

Stafford Borough Local Development Framework

PLANNING

for our **FUTURE**

Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document

October 2005



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Submission - Core Strategy Development Plan Document

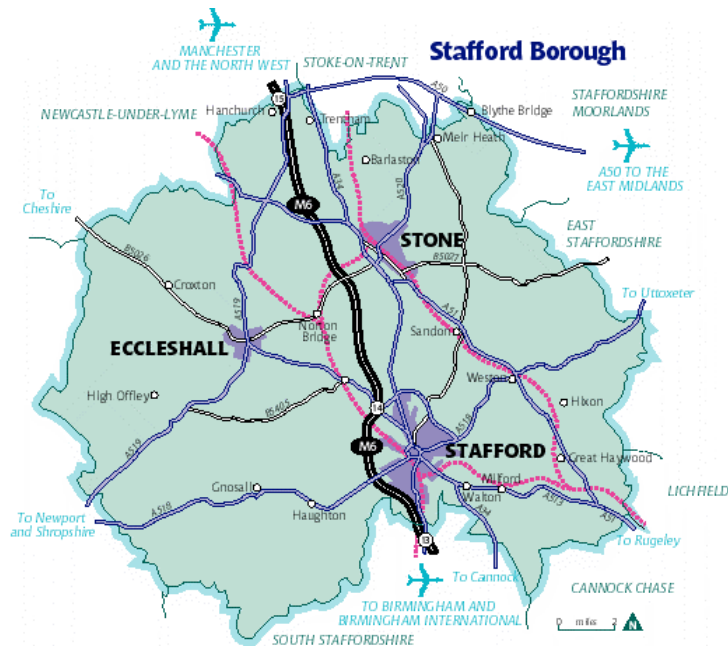
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 *The purpose of planning policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document is to deliver the strategic approach for spatial planning across the Borough Council area. The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will be the principal planning document in the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework and will form part of the new Development Plan for Stafford Borough alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS). The Core Strategy will aim to cover the same time period as the Regional Spatial Strategy.¹*
- 1.2 *Sustainability Appraisal is a key part of the process for preparing the Core Strategy Development Plan Document in order to assess the planning policies in terms of sustainable development principles. A number of Sustainability Appraisal Reports have been prepared and consulted upon at each stage of producing the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.*
- 1.3 *The Government requires Local Authorities to ‘front load’ the process for preparing Local Development Documents (LDDs). In January and February 2005 the Core Strategy Development Plan Document’s Issues and Options Paper was published and consulted upon as part of this ‘front loading’ process, seeking consensus around policy options. The Issues and Options stage is important for ensuring that the Development Plan Document (DPD) is both soundly based on evidence and relevant to the local area’s key issues.*
- 1.4 *Following consideration of the responses received to the Issues and Options Paper and recommendations in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report Members agreed the Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options Report for consultation. The Preferred Options Report is a statutory stage, as part of the new Development Plan process, for the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework. Consultation on the Preferred Options Report took place in June and July 2005.*
- 1.5 *Following consideration of the representations received to the Preferred Options Report and recommendations in the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Members have now agreed this Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.*
- 1.6 *The Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document sets out the vision, spatial objectives and policy options that Stafford Borough Council consider are appropriate for the area. The core policies are credibly based upon national and regional policies and aim to deliver key elements of both the Staffordshire County Community Strategy and the Stafford Borough Community Plan. The Core Strategy Development Plan Document contains clear and concise policies for delivering the Borough’s spatial strategy. However it will not contain policies that refer to individual sites as these will be dealt with in subsequent Development Plan Documents.*

¹ 2001-2021

2.0 Character of the Borough

- 2.1 *Stafford Borough is centrally placed within Staffordshire County. Staffordshire is a large County between the conurbations of Manchester, 50 miles to the north, and Birmingham, 30 miles to the south. The Borough shares boundaries with Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire Moorlands, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin and North Shropshire.*



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- 2.2 *The Borough covers an area of 230 square miles and has a population of around 120,000 people. There are two main areas of settlement, Stafford with a population of 60,500 and Stone, 6 miles to the north of Stafford within the valley of the River Trent, with a population of approximately 14,500. The majority of the Borough's area is rural in character, with settlements ranging from sub urban areas on the fringe of the Potteries conurbation such as Blythe Bridge, Barlaston, Clayton, Trentham, Meir Heath and Rough Close to large freestanding market towns and villages such as Gnosall, Eccleshall, Hixon, Great Haywood, Little Haywood and Colwich, to more isolated settlements.*

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 *This section sets out the key issues and constraints affecting the spatial development of the Borough in order to identify key drivers for change. The following key issues have been identified through representations to the Core Strategy DPD – Preferred Options Report and the Issues & Options Paper as well as previous consultations including the Gathering Evidence Questionnaire responses in early 2004, initial work on the Local Development Framework in Spring 2003 and the Local Plan Review Issues Paper in 2001 - 2002:*

