



# **Re-use of Rural Buildings**

**Draft Supplementary  
Planning Document**

**August 2017**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide agents, applicants, landowners and potential buyers of agricultural buildings with advice to ensure that high standards of design and conversion are maintained in the Borough, and to ensure that traditional rural buildings are re-used or adapted in such a way as to retain their integrity and local distinctiveness.



- 1.2. This SPD contains important information for anyone contemplating this type of development, and will be taken into account as a ‘material consideration’ when planning applications for the re-use of rural buildings are determined by the Council. This applies equally to both commercial operators and those looking at converting a redundant building into a dwelling.
- 1.3. The design guidance in this SPD explains the general design principles to ensure that traditional<sup>1</sup> rural buildings can be brought back into use by converting them (where appropriate) in a sympathetic manner, to retain their traditional rural character and setting. This guidance covers both traditional rural buildings in the open countryside and those within villages. The guidance also addresses some key overarching considerations that need to be taken into account when converting a listed building. However, further detailed guidance should be sought from Stafford Borough Council at the earliest possible stage; as such buildings are subject to special considerations and control.
- 1.4. Changes in the agricultural industry have led to large numbers of rural buildings becoming surplus to requirement. Traditional rural buildings contribute towards the character of their wider landscape. Therefore, any impact on the wider landscape should form a key consideration when finding alternative uses for rural buildings.

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional’ is a term often used to describe farm buildings pre-dating 1940, after which modern building materials and revolutions in farming technology and farmstead planning marked a sharp divide with previous practice, English Heritage.

## 2. Policy Context

2.1. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 came into force on 6th April 2014 (see web-link below). The Order changes permitted development rights to allow for the conversion of agricultural buildings provided that certain conditions are met. It is still necessary for the landowner to contact the Borough Council to apply for a determination as to whether prior approval will be required. This type of application covers design and external appearance, and this SPD should be utilised for guidance on these matters. Prior approval may also be required in regard to transport and highways impacts, noise impacts, contamination risks, flooding risks and the location or siting of the proposed development.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/564/contents/made>

2.2. The overall aim of this SPD is to provide further details to policies within the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (see web-link below or Appendix A) and paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Any development proposal should also take note of relevant adopted/made or draft neighbourhood plan policies if applicable. Key policies in the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031, which this SPD is designed to support, are 'Policy E2 - Sustainable Rural Development', 'Policy C5 - Residential Properties outside the Settlement Hierarchy', 'Policy Spatial Principle 6 (SP6) – Achieving Rural Sustainability'; 'Policy Spatial Principle 7 (SP7) – Supporting the Location of New Development'; and Policy N1 - Design. However some aspects of Policy E2 have subsequently been superseded following the changes to General Permitted Development (as set out in paragraph 2.1 above), as priority can no longer be given to economic uses before residential uses.

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/theplanforstaffordborough>

2.3. Historic England has produced a number of documents offering guidance on proposals to convert traditional rural buildings. These documents and other links can be found in Appendix B.

2.4. All proposals which include the re-use of rural buildings should be in line with national and local policy/ guidance.

## **3. General Principles for Conversion/Adaptation and Re-use**

### **Rural Diversification**

3.1. As set out in Policies E2 and E6 of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough, potentially appropriate new uses for traditional rural buildings within Stafford Borough include, but are not limited to:

- Niche retail such as Farm or craft shops,
- Storage or workshop unit,
- Offices,
- Live/work units,
- Tourist/visitor centres or similar uses, and
- Community uses.

### **Residential Re-use**

3.2. The type of agricultural or industrial building should be suitable for conversion to residential use. Evidence must be provided in the form of a structural survey to demonstrate that the building is structurally sound, large enough and capable of accommodating the conversion. A conversion where substantial rebuilding of the original structure is required is effectively a rebuild, and will be considered a new dwelling rather than a conversion and will not be supported. In such cases the architectural / historic interest is lost and with it the justification for the conversion.

3.3. Any application which involves the construction of additional buildings or extensions / significant alterations to the existing rural building will not be supported.

## 4. Detailed Considerations for Conversion – External Alterations



4.1. Conversions must respect and where possible enhance the key features of the wider landscape, and not have an adverse impact on its character. It is acknowledged that there is a wide diversity of traditional rural building types, from different periods within the Borough. Each of these building's character is reflective of the

specific function that the building previously accommodated. To ensure that this special character and local distinctiveness is conserved and strengthened, the following design principles should be adopted when considering new conversions..

### Walls and External Features

- 4.2. New materials will need to be natural and match the colour size and texture of the originals as closely as possible.
- 4.3. The re-pointing of joints should be confined to localised areas that require repair, using traditional lime based mortar of appropriate colour and texture.

### Making Best Use of Existing Openings

- 4.4. The key to a successful conversion is to design the internal layout to make the best use of all existing openings without alteration.
- 4.5. Existing window and door openings, along with large existing openings, such as cart openings, should be fully utilised to allow natural light into the building.



4.6. Where the introduction of new openings is necessary, they should be of a size that respects the building's character, be kept to an absolute minimum and be discreetly located on the less publicly visible elevations. Openings should also not interrupt distinctive architectural features such as ventilation holes or Owl holes.

4.7. Surplus openings that are no longer required may be used as convenient storage facilities for bins accessed from the outside of the building, or as unobtrusive locations for utility meters.

4.8. Where openings need to be blocked up, the infill should be of a sympathetic material and fully recessed for the full extent of the original opening. Such an approach emphasises the original opening and preserves the building's character and evidence of former uses.



### *Windows*

4.9. Where original window joinery exists, this should be repaired rather than renewed, where possible. Existing historical window shutters (where present) can either be retained and tied back to the wall, or retained in working order to provide an additional layer of security when the building is empty.

4.10. New windows inserted into existing openings should utilise bespoke units composed of either timber or metal. Features out of keeping with traditional rural buildings such as dormer windows, uPVC and windows of a suburban character, will be resisted, unless there is a compelling justification for why these are appropriate.



4.11. Existing window cill details should be retained and replicated where appropriate.

### Doors

4.12. Where present original doors should be retained. Large doors are part of the original character of certain types of agricultural building and should be retained and tied back in the open position.

4.13. Where required, new doors should be based on original surviving doors. Old ironmongery, where present should be retained.

4.14. Lintels over openings should be preserved where possible. Where new lintels are required, the external appearance should replicate the existing details on the building, for example natural stone, brick or timber facing.



### Roofs

4.15. The roof of a farm building is its most visible feature and forms a key part of the building's character. Traditional farm buildings' roofs are generally simple in character and composed of local materials.

4.16. When roof finishes need to be relayed the original material should be re-used.



Sometimes it will be necessary to reinstate a traditional roof finish in place of a more recent alteration. This should be done in material appropriate to the locality or adjacent buildings. Natural materials should be used to repair the existing structure and avoid total reconstruction that irons out all irregularities. Much of the character of an old roof lies in its slight unevenness where it has settled between the trusses.

4.17. Modern domesticating roof detailing such as cupolas and weathervanes are not considered acceptable. Applicants proposing to add such features will need to demonstrate that there is a historic precedent for them on the subject building(s).

- 4.18. The introduction of roof lights may be acceptable but used with restraint, they should generally be located on the rear slope rather than the principal elevation, with flush fitting design and non-reflective glazing.
- 4.19. Where