

STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT STRUCTURE PLAN 1996-2011

'SAVED' POLICIES EXTENDED BEYOND 28 SEPTEMBER 2007

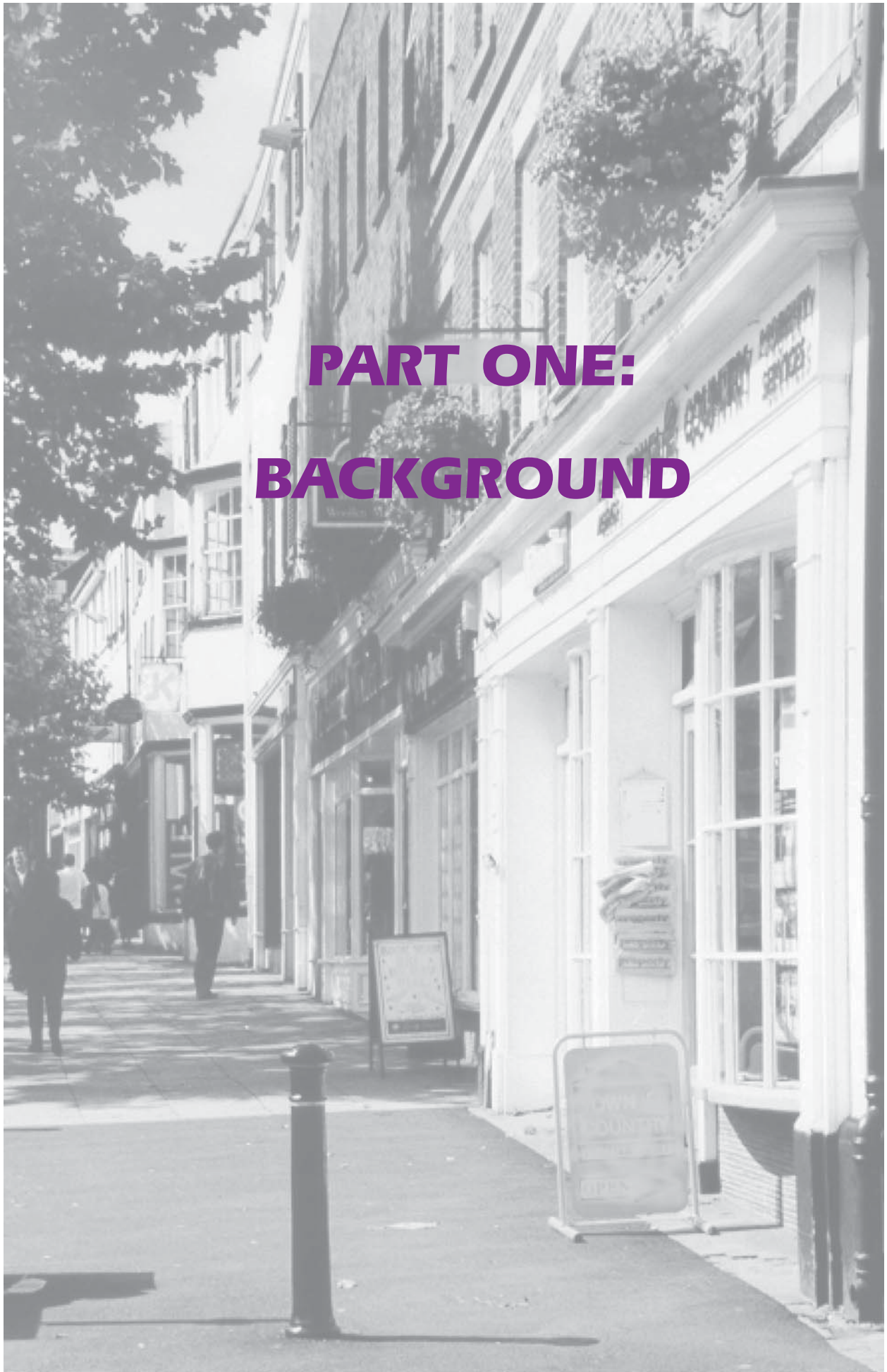
The policies remaining in this document (i.e. not crossed out) are those which the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in exercise of the power conferred by paragraph 1(3) of schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has deemed to be extended beyond 28th September 2007.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

**AS ADOPTED ON 10th. MAY 2001
AND AMENDED IN ACCORD WITH THE
RULING OF THE HIGH COURT ON
5th. FEBRUARY 2002**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Structure Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent has been prepared jointly by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council and proposes a broad planning framework for the period 1996-2011. It provides a comprehensive, sustainable strategy relating to land use, transportation and the environment. Its policies must be rational, realistic, flexible, yet easily understood and in accord with European, national and regional guidance. It provides the strategic context for local plans dealing with detailed land use policies and site specific developments. It also looks beyond the Plan period, as policies agreed now will inevitably have an effect on long term land use patterns and the environment.

The Development Plan System

- 1.2 The development plan system, which in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent comprises a structure plan, district-wide local plans and subject local plans (Minerals and Waste), is designed to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. Its main role is to guide appropriate development to the right place and to prevent unacceptable development elsewhere. In order to avoid decisions being taken on an arbitrary basis, both private and public development proposals need to be considered against objective criteria providing the requisite guidance, incentive and control. Since publication of the 1991 Planning Act, precedence has been given to the Development Plan; Section 54A states that "... determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".
- 1.3 Structure plans, which are prepared under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act, have three main functions:
- To ensure that provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy. The Government provides national and regional guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) which are periodically updated, as well as Regional Planning Guidance (RPGs).
 - To provide a strategic policy framework for development control by setting out the policies and general proposals for land use within the area.
 - To provide a framework for local plans which, in Staffordshire, are those prepared for their areas by the eight District Councils and by Stoke-on-Trent City Council for the unitary authority. A local plan for minerals has been prepared jointly by the County Council and the City Council and similar arrangements are in hand for a waste local plan.

The Current Structure Plan Review

- 1.4 The first Staffordshire Structure Plan was approved by the Secretary of State in 1978, along with separate plans for Stoke-on-Trent and Burton upon Trent. There have been subsequent reviews prepared by Staffordshire County Council with replacement plans for the administrative County of Staffordshire approved in 1984 and 1991 respectively. The new joint Structure Plan covers the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent, except for that part of north-east Staffordshire within the Peak District National Park.

- 1.5 This replacement plan completely supersedes the 1991 approved plan. Its production has been different in that it has been prepared jointly by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the latter as a consequence of Local Government Reorganisation having become an all-purpose unitary local authority on 1 April 1997 and a structure plan authority in its own right.
- 1.6 There are a number of reasons why the approved Staffordshire Structure Plan has been reviewed and rolled forward. Foremost is that the Structure Plan approved in 1991 covered the period 1986-2001 and the Secretary of State requires structure plans to be reviewed at least once every five years. The other issues which have dictated that the strategic planning framework for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent should be updated include:
- The need to deal with issues identified in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (RPG11), such as the revised level of housing provision and the examination of the potential of transport corridors to accommodate new development.
 - The need to have regard to recent Government Planning Policy Guidance, which requires that structure plan policies have regard to changing attitudes towards the issue of transport and sustainability.
 - The need to consider how the performance of employment related development can be improved to match that achieved for housing, including the issue of Premium Employment Sites and Major Investment Sites.
 - The need to ensure continuity in the development planning process beyond 2001.
 - The need to provide an up-to-date strategic context for reviews of County, City and District-prepared local plans.
- 1.7 In preparing the Plan, the policies and proposals have been designed to be compatible with the plans of adjoining local authorities.

Preparation of the Plan

- 1.8 The Consultation Draft Structure Plan was the subject of public participation from November 1997 to end of January 1998.
- 1.9 Revised Regional Planning Guidance, other changes in national planning policy guidance, representations received and the outcome of further work, including that undertaken by consultants, led to amendments to the Plan which was placed on deposit in January-February 1999, along with a Statement of Public Participation and an Environmental Appraisal of the Plan.
- 1.10 An Examination in Public into selected matters was held in October 1999 and the Examination Panel presented its Report to the promoting authorities in December 1999. The Panel Report was published in January 2000.
- 1.11 The Plan was adopted in May 2001 and includes changes considered appropriate by the County and City Councils in response to the Panel's recommendations, representations on other matters not discussed by the Examination in Public Panel and any other relevant changes in the general planning context.

- 1.12 The plan as adopted was subject to a challenge in the High Court which was heard in February 2002. As a result of the High Court ruling, reference to Essington within Policy H1 and related supporting text has been deleted (as shown by *).

The Form of the Plan

- 1.13 The Structure Plan consists of a Written Statement containing the policies and proposals, illustrated by a key diagram. The Structure Plan must be accompanied by an Explanatory Memorandum which justifies the policies and proposals, gives the information on which they are based, and explains their relationship to national and regional planning guidance. The Explanatory Memorandum is not part of the Plan but can be bound into the same document. In this document, the policies are shown in bold typeface. Other text is part of the Explanatory Memorandum.
- 1.14 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan is designed to be read as a whole. Policies and proposals are not listed in any priority order. The General Development policies are those which relate to all development; topic sections contain policies for particular subjects. Many proposals will need to be considered in relation to policies under more than one heading. A development being put forward in a local plan comprising a mix of recreation facilities and housing would, for example, be considered having regard to the appropriate policies for each separate element of it.

The Enabling Role of the Structure Plan

- 1.15 The Structure Plan is part of the overall process of securing development where it is most appropriate. As well as providing the broad strategy to which the subsequent elements of the planning process (local plans and development control) should adhere, it is also influential in the increasingly important area of attracting funding to implement development proposals.
- 1.16 The implementation of the policies and proposals outlined in the Structure Plan rely either upon public resources, or upon investment from various private sources. Often it is a combination of both. For the Structure Plan to be effective in its over-arching role as a catalyst for change, regard must be given to mechanisms which are available to allow their delivery within a realistic timescale.
- 1.17 Of particular relevance to implementation are bids made against various programmes, including the European Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF, RECHAR, etc.), the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and Lottery Funds, together with other methods of obtaining funding such as the Local Transport Plans. The role of the emerging Regional Development Agency is also likely to be crucial in this respect. The potential availability of resources from such sources can be critical as to whether certain major proposals are viable. The competitive nature of the bidding process does mean, however, that no absolute certainty can be attached to the availability of outside funding. The Structure Plan provides the basis for the preparation of integrated funding bids.
- 1.18 The importance of private finance has been heightened with constraints placed upon the scale and availability of public funding through traditional budgets and also with the introduction of positive measures by Government to encourage the early injection of private capital, such as the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). In the context of the Structure Plan and subsequent local plans, there should be recognition of both the potential and the limits which exist in obtaining financial contributions from developers towards infrastructure and services related to major projects.

- 1.19 The focusing of resources from the various public and private agencies requires the increasing use of partnerships and package initiatives where resources are pooled and match-funding employed.

Performance Appraisal

- 1.20 It is essential for the effective implementation of the Structure Plan that a regular appraisal of the planning situation within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is undertaken after the Plan has been adopted. There is a statutory requirement upon local planning authorities to keep under review those matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area. These matters should include the principal physical and economic characteristics of the area; the size, composition and distribution of the population; and the communications, transport system and traffic of the area. Regular monitoring of the Plan will aid the assessment of:
- the validity of the strategy and objectives underpinning the Plan;
 - the degree to which policies and proposals are being achieved;
 - any new issues which may impact upon the Plan's continued relevance.
- 1.21 This will enable the County and City Councils to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Plan and to identify which policies need to be altered, strengthened or maintained.
- 1.22 To provide clarity and co-ordination to the monitoring process, it is the County and City Council's intention to produce an annual monitoring report. The report will provide summary information from survey and research work, and relate such information to relevant Plan policies and proposals.
- 1.23 The monitoring report will initially build upon survey work and data collection already undertaken by the joint planning authorities.
- 1.24 In addition, as experience is gained, the County and City Councils will be actively seeking the participation of other authorities, District and Parish Councils, and various agencies to improve the scope and efficiency of the monitoring process. Of particular relevance is the continuing work being undertaken as part of the Local Agenda 21 initiative.

2. ISSUES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 A report "Towards a New Strategy" was the subject of wide consultation during the Summer of 1995 as an introduction to this Structure Plan review. It dealt mainly with the issues that the new Plan would have to address and went on to put forward aims and objectives which were, at that time, seen as most relevant. These were largely incorporated into the consultation draft Structure Plan which was the subject of public participation from late 1997 well into 1998. Close working arrangements were established with all the local authorities and other relevant agencies and organisations, including those involved in Local Agenda 21, to obtain their input to the Plan as it evolved. Topic seminars were also held and there were presentations to elected Members. The views obtained have been taken into account and have been of great assistance in refining and addressing those issues originally identified.

Sustainable Development

2.2 Perhaps the most difficult of the issues faced in the Structure Plan Review was how to address the concept of sustainable development through strategic planning policies. There have been numerous attempts at producing a useable definition of the term sustainable development. The most commonly used was provided by the Brundtland Commission (1987):

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

2.3 The Government's commitment to the principles of sustainable development are set out in "Sustainable Development : The UK Strategy" (1994) which recognises the important role of the planning system in regulating the development and use of land in the public interest.

2.4 Paragraph 5 of PPG1 sets out the framework for sustainable planning which should:

- provide for the nation's needs for commercial and industrial development, food production, minerals extraction, new homes and other buildings, while respecting environmental objectives;
- use already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work;
- conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources (including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality) taking particular care to safeguard designations of national and international importance; and
- shape new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel.

2.5 In practice, the pressures for development in certain areas of Staffordshire, largely required by Regional Planning Guidance, have proved difficult to reconcile with requirements to reduce travel, avoid sensitive environments and protect natural resources. Nonetheless, the Structure Plan has sought to place sustainability at the heart of its strategy, policy and proposals.

The Other Main Issues

- 2.6 The requirement to move towards a more sustainable development pattern should be seen as a basic parameter against which all the numerous other issues should be considered. Each policy being proposed in this Plan may be regarded as a necessary response to an issue which has been raised in some form during the review process. Sometimes it has involved a fundamental change of approach, while with others it has meant only an updating of longstanding and well-tested policies. Nearly all the policies in the Structure Plan therefore differ to a greater or lesser extent from those in the Plan approved in 1991. Many of these changes have been as a consequence of the need to reconsider policy requirements having had a conscious regard to sustainability principles.
- 2.7 There are, nevertheless, also certain topic issues worthy of special mention at this point in the Plan, because they have engendered considerable debate during the review process or have been of particular concern.
- *Providing a portfolio of sustainable employment sites which is available and attractive to a wide range of potential users.*
- 2.8 Whilst in gross terms, many areas have an adequate supply of sites which are available now, or can be brought forward in the fairly near future, there remains the need to improve the attractiveness of currently defined employment sites and to allow for a modest amount of additional land to be allocated where the existing supply of sites is considered to be deficient in some respect.
- *Accommodating the pressures for housing in southern Staffordshire in such a way as to create a more sustainable development pattern.*
- 2.9 While the best use will be made of 'brownfield' and urban sites, the need to use some greenfield land in sustainable locations is unavoidable if people are to be housed in the numbers required in Regional Planning Guidance. Efforts have been made to limit the impact of development upon Green Belt, environmentally sensitive areas, land of high agricultural quality and areas with mineral reserves, although this has not been possible in all cases. The intention is also to exploit the presence of rail links. However, the lack of capacity of the main highway network onto which new development will still feed in some measure, regardless of the presence of a rail service, is a physical constraint which cannot be easily remedied. In southern Staffordshire, there is a need to ensure that housing provision has access to existing or new employment allocations as part of an integrated strategy to create more balanced settlements and help reduce the need to commute, particularly to the West Midlands Conurbation.
- *Providing a sufficiently wide range of housing types to meet the requirements of all sections of the community.*
- 2.10 It is estimated that a significant proportion of the total requirement in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is for affordable housing, much of which is in the sector previously provided for rent by local authorities and now increasingly the responsibility of housing associations. There appears to be little prospect that the level of affordable housing likely to be provided will meet needs, particularly in southern Staffordshire where there is a requirement, as part of Regional Planning Guidance, to meet the local needs of residents and households from the West Midlands Conurbation, and where there is limited potential for small or medium site development within urban areas close to existing facilities.
- *Promoting integrated transport and reducing movements by road, particularly by private car.*

2.11 This is fundamental to the debate on sustainability. More facilities are being provided for pedestrians and cyclists and improved bus and rail services and facilities are continuing to be developed with the aim of reducing the use of cars. Similarly, encouragement for a shift of freight movements to other transport modes, such as rail, must continue. At present, however, changes in travelling habits and patterns, while making a useful contribution towards environmental improvement, are likely to remain at the margins unless significantly more financial constraints are imposed on road users. In this respect, particular attention has been paid to the Government White Paper on integrated transport policy.

- *Enhancing and protecting the Countryside and Built Environment.*

2.12 Considerable emphasis has been placed by many of those consulted on the need to ensure that “the countryside is protected for its own sake” as endorsed by Government. There is also increased emphasis upon environmental enhancement through initiatives such as National and Community Forests and attention is given to the conservation of historic buildings and areas. The policies in this Plan fully address this issue, subject to the proviso that, in some areas, greenfield land will inevitably be needed to meet development requirements which cannot be met within urban areas. Revised policies relating to landscape protection and enhancement are aimed at providing a more holistic approach when considering the appropriateness of development in the countryside.

Aims and Objectives

2.13 The aims now put forward are essentially those originally considered at the start of the Structure Plan Review process in 1995. The objectives have, however, been refined and made more specific in the light of subsequent consultation and advice.

2.14 The aims of the Structure Plan are to:

- increase the prosperity of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and reduce unemployment levels;
- maintain and enhance environmental quality;
- meet identified housing needs;
- develop a more sustainable integrated accessibility strategy;
- revitalise the image of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

2.15 In order to move towards the achievement of these general aims, the following objectives have been identified.

2.16 Local economies will be improved by:

- (i) proposing policies to improve the range and quality of employment sites available and other measures which help to stimulate and diversify the local economy in urban and rural areas;
- (ii) promoting employment development in areas where this is likely to contribute to the creation of more balanced local economies;

- (iii) seeking the introduction of employment uses in urban and rural areas which maintain and strengthen local communities;
- (iv) meeting the opportunity to accommodate a new Premium Employment Site and a Major Investment Site in locations which can be balanced with strategic Green Belt, environmental or transportation principles;
- (v) reinforcing and expanding the function of town centres for high quality service employment, shopping, leisure and entertainment activities;
- (vi) exploiting appropriate "new" technologies to the full.

2.17 Environmental improvement will be achieved by:

- (i) applying sustainability principles to all new development proposals, mineral extraction, and waste management practices;
- (ii) promoting the conservation and the use of renewable energy resources and improvement to air, water and land quality;
- (iii) putting a greater emphasis on good design as well as conservation as advocated in Government guidance (PPG1);
- (iv) ensuring that the particular character of landscapes is respected or enhanced by new development, or protected from new development;
- (v) continuing to protect areas of ecological, geological and archaeological importance;
- (vi) promoting the protection, enhancement and, where appropriate, the recreation of relevant key habitats;
- (vii) addressing the changes in rural areas, particularly those related to agricultural practices, diversification and development pressures;
- (viii) promoting improvements in the quality of urban living through regeneration and town and local centre improvements;
- (ix) seeking to improve community safety in all areas.

2.18 Housing requirements will be met by:

- (i) maximising the use of the existing housing stock, promoting renovation, where appropriate/economic, and demolition of dwellings only when beyond repair or when replacement development would represent an addition to the total housing stock;
- (ii) examining all potential sources of new housing in existing settlements, including the conversion of existing buildings and the reuse of vacant or under-used land and buildings, except where this would result in unacceptable cramming of development, with the loss of areas of accessible open space which have a high recreational value;
- (iii) providing a balanced portfolio of housing land to complement economic regeneration initiatives;

- (iv) endeavouring to facilitate the provision of affordable housing sufficient to meet the high level of need for this type of accommodation;
- (v) locating housing development which is easily accessible to employment, shopping and other facilities (including rail stations) by walking, cycling and public transport;
- (vi) focusing development in sustainable locations where major infrastructure can be funded and made viable, and where a range of social and community facilities can be retained and enhanced or provided as part of the development.

2.19 A more integrated accessibility strategy will be achieved by:

- (i) promoting measures which will reduce the use of the private car;
- (ii) moving towards a development pattern where settlements become increasingly self-contained, less reliant on commuting and with a real choice of more sustainable transport modes;
- (iii) making more provision for convenient and attractive access for people with disabilities and for walking and cycling in safety;
- (iv) seeking to ensure adequate attractive, integrated public transport services;
- (v) reducing the movement by road of freight, including minerals and waste;
- (vi) directing resources to a package of measures which would help relieve congestion, support economic regeneration initiatives, minimise adverse environmental impacts, continue to seek reduction in accidents and provide facilities which encourage the use of alternative modes of transport, namely walking, cycling and public transport, thereby improving the quality of life for local communities.

2.20 The image of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will be improved by:

- (i) promoting initiatives intended to upgrade the perception of the environment and economy of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent;
- (ii) trading on the Plan area's attributes of diversity of quality, traditions and topography;
- (iii) maintaining and encouraging a greater spirit of place by drawing out more the distinct character of different communities, including the small towns and villages.



PART TWO:

**A SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (RPG11) April 1998 provides the regional context for this strategic framework for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The essence of the regional planning framework is sustainability, to be achieved by integrating existing and proposed development and transport provision, by maximising the development capacity of existing urban areas (reusing derelict and vacant land, considering changes of permitted uses, and higher density of development) and by focusing on existing larger settlements which can provide a choice of means of transport and employment opportunities. The potential for the further growth of expanded towns is raised in the light of the significant past investment in infrastructure.
- 3.2 Guidance also specifically requires the encouragement of employment-led growth in the north and west of the region, including the need to strengthen the economic base of North Staffordshire.
- 3.3 The vision in RPG11 (contained in paragraph 1.2) is of:
- “an advanced and competitive manufacturing region where development is set within a sustainable development framework, where inward investment and enterprise are encouraged, where everyone has access to a high quality of life and choice of opportunities, and where the quality and distinctiveness of the natural and built environment are maintained and enhanced”.*
- 3.4 The primary development requirements for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent from Regional Guidance (RPG11) are 70,400 houses between 1991 and 2011, together with provision for Premium Employment Sites and possible Major Investment Sites.
- 3.5 Urban regeneration is seen as a critical part of sustainability, making efficient use of land and other resources, including existing buildings, minimising greenfield development and tackling dereliction and decay. In particular, the Regional Strategy seeks to maintain the economic and social infrastructure of the Metropolitan and North Staffordshire Conurbations so that they remain foci for surrounding areas. Although a substantial majority of additional housing provision should take the form of new housing on previously developed land and conversions within urban areas, some greenfield development will be necessary in sustainable locations. Such a strategy explicitly accepts a continued and important role for commuting. Migrant and indigenous housing need should largely be met within the “Central Crescent”, an area which includes southern Staffordshire. At the same time, the strategy encourages employment allocations in certain locations to help move towards a better balance between population and jobs.
- 3.6 Particular emphasis is placed on the consideration and assessment of development potential along corridors well served by public transport or with the potential for the improvement or introduction/reintroduction of services (rail, bus and Metro). Within these corridors, priority should be given to accommodating development within the metropolitan area and next, at freestanding towns or large new settlements beyond the Green Belt or in settlements excluded from the Green Belt. Only in exceptional circumstances, and if a significant contribution can be made to the aim of achieving sustainable development objectives (including reduction of the need to travel), should locations within the currently defined Green Belt be identified. While locating new development in or close to existing settlements is emphasised, “smaller new settlements” within public transport corridors may have an important part to play in providing new housing.

- 3.7 All the rail corridors across southern Staffordshire are highlighted as areas for consideration for employment-led growth, a principle being promoted for the areas in the north and west of the Region. The A50 and A500 corridors in North Staffordshire are also considered to have possible growth opportunities. However, the A38 and A500 corridors are noted as having capacity constraints, although, in the case of the latter, these are likely to be made less following the implementation of improvements recently agreed by Government.
- 3.8 The Regional Strategy is against sporadic rural development or expansion of small settlements. Rather, improved balance is sought based on market towns with public transport facilities, with employment allocations to meet local needs and provide opportunities for employment diversification. Broad based economic development initiatives are seen as vital to the regeneration of the rural areas of the region and some housing development in existing settlements can help to sustain local services and employment. However, in many smaller settlements, it will be appropriate to limit housing development to that for local needs only.
- 3.9 With regard to employment provision, Guidance specifically proposes the provision of premium employment sites to meet the needs of the Black Country and allows for further provision to be made in North Staffordshire, if this is required. In addition, the designation of large sites for new industrial and commercial investment to be reserved for single large multi-national organisations is allowed for in Guidance.
- 3.10 Guidance recognises that the minerals industry in the Region is important in promoting economic growth, creating and maintaining employment and supporting the construction industry. However, it is also considered important that minerals planning reflects sustainable development objectives and protects the environment. Development plans are expected to provide for development in a way which avoids unnecessary sterilisation of significant mineral resources by other development, or where unavoidable, allows for the prior extraction of the minerals. Guidance highlights the potential relationship between mineral extraction sites and waste disposal. However, Guidance reiterates the Government's hierarchical approach to waste management. In relation to both minerals and waste, Guidance looks to Minerals and Waste Local Plans to develop in more detail broad policy frameworks set out in structure plans.
- 3.11 Regional Planning Guidance for the Peak District National Park, part of which is in the West Midlands Region and the geographical County of Staffordshire, is provided by Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands Region. This recognises the regional and national importance of the National Park and stresses the highest priority should be given to its protection.
- 3.12 A review of Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands commenced in February 2000 and is programmed for completion in Autumn 2002.

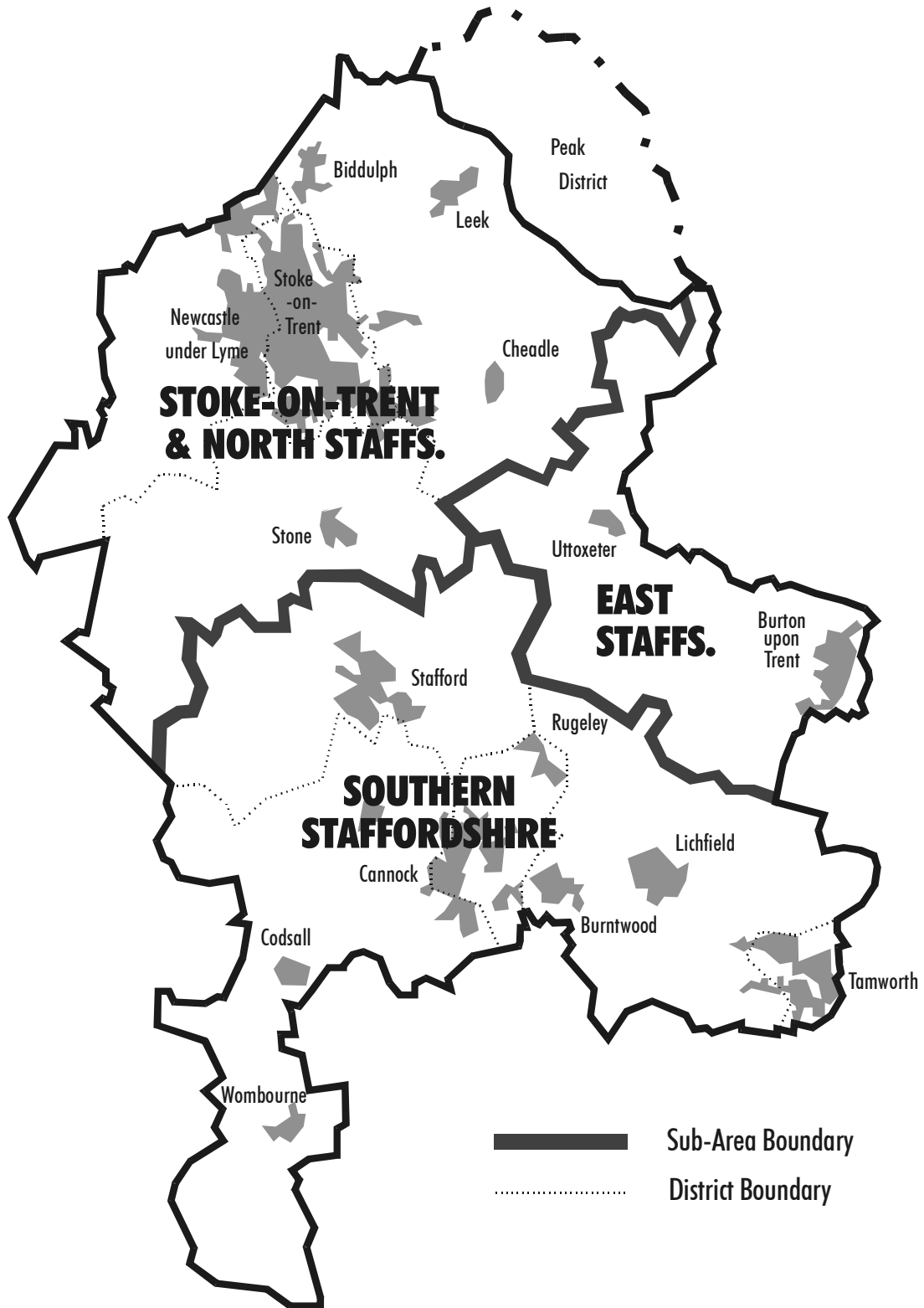
4. THE STRATEGY

Introduction

- 4.1 This section sets out the overall strategy of the Structure Plan. The diverse features of the Plan area call for different approaches to address local problems, pressures, opportunities and characteristics. The following sub-areas are based on those identified in RPG11 and are shown on Map 1.
- Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire
 - Southern Staffordshire (Central Crescent)
 - Eastern Staffordshire
- 4.2 The overall strategy incorporated in this Structure Plan, closely reflects the Regional Strategy and shares the vision referred to at paragraph 3.3. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are well placed to realise this vision. Located on the national and international transport network; with many established national and international manufacturing firms already resident; attractive countryside, towns and villages; existing and proposed high quality retail, recreation, leisure and cultural facilities; the framework is available within which, by appropriate planning policies and proposals, the full potential of the County and City can be achieved in the most sympathetic way.
- 4.3 Foremost in the overall strategy is the provision of homes and employment opportunities for the existing and future inhabitants of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in order to improve their social and economic well-being. However, such an imperative must not be at the expense of environmental standards and quality.
- 4.4 Sustainable development is fundamental to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. Such an aim is, however, a continuous process, only a part of which can be achieved in the lifetime of this Plan. In subsequent Plans, and as the concept of sustainability is more widely promoted, further progress towards the ultimate aim can be expected. Within the Plan period and the constraints of an essentially land-use strategy, the following principles have been applied wherever possible:
- providing maximum development capacity within existing settlements within local environmental limits and without resorting to unacceptable town cramming;
 - giving priority to the maximisation of “brownfield”, i.e. redevelopment options, and making more intensive use and reuse of under-used and redundant buildings, where compatible with planning policies and sustainability principles;
 - locating major new built development in and adjoining urban areas with good access to the strategic transportation network;
 - allowing for growth on an appropriate scale in towns, promoting self-sufficiency and therefore sustainability without prejudicing settlement character;
 - promoting the vitality and viability of town centres;
 - locating “people intensive” land uses (such as housing, and commercial and service activities) where there is good public transport accessibility (existing or proposed) to help minimise car dependency;

MAP 1: THE PLAN AREA

(Sub-areas based upon descriptions in Regional Guidance)



- retaining employment in the countryside by having planning policies that support agricultural businesses and encourage farm diversification (including tourism-based uses) and making provision for employment development appropriate to the needs of the area;
- ensuring an appropriate supply of minerals to meet local, regional and national needs, whilst conserving minerals, where possible, and ensuring that waste management is conducted in a sustainable manner;
- protecting the best quality agricultural land as a resource;
- seeking to meet development pressures within the areas from which the need arises, provided this can be achieved in an environmentally acceptable manner and assist in the creation of increasingly balanced communities;
- maintaining the principles of the Green Belt;
- developing detailed policies and programmes to promote the greening of urban areas and protect core natural and cultural assets;
- protecting and improving the appearance and biodiversity of the countryside and urban areas.

4.5 However, these principles must all be seen against the development requirements placed on Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent by Regional Planning Guidance both in terms of scale and the locational stipulations contained in Guidance, in particular the concentration of development within public transport corridors and within the Central Crescent or the southern Staffordshire sub-area. As a consequence, a balance has needed to be struck between conflicting principles.

4.6 Guidance requires that provision for both indigenous growth in southern Staffordshire and for migrant households from the metropolitan area should be largely made within the Central Crescent. However, the larger part of the Central Crescent in Staffordshire (the southern Staffordshire sub-area) comprises Green Belt, land of high agricultural quality, land and settlements of high environmental quality and settlements which have accommodated substantial development in recent times. A variety of potential conflicts must be addressed if the Guidance development requirements are to be met. The resolution of these conflicts has led to proposals which will involve incursions into Green Belt and good quality agricultural land.

4.7 With regard to the advice in Guidance to locate development in transportation corridors, the Plan has sought to adhere to this advice. However, corridor studies, undertaken by consultants on behalf of the strategic planning authorities, have revealed highway capacity constraints almost everywhere across the Plan area by 2011, if not before. These conclusions are based on a reasonable degree of modal change and improvements to public transport facilities. Even highly radical approaches (as yet untried and yet to be considered acceptable) fail to bring forecast road usage down to existing assessments of road capacity. These circumstances are particularly serious within the Central Crescent, the southern Staffordshire sub-area, where Guidance seeks the greater part of new development provision to be made, along the radial routes into the metropolitan conurbation.

4.8 Highway capacity problems are not unique to Staffordshire nor capable of being fully addressed through a land-use plan. Nevertheless the Plan sets out policies and proposals aimed at minimising the difficulties.

Sub-Area Strategies

- 4.9 The following sub-area strategies provide detail on the implications of implementing the overall strategy, highlighting the conflicts which arise from meeting the development requirements of each sub-area. In seeking to promote sustainable development, the proposals are more prescriptive than was the case in the previous Structure Plan. With regard to housing, specific strategic proposals are made for development that would be for as many as 1,000 dwellings or more, or where boundary issues are involved, for lesser developments of around 500 dwellings. The identification of development locations of smaller scale is to be undertaken in the review of District-wide local plans.

Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire (excluding Peak National Park)

- 4.10 The sub-area comprises the urban core of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, together with the towns, villages and countryside of Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle Borough and the northern part of Stafford Borough, including Stone town.
- 4.11 About half a million people live within the area. Its influence in terms of such matters as the economy, retailing, education and leisure extends well beyond its boundaries into Cheshire, Shropshire and central Staffordshire and even wider as the local tourism industry continues to grow. It contains areas of high quality in terms of its landscape and wildlife habitats, and is internationally known as a centre of excellence in ceramic production.
- 4.12 In recognition of the scale and special circumstances of the needs of the North Staffordshire Conurbation, Regional Planning Guidance promotes employment-led growth to secure a fairer distribution of the development opportunities in the West Midlands.
- 4.13 The strengths of the sub-area include its location on the national and international transportation network (over half the country's population live within 100 miles of North Staffordshire); a substantial local economy adapting to changing market demands and opportunities including tourism; its blend of town, country and open spaces including access to some of the finest landscapes that England has to offer and with a wide range of important natural and cultural assets; the choices that are available in North Staffordshire in terms of living, cultural and working environments; and the skills, experience and drive of the people who live and work there. The presence of the two universities of Keele and Staffordshire also give extra weight to the sub-area being regarded as a social, cultural and economic entity.
- 4.14 The essential feature of the strategy for North Staffordshire is urban and rural regeneration. This complements steps already being taken to redress the perceived barriers to prosperity within the sub-area derived from an urban and rural economy dependent on a relatively narrow range of declining industries; environmental degradation; under-investment in essential infrastructure and modern facilities; and a poor image.
- 4.15 To complement policies to guide investment towards the urban areas, the strategy promotes gateways to the urban core. Gateways are put forward as general locations for prestigious development schemes of sub-regional significance, designed to the highest standards, linked to the strategic transportation network and forming a valuable addition to the employment land portfolio aimed at regenerating North Staffordshire. Regional Planning Guidance promotes employment-led growth in the North Staffordshire sub-region. The economic development proposals included in the Structure Plan strategy at gateways and inter-connecting A500/A50 corridors will act as a focal point for the realisation of this objective. These gateways will aid the regeneration of the sub-region and provide appropriate locations for Premium Employment sites linked to the strategic transport network. The Blythe Bridge Premium Employment Site is allocated in an adopted local plan. Proposed development in the Chatterley Valley, while predominantly using recycled land, will have a marginal impact on Green Belt.

- 4.16 The strategy for the regeneration of North Staffordshire involves action to consolidate and improve the attraction of North Staffordshire in all respects to encourage retention of its indigenous population growth. This represents a continuation of the existing regeneration strategy which has included various wide ranging initiatives such as the Newcastle Countryside Project and SRB schemes in Chesterton and the Newcastle Western Villages as well as Capital Challenge and SRB schemes in Stoke-on-Trent. As part of this continuing regeneration process, current "industrial" land allocations which have failed to attract employment development to date should be reviewed. The site specific circumstances of some of these may merit their being reallocated for other appropriate uses, without harm to the overall industrial land portfolio of the sub-area, subject to their being available and economically developable. They might thus contribute to local environmental improvements and accommodate development which might otherwise increase pressure on "greenfield" sites - in particular, their potential for housing development should be assessed. The provision of housing land within the urban area also provides the opportunity to reduce commuting.
- 4.17 With regard to the possibility of providing further major improvements to the strategic highway network, the Government generally encourages private sector integrated land/transportation development packages. While the strategic planning authorities welcome Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), such proposals must, however, be rigorously examined in relation to the policies of the Development Plan, having particular regard to their impact upon or contribution to the regeneration strategy, Green Belt policies, existing transport infrastructure and the amenity of local communities. No PFI schemes are currently sufficiently advanced to warrant inclusion in this Plan.
- 4.18 The attractive countryside of the sub-area is an important asset and its protection is vital. The Green Belt, a cornerstone of planning policy with strong support from national Planning Guidance, serves to contain the urban area and maintain the proximity of open countryside. The strategy for North Staffordshire will retain its general form and function. Relaxation of restrictive Green Belt policy by way of boundary redefinition will only be supported in exceptional, location specific circumstances where the case for the proposed development outweighs the presumption in favour of protection of the Green Belt, including consideration of other less sensitive locations which could reasonably accommodate the proposed development.
- 4.19 Projected household growth within the Plan period to 2011 can be accommodated without "new" major greenfield development outside the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme urban areas as indicated in Regional Planning Guidance. The emphasis will therefore be placed on providing high quality sites to meet all types of housing requirement within the general confines of the conurbation area and the surrounding settlements, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.20 Besides applying the general national and Structure Plan policies for town centres and retailing, the Stoke-on-Trent sub-regional centre (Hanley and the complementary Festival Park) should be maintained and developed as a major commercial, retail, cultural and leisure focus appealing to residents of North Staffordshire and beyond. Similarly, the particular character of the leisure attractions of other centres, notably Newcastle, should be maintained and developed. Within the City of Stoke-on-Trent, away from Hanley, the other town centres should be revived, building on their individual character and strengths.
- 4.21 The sub-regional strategy seeks to complement those measures being introduced to redress economic and social deprivation in North Staffordshire, including low educational attainment levels within the conurbation.

- 4.22 The particular problems of the rural areas of North Staffordshire are recognised in Regional Planning Guidance. The need for a sound economic base to arrest the process of social and economic decline and to ensure rural areas, and particularly settlements therein, remain locations where people both live and work, is vital to rural regeneration. The overall strategy to conserve and enhance the environments and economies of the rural areas will be applied most vigorously in North Staffordshire.
- 4.23 Much of the Peak District National Park falls within Staffordshire. Although the National Park Authority draws up a separate Structure Plan, this Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan takes into account the Park's status and significance and the need to contribute to its conservation and enhancement.
- 4.24 The main points of the North Staffordshire sub-area strategy are:
- urban and rural regeneration including the consolidation and expansion of indigenous industry;
 - employment land provision at strategic gateways to the urban core and along intervening strategic transportation corridors;
 - reassess current industrial land allocations and possibly reallocate some for alternative uses;
 - maintain the general form and function of Green Belt;
 - seek additional quality housing land;
 - maintain and develop the commercial, retail, cultural and leisure focus of the sub-regional centre (Hanley and the complementary Festival Park) for investment and innovation, whilst protecting the vitality and viability of other centres; and
 - encourage the development of offices with a national, regional and sub-regional role.

Southern Staffordshire

- 4.25 The southern Staffordshire sub-area comprises the four districts of South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Tamworth, together with the southern part of Stafford Borough south of Stone town. This sub-area comprises the Staffordshire part of the "Central Crescent" identified in Regional Planning Guidance.
- 4.26 Southern Staffordshire abuts the West Midlands Conurbation, in particular the Metropolitan Districts of Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham. In describing the Central Crescent, Regional Planning Guidance points out that this area, surrounding the Metropolitan Conurbation, contains towns which are important centres in their own right. The spheres of influence of these towns in Staffordshire may cross District boundaries but are generally contained within Staffordshire. However, Tamworth does have an influence to the east and south on parts of North Warwickshire. Over and above these local spheres of influence, notwithstanding past efforts to achieve more local self-sufficiency, the sub-area has close economic, social and commuting links with the conurbation.
- 4.27 As a consequence of Staffordshire's proximity to, and close relationship with the West Midlands Conurbation, the strategy, particularly for southern Staffordshire, through its policies and proposals, seeks to play its part in pursuing the regional planning aim of regenerating and

- revitalising the conurbation. Housing provision for migrant households and appropriate employment land provision has been made having regard to the full range of advice in Regional Planning Guidance and the latest changes in circumstances e.g. abandonment of the Western Orbital Route.
- 4.28 With large areas of highly attractive landscape, including the nationally designated Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and many historic towns and villages, southern Staffordshire has been and will continue to be subject to considerable development pressure. Accessible by motorway and major trunk roads, albeit subject to increasing pressure on available capacity, and with wide-ranging public transport facilities, mainly linking the sub-area with the conurbation, the sub-area possesses many economic advantages. As across the whole Plan area, the task in southern Staffordshire is to balance these economic advantages and development pressures with protection of the environment and existing infrastructure in order to retain the sub-area's attractiveness.
- 4.29 The sub-area strategy for southern Staffordshire builds upon initiatives already taken which provide a framework within which new development can take place, including significant past investment in the infrastructure of expanded towns; the redevelopment/reuse of vacant brownfield land with associated regenerative infrastructure investment; improvements and investment in public transport links and the environment. Examples of these regeneration initiatives include the Forest of Mercia Community Forest and SRB schemes in Cannock, Burntwood and Rugeley. In particular the sub-area strategy seeks to maximise development capacity within the larger settlements including previously used "brownfield" land.
- 4.30 The essential feature of the strategy for southern Staffordshire is to meet the housing needs of the locally generated (indigenous) growth, and those of migrants unable to be accommodated within the West Midlands Conurbation, while improving the balance of population and employment opportunities within settlements across the sub-area. The closeness of the area to the conurbation means migration continues to exert housing pressures on the area to add to the indigenous growth, a large part of which emanates from earlier migration.
- 4.31 Regional Guidance anticipates these links will remain important and that new development, housing in particular, should be distributed in or close to corridors of public transport by bus and train to provide for more sustainable means of movement.
- 4.32 Corridor studies have been carried out to ascertain the development capacity of the numerous corridors which cross the sub-area, primarily emanating from the conurbation (Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall). There may be existing or potential capacity to accommodate more public transport traffic. However, if this capacity were to be used by passengers from new developments, by virtue of the currently low public transport modal split and the low propensity for modal change to public transport, any new development will generate proportionately more car movements.
- 4.33 The principal conclusion of the corridor studies was that highway capacity will remain, for the foreseeable future, the critical restraint on movement and development capacity along the corridors. Indeed, the corridor studies reveal widespread overloading of the main highway network across southern Staffordshire by the end of the Plan period.
- 4.34 Despite the findings of the corridor studies, it was still concluded that, in order to seek to achieve more sustainable travel movements, when travel is necessary, development should be located in corridors which have and can provide public transport facilities or which could be capable of consideration for radical initiatives.

- 4.35 A further conclusion by the consultants was, however, that in principle development in settlements which are relatively self-contained and which offer a substantial level of internal public transport facilities, is likely to be preferable to the use of sites on transport corridors where there is potential for modal shift which may not be fully realised without fiscal intervention.
- 4.36 As a consequence of these findings the sub-area strategy distributes new development to settlements capable of a high degree of self containment yet within existing or potential public transport corridors to facilitate the inevitable communication with the conurbation. Such a focussed strategy seeks to minimise movement rather than generate it by dispersing development. Local plans will also be expected to give full consideration to the development potential of public transport corridors when designating development sites.
- 4.37 The South Staffordshire Green Belt covers much of the southern Staffordshire sub-area. The location of development beyond the Green Belt is preferred after maximising the acceptable capacity within the built-up areas of the main settlements. Consequently, development locations are proposed north of Tamworth, north of Lichfield, at Rugeley and at Stafford, all beyond the Green Belt and with the benefit of or potential for high quality public transport facilities. However, as part of the objective of diverting development to transport corridors and existing settlements, the development potential of the Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) and/or the Featherstone/Brinsford areas has been identified where the Green Belt would need to be redefined. Both of these development locations are linked to new or improved rail facilities/services. Some further redefinition may be necessary to accommodate more limited development around settlements where the boundary has previously been drawn too tightly. Notwithstanding any minor redefinition, it is not proposed to alter the Green Belt significantly or undermine its objectives.
- 4.38 Large areas of southern Staffordshire comprise high quality agricultural land, particularly in the south-east where pressures of demand are considered to be greatest. For historical reasons, the high quality land is frequently to be found around or close to existing settlements large and small. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, mineral reserves, particularly river sand and gravels, occur near many settlements. As a consequence of the locational bias as set out in Regional Planning Guidance, some areas of best and most versatile agricultural land are likely to be affected by the proposals in this Plan. However, it is important that options for development take full account of all the policy constraints and that an overriding need is established to minimise adverse impact.
- 4.39 With regard to possible new settlements, the view has generally been taken that most potential freestanding developments in the area have little prospect of achieving any degree of self-sufficiency beyond a primary school and local shops and would become socially and economically dependent on other settlements. Requiring substantial new infrastructure to open up the development land, such proposals are considered to be, overall, an inefficient use of resources. However, a new settlement of sufficient size, that is able to take advantage of existing or potential transportation networks and where infrastructure and employment opportunities are already present, may make a valuable contribution to meeting housing need. The potential of such a new settlement to incorporate the most recent thinking in terms of sustainability and integrated transport should be recognised.
- 4.40 The particular circumstances in Lichfield District and at Fradley warrant special consideration. The two largest settlements in the District provide limited potential for additional adjoining development. Burntwood is separated from Brownhills and the built-up area of the West Midlands Conurbation (Walsall) by a narrow open gap of designated Green Belt and is hard up against the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the north and west. The historic City of Lichfield is surrounded by Green Belt on three sides and by the physical 'barrier' of the railway line to the north-east and is close to fully occupying a topographic

- bowl. While the currently adopted Local Plan for the City includes proposed extension of the built-up area, the local plan process, including the inquiry Inspector's report, indicates a situation where any further substantial extensions would undermine the historic character of the City.
- 4.41 Nevertheless, Lichfield will retain its employment, commercial and social role for a wide surrounding area and continue to provide station facilities for commuting to the West Midlands Conurbation and elsewhere. To make use of this infrastructure, but to protect the historic character of Lichfield from harmful development, the preferred direction for growth around Lichfield City is to the north-east within the Lichfield-Burton rail/road corridor. Within this corridor, land at Fradley is already allocated for employment use and some limited further residential development within the context of the Staffordshire Structure Plan 1986-2001. This existing and proposed employment, together with the related infrastructure and the existing and potential transport networks, offer a vital development opportunity to contribute towards meeting local and sub-regional housing needs. A significant degree of self-sufficiency could be achieved once the proposed "new settlement" reaches its optimum size of at least 3,000 houses beyond the end of the Plan period.
- 4.42 To minimise the effect upon the A38 of development at Fradley, particularly at peak hours, will require a combined approach by the Highways Agency, the planning authorities and the private sector. It is the Highways Agency's view that the proposal along the A38 can be implemented if all the necessary measures to minimise traffic generation, particularly at peak hours and provide additional capacity at locations of greatest congestion, are taken forward by the parties involved.
- 4.43 Rugeley also presents a special case. It has been the target of several inward investment initiatives following major job losses due to the closure of Lea Hall Colliery. However, the town still exhibits signs of decay. Current employment initiatives on the reclaimed Lea Hall Colliery site, the opening of the rail link to Walsall via Cannock, and more recently through to Stafford, and continued improvements to the line and its services, plus the plans to complete the already partially implemented Rugeley Bypass, should provide the opportunity for substantial further redevelopment and environmental improvements immediately to the east of the town. Such development for both employment, industry and possibly other uses, could produce sustainable regeneration in Rugeley, and will avoid major incursions into the Green Belt or harm to the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Open countryside to the north-east of the town beyond the River Trent previously referred to in Structure and Local Plans, is no longer considered necessary or indeed viable.
- 4.44 Since its designation as an Expanded Town in the 1950s, Tamworth has grown substantially and has achieved a wide range of social, economic and transport facilities. In terms of the housing and employment needs of the indigenous population, there is a requirement for further growth of the town. While the town is constrained somewhat by its administrative boundaries, further study of land within the Borough has shown there to be significant additional development capacity, albeit involving the use of greenfield sites, particularly in the north-eastern quadrant of the Borough (the Anker Valley) and possibly some limited incursions into Green Belt in the south. In order to make further housing provision to meet the town's needs, development is directed to the north of, but adjoining, the town, away from Green Belt, in Lichfield District.
- 4.45 Regional Planning Guidance promotes some employment provision in the Central Crescent but not at a level, or of a type, which will undermine the regeneration activities of the metropolitan area. Guidance considers that some employment land provision in the larger settlements in the Central Crescent can, if carefully matched to the employment needs of the area, contribute to a better balance between housing and employment, and therefore help reduce the need to commute.

- 4.46 Strategic development proposals should be related to employment proposals including those which exist at Fradley and the former Lea Hall colliery site, Rugeley. Elsewhere, the larger strategic development proposals should incorporate a mix of development, subject to amenity safeguards, aimed at improving local self-sufficiency and sustainability.
- 4.47 A Major Investment Site, as promoted in Regional Planning Guidance, is proposed at Wobaston Road. There are no further Premium Employment Site proposals. Further details are provided in Section 6 – The Economy.
- 4.48 Away from the strategic employment development locations specifically listed in Section 6, new employment land provision in an area primarily of Green Belt should be made only if justified in terms of meeting local employment needs, maintaining the local/rural economy and providing for rural diversification, or by promoting settlement balance and sustainability aims. In the urban fringe Green Belt areas it is important that the rural economy is supported in order that it may safeguard the rural environment.
- 4.49 The main points of the southern Staffordshire sub-area strategy are:
- meet the housing needs of the locally generated (indigenous) growth, together with those of migrants unable to be accommodated within the West Midlands Conurbation;
 - improve the balance of population and employment opportunities within settlements across the sub-region;
 - aid the regeneration of the West Midlands Conurbation by maintaining the principles of the West Midlands Green Belt;
 - protect the environmental quality of southern Staffordshire settlements and countryside;
 - maintain and enhance the rural economy.

Eastern Staffordshire

- 4.50 The eastern Staffordshire sub-area comprises the Borough of East Staffordshire, within which development and movement are focused on the towns of Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter on the primary routes A38 and A50. Away from these corridors, there are large tracts of attractive countryside and scattered villages.
- 4.51 Burton upon Trent has a sphere of influence which extends into urban and rural South Derbyshire for economic, social and retail purposes. Similarly, the hinterland of the market town of Uttoxeter extends into rural Derbyshire, albeit for more localised services. The northern parts of the sub-area have an affinity with the rural Moorlands area of North Staffordshire to the extent of being included in the EU Objective 5b area.
- 4.52 While the greater part of the sub-area is economically and socially stable, there are pockets of high unemployment and deprivation within urban areas of Burton upon Trent. It is proposed that priority should be given to building upon the current regeneration initiatives in this area involving SRB and Objective 2 funding. The concentrated nature of the problems suggest a combination of social and economic measures at the local level, together with some additional provision of employment land in that general area, would be the most effective course of remedial action.
- 4.53 With regard to new housing provision, indigenous population growth should generally be accommodated where it arises. Additional provision is appropriate to take account of limited population movement into the area, from the south of the County and from the West Midlands

Conurbation. Development should be concentrated mainly in and adjoining the towns of Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter.

- 4.54 Regional Planning Guidance recognises the extensive employment land allocations that have been made along the A38 corridor in anticipation of the effect of the Toyota development at Burnaston. Considerable scope is considered to remain in the existing allocations but in view of the relatively high levels of unemployment that persist in parts of the sub-area, some additional provision of employment land has been made. The continued expansion of Toyota is also considered as being material to the need to provide sufficient land to ensure that the economic development potential of the area is optimised. In this connection the potential constraint to development imposed by the currently limited capacity of the A38(T) and to the need for increased public transport is to be addressed as part of the study referred to in the Government's Trunk Road Review (July 1998) to consider traffic congestion in the West Midlands/East Midlands corridor. Nevertheless, it is the Highways Agency's view that the Structure Plan development proposals along the A38 corridor can be implemented if all the necessary measures to minimise traffic generation, particularly at peak hours and provide additional capacity at locations of greatest congestion, are taken forward by the parties involved (i.e. the Highways Agency, the planning authorities and the private sector).
- 4.55 Recent improvements to the A50(T) corridor, which form part of an important east-west link across the country, should assist in the promotion and development of employment land provision already made in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Rates of development should be monitored closely to determine whether or when further employment allocations should be made.
- 4.56 While the rural regeneration strategy will apply to the northern part of the sub-area, similar policies will also be relevant throughout the rural areas in order to maintain and enhance their economic and social well-being. Across much of the rural area and extending into the built-up area of Burton upon Trent, the National Forest project provides opportunities for economic and environmental enhancement.
- 4.57 The main points of the eastern Staffordshire sub-area strategy are:
- provide housing to meet indigenous need and for some limited migration into the sub-area, mainly in and adjoining the towns of Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter;
 - ensure a supply of high quality employment land, sufficient to ameliorate existing problems of unemployment and help offset the effects of the ongoing restructuring of the brewing industry;
 - maintain and enhance the rural economy;
 - improve and enhance recreation and the environment.



5. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- 5.1 This section contains the framework for managing the development elements of the Structure Plan in the most sustainable way. It largely comprises general policy criteria which should be applied along with the other topic or geographically specific policies when considering development proposals or options.
- 5.2 The matters addressed are those which are central to current national and local debates about how to reconcile pressures for development and growth with the increasing awareness about the need to preserve and improve living environments, protect the countryside and reduce traffic. The policies themselves cover development form and the minimisation of its impact upon the environment generally, urban and rural regeneration, the maintenance of Green Belts and the conservation of energy. Closely related are the resource implications of delivering high quality and environmentally acceptable development. The onus which will be placed on developers to satisfy needs for infrastructure and services which arise from their development is therefore made clear at this point in the Plan.
- 5.3 Government guidance in its various forms, the views of other local authorities, agencies, groups and individuals have all been drawn upon when putting together this fundamental part of the policy framework. However, it must be recognised that sustainable development cannot be reached overnight and the Structure Plan can only be one element in the move towards greater sustainability. What land use plans can do, and what this Plan aims to achieve, is to establish in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent patterns of development which are not incompatible with and will indeed pave the way for a more truly sustainable way of living.

Sustainable Forms of Development

D1 Sustainable forms and patterns of new development will be sought which:

- (a) concentrate as much new built development as possible within the fabric of existing urban areas (while protecting or enhancing their distinctive character and environmental quality);**
- (b) consider all possibilities for reuse of land and buildings, including the reclamation of contaminated and derelict land in sustainable development locations before using greenfield land (though use of rural brownfield land is generally unlikely to be a sustainable development option);**
- (c) generally restrict greenfield development to a limited number of strategic nodes in transport corridors where there is or could be accessibility to a choice of modes of transport;**
- (d) create communities where there is a balanced mix of land uses which will reduce the need to travel, the distance travelled and the adverse effects of transportation;**
- (e) minimise the consumption of all resources, particularly those which are non-renewable such as land (especially the best and most versatile agricultural land) and minerals;**

- (f) protect and, wherever possible, enhance natural and cultural assets, including open spaces;**
- (g) ensure that the interests of regeneration in adjoining urban areas are not prejudiced;**
- (h) have regard to the long term implications of development proposals, the implementation of which may run beyond the end of the Plan period;**
- (i) have regard to the location and effects of existing nearby land uses with the potential to generate pollution which could have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the proposed development.**

- 5.4 A substantial amount of new development will be required in the Plan area over the period to 2011. This development must take place in ways which contribute to the principles of sustainable development. It must also be of a quality which improves the environment of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and preserves or enhances local character. Policy D1 provides a mandatory checklist against which development proposals should be measured.
- 5.5 Where new development is necessary, the ultimate aim is to create communities where there is a balanced mix of land uses, where there is a reduced need to travel, and where the impact of the development on natural and cultural assets is minimised. The emphasis will be on the reuse of land within existing urban areas. The development of greenfield sites in locations peripheral or close to urban areas may, however, be necessary where there are no acceptable brownfield alternatives and provided they are accessible to regular public transport and preferably in transport corridors. (Brownfield development should similarly be promoted in rural areas only where it can be demonstrated to be in the interests of sustainable development and where it meets the criteria of Policy D4).
- 5.6 The quality of the living environment should be high with an emphasis placed on reducing pollution in all its forms and allowing new development of a type and scale in keeping with its surroundings. Natural assets which should be particularly valued and protected include river and watercourse corridors, woodlands, hedgerows and urban trees in addition to priority habitats and species identified in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. It should be remembered that buildings provide significant habitats for a variety of species including bats and owls, and restoration or conversion proposals should take this into account. Revegetated derelict land can also often be biologically diverse and reclamation proposals should be sensitive to such considerations. Due weight should also be given to the need to maintain or improve the character of the countryside within the framework established by Policies NC1 and NC2 and accompanying supplementary guidance.
- 5.7 It is also most important to recognise that decisions about development taken now will affect the pattern of development well into the next century. Structure and local plan policies must have regard to this fact when proposing larger development schemes which may not reach maturity in terms of providing more sustainable and rounded communities until some time after the end of the period of the Plan. Wherever possible, some indication should be provided as to the ultimate scale and form development proposals will take and, where appropriate, what implications there may be for the environment, and, in particular, for Green Belt boundaries and for the countryside.

The Design and Environmental Quality of Development

- D2 Development should generally conserve and, where possible, improve the quality of life and the environment and should:**
- (a) be informed by, or sympathetic to, the character and qualities of its surroundings, in its location, scale and design;**
 - (b) be designed to relate to its surrounding context while not excluding innovative and creative designs;**
 - (c) minimise pollution of land, water and air, waste generation, nuisance from noise, and pollution by artificial sources of light;**
 - (d) avoid hazards to health and safety;**
 - (e) include pollution prevention measures to prevent contamination of controlled waters, be connected to the foul sewerage system, whenever feasible, and not proceed ahead of the ability of water supply, sewerage and sewage treatment systems to effectively service the proposed development;**
 - (f) not take place in floodplains unless acceptable mitigating measures are provided which protect the development itself without increasing flood risk elsewhere;**
 - (g) incorporate, wherever possible, sustainable surface water drainage techniques;**
 - (h) avoid the culverting of watercourses and, wherever possible, incorporate existing open watercourses and their associated corridors as features of the development.**

5.8 New built development provides an opportunity to complement or reinforce the existing grain of different areas, streets, squares and spaces (design of urban and rural settlements relates to the relationship between buildings, spaces, activities and patterns of movement). Supplementary design guidance should be prepared where appropriate by local planning authorities to identify the essential characteristics of various sites, areas and localities and suggest ways in which new development might respond to opportunities in these areas.

5.9 A high and creative quality of architecture and design can considerably enhance the image and character of an area. This can benefit the quality of life of people who live and work in the Plan area, and convey a message about the dynamism, distinctiveness and self-confidence of the locality, making it attractive to inward investors. Much recent development has been mundane in design and layout, lacking any sense of place. The adverse impact that this has had on the area's image needs redressing. Innovation and creativity will be encouraged in local planning policy, guidance and advice. High quality design can be achieved within a reasonable budget, and indeed can be cheaper in some instances. Poor design is usually a result not of budget but of inadequate attention or priority being given to design matters at all stages in the development process.

- 5.10 Policy D2(b) should be interpreted as meaning distinctive, site-specific design solutions and the avoidance of imposed standard design solutions which ignore their context. It should not be interpreted to imply that the style and features of older buildings should be copied. Continuity requires that the continuing evolution of architectural style be allowed. Local design policies should generally discourage the slavish copying of the styles and features of older buildings, and allow the evolution of styles which respect and draw from past principles. It will generally be desirable, especially in localities of homogeneous character, to respect the established palette of building materials.
- 5.11 Policy D2 is also designed to ensure that the adverse environmental impact of development is minimised and that local plans include policies to ensure this. In particular:
- adverse impacts of effluent discharges should be as far as possible eradicated, including the minimisation of small package sewage treatment plants and septic tanks in rural areas, where local authorities should work with developers and providers to extend rural sewerage systems where there is a need;
 - developers must be encouraged to incorporate measures which reduce surface water run-off;
 - watercourses should be protected and culverts discouraged;
 - water resource difficulties should be addressed as early as possible in the planning of new development;
 - the siting of industrial development should be such that air pollution or other harm is minimised.

Urban Regeneration

D3 The regeneration of urban areas is a fundamental requirement of a sustainable strategy, to be achieved by supporting initiatives which will enhance the image, create vitality and improve safety, comfort and environmental quality of urban areas. Local authorities will continue to bring forward, on their own behalf or in partnership with other agencies, schemes which:

- (a) concentrate investment on an area basis, thereby assisting access to employment, social and other facilities;**
- (b) enhance the image, attractiveness and accessibility of town centres, boost vitality and encourage new investment;**
- (c) reclaim and reuse derelict, contaminated, degraded or underused land and buildings for new employment, housing, commercial, retail, leisure and amenity uses, in preference to taking greenfield land;**
- (d) improve the availability, quality and diversity of the housing stock (including affordable housing), particularly in areas within or close to town centres;**
- (e) create, retain, protect, improve and extend areas of wildlife value, open spaces and access to watercourses;**

(f) comply with environmental policies in this Plan.

In promoting or considering major initiatives, regard must be had to ensuring that investment is targeted on areas of established need, that the views of local people are taken into account and that development proposals within the Plan area are not of a type which might prejudice regeneration in adjoining urban areas.

- 5.12 Urban regeneration is central to much of the strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Its achievement is dependent not upon one policy but by the application of a wide spectrum of policies in the Structure Plan and local plans and also by other directly related programme initiatives for particular areas. There is a need for an holistic approach to make towns more attractive places to be in, with increased economic opportunities. Improving the quality and diversity of the housing stock, providing improved public transport and creating attractive public areas are all integral to this basic aim.
- 5.13 In terms of sustainability, the re-emergence of towns as desirable places to live and work will help reduce pressure for development in peripheral and countryside areas, which in turn, will cut down distances travelled and vehicular pollution. The reuse of urban land will help preserve attractive and productive countryside areas, while the reuse of buildings will often reduce the consumption of aggregates and other primary materials for construction. Subject to health and safety considerations, contaminated land can be recycled by means of reclamation associated with new development.
- 5.14 There is already widespread evidence of urban regeneration in practice throughout the Plan area. In particular, within the North Staffordshire conurbation, the largest urban area, there are examples of major redevelopment or reuse of degraded or redundant land and buildings for new uses. The creation of green areas within or close to the urban area has been a complementary feature of these continuing initiatives.
- 5.15 Town centres are covered separately in the Plan but their further improvement is vital to the regeneration process generally. Town centres form the cores of urban areas, and any regeneration initiative can only be successful if the town centre is healthy. Attractive, clean and safe centres have a critical role in attracting investment and creating a showcase for urban living.
- 5.16 It is also important that development within the Plan area is compatible with the interests of regeneration in nearby urban areas. This is particularly relevant in southern Staffordshire near the urban concentrations of Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley.

Managing Change in Rural Areas

D4 The essential character and economic and social fabric of rural areas should be maintained and improved by:

- (a) encouraging appropriate development which assists in diversifying the local economy and underpins or improves services and community facilities;**
- (b) seeking the provision of affordable housing where there is a local need;**
- (c) limiting development where it is not matched by supporting infrastructure and facilities, or where there is little prospect of a more balanced community evolving;**

- (d) ensuring that development does not have undesirable traffic impacts and is not of a scale or type which would adversely impact on the rural setting;**
- (e) generally seeking to protect open countryside for its own sake.**

- 5.17 Continuing population growth in rural areas has been accompanied by decline in local jobs and facilities, which has led to greater reliance on car journeys to towns. In the interests of sustainable development, a fundamental aim is to move towards more balanced rural communities where jobs are provided as well as houses. In rural areas, previously developed ('brownfield') land will often be in locations where traffic-generating development would not be sustainable, or might otherwise conflict with the interests of rural communities or the countryside. In such cases, the fact of the site being previously developed should not be given greater weight than the provisions of Policy D4. 'Appropriate' development can be defined as that which will tend to benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. In particular, it should not generate commuting from wider distances. It may, however, include mineral and waste development which otherwise meets the criteria of the Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan and/or Waste Local Plan.
- 5.18 It is vital that change in rural areas should be recognised and managed positively, having particular regard to Government advice contained in PPG7 and "Planning for Rural Diversification: A Good Practice Guide". It should also be complementary to the policy of promoting urban regeneration. Small businesses and services should be encouraged to set up or expand to provide more local employment, while affordable housing should be allowed in appropriate locations to help arrest the drift of local people on lower incomes away from rural communities. New building should, however, be such as to reflect the individuality of an area and contribute towards a sense of local identity.
- 5.19 On the other hand, there are circumstances where development in settlements will not be beneficial; for example, residential development where there is no prospect of complementary services or employment, or non-residential uses which cannot be sustained by the local population. Such development is likely to be unsustainable by virtue of generating more car journeys, and should not be permitted.
- 5.20 Development in open countryside (which includes wooded and forested areas) should be strictly controlled. As well as protecting the countryside from unnecessary visual incursion, sporadic development away from settlements should be reduced in the interests of sustainability, with houses, jobs and other facilities, including public transport, related more closely to each other. (There may be circumstances where development is appropriate and policies elsewhere in this Plan refer to such. These should be regarded as exceptional and should be consistent with the overall aims of rural regeneration).

Green Belts

D5A Local plans will maintain the general form and purposes of adopted Green Belts. Green Belt boundaries will be redefined only in exceptional circumstances, having regard to:

- (a) the impact of developments on the aim, purposes, and objectives of Green Belts as they apply to those locations;**

- (b) the need to meet specified development requirements of the Plan as referred to in Policies H1 and E4;**
 - (c) the achievement of sustainable development objectives, e.g. to reduce the need to travel;**
 - (d) the longer term development requirements beyond the timescale of the Plan, through inclusion of safeguarded land, if appropriate, where redefinition is proposed;**
- but only after full consideration has been given to any alternative locations or means of provision, including land previously safeguarded in current local plans, that could accommodate the proposed development outside the Green Belt in a sustainable manner.**

5.21 There are three areas of Green Belt in Staffordshire:

- (i) around the North Staffordshire Conurbation;
- (ii) to the north and west of the West Midlands Conurbation; and
- (iii) the small area to the east of Burton upon Trent.

They are incorporated and defined in detail in the relevant adopted local plans. Their purpose is to check urban sprawl, safeguard the surrounding countryside, prevent neighbouring settlements from merging, preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and assist urban regeneration.

5.22 There are no new Green Belts, or areas of Green Belt, proposed within the Plan area. This accords with the conclusions in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) that there is no case for a fundamental review of the Green Belts within the region as a whole.

5.23 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG2) and Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) both advise that Green Belt boundaries should be altered only exceptionally. RPG11 is clear "that development should be accommodated as far as possible within the metropolitan area (of the West Midlands) and North Staffordshire Conurbation; next, within freestanding towns beyond the Green Belt or in settlements excluded from the Green Belt; and only in exceptional circumstances should changes to Green Belt boundaries be considered". In cases where a review of boundaries is necessary, RPG11 requires that proposals be considered against criteria set out in structure plans. The criteria in this plan which should be given particular consideration include those set out in the other policies in this chapter, and Policy NC2 with its supporting supplementary planning guidance.

5.24 Policy D5A sets out the criteria to be applied within the Plan area when appraising the need to redefine Green Belt boundaries. As well as providing the development land necessary to meet the requirements set out in this Plan, the policy makes specific the need for boundary reviews to be related to a timescale longer than that adopted for other aspects of the Plan. In this way, Green Belt boundaries will be provided with a greater degree of permanence. This may require safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt in order to meet longer term development needs.

5.25 General locations where substantial incursions into Green Belt land may be required are identified in Structure Plan Policies E4 and H1, to be defined and taken forward in local plans.

Development in the Green Belt

D5B Inappropriate development within Green Belts will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances.

Construction of new buildings may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- (a) limited infilling in existing villages, especially for affordable housing or development, meeting Policy D4(a);**
- (b) agriculture and forestry;**
- (c) essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and other uses compatible with the openness of the Green Belt;**
- (d) extensions to existing dwellings which do not result in additions disproportionate to their original size;**
- (e) limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites where identified in local plans.**

Reuse of buildings within the Green Belt may be appropriate provided that the new use does not have a materially greater impact on the openness or quality of the Green Belt and that any conversion work does not disproportionately increase the size of buildings and is in keeping with the surroundings.