- By March 2005 over 80% of housing provision, allocated for Stafford Borough in the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011, had already been completed
- Of the 150 hectares of employment land provision allocated for Stafford Borough in the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011, 35 hectares of employment land remains to be committed and is considered to be inadequate for the Stafford Borough area.
- Review of existing allocated Greenfield housing sites is required
- Significant decline in manufacturing employment in Stafford Borough
- Re-use of buildings for residential development rather than employment uses in urban and rural areas
- Declining and ageing population with an increase in single people
- Access to key services in rural areas
- Areas of poor quality housing
- Pockets of deprivation within a generally wealthy Borough population
- Maintaining Stafford's status as a retail and local governance centre
- Lack of provision for social and community facilities
- Maintaining biodiversity and wildlife corridors
- Protect and enhance the historic environment

4.0 Vision, Sustainable Development Statement and Spatial Objectives

- 4.1 *It is important that the Vision, Sustainable Development Statement and the Spatial Objectives are unique to the Borough and reflect the circumstances and the characteristics of the area.*

Vision

“The overall vision for Stafford Borough is to create an economically successful, sustainable and adaptable Borough whilst protecting and enhancing the local environment, where:

- The urban area of Stafford supports major new employment development and future sustainable housing provision
- The market town of Stone and the rural areas provide viable local services and facilities to meet local community needs
- Sustainable economic development is encouraged across the Borough

and together they maintain and enhance existing services and facilities, and the high quality environment where all people living and working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs whilst improving the quality of life for future generations”

- 4.2 *The Stafford Borough Local Development Framework is based on the following Sustainable Development Statement in order to place the principles of sustainable development at the centre of the new Development Plan for the area:*

Sustainable Development Statement

“Within the Borough the Core Strategy, Proposals Map, Development Plan Documents, Area Action Plans and the associated implementation framework will aim to deliver the Government’s purpose and guiding principles as set out in the ‘Securing the Future: Delivering UK sustainable development strategy’ document.

In order to ensure that the implementation of the Local Development Framework’s spatial development strategy is consistent with the purpose and guiding principles the policy framework will be monitored and reviewed through relevant indicators and targets as well as being assessed by Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment”

- 4.3 *The Core Strategy Development Plan Document has a number of spatial objectives which underpin the core policies, provide the spatial perspective for the Vision and create links to the individual Development Plan Documents being prepared.*

Spatial Objective 1

To create a Borough where all areas have distinct roles to play with Stafford as the strategic centre, and to encourage cross-border linkages with adjoining Districts. The role of each area and linkage should reflect the distinctive qualities of the locality as a contribution to the overall diversity and character of the Borough whilst mitigating impacts of increased transport movements between settlements.

Spatial Objective 2

To secure an improvement in the quality of life in the rural area of the Borough by maintaining and promoting thriving, balanced, viable, inclusive and sustainable rural communities with access to services and securing the protection and enhancement of its environmental resources.

Spatial Objective 3

To maintain a high and stable level of employment by supporting the diversification and strengthening the modernisation of the Borough's economy whilst ensuring that opportunities for new growth, retention and expansion of existing businesses are linked to meeting the needs of the local community, respecting the local environment.

Spatial Objective 4

Develop the local economy to meet local employment, higher education and learning needs by providing a sufficient number and variety of employment and educational locations and opportunities, including the review of existing under used and derelict sites, whilst respecting the local environment.

Spatial Objective 5

To create a variety and choice of high quality, healthy, affordable and sustainable residential environments with access to local services, which respect the environment.

Spatial Objective 6

Meet housing requirements in the Regional Spatial Strategy, including provision of affordable housing and housing for key workers by enabling new residential developments on previously developed land in settlements (excluding land used for sport and recreation) in preference to Greenfield locations.

Spatial Objective 7

To ensure the quality of the natural environment, including habitats and species, are protected, conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Borough taking care to safeguard sites within local, national and international designations including registered Commons and sites supporting protected species, and habitats and species identified in the local, regional and national Biodiversity Action Plans.

Spatial Objective 8

To encourage improvement of the Borough's transport systems in an integrated, sustainable and accessible way for all, whilst reducing, where possible, the need for travel, increasing active travel (walking and cycling) and protecting the environment through mitigation measures.

Spatial Objective 9

To provide for local community services and facilities in key locations to increase social cohesion and improve health, community pride and effective, viable centres through high quality design whilst respecting the local environment.

Spatial Objective 10

To maintain, improve and enhance high quality, vital and viable town and district centres ensuring that if new development takes place outside of these centres practical linkages are incorporated.

Spatial Objective 11

To conserve and enhance unique and sustainable developed areas and other locations where development takes place to be increasingly attractive places where people wish to live, work, visit and invest, whilst utilising previously developed land respecting local environmental factors in the most effective way and providing a variety and choice of high quality, healthy and sustainable living and working environments.

Spatial Objective 12

To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment, in particular the Borough's Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and Sites of Archaeological Value.

Spatial Objective 13

To maintain the principles of Green Belt and protect it from inappropriate development.

Spatial Objective 14

To secure planning obligations in order to ensure that development is acceptable in community planning terms and compensates for any harmful impact.

Spatial Objective 15

To protect ancient woodlands, other managed woodlands and significant trees in Stafford Borough and to increase the area of native broadleaf woodland.