All development within the Green Belt should maintain the visual amenities of the Green Belt and will be subject to other relevant policies.

5.26 Local plan policies and planning decisions concerning the Green Belt should regard the above criteria as subject to amplification by the more detailed guidance provided in PPG2.

Conserving Agricultural Land

D6 The best and most versatile agricultural land will be protected from any form of development, unless:

- (a) there is a strong case of overriding need for development on that site;**
- (b) opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development needs on previously developed sites, land within the boundaries of existing developed areas, and on poorer quality farmland;**
- (c) there is no other site suitable (or which could be made suitable) for the particular purpose, and insufficient lower grade land which does not have an environmental value recognised by statutory designation;**

(d) the development fully accords with other Structure Plan policies.

Where development of such land is permitted, it should, as far as possible, use the lowest grade of land suitable for the development.

- 5.27 Staffordshire is a very diverse farming area with the main enterprises being beef, sheep and dairying, widely integrated with arable cropping and with concentrated areas of market gardening and vegetable growing close to the main urban areas. The southern area, in particular, also experiences the pressures of demand for non-agricultural uses such as development for housing and industry as well as access to the countryside.
- 5.28 Agricultural land is graded according to the degree to which its physical and chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on agricultural use. The grades range from 1 (the most versatile) to 5 (the least versatile). Grades 1 and 2 cover about 9% of the Plan area and have no, or only minor, limitations to their agricultural use. The majority of the Plan area, 57%, is classified as Grade 3 (sub-categorised 3a and 3b in local surveys), with 15% being Grades 4 and 5, the lowest agricultural category, best suited for grass crops and rough grazing. The remainder of the land is in urban (11%) and non-agricultural uses (8%), such as golf courses, allotments, public open spaces, etc.
- 5.29 The provisions of PPG7 - The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development - require that "within the principles of sustainable development, the best and most versatile agricultural land should be protected as a national resource for future generations. This is defined as land in Grades 1, 2 and 3a". Policy D6 seeks to protect those areas of the greatest agricultural production which should only be used where there is an extremely strong case for development which overrides the need to protect such land. In addition, full account must be taken of all other policies in the Structure Plan. In particular, there should be no other site suitable for the development or which could be made suitable for the particular purpose. Given the scale of new development requirements and the locational advice given in Regional Planning Guidance, it would appear that some inroads into high quality agricultural land will be inevitable. Where this is necessary, development should first be directed towards land of the lowest grade. However, where a plot has become physically incapable of incorporation into an agricultural holding capable of being farmed viably, this can be taken into account as a factor material to assessing whether it can be released for development.
- 5.30 Lower grade land is however still recognised as a resource worth protecting. Development of Grade 1, 2 or 3a land may be regarded as preferable to the loss of lower grade land with a statutory landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation, unless there are exceptional agricultural considerations to be taken into account. Where lower grade land is without such protection, it remains subject to the policies in this Plan covering countryside preservation and the protection of the rural economy, and should not be lost unless there is an established need for the development proposed.
- 5.31 Policy D6 relates to all development, even that such as recreation, which maintains the open nature of the countryside, be it on a small scale or the more extensive uses such as golf courses, because once agricultural land is developed, even for "soft" uses, its return to best quality agricultural use is seldom practical. However, mineral development can only take place where the mineral exists. Mineral and some waste developments are temporary uses of land which can potentially be restored to high grade agricultural land. Where minerals and waste proposals accord with national guidance and the Minerals Local Plan, it can be assumed that they accord with Policy D6.

Conserving Energy and Water

D7 In assessing development proposals, measures which help to conserve natural resources will generally be supported. These include:

- (a) more efficient use of energy - development proposals should, wherever appropriate, incorporate measures which obtain a more efficient use of resources. These include higher levels of insulation; effective landscaping shelter; combined heat and power systems; and the location and orientation of sites and buildings;**
- (b) greater use of recycled materials;**
- (c) use of renewable energy resources for the development of renewable energy generating installations, such as wind turbines, will be considered on their merits, having regard to any potential adverse impacts on local people and the local environment (the same will apply to proposals for the exploitation of naturally occurring or by-product gases). Developments should also be encouraged to incorporate photovoltaics or other renewable energy generators, wherever appropriate;**
- (d) more efficient use of water – new development should incorporate the use of rainwater collection systems and the recycling of grey water, wherever possible.**

Development will not be permitted in locations where adequate water resources do not exist, or where the provision of water to serve the development would cause detriment to the natural environment.

- 5.32 The depletion in non-renewable energy sources is a major environmental issue. In addition to policies promoting a development pattern which helps cut down on fuel consumption by reducing the need to travel, there is a need to encourage the use of renewable energy sources, along with those produced as a by-product of activities such as landfill and the adoption of more energy efficient development measures. Policy D7 is intended as a general enabling policy which should be elaborated upon and applied to specific development proposals in local plans and design briefs.
- 5.33 Among renewable energy sources, wind energy is specifically referred to in an Annex to PPG22 and is given particular attention because of the possible suitability of upland or other topographically exposed areas in the Plan area. Wind turbines generate mechanical power which can be used for electricity generation. Harnessing energy from the wind has clear advantages in that it is a clean, renewable source. However, the turbines can have detrimental effects, visual impact and noise being the greatest concerns. Small clusters or large groups of turbines, known as wind farms, are usually necessary if the commercial production of electricity for supply to the grid system is to be viable. A medium-sized wind farm might consist of 10-25 turbines. Commercial scale wind energy schemes will usually need to be located in areas with relatively high annual mean wind speeds. These are normally open, exposed areas and may therefore be viable in the upland areas of North Staffordshire. Although a wind farm would cover a considerable area, the land actually used by the turbines is small and the remainder can continue to be used for agriculture or public access.

- 5.34 Other sources of energy which may be significant locally include wood (the Forest of Mercia is producing a local wood energy plan) and other biomass crops. Development which supports or makes use of these resources will be encouraged, subject to the other policies of this Plan.
- 5.35 As the demand for water continues to increase, further development can place additional pressures on existing resources. In order to manage water resources on a sustainable basis, local authorities will strongly encourage the use and adoption of appropriate and innovative measures to use and dispose of water in a more environmentally responsible manner. In the operation of their development control and building control functions, local authorities will encourage the use of water efficient devices, such as dual flush toilets, spray and pressure controlled taps, and waterless urinals. The reuse of grey water will also be encouraged. New developments should incorporate sustainable surface water drainage techniques to reduce surface water run-off. Such techniques include the use of swales, soakaways, porous pavements, water butts and rainwater harvesting of existing surfaces. However, the use of sustainable surface water techniques may not be appropriate where development is proposed on contaminated land as contaminated material may be remobilised leading to the pollution of controlled waters. Advice on the appropriateness of various forms of sustainable surface water drainage should be obtained from the Environment Agency.

Providing Infrastructure Services, Facilities and/or Mitigating Measures Associated with Development

- D8 Where appropriate, development schemes should be accompanied by the provision of necessary on- and off-site infrastructure, community services, and/or mitigating measures. Local authorities should include in their local plans policies on planning obligations with the aim of securing benefits where these are necessary, relevant to planning, directly related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects. The provisions to be negotiated to make the impact of development acceptable may include:**
- (a) pedestrian routes, cycleways, public transport facilities and services, highway infrastructure and appropriate parking;**
 - (b) utility services, including surface water and foul drainage;**
 - (c) educational and community facilities, open space and other recreational facilities;**
 - (d) affordable housing;**
 - (e) high quality landscaping and/or woodland planting;**
 - (f) where damage to protected habitats or those frequented by protected species is unavoidable, the replacement of significant natural habitats or introduction of other appropriate mitigation measures.**

- 5.36 Policy D8 makes clear the requirement for local plans to include policies ensuring that where developments impose a burden on the community in terms of any of the matters referred to, developers will be expected to make provision for that burden to be met. This requirement is integral to the achievement of a sustainable development strategy. Developers should be aware of the general nature and scale of infrastructure, services and directly related facilities which may be required as a result of the development proposed, particularly in respect of major development schemes. Local authorities should maintain consultation with relevant agencies to ensure that community costs of major developments are identified at an early stage. In this connection, regard should be given to the potential for partnerships between the agencies involved in facilitating the realisation of major projects, and/or package initiatives which involve bringing together funding from different sources.
- 5.37 Policies concerning planning obligations should be framed within the requirements of Circular 1/97, in particular the stipulation that they must be relevant to planning, directly related to the proposed development and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development.

6. THE ECONOMY

- 6.1 Through the late 1990s, the local economy has shown a degree of stability and resilience, undergoing a modest recovery as evidenced by a broad range of indicators, in particular relatively high employment rates and, in most of the County, moderate to low levels of deprivation. The Plan has been developed within this current context but, more fundamentally, seeks to place issues within the broader setting of long term structural problems in the local economy.
- 6.2 Two major underlying difficulties persist. The first of these is a continuing industrial restructuring, arising from an increasingly competitive global economy and changing technology and resulting in a range of negative local impacts, in particular job shedding. The second is the low baseline values on many of the competitiveness indicators in particular and the limited wealth and public sector resource base. These have been compounded in recent years by macro-economic difficulties, affecting manufacturing in particular.
- 6.3 The Plan area is still relatively reliant on its traditional manufacturing base; Stoke-on-Trent, East Staffordshire and Cannock Chase, in particular, have high concentrations of manufacturing. Locally important industries, which include ceramics, mechanical and electrical engineering and food and drink, continue to contract in employment terms and remain vulnerable to fluctuations in consumer demand and high levels of international competition. In addition, the virtual loss of a thriving coal mining sector, culminating in the closure of Silverdale Colliery in December 1998, has left a legacy of problems which have yet to be fully addressed, while the agricultural sector, and associated rural support industries, have been hit by falling incomes, the effects of BSE and the prospective restructuring of subsidies.
- 6.4 Jobs lost in the manufacturing and coal mining industries have, in most areas, been replaced by service sector job growth. Many of these new jobs, however, are in low-value industries with local markets, most growth being located in the poorly paid wholesale, retail, hotel and restaurant sectors.
- 6.5 With regard to improving economic performance through land use planning, it must be recognised that the link between providing sites for employment and creating jobs is tenuous, new job opportunities being a secondary consequence of market demand being met. Land is only one factor amongst many to be taken into account in the process of economic development. The use of automated methods and new technologies, coupled with a requirement for the most efficient use of floorspace, makes the number and types of job which follow once land is developed difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy. Generally, it appears, however, that manufacturing industry and warehousing are becoming less labour intensive and the number of employees per hectare on new industrial estates is reducing as a consequence.
- 6.6 Market demand for industrial land is also difficult to predict, but it is felt that to try and match future provision with expected developer/user requirements is likely to be the most realistic approach to the problem of helping to stimulate economic activity. Past rates of development offer some guide as to future demand but they also reflect the quality and quantity of the sites which have previously been available. Overall take-up rates average some 30-35ha. per annum, but in some areas, particularly the northern districts, activity has been sporadic, despite indications that the overall potential of the locations are attractive to developers. The improved quality of the sites identified and brought forward through the last round of local plans, together with the initiatives now being undertaken in many areas to bring these sites on-stream, offer the real prospect that past development rates might be improved upon. As a consequence, only modest additional allocations of land are required in certain areas, partly to ensure a continuing availability of high quality land and also to even up the match between housing and employment.

- 6.7 There is a need throughout the Plan area for a more dynamic service sector to offer an alternative to declining manufacturing industries. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have one of the highest proportions of manufacturing employment in England and Wales, and this makes them vulnerable to decline if the service sector cannot offer viable alternatives. To this end, the contribution of service employment in town centres is important and is discussed in the Town Centres and Retailing Chapter. Consideration is also needed of how service industries can be encouraged within existing industrial areas and new industrial proposals in the context of Policy E1.
- 6.8 The requirements and well-being of existing industries which already employ large numbers of people and the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), along with micro-enterprises and self-employment, are of equal importance to the encouragement of new industries. It is proposed, therefore, that wherever appropriate, the local authorities should help ensure their continued viability by assisting with relocation onto new sites or allowing their expansion.
- 6.9 The role of tourism as a major employer is also acknowledged, as is the need for economic initiatives in rural areas to assist in maintaining viable local communities and to reduce commuting.
- 6.10 The educational sector is playing an increasingly important role in the life and economy of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Education supports the economy by fostering increased links with industry, public authorities and related agencies, including the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and health service, and between the school system, further and higher education, the Careers Service and TEC. Through these links, the competitiveness of traditional industries can be increased and the workforce can become better trained, fit and qualified.
- 6.11 The strategy seeks to continue to integrate the educational institutions into the life, culture and economy of the County and the City. To enhance the role of educational institutions, the strategy encourages further developments, such as the Keele University Science Park, which enable academic and research work to have practical economic development results. The development of educational facilities should fit sensitively into the local environment and maximise opportunities both for imaginative reuse of older buildings and high quality modern development.

Employment Land Provision and Distribution

E1 Provision will be made for about 1,245 hectares (gross) of employment land in the industrial, office, warehousing and distribution sectors (Class B uses) between 1996 and 2011. This will be allocated throughout the County as follows:

Staffordshire Moorlands	40 hectares
Newcastle	120 hectares
Stoke-on-Trent	240 hectares
Stafford	150 hectares
East Staffordshire	250 hectares

South Staffordshire	60 hectares
Cannock Chase	80 hectares
Lichfield	185 hectares
Tamworth	120 hectares

6.12 In order to provide sufficient new land for general employment needs, 1,245 hectares of employment land will be provided during the Plan period. This will be sufficient to accommodate the needs of local employers and enable the diversification of the economy through inward investment, while protecting the environment. Emphasis is, however, placed on the range and quality of land available rather than on the total level of provision. Most of the land needed for general industry and warehousing is already committed, being defined in local plans and often with the benefit of planning permission. While there is still some scope for improvement in the quality and range of sites, consultation with the District Councils indicates that there is already, within many areas, a sufficient supply of available or potentially available land of a type which is likely to be attractive to most potential developers. Local plan reviews should nevertheless have regard to the appropriateness of existing commitments for employment in accordance with the provisions of Policy E2. Table 1 provides a breakdown of this land provision for the period 1996-2011.

TABLE 1: Summary of General Employment Land Provision by Local Authority Area (at April 1999) (Excludes provision for all Premium Employment Sites and Major Investment Sites both existing and proposed)

Local Authority	Hectares (gross)			
	Total Provision 1996-2011	Built 1996-99	Committed ¹ Land 1999	Balance to be allocated
Staffordshire Moorlands	40	1	31	8
Newcastle	120	1	121	0
Stoke-on-Trent	240	10	209	21
Stafford	150	18	98	34
East Staffordshire	250	25	188	37
South Staffordshire	60	19	43	0
Cannock Chase	80	5	68	7
Lichfield	185	16	196	0
Tamworth	120	11	89	20
STAFFORDSHIRE	1,245	106	1,043	2127

NOTES: ¹ Commitments are defined as development still under construction, planning permissions outstanding, adopted local plan allocations, and allocations in deposit draft local plans (latest information). The status of these areas will be reassessed in local plan reviews.

² Does not take into account over-commitment in three Districts which may be addressed in the context of Policy E2.

- 6.13 General employment land, the subject of Policy E1 and Table 1, is land for use within the Town and Country Planning Use Classes B1-B8, excluding curtilage development within existing employment premises, conversions and the redevelopment of former employment sites. Existing Premium Employment Sites in both North and Southern Staffordshire are also excluded from Policy E1 and Table 1. Separate provision is made for a new Premium Site (Policy E4) and a Major Investment Site (Policy E5). It is also recognised that other forms of development that fall within other Use Classes, such as retail or leisure development, will contribute to employment creation in the Plan area and this has been taken into consideration in the projected requirements. Policies guiding other employment-generating development are included elsewhere in the Plan.
- 6.14 Due to the nature of employment development, the actual level of employment generated from a specified amount of land can be very variable. For this reason, the land allocation figures may be applied with some degree of flexibility but they should not be significantly exceeded or under-provided. In this context, RPG11 promotes employment-led growth and diversification in North Staffordshire. The target provision for urban areas should not preclude further quality employment land within the built-up area being brought forward in response to as yet unidentified regeneration opportunities.
- 6.15 With regard to specific development locations and their relationship to proposed housing, major sites already identified and committed at Fradley, Rugeley and Cannock are integral to the overall development strategy. In Tamworth, there is a need for additional provision to be related to the housing proposals for those areas in Policy H1. Further land provision for Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford is consistent with the promotion of employment led growth in the north and west of the Region. The additional employment land provision in East Staffordshire is aimed at addressing the problem of high unemployment that still persists in areas of Burton upon Trent and also optimising the area's locational potential for attracting inward investment.

Increasing the Choice of Sites

~~**E2 Existing allocations and expiring permissions for employment land should be reviewed to see whether reallocation for alternative uses would provide for more sustainable development. The provision of new employment land, in accordance with the requirements of Policies E1 and E3, should complement rather than duplicate the existing stock of sites by creating a more diverse land portfolio increasingly able to meet different market requirements as they arise.**~~

- 6.16 Existing allocations should not always be seen as sacrosanct so that new allocations have to be added on to the existing supply. In those areas which have a large supply relative to past take-up rates, the identification of new employment land opportunities should be accompanied by a re-evaluation of existing allocations, through the local plan process, which may be suitable for other land uses, especially housing. Brownfield land which may be unsuitable for modern employment development, for example for reasons of access, is often suitable for residential use. Thus, while justification for the releases of land for employment on the edge of towns should be accompanied by evidence that all other development opportunities have been considered, it may also include evidence of the reappraisal of existing allocations.
- 6.17 Priority should be given to filling the gaps in the current supply of available employment land so that all parts of the County can offer a balanced portfolio catering for inward investment, local relocations, small firms of all types, advance units and special industrial uses. These gaps will be identified with reference to the annual land availability survey and other related surveys which will be conducted from time to time regionally.

Locational Factors for New Sites

E3 In addition to the requirements of Policy D1, new employment sites should be located where the requirements of those firms most likely to be accommodated on them can be met. In all cases, regard should be given to:

- (a) the availability of utility services;
- (b) access to the strategic highway and rail networks for the distribution of goods and services;
- (c) the presence of a nearby potential workforce;
- (d) the capability of being served by public transport;
- (e) the availability of pedestrian and cycle links between the site and adjoining residential areas;
- (f) the capability of existing services being able to be extended or improved to allow for future site expansion, when and if appropriate;
- (g) avoiding the sterilisation of mineral reserves;
- (h) the ability to reuse previously developed land.

6.18 The principle underlying this policy is the reconciliation, as far as is possible, of the needs of modern employment and developers with the imperative that development should not compromise the ability of communities to develop sustainably. PPG13 states that there should be a better balance between employment and population, to reduce unnecessary movement and minimise journey to work lengths (especially by car). The criteria in Policy E3 are designed to give a checklist of the extent to which proposals are striking this balance.

~~**Premium Employment Site**~~

~~**E4** A new Premium Employment Site for high quality B1 uses, and also high quality B2 uses, if a need can be demonstrated, will be provided in the Chatterley Valley, immediately north of the urban area of Newcastle close to the A500 at its junction with the Tunstall Bypass to the west of the West Coast Main Line. The area comprises some 30-40 ha. Development of the larger area would require a marginal adjustment of the Green Belt boundary. The potential extraction of Etruria Marl reserves from part of the area will need to be resolved prior to development. Rail access will be safeguarded and consideration given to the provision of a new station. This site is in addition to the provision of employment land under Policy E1 (which includes provision for some 22 ha. of adjoining land at Ravensdale east of the West Coast Main Line) and Policy E5.~~

- 6.19 There is a longstanding need for high quality employment land in North Staffordshire and the 1991 Structure Plan established the criteria which would define such provision. Regeneration programmes since then have made substantial progress with land at Trentham Lakes (incorporating the Sideway premium site) now available, and the second site identified in the early 1990s, at Blythe Bridge, being brought forward in the development plan process.
- 6.20 Regional Planning Guidance clarifies the situation. Premium employment sites are intended to provide accommodation for B1 and high quality B2 uses, if a need can be demonstrated. Paragraph 7.18 indicates that “there should always be two suitable large sites available, giving a choice of locations in different parts of the conurbation”. This guidance is specific to North Staffordshire and has no regard to the availability of premium employment sites in other areas. Sideway/Trentham Lakes and Blythe Bridge, being located in the southern and south-eastern sectors of the North Staffordshire Conurbation, provide for the first two sites within the sub-region and are becoming available now. The take-up of land within these two existing premium site locations is speculative. To maintain a rolling programme of such investment opportunities, a third general location is now proposed for the Chatterley Valley to the north-west of the conurbation.
- 6.21 The Chatterley area is underlain by Etruria Marl, a scarce and valuable mineral which is protected by its designation within Mineral Safeguard Areas in the Minerals Local Plan. Therefore, prior to development, the mineral should be proven and viable reserves extracted in accordance with the policies in the Minerals Local Plan. Subject to the prior extraction of the mineral, the area is consistent with Regional Planning Guidance and broadly compatible with local planning policy. Its designation accords with the principles of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 7.14 of RPG11. It is adjacent to the built-up area close to the bulk of the North Staffordshire labour force and within easy reach of local housing, thus minimising the need to travel and maximising use of non-car transportation facilities. Educational institutions and other support facilities are in close proximity and the site is accessible by bus and adjacent to the trunk road network. The area also comprises predominantly recycled land, would have only a marginal impact on Green Belt and offers the potential for rail access and the possibility for a new passenger station which could be explored in the detailed design of the site. In addition, appropriate pollution prevention measures should be undertaken as an integral part of the development.
- 6.22 With regard to southern Staffordshire, provision has already been made within South Staffordshire District to provide premium employment sites to meet the needs of the adjoining Metropolitan Authorities. Currently, about 50 hectares have been allocated for this purpose north of Wolverhampton, plus an area of search for a further site west of Dudley indicated in the adopted South Staffordshire Local Plan. Within Wolverhampton, some 13 hectares have also been allocated.
- 6.23 RPG11 states that “Up to a maximum of 120 hectares (gross) of land may be required to meet the needs of the Black Country”. The abandonment of the proposed Western Orbital Motorway scheme and the scale of existing allocations already made for both premium sites and major investment sites, have led to the conclusion that no further provision is justifiable in southern Staffordshire at the present time, particularly as this would involve taking large and sensitive areas of Green Belt (i.e. there is now no strategic support to the definition of a premium employment site within the area of search to the west of Dudley, shown in the adopted South Staffordshire Local Plan). It is proposed, however, that the situation be the subject of a further joint study, including both local authorities and business interests, to consider future premium employment site provision through the current review of RPG11.

Major Investment Site

E5 A Major Investment Site is proposed at Wobaston Road, immediately to the north of Wolverhampton adjoining the M54, to be reserved exclusively for a single large multi-national organisation within the B1 or B2 Use Classes. This will be additional to the provision made in Policies E1 and E4.

- 6.24 RPG11 proposes that the West Midlands Region as a whole should be ready to provide up to two large Major Investment Sites for new industrial and commercial investment, available for a single large multi-national organisation which would be of considerable benefit to the regional economy. Each of these would require a minimum of 50 hectares and should be regarded as additional to Premium Employment Sites.
- 6.25 The West Midlands Regional Forum of Local Authorities was charged by the Government Office for the West Midlands to undertake a study and make recommendations on preferred locations for these Major Investment Sites. Bids were invited from all interested parties. One of the two locations which the report recommended should be "fast-tracked" for early availability was a location north of Wolverhampton. South Staffordshire District Council and Staffordshire County Council have both accepted this recommendation and land adjoining Wobaston Road immediately south of the M54 is currently being promoted for this purpose.
- 6.26 With regard to North Staffordshire, securing a major investor would give a considerable boost to the local economy. Compatibility with RPG11's aim of employment-led growth in the north and west of the region would also be achieved by securing the presence of a large multi-national organisation. However, there are already opportunities within the existing and emerging portfolio of large employment sites (the quality of which is continuing to improve) to cater for most potential investors should the need arise. Although none of these sites could provide an area extending to 50ha., exclusively reserved for one firm, there appears, at the present time, to be insufficient justification for reserving a large area of Green Belt for this purpose. It is proposed, therefore, that the issue of the need for an MIS be monitored and be given further consideration in the review of RPG11.

Implementation and Programming

E6 New employment sites should be located and defined having regard to their viability, feasibility for implementation and capability for commencement during the Plan period.

- 6.27 Employment development can have a long lead-in period, particularly where the reuse of "brownfield" land is proposed. It is important that policies and proposals should be realistic; in other words, that there is a reasonable expectation that the site will be required or can be brought forward during the Plan period, or that there are other good reasons to reserve it for a future use.
- 6.28 Where there are constraints these should be assessed realistically, with reference to the sites' likely market attractiveness. This particularly applies to Premium or Major Investment Sites but may also be relevant elsewhere, for example in considering the overall quality of land allocated in a local plan (see Policy E2); it may be appropriate to consider for other uses land which is unlikely to be developed within the Plan period when local plans are reviewed.

- 6.29 The resourcing of development is a material consideration in this context as it may have a bearing on the development prospects of areas of land. It is therefore reasonable to take into account eligibility for grant aid from UK and European Union programmes where applicable and financing through the private sector when comparing the merits of particular possibilities.

Existing Industries

E7 The needs of existing industry will be supported by:

- (a) permitting firms to extend or expand, unless unacceptable environmental conditions would result;**
- (b) helping industry to relocate from obsolete premises or environmentally unsuitable locations to more modern, accessible or other suitable designated employment land in the same general area;**
- (c) promoting, if environmentally appropriate, the reuse or redevelopment of land and redundant buildings to provide space for new employment, particularly in areas of high unemployment.**

- 6.30 The modernisation of indigenous industry and support of small firms is at least as important to the local economy as the attraction of inward investment. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the supply of land includes a range of possibilities for local firms to modernise by allowing them to expand within the same location or move to new sites of a quality which matches their aspirations. Where there is no alternative, this may include greenfield opportunities where needed (subject to environmental and amenity considerations and under the same restrictions applied to inward investment), provision for 'bad neighbour' uses and a good range of reclaimed or otherwise improved land, and buildings suitable for reuse. When considering development proposals in more sensitive rural or Green Belt areas, development will need to have regard to the other relevant policy provision.

Loss of Employment Land and Buildings

E8 Development which would lead to the loss of business or general industrial land considered to be necessary to meet market requirements and provide a diverse local portfolio of employment opportunities, will be resisted, subject to the provisions for review contained in Policy E2.

- 6.31 It is likely that some land or buildings suitable for good quality industrial development will also be attractive for other uses. While proposals for alternative uses will be dealt with on their merits, having regard to market requirements, the priority will be to ensure a continuing stock of land and buildings attractive to Class B users, so that opportunities for inward investment and modernisation of existing industry are maximised.

~~The Rural Economy~~

~~E9 The provision of small business units will be sought in rural areas by means of:~~

~~(a) the conversion of existing buildings; or~~

~~(b) new build within or on the edge of settlements;~~

~~provided that the use is related to the availability of the local workforce and of a scale and type in keeping with its location and complies with Policy D5B where relevant.~~

- 6.32 The larger part of Staffordshire is rural in character, including remote areas such as parts of Staffordshire Moorlands. While agriculture is an important employer in the rural areas, together with employment in agriculture-related industry, forestry, minerals, tourism and leisure, employment opportunities are decreasing, particularly as a result of agricultural change. (Minerals policies are listed separately in Chapter 12 of this Plan and the Minerals Local Plan). Rural regeneration is therefore important to provide a sound economic base, to arrest the process of social and economic decline and to ensure rural areas remain locations where people live and work. Consequently, it is important that new economic initiatives in the rural areas are supported.
- 6.33 It is also equally important that any development does not, by virtue of its size or nature, detract from the attractiveness of the countryside, or adversely affect a legally protected species or its habitat, which are also significant resources and generators of employment opportunities. In addition, such development should not be so large as to generate significant and unacceptable amounts of new traffic.
- 6.34 The conversion of existing buildings is an especially suitable means of providing, at an appropriate level, rural employment and is strongly supported in principle. It may also be appropriate to provide land for small business units, particularly those promoting the use of IT facilities in new buildings on sites within or on the edge of settlements. It is unlikely that such developments will be acceptable, however, if detached from existing settlements.

~~Agricultural Related Development~~

~~E10 Development related to the operational requirements of the agricultural industry will be supported, having regard to the twin objectives of improving or maintaining the local economy and protecting local countryside character and the environment.~~

- 6.35 The importance of the agricultural industry to rural areas is twofold. First, it provides a source of employment, albeit declining in employment numbers. Second, it provides and maintains the local characteristic landscape which is itself a resource and generator of employment opportunities by way of recreation and tourism. Therefore, it is vital that the well-being of the agricultural industry is sought or maintained having regard to both these aspects.

Tourism

E11A Proposals for the development of new or the expansion of existing tourist attractions or facilities will be supported provided they:

- (a) reflect the inherent character of their location, emphasising, where relevant, features of industrial, cultural and natural heritage interest through design, materials and site features;**
- (b) are in keeping with policies to conserve and promote the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage qualities of the area;**
- (c) have regard to the provision of public transport services/facilities;**
- (d) do not generate traffic which cannot be accommodated on the road system without undue adverse effect;**
- (e) do not harm the amenity of local residents.**

- 6.36 Tourism is related to a wide range of activities, including visits to the countryside, theme parks, cultural attractions such as historic houses, museums and theatres, and industrial heritage/interest locations. It now supports several thousand jobs within the Plan area and is becoming one of its main industries; it is also a significant factor in encouraging investment by generating a positive image of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The continuing success and growth of this sector is therefore strongly supported, particularly as the National Forest will become a major tourist attraction of the future. However, the growth of tourism must be sustainable both environmentally and economically, so that the assets which attract visitors are not spoiled by insensitively planned, designed or located facilities.
- 6.37 It is particularly important that tourism-related developments do not damage the "sense of place" of their location, which is an important component of what visitors come to see (Policy NC2 may be particularly relevant); nor should they generate traffic which cannot be accommodated on the road system without undue adverse effects, which would be similarly self-defeating.
- 6.38 As suggested in PPG21, tourism should also be considered in relation to other policy areas in this chapter and elsewhere in the Plan. Local plans should give special consideration to these factors when identifying locations where tourism development will be encouraged.

Major Tourist Attractions

E11B While having regard to the above criteria in Policy E11A, major tourist attractions may need to provide on-site and off-site ameliorative measures to be acceptable, for example, to protect existing character, landscape, wildlife, etc., to provide public transport services and to accommodate generated traffic in an acceptable way.

- 6.39 In rural areas, it is especially important that development be accommodated with the aid of environmental measures, either to its surroundings, or incorporated into the design. In urban areas, attention should also be given to ensuring that development appropriately reflects its surroundings. In this respect, Policy NC2 is seen as being particularly relevant. In all cases, the provision of improved public transport may be appropriate even where it cannot be provided immediately.

Tourist Accommodation

E12 New tourist and visitor accommodation should be allowed subject to:

- (a) major hotel developments and conference centre facilities being located in or on the edge of town centres or where they have ready access to the main transport network and to public transport and where they will not have adverse impacts upon local residents, businesses or the environment;**
- (b) budget hotel accommodation and motels being in urban areas, at strategic points related to business and holiday potential, at motorway junctions, or close to the primary road and public transport networks;**
- (c) “country house” hotels, where appropriate, being established in redundant buildings of historic interest in suitable rural locations, where there is no adverse effect upon local residents, neighbouring uses, the environment or the transport network;**
- (d) guest house, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation being related to the main visitor and public transport routes in urban areas, or associated with existing built development in rural areas;**
- (e) touring caravan/tent sites being related to the main holiday and public transport routes and in other areas of tourist importance, located and designed so as not to intrude on the appearance of rural areas or generate traffic which cannot be accommodated on the road system without undue adverse effects.**

6.40 Major hotel and conference facilities should be in locations accessible to the main transport network, preferably in or on the edge of town centres or in other locations where there are established public transport services. Such facilities can also be a particularly valuable resource when located close to existing and proposed employment uses. Exceptionally, new hotel development may be acceptable when related to tourist attractions, subject to local residents and businesses not being unduly disturbed and the local environment not being adversely affected, and regard being had to paragraph 5.26 of PPG21 and policies contained elsewhere in this Plan which restrict development in the countryside.

6.41 Developments which utilise existing buildings in rural areas may offer benefits and should be treated on their merits. Guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation in existing houses may well be worthy of support within the general terms of Policies E9 and E10, subject to amenity considerations

6.42 Local plans should consider the scale and distribution of tourist accommodation within their areas while determining where, and to what extent, further provision should be encouraged.

7. HOUSING

- 7.1 Good quality housing is a basic human requirement which everyone has a right to expect. The planning system has a role to play in ensuring a continuous supply of land which is adequate to meet housing need, having regard to market demand and Government policies. However, it must also ensure that environmental principles are recognised and given due priority. The conservation of natural habitats; the protection of the countryside and of the best agricultural land; the enhancement of the urban environment; and the conservation of mineral resources must be balanced against the need for housing.
- 7.2 This “balancing act” occurs across all the concerns of planning, but the position of housing as a basic human need and as the largest built use of land makes it a particularly important issue.
- 7.3 The 1992-based household projections published by the Government in 1995 indicated a need for 4.4 million new homes to be built between 1991 and 2016 in England. This level of growth is mainly due to reducing household sizes, which by 1996 averaged 2.4 persons per house. The projected growth in household numbers reflect a complexity of social and demographic factors. In particular, increased prosperity is allowing more people to live in separate homes, improved standards of living and health care are allowing people to live longer, and changes in behaviour, including attitudes to marriage, have produced more separate households. Household numbers would therefore increase even given a static population. The subsequent 1996-based household projections have indicated a somewhat reduced level of growth. Any future review of the Structure Plan and reassessment of housing provision can take account of any changes in demographic and household formation trends that may be reflected in revised household projections.
- 7.4 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (RPG11, as revised 1998) stresses that a substantial majority of the additional housing provision across the region should take the form of new housing on previously developed land and conversions within urban areas. The West Midlands Local Government Association have been asked to identify a target for the proportion of new housing to be developed from these sources up to 2011, and have indicated that at least 61% of new housing across the region as a whole should be found on recycled sites.
- 7.5 With regard to the level of housing provision in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, RPG11 proposes that, for the period 1991-2011, there should be 335,000 new dwellings provided in the region, of which 70,400 should be in the Plan Area.
- 7.6 Further work relating to these housing requirements has produced a perspective on how the 70,400 household figure should be distributed.
- 7.7 A consideration of migration flows using information available from both the 1991 Census and trends from the National Health Service Central Register suggests that, for the period 1996-2011, net inward migration into the Plan area is likely to be relatively modest equating to around 500 households. However, these net flows are made up by a major net inward flow from the West Midlands Conurbation, offset by net outward flows to other areas of the country. These different migration flows have different spatial impacts. Flows from the West Midlands Conurbation mainly relate to the Central Crescent. Flows to and from other parts of the country relate to all parts of the County but have particular implications for net outflow from North Staffordshire.
- 7.8 Local housing needs also differ across the Plan area, depending on the age structure of the population in different areas.

- 7.9 It should be recognised that all sources of available information used in the projections are imperfect and liable to considerable variation over time. Projections may, therefore, be used to inform the debate on the level and distribution of housing but should not be an absolute prescription for the Plan. In the final analysis, the main determinant of housing provision must be Government policy, as embodied in Regional Planning Guidance, together with the physical and environmental capacity of the Plan area.
- 7.10 It is apparent from the projections, however, that the requirement for new housing development across the Plan area is uneven. Local needs are greatest in the south of the Plan area, as is the pressure to cater for migration which is not offset in reality by the outflow of households currently being experienced in the north.
- 7.11 North Staffordshire must therefore be regarded as a largely separate housing market. It is anticipated that the presence of a continuing supply of housing land in this area (most of which is already committed or likely to take place on small urban sites) may, in due course, help to stem out-migration. Growth in the housing market will be stimulated further by current major employment initiatives and the provision of good quality housing will in turn assist the regeneration process.
- 7.12 It is in southern Staffordshire, however, where the greatest pressures for housing to meet the needs of local people and of migrants from the nearby West Midlands Conurbation will continue to be experienced. The problem of accommodating development is made particularly difficult by the numerous and extensive constraints on development which need to be taken into account. These include Green Belt, the best and most versatile agricultural land, mineral reserves, the limited capacity of major roads in transport corridors and the need to conserve the quality of existing settlements, including the historic City of Lichfield. The proposed strategy locates the bulk of new housing development yet to be committed within the Central Crescent area of southern Staffordshire in accordance with the numerical and locational provisions of Regional Planning Guidance.
- 7.13 The West Midlands Local Government Association's aspirational target for the Region as a whole of at least 61% of all new housing to be developed on previously used land poses challenges when attempting to locate suitable land with market potential, while preserving open land with amenity value within urban areas. The current total supply of land committed for housing development on recycled land throughout the Plan area, amounts to approximately 56%. However, this is not evenly distributed. In certain urban areas, including Stoke-on-Trent, the percentage is significantly higher than the 61%, while in the more rural Districts, it falls to below 40%.
- 7.14 Most new housing initiatives should concentrate on maximising the use of recycled land within the main urban areas and should minimise the impact of development on the countryside and specifically on greenfield sites. Nevertheless, given the paucity of land with potential for redevelopment for housing in the south of the County, a target of significantly more than 55% brownfield development for the whole of the Plan area to 2011 is considered to be probably unrealistic. Attempts should be made to encourage new development within urban areas without raising the problems of "town cramming". Mixed use developments are encouraged to provide attractive new urban environments and measures are proposed to bring into use large areas of vacant or under-used space in towns. Development in rural areas, except where major allocations are proposed, is discouraged unless exceptional circumstances exist, and then should only take place within village envelopes.

7.15 Related to the problem of physically accommodating development in the right area is the critical need in some areas to make provision for affordable housing. The term affordable housing includes both low cost market housing for sale and housing for rent or shared ownership provided by a housing association, local authority or other registered social landlord. Housing need studies currently being prepared by several District Councils may assist in determining these requirements and also in determining the feasible levels at which this type of provision can be delivered in locations accessible to jobs and services. However, in some of the higher demand areas of the County, it will not be possible to meet all the potential needs for affordable housing. Housing associations and other providers of subsidised housing need to look at opportunities available within the existing housing stock and through conversions to meet an element of this need.

Housing Provision

~~H1 Sufficient land should be allocated to enable 51,800 dwellings to be completed 1996-2011, to be located as follows:~~

~~Staffordshire Moorlands 3,000 dwellings~~

~~Newcastle-under-Lyme 3,000 dwellings~~

~~Stoke-on-Trent 8,500 dwellings~~

~~Stafford 5,600 dwellings~~

~~- new allocations to be concentrated mainly in and adjoining the town of Stafford.~~

~~East Staffordshire 6,500 dwellings~~

~~- new allocations to be concentrated mainly in and adjoining the towns of Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter.~~

~~South Staffordshire 5,100 dwellings~~

~~- to include a maximum allocation of 1,000 dwellings between Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) and/or further possible developments around the new railway station at Brinsford, including land at the former Featherstone Ordnance Depot, subject to a commitment to the provision of this station having first been secured. These schemes will require the release of Green Belt land.~~

~~Cannock Chase 7,300 dwellings~~

~~- to include provision for some 500* dwellings as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme in the east of Rugeley that will involve a minor redrawing of the Green Belt boundary to follow the Eastern Bypass south of the A513, subject to a commitment to full funding for the completion of the Eastern Bypass having first been secured.~~

~~Lichfield 7,800 dwellings~~

~~- to include new allocations:~~

~~(i) for some 500* dwellings as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme in the east of Rugeley that will involve a minor redrawing of the Green Belt boundary to follow the Eastern Bypass south of the A513, subject to a commitment to full funding for the completion of the Eastern Bypass having first been secured;~~

~~(iii) for some 1,400 dwellings north east of Lichfield centred around the former Fradley Airfield, with capacity allowed for at least a further 1,600 dwellings beyond the Plan period, subject to meeting the requirements of Policies IM1 and IM2;~~

~~(iii) for some 1,000 dwellings adjacent to the northern edge of Tamworth.~~

~~**Tamworth** **5,000 dwellings**
- where release of land in the Anker Valley area in the north east of the Borough will be required to co-ordinate with the development proposed within Lichfield District, and the release of Green Belt may be required in the Dosthill/Hockley area.~~

~~* The final distribution of 1,000 dwellings (or what the area will accommodate) proposed in the brownfield Rugeley Eastern Redevelopment Zone between Cannock Chase and Lichfield will follow on from a comprehensive study and the preparation of a joint development brief as part of the review of the local plans for those authorities.~~

- 7.16 The assumption underlying Policy H1 is that sufficient land should be allocated in local plans, or otherwise committed by planning permission, to enable approximately 51,800 dwellings to be built in the Plan period. However, the state of both national and local housing markets at a particular point in time will be an important consideration as to whether this level of development can be achieved within the Plan period. Equally important will be decisions on the 'brownfield/greenfield' mix of sites and whether development on greenfield sites should be phased.
- 7.17 District Councils will have to determine, as part of their local plan preparation, the flexibility allowance which should be applied to housing proposals to secure an appropriate level of housing completions, while at the same time meeting the other objectives of the Plan. In making such assessments, authorities will, no doubt, recognise that many commitments have been recently defined via the plan-led system, and have been tested at local plan inquiries. Future site allocations should have regard to their capability of implementation, with a view to reducing the need for over-provision which could lead to the unnecessary loss of open land and a further dilution of the scarce resources available for services.
- 7.18 Some 18,800 houses were completed in the period 1991-1996. The proposals in Policy H1 relate to the residual requirement of 51,800 houses for the period 1996-2011 to bring the total to the 70,400 figure 1991-2011, stated in RPG11 (based on a figure of 18,600 housing completions 1991-1996). Since publication of the Deposit Plan, the calculation of completions 1991-1996 has been revised to 18,800 following consultation with the District Councils. It is not considered that the discrepancy is of sufficient magnitude to warrant a downward revision of the housing allocation and incumbent redistribution across the Plan area. Table 2 shows how the housing provision is made up for each local authority in terms of completions since 1996, outstanding commitments and the remaining balance to be found.

TABLE 2: Summary of Housing Provision by Local Authority Area (at April 1999)

Local Authority	Total Provision 1996-2011	Completions 1996-1999	Dwellings Committed¹ 1999	Balance²
Staffs. Moorlands	3,000	580	2,410	10
Newcastle	3,000	870	1,720	410
Stoke-on-Trent	8,500	1,900	5,810	790
Stafford	5,600	1,270	3,500	840
East Staffordshire	6,500	1,970	3,000	1,530
South Staffordshire	5,100	880	1,150	3,070
				including new major development at Great Wyrley/ Cheslyn Hay / Essington* (see para. 1.12) up to 1,000 and/or Brinsford/ Featherstone
Cannock Chase	7,300	1,250	2,980	3,070
				including new major development at Rugeley 500 ³
Lichfield	7,800	770	2,740	4,290
				including new major development at Rugeley 500 ³ , Fradley 1,400, north-east of Tamworth 1,000
Tamworth	5,000	1,140	950	2,910
STAFFORDSHIRE	51,800⁴	10,610	24,260	16,930

Totals may not agree due to rounding.

- NOTES:
1. Commitments are defined as dwellings under construction at April 1999, planning permissions outstanding, adopted local plan allocations, and allocations in deposit draft local plans (latest information). The figure includes commitments on small sites of less than 0.4ha. Figures for dwelling commitments reflect densities on sites with planning permission and District Council density assumptions on local plan allocations. The yield of dwellings from committed sites may rise subject to a review of site densities in the renewal of planning permissions and local plan allocations.
 2. The balance figure subsumes unidentifiable windfall and small sites not taken account of in local plans, and identified safeguarded land with development potential beyond 2001.
 3. Approximate figure – to be refined following further comprehensive study.
 4. To be consistent with the methodology of RPG11, the allocation in Policy H1 represents gross additions to the dwelling stock and includes an assumption for the replacement of an estimated 3,450 dwellings (1996-2011) lost through demolition. In the review of local plans, District Councils should assess the demolition assumptions, set out in Table 2 of the Housing Background Paper published in June 1999, on the basis of the latest available information.

- 7.19 As Table 2 indicates, approximately 20% of the total provision was completed and 47% already committed through planning permission or allocated in a local plan at April 1999. When revising their local plans, District Councils should investigate whether any of these allocations should still be retained or the site densities raised. Where planning permissions lapse, they should decide whether permission should be renewed in the light of the need to create more sustainable developments, in accordance with Policies D1 and H2. The proportion of commitments and small balance of sites to be found in some local authority areas requires this process to be rigorous to ensure that the housing requirement is not significantly exceeded and greenfield sites developed unnecessarily. In calculating the number of sites to be defined, local plan authorities should consider the number of dwellings which are likely to come forward in the future on unidentified sites, having regard to past rates of development and the future potential for such sites.
- 7.20 Policy H1 distributes the total provision of 51,800 to each local authority area in accordance with the general geographical prescription in RPG11, while having regard to local pressures and constraints. A high proportion of the additional provision to be found arises within the Central Crescent, to meet both local housing needs and the needs of migrants from the West Midlands Conurbation.
- 7.21 Within the Crescent area, major housing development is proposed mainly in or close to the main urban areas on the outer edge and beyond the Green Belt. The prime objective has been to facilitate the creation of communities with a mix of housing, employment and related uses which will progressively achieve a greater degree of self-containment, and are in line with sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, the existence of commuting is accepted and particular regard has been paid, when considering development options, to the existence of (or the potential for) regular public transport, especially rail links, to enable access to the West Midlands Conurbation and other main employment centres.
- 7.22 The potential and feasibility of areas to meet the development requirement within the period of the Plan has also been a determining factor. This has resulted in a spread of provision which is seen as being capable of meeting likely local needs, particularly from the main settlements across the area, while also catering for some migration.
- 7.23 Further locations should be sought in local plans which accord with the overall strategy and policies of the Plan. Limits on the amount of recycled land in southern Staffordshire generally and the limited number of practical development options available must, however, be recognised. Decisions need to take account of any requirement to breach major development thresholds, and therefore the cost of the necessary infrastructure.
- 7.24 There is also a requirement to give consideration to suitable development opportunities beyond the current Plan period. In the case of Lichfield, this has been addressed in this Plan, insofar as there is explicit reference in Policy H1 to the growth potential at nearby Fradley. Long term options in some other areas are, however, not so clear-cut. The expansion of Tamworth beyond 2011, for example, requires particular attention given the environmental, physical and policy constraints which apply around its boundaries. It is suggested that the situation has become sufficiently critical for it to be a matter for consideration as part of the review of Regional Planning Guidance, where the issue of the potential for making provision for Tamworth's development needs in the adjoining areas of Warwickshire should be highlighted.
- 7.25 District Local Plans in Staffordshire, prepared for the Plan period running up to 2001, have largely complied with the strategy set out in the Staffordshire Structure Plan 1991-2001, by making provision mainly on small to medium sized sites. This has had the consequence that capacity on such sites in Staffordshire is becoming limited. To meet the levels of provision to 2011, and in the interests of promoting a sustainable development pattern, it has been considered appropriate to make specific proposals for a limited number of substantial new developments in the southern Staffordshire sub-area. The development locations specified in H1 are described below.

South Staffordshire District

- 7.26 While urging the consideration of larger increments of new housing development close to employment opportunities and with good access to existing or proposed public transport, two possible strategic development locations have been identified in South Staffordshire District - at Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) and Featherstone/Brinsford.
- 7.27 Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) is seen as a location with existing employment, retail, recreation and entertainment facilities both locally and in neighbouring Cannock which, combined with public transport links (bus and rail) to the West Midlands conurbation, meet many of the basic criteria for achieving long term sustainability. Improvements to the services and infrastructure on the Walsall-Cannock railway line (proposals have been made in the Railtrack Network Management Plan 1999, for the electrification of the Walsall-Cannock line and for further measures at Landywood Station, included in the Local Transport Plan for Staffordshire) and bus showcase routes on the A34 to Walsall and the A460 to Wolverhampton would provide opportunities to reduce the use of private cars. Comprehensive, mixed development will provide the opportunity to increase the range of facilities in the village(s) helping to reduce the need to travel.
- 7.28 Brownfield land at Featherstone not in the Green Belt (the former Featherstone Ordnance Depot) close to both the existing settlement of Featherstone and the conurbation/Wolverhampton, and a proposed new station at Brinsford, including a major park and ride car park (included in the Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands) provides the potential for a new mixed use community with potentially strong sustainability credentials.
- 7.29 The District Council is advised to assess the development potential of both these strategic locations in deciding on how and where to provide the new housing necessary to meet the requirements set out in Policy H1. These assessments should include appraisals of the necessary transport infrastructure. In accordance with the principle of providing specific strategic guidance for development of at least 1,000 dwellings, the potential of providing major development at each of the above locations (Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) and Featherstone/Brinsford) should be considered. Development at either/both locations will require the release of Green Belt land.

Rugeley

- 7.30 Rugeley has benefited from a number of substantial investment projects following the closure of the Lea Hall Colliery. These have included the construction of Phase 1 of the Rugeley Bypass, the introduction of passenger rail services to Walsall and Stafford, and the redevelopment of part of the former colliery site. The presence of a large area of brownfield land (the Rugeley Eastern Redevelopment Zone) immediately to the east of the town is seen as presenting a most sustainable location for mixed use development, which would complement the above schemes. This would comprise some 1,000 dwellings (subject to further study as to the area's capacity) and also incorporate at least 40 ha. of industry on already committed employment land and potentially other uses. The administrative boundary between Cannock Chase District and Lichfield District at this point suggests that, for the time being, about half the proposed housing scheme should be assigned to each authority, although it is intended that the proposal be subject to a comprehensive and detailed study to determine site definitions. The successful delivery of the scheme will also, to a large extent, be dependent upon the completion, in full, of the Rugeley Eastern Bypass, necessary to relieve unacceptable traffic congestion on the A51 adjoining the town centre. Funding of the remaining phase(s) of the bypass will involve both public funding and private sector contributions from anticipated development in the town not only from the Eastern Redevelopment Zone. Improvements to the services and infrastructure on the Walsall-Cannock-Rugeley railway line will provide improved access to the West Midlands Conurbation.

Fradley

- 7.31 Development is proposed at Fradley for 1,400 dwellings during the Plan period, and thereafter to a minimum of 3,000 to form a new settlement which will achieve a considerable amount of self-sufficiency. The location can accommodate a development of this scale, is outside the Green Belt, and is close enough to Lichfield to benefit from its facilities. It is considered that this major proposal is justified given the high numbers of houses required in Lichfield District and the need to restrict development in and immediately adjoining the historic City of Lichfield. Special circumstances also apply at Fradley, due to the existence of a major employment area at Fradley Park, and the potential for developers to provide much improved public transport links to Lichfield. In addition, development could facilitate the extension of the cross-city rail link, providing direct access to the West Midlands Conurbation and associated transport networks. Improvements to the A38 will need to be assessed as part of the development package for the Fradley area.
- 7.32 As part of the review of the Lichfield District Local Plan, an integrated master plan for the new settlement should look afresh at the location of various land uses, existing and proposed in combination with an assessment of the most effective public transport links. Included in the preparation of the master plan should be testing of the feasibility and viability of a new station and park and ride facilities and the electrification and reintroduction of passenger services on the appropriate part of the Lichfield-Burton line.

Tamworth Area

- 7.33 The proposed provision of 5,000 new dwellings within Tamworth Borough will include expansion into the area to the north-east of Tamworth town centre, accepting the need to respect, as far as possible, environmental constraints (including floodplain, sites of nature conservation interest and common land). Elsewhere in the Borough, development in the south-east would involve a limited review of Green Belt boundaries to allow for the release of land to the west of the A51 at Dosthill and east of the main railway south of Hockley.
- 7.34 To provide additional housing capacity to meet, in part, total local housing need in the Tamworth area, a further 1,000 dwellings are proposed to the north of the Borough in Lichfield District, outside the Green Belt, in an area of limited landscape quality and within walking/cycling distance of the railway station and town centre. Development of land each side of the District/Borough boundary should be undertaken in a co-ordinated way to provide a mixed use development, incorporating permitted employment areas and provide access to the railway station and town centre. This will require close co-operation between the two adjoining authorities to meet Tamworth's housing needs and to provide the necessary infrastructure.

Elsewhere

- 7.35 Other housing proposals should generally be concentrated in a small number of locations in public transport corridors (i.e. where there is existing access or where new development can be integrated with the provision of new public transport services), closely related to those larger settlements where employment, retail and service facilities are already concentrated, and should have regard to the possible need for additional school provision. Such development provides the potential to create mixed use communities and progressively achieve a greater degree of self-containment. This applies throughout the Plan area, although in North and East Staffordshire the high level of existing commitments and the potential for regeneration or reuse of land within the urban areas suggests that there should be no need for large scale incursions into greenfield areas. New housing within smaller rural settlements should be limited to local needs and to supporting local services and employment.

~~Location, Phasing and Density of Housing Development~~

~~H2 The provision of new housing land should complement rather than duplicate the existing stock of sites and encourage the concentration of development in urban areas and the use of recycled land, before the release of greenfield sites, accordingly:~~

~~(a) A substantial majority of new housing allocations and proposals should, as a first preference, be located within the main urban areas and should utilise previously developed land. As a target, 55% of all development across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent over the Plan period should be on recycled land.~~

~~(b) Where large, new developments on greenfield land are required, these may be subject to a phased release in local plans to ensure that their availability does not prejudice the achievement of the local plan target for development on recycled land and the early development of urban or brownfield sites.~~

~~(c) District Councils should consider the use of minimum density policies and ensure that housing within urban areas should include high density development located within and adjacent to town and local centres and at other points of high public transport accessibility.~~

~~Development should be consistent with the creation of attractive living environments, be in keeping with its surroundings and must not take valuable amenity open space.~~

7.36 To achieve a sustainable form and pattern of new development and provide the balance of housing to be found, local plan authorities should, as far as is practicable, adopt a sequential approach to the allocation of sites in accordance with Policies D1 and H2 and the guidance of PPG3. An assessment should be made of the potential contribution of the existing stock to meeting future housing demand, including opportunities for conversion and sub-division and reducing the level of vacant property.

7.37 In following a sequential approach, first preference should be to allocate sites within the existing main urban areas, where new housing will be accessible to employment, shops and services and the use of non-car modes can be maximised. PPG3 encourages all local authorities to undertake housing capacity studies to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated in urban areas. The potential for raising residential densities, the reallocation of land to housing from other uses, such as historic employment allocations and the opportunities for land assembly to contribute to area-wide redevelopment should be realistically assessed.

7.38 Following development within urban areas and the potential for increasing capacity, PPG3 places extensions to urban areas next in the search sequence subject to physical and environmental constraints, the capacity and potential of the infrastructure to absorb new development and sustainability objectives. In assessing the potential of urban extensions, full regard should be given to the objectives of Green Belt and the guidance of PPG2 and Policy D5A. The areas of major land release from Green Belt to meet the housing requirement of Policy H1 have been identified as strategic development locations. Where further release of greenfield land is required, account should be taken of the advice of RPG11, paragraph 3.19 and Policy D1, and development generally restricted to a limited number of strategic nodes in transport corridors.

- 7.39 The use of previously developed land will be preferred to the release of greenfield sites in all locations, although the most important consideration should be to achieve sustainable balanced communities where the need for travel is minimised. In locations with poor public transport accessibility and without a balance of housing, employment and service provision, development of brownfield land is unlikely to provide the most sustainable development option.
- 7.40 It will be an issue for local plan authorities to define 'urban areas' in the context of local circumstances. However, it is envisaged that the main urban areas will generally have a range of retailing and other facilities, including public transport.
- 7.41 Local plans should specify the number of additional dwellings to be provided in urban areas and on previously developed land. The proportion of dwellings that can be provided on these brownfield sites will vary significantly between Districts, depending on local circumstances. It is envisaged that, for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent as a whole, a target of 55% housing development on recycled land should be achievable and is consistent with the advice of RPG11 to the West Midlands Local Government Association to improve on a target of 61% for the West Midlands Region. The great majority of this development will be within urban areas.
- 7.42 The indicative targets for brownfield development for Districts set out in Table 3 reflect an assessment of the potential supply of recycled land up to 2011 taking into account housing completions since 1996, outstanding commitments, the likelihood of windfall sites being developed and the strategic development locations specified in the Plan. The main urban areas of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will yield the great majority of development on recycled land. The District targets should be interpreted as indicative percentages and local plan authorities may well be able to exceed them. Following a more detailed assessment of land capacity, it may be appropriate to raise a District target as part of the process of reviewing the local plan.

TABLE 3: Indicative Targets for Proportion of Dwelling Requirement to be Met on Recycled Land by Local Authority Area, 1996-2011

Local Authority	Total Housing Provision 1996-2011	Percentage Target for Development on Recycled Land
Staffordshire Moorlands	3,000	45
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3,000	70
Stoke-on-Trent	8,500	85
Stafford	5,600	50
East Staffordshire	6,500	50
South Staffordshire	5,100	40
Cannock Chase	7,300	45
Lichfield	7,800	45
Tamworth	5,000	45
STAFFORDSHIRE	51,800	55

- 7.43 Local plan authorities, having ascertained their requirement for greenfield sites, should consider whether it is necessary to phase their release to ensure a steady flow of such sites throughout the Plan period. However, they will need to ensure that a five year supply of genuinely and readily available building land is maintained at all times.

- 7.44 Raising the average dwelling density of new sites can contribute to a more sustainable pattern of development providing greater potential patronage for public transport services, allowing more economic provision of local services and reducing the overall land-take. PPG3 states that local planning authorities should avoid developments of less than 30 dwellings/ha. Housing densities on new sites should generally be higher than have been achieved in the past. The greatest proportional benefits can be achieved by generally discouraging low density development as well as promoting high densities in locations well related to a range of services with adequate access to public transport. High density development is typically defined as that yielding over 50 dwellings/ha., medium density 20-50 dwellings/ha., and low density less than 20 dwellings/ha.
- 7.45 Dwelling densities should be measured on a net site basis, including all land directly associated with the development, such as access roads and open space, but excluding any land associated with activities serving a wider area or other uses as part of a mixed use development. More detailed guidance on the measurement of density is provided in Annex C of PPG3.

Mixed Use Developments

H3 In order to create sustainable communities, proposals for large residential schemes should include a mix of compatible land uses which incorporate phased provision of employment, social, educational, local needs shopping, recreation, community and open space facilities as appropriate or which enhance existing local facilities.

- 7.46 Mixed use developments can help to create diversity, vitality and reduce the need for people to travel, thereby enhancing sustainability. PPG1 encourages local authorities to promote and retain mixed use developments, especially in relation to major new development proposals. Developments should be in locations with an adequate infrastructure provision and should be integrated with the character of surrounding areas. They should have good access to, and be integrated into the public transport networks. Schemes may follow the "urban village" model, comprising an entity with a mixture of dwelling types and land uses, including employment, leisure and community facilities. There is a danger that large residential schemes may become dormitories for people commuting to either the West Midlands or North Staffordshire Conurbations. Mixed use proposals can at least provide the opportunity for people to reduce their reliance on the car by working, shopping and enjoying their leisure time in places close to their homes. Proposals should be compatible with the environment policies set out in Chapter 9.

Portfolio of Sites

H4 Provision should be made for sites suitable for a wide range of dwellings to meet differing and changing housing needs, including the special needs of people with disabilities, elderly people and other groups in the population who require specialist accommodation, and to overcome any identified local deficiencies. Proposals for large residential schemes should include as wide a mix of dwelling types, sizes and affordability as possible to increase choice within the local area and reduce the likelihood of social exclusion.

- 7.47 The need for new housing is being created by a population which is living longer, and by people increasingly living on their own. The requirements of special needs groups, for example those with learning difficulties, the young homeless, and those people subject to care in the community, must also be considered. These trends indicate a need for a variety of dwelling types to cater for changing demands. There is a need for sites to be identified which can provide the full range of dwellings required, and to respond to local needs and deficiencies (further covered by Policy H8). This policy encourages the provision of a range of sites across the County to meet those varying needs. It may not be necessary for every individual site to provide for all these needs.

Housing Renewal

~~**H5 An area-based approach to housing renewal and environmental improvement should be adopted integrating improvement and reuse or clearance and redevelopment and taking account of the possibilities for new residential development on other land within the area.**~~

- 7.48 Housing renewal can make a significant contribution to urban regeneration initiatives, improving both the image and the reality of living in urban areas. RPG11 emphasises the importance of improving the existing housing stock to minimise the amount of new building which will be necessary. Such renewal may be achieved through the use of SRB bids or other Government schemes such as Estate Action. PPG3 advocates the full and effective use of land in urban areas, including the conversion, redevelopment and improvement of existing stock and the use of derelict and neglected sites for small scale housing developments. Development which provides regeneration prospects for an area should be welcomed.
- 7.49 These proposals will interact with policies encouraging housing within urban areas and promoting mixed used development, both of which may include housing renewal schemes.

Conversions

H6 Provision for increased residential capacities either from within the existing housing stock or through the reuse and conversion of other buildings should be encouraged, where this:

- (a) would retain the amenity and character of existing residential areas;**
- (b) would provide opportunities for regeneration and enhancement of urban and rural areas;**
- (c) would allow the retention or improvement of buildings of historical or architectural importance;**
- (d) would not create sporadic development in the countryside where first preference will be given for the reuse of existing buildings for employment purposes;**
- (e) would not impose a significant detrimental impact on the local transport network.**

- 7.50 Converted buildings can make an important contribution to the provision of new dwellings, both market and affordable, but a contribution which is sometimes overlooked since no “new” building is involved. Adaptation of the existing stock can contribute to meeting the needs of smaller households and reduce the level of vacant and underused property. Any conversions should respect the character of the surrounding area, and the amenity of existing areas.
- 7.51 There is also a potential for converting other buildings to housing. A number of examples of the conversion of offices, factories, hospitals, colleges of further education and other redundant buildings, recently completed in Staffordshire, have made a contribution to urban regeneration and introduced innovative housing styles and designs. Opportunities also exist in releasing under-used space above shops as part of the “living over the shop” initiative. Further conversion of redundant buildings should be encouraged, particularly within urban areas where it is well related to services and employment.
- 7.52 In rural locations, housing development in the open countryside is to be resisted (Policy H11), and the priority for the conversion of any building is to provide spaces for employment and community uses. Any conversion proposal in urban or rural areas should have particular regard to the policy provisions of Chapter 9.

Windfall Sites

~~**H7 In determining the level of new land to be released for housing, an assessment should be made of the amount of provision it is reasonable to expect will be found by way of “windfall” sites. Any proposed development on “windfall” sites should be consistent with other planning policies, including nature conservation policies.**~~

- 7.53 Sites not identified in the development plan process can make a significant contribution to the land supply for housing. These sites frequently come forward as redevelopment or infill opportunities within urban areas and can contribute to a sustainable pattern of development. Proper account of the potential of windfall sites is fundamental to the sequential approach to site allocation advocated in this Plan.
- 7.54 In previous Government advice, the consideration of large windfall sites of over 1 hectare was excluded. However, evidence shows that sites of this size repeatedly become available over the timescale of a plan, often from redundant industrial and other employment locations. While local plan authorities may unofficially be well aware of the likely cessation of employment use on such sites, they are unable to allocate these sites in a local plan, until the employment use has actually ceased.
- 7.55 In guidance on the assessment of windfall potential, PPG3 (March 2000) makes no reference to size of sites. Local plan authorities need to make realistic assumptions on the likely contribution of windfall sites, of all sizes, taking into account past trends and on the basis of their local knowledge. To achieve a consistent approach, it is advised, in including allowance for windfalls in housing provision calculations in local plans, that a breakdown of assessments by site size is continued to be used (for small sites up to 0.4ha. and sites over 0.4ha.).
- 7.56 PPG3 indicates that no allowance should be made for windfalls on greenfield sites. This is consistent with proper identification and justification for the release of such sites through the review of local plans and should apply to assumptions for sites over 0.4 ha. However, as small sites (up to 0.4 ha.) are not generally allocated in local plans, assumptions should continue to be based on all sites regardless of previous land-use.

- 7.57 It is important that any assumption is realistic, since over-estimates may lead to a shortfall in the housing provision, whereas an under-estimate may lead to unnecessary allocations on greenfield sites. In addition, local plans must consider the take-up rate of windfalls which are granted permission when they make assessments. Past rates of development may show the proportion of sites coming forward which actually progress to completion.

Affordable Housing

~~**H8 Provision for the affordable housing needs of the local community should be a fundamental consideration in the allocation of sites and the release of land for housing on windfall sites. Local authorities should assess their needs for affordable housing and, where there is a demonstrable lack of such housing, include policies in their local plan for:**~~

~~**(a) negotiating with developers for the provision of affordable housing to be made on suitable allocated or windfall housing sites of an appropriate size; and**~~

~~**(b) encouraging the supply of affordable housing through other means, such as policies for the reuse and conversions of buildings for housing, mixed use development, higher densities, and bringing forward affordable housing proposals on smaller sites.**~~

~~**Binding agreements should be established to ensure that dwellings for those in need of affordable homes remain available and at low cost for initial and successive occupants.**~~

- 7.58 The general term for affordable housing encompasses two broadly distinct types;
- (i) Housing provided by an organisation – such as a registered social landlord or local authority allocating on the basis of need. While such dwellings will normally be made available for rent, they may also include subsidised home ownership, such as shared ownership, where a registered social landlord or local authority retains a continuing interest;
- and
- (ii) Low-cost market housing, helping to meet the needs of first-time buyers, single people, the elderly and other low income households, who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market.

Affordable housing, irrespective of whether it is provided for rent or sale, must be made available at a price level that can be sustained by local people in housing need. What constitutes 'affordable', in terms of price and income, is for each local authority to define through its Housing Strategy Statement.

- 7.59 The County and City Councils, with the co-operation of the District Councils, are making an assessment of the realistic provision for affordable housing which can be made in each part of the County up to 2011, given both locally based need estimates, the potential for negotiation with private developers on existing commitments and future allocations; the likely building programmes of registered social landlords, and the potential for the reuse of the existing housing stock for affordable housing.

- 7.60 Such indicative figures provided by the structure plan authorities should supplement more detailed and ongoing local assessment of affordable housing needs by housing authorities in their own areas. These should be given high priority, as part of the District's housing strategy, before entering on a review of the local plan. Local plan authorities will need to determine the amount of affordable housing which should be negotiated on sites to be allocated in the local plan, in line with the proposals set out in Circular 6/98. The mix of size of housing sites likely to be allocated in any particular area will be an important factor in a consideration of the suitable thresholds for negotiating a proportion of affordable housing. New provision to meet affordable housing needs has to be made, however, within the overall housing proposals set out in Policy H1. Given that the main mechanism for providing affordable housing is likely to remain through negotiations with private developers to provide a level of such provision on their housing schemes, and given that over half of the Structure Plan proposals are already committed through planning permission or allocation in a local plan, the provision of affordable housing on new sites may not fully meet anticipated requirements in all parts of the County. A significant proportion of the required provision may, therefore, have to come through reuse of the existing housing stock.
- 7.61 PPG3 indicates that plans may need to encourage a mix of dwelling types and tenures to cater for need. In order to achieve this, negotiations should be entered into with developers to include an allowance of affordable housing (including the needs of people with disabilities and elderly people) on sites committed by policy, or, if possible, at pre-application discussions on other sites. It is important to ensure that such an allowance, once agreed, is available in perpetuity for people in need. This may be achieved through the use of planning conditions or agreements.

Rural Settlements

H9 ~~New development within larger villages and market towns identified in local plans as being suitable for additional residential development should:~~

- ~~(a) be of a scale which reflects the existing settlement;~~
- ~~(b) be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the settlement and the local environment;~~
- ~~(c) be closely related to housing provision to meet identified local housing needs.~~

~~Only identified settlements where development can be demonstrated to assist in sustaining local employment and facilities such as schools and shops, which could become unviable without some modest growth should be considered suitable. New development should be located within boundaries defined in local plans. Significant incremental expansion should be avoided when this is likely to result largely in commuting by car to urban areas.~~

- 7.62 The application of the sequential approach to land release for housing and the focus of development in existing urban areas, in accordance with Policies D1 and H2, should ensure that the pressure for housing development in rural settlements is relatively limited. It is expected that rural settlements will only contribute a very modest proportion of the overall housing provision. Over-provision in rural settlements can encourage migration and an imbalance between homes and jobs available locally and lead to additional commuting and increased car dependency.

- 7.63 New housing development should be limited to settlements where it can make a contribution to sustaining the local community and the availability of services, which might otherwise become unviable and should closely relate to local housing need. The location and accessibility to employment, higher order shops and services, the utilisation of previously developed land, the capacity of the infrastructure to absorb new development and the availability of public transport services will be important considerations in assessing the appropriateness of new development.
- 7.64 In larger villages and market towns considered suitable for modest growth, any development should be within boundaries defined in local plans and should not create fragmented or ribbon development. Proposals should be of a high standard of design, should reflect the local character and tradition, and should be consistent with the environmental policies found in Chapter 9.

Affordable Housing in Rural Areas

H10 Exceptionally, affordable housing may be allowed within or on the edge of, villages in rural areas on land that would not normally be released for development, provided that:

- (a) the scheme would meet a genuine local need that would not otherwise be met;**
- (b) there are secure arrangements to ensure that the benefits of low-cost housing will be enjoyed by local people on low incomes in perpetuity;**
- (c) any such land released will be additional to the provision made for general housing demand;**
- (d) the scheme is of a scale and of a character appropriate to the location.**

- 7.65 PPG3 makes allowance for affordable housing developments to be allowed in rural areas where housing development would not normally be allowed. Rural locations often have a lack of affordable housing, and prices of houses are forced up by the ability of in-migrants to pay higher prices than local people. Such a situation may jeopardise the viability of the community. Where the need for affordable housing can be proved, it can be treated as a material consideration when planning applications are decided. Any development allowed will not count against the overall provision of housing for the District until completed. In Staffordshire, such development has, to date, been on a very small scale.
- 7.66 Proposals should still have regard to local character and should be in line with other local planning policies, and should be constrained by a planning condition or Section 106 Agreement to ensure that the dwellings will always be available as affordable housing.