Spatial Objective 16

To improve the Borough's sport, recreation, leisure and tourist facilities in those areas with an identified quality or quantity deficiency of facilities and to provide accessible natural greenspace including woodlands with priority given to local needs whilst sustaining the Borough economy and protecting the environment.

Spatial Objective 17

To encourage the exploitation and development of renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive, and environmentally and socially acceptable.

Spatial Objective 18

To ensure a balance between the growth of new and existing telecommunication systems and the environmental, social, health and physical impacts of any such development.

Spatial Objective 19

To ensure that the impacts of climate change on the natural environment, including ensuring that new and existing development is not at risk of flooding or detrimental to flooding elsewhere and to ensure pollution control and protection of controlled waters leads to key water resources being maintained for the future for economic, social or environmental benefits.

Spatial Objective 20

To encourage protection and enhancement of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to the Cannock Chase to Sutton Park Biodiversity Enhancement Area.

5.0 Background Context to the Vision and Spatial Objectives

5.1 This section sets out the general context for the proposed vision and spatial objectives for the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework. The proposed vision and objectives are underpinned by the principles of sustainable development.

5.2 The new Local Development Framework (LDF) should be based on a clear vision for the area and should take account of other policies and strategies affecting Stafford Borough.

5.3 **The Council's Corporate Vision and Priorities**

On 30 September 2003, the Borough Council agreed a vision for the area, together with four key priorities. In finalising the Council's priorities for 2003-2007 Members considered responses from a consultation exercise designed to feed into the Council meeting.

The Borough Council's vision is to **"lead a community and Borough which is prosperous, safe, healthy, clean and green."**

In order to achieve this vision, four key priorities were identified:

- **Prosperity** – Working to ensure good employment opportunities and a flourishing economy, retail, leisure and tourism services.
- **Community Safety** – Working to ensure that people are safe in their home and in their neighbourhood.
- **Management of Public Spaces** – Working to ensure clean, tidy and attractive public spaces.
- **Waste Management** – Working to ensure recycling targets for household waste are met.

The corresponding key commitments in the Council's Corporate Vision and Priorities that are relevant to the LDF are set out below:

Prosperity

P1 Work with the business community to support the local economy and secure competitive advantage for our Borough.

P2 Ensure that the development of the Borough as a destination for inward investment is supported by provision and encouragement of services, choice within the housing market, leisure opportunities and an environment that also improves the quality of life for residents.

P3 Ensure the new Local Development Framework (Local Plan) identifies and brings forward new employment sites for the next 10 years.

P4 Pursue a "fast track" approach to key planning applications, adopt a more proactive stance to pre-application advice prior to submission of planning applications and ensure that recent improvements in the Planning Service are sustained.

- P5** *Work with the Local Strategic Partnership to support the development of the whole Borough as a destination for visitors for retail, culture and tourism purposes.*
- P8** *Support the rural economy through the Market Towns Initiatives and other measures.*
- P9** *Maintain an active role in the North and Southern Staffordshire Partnerships to ensure that Stafford Borough benefits from sub-regional strategies and encourage Advantage West Midlands to invest in the area.*

Community Safety

- CS1** *Play our role within the Stafford Borough Community Safety Partnership to fully support the Police, Fire Service and Ambulance Service in their community safety role, together with other appropriate agencies in reducing crime and the fear of crime.*
- CS2** *Use our planning responsibilities to guide and support physical development which discourages unlawful activity.*

The Management of Public Space

- PS 1** *Work with the Staffordshire County Council and encourage them to invest in highways, transportation and public space to the advantage of our local communities.*
- PS4** *Pay particular attention to our role in partnerships with others in maintaining quality town centres.*
- PS5** *Ensure our green spaces are protected and enhanced using the Local Development Framework and other strategies.*

Waste Management

- WM5** *Remain committed to environmental protection and the pursuit of sustainability, where practical.*

5.4 Stafford Borough Community Plan 2003 - 2006

*In September 2003 the **Stafford Borough Community Plan 2003-06** (described in Government guidance as the Community Strategy) was published by the Local Strategic Partnership, known as the Stafford Partnership, as a joint plan setting out aspirations and proposals from over 300 key local partner organisations and individuals to ensure the economic, environmental and social well-being of the community.*

The Community Plan aims to improve the quality of life in Stafford Borough over the next three years and beyond through the following vision:

“To create a Borough in which people and organisations can face the 21st Century with confidence, a place that is prosperous with a community that cares.”

The Community Plan 2003-06 sets out the strategic direction, by identifying a number of priorities for improving the quality of life in Stafford Borough, centred around nine key themes, which each have a set of objectives:

- *Planning for the Future*
- *Employment Opportunities*
- *Attracting Resources*
- *Youth and Community*
- *Community Safety*
- *Health and Lifestyle*
- *Waste Minimisation, Recycling and the Efficient Use of Resources*
- *Protecting and Enhancing the Environment*
- *Transportation*

5.5 **The Community Strategy for Staffordshire**

In November 2002 'A Community Strategy for Staffordshire' was prepared by the Staffordshire Conference, a partnership of 50 organisations working across the County area. The Community Strategy concentrates on issues that are important to the whole county and supports the strategies produced at district and borough levels.

The aim of the strategy is to improve the quality of life for local communities within Staffordshire, and to contribute to achieving sustainable development by improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county and those who live in it.

The community strategy for Staffordshire is built on six areas. These relate to the following:

Community safety - *reducing crime and the fear of crime arising from burglary, drug abuse and vandalism, and promoting public safety.*

Environment - *Conserving and enhancing a distinctive and sustainable natural and built environment.*

Health, social care and housing - *Improving people's health and well-being and the health and care services they receive, and providing housing for local need.*

Lifelong learning and culture - *producing better opportunities for education and lifelong learning, and promoting community development (including cultural facilities).*

Prosperity - *developing the local economy, building on local distinctiveness and assets.*

Transport - *providing transport facilities and encouraging environmentally friendly means of getting about.*

5.6 **Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands**

The vision in Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands states that:

"The overall vision for the West Midlands is one of an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable Region, which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life for future generations."

Regional Spatial Strategy has the following set of spatial objectives for the region:

- *To make the Major Urban Areas of the West Midlands increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest;*
- *To secure the regeneration of the rural areas of the Region;*
- *To create a joined-up multi-centred Regional structure where all areas / centres have distinct roles to play;*

- To retain the Green Belt, but to allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration;
- To support the cities and towns of the Region to meet their local and sub-regional development needs;
- To support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion;
- To ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Region;
- To improve significantly the Region's transport systems;
- To promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region; and
- To promote Birmingham as a world city.

5.7 **The Sustainable Development Strategy for the UK**

The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy for the UK (1999) provides four broad objectives:

- *Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;*
- *Effective protection of the environment;*
- *Prudent use of natural resources; and*
- *Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.*

The Government's update to the Sustainable Development Strategy published in 2005 entitled 'Securing the future – Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy' contains the following purpose and strategic principles:

Purpose

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

For the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, that goal will be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment; and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

Government must promote a clear understanding of, and commitment to, sustainable development so that all people can contribute to the overall goal through their individual decisions.

Similar objectives will inform all our international endeavours, with the UK actively promoting multilateral and sustainable solutions to today's most pressing environmental, economic and social problems. There is a clear obligation on more prosperous nations both to put their own house in order, and to support other countries in the transition towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

Guiding Principles

- Living Within Environmental Limits

Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

- Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.

- Achieving a Sustainable Economy

Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

- Promoting Good Governance

Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy, and diversity.

- Using Sound Science Responsibly

Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

5.8 **Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future**

The Government's Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003) sets out several key requirements for the creation of sustainable communities to be facilitated by the Local Development Framework process including:

- A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth;
- A safe and healthy local environment with well designed public and green space;
- Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both with the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres;
- A well integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes; and
- Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure.

6.0 Policy Context

6.1 *In identifying the proposed spatial vision, objectives and core policies for the Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document the Borough Council has taken account of national and regional policy compliance, deliverability, and local acceptability.*

6.2 National Policy

The Government sets out national policy in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), which are currently being replaced by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The Government also produces Circulars and Best Practice Guides in order to provide advice to local planning authorities, to encourage a consistent approach to planning across the country.

For more information please refer to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website at www.odpm.gov.uk

6.3 Regional Policy

Regional planning policy for the West Midlands is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS provides the regional spatial framework within which Local Development Documents of the Local Development Framework (LDF) will be prepared. The RSS forms part of the statutory development plan alongside the Development Plan Documents of the LDF. The West Midland Economic Strategy is a delivery vehicle for many aspects of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

For more information please refer to the Government Office for the West Midlands website at www.go-wm.gov.uk

6.4 County Policy

The County Council is required to produce a Mineral and Waste Development Framework for the whole County area, of which the proposals covering Stafford Borough's area will be indicated on the Proposals Map where relevant.

For more information please refer to the Staffordshire County Council website at www.staffordshire.gov.uk

6.5 Local Policy

Currently the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 makes up the adopted Development Plan for the area. However this Development Plan now needs to be reviewed and updated. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that existing Development Plans be replaced by Development Plan Documents within Local Development Frameworks. The new Development Plan for Stafford Borough will be made up of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Development Plan Documents within the Local Development Framework, which will provide the spatial framework for the Borough.

The following policies from the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 will be replaced by the Core Strategy Development Plan Document's core policies:

- HOU1 – Development in existing Residential Areas
- EMP1 – Protection of Employment Land
- EMP9 – Design and Landscaping
- EMP10 – Implementation of Landscaping Schemes
- EMP11 – Future Employment Land Provision

For more information please refer to the Stafford Borough Council website at www.staffordbc.gov.uk