Housing in Open Countryside

H11 Subject to the specific provisions of Policy H1, housing development by means of new buildings in the open countryside, outside of development boundaries, will not be permitted except where special circumstances exist, such as where such development is essential to the operation of rural activities and must be located in the countryside rather than in a nearby town or village. Any proposed development must be of a scale and character appropriate to the local environment, and have full regard to countryside protection policies.

- 7.67 Building in the open countryside in locations unrelated to any settlement should be strictly controlled. For such development to be permitted, special justification such as the need to pursue farming or forestry work will be required. Sporadic development which harms the character of the countryside environment will be resisted. Where such development is allowed, it should be of a scale and design suitable for its surroundings.

~~Provision for Gypsies~~

~~**H12 Adequate sites to meet an identified demand for Gypsies residing or resorting to the Plan area should be available for both short term and long term accommodation needs. The detailed criteria for suitable locations will be set out in local plans but in general sites should:**~~

~~**(a) not be located in areas of open land where development is severely restricted;**~~

~~**(b) not be permitted in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or in the Green Belt.**~~

- 7.68 This policy covers persons of nomadic habit of livelihood, whatever their race or origin, and includes persons living in largely static or mobile homes that have ethnic or cultural associations with the historical travelling community. It excludes members of organised groups of travelling showmen or of persons engaged in travelling circuses.
- 7.69 The provision of sites for gypsies is a form of affordable housing provision and additional authorised provision is the most effective means of ameliorating the difficulties for owners, neighbours and gypsies alike, that arise from unauthorised encampments. The levels of proposals should broadly relate to the numbers of unauthorised encampments shown in official counts over the last few years, but be further informed by discussions with representatives of the travelling community, and providers of education, social services and health services to them. The locational criteria should reflect Government guidance. The current criteria are stated in Circular 1/94 and are reflected in the policy. Local plans should also have regard to the guidance set out in PPG12.

8. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 8.1 Transport is not an end in itself, but a means to a number of diverse ends. These include helping to develop the economies of both the County and the City and meeting peoples' mobility needs. Used correctly, transport may help to achieve sustainable patterns of land use and maintain or enhance living and working environments. The policies and methods of achieving these ends are continually evolving.
- 8.2 Travel is currently dominated by the private motor vehicle. According to the National Travel survey (1996/98), 82% of total distance travelled is by car, van or lorry; 5% by bus; 4% by surface rail; 3% by foot and 1% by bicycle. 81% of goods are moved by road (Transport Statistics – Great Britain 1999). On past trends, road traffic could be expected to grow between 27% and 44% over the Structure Plan period. However, legislation and processes are proposed to set targets to reduce the amount of traffic.
- 8.3 The provision of new roads to meet the demand for travel has provided many economic, safety and environmental benefits. However, it is now recognised that for environmental, social and financial reasons, roads cannot be built to meet unrestrained growth in car use. All forms of motorised transport cause environmental pollution through exhaust emissions, noise and visual intrusion. In addition, there is growing concern about the effects of transport-generated pollution on the health of individuals.
- 8.4 The way in which the transport networks have developed has meant that the road and rail systems now cater for longer and shorter journeys. For example, the motorway system can be used not only for long distance trips, but also for shorter journeys within the Plan area. Likewise, the rail network supports slower freight trains, faster InterCity expresses and frequently stopping local services. Industrial premises and shops are often located where deliveries and collections create conflicts between lorries and other road users. Conflicts are thus regularly encountered throughout the network.
- 8.5 The 1998 White Paper on the future of transport sets out the Government's integrated transport policy. It aims to increase personal choice by improving facilities for walking, cycling and public transport; secure mobility that is sustainable in the long term; and provide a transport system that is safe, efficient, clean and fair. It emerged from the White Paper that local authorities would be required to produce local transport plans setting out proposals for delivering integrated transport over a five year period. The County and City Councils' 1999 Provisional Local Transport Plans and 2000 Full Local Transport Plans have been prepared in parallel to the Structure Plan Review. This has helped to ensure consistency and integration between planning and transport strategies. The Government proposes to make local transport plans statutory in due course.
- 8.6 Through Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13), emphasis is now given to planning land use and transportation together, in order to help reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys and encourage the use of alternative means of travel to the private motor vehicle. PPG13 requires structure plans to promote development which will be well served by public transport and to provide a range of local facilities which encourage walking and cycling. A review of PPG13 was undertaken during 1999 and a consultation draft was published in October 1999.
- 8.7 The principles and policies of PPG13 are supported in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11), by encouraging the attainment of sustainable development patterns; managing the use of existing infrastructure; and providing a choice of transport opportunities. These policies are amplified in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS): an Integrated Transport

Action Plan for the West Midlands Region which identifies how local authorities believe transport should play a full and proper part in the development of the region. A full review of the RTS is being carried out as an integrated part of the RPG11 review. The County Council is also involved at a regional level in the Peak Park Transport Forum which has developed the South Pennine Integrated Transport Strategy (SPITS) affecting parts of Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire as well as other regions.

- 8.8 The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to secure improvements in air quality, particularly at the local level. As traffic on our roads has increased, transport emission has become a major source of many pollutants. Air quality must therefore be an important consideration within transport policies in the Structure Plan.
- 8.9 The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 (RTRA) obliges local traffic authorities to produce a report containing an assessment of existing levels of local road traffic and a forecast of expected growth in those levels. It should also contain targets for reducing the level of local road traffic or its rate of growth. The RTRA reports produced by the County and City Councils will be an integral part of the process of local transport plan (LTP) preparation.
- 8.10 Demand for travel must be managed through land use policy and improvements to the transport network must be made to help to reduce the level and speed of traffic in sensitive areas and provide a safe environment to encourage individuals to walk, cycle and use public transport. Implementing road safety schemes and providing education and training programmes will improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce road traffic accidents. In addition, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent TravelWise Campaigns will help to increase public recognition of the need to reduce car use.

Sustainable Location

T1A Development proposals should be located, sited and designed so that the most convenient, safe and attractive choice of transport mode is progressively:

- (a) avoidance of unnecessary travel;**
- (b) walking and cycling;**
- (c) public transport, with rail preferred to road;**
- (d) and finally, private vehicles.**

- 8.11 Policy T1A encourages the efficient use of the existing infrastructure by all types of "transport" recognising the advantages each has, to move towards more sustainable transportation within a vibrant economy. New development should be accessible by foot, bicycle, public transport and telecommunications thus reducing reliance on the private motor vehicle.

An Integrated Transport Strategy

T1B An integrated and sustainable transport strategy will continue to be developed and implemented in order to:

- (a) reduce the growth in the length and number of motorised journeys;**
- (b) improve the availability, accessibility, efficiency and attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport;**

- (c) reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle;**
- (d) promote land use patterns which can be served by a range of transport modes other than the private motor vehicle;**
- (e) make it easier for people to switch between different forms of transport;**
- (f) improve personal security, road safety and access for everyone, but particularly for people with special needs, such as those with disabilities;**
- (g) improve the quality of the local environment and attractiveness of town centres, local centres, residential and other sensitive areas;**
- (h) make the best use of existing and planned transport infrastructure;**
- (i) manage car parking, on and off-street, to discourage reliance on the private motor vehicle for work, and other journeys where there are effective alternatives;**
- (j) reduce transport-related pollution;**
- (k) reduce the impact of road freight;**
- (l) promote the use of information technology and telecommunications to reduce the need to travel.**

8.12 As explained in the Transport White Paper, an integrated transport policy encompasses:

1. Integration within and between different types of transport – so that each contributes its full potential and people can move easily between them.
2. Integration with the environment – so that our transport choices support a better environment.
3. Integration with land use planning at a national, regional and local level – so that transport and planning work together to support more sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel.
4. Integration with policies for education, health and wealth creation – so that transport helps to make a fairer, more inclusive society.

Urban Areas

T2 In each urban area, priority will be given to the initial identification of:

- (a) locations where safety and environmental quality are key concerns;**
- (b) the level of demand management and/or traffic reduction targets which are required.**

Detailed policies and proposals will then be defined in local transport plans and in local plans as appropriate for:

- (i) people with special needs;**
- (ii) main pedestrian routes;**
- (iii) cycle networks;**
- (iv) the public transport network;**
- (v) the road network.**

- 8.13 Urban areas have to be made safer and more people-friendly in order to meet the objectives of the Plan. This will be achieved by encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport and providing for an improving quality of life.
- 8.14 It is now accepted that provision can no longer be made for unrestricted growth in the number of motorised journeys, particularly those by car. However, with no restrictions on car ownership, traffic congestion will continue to increase unless patterns of use can be changed.
- 8.15 Managing demand for private car use is seen as a possible way of balancing environmental, economic and mobility requirements. This may entail reducing the attractiveness of using the car for journeys at certain times of the day, or to certain locations or on particular roads. Procedures for achieving these objectives will be kept under review as legislation and national policies change.
- 8.16 The levels of such demand management measures and how they can be applied are likely to be different for large urban area with higher levels of public transport services and facilities than for small towns where services may remain sparse. Urban Area Transport Strategies are being developed in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans, in line with Policy T2. Also Policy T2 aims to complement General Development Policy D3 on urban regeneration.

Rural Areas

T3 The retention and improvement of rural services such as local schools, shops and leisure facilities will be promoted in order to minimise the need to travel to major towns and encourage walking and cycling for short journeys. Priority will be given within available resources (and in partnership with Parish and District Councils) to:

- (a) providing footpaths and cycleways linking residential areas with local schools, shops, leisure facilities and public transport services in rural settlements;**
- (b) supporting public transport services and facilities between settlements with a significant population size and passenger demand to help reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle.**

- 8.17 The car provides an essential mode of transport for rural residents where alternative means are unavailable. However, many car trips originating from rural areas are destined for major towns, thus contributing to congestion and traffic-related air pollution and health problems in urban areas.

- 8.18 It is necessary to make rural settlements as self-contained as possible by providing a range of community facilities, retailing and employment appropriate to the size of the settlement. This will contribute towards improving the quality of life by maximising the accessibility of facilities to those who need them and reducing the need to travel. Community transport schemes also have an important role to play in reducing car dependency in rural areas. They include shared/hired community cars, post-buses and school buses and are developed through partnerships between local authorities, voluntary groups and businesses.
- 8.19 The Rural Area Transport Strategies in Staffordshire's Local Transport Plan will complement and expand upon Policy T3 and General Development Policy D4 on Managing Change in Rural Areas.

Walking

T4 Greater priority will be given to pedestrian movement by:

- (a) identifying safe, direct, convenient and attractive pedestrian route networks to town centres, local centres, employment centres, public transport facilities (such as railway and bus stations and bus stops), schools and community facilities, recreational areas, public open spaces and residential areas;**
- (b) the creation or extension of pedestrian schemes in town centres;**
- (c) traffic calming on highways, in appropriate locations, where pedestrians are most at risk;**
- (d) the provision of pedestrian priority facilities, good lighting, and safe road crossings that are accessible to everyone;**
- (e) the provision of public rights of way and facilities for pedestrians in conjunction with new developments and transportation proposals, with the aim of minimising walking distances and conflicts;**
- (f) maintaining, developing and promoting a network of paths and bridleways for recreational use, based upon the existing rights of way network, canal towpaths and disused railway lines unlikely to be required for rail use in the future.**

- 8.20 Walking underpins the sustainability objectives of the Plan. It is the most environmentally sound mode of transport and can help improve personal health and fitness. Walking and rambling are also among the most popular forms of outdoor recreation.
- 8.21 New residential developments and improvements to existing developments which provide key community facilities within easy walking distance of the majority of the settlement population, will be encouraged. This must be combined with good, safe pedestrian areas, routes and facilities to reduce the need to use the private motor vehicle. Likewise, a better walking environment can improve the attractiveness of town centres and shopping areas.

8.22 Policies and strategies for walking in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans are in line with Government advice to local authorities on encouraging walking and build upon the Structure Plan policies.

Cycling

T5 Cycling will be encouraged by:

- (a) identifying a cycle network which provides safe and easy access within and between residential areas, town centres, local centres, employment centres, public transport facilities, schools and community facilities, recreational areas, public open space and the countryside. Where appropriate, disused railways and canal towpaths would be used as cycleways;**
- (b) enhancing the cycle network by ensuring that routes are well designed, clearly signed and safe. Provision will be made for safe cycle crossings and secure cycle parking and storage facilities;**
- (c) adapting existing road space to provide more cycle facilities, where appropriate, and reducing the volume and speed of motorised traffic to improve safety for cyclists. Where there is no opportunity to improve conditions on the carriageway, the conversion of footways and footpaths to shared use by cyclists and pedestrians will be considered;**
- (d) promoting greater integration between cycling and public transport through provision of secure cycle facilities at bus and rail stations and on buses and trains;**
- (e) requiring cycle routes and facilities to be provided in conjunction with new development, new road schemes, traffic management and traffic calming schemes;**
- (f) supporting the implementation of and assisting in the provision of appropriate links to the National Cycle Network;**
- (g) developing a regional network to provide a link between the National Cycle Network and local networks in urban areas.**

8.23 Cycling is a sustainable mode of transport which is energy efficient and pollution free and, like walking, can improve personal health and fitness. It has the potential to play an important role in reducing car traffic, particularly in urban areas. The bicycle offers comparable speed and flexibility to the car over short distances in urban areas. In the UK, 70% of all personal trips are less than five miles in length and yet the car is used for nearly 50% of these trips (National Travel Survey 1996/98).

8.24 Statistics show that cycling has a poor accident record. Safer cycling conditions, and ultimately an increase in cycling, will be achieved by reducing conflicts with motor vehicles; reducing traffic speeds; improving cycle facilities; and providing road safety education and training programmes for both cyclists and drivers.

- 8.25 The provision of key community facilities within residential areas which are accessible both by cycling and walking are essential. Safe and convenient cycle routes and secure cycle parking at journey destinations must also be provided. The National Cycle Network in Staffordshire is shown on the Key Diagram.
- 8.26 The importance of cycling was recognised by Central Government with the publication of the National Cycling Strategy in July 1996. The Government has set a target of doubling the level of cycling by 2002 and doubling it again by 2012. Cycling Strategies for both the County and City have been produced as supporting documents to the Local Transport Plans. The Strategies build upon the Structure Plan policies and include targets in line with the national targets.

Motorcycling

T6 The safety of users of motorcycles and mopeds and the need for secure parking will be taken into account both in new and existing developments and at public transport interchange sites.

- 8.27 Powered Two-Wheelers (PTWs) offer the same potential for personal mobility as private cars whilst contributing less congestion, pollution and damage to roads. PTWs are not subject to the same delays in congested traffic and so spend less time wasting fuel idling in queues; they are lighter, more fuel efficient and take up less space - whether parked or moving.
- 8.28 Although motorcyclists inflict fewer casualties on other road users than do car users, safety considerations are important as motorcyclists are more vulnerable to injury in an accident than the occupants of a car.
- 8.29 Policies on motorcycling have been further developed in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans.

Public Transport Provision

T7 The provision of a comprehensive and integrated public transport network throughout Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, which meets local and longer distance travel needs, will be pursued by:

- (a) seeking partnerships with public transport operators to ensure the provision of regular, co-ordinated high quality services throughout the Plan area;**
- (b) seeking to ensure that existing settlements and communities are well served by public transport services and facilities;**
- (c) ensuring that new developments are located in areas that are well served by public transport and, where appropriate, improved facilities and services are provided at an early stage by developers. In particular, within the travel to work area of the West Midlands Conurbation, all existing and future built-up areas with an existing or anticipated trip generation of 1,000 person trips or more per day to/from the Metropolitan area should have access to a stop or station, or be served by a strategic park and ride facility with a high frequency and high quality connection into the West Midlands Metropolitan area;**

- (d) consideration being given to the public transport needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, and other mobility impaired travellers, by the provision of services which meet their needs;**
- (e) in partnership with operators, providing enhanced passenger waiting and information facilities, better bus/rail interchanges and better provision for cyclists and cycles to transfer to public transport;**
- (f) improving access by foot to bus stops and rail stations;**
- (g) improving bus and rail accessibility from Staffordshire to the airports of Manchester, Birmingham and East Midlands;**
- (h) developing rail and bus-based strategic park and ride schemes within the context of 'corridor studies' in partnership with other national and local government agencies and transport providers.**

- 8.30 All policies relating to public transport provision in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent reflect the increased emphasis now placed on sustainability, and the need to reduce travel by the private motor vehicle. The policies set out the longer term aspirations for public transport services, and the important role of partnerships between public transport operators, Parish Councils and other public and private sector organisations. The policies also acknowledge that the legislative framework within which bus and rail services operate can change and the financial resources currently available to the County and City Councils for public transport are limited.
- 8.31 Encouraging travel by bus or rail requires a regular, safe and high quality public transport service which is an acceptable alternative to the car rather than providing a service which just meets the social needs of those without cars. The County and City Councils will aim to ensure that all settlements and communities are well served by public transport through the provision of a core urban and interurban service network as detailed in the Local Transport Plan documents.
- 8.32 An essential part of a progressive transportation strategy must be to continue the search for new forms of transport to carry passengers speedily and safely around the North Staffordshire Conurbation. Preliminary investigations of innovative systems have failed to reveal viable options to date, although the issue will be kept under review, particularly in the light of the changing economics of transportation. New land uses, regeneration opportunities and other traffic generating initiatives will be a critical element in the success of such an integrated transport system. This should be taken into account in determining the suitability of proposed development locations.
- 8.33 Local transport plan guidance suggests that park and ride, in appropriate circumstances, can help promote sustainable travel patterns and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of town centres. Schemes need to be developed as an integral part of the transport strategy for an area and subject to robust assessment, including consideration of alternatives, the impact on local amenity and travel impacts. Whilst acknowledging the benefits that park and ride can bring, the County and City Councils wish to ensure that sites do not result in additional car travel.

- 8.34 The County, City and District Councils can work with operators and developers to promote the use of services, or provide infrastructure aimed at encouraging reliable and efficient services. Public transport operators, users and non-users should be consulted fully about the role of public transport, and land use policies should be developed which are compatible with public transport operations. It will be necessary to ensure that users of public transport services are able to make the whole of their journey in greater comfort, and with greater certainty, than at present. This requires that considerable attention is given to the "off-bus/off-train" portions of passenger journeys, particularly to walking routes, waiting facilities, and information.
- 8.35 The policies and strategies being developed in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans are in line with Structure Plan policies.

Improving the Rail Network

T8A The protection and improvement of the rail network will be sought, following consultation with the rail industry, in order to increase passenger journeys and movement of freight by rail, by:

- (a) safeguarding existing rail infrastructure;**
- (b) protecting redundant rail routes and facilities and actively promoting their restoration where it is considered that the demand and resources permit;**
- (c) developing the local rail network and facilities to help divert commuters and other users from private vehicles, including the development of additional parking at railway stations;**
- (d) encouraging the development of inter-regional and local services, the upgrading of the West Coast Main Line and the modernisation and enhancement of other lines.**

- 8.36 Policy T8A supports and encourages improvements to the strategic and local rail network shown on the Key Diagram. Rail has significant environmental advantages over road transport in terms of energy consumption, pollution and safety. One of the Plan's specific transport objectives is to make greater and more effective use of the passenger rail network. Improvements to the network are important for achieving this objective. It is also important to encourage the use of rail for freight transport, as covered by Policy T10.
- 8.37 Railway infrastructure has a high profile, particularly to visitors and to passengers travelling through the Plan area. Selective improvements can help to make rail travel a more pleasant experience, and can improve the environment of areas through which rail lines pass.
- 8.38 Good rail links to other UK regions are important for the future well-being of the local economy. In this context, links with Europe will be even more important in the future. The development of a Trans-European Rail Network, which includes the West Coast Main Line, will allow Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to benefit from the Single European Market.

New Stations

T8B New or re-opened stations, including strategic park and ride sites will be supported where they are justified and do not adversely affect the use of, and services to, other stations or result in the increased use of the private motor vehicle. Specific proposals, including Bridgtown and Brinsford, will be identified in local plans in conjunction with the rail industry and other partners.

- 8.39 A station at Bridgtown could potentially serve the Orbital Centre, and Kingswood Lakeside development. Also, a strategic park and ride site at Brinsford has been identified as an opportunity to improve rail services on the Wolverhampton to Stafford line and open up potential development land. This site has only been the subject of a scoping study to date and further work is needed to assess its feasibility and benefits.
- 8.40 Further detailed assessment is required to identify the overall impact of any new rail proposal, and the availability of funding, before it can proceed. This would include an assessment by Railtrack of the effects of any new station on track capacity. A station at Dosthill, Tamworth is unlikely to be feasible in the Plan period due to capacity problems on the line. However, if a solution to the problems comes forward, the option for a new station should then be considered.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

T9 Taxi and private hire vehicle ranks will be provided, where appropriate, in convenient and safe locations, with suitable facilities and waiting areas, to allow taxis to assist with the movement of people.

- 8.41 Taxis and private hire vehicles have an important role to play in meeting the travel needs of many sections of the population. They are used by people without access to a car, in particular by those with disabilities and those encumbered with heavy items such as shopping, and when journeys cannot be made by foot, cycle, bus or train. They also provide a useful service at night when bus and train services have ended.
- 8.42 Taxi and private vehicle hire ranks and waiting areas with suitable facilities such as shelter, lighting, seating and payphones need to be provided where appropriate, and should be clearly marked as such. They must be of a suitable size and in convenient locations, for example within walking distance of shopping centres, bus and rail facilities and outside supermarkets. However, they must not discourage the use of, or interfere with, the provision of walking, cycling and public transport facilities.

Freight Transport

T10 Priority will be given to reducing the environmental impact of long distance freight movements by:

- (a) the safeguarding of existing and disused rail lines and sidings which could be used by freight traffic in the future, following consultation with the rail industry and within available resources;**
- (b) seeking, in conjunction with rail operators, the maintenance of or provision of rail freight terminals taking into account the impact on the local environment;**
- (c) supporting proposals to increase the movement of freight by pipelines, canals and rivers, which do not have significant detrimental effects on the local environment or recreational activities;**

- (d) improving, where appropriate, local roads which serve freight terminals and distribution depots;**
- (e) using traffic management measures to concentrate road freight on the Strategic Highway Network, away from town centres and residential areas;**
- (f) giving priority to locating new developments which are likely to generate significant amounts of heavy goods traffic, in areas where there is good access to the rail network;**
- (g) locating developments generating significant amounts of goods traffic with easy access by an appropriate route to the Strategic Highway Network avoiding residential or environmentally sensitive areas, when rail access is not available or appropriate.**

8.43 Lorries and vans have an essential role in the economy yet are a source of increasing environmental concern. Currently, the lorry and van are generally the most economic and efficient mode for short journeys and are the most practical solution for urban collections and deliveries. The aim is to concentrate the road freight on the Strategic Highway Network which is defined in Policy T12 and identified on the Key Diagram.

8.44 Rail freight is particularly suited to longer journeys. Whilst roads are congested, the current capacity of the rail network to carry freight is under-used. It is therefore important to protect the currently used rail freight terminals at Longport, Cliff Vale, Etruria, Burton Wagon Works and Marcroft Wagon Works and the following disused facilities which have the potential to be strategic rail freight terminals, serving industrial proposals in Chapter 6 "The Economy":

- Chatterley Valley
- Creswell, Blythe Bridge
- Forge Lane (Etruria)
- Hem Heath/Trentham
- Mid Cannock Rail Disposal Point
- Stafford Sidings
- Cauldon Lowe
- Oakamoor

8.45 The County and City Councils have assessed road and rail freight issues in their Local Transport Plans. Policies and strategies have been developed in line with the Government's Strategy on Sustainable Distribution, published March 1999, building upon the policies in Policy T10. The Local Transport Plans recognise the inherent need to consult with the road and rail industry and environmental bodies on freight issues. Freight Quality Partnerships will provide one means of working with all relevant parties to help achieve a distribution system that does not compromise the future needs of our society, economy and environment.

Management of Traffic

T11 Traffic management measures, urban traffic control and information systems will be introduced, where necessary, to:

- (a) control the volume and speed of traffic;**
- (b) ensure the most efficient use of highway capacity on the Strategic Highway Network;**
- (c) improve conditions for public transport operators and promote the use of public transport;**
- (d) reinforce the road network hierarchy and control use of unsuitable roads by non-local traffic;**
- (e) minimise the impact of traffic in residential and other environmentally sensitive areas;**
- (f) improve safety;**
- (g) enhance the environment and convenience for people with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists;**
- (h) provide safe, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes, particularly to schools;**
- (i) enable road space in town centres to be allocated so as to reflect the respective needs of disabled people, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, emergency services and delivery vehicles;**
- (j) support demand management initiatives.**

8.46 Complementary to development location policies, traffic management measures can play an important role in encouraging walking and cycling and improving the overall quality of life in urban areas. They help to manage congestion in town centres and improve road safety in people sensitive areas such as residential zones, shopping streets and near schools. Meeting future demand for travel by the provision of additional road space is now recognised as being unacceptable in environmental and financial terms. Traffic must therefore be managed to ensure the most effective use of the existing transport infrastructure.

8.47 Traffic management measures encompass the reallocation of highway space by introducing bus and cycle lanes and pedestrianised areas; parking controls (covered by T16); traffic control systems which encourage smoother flowing traffic and give priority to public transport; and regulating traffic speeds by introducing speed limits and traffic calming.

8.48 New technology can now keep drivers informed of traffic conditions while also controlling and directing traffic for environmental or efficiency objectives, for example variable message signs and in-car navigation systems.

Strategic Highway Network

T12 Except as required by Policies T2, T3 and T14, the Strategic Highway Network will be improved in order to:

- (a) safeguard the safety of all users;**
- (b) provide accessibility to major areas of development;**
- (c) increase the vitality and viability of town centres;**
- (d) assist public transport;**
- (e) reduce traffic in areas of high environmental sensitivity;**
- (f) maintain the efficiency of the Network;**
- (g) assist in securing regeneration.**

8.49 The Strategic Highway Network is defined as all motorways and trunk roads, other Primary Routes and some non-Primary Routes of more than local importance. It encompasses a coherent network of roads which accommodates substantial volumes of traffic including a high proportion of long distance through traffic and significant numbers of heavy goods vehicles. It links major industrial or commercial development and centres of population together or to the Primary Route Network. The Strategic Highway Network is identified on the Key Diagram.

8.50 Specific measures for improving the Strategic Highway Network will be developed in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans, complementing measures identified by Central Government for trunk roads and motorways.

Local Roads

T13 The priorities for local roads will be to:

- (a) improve safety for all users;**
- (b) improve facilities for people with disabilities, pedestrians, cyclists and buses;**
- (c) reduce the impact of motor vehicular traffic on people and environmentally sensitive areas.**

8.51 In contrast to the Strategic Highway Network, the main purpose of local roads is to provide access to all types of development by foot, bicycle and motor vehicles. Through the implementation of the transport policies in this Plan, the aim is to improve safety for all users of local roads and enhance the environment of areas where people live and work. This will be achieved by encouraging people to walk, cycle and use the bus; regulating traffic movements through traffic management measures; and implementing appropriate land use development policies. Detailed policies and strategies will be developed through the local transport plan process.

Routes of National and Regional Significance

T14 Policies and proposals for the free flow of traffic, particularly commercial traffic, on the following routes, which are considered to be of national and regional significance, will be supported in principle, subject to beneficial effects on the economy, safety and the environment of the Plan area:

Roads:

M6 Motorway
M54 Motorway
Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR)
M42/A42(T)
A50(T)
A5(T) (M42 to BNRR)
A500(T)
A38(T)

Railway Lines:

West Coast Main Line
Derby to Bristol and Didcot via Birmingham
Crewe to Derby via Stoke
Commuter lines serving the West Midlands Conurbation
Wolverhampton to Chester, Aberystwyth and Pwllheli

- 8.52 The regional transport objectives of improving access for goods to their markets will be achieved by reducing congestion on routes of national and regional significance. Policies and proposals to achieve this, at present largely the responsibility of Central Government, will be judged against the effects on the Plan area. It is also necessary to make the best use of the rail network for moving both passengers and freight to, from and through Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This will essentially be carried out by the rail industry with support from the County and City Councils.
- 8.53 The Trans-European Transport Network (TENS) which has been defined by the Member States of the European Union includes the M6 and M54 motorways and the West Coast Main Rail Line. The Network seeks to promote the integration of Europe's transport systems, encouraging the fast and efficient movement of goods over long distances.
- 8.54 In view of the need to implement the development proposals in the Plan and of the recognition that road capacity cannot be increased throughout the network to meet the demand, it will not be possible to have the same freedom of movement on the entire highway network. Roads other than those listed above will therefore have to provide for the road traffic arising from developments to a safe standard that can be achieved by implementing the sustainable transport policies in this Plan.
- 8.55 Three major multi-modal studies that affect Staffordshire are being carried out by the Government. They cover the West Midlands Area, West Midlands to the North West and West Midlands to Nottingham. The County and City Councils are participating fully in these studies and will seek to ensure that their outcomes are consistent with their Local Transport Plans.

- 8.56 The A38(T) (between the A5 and A50) requires a specific mention owing to the fact that it is defined as a nationally and regionally significant route; it is currently heavily trafficked in the peak hours; and is also subject to considerable development pressures. Transport improvements in the corridor are therefore essential for achieving satisfactory operating conditions. Suitable measures will be developed by the Highways Agency in consultation with the County Council and taking into account the Government's multi-modal studies.

~~Motorway, Trunk Road and National Rail Proposals~~

~~**T15A Land is reserved for the implementation of the following schemes in the first half of the Plan period:**~~

~~**Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR)**~~

~~**A500 grade-separated junctions at City Road and Stoke Road, Stoke-on-Trent**~~

~~**A5 Weeford to Fazeley**~~

~~**A38 Streethay to Hilliards Cross (with developer contribution)**~~

~~**A449 Four Ashes**~~

~~**West Coast Main Line improvements**~~

~~**Land is reserved for the possible widening of the M6 (Junctions 11A-16) subject to further study.**~~

- 8.57 The BNRR was approved in July 1997 after a full public inquiry.
- 8.58 The Government's Trunk Roads Review, published in July 1998, has given the go-ahead for the above schemes to be commenced within the next seven years. The M6 widening project was not approved, but remains a future possibility depending on the outcome of the Government's multi-modal study on the M6 corridor to be completed in 2001.

~~Priority County and City Major Transport Schemes~~

~~**T15B Priority will be given to the early implementation of the following major proposals, as defined on the Key Diagram, which are considered to be crucial in terms of the economy, regeneration, environmental improvement, road safety and the efficient use of the network in accordance with Policies T8A/B and T12. Developer contributions will be sought, where appropriate, to assist in bringing forward these schemes:**~~

~~**Biddulph Inner Bypass**~~

~~**Burntwood Bypass**~~

~~**City Centre (Hanley) Link**~~

~~**Hanley Bentilee Link**~~

~~**Rugeley Bypass (Stages 2A and 2B)**~~

~~**Tunstall Bypass (Phase 3)**~~

~~**Upgrading of the Walsall-Cannock-Hednesford-Rugeley railway line and improvement of stations along its route**~~

~~**New stations at Brinsford, Bridgtown and Trentham**~~

~~**with park and ride facilities as appropriate, dependent upon further investigation at the local plan stage.**~~

- 8.59 Biddulph Inner Bypass: This important improvement to the Strategic Highway Network will provide essential relief to Biddulph town centre and adjoining residential streets of the adverse effects of heavy through traffic. It will encourage the economic regeneration of Biddulph town centre and improve access to proposed employment sites north and west of the town centre and existing businesses to the west of the town centre. Complementary to the bypass, traffic restraint measures and environmental improvements will be implemented through the Local Transport Plan along the existing A527, and the opportunity to enhance and upgrade town centre bus facilities will be provided.
- 8.60 Burntwood Bypass: This is an essential component of a much wider transportation strategy for the whole Burntwood area. It will provide an opportunity to create a viable and vibrant town centre, including opportunities to improve public transport, and will also be a vital element in the strategy to provide a direct link between the Burntwood area and the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR). The bypass will also provide access to employment land, broadening local employment opportunities and provide improved access to Chasewater and the National Cycle Route Network.
- 8.61 City Centre (Hanley) Link: This is an essential part of the Hanley West development area and involves the construction of a new road linking the western end of Potteries Way to Etruria Road (A5010) at Festival Park. It will greatly reduce through traffic in Hanley centre thus improving the local environment, air quality and noise, particularly in the Hanley Cultural quarter. The new road will also facilitate the efficient movement of buses and commercial vehicles and allow the free movement of cyclists and pedestrians in the areas freed of traffic. The road will provide access to around 20ha. of employment land, creating opportunities for new businesses and new jobs.
- 8.62 Hanley-Bentilee Link: This involves the construction of a new link from Dividy Road to Hanley City Centre completely bypassing the Lime Kiln and A5008 corridor which is currently heavily congested. The scheme includes bus priority measures, cycle lanes and potential for a park and ride facility and because of its strategic importance has an important part to play in the strategy of the Stoke/Newcastle package. Its primary function is to provide a new transport route leading into the City Centre from the east which would benefit all road users and local residents as well as procuring significant economic benefits to the area.
- 8.63 Rugeley Bypass (Stages 2A and 2B): This scheme will improve the accessibility and marketability of the former Lea Hall Colliery which is to be redeveloped creating significant employment opportunities. It will complement traffic calming measures already introduced on the A51 through Rugeley by routing through traffic away from this corridor, reducing peak period congestion, accident levels, and reducing the severance of the town centre from the residential areas to the west.
- 8.64 Tunstall Bypass (Phase 3): This provides a strategic link between the A527 (to Biddulph), the A50 and the A500 and thence to the M6. It was designed in three phases, two of which are complete and open to traffic thus providing the A500 to A50 section. The final link to the A527 known as the Northern Bypass has the benefit of planning permission and the Secretary of State's approval is awaited following a special Parliamentary procedure in connection with the associated compulsory purchase order. The main benefits of the scheme are to relieve the congested A50 and A527 primary routes, particularly in the Tunstall area; to relieve Tunstall town centre from the effects of heavy traffic; allow pedestrianisation and other environmental improvements to take place; enable town centre bus facilities to be enhanced and upgraded; and to realise the full potential of the housing and employment developments in the north of Stoke-on-Trent.

- 8.65 Walsall-Cannock-Hednesford-Rugeley Railway Line: Railtrack's 2000 Network Management Statement for Great Britain identifies the electrification and improvement in line speed and journey times as an option for further improvements in capability between Walsall and Rugeley. The County Council supports any improvements in capacity along this line, which will provide improved services for major development sites at Rugeley and Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay (see Policy H1).
- 8.66 New Stations: As stated in paragraph 8.39, a strategic park and ride site at Brinsford has been identified as an opportunity to improve rail services on the Wolverhampton to Stafford line and open up potential development land. Stations at Bridgtown, serving the Orbital Centre and Kingswood Lakeside development, and Trentham, serving the Premium Employment Site at Sideway/Trentham Lakes, have also been proposed. Any new station or park and ride facility will be subject to robust assessment, including the impact on local amenity, track capacity and travel demand and its financial viability to enable it to be included in any local plan.