7.0 Submission Core Policies

- 7.1 *The following submission Core Strategy policies have been identified following consultation and community involvement through alternative policy options in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Issues and Options Paper and the preferred policy options in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Preferred Options Report to provide a local policy context to support national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Notes / Statements and deliver key elements of the Community Strategies. The core policies in this Development Plan Document (DPD) have been prepared to deliver the spatial objectives as well as aiming to avoid re-iterating national guidance.*
- 7.2 *The Initial and subsequently Final Sustainability Appraisal Reports for the Core Strategy DPD were consulted upon at the same time as the Issues and Options Paper and the Preferred Options Report. Following an assessment of the policy alternatives through the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report a preferred option was recommended for each Core Policy. The preferred option was then assessed through the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report. The submitted core policies have been re-assessed through the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report. For further information please refer to the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report.*
- 7.3 *The Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Issues and Options Paper contained three alternative policy approaches for each Core Policy area. The alternative approaches related to the level of guidance provided for development, as follows:*
- *Option A – Greatest level of guidance and most restriction over development*
 - *Option B – Less level of guidance and less restriction over development*
 - *Option C – Least level of guidance and least restriction over development*
- 7.4 *For further information about the alternative policy approach beyond this précis please refer to the Core Strategy DPD – Issues and Options Paper. Following consideration of the responses and representations received to the Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Issues and Options Paper and the Preferred Options Report, as well as the recommendations in the Sustainability Appraisal Reports, the following submitted core policies have been prepared.*

8.0 *Proposals Map*

- 8.1 *The submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document is accompanied by a Proposals Map for the Stafford Borough area. The purpose of the Proposals Map is to show the main proposals, designations, locations for Area Action Plans and areas where specific policies apply. The Proposals Map will be adopted at the same time as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document but revised and updated as subsequent theme-based Development Plan Documents are adopted.*

9.0 *Monitoring and Delivery*

- 9.1 *A crucial element of preparing the Core Strategy Development Plan Document was to establish a clear monitoring and implementation framework. As part of this monitoring and implementation framework the national core indicators will be reported through the Annual Monitoring Report to assess the delivery of core policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Where appropriate these national core indicators will also be used to assess the performance of other policies in the theme-based Development Plan Documents.*
- 9.2 *Spatial objectives, targets, milestones, implementation bodies, the timescale for delivery and indicators including the national core indicators from the Government guidance 'Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide' have been linked to the relevant core policy as set out below.*

The purpose of this policy is to direct most new development to Stafford whilst retaining and enhancing existing facilities elsewhere. Stafford is identified within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS) as an 'Other large settlement', a 'Local Regeneration Area' and a 'Strategic Centre'. Furthermore the RSS provides policies for market towns, such as Stone, to accommodate sustainable economic and housing development. Services and facilities referred to in this policy are defined to include the following: retail, health, community, cultural, social, sport, recreation and leisure.

SUBMISSION POLICY

The requirements for new development in the Borough will primarily be met by the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, excluding land used for sport and recreation. Where appropriate planning obligations will be used to secure the implementation of planning policies through acceptable development proposals.

1. Major new employment development, including office and industrial uses and significant sporting facilities will be concentrated in or adjoining the urban area of Stafford. Sustainable housing and tourism development, and providing major services and facilities to the Borough and the surrounding area will take place within the urban area of Stafford
2. The market town of Stone will be a focus for employment and tourism development as well as limited housing development and providing services and facilities to serve its rural hinterland
3. Services and facilities to serve rural areas will be maintained and enhanced in the following settlements:

Gnosall	Eccleshall	Great Haywood
Barlston	Hixon	Little Haywood & Colwich
4. The retention and appropriate enhancement of existing services and facilities will be sought in other rural settlements
5. Sustainable employment development will be encouraged across the Borough

All new development must:

- (a) mitigate for environmental impacts where appropriate;
- (b) avoid the sterilisation of mineral reserves; and
- (c) protect the natural floodplain through Flood Risk Assessments as well as utilising Sustainable Drainage Systems to control flooding and maintain water quality.

All new developments and renovations will be encouraged to use energy saving systems and provide on-site renewable energy generation, where practical and economically viable, or provide acceptable sustainable energy alternatives.

Core Policy 1 is linked to Spatial Objective 1, 9, 14, 16 & 17

Indicator

Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development.

Target: Increase provision for Stafford and Stone by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres

Target: 60 – 80% completed in town centres (measured from 2007)

Renewable energy capacity installed by type.

Target: Increase provision by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality

Target: Less than 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Environment Agency
Stafford Borough Council

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new development maintains and improves the character and quality of life in the rural area and its settlements.

SUBMISSION POLICY

The essential character and economic and social fabric of rural areas and settlements shall be maintained or improved to meet local needs by:

- a) encouraging development at an appropriate scale and location which assists in supporting existing businesses or diversifying the local economy, to help to underpin or improve services, community facilities and local employment;
- b) the provision of housing to meet the needs of existing rural communities including affordable homes and housing for key workers;
- c) ensuring that development protects, conserves and enhances the rural setting whilst not having undesirable impacts on local infrastructure, facilities and transportation networks;
- d) conserving and enhancing the natural, built, historic and water environments;
- e) maximising the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites; and
- f) ensuring that new development provides adequate foul drainage services to prevent pollution to controlled waters.

Core Policy 2 is linked to Spatial Objective 2 & 11

Indicator

Affordable housing completions -
Number of affordable houses completed outside Stafford and Stone per year

Target: 10 affordable houses completed (measured from 2007)

Percentage of new housing development on previously developed land in rural areas

Target: 70% by 2011 80% by 2021 (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Registered Social Landlords

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to encourage partnership working to deliver quality development schemes in the urban areas of Stafford and Stone.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Sustainable urban living will be achieved by encouraging and implementing initiatives which will enhance the image, improve opportunities for physical activity, create vitality and improve safety, comfort and environmental quality. This approach will be developed through partnerships with other agencies and the development industry, for schemes and proposals which:

- a) Maintain and enhance the viability and sustainability of urban areas whilst facilitating new built development, economic investment and diversification;
- b) enhance the image, attractiveness and accessibility of the town and district centres within the urban areas, boost vitality and encourage new investment;
- c) aim to reclaim and reuse derelict, contaminated, degraded, vacant or underused land and buildings for new development in preference to taking greenfield land;
- d) seek to improve the availability, accessibility, quality and diversity of the housing stock, including the provision of affordable housing;
- e) protect, conserve and enhance the character and quality of the Borough's townscapes and public realm;
- f) protect and enhance environmental quality through the creation, retention, improvement and extension of areas of wildlife value, woodlands, open spaces, access to watercourses and historic assets where relevant;
- g) provide high quality designed developments which will protect water quality, improve the quality of life and enhance the built environment; and
- h) promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel.

Core Policy 3 is linked to Spatial Objective 10 & 11

Indicator

Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres

Target: 60 – 80% completed in town centres (measured from 2007)

Affordable housing completions -

Percentage of new housing development classified as affordable housing

Target: 25% classified as affordable housing (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Registered Social Landlords
Stafford Borough Council – Economic Development

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

Core Policy 4: *The Balance of Economic Growth*

The purpose of this policy is to promote economic prosperity and support the Borough's employment base through targeted employment allocations and development proposals.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Diversification of the Borough's economy will be encouraged through the promotion and development of targeted employment allocations and attracting inward investment to the urban areas of Stafford and, to a lesser extent the market town of Stone, with an emphasis on creating greater opportunities for development, maintaining and enhancing social and environmental benefits and support for existing economic activities by:

- a) enabling the economy to diversify and modernise through the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new enterprises;
- b) maintaining and improving the Borough's economic position;
- c) enhancing the Borough's role as a centre of governance, a high technology business centre and University location within the Regional economy; and
- d) improving accessibility by a choice of means of transport to employment opportunities for the Borough's residents in order to meet local employment needs, maintain viable and sustainable local communities.

Economic growth and tourism opportunities in rural areas will be encouraged by locating development where:

- (i) it includes the re-use of existing buildings and assists with appropriate rural diversification; and
- (ii) it can help create more sustainable communities by generally providing a better balance between housing and employment, and limiting the need for commuting.

Existing economic activities in the Borough will be encouraged to modernise both to stay competitive and to embrace the opportunities offered by new technologies including Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The potential for existing and new industries to apply renewable energy technology to help address the implications of climate change will be encouraged, where practical and economically viable.

In all cases, the scale and nature of development should ensure that it meets the Borough's economic needs and does not encourage further outward movements of people and jobs from Stafford and Stone as well as the major urban areas identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Core Policy 4 is linked to Spatial Objective 3, 17 & 18

Indicator

Amount of land developed for employment by type.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Amount of land developed for employment, by type, which is in development and / or regeneration areas defined in the local development framework.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Percentage of land developed for employment, by type, which is on previously developed land.

Target: 60 – 70% average per annum (measured from 2007)

Employment land supply by type.

Target: To have 10 hectares of employment land immediately available (measured from 2007)

Losses of employment land (i) development / regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area.

Target: Less than 5 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Amount of employment land lost to residential development

Target: Less than 3 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Renewable energy capacity installed by type.

Target: Increase provision by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Staffordshire County Council
Instaffs
Business Link
Stafford Borough Council – Economic Development

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to support the delivery of initiatives in the Local Transport Plan through spatial planning principles for a modern transport network.

SUBMISSION POLICY

The creation and retention of a modern transport network in the Borough will be promoted in order to support development and sustainability of quality living environments and the creation and maintenance of jobs in accessible locations, particularly around public transport nodes. Integrated transport networks will be promoted through the Local Transport Plan to encourage safe and efficient movement in urban and rural areas, whilst protecting and enhancing local biodiversity and water quality.

Reducing the need to travel, reduce the adverse effects of transportation on the quality of life including the environment and the length of journeys will be encouraged by:

- a) locating development in areas which are accessible by the motor car, public transport, cycling and walking;
- b) achieving a balanced mix of land uses and patterns of development to reduce the need to travel;
- c) promoting and assisting journeys by motor cars, public transport, cycling, mobility aids and walking, by making them accessible, safe, convenient and as attractive as possible;
- d) securing Travel Plans where appropriate and requiring the preparation of Transport Assessments for all developments that are likely to have significant transport implications, to determine the measures required on the surrounding highway network to ensure adequate access by all modes of transport. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought towards the provision of the Stafford Urban Area Transport Management Strategy (SUATMS);
- e) encouraging the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the purposes of businesses and for other service provision;
- f) supporting the retention and enhancement of neighbourhood service provision, such as in District Centres;
- g) promoting safer use of routes in town and local areas by encouraging the development of traffic management schemes as determined by local need; and
- h) minimising environmental impacts through mitigation measures.