~~Other Major County and City Transport Schemes~~

~~**T15C The following further major transport schemes are proposed. These are important for the implementation of the locational strategy of the Structure Plan in accordance with Policies T8A/B and T12, but are considered likely to require substantial funding from private finance if they are to be achieved in the Plan period. Associated development to secure such funding must be justified in the context of local plan procedures:**~~

~~**Amington Link Road**~~

~~**Chatterley Station**~~

~~**Cheadle Town Centre Bypass Option 2 (Cheadle South West Distributor Road)**~~

~~**Dosthill Bypass, Tamworth**~~

~~**A high quality public transport link between Fradley, Lichfield Trent Valley Station and Lichfield City Centre**~~

~~**Lichfield Southern Bypass (Walsall Road to London Road)**~~

~~**Stafford Eastern Bypass – Uttoxeter Road (A518) to Rugeley Road (A513)**~~

~~**Stafford Western access improvements**~~

~~**Stoke Inner Relief Road**~~

~~**Tunstall South Western Access Link**~~

~~**Winchester Road Extension**~~

- 8.67 It is considered that the road and public transport improvements in T15C are required to achieve the objectives of the Plan and meet Policies T8A/B and T12. Plans identifying the location of the transport proposals are available from the County Council. The road schemes were assessed in terms of cost, alignment and engineering and their contribution towards:
- (i) aiding economic regeneration;
 - (ii) reducing road traffic accidents;
 - (iii) improving the environment;
 - (iv) meeting development targets;
 - (v) reducing traffic flows.

- 8.68 The major new housing development proposal at Fradley, detailed in H1, requires good public transport links to local employment and shopping centres and centres further afield, particularly the West Midlands Conurbation (see Policy T7(c)). A combination of bus and rail improvements will be required to serve the development. The nature of these improvements requires further study as a matter of urgency. The costs and benefits of the provision of a new station at Chatterley need to be considered before it can be identified in the Local Plan.
- 8.69 The availability of financial resources, substantially from private developers, will dictate the progress on implementing these transport improvements. The County and City Councils acknowledge the benefits of a number of strategic road schemes not listed in Policies T15B or T15C. However, due to the Government's priority to improve the availability of all modes of travel, funding is unlikely to be available, within the Structure Plan period, for any road schemes not listed in Policies T15B or T15C. The Wolstanton Link Road is supported by the County Council on the basis of its local benefits, but is not considered to be strategically significant enough to be included in the Plan, and should be left to the local planning authority to determine. In addition, a number of communities would benefit from bypasses (e.g. Yoxall) or strategic road links (e.g. between the A513 and the A449 on the southern side of Stafford). To safeguard this objective, the County Council will, in appropriate cases, continue the protection of such schemes for the longer term.

Car Parking

~~**T16 Maximum standards for off street parking provision will be set in local plans and these standards shall take into account national standards or any regional standards that may be specified. Policy and standards for both on and off street parking should be consistent across the area of Staffordshire and Stoke subject to regard being had for the need to:**~~

- ~~**(a) meet demand management and traffic reduction policies;**~~
- ~~**(b) reduce demand for travel by the private motor vehicle;**~~
- ~~**(c) encourage users of new and existing developments to travel by modes other than the private motor vehicle;**~~
- ~~**(d) make provision for parking for users with disabilities;**~~
- ~~**(e) avoid traffic, environmental and safety problems caused by on-street parking;**~~
- ~~**(f) ensure that non operational parking requirements reflect the availability or potential availability of alternative modes of travel;**~~
- ~~**(g) maximise the potential for park and ride facilities where these are deemed appropriate.**~~

- 8.70 A primary aim of this policy is to ensure that car parking availability does not undermine the strategic aims of sustainability while ensuring that land uses are efficiently serviced. In some areas it will be desirable to discourage the use of private motor vehicles, or at least control their movement. This aim must relate to the availability of alternative modes of transport. It is also important to ensure that where parking restraint measures are applied in order to deter commuting and the demand for long stay parking, they are applied with some measure of consistency.

- 8.71 Draft PPG13 on Transport was published for consultation in 1999. It recommends a consistent approach towards maximum parking standards that would serve to encourage sustainable transport. With regard to residential parking requirements, the County and City Councils consider that adequate off-street provision is desirable to minimise accidents, maintain access, and allow a more flexible approach to carriageway layout. Departure from the standards for residential parking in PPG3 : Housing may therefore be justified in certain circumstances.
- 8.72 Regional Planning Guidance requires the co-ordination of parking policy across the Region (and in adjacent regions). Parking levels and charges should be consistent to avoid competition between neighbouring centres. The development of a region-wide car parking policy framework is proposed by The Integrated Transport Action Plan for the West Midlands Region, published in 1998. It will seek to implement demand management policies by consensus, whilst recognising the need to maintain and enhance the viability of town centres.
- 8.73 The West Midlands Regional Car Parking Study was published in 1999. The objective of the study was to provide a list of parking provision and prices at various centres within the West Midlands Region. The following conclusions were drawn:
- parking policies should be restraint-based rather than demand-led;
 - in line with guidance from Central Government, regional targets should be set for the provision of short stay parking spaces;
 - a uniform set of parking standards could avoid developers from relocating to adjacent areas with more generous parking arrangements;
 - a further look at the viability of park and ride could encourage greater use of the service.
- 8.74 Detailed policies and strategies on car parking will be developed through the local transport plan process in line with national and regional planning guidance and local transport plan guidance, and building upon the Structure Plan policies.

Lorry and Coach Parking Facilities

T17 Off-street coach and overnight lorry parks will be located, where required, with:

- (a) good links to the Strategic Highway Network;**
- (b) regard to the impact on the local environment, the character of the landscape and nature conservation interests.**

- 8.75 In-transit lorry drivers often have to stay overnight away from their home depot, and this can create problems which can only be controlled by suitably located and secure lorry parks. Successful tourist attractions require adequate off-street coach parks to prevent road safety problems and to protect the environment.
- 8.76 To deter access via residential streets and other environmentally sensitive areas, lorry and coach parks should be easily accessible to the Strategic Highway Network. Locations will be chosen which will minimise the risk of environment damage through noise, fumes or visual intrusion.

- 8.77 Lorry and coach parking is dealt with in the County and City Councils' Local Transport Plans in line with Policy T17.

Transport and Development

T18A Development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the function of the transport network. Prior to new developments being permitted that are likely to create significant movement demand, undertakings will be sought to secure appropriate operational standards on the transport network following the preparation of Transport Assessments. The undertakings may involve:

- (a) preparation and implementation of 'Green Transport Plans' which make alternative forms of transport to the private motor vehicle more attractive to users of relevant developments;**
- (b) provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities related to the developments to support modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport but also, where relevant, highway works or parking provision in order to maintain an acceptable level of service in the transport system.**

- 8.78 The aim of Policy T18A is to provide a strategic framework to ensure that the issues which are essential to the achievement of a sustainable and integrated transport strategy are taken into account in the preparation of local plans. It endeavours to promote consistency between local transport plans, local plans and the Structure Plan.
- 8.79 Government guidance recognises that developers may be required to meet or contribute towards the cost of providing necessary facilities to enable a development to go ahead. Travel Impact Assessments must show that a proposed development would not adversely affect the traffic flow on the network, and ensure that necessary remedial measures are implemented. The County and City Councils continue to develop a range of local transport strategies for urban areas which are used to guide development investment in infrastructure. The adoption of 'Green Transport Plans' will ensure that the options for travel by means other than the private motor vehicle have been fully explored by developers and businesses, where appropriate.
- 8.80 The policy should be applied by local planning authorities in line with Circular 1/97.

Operational Requirements for Employment Developments

T18B Developers of industrial and commercial sites will be expected to provide adequate off-street loading and unloading facilities with suitable access from adjoining highways. Operators of heavy goods vehicles should provide adequate parking and servicing facilities off the highway to serve the number of vehicles to be operated from the given site.

8.81 The distribution of goods relies heavily on the use of road infrastructure and the lorry and van. Currently, the most practical way to make collections and deliveries is the lorry and van. On-street loading and unloading and parking of lorries, due to inadequate off-street facilities, can create further congestion in urban areas, obstruct pedestrian and cycle route, and increase the likelihood of accidents. The issues surrounding the delivery of goods will be dealt with in the freight strategies in the County and City Local Transport Plans.

Airfields and Heliports

T19 Proposals for the use of existing operational airfields or heliports and the development of new facilities for private business and recreational flying will be assessed in terms of:

- (a) the impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local settlements;**
- (b) the economic and employment advantages;**
- (c) access from the main population and employment centres in the City and County and neighbouring areas;**
- (d) the existence of suitably located alternative flying facilities.**

8.82 The County and City Councils acknowledge the demand for small scale business and recreational flying. If demand cannot be met within existing facilities, new development will be considered. Proposals will be assessed against economic benefits and environmental considerations, such as aircraft noise, increases in road traffic, visual intrusion, energy use and air pollution.

9. NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

Protection of the Countryside: General Considerations

NC1 The countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake and non-renewable and natural resources will be afforded protection. New building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in Development Plans, will be strictly controlled. Development which is acceptable with respect to other Structure Plan policies should respect the character of the countryside and maintain or improve the environment. Where overriding economic or social interests outweigh the need for environmental maintenance or improvement, development proposals should include measures for adequate mitigation of, or compensation for, adverse environmental impacts.

- 9.1 A framework for sustainable development must have regard to the need to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural environment in its most inclusive sense. Local character and distinctiveness have resulted from a continuous inter-relationship between human activity, the physical elements of the land, and the plants and animals that populate it. The countryside and the built environment remain in a state of evolution, and the inevitability of change is recognised. However, within that context the maintenance of environmental quality requires that special attention be paid to the safeguarding of all of those elements that contribute to diversity, character and distinctiveness. To that end, a particular emphasis will be placed on the conservation, enhancement and restoration of landscapes, the maintenance and promotion of biodiversity and the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the historic environment, both within settlements and in the wider countryside.

Landscape Protection and Restoration

NC2 Development should be informed by and be sympathetic to landscape character and quality and should contribute, as appropriate, to the regeneration, restoration, enhancement, maintenance or active conservation of the landscape likely to be affected. Proposals with landscape and visual implications will be assessed having regard to the extent to which they would:

- (a) cause unacceptable visual harm;**
- (b) introduce (or conversely remove) incongruous landscape elements;**
- (c) cause the disturbance or loss of (or conversely help to maintain):**
 - (i) landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness;**
 - (ii) historic elements which contribute significantly to landscape character and quality, such as field, settlement or road patterns;**

- (iii) semi-natural vegetation which is characteristic of that landscape type;**
- (iv) the visual condition of landscape elements;**
- (v) tranquillity.**

- 9.2 Staffordshire County Council has undertaken a project in partnership with the Countryside Commission to evaluate the landscapes of the Plan area and to map their quality or effective strength of character. In addition to the evaluation of landscape quality, a method has been developed for assessing and mapping the general sensitivity of landscape units to the impacts of change. It has been found that the key characteristics which determine the strength of character of landscapes, their quality and their vulnerability to the impacts of change, are those listed under Policy NC2 above. It is proposed that the output from this study should be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance to aid delivery of Policy NC2 and subsequent local plans, by helping to determine what type and scale of development would be acceptable in differing rural landscapes, and by identifying those areas which require positive investment, either to maintain their high landscape quality or to restore or recreate lost quality and character. This would necessarily be subject to the provisions of other relevant policies, including those relating to areas within Green Belt, and to the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 9.3 In essence, this would mean that in areas of the highest landscape quality that are also highly sensitive the general policy objective should be the conservation of existing character and quality, and restrictive planning policies would be appropriate. Conversely, in areas of low quality and low sensitivity, the general objective should be the restoration of lost or eroded character, and the test of acceptability of development should be the extent to which it can meet that objective. In some areas which are of the lowest quality and sensitivity landscape character may have been eroded to such an extent, or the pattern of land use may have changed so radically, that restoration of character is not possible and landscape regeneration to a new vision, appropriate to the characteristics of the land, is necessary. Areas closer to average quality and sensitivity would require policies aimed at landscape enhancement and maintenance as appropriate.
- 9.4 It is considered that this approach accords with Planning Policy Guidance for the Countryside (PPG7). This requires a fundamental reassessment of local countryside designations such as Special Landscape Areas and proposes that designations should only be maintained or extended where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. Guidance also requires that in reviewing development plans, the function and justification of existing local countryside designations should be rigorously considered, with planning authorities ensuring that they are soundly based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the countryside.
- 9.5 The future of existing local countryside designations will be a matter for local plans to decide in due course. However, the adoption of the results of the landscape study as Supplementary Planning Guidance is commended to the local plan authorities to provide support for general countryside policies in local plans and, where appropriate, for the definition of local designations which may be seen as the product of an assessment process taking an holistic approach to landscape quality and character.

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NC3 The landscape quality of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting will be conserved and enhanced, and its nature conservation and recreational value protected and extended. Proposals for development within the AONB will be subject to special scrutiny, having regard to the economic and social well-being of the area, and most particularly to the environmental effects of the proposal. Development will be restricted to uses compatible with the conservation of the area's natural beauty, and major industrial or commercial development will not be permitted unless proven national interest and lack of alternative sites can justify an exception. The acceptability of development proposals outside the AONB boundary will be assessed with regard to the extent of any adverse impact on the landscape, nature conservation or recreation interest of the AONB.

- 9.6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are designated by the Countryside Commission on the basis of the quality and character of their landscapes in the national context. The primary objective of designation is to conserve the natural beauty of these open and wooded landscapes. Cannock Chase is the Plan area's only AONB and is characterised by heathland landscape, supporting priority habitats and species, and existing extensive areas of forest.
- 9.7 Past policy has been directed towards preventing damaging developments within the AONB and controlling public access by limiting recreational provision to a level which can be absorbed by the landscape without visual or habitat damage. This policy will be maintained, and will be complemented by a continuing effort to ensure that developments in the zone around the AONB do not have adverse impacts upon it. Moreover, in view of the high nature conservation significance of the heathland habitat on Cannock Chase, the County Council will seek, through its own management practice as a landowner, and in partnership with other relevant bodies, to safeguard and enhance this resource within the AONB as a contribution towards the achievement of biodiversity targets for priority habitats and species.
- 9.8 There has been a significant increase in the number of planning applications for development related to horse-riding within the AONB in recent years. The growth of commercial riding facilities helps to meet a recreational need, but brings with it potential problems of visual intrusion, soil erosion, damage to fragile vegetation communities, and pressures on the rights of way network. The planning authorities will require applicants for planning consent to assess the effect of their proposals with respect to those potential problems, to ensure that any expansion in equestrian activities does not have an adverse effect on the AONB.
- 9.9 The provisions of the adopted Minerals Local Plan for the winning of sand and gravel at Pottal Pool will not be affected by this policy.

Protecting the Peak District National Park

NC4 The acceptability of development proposals outside the boundary of the Peak District National Park will be assessed having regard to the need to ensure that the appearance and valued characteristics of the National Park are not adversely affected.

- 9.10 The Peak District National Park contains some of the country's wildest and most beautiful landscapes. If it is to be protected, careful control needs to be exercised over harmful development, be this inside the National Park or not. The National Park Authority will be consulted on any proposal which may have such an effect.
- 9.11 The types of proposals that may be unacceptable are those that could adversely affect the purposes of the National Park or its valued characteristics, as set out in the Park Authority's plans. This could include development conspicuous from within the National Park, development that generates harmful pollution such as might arise from industrial activities, power generation and agriculture, or development that would interfere with the public's enjoyment of the National Park.

Biodiversity

~~**NC5 Planning authorities will seek to further the objectives of the UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plans through appropriate policies and proposals for safeguarding and increasing key habitats and species. Opportunities will be sought to achieve UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets for key habitats and species.**~~

- 9.12 The Convention on Biological Diversity, designed to halt the worldwide loss of animal and plant species and genetic resources, was drawn up at the "Earth Summit" at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. It requires contracting parties to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, now commonly referred to as biodiversity. In response to this, a national Biodiversity Action Plan was published in January 1994, and this was followed in December 1995 by a detailed report from the UK Biodiversity Steering Group, a body set up by Government to examine these issues in detail. The latter document identified key habitats of national importance and set out lists of Globally Threatened and Declining Species in need of protection in the UK. It also produced costed Action Plans, including specific targets, for conserving many of these key habitats and species.
- 9.13 The Government Response to the UK Steering Group's report was published in May 1996. It set out a range of actions considered necessary from individuals and voluntary and statutory bodies, including local authorities. These included the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans at a County or other appropriate level. Such plans have been prepared for the administrative County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent (the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan) and for the National Forest area (which includes part of Staffordshire), whilst a plan for the Peak District National Park is in preparation. The first two plans will be used as guidance to aid delivery of Policy NC5 (Biodiversity) and a similar approach is relevant to the formulation and implementation of appropriate local plan policies. There would be value in the identification, as part of the process of reviewing local plans, of the Biodiversity Action Plan targets that are most appropriate to the area covered.

Important Semi-Natural Habitats

NC6 In considering or formulating proposals for development or land use change, planning authorities will ensure, wherever possible, that damage to important semi-natural habitats or other features or sites of significant nature conservation or geological value is avoided. Particular care will be taken to safeguard and consolidate the integrity of linear and other landscape features which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Where damage is unavoidable, measures to mitigate or compensate through establishment of replacement habitat or features should be taken, wherever possible.

- 9.14 Ancient woodland, lowland heathland, unimproved grassland, peatland and wetlands are examples of habitat types recognised as being of high nature conservation importance and hence in need of particular protection. Information on these and other habitats which are of importance in the Plan area can be found in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, and in other publications such as English Nature's County Inventories of ancient woodland, heathland, grassland and peatland. Such habitats frequently provide essential conditions for some of the County's most uncommon plant and animal species, and as such are regarded as part of the nation's "critical natural capital".
- 9.15 Biodiversity conservation requires not only the safeguarding of individual sites of importance, but the maintenance of an "ecologically healthy" landscape and environment. In seeking to provide for this, the policy also fulfils the requirements of Article 10 of the EC Habitats Directive and Regulation 37 of the UK Habitats Regulations. The Regulation extends the application of policies for the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land to include "encouraging the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora". Such features are defined as "those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species".
- 9.16 The widespread loss of such features in recent decades has resulted in animal and plant populations becoming more fragmented and isolated, and hence more vulnerable. There is a need to reverse these losses by re-establishing habitat links wherever possible. Linear habitats are often of critical nature conservation importance in urban areas providing opportunities for the movement and dispersal of species and may also have a landscape and recreational value by connecting urban areas to their rural hinterlands. Appropriate management of these features will be encouraged generally and in order to promote sustainable development and sympathetic land use change, planning authorities will consider the imposition of conditions to planning permissions and the use of planning obligations and management agreements with landowners and developers to maximise nature conservation benefits, including the conservation and appropriate management of existing or newly created geological exposures.

Sites of International Nature Conservation Importance

NC7A Proposals for development or land use change which are likely to have significant effects on an existing or proposed site of international importance for nature conservation will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Proposals not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, and which are likely (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, will not be permitted unless the planning authority is satisfied that there is no alternative solution, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land use change.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/ or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless the planning authority is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

- 9.17 The protection of sites of nature conservation importance is based upon a hierarchy of international, national and more localised designations as set out in PPG9 (Nature Conservation) "to have regard to the relative significance of international, national, local and informal designations in considering the weight to be attached to nature conservation interests" (sites are listed in Appendix 1).
- 9.18 The protection of internationally designated sites is considered to be of primary importance. The integrity of these sites should not be prejudiced by development, unless there are overriding exceptional circumstances. Regulation 48 of the 1994 UK Habitats Regulations requires "competent authorities", before authorising any proposal which is likely to have a "significant effect" on a European site in Great Britain, to undertake "an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives". It is important when considering the impact of development upon these sites, that attention is paid to the potential damage which could occur from development adjacent to or some distance from the site. In making such an assessment, advice should be taken from relevant bodies such as English Nature and the Environment Agency.
- 9.19 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are classified under European Community Directives. SPAs are designated as part of a network to protect the habitats and populations of a number of wild bird species. SACs are designated to safeguard biodiversity, requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status. The Ramsar convention pre-dates the EC Directives and was specifically concerned with the protection of wetlands, in particular those of importance as waterfowl habitats. Priority natural habitat types and species are those set out in the Annexes to the EU Habitats Directive 1992. They are considered to be threatened on an international scale, and therefore require special protection.

Sites of National Nature Conservation Importance

NC7B Proposals for development or land use change in or likely to affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such proposals are likely to have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, on the SSSI, they will not be permitted unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting that development need and the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites.

Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) or a site identified under the Nature Conservation Review (NCR) or Geological Conservation Review (GCR), particular regard will be paid to the individual site's national importance.

- 9.20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated by English Nature to safeguard a representative series of the nation's most valuable natural history resources and geological features. Some of these are National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and are managed with nature conservation as the principal objective. The Nature Conservation Review (NCR) and Geological Conservation Review (GCR) were carried out by the former Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) to identify and describe nationally important biological and geological sites.

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance

NC7C Development or land use change likely to have an adverse effect on a Local Nature Reserve or a Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site.

- 9.21 The above policy refers to the generic term 'Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance'. Within the City of Stoke-on-Trent, such sites are referred to as Natural Heritage Sites which are locally important because of their wildlife and/or earth science interest. In the rest of the County, sites of local importance for nature conservation consist of Grade 1 County Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). A number of sites have the designation of Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a title which applies to sites declared as LNRs under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Local plans should show all Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance on the Proposals Map.

~~Habitats of Protected Species~~

~~**NC8 Development or land use change which would have an adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on legally protected species will not be allowed. Where development involving satisfactory mitigation is possible, planning authorities will seek, through the planning process, to:**~~

- ~~**(a) reduce disturbance to a minimum;**~~
- ~~**(b) facilitate the survival of individual members of the species;**~~
- ~~**(c) provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current population levels.**~~

- 9.22 Legal protection for certain plant and animal species is required from EC Member States as a result of Council Directives such as 79/409/EEC (The "Birds Directive") and 92/43/EEC (The Habitats and Species Directive). In the UK, such protection is provided mainly through Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The species concerned are listed on Schedule 1 (birds), Schedule 5 (animals) and Schedule 8 (plants) of the Act, the latter two schedules fulfilling the requirements of Articles 12-16 of 92/43/EEC. The schedules, which are revised every five years, currently include species such as otter, water vole, all species of bat, great crested newt and birds such as barn owl and kingfisher. In addition, badgers and their setts are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Certain British species are also listed in the Annexes of Directive 92/43/EEC as being under threat in Europe (e.g. Annex 11a includes the bullhead), and these species therefore also require protection within the UK.
- 9.23 The listed species are those which are very rare or localised nationally, or which are experiencing severe declines in national populations, or where the British populations are important in a European or World context. Developments affecting a European protected species (a number of which occur in Staffordshire) require a licence to derogate from the provisions of the Habitat Directive. Before a licence can be granted by the Secretary of State, as licensing authority, three specific tests in the Habitat Directive and the 1994 Regulations must be

satisfied. In all cases, English Nature will be consulted on any application affecting a protected species prior to any decision being made. It is recommended that English Nature is contacted at the earliest possible stage where work may affect a protected species. Where development that may have an effect on these species is permitted the planning authorities will impose conditions, where appropriate, or enter into planning agreements to secure the policy objectives.

Water Resources

NC9 Groundwater resources and standing water bodies and river systems with their associated wetlands will be safeguarded whenever possible. Development or land use change which would lead to pollution or degradation of these resources will not be permitted unless, exceptionally, it can be demonstrated that adequate mitigation measures to counteract the effect of such adverse impacts can be satisfactorily implemented. Development will not be promoted or permitted in locations where adequate water resources do not exist, or where the provision of water to serve such development would cause detriment to the natural environment.

- 9.24 Groundwater resources are an invaluable source for both public and private water supply, for industry and agriculture, as well as sustaining watercourses and wetlands. Groundwater can be highly susceptible to pollution, and once contaminated is extremely difficult to restore to original quality.
- 9.25 The Environment Agency has set out its approach to groundwater protection in the "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater". There are also associated maps detailing vulnerability of groundwater and its subdivision into major, minor and non-aquifer, and also maps detailing the locations of the source protection zones of public and large private groundwater abstractions. Generally, activities which are considered to pose a risk of physical disturbance to, and/or pollution of groundwater will be discouraged from the major aquifers and designated source protection zones.
- 9.26 Careful consideration also needs to be given to developments where vulnerable groundwaters occur on minor and non-aquifer situations, particularly in close vicinity to private water abstractions and watercourses or wetlands. Whilst mitigation measures can sometimes be sufficient, there are certain types of development identified in the "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater" which are unlikely to be acceptable within certain zones. Where development is in conflict with the "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater", developers are advised to consult the Agency at an early stage to discuss the likely implications and site-specific requirements.
- 9.27 Staffordshire has large areas which overlie highly vulnerable major aquifers and which contain a large number of source protection zones. The key areas are the Triassic Sandstones around Lichfield, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Leek, Cheadle, and to the south east and south west of Stoke on Trent. In addition there is an outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone around Caldon.
- 9.28 The water environment generally has suffered widespread pollution and damage, some of it irreversible. This has had considerable adverse repercussions for aquatic wildlife and for the biological integrity of wetland systems. Policy NC9 is designed to complement similar safeguarding policies put forward by the former National Rivers Authority (now the Environment Agency).

Flood Risk

NC10 Development will not be permitted which would:

- (a) be located in the floodplain, unless acceptable mitigating measures are provided;**
- (b) be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding, or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;**
- (c) adversely affect the water environment as a result of an increase in surface water run-off;**
- (d) detrimentally affect existing or proposed flood defences, or prevent responsible bodies from carrying out flood control works and maintenance activities;**
- (e) necessitate additional public finances for flood defence works.**

9.29 Unless carefully sited and designed, development could itself be at risk of flooding, or could increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, placing life and property at risk. Flood defences can adversely impact upon the environment by interfering with natural processes.

9.30 Historically, many settlements were established close to rivers, since they provided a supply of water, a convenient means of waste disposal and drainage and a means of transport. Prior to planning controls, many of these settlements expanded into floodplains, and only relatively recently have policies and guidelines been established which seek to steer development away from such areas. Current concerns over sea level rise, and recent spring and autumn floods, have reinforced the importance of safeguarding floodplains.

Establishment of Trees and Woodlands

NC11 The extensive planting of trees and new woodlands will be sought, in appropriate locations, and to established standards of design. Emphasis will be placed on the use of native broad-leaved species where suitable. In areas identified as preferred for an extension of woodlands planting, development proposals should include provision for tree or woodland planting which will create an appropriate woodland setting. In and around the larger towns, measures will be taken to encourage and promote urban forestry.

9.31 The national policy to expand woodland cover, especially in the lowlands and on land taken out of agricultural production, is strongly supported, because of the many benefits that environmentally responsible multi-purpose forestry can provide. These include landscape protection and enhancement; the creation of new wildlife habitats; the protection of groundwater quality; the protection and creation of rural employment; the provision of new recreational opportunities; and the fixing of carbon dioxide emissions. Trees and woodlands in and around centres of population can also reduce recreational pressure on the wider countryside; improve degraded landscapes; and create a more pleasant working environment. Woodlands can also be important for their commercial value as well as contributing to the rural economy and the production of home-grown timber.

- 9.32 When considering planting new woodlands it is important to take account of their environmental impact, to ensure that the existing or potential nature conservation value of the site, its archaeology, and its contribution to the landscape will not be compromised. The most appropriate locations for new woodlands have been identified in Supplementary Planning Guidance to this Plan (Planning for Landscape Change) and in strategies for the National Forest and the Forest of Mercia. Established standards of design are laid down in Forestry Commission Guidelines and in the UK Forestry Standard, and are given local interpretations in the strategies and Guidance noted above. The lack of management of many small woodlands, and the potential for their becoming derelict, is of particular concern. The provision of new tree planting or management of existing woodlands will not make acceptable a development which would otherwise be unacceptable.

National and Community Forests

NC12 Within the National Forest and the Forest of Mercia, opportunities will be sought for the planting of woodlands with public access, subject to environmental constraints. Within the rural area of each, development, including appropriate recreational development, which facilitates their use as a woodland resource and which conforms with other Development Plan policies, will be permitted. All development proposals should respect the woodland setting and provide appropriate landscaping and tree planting which reflects the forest context.

- 9.33 The National Forest is a unique initiative of national importance, to establish a new multi-purpose forest covering 200 square miles of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and eastern Staffordshire. The Forest's creation is promoting economic regeneration and environmental improvement in a landscape damaged by industrial dereliction. In addition, it offers opportunities to meet biodiversity targets. The Forest concept is that it will contain working woodlands contributing to supplies of home-grown timber, be a major new recreation and tourism resource, create new landscapes, and provide an alternative productive use for farmland and help stimulate the region's economy. The County Council supports fully the concept of the establishment of the National Forest.
- 9.34 The Forest of Mercia, sited between Cannock Chase and the West Midlands Conurbation, is one of 12 Community Forests in England, which aim to improve the quality of the urban fringe, and enable more people to enjoy the countryside close to home. It promotes the creation, restoration and multi-purpose use of well-wooded landscapes, providing wildlife and amenity benefits and opportunities for economic diversification, regeneration, and environmental training.
- 9.35 The designation of the National Forest or a Community Forest has no direct statutory implications for the planning process, but the National Forest Strategy and the Forest of Mercia Forest Plan may be material considerations in determining development applications. In addition woodland planting linked to new development provides an opportunity to make a considerable contribution to the achievement of their objectives. The appropriate planning authorities will have regard to the National Forest Strategy and Forest of Mercia Forest Plan, and assist with their implementation wherever possible.

Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

NC13 Measures to improve the management and conservation of existing woodlands and important trees and hedgerows, including those in urban areas, will be supported. Development or land use change will only be approved where it will not result in the loss of or significant damage to ancient woodlands, and will not have an unacceptable adverse effect on other woodlands or hedgerows which contribute significantly to landscape character and quality or to the meeting of biodiversity targets, unless it can be demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the site. Where, exceptionally, such a woodland or hedgerow is lost to development, the developer should incorporate or provide for such compensatory planting as is appropriate and feasible in order to minimise the loss of an environmental resource. Schemes for the planting of a new woodland should include subsequent management.

- 9.36 The many benefits that accrue from woodland planting are also provided by existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which, in particular, contribute substantially to landscape character and to the maintenance of biodiversity. Woodlands may also make a valuable contribution to the rural economy, but their relatively low capital value, in comparison with agricultural land, may make them vulnerable to development pressures. The protection of existing woodland of environmental value is therefore a high priority. Just under half the woodlands in the Plan area pre-date the year 1600 and are ancient woodland sites. These are part of the area's cultural heritage and are of key ecological importance, as well as forming a vital element in the landscape. Once lost, an ancient woodland cannot be recreated.

Sites of Archaeological Importance

NC14 Proposals for development or land use change affecting sites of known or potential archaeological importance, and their settings, will be considered in the light of information held by the County or City Councils. Where necessary, developers will be required to supplement this information with the results of desk-based assessments and field evaluations before any decision on the planning application is taken. Where the planning authority decides on the basis of professional advice that archaeological remains are not sufficiently important to warrant physical preservation in situ, developers will be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains prior to development, and for the publication of the results.

- 9.37 Given the nature of archaeological remains, sufficient information is required to enable a thorough evaluation to be made of the value of any remains, and to inform the planning authority in the determination of the planning application. Information on sites of archaeological interest is held in the County and City Sites and Monuments Records, which are continuously updated to record new information as it becomes available. Desk-based assessments and field evaluations must take place before any decision is taken on an application, and it is therefore essential that the possibility of the presence of archaeological constraints be considered at an early stage. Monitoring of the site should continue throughout the implementation period. In determining the importance of any individual site, there may be instances where its value is greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments or with sites of a different period. The above policy applies to all sites of known or potential importance, whether of national importance or not.

- 9.38 When considering the impact of development upon any of these sites, it will be necessary to take into account the impact on the site and its setting which may occur from development nearby.

Sites of National Archaeological Importance

NC15 Development which would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments or archaeological sites of national importance or, in either case, their settings, will only be allowed in the most exceptional circumstances.

- 9.39 Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. All such sites are of national importance, but not all nationally important sites are necessarily scheduled.

Registered Historic Battlefields

NC16 Development proposals within registered Historic Battlefields shall be accompanied by an assessment of the possible adverse impacts upon them. Development or change of use likely to have a detrimental impact upon their integrity and amenity will normally not be permitted.

- 9.40 A Register of Historic Battlefields has been prepared by English Heritage, and PPG15 requires it to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. There are currently two such sites within the Plan area, and the Register is subject to periodic review by English Heritage.

Historic Parks and Gardens: Protection

NC17A Historic parks and gardens and their settings will be protected from development which would cause harm to their character or appearance. In order to assist in the protection of the character and appearance of recorded sites:

- (a) an historic landscape appraisal report may be required where development affecting an historic park or garden or its setting is proposed;**
- (b) historic parks and gardens of particular historic design or aesthetic significance may be designated as Conservation Areas to help protect their character and appearance.**

- 9.41 The Plan area has a remarkable wealth of historic parks and gardens ranging from relict archaeological sites of the Tudor or earlier periods to major designed landscapes of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Many of these are included on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, are designated Conservation Areas, or, as far as current research has identified them, are included in the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record; further sites will be added to the SMR as and when they are identified. Every effort will be made to safeguard these sites, and others which are notified to the planning authorities by the Garden History Society or the Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust, from unsympathetic development. Consideration will be given to adding appropriate additional sites to the English Heritage Register, or including them in designated Conservation Areas. The preparation of historic landscape management and enhancement plans to assist the proper preservation and management of historic parks will be encouraged.

Historic Parks and Gardens: Management and Regeneration

NC17B **Proposals for the positive management and regeneration of historic parks and gardens will be encouraged where they are sympathetic to the special character and interest of the site, and comply with an appropriately formulated assessment and management plan.**

- 9.42 New social and financial priorities during the 20th century have caused significant changes in the management of many historic parks and gardens. Many are now in need of regeneration through substantial investment of finance and expertise.
- 9.43 The diversity of historic parks and gardens in Staffordshire is not only part of the Plan area's historic and cultural heritage but a major part of its distinctive visual identity. Imaginative regeneration of parks and gardens, where informed by understanding of their historic and ecological character, can both benefit individual sites and help revitalise the image of the area. This can attract economically worthwhile tourism and inward investment.
- 9.44 Suitable schemes to regenerate and manage historic parks and gardens for the long term will be actively encouraged.