Core Policy 5 is linked to Spatial Objective 8

Indicator

Percentage of completed non-residential development complying with car-parking standards set out in the local development framework.

Target: 70 – 80% (measured from 2007)

Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre

Target: 60 – 70% (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Highways Agency
Highways Authority (Staffordshire County Council)
Development industry
Local Transport operators

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment by ensuring that new development is based on sustainable development principles. Environmental capital is defined as being the combination of the assets (i.e. the tangible commodities such as land, trees, fields etc...) with the environmental benefits derived from them, such as leisure opportunities, tranquillity, natural habitats etc...

SUBMISSION POLICY

Environmental capital will be maintained and improved in order to underpin the overall quality of life across all areas and support wider economic and social objectives.

This will be achieved by:

- a) supporting regeneration, by restoring degraded areas and previously developed land, conserving existing environmental assets and creating new, high quality, built and natural environments;
- b) protecting and enhancing special areas of intrinsic visual or cultural merit within the Borough including registered Commons, the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Hanchurch Hills and Trentham Park;
- c) protecting and enhancing other irreplaceable assets;
- d) protecting and enhancing the distinctive character of different parts of the Borough, including the retention of existing buildings integral to the character of the area where the buildings make a positive contribution;
- e) protecting and enhancing international, national and locally important designated sites, and locations supporting protected species, and developing measures to enable the Borough to contribute to the Area of Concentrated Biodiversity Enhancement identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy, and to achieve its minimum share of Biodiversity Action Plan targets in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan including with respect to woodlands;
- f) protecting the natural floodplain from development and utilising Sustainable Drainage Systems to control flooding and maintain water quality;
- g) promote, on a strategic basis, measures that increase the extent and quality of accessible greenspace and encourage the management of features of the landscape of major importance to flora and fauna;
- h) protection and, where possible, enhancement of the Borough's historic assets; and
- i) adopting a character based approach for the protection and enhancement of landscapes.

The loss of irreplaceable environmental assets by development proposals will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances. With regards to replaceable environmental assets all development proposals must minimise harm including by giving consideration to reasonable alternatives, mitigate and compensate for any loss of environmental capital and should use natural resources more sustainably. In addition proposals will be expected to provide a net gain to environmental assets.

Core Policy 6 is linked to Spatial Objective 7, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20

Indicator

Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:

- (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and
- (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional significance

Target: Less than 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality

Target: Less than 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard

Target: Increase by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

English Nature
Environment Agency
English Heritage
Countryside Agency
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Development industry
Stafford Borough Council

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

SUBMISSION POLICY

There will be no review or adjustment of currently defined Green Belt boundaries unless required by the Regional Spatial Strategy. The general form and purposes of the adopted Green Belts will be maintained. Inappropriate development within Green Belts will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances (very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations).

Construction of new buildings will only be appropriate if proven through the following circumstances and having regard to national Planning Policy Guidance note 2: Green Belt or its successor documents:

- (a) construction of domestic outbuildings incidental to the enjoyment of an existing building;
- (b) agriculture, forestry, horticulture and equine;
- (c) essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries;
- (d) acceptable extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- (e) acceptable infilling in existing villages for affordable housing or essential for rural regeneration to diversify the local economy or improve services or community facilities;
- (f) acceptable infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in the Development Plan; and
- (g) other uses compatible with the openness of the Green Belt.

All development within the Green Belt should be appropriate in terms of scale, form, character and siting; it should maintain the visual amenities of the Green Belt and will be subject to other relevant policies.

Core Policy 7 is linked to Spatial Objective 13

Indicator

Planning applications and decisions thereon for significant new development or change of use including 5 or more dwellings (residential) or 500 square metres floorspace or more (non-residential) or significant leisure developments within the Green Belt

Target: Decisions in accordance with Greenbelt policy (measured from 2007)

Milestone 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Stafford Borough Council
Landowners within the Green Belt

Timescale for Delivery 2001 - 2021

Core Policy 8: High Quality Design

The purpose of this policy is to achieve high quality of design in all new developments to support the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits.

SUBMISSION POLICY

The creation of high quality design for all development in the Borough must be promoted in order to enhance the built environment and support economic, social and environmental objectives for achieving sustainable development.

All new development must:

- (a) adopt appropriate design measures, showing careful attention to the scale, character, setting and compatibility with their surroundings, materials and proposed use;
- (b) respect, maintain and enhance the character, street scene, scale and hierarchy of existing buildings and the spaces between them;
- (c) ensure through careful design and sustainable construction that the development is usable, durable, adaptable and maximises opportunities, where practical and economically viable, to use recycled materials in their construction;
- (d) where appropriate, demonstrate by means of an Access Statement access for all through the provision of safe and convenient access, addressing the needs of all in society, including people with disability;
- (e) adopt design measures to reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour;
- (f) make efficient and prudent use of natural resources, including water as well as incorporating waste management, energy efficiency and pollution control measures regarding noise, air, water and light where appropriate;
- (g) contribute to high quality public spaces and opportunities for physical activity;
- (h) provide landscaping within the scheme appropriate to the location; and
- (i) protect and enhance existing areas of biodiversity value and links between them where appropriate.