Listed Buildings

NC18 **There will be a presumption in favour of preserving Listed Buildings and protecting their settings and historic context. In exceptional circumstances, other planning policies may be relaxed to enable the retention or sympathetic reuse of Listed Buildings, or to maintain the integrity of their settings. An historical and architectural evaluation of Listed Buildings may be required as part of the planning process to ensure decision-making is based on a proper understanding of their fabric and structure.**

- 9.45 Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest, included on a list published by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. They are an important part of the national cultural heritage. They contribute to a special sense of place in town and country, and have an economic role both in providing viable economic accommodation for present-day activities and in attracting tourists to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Listed Buildings should not be seen as isolated historical artefacts. They derive their interest as part of human activity in the wider man-made or natural landscape. Development proposals should respect this wider townscape or landscape context.
- 9.46 Listed Buildings are a finite and irreplaceable resource. Every effort should be made to safeguard them. Alterations or extensions to Listed Buildings will only be permitted where they respect the scale, character, materials and archaeology of the historic fabric. Individual buildings often have a complex evolutionary history. This should be properly understood and evaluated to ensure physical alterations do not destroy irreplaceable evidence or features of interest. Applicants for Listed Building consent or planning permission affecting Listed Buildings or their settings may be required to submit an architectural or historic evaluation of the Listed Buildings, or other relevant information, to help inform both their own proposals and the decision making process.

Conservation Areas

NC19 Areas of architectural or historic interest will be designated as Conservation Areas. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining and enhancing buildings, groups of buildings, or other features, including open spaces and views through, into or out of the areas which contribute to their special character, appearance or interest. New development within or adjacent to Conservation Areas should respect, protect and enhance their character and appearance with respect to its height, scale, intensity and materials, and only generate levels of activity which will support their preservation and economic viability. Proposals which would result in over-development, undue disturbance and traffic movement detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area will not be permitted.

- 9.47 The Plan area contains a very wide variety of areas of historic, architectural or industrial archaeological interest. Many have already been designated as Conservation Areas. The adequacy of these designations will be subject to periodic review. Further areas will be designated if they are considered to have the relevant qualities of architectural or historic interest.
- 9.48 Conservation Areas represent the most outstanding parts of the built historic environment, including historic town and village centres, canals, historic parks and gardens and areas of industrial archaeological interest. Designation of a Conservation Area does not preclude change or new building. It seeks to ensure that where acceptable in principle, any new development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area protects its special qualities, and respects the scale, height and form of older buildings. Particular consideration should be paid to safeguarding the morphology of the settlement, including open spaces and views to, through and from the area.
- 9.49 The character of Conservation Areas is not solely determined by the quality of their built environment but also by other factors such as traffic, congestion, visitor numbers, noise or pollution. Some Conservation Areas, particularly market towns or larger villages, may require buoyant levels of economic activity if they are to thrive, but this needs to be carefully monitored or managed to ensure it does not become counter-productively dominant or overwhelming.

10. TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING

- 10.1 Shopping is the function which underpins town centres but it is by no means their only role. They are also the foci of civic pride and identity, workplaces for many people and are places where people live. They offer accessibility to services and facilities that are not available elsewhere and provide access to shops and facilities for people without a car. PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Developments defines town centres as "... city, town, and suburban centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and act as a focus for both the community and for public transport". Due to this mix of uses and attractions in one accessible area, the protection and improvement of town centres is important to the achievement of a more sustainable development pattern.
- 10.2 Retailing is not, however, the only business of town centres. Many people are employed in service industries, and occasionally manufacturing, within town centres. Issues affecting town centres also affect their businesses. It is important that these non-retail employment generators are encouraged in town centres. Those employed in them add to the vitality and viability of the town centre, and the businesses add to the diversity of development. Encouraging the development of the service sector, based in town centres, also helps to expand the service sector of the economy, strengthening the employment base of the area and the town centre.
- 10.3 Many town centres have experienced a decline in the range and quality of goods sold and a lack of investment over the last decade. This situation has been compounded by the expansion of out-of-centre retail outlets, and along with other factors, this has threatened the vitality and viability of town centres. Due to the diverse role played by town centres, it is important to strengthen and protect their position.
- 10.4 Government policy on town centres and retailing is set out in PPG6, issued in revised form in June 1996. Essentially this requires that town centres should be the preferred location for retail development, with other locations on the edge-of-centre or out-of-centre to be considered only if necessary and in sequence. Town centre management strategies, the creation of a 24-hour economy, mixed use developments, good quality design and the creation of attractive environments are encouraged. The need for access and car parking strategies to support the vitality and viability of the centres is also emphasised.
- 10.5 In southern Staffordshire in general, town centres are influenced by the major centres in the West Midlands Conurbation. However, Rugeley and Burntwood, in particular, are in need of further improvement. The town centres of these settlements are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the populations and are in need of expansion and upgrading.
- 10.6 Similarly, in North Staffordshire, the town centres of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph are in need of improvement to secure their roles serving large rural hinterlands into the next plan period. However, any development in these towns or others, should be of a scale appropriate to the centre to which they relate.
- 10.7 A hierarchy can be identified among the centres of the Plan area which is set out in the accompanying descriptive table and Policy TC1. This should be borne in mind in preparing strategies and policies for them. Local plans should analyse the present and future role of each main centre in their area in a manner which takes into account the ramifications of proposals for development on the vitality and viability of other centres.

THE MAIN CENTRES

<p>The Sub-Regional Centre: Stoke-on-Trent City Centre – Hanley</p>	<p>The sub-regional centre has proved to have the critical mass to be able to regard a major off-centre development (the Festival Park) as complementary and expand to coalesce with it. It is a major multi-use centre capable of attracting regional-scale retail, arts, leisure and service sector development. Its continuing growth as a sub-regional centre is to the benefit of its entire hinterland, which includes a substantial proportion of the County.</p>
<p>Large Town Centres: Burton upon Trent, Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tamworth, Lichfield.</p>	<p>These centres have a substantial degree of representation of national ‘multiple’ retailers and also tend to be significant centres of evening leisure activity. They can be expected to be suitable for substantial investment including edge-of-centre retail developments, and major leisure development such as cinemas and night clubs. With specific regard to Tamworth, the limited physical and environmental capacity of the town centre suggests that the continuing pressure for retail expansion may need to be accommodated on the edge-of-centre, for example at Ventura Park.</p>
<p>Medium Town Centres and Conurbation District Centres: Cannock, Leek, Rugeley, Longton, Tunstall, Uttoxeter</p>	<p>This group tends to have a smaller representation of large retail occupiers, and evening leisure activity is more focused on pubs and restaurants than larger attractions. However, they may have the capacity to be transformed by larger scale development and this can be encouraged as long as it does not detract from their character. In particular, Rugeley and Tunstall are likely to be susceptible to investment allowing them to respond to the needs of a growing catchment population; and Longton is well placed for development which would increase its viability, building on sites adjacent to the town centre opened up by the new A50 bypass. These centres are particularly likely to benefit from housing development within them or close by.</p>
<p>Smaller Town Centres and Urban District Centres: Burslem, Kidsgrove, Stoke-upon-Trent Town Centre, Stone, Cheadle, Biddulph, Burntwood, Penkridge, Codsall</p>	<p>Each of these smaller centres has its own special character, tending to concentrate more on speciality ‘niches’ or on local general provision. Care should be taken in assessing large-scale proposals in or on the edge of these centres, to ensure that as far as possible their economic balance is not destroyed or their fabric and atmosphere damaged. Generally speaking, development fostering smaller-scale, more ‘organic’ growth or consolidation (which might include conversion of retail to residential use in declining or fringe areas) is likely to be preferable. Burntwood, however, would benefit from investment allowing it to cater for its growing catchment population, and this may be true of others as circumstances develop.</p>
<p>Local Neighbourhood and Other Centres</p>	<p>Most of these centres can be said to be covered by Policy TC4 (and local plans will have policies providing for their preservation or change as appropriate). However, District Councils should be alert to changing circumstances which might make appropriate their reconsideration as larger order centres – or indeed, the creation or recognition of new centres. In exceptional circumstances (in particular, in neighbourhoods not served by a nearby conventional centre) this might include the recognition of out-of-centre developments including convenience stores as district centres.</p>

- 10.8 There are a number of out-of-centre shopping developments in the Plan area, but no true 'out-of-town' facilities (i.e. large developments detached from urban areas). However, the south of the Plan area comes within the influence of the Regional Shopping Centre at Merryhill, Dudley and the north may be affected by the new centre at Dimplington, Greater Manchester.

Ensuring the Future of Town Centres

TC1 The vitality and viability of town centres should be sustained and enhanced. The hierarchy of centres is as follows:

Sub-Regional Centre: Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (Hanley);

Large Town Centres: Burton upon Trent, Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tamworth, Lichfield;

Medium Town Centres and Conurbation District Centres: Cannock, Leek, Rugeley, Longton, Tunstall, Uttoxeter;

Smaller Town Centres and Urban District Centres: Burslem, Kidsgrove, Stoke upon Trent Town Centre, Stone, Cheadle, Biddulph, Burntwood, Penkridge, Codsall.

Proposals assisting the growth of any of these centres should be encouraged, as long as their fabric and character are not damaged nor the interests of other centres compromised. Development proposals in these towns or others should be of a scale appropriate to the centres to which they relate.

The use of town centres should be increased through measures which:

- (a) maintain and improve the quality and diversity of retail provision;**
- (b) maintain and promote a diversity of uses, including the provision of entertainment and cultural areas;**
- (c) retain and increase the amount of attractive residential provision in town centres, through new build and conversion;**
- (d) increase safety and security, which would also assist in the creation of a night-time economy;**
- (e) promote the protection and enhancement of historic or architecturally important buildings and quarters, the maintenance and creation of greenspace and the use of high standards of design in new development;**
- (f) contribute to the creation of an appropriate town centre management strategy;**
- (g) improve access to and within them by a variety of means (for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport), in order to promote alternatives to use of the private car and to ensure that their facilities can be enjoyed by the widest range of users.**

- 10.9 The role of town centres should be reinforced. Whilst it is true that the retail industry underpins the economy of town centres, this policy attempts to produce conditions which allow retailing to flourish, thus further boosting their health generally. The diversification of retail would help to ensure town centres do not become dependent on one type of trade, whilst the upgrading of town centre buildings and facilities, where appropriate, would help to improve the image and attractiveness of the centre. The introduction of entertainment, leisure and residential uses should encourage activity outside normal hours of trading and contribute to the creation of a night-time economy. Whilst such an economy would require increased security and safety measures, the presence of numbers of people would deter crime and give shops the choice of opening for longer periods. In addition, town centres would have a more active, vital image. Nonetheless, shopping remains the mainstay of town centre viability, and policies should still pursue the preservation of retailing as the primary activity in core shopping areas.
- 10.10 These and other issues of design, greenspace, access and the provision and maintenance of services should be brought together and debated through a town centre management strategy, which can ensure that all the stakeholders in the town centre are working towards the same aims. Such strategies should therefore be prepared by partnerships involving businesses, other appropriate agencies such as the police and public transport operators, and taking into account the views of town centre users and groups representing them. The Stafford Town Centre Strategy provides a good model for other such initiatives throughout the Plan area.

~~Access to Town Centres~~

~~TC2 Town centres should have an access strategy, which includes:~~

- ~~(a) provision for improved access by people with disabilities, elderly people, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;~~
- ~~(b) formulation of a coherent parking strategy, including control over numbers of public and private spaces, particularly long stay/commuter parking and charging policies;~~
- ~~(c) ensuring that access into town centres from public transport access points and car parks is easy and safe both during and after normal shopping hours;~~
- ~~(d) encouragement for facilities which enhance the efficiency, comfort and attractiveness of public transport usage;~~
- ~~(e) where appropriate, giving consideration to the replacement of town centre long stay parking with public transport improvements related to park and ride facilities;~~
- ~~(f) where appropriate, seeking alternative uses on private car parking sites.~~

- 10.11 Town centres should be easily and safely accessible to all who want to use them. The clustering of functions in town centres allows one trip to satisfy several needs, and that trip can be made by public transport since town centres form hubs in the transport network. However, it is accepted that many people wish to shop by car. Access strategies should be based primarily on making the alternatives to car use more attractive, and take care not to damage the prospects of town centres by adopting an approach based too heavily on car restriction. It is an obvious conclusion that measures to boost town centres and focus development in them should be related to measures to provide safe and easy access and promotion of the use of public transport. This, in turn, will reduce congestion on the road network and reduce pollution.
- 10.12 Where appropriate, numbers of parking spaces should be controlled by a parking strategy, which still allows adequate car parking, especially shopper car parking. Parking strategies should be in accordance with regional guidance and strategies arising therefrom, and should be part of a package of measures which make access to the centre more sustainable while maintaining or improving its viability.

~~The Sequential Approach: Town Centre Developments~~

~~**TC3A Retail and leisure developments over 2,500 sq.m. gross floorspace or which are intended to serve a wide catchment or which might have a significant effect on local shopping patterns in that catchment should be subject to a sequential approach. As a first preference, such developments should be located within town centres as defined in Policy TC1. Such developments should:**~~

- ~~**(a) not, either individually or cumulatively, harm the vitality or viability of any other town centre within the anticipated catchment;**~~
- ~~**(b) be accessible by a choice of transport modes with facilities for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists;**~~
- ~~**(c) not significantly increase the need to travel by car;**~~
- ~~**(d) not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of neighbouring residential property;**~~
- ~~**(e) comply with environmental policies.**~~

- 10.13 For known centres to have a dynamism which will contribute to their vitality and viability, there is a need for new, quality development. The sequential approach as outlined in revised PPG6 states that new retail and leisure development should be located as a first preference in town centres. If no suitable town centre sites are available, having considered flexibility in format and redevelopment opportunities, edge-of-centre sites should next be considered. An edge-of-centre site is defined in PPG6 for shopping purposes as being within easy walking distance (200-300 metres) of the primary shopping area. For other uses, the distance may be further, depending how far people are prepared to walk. For offices, this is likely to be in the region of 500 metres from a station or other public transport interchange. The definition of town centres in PPG6 (as set out in 10.1 above) excludes small parades of shops of purely local significance, which are termed local centres.
- 10.14 The sequential approach recognises that some town centres, particularly small or historic centres, may not have suitable sites in terms of size, ground conditions, parking and traffic restrictions or marketability. Local plans, in identifying possible development sites or criteria for development should indicate how, if centres lack development opportunities, the need for suitable sites can be met.

~~The Sequential Approach: Edge-of-Centre and Out-of-Centre Developments~~

~~TC3B Only if no suitable town centre sites or buildings are available for such retail or leisure developments, having considered flexibility in formats, sequentially edge-of-centre, district and local centre sites should next be considered and only then, if there is no appropriate edge-of-centre, district centre or local centre sites available, should out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of transport modes be considered. All such developments outside town centres should demonstrate need for the proposal, either through the local plan process or, failing that, at the development control stage. Such developments should:~~

- ~~(a) not, either individually or cumulatively, harm the vitality or viability of any town centre or neighbourhood or local centre within the anticipated catchment;~~
- ~~(b) be located within the established or proposed built-up area boundaries;~~
- ~~(c) be accessible by a choice of transport modes with facilities for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists;~~
- ~~(d) promote sustainability objectives by reducing travel distances for local residents and not significantly increasing the need to travel by car;~~
- ~~(e) not have a harmful effect on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;~~
- ~~(f) comply with environmental policies in this Plan.~~

~~Conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, to preclude sub-division, trading in particular categories of goods or to prohibit provision of particular services, such as post offices or pharmacies, in order to safeguard the viability and vitality of centres within the anticipated catchment.~~

- 10.15 The sequential approach requires that major retail and major leisure development should only take place on out-of-centre sites if all town centre, edge-of-centre, district and local centre options have been considered and shown to be unsuitable and the need for them can clearly be demonstrated. The application of the sequential approach should apply to all major retail proposals, including food supermarkets, retail warehouses, warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres, as well as major leisure facilities.
- 10.16 An out-of-centre development, and particularly large regional centres and factory outlet centres, may potentially damage the vitality and viability of a town centre. It is also less likely that an out-of-centre development will be so accessible by public transport and will therefore encourage car use. In some cases, it is possible that an out-of-centre development can reduce the distance travelled by local residents for a shopping trip if no such facilities exist in the local area. Such developments may be acceptable provided that they fulfil the criteria of Policy TC3B, subject to other planning considerations. The balance of any reduction in

travel distances for local residents must be set against increases in travel distances which may be promoted in attracting people away from facilities closer to them. Proposals which are likely to increase aggregate travel distances are unlikely to be acceptable. Where it is proved that an out-of-centre location is permissible, it should preferably be combined with or consolidate an existing out-of-centre retail development.

- 10.17 Concern has been expressed that the proliferation of ancillary operations within stores, such as post offices, pharmacies, dry cleaners and travel agents, can also impact on the vitality and viability of smaller centres nearby. Assessment of such proposals should therefore establish and take into account the full mix of uses proposed.

~~The Sequential Approach: Offices and Similar Developments in Town Centres~~

~~**TC3C Commercial and public offices, higher education establishments and other similar developments which attract large numbers of people on a daily or regular basis, should be located in town centres, subject to their compliance with other planning policies. Applications for proposed developments on edge-of-centre or out-of-centre sites should comply with the requirements set out in Policy TC3B.**~~

- 10.18 Retail development is the main focus of development in town centres. PPG6 states that the sequential approach applies to all town centre uses which attract large numbers of visitors on a daily basis, such as public and major commercial offices. Sustainability principles also urge that these uses should be in town centres to open the opportunity for users to travel on public transport. These people, if working in town centres, will also bring extra expenditure to the town. Changes of use for retailing to offices should not be encouraged.

Local Shops

TC4 Changes of use or redevelopment proposals which would involve the loss of existing retail or related service facilities in villages and local centres in urban areas will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer any need for such facilities in that location or that they can be provided in another appropriate and sustainable manner. Proposals to restore or preserve important local services such as post offices or pharmacies within or properly related to villages or local centres will be welcomed. Large developments that are not well related to an existing centre or which may otherwise threaten the vitality and viability of a centre will not be permitted.

- 10.19 Local shops in small district centres and villages fulfil an important function servicing day to day needs, and reducing the need for people to travel longer distances to satisfy "top-up" shopping needs. They are often of great importance to less mobile members of the community in particular. In rural areas, such shops provide a service beyond simple retailing, and have a social and economic role which acts as a community focus to reinforce the viability of a village. Post Office and pharmacy functions in particular provide important services to villages; also, public houses often provide a community and social facility, for example for meetings and functions, which can be hard to replace and should be recognised. In addition, these facilities are often locally significant as a source of part-time employment. It is therefore important that proposals which threaten their existence be resisted, and proposals which secure their future be encouraged.

Small Scale Retail Facilities in the Countryside

TC5 In order to diversify the rural economy, small scale retail facilities, such as farm shops or those ancillary to petrol stations, may be allowed in the countryside, provided the new facility:

- (a) makes use of existing buildings or, if this is not possible, does not involve new building out of scale and character with the surrounding area;**
- (b) does not generate significant amounts of new traffic which would adversely impact on the rural setting;**
- (c) does not threaten the vitality or viability of village shopping facilities;**
- (d) complies with environmental policies.**

10.20 Small scale retail facilities such as farm shops can be significant in providing new sources of jobs and services in rural areas. They can increase the incomes of those who operate them, such as farmers and craft workers, and diversify the economy of the countryside. However, it must be recognised that their effect will be detrimental if they threaten the vitality and viability of established village facilities, and proposals likely to have this effect should be resisted. In addition, the environmental effects of traffic generation should be taken into account. For example, facilities whose effect is to retain tourist visitors in the area for longer might be welcome; at the other extreme, developments which generate large numbers of single trips from outside the area, to the extent of causing significant amenity or safety problems, would be unacceptable.

11. RECREATION, LEISURE AND CULTURE

- 11.1 This Section deals with activities which are carried out for relaxation or as pastimes during wakeful hours outside of employment. These activities range widely in intensity of participation and degree to which they have land use implications. They range from the passive enjoyment of open space and the countryside, through walking, riding and cycling to active participation in organised sports, the use of built structures in theme parks, the use of buildings and new development such as theatres, museums and libraries. With increased sophistication, the land use implications, which were once more concerned with land management, have become increasingly commercial with their own spin-offs, in terms of employment and economic benefits both directly and indirectly and by affecting the overall image of an area and its attractiveness as a place to live. In some cases, recreational facilities can become so significant that they attract staying visitors and thereby contribute to the tourism capital of the area. In other cases, such as museums and libraries, the recreational or leisure use is complementary to their academic and business service functions.
- 11.2 Because of this diversity of activities, there should also be reference to various other policy chapters. In particular for the more commercial, intensive or cultural facilities, town centre policies are relevant; on the other hand, the countryside and environmental policies are relevant to those outdoor pursuits which are based on these attractions. Of particular relevance in this latter respect are the National Forest and the Forest of Mercia Community Forest in which the creation of new recreational opportunities in association with appropriate woodland planting/landscaping is a vital part of their strategies. In addition, "movement" in itself can be a form of recreation; walking, running, cycling, flying. These topics are covered in the Transport and Accessibility Chapter.
- 11.3 With increased mobility, recreational activities have been increasingly associated with travel to and from the recreational venue. Some venues have become very popular as a result of this accessibility to the point where this popularity and pressures of use begin to detract from the original attraction. Both these aspects - travel and user pressure including effects on resource consumption and effects on biodiversity - stress the importance of sustainability to these matters as much as any other.

Providing for Recreation and Leisure

R1 Recreation and leisure developments should, where relevant:

- (a) provide facilities in or close to population centres;**
- (b) provide relief for over-used and/or more remote recreational areas;**
- (c) minimise potential conflict with other activities and wildlife interests;**
- (d) contribute to the reclamation and reuse of derelict or despoiled land;**
- (e) relate to existing or extended open space/public access systems, including public paths;**
- (f) be accessible by a variety of means of public and private transport.**

- 11.4 An essential part of sustainable development is seeking to reduce the length of journeys and the amount of travel. This can be achieved by providing facilities/developments close to the main areas of demand and ensuring accessibility by a wide range of means of travel but particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. To conserve the local natural resources for the benefit of future generations, it is vital that recreation and entertainment developments seek to recycle derelict and despoiled land, which has not gained significant wildlife value, and minimise impacts, both direct and indirect, on natural and cultural facilities.

~~Provision for Intensive Recreation~~

~~**R2A Development of intensive recreation, entertainment and cultural facilities should, if possible, be located on sites in or on the edge of town centres which are, or will be made, highly accessible to public transport in accordance with Policies TC1 and TC3A. Where the type of proposed use necessitates a location for development away from town centres, a location within an urban area will be preferred. The need to seek sustainable development locations and comply with Policy D5B within Green Belt areas will still apply. The following considerations will be taken into account for all proposals for intensive recreation:**~~

- ~~**(a) whether the land is derelict or has little agricultural or conservation value;**~~
- ~~**(b) whether the land or adjoining land has a protected nature conservation status (SSSI, SNCI, etc.);**~~
- ~~**(c) whether the new use would generate significant new traffic and be capable of being served by a variety of modes of transport, including walking, cycling and/or public transport;**~~
- ~~**(d) whether the development would harm the viability or vitality of existing or potential facilities at town centres within the anticipated catchment in accordance with Policy TC3B.**~~

~~**Where inappropriate development is involved within the Green Belt, very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated.**~~

- 11.5 Intensive recreation and entertainment and cultural facilities are frequently unrelated to any particular inherent features of a site. Consequently, in seeking appropriate locations for these activities, a sequential approach should be applied in accordance with Policies TC1 and TC3A. Emphasis should be given to the sustainable advantages of town centre and sequentially edge-of-town centre locations, recycling land and promoting the vitality and viability of the existing centres. In the larger urban areas, the successful provision and appropriate concentration of such facilities can provide more than proportional benefits in terms of usage and accessibility and prestige. The proposals for an enhanced "cultural quarter" in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent represent an example of the application of this policy. Conversely, there may be circumstances where, by virtue of the location of the necessary facilities and the nature of the land, locations away from town centres and urban areas generally are appropriate for more intensive development. The water area and land adjoining Chasewater in Lichfield District is considered to be such a location for future development, while Alton Towers in Staffordshire Moorlands is the ultimate example of a number of recreation and tourist facilities which have been established in rural areas as a result of particular sets of circumstances.

Chasewater

R2B Land at Chasewater within the Forest of Mercia, in Lichfield District, is proposed as a strategic recreation and leisure location of sub-regional significance to incorporate a country park, forest-related facilities and intensive outdoor recreation facilities.

- 11.6 Chasewater and surrounding land has and will continue to provide a variety of recreational facilities, many of which are essentially related to the water area which provides a focus of activity slightly removed from the edge of the urban area. Some more intensive or harder forms of development took place on the south shore (stadium, promenade, pools, pier and cafe) but have either become derelict or do not meet modern requirements. Considerable investment is required in the area to avoid further dereliction and remedy structural problems.
- 11.7 By virtue of its location on the edge of the West Midlands Conurbation and its accessibility to the existing A5 and the proposed Birmingham Northern Relief Road, the south shore of Chasewater is considered to have redevelopment potential for outdoor intensive recreational and leisure facilities of sub-regional as well as local significance
- 11.8 In addition, as part of the regeneration of the previously developed land on the south shore, the Forest of Mercia, in conjunction with local authority partners, propose the establishment of an Innovation Centre comprising a new administrative headquarters, a visitor centre, and micro-business units for forest-related activities, all aimed at stimulating the tourism potential of this location.
- 11.9 Away from the south shore, less intensive recreation facilities are to be preferred, including a country park. In consideration of any proposals, account should be taken of the need to protect the lowland heath to the north and east of Chasewater consistent with the designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Recreational Facilities in the Countryside

R3 Proposals for the development of facilities and the use of land and water resources for sport and recreation in the countryside away from the urban fringe will be permitted provided that:

- (a) they involve activities more suited to sites away from built-up areas;**
- (b) they will not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment, natural and cultural heritage areas with countryside protection, or Green Belt policies;**
- (c) any traffic generated can be accommodated on the road system without undue adverse effects;**
- (d) the form, bulk and general design of the development, including any necessary new buildings, respect the character of the countryside;**
- (e) they reuse existing buildings, wherever possible.**

- 11.10 While recognising that the countryside is the focus of much recreational activity, Policy R3 aims to protect the countryside for its own sake by seeking to restrict recreation related development that could and should be located elsewhere. Where development is considered appropriate, it should, wherever possible, make use of and respect existing buildings, surroundings and the landscape. Opportunities for recreational and environmental initiatives in the countryside may arise as a result of reclamation or restoration schemes, for example following minerals extraction.

Public Access Land

R4 Expansion of the total area of public access land and improvement of facilities in existing sites will be sought, where suitable opportunities and resources arise, in order to encourage fuller public participation in a range of sport, recreational, community and nature conservation activities. New provision must be accompanied by a comprehensive management plan. Subject to the availability of funds, an increase in the level of land with access to the public in Dosthill will be sought during the Plan period.

- 11.11 Public access land includes country parks and picnic places. Currently widely dispersed through the Plan area, they represent both a local recreational and a wider tourism resource. While there may be potential for further provision in absolute terms and in relation to on-site facilities, severe constraints on public sector finances will limit local authorities' ability to acquire and maintain new facilities.
- 11.12 Provision by the County Council of a Community Country Park at Apedale in Newcastle Borough on land previously worked by British Coal is the realisation of a longstanding commitment. At Dosthill, near Tamworth, options to increase public access to land which has been largely worked for aggregates are being evaluated, following the completion of a feasibility study. Private sector investment (and joint schemes) will be encouraged as appropriate, including new public access opportunities which arise as a result of the National and Community Forest initiatives. Any new provision must be accompanied by a comprehensive management plan comprising a development plan and a business plan to ensure the long term maintenance and safeguarding of the facility.

Water Areas and Rivers

R5A Subject to the need to maintain supplies of water for domestic and industrial use, and to locational and environmental considerations, proposals for the more effective use of existing and new water resources (rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) for sport, recreation and/or wildlife and education will be supported.

- 11.13 While seeking to ensure that existing and future water resources are used to the full, Policy R5A highlights the need for an overall balance amongst the various alternative activities and uses. In some cases, only one particular use may be acceptable.

The Tame and Trent Valley

R5B A comprehensive land use management strategy involving an integrated approach to the provision of a range of recreational and environmental initiatives along the Tame and Trent Valley will be sought, together with the provision of related infrastructure.

11.14 The Tame and Trent Valleys offer future potential for recreational opportunities and environmental enhancement following the completion of extensive areas of mineral working and gravel extraction. A land use management strategy for the Tame Valley south of Tamworth and into Warwickshire should address the extent to which the recreational opportunities of the area can be managed and environmental improvement secured. The strategy will be linked to the Central Rivers project, which has considered the feasibility of initiatives in the context of a long term vision for improvement and enhancement of the landscape of the Tame Valley north of Tamworth and Trent Valley between Alrewas and Burton.

~~Open Space in Urban Areas~~

~~R6 The provision of open space within urban areas will be sought, having regard to:~~

~~(a) the standard of 2.43 ha. per 1,000 population being used as a baseline level of provision in conjunction with any available assessments of need for specific sports and recreation activities and other local circumstances; and~~

~~(b) the retention of existing public open spaces and playing fields owned by public, private or voluntary organisations and required to meet open space standards referred to above, land of especial ecological or visual value or forming an important link in the urban open space network. Their development for other purposes will not be permitted except where it can be shown by the would-be developer that the development of a small part of the site would allow the retention and enhancement of facilities; alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available; or there is an excess of provision for sports, recreation and amenity purposes.~~

11.15 This policy concurs with the national planning advice given in PPG17. While commending the National Playing Fields Association's recommended minimum standard for outdoor playing space, the policy, and guidance, recognise that circumstances differ greatly from one area to another. Local plan authorities should draw up their own standards of provision based on their own assessment of need across the whole, or if appropriate, with respect to the various separate parts, of the district. These local assessments should include consideration of types of housing, age structure (short and long term effects), and the wider distribution of open space and its accessibility. For example, Tamworth Borough Council has adopted a higher open space standard to take account of its young age structure. With regard to planning sports provision generally, regard should be had to the policies and standards recommended by Sport England and the guidance for local authorities and others involved in recreational planning provided by its regional office. Agreements with developers are likely to be sought to meet the appropriate levels of provision.

11.16 Existing open space and playing fields should be protected inasmuch as the locally determined standards may be undermined by their loss. As with the determination of those standards, local circumstances should be taken into consideration, including an assessment of different types of facility (grass, all-weather, indoor, etc.) and the maintenance of an open space network where appropriate. Any proposal to develop sports fields if opposed by Sport England will be referred to the DETR.

Canal Facilities

R7 New canal facilities and associated services, such as moorings, service facilities, marinas, hire and trip boat facilities, information points, restaurants and heritage attractions should be sited in or adjacent to towns, villages and canal junctions, subject to the need to protect the countryside and Conservation Areas. Canalside development should contribute positively to the function and appearance of canals, wherever possible, providing new life for redundant buildings. The wildlife value of canals is recognised and will be conserved and enhanced.

11.17 Canals contribute significantly to the heritage of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and provide a distinctive focus for recreation and tourism activities. Many canals are already protected as Conservation Areas with consideration being given to extended coverage. Improvements to the provision of visitor and interpretation services on the canal network are sought, whilst ensuring conservation of their scenic, architectural and historic character. Their value as wildlife habitats and open space corridors, often penetrating right into the heart of urban areas is recognised.

Restoration of Canals

R8 Proposals for the restoration of former canals will be supported, having regard to the benefits to the canal system, urban regeneration and the impact on the nature conservation value of the land and any extant water.

11.18 The restoration of former canals can provide wide-ranging benefits, both operational and environmental. Parts of the canal system in southern Staffordshire are currently disconnected culs-de-sac, e.g. the Wyrley and Essington Canal where restoration of the former links would provide the opportunity to recreate through routes of recreational and potential economic value. Through urban areas, canal restoration can form the focus for imaginative and wide-ranging urban regeneration schemes. The routes of disused canals which have potential for restoration should be protected from adverse developments which would hinder their possible reconstruction.

11.19 However, the line of the disused canal may have acquired an enhanced nature conservation or environmental value by virtue of the particular circumstances along the former route. This enhanced value will need to be assessed in consideration of any redevelopment proposal. In any restoration scheme, the water source for the canal should be identified at an early stage in the planning process and an assessment made of the potential impact on existing water resources.

12. MINERALS AND WASTE

- 12.1 The Plan area is rich in mineral resources including coal, clay, evaporites, limestone, sandstone, sand and gravel. It is one of the United Kingdom's main mineral producers and the working of minerals makes an important contribution towards the national, regional and local economy. Mineral operations may have significant, adverse impacts upon people and the environment although these impacts can be reduced by careful site design and management and there can be long term benefits arising from restoration such as the clearance of dereliction.
- 12.2 There are over 200 existing and former mineral sites identified in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The majority have been worked out and restored but about 100 have valid planning permission for continued mining operations. It is estimated that in 1994, the Plan area produced about 13 million tonnes of mineral in total. In that same year, about 4,000 hectares of land had planning permission for surface mineral working in addition to 24,000 hectares of land with permission for underground working, principally coal.
- 12.3 Most human activities produce wastes which vary in nature from relatively harmless materials to noxious and potentially dangerous substances. To safeguard the environment, wastes must be properly managed in ways which reduce, reuse, reclaim or finally dispose of the waste so as to avoid the risk of pollution and harm to human health.
- 12.4 Staffordshire County Council's Waste Management Plan (1995-2005) indicates that around 4.5 million tonnes of controlled waste arose in the County (including Stoke-on-Trent) during 1994/95. This comprised 464,900 tonnes of household and civic amenity waste, 2.72 million tonnes of commercial and industrial waste and 1.29 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste. In addition, 13.7 million tonnes of mine and quarry waste and 1.6 million tonnes of agricultural waste were produced and disposed of, mainly at source.
- 12.5 The majority of wastes produced in the Plan area are dealt with within the County and Stoke-on-Trent. However, significant quantities of difficult and special wastes are exported elsewhere for treatment or disposal. Large quantities of wastes, particularly from the West Midlands are imported to Staffordshire for disposal.
- 12.6 In 1994/95, about 3 million tonnes of controlled wastes in total were disposed of in the Plan area in licensed landfills, of which a third originated in the West Midlands. There were about 100 landfill sites at the end of 1995. About one-third of the waste was dealt with by incineration, recycling, reuse and other means of management.
- 12.7 Structure plans are required to express, in general terms, the strategy for mineral working, waste management and related development, taking into account national and regional policies. The mineral strategy must accord with the principles of sustainable development which provide a framework for the future supply of minerals whilst ensuring that necessary measures are taken to protect, restore and enhance the environment, to conserve minerals as far as possible and to encourage their more efficient use and replacement with alternatives, including recycling materials that would otherwise be disposed of as wastes. The waste strategy should be compatible with the national strategy for sustainable waste management and the emerging regional waste strategy referred to in more detail later.

The Need for Minerals

MW1 Where the need for minerals is at issue, planning applications for mineral working will be considered in the context of:

- (a) the landbank;**
- (b) the projected requirements for the mineral;**
- (c) national and regional guidance and the Development Plan;**
- (d) the quality and beneficial properties of the mineral in relation to the proposed uses;**
- (e) the availability of suitable alternative sources of supply within and outside the Plan area; and**
- (f) the amortisation of mineral preparation and processing plant.**

12.8 Society needs minerals and the working of minerals requires the use of land. As existing sources of supply are depleted, pressures arise to identify and develop new reserves. Even allowing for sources of supply outside the Plan area, less reliance on raw materials because of recycling, reuse and minimisation of waste production and wasteful use of premium resources, there is likely to be a continued demand for primary minerals.

12.9 Each mineral planning authority should make an appropriate contribution to meeting local, regional and national requirements which reflect the nature and extent of the minerals within their area and other relevant planning considerations. Generally applicants do not have to prove the need for specific mineral developments or evaluate alternative sources of supply in support of their application. However, the mineral planning authorities may have to take need into account where the proposal would cause adverse impacts that are not outweighed by material planning benefits. Policy MW1 sets out the principles of the assessment of need which the mineral planning authority will adopt as circumstances require.

~~**Maintaining Mineral Supply**~~

~~**MW2 Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will maintain appropriate landbanks for non-energy minerals within the Plan area throughout and at the end of the Plan period in line with national and regional policy guidance, compatible with the capacity to absorb further mineral development without unacceptable adverse impacts upon people, transportation systems or the environment.**~~

12.10 It is the intention to release sufficient land to maintain an appropriate supply of minerals to contribute towards national, regional and local needs, while, at the same time, seeking to minimise the adverse impact of mineral development on the environment, transportation systems and the amenity of people consistent with the principles of sustainable development. Appropriate landbanks for non-energy minerals are set out within the Minerals Local Plan.

- 12.11 In some instances, national mineral planning guidance prescribes landbanks for particular minerals. The landbank requirements vary dependant upon the nature of the specific mineral industry. Mineral landbanks require to be regularly reviewed and determination of landbank periods are more appropriate for local plan considerations. Energy minerals are specifically excluded from landbank considerations by national policy because energy may be derived from a variety of sources. It is not for mineral planning authorities to determine the level of output to which energy mineral operators should aspire. National guidance indicates that it is for the operators to determine the level of output they wish to aim for in the light of market conditions and the acceptability of individual projects will be determined by the land use planning system. Specific policies relating to energy minerals are contained in Chapter 4 of the Minerals Local Plan.

The Efficient Use and Recycling of Minerals

MW3 The Mineral Planning Authorities will encourage the efficient use of finite mineral resources and alternative materials, where practicable, by:

- (a) the appropriate use of high quality minerals;**
- (b) minimising the production of mineral waste;**
- (c) the reuse and recycling of minerals and their products;**
- (d) the use of alternative lower quality or waste materials, such as colliery shale, metallurgical slags, construction and demolition materials and pulverised fuel ash.**

- 12.12 The principle of efficient use of minerals and reuse or recycling of materials, for example, the use of processed demolition and construction wastes as a source of aggregate, is an increasingly important component of the concept of sustainable development. The decision to pursue such an option depends upon a number of considerations, including environmental impact, costs, availability and technical specifications, some of which are outside planning control. The structure planning authorities will seek to promote a more environmentally sustainable approach to mineral planning. Securing this goal can only be achieved if all those involved in producing and using minerals and their products take a positive attitude to ensuring that development becomes more sustainable. All those concerned with the extraction and consumption of minerals should aim, insofar as they are able, to ensure the maximisation of reuse and recycling of minerals and their products and that higher quality minerals will not be used where lower quality minerals are available and will suffice for the purpose. As an example of implementation of the policy, nationally important reserves of silica sand would not be allocated in order to meet a shortfall in the landbank for sand and gravel for general aggregate use.

Conservation of Mineral Resources

MW4 Important mineral resources should not be permanently sterilised or unduly restricted by other forms of development occurring on, or in close proximity to, identified mineral resources or allocated, existing or permitted mineral workings. The safeguarding of these resources does not imply that permission for mineral working will automatically be granted. When other development is proposed, the mineral should, where practicable, be extracted before such development commences, provided that the winning and working of minerals can be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner, within a reasonable timescale, and that the site can be restored to a condition which does not prevent the approved after-use taking place.

- 12.13 Minerals are a finite resource and it is often difficult to bring forward sites which can be worked in an environmentally acceptable manner. It is important, therefore, to ensure that minerals are not needlessly sterilised or their extraction hampered by other development, if at all possible. Where conflict arises between minerals and other development, it is desirable, in principle, to secure prior extraction of the mineral before the other development commences. Whilst the protection of important mineral resources will normally take precedence over allowing development to proceed in some circumstances, the importance attached to securing other developments may take precedence. Each case must be judged on its merits.

Sustainable Waste Management

MW5 In accordance with the principles of sustainable waste management:

- (a) proposals at or near the top of the 'waste hierarchy' will be favoured provided that the proposals represent the 'best practicable environmental option', include sensitive working and restoration practices and do not cause any unacceptable direct or indirect adverse impacts;**
- (b) new proposals should be located reasonably close to the source of waste production in accordance with the 'proximity principle';**
- (c) an appropriate contribution towards the treatment and disposal of waste arising within the West Midlands or adjoining regions will continue to be provided, in accordance with the principle of 'regional self-sufficiency' and the 'proximity principle', provided that it would not cause any unacceptable direct or indirect adverse impacts upon people, transportation systems or the environment;**
- (d) Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will aim to continue to be self-sufficient in the management of waste arising in the Plan area;**
- (e) the waste implications of all major development proposals and the measures to be taken to manage the waste generated should be identified and be consistent with the 'waste hierarchy' and the 'best practicable environmental option'.**

- 12.14 As Waste Planning Authorities, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Councils are preparing a joint Waste Local Plan. This will ensure that there will be an adequate planning framework in place so that waste management proposals can be assessed against the objectives of sustainable development. The Government strategy for sustainable waste management is contained in "Waste Strategy 2000" (May 2000) and the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (April 1998). The guidance indicates that the primary objective should be to reduce the amount of waste that is produced and to develop more integrated systems to manage waste. The guidance also states that, when making decisions on waste management facilities, the emphasis should be on determining the 'Best Practicable Environmental Option' (BPEO) to ensure that damage to the environment as a whole is minimised, both in the long and short term. In determining the BPEO, consideration should be given to the 'waste hierarchy', the 'proximity principle' and 'regional self-sufficiency'. The waste hierarchy begins at the top

with waste reduction, followed by re-use and recovery (including material recycling and composting, before incineration with energy recovery), and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, safe disposal. The proximity principle requires waste to be managed as close as possible to the place where it was produced. Regional self-sufficiency requires that as an overall aim, the West Midlands should be self-sufficient in the management of the region's own waste. A Regional Waste Strategy is currently being prepared. When agreed, the Regional Strategy should assist the Waste Planning Authorities in determining the appropriate contribution each authority should make towards the management of waste within the region. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will also aim to continue to plan for the management of the waste arising in the Plan area.

12.15 When considering development proposals, the waste implications should be taken into account to ensure that the waste arisings are managed in accordance with:

- the BPEO to minimise the environmental impacts;
- the waste hierarchy to maximise the opportunities to reduce, re-use and recover waste; and
- the proximity principle to manage the waste as close as possible to the place where it has arisen.

Evaluation of Proposals

MW6 Mineral and/or waste development proposals will be assessed in terms of their social, environmental and economic effects in relation to the ability to safeguard, enhance and sustain environmental resources and amenity. The applicant will need to demonstrate that the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact, either on its own or in conjunction with other developments, upon people, transportation systems or the environment.

12.16 A wide range of land use planning and socio-economic considerations may be relevant to the evaluation of development proposals and it would be inappropriate to place limitations on what may be considered as interests of acknowledged importance. Whether proposals have an unacceptable adverse impact will be a matter of fact and degree and will be dependent upon the nature and extent of the proposals having regard to site specific circumstances. Where conflicts of interest arise a balance has to be struck between the case for mineral and waste development and the protection of the environment.

Relationship to Conservation and/or Development Initiatives

MW7 Where compatible with other planning policies, mineral and/or waste development which will secure landscape or nature conservation improvements, including woodland planting, reclamation of derelict or despoiled land, relevant community benefits or otherwise contribute towards the implementation of the Development Plan will be sympathetically considered. Conversely, development proposals which will conflict with measures to conserve or enhance the environment and economies of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent or otherwise be contrary to the implementation of the Development Plan will be resisted.

- 12.17 Mineral and/or waste development proposals may adversely affect or facilitate the implementation of the policies and proposals of the Development Plan. The degree to which the proposal contributes towards or detracts from the implementation of the Development Plan strategy will be a material consideration.

Transportation of Minerals and Waste

MW8 Where compatible with other planning policies, support will be given to mineral or waste development proposals which facilitate the use of non-road transportation systems and reduce the impact of mineral or waste transport on people, the highway network and the environment.

- 12.18 Traffic generation arising from mineral and waste operations, particularly in relation to its impact on the transportation network, environment and community is a sensitive planning consideration. The majority of materials are transported by road. Sustainable development should seek to minimise the environmental impacts arising from transportation.

Reclamation

MW9 Proposals for mineral development and waste disposal will only be acceptable where provision is made to secure the appropriate rehabilitation of the site. Where a site is subject to restoration and aftercare provisions, it should be demonstrated that it will be returned, at the earliest, practicable opportunity, to an acceptable after-use(s) compatible with the Development Plan.

- 12.19 Mineral development and landfill are temporary uses of land albeit that such operations may extend over a substantial period of time. Whilst detailed guidance regarding reclamation is more appropriate to local plan considerations, the principle of securing acceptable restoration and aftercare upon the cessation of operations is crucial to the future of mineral/waste development in the Plan area.

13. IMPLEMENTATION – PACKAGES, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- 13.1 While the policies and proposals of this strategy are expressed in terms of single topics, their implementation will depend on a wide range of interacting actions by various agencies having regard to the full range of policies and proposals in this draft Plan and to their own priorities. Furthermore, in view of the continuing constraints which are being imposed on public expenditure, there is a need to assess development proposals in the light of their potential to form the basis of integrated schemes capable of obtaining wide-ranging commitment and policy achievement.
- 13.2 The emphasis of the previous Structure Plan was to make provision, particularly for housing, on medium to small sized sites in order to ease the assimilation of new development. The local plans prepared to implement that strategy have largely complied with this emphasis to the point where limited capacity on such sites remains to be allocated in the new plans. Consequently, to meet the necessary levels of provision, a number of substantial new developments are now being proposed, particularly in the southern Staffordshire sub-area. Nevertheless a portfolio of small, medium and large sites will also be sought.
- 13.3 The development strategy in this Plan has been expressed, in some areas, in a more specific way than appears in the previous Plan. This extra detail is considered appropriate in order to give full weight to the issue of sustainability. In addition, critical parts of the strategy can be expressed in terms of development packages with various elements being highlighted as necessary to the fulfilment of the proposal.
- 13.4 Any new development, of whatever scale, will require some form of package to enable its implementation, even if it is only an arrangement with the public utilities to link the development with existing infrastructure. As the scale of development increases, the possible opportunities for wider ranging packages increase. These packages can include variations in the range and mix of development, provision of transport infrastructure (roads, parking, public transport), provision of social infrastructure, and environmental protection or enhancement measures, and involve a widening range of agencies and parties as highlighted in the section, “The Enabling Role of the Structure Plan” in Chapter 1. Policy E6 specifically proposes that new employment sites should be located having regard to the likely availability of resources.
- 13.5 Policy D8 (Providing Infrastructure and Services Associated with Development) includes an indicative list of infrastructure and community facilities which may be required for a development scheme:
- pedestrian and cycle routes, public transport facilities and services, highway infrastructure and appropriate parking;
 - utility services;
 - schools, community and recreational facilities;
 - affordable housing;
 - high quality landscaping;
 - the replacement or creation of significant natural habitats.

The major new housing proposals (Policy H1) and the major new employment proposals (Policies E1, E4 - Premium Employment Sites and E5 - Major Investment Site) will require provision of all or many of these facilities or services to be included in any permitted development.

- 13.6 In many cases, but particularly the residential proposals at Fradley, Rugeley, Tamworth (within the Borough and on adjoining land in Lichfield District) and Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) and/or Brinsford/Featherstone, the development package should include provision for the integration of or creation of linkages with existing or proposed employment areas.
- 13.7 More specific elements of proposed development packages relating particularly to transportation or movement facilities include:
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Fradley | - | improvements to existing and/or provision of new transport and movement links between Fradley and Lichfield; |
| Rugeley | - | the relationship between major redevelopment proposals for housing and employment and the completion of the Rugeley Bypass and improvements to the Walsall-Cannock-Rugeley railway line; |
| Great Wyrley/Cheslyn Hay/Essington* (see para. 1.12) | - | improvements to the Walsall-Cannock-Rugeley railway line and necessary local road improvements; |
| Featherstone/Brinsford | - | related to the provision of a new station and park and ride facility on the Wolverhampton-Stafford railway line; |
| Burntwood | - | the integration of the proposal for the western bypass with adjoining development; |
| Biddulph | - | providing a development package which will assist in delivering the high priority bypass scheme; |
| Hanley West | - | improved transport links, including a new road between Hanley City Centre and Festival Park as part of a comprehensive development package for the west of Hanley; |
| Hanley South | - | construction of the Hanley-Bentilee Link, together with bus priority measures, cycle lanes and park and ride in association with built development; |
| Stoke-on-Trent | - | the Stoke Inner Relief Road forms part of a development package for Stoke town centre. |
- 13.8 Private sector integrated land/transportation development packages are generally encouraged by the Government and will clearly be sought to enable the implementation of the specific proposals contained in this draft Plan. However, proposals would have to be examined in relation to the policies in the Development Plan.
- 13.9 A wide range of policies may be relevant to the implementation of the proposals in the Plan and the creation of the necessary development packages. While Policy D8 provides the context for seeking developer contributions to provide infrastructure and services associated with development, it is considered necessary to provide more specific guidance for arrangements appropriate to the bringing forward of strategic development proposals and the new settlement proposal at Fradley in particular.

~~Implementation of Proposals – General~~

~~**IM1 Local authorities should bring forward the strategic provisions of this Plan, including the proposed new settlement at Fradley, through the preparation or review of local plans. They should draw up development briefs setting out the policy context, relevant constraints and opportunities, the sustainable development, phasing and design principles to be applied, and the requirements of those bodies and agencies likely to be involved in the development. The management and partnership arrangements required to secure shared commitment to the implementation of the project and ensure the satisfactory integration of the development in the local community should be resolved concurrently with the preparation of the development brief.**~~

- 13.10 Implementation of the strategic development proposals contained in the Plan will require full consideration of local alternatives which can only be achieved through the local plan process. They will also require clear indications of how the development, in land use terms, should/will be undertaken, which should be provided through development briefs. In preparing local plans and individual development briefs, alternative arrangements should be evaluated and their viability tested; this is particularly relevant to assessing alternative public transport arrangements.
- 13.11 At the same time, but separate from the briefs, which would form Supplementary Planning Guidance, management arrangements will need to be resolved, culminating in legally binding agreements to secure management and partnerships. The private sector will have a role to play in this process.

~~Implementation of Strategic Development Proposals – Fradley~~

~~**IM2 A new settlement should be provided for within Lichfield District at Fradley as shown on the Key Diagram. The new settlement should include provision for a minimum of 1,400 dwellings in the period up to 2011, and allow for growth to at least 3,000 dwellings after the Plan period.**~~

~~**The new settlement should:**~~

- ~~**(a) be centred on the former airfield which contains significant amounts of brownfield land and a developing employment area;**~~
- ~~**(b) ensure a minimum of 90 ha. of land for employment purposes is integrated within the new settlement;**~~
- ~~**(c) make maximum use of brownfield land and land of lesser agricultural quality, whilst avoiding adverse impact on nature conservation, archaeological or built environmental assets and avoiding the sterilisation of minerals as set out in Policy MW4;**~~

- ~~(d) minimise the impact on the character of the existing Fradley village; protect the amenities of Fradley and South Fradley villages and respect and, where possible, enhance the setting of the Trent and Mersey and Coventry canals and their associated Conservation Areas;~~
- ~~(e) secure high quality public transport links to serve the development and to connect it with Lichfield and the West Midlands Conurbation in particular, by providing the most convenient connections to the electrified cross-city line rail service (existing or extended) for the residents of the settlement, to encourage the maximum use of rail transport;~~
- ~~(f) provide the means of accommodating traffic movements generated by the development without causing an unacceptable impact on flow conditions on the A38(T);~~
- ~~(g) retain a buffer of open land to the north-east of Lichfield of sufficient width to maintain the separate identities of Lichfield and Fradley and prevent coalescence of the settlements;~~
- ~~(h) provide widespread structural planting and landscaping to assimilate the development into the landscape.~~

13.12 In addition to Policy IM1, implementation of the new settlement proposal at Fradley will have a considerable number of specific requirements that can be identified now. The development brief and management arrangements will need to formulate ways and means of addressing these requirements, including, where appropriate, the evaluation of alternatives. For example, in relation to provision of high quality public transport links, the question of the provision of a new station, park and ride facilities and electrification of the line from Trent Valley Station will need to be evaluated and viability tested.

Partnerships

13.13 The most important aspects of the structure plan making process are the establishment of the broadest possible ownership of the Plan and the realisation of its policies and proposals. To achieve these twin objectives will require building on existing partnerships and forging new ones. There are many reasons for such an approach but the key ones can be identified as follows:

- to achieve an involvement and a commitment from the public and a wide range of public and private groups and organisations;
- to identify and implement strategies for sub-areas of the County with all the key “players” in that area;
- to “package” projects in order to lever funds from the increasing array of external funding sources, e.g. European Union, Single Regeneration Budget, Lottery, Capital Challenge;
- to pool resources in order to maximise cost-effectiveness and stretch reducing funds as far as possible.

- 13.14 The possible partners and funding sources are almost innumerable and will no doubt change over the life of the Plan as new initiatives and organisations evolve.

Public Sector

- 13.15 The role of and contribution from local authorities has become less participatory and more enabling. Similarly, Central Government funding has been reduced and has been increasingly subject to competition with private sector participation and the involvement of various quangos. Nevertheless, the County and City Councils, together with the District Councils, will continue to have a major role in ensuring the proper implementation of the Plan primarily through the planning process and the determination of planning applications.
- 13.16 Together with other local authorities in the region and the Parish and Town Councils, various partnerships can be formed to further the prospect of plan implementation through advocacy and mutual assistance.
- 13.17 Relationships with the various existing Central Government departments and agencies must be maintained to ensure their support and participation as with any future arrangements which may emerge, such as with the proposed Regional Development Agency.

Private Sector

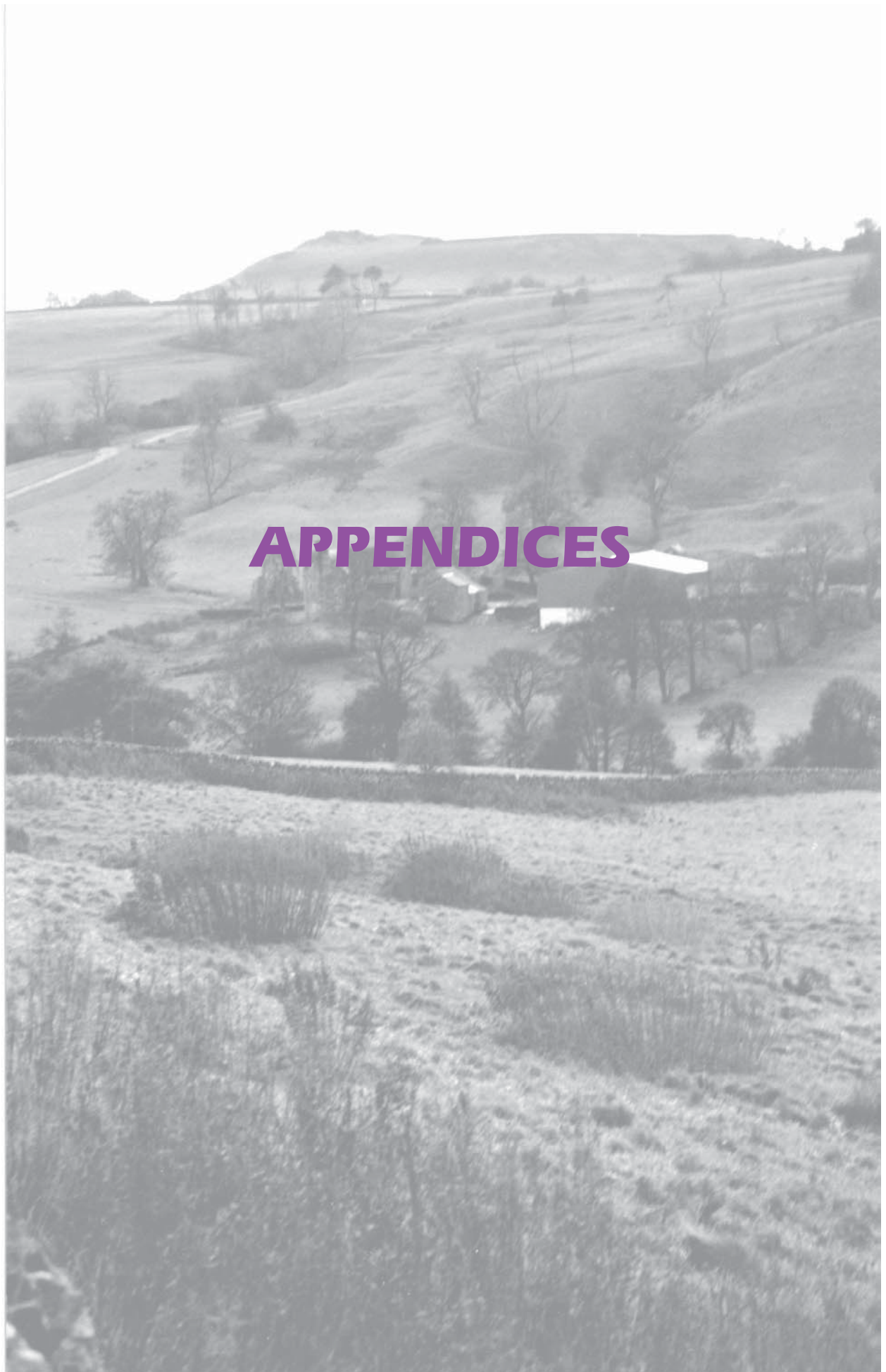
- 13.18 The private sector will be responsible for the implementation of most of the development proposals in the Structure Plan and local plans and the realisation of the policy objectives. This will involve both free market development and provision of amenities and facilities for wider public uses.
- 13.19 In addition, the private sector is being encouraged to promote their own funded initiatives (PFIs) for such projects as road and schools, previously provided solely by the public sector.
- 13.20 The private sector is also being encouraged to undertake, to varying degrees, promotional and training initiatives and become more closely involved with traditional local government activities.
- 13.21 The support and assistance of the private sector organisations, such as local Chambers of Commerce or the CBI, are seen as important to the progress of the Plan.

European Funding Sources

- 13.22 Funding from the various schemes devised by the European Union has become increasingly important. With the possibility of limited eligibility, it is vital that such opportunities are maximised. The Development Plan forms an important part of successful applications by providing a clear planning framework and context for individual or packages of schemes. Normally, it is necessary to include match funding as part of any application, necessitating close co-operation with a wide range of possible partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Voluntary Sector

- 13.23 Public support for the policies and proposals contained in this draft Plan will achieve a greater commitment to and ownership of the finalised Plan. Partnership with the voluntary sector is, in its own right, a valuable method of contributing to the aims of the Plan. The voluntary sector also has increasing access to some resources such as Lottery funds, the Millennium Fund and charities which can enable the realisation of some Development Plan policies. Voluntary organisations play an important, but by no means exclusive, role in the ongoing work of Local Agenda 21, which has played a part in the preparation of this Plan and will be looking to see its sustainable implementation.
- 13.24 The publicity and participation phase of this draft Plan will involve seeking the views and the commitment of all possible partners to the strategy proposed. Then, as the Plan progresses, firmer commitments, will be sought in order to obtain the resources for the implementation of the Plan.



KEY BIOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL SITES

The following list of SSSIs does not include those that lie within the Peak Park.

Site Name	District	NGR
1. Allimore Green Common	Stafford	SJ 858 193
2. Alvecote Pools	North Warwick / Tamworth	SK 249 050
3. Aqualate Mere (NNR, RAMSAR, NCR, GCR)	Stafford	SJ 770 205
4. Baswich Meadows	Stafford	SJ 950 227
5. Bath Pasture	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 063 459
6. Belvide Reservoir	South Staffordshire	SJ 862 102
7. Betley Mere (RAMSAR)	Newcastle-under-Lyme / Crewe & Nantwich Borough	SJ 947 482
8. Biddulphs Pool and No Mans Bank	Cannock Chase / Lichfield	SK 030 103
9. Big Hyde Rough	South Staffordshire	SJ 864 083
10. Black Firs and Cranberry Bog (RAMSAR, NCR)	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ 748 503
11. Blithfield Reservoir	East Staffordshire	SK 057 242
12. Braken Hurst	East Staffordshire	SK 137 222
13. Burnt Wood	Stafford / Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ 735 350 & SJ 742 336
14. Caldon Dales	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 093 489
15. Caldon Low (GCR)	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 077 492
16. Cannock Chase (NCR, CSAC)	Stafford / Cannock Chase	SJ 990 180
17. Cannock Extension Canal (CSAC)	Cannock Chase / Walsall	SK 019 044 to SK 020 069
18. Cauldon Railway Cutting (GCR)	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 077 496
19. Chartley Moss (NNR, RAMSAR, CSAC)	Stafford	SK 027 243
20. Chasewater Heaths	Lichfield	SK 039 080
21. Checkhill Bogs	South Staffordshire	SO 852 879 & SO 856 877 & SO 859 874
22. Churnet Valley	Staffordshire Moorlands	SJ 992 479, SJ 992 501, SJ 996 497, SK 005 485, SK 024 485 & SK 034 479
23. Combes Valley	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 005 525
24. Cop Mere (RAMSAR)	Stafford	SJ 802 297
25. Dimmingsdale & The Ranger	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 051 433 & SK 053 434 & SK 060 430
26. Doley Common	Stafford	SJ 802 297
27. Doxey and Tillington Marshes	Stafford	SJ 906 245
28. Ecton Copper Mines (GCR)	Staffordshire Moorlands / Peak Park	SK 099 581
29. Ford Green Reedbed	Stoke-on-Trent	SJ 887 511
30. Forest Banks	East Staffordshire	SK 120 284

31.	Four Ashes Pit (GCR)	South Staffordshire	SJ 914 083
32.	Froghall Meadows and Pastures	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 023 469
33.	Gentleshaw Common	Lichfield	SK 050 113
34.	Goat Lodge	East Staffordshire	SK 084 265
35.	Gospel End Road Cutting (GCR)	South Staffordshire	SO 904 936
36.	Hulme Quarry (GCR)	Staffordshire Moorlands & Stoke-on-Trent	SJ 929 446
37.	King's & Hargreaves Wood	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ 860 402
38.	Kinver Edge (GCR)	South Staffordshire / Wyre Forest	SO 831 829
39.	Loynton Moss	Stafford	SJ 788 244
40.	Maer Pool	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ 789 384
41.	Metallic Tileries, Parkhouse (GCR)	Newcastle-under-Lyme	SJ 840 497
42.	Milford Quarry (GCR)	Stafford	SJ 977 191
43.	Mottey Meadows (CSAC, NNR)	South Staffordshire	SJ 840 134
44.	Newport Canal	Wrekin / Stafford	SJ 734 192 to 752 200
45.	Old River Dove, Marston-on-Dove	East Staffordshire	SK 238 285
46.	Pasturefields Salt Marsh (CSAC)	Stafford	SJ 992 248
47.	Rawbones Meadow	Stafford	SJ 985 225
48.	Rue Hill	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 082 481
49.	Saltersford Lane Meadows	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 083 319
50.	Stafford Brook	Stafford	SK 023 194
51.	Stanton Pastures and Cuckoocliff Valley	East Staffordshire / Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 122 473 & SK 130 474
52.	Stowe Pool and Walk Mill Clay Pit	Lichfield / South Staffordshire	SK 120 100 & SJ 974 082
53.	Swineholes Wood & Black Heath	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 048 504 & SK 054 498
54.	The Wilderness & Vermin Valley	South Staffordshire	SO 812 238 & SO 816 833
55.	Thornccliffe Moor	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 023 586
56.	Wetley Moor	Staffordshire Moorlands	SJ 931 845
57.	Whiston Eaves	Staffordshire Moorlands	SK 037 463 & SK 037 461
58.	Woolaston Ridge Quarry (GCR)	South Staffordshire	SO 883 848
In addition to these are five Local Nature Reserves:			
59.	Brocton Reserve	Staffordshire County Council	
60.	Hazel Slade	Cannock Chase Council	
61.	Hodge Lane	Tamworth Borough Council	
62.	Whitfield Valley	City of Stoke-on-Trent	
63.	Hednesford Hills Common	Cannock Chase Council	

Abbreviations

CSAC:	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
GCR:	Geological Conservation Review site
NCR:	Nature Conservation Review site
NNR:	National Nature Reserve
RAMSAR:	Site designated under the RAMSAR Convention

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affordable Housing

This may be low cost private sector housing or subsidised homes provided by agreement with the local authority - the latter may include subsidised purchase arrangements or housing for rent.

Allocated Land

Land designated for a particular use in a local plan.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Agricultural land is classified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, according to its characteristics and how these affect the range of uses to which it can be put. This categorisation covers Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

Biodiversity

A modern term for 'nature', emphasising the importance of maintaining the variety of life in all its interdependent forms.

Brownfield Land

Land which has previously been developed (including land used for minerals extraction as well as that previously built on). Such land is not necessarily contaminated and may indeed be 'green' in appearance.

Business Uses (B1)

'Business' or 'B1' land use (see 'Use Classes' below) includes:

- offices other than financial and professional services;
- research and development of products or processes;
- light industry.

Central Crescent

This is a regional zone defined in RPG11 (similar to that previously known as the 'middle ring'); it is a belt around, but not surrounding, the West Midlands conurbation and includes the Southern Staffordshire subdivision identified in the Strategy chapter of this Plan (Chapter 4).

Commitments/Committed Sites

Normally, land subject to a current planning permission. May also include land allocated in local plans but not covered by planning consent, or as defined in tables/footnotes, etc.

Commuted Payment

Payments made to a local authority (under its highways or planning function in this instance). These are generally to meet the cost to the community of works needed as a result of a development, and/or to overcome a constraint which might cause the development to be unacceptable. Such payments may be in the form of a lump sum or periodic payments. The terms under which they can be required under planning agreements or obligations are defined by the Highways Act 1980 (s.278) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s.106), and by related Government Circulars.

Comparison Goods

Goods purchased on an occasional rather than everyday basis, often after comparing alternatives in a variety of shops; for example, clothing and other fashion goods, electrical goods, furniture, do-it-yourself items.

Convenience Goods

Items purchased on an everyday basis - notably food and drink, also newspapers. Since convenience items are purchased as a matter of habit rather than as the result of specific decisions, shops selling them may be located according to different considerations than are comparison goods shops.

Derelict Land

Land so damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use in its current state. Such land therefore will need reclamation works before development is feasible. Derelict land is often contaminated but is *not* necessarily so.

Development

In planning terms this word is specifically defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s.55) as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land"

Durable Goods

Alternative term for comparison goods (see above)

Eastern Staffordshire

The Burton and Uttoxeter areas are considered by Regional Guidance to be outside the Central Crescent and thus form a separate strategic planning area, contiguous for planning purposes with the Borough of East Staffordshire.

Environmental Appraisal

A means of identifying the potential environmental impacts of policies contained in development plans.

Environmental Assessment

An examination of the environmental impact which a development proposal can be expected to have. This is a mandatory part of applications for major developments, and is recommended for others, as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988.

Green Belt

Green Belts are statutorily designated zones around selected urban areas where development is more tightly controlled in order to:

- check urban sprawl;
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- help safeguard the countryside;
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- assist urban regeneration by encouraging 'brownfield' development.

The detailed definition of Green Belt boundaries is the responsibility of local plans.

It is not intended that there be a total ban on development in Green Belts; their role, and the extent to which development within them can be controlled, are defined by PPG2.

Greenfield Land

Land which has not previously been developed.

Infrastructure

Works such as drainage, water, gas and electricity connections, and roads, which are necessary for built development.

Local Plan

The 'next' stage of the development plan system, whereby district councils prepare detailed policies and proposals for the use and development of land in their areas. (In addition, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals and Waste Plans count as 'local plans'). Local Plans must conform with the Structure Plan, which provides the strategic framework guiding their preparation and ensuring consistency across the County.

North Staffordshire

For the purposes of this Plan, the North Staffordshire sub-region is defined in RPG11 and comprises the three North Staffordshire Districts (Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands *excluding the Peak National Park*) and the northern part of Stafford Borough (roughly, the Stone, Swynnerton and Eccleshall areas). Where the North Staffordshire Conurbation is referred to, this represents the continuous urban area around Stoke-on-Trent, including the towns of Newcastle and Kidsgrove and those settlements in Staffordshire Moorlands which adjoin the eastern edge of the City - giving a total population of roughly 400,000.

Photovoltaics

Conversion of light energy into electricity, most commonly through solar cells.

PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance Notes)

These are issued by Government to express its policy on particular issues; planning policies and decisions are expected to abide by them. PPG12 'Development Plans and Regional Guidance' sets out the role and responsibilities of this Plan, for example. Others specifically referred to in this Plan are:

PPG1	General Policies and Principles
PPG2	Green Belts
PPG3	Housing
PPG6	Town Centres and Retail Development
PPG7	The Countryside and the Rural Economy
PPG9	Nature Conservation
PPG13	Transport
PPG15	Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas
PPG17	Sport and Recreation

There is also a series of Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs)

Regional Guidance (RPG11)

RPG11 translates Government policy into guidelines for development in the West Midlands, and thus sets the framework within which structure plan policies must be set.

Social Housing

This can be understood as being housing for rent from a social housing agency, that is, the Council or (more normally in new developments) a housing association.

Southern Staffordshire

A strategic planning area comprising those parts of the County deemed to be within the Central Crescent - South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Tamworth Districts and the southern part of Stafford Borough.

Use Classes

These are defined in the Use Classes Order 1987. As well as defining types of development, they serve the purpose of determining whether change from one use of land or buildings to another constitutes development requiring planning permission. Those referred to in this draft Plan include:

- B1 Business uses (see entry above)
- B2 Manufacturing
- B8 Warehousing/distribution

Utilities

Infrastructure for the supply of water, electricity, gas, telecommunications; and/or the companies who provide them.

Vacant Land

Usually regarded separately from derelict land (although derelict land is generally vacant); land without a current use or recognised amenity value.

'Windfall'

Housing development which takes place on sites not allocated for new development in local plans - for example on 'brownfield' sites which become available due to demolition, by conversion of other buildings, and on small sites. It is important that local plans make realistic prediction of such development so that the right amount of land is released for new housing sites.