Design statements will be required for development proposals within Conservation Areas, where appropriate

Core Policy 8 is linked to Spatial Objective 11

Indicator

Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard

Target: Increase by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry	Landowners
Parish Councils	Staffordshire County Council
Stafford Borough Council	

Timescale for Delivery 2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to meet the employment needs of the Borough.

SUBMISSION POLICY

To achieve sustainable development and economic growth, between 2001 and 2021 an annual average rate of 10 hectares for employment land provision will be made available in Stafford Borough for the industrial, office, warehousing and distribution sectors (Class B Uses). Employment land provision will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis, subject to employment land requirements identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

In allocating sites for employment and considering applications for economic development, where appropriate the Council will have regard to:

- (a) The ability to reuse previously developed land and buildings;
- (b) The nature, characteristics and needs of existing businesses, industries and institutions including the University and the College;
- (c) The availability of existing sites and the character of the surrounding locality;
- (d) Access to the strategic highway and rail networks for the distribution of goods and services;
- (e) The presence of a nearby potential workforce;
- (f) The provision of public transport;
- (g) The availability of public transport, motor car, pedestrian and cycle links between the site and residential areas;
- (h) The capability of existing services being able to be extended or improved to allow for future site expansion, when and if appropriate;
- (i) Viability and market demand, feasibility for implementation and capability for development;
- (j) Establishing and maintaining a portfolio of sustainably located employment sites by ensuring an adequate range and number of sites;
- (k) Stafford's role as the strategic centre within the Borough; and
- (l) The capacity of the strategic highway network.

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.

Core Policy 9 is linked to Spatial Objective 4

Indicator

Amount of land developed for employment by type.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Amount of land developed for employment, by type, which is in development and / or regeneration areas defined in the local development framework.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Percentage of 1a, by type, which is on previously developed land.

Target: 60 – 70% average per annum (measured from 2007)

Employment land supply by type.

Target: To have 10 hectares of employment land immediately available

Losses of employment land (i) development / regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area.

Target: Less than 5 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Amount of employment land lost to residential development

Target: Less than 3 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Table 1 – Current completions and commitments of employment land

Completions – 2001 to 2004	15.31 hectares
Commitments at 2004, including planning permission and sites subject to consent following the signing of Section 106 agreements	118.49 hectares

Development industry
Landowners
Advantage West Midlands
Staffordshire County Council
Stafford Borough Council
Instaffs
Business Link

Timescale for Delivery 2001 - 2021

The purpose of this policy is to meet the residential requirements for the Borough as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Provision will be made for not more than the housing requirements for Stafford Borough identified in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, as set out in Table 2 below.

In allocating sites for housing and considering applications for residential development, where appropriate the Council will have regard to the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing or its successor documents and the following:

- (a) The capability of being served by public transport;
- (b) The availability of pedestrian and cycle links, being suitable for people with mobility aids;
- (c) Access to the strategic highway network and proximity to employment locations;
- (d) The capacity of existing health, education services and provision of additional (or improvements to existing) community facilities arising from increased demand;
- (e) The availability of utility services;
- (f) The ability to reuse previously developed land and buildings;
- (g) Viability, feasibility for implementation and capability for development;
- (h) Achieving acceptable densities;
- (i) Provision for housing mix and tenure including affordable housing and specialist needs; and
- (j) The capacity of the strategic highway network.

Developments should be consistent with the creation of attractive and safe living environments, be in keeping with their surroundings and must not take valuable open space. Providing a range of housing types and tenures is an essential part of establishing choice for the whole community.

Core Policy 10 is linked to Spatial Objective 5 & 6

Indicator

Housing trajectory showing:

- (i) net additional dwellings over the previous five year period or since the start of the relevant development plan document period, whichever is the longer;
- (ii) net additional dwellings for the current year;
- (iii) projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the relevant development plan document period or over a ten year period from its adoption, whichever is the longer;
- (iv) the annual net additional dwelling requirement; and
- (v) annual average number of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall housing requirements, having regard to previous years' performances.

Target: To be reported by the housing trajectory (measured from 2007)

Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.

Target: 75 – 85% (measured from 2007)

Percentage of new dwellings completed at:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare; | Target: 15%
(measured from 2007) |
| (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and | Target: 70%
(measured from 2007) |
| (iii) Above 50 dwellings per hectare. | Target: 15%
(measured from 2007) |

Affordable housing completions

Target: 35 affordable homes to be completed per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Table 2 – Annual average rates of housing provision for Stafford Borough based on Regional Spatial Strategy requirements and the Ministerial letter dated 15 June 2004.

Annual average rate of housing provision 2001 – 2007	375
Annual average rate of housing provision 2007 – 2011	323
Annual average rate of housing provision 2011 – 2021	206

Implementation

Table 3 - Current completions and commitments of residential land

Completions – 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2005	2,168 dwellings
Commitments at 2004, including planning permission and sites subject to consent following the signing of Section 106 agreements	1,574 dwellings

Development industry
Landowners
Registered Social Landlords

Timescale for Delivery 2001 – 2021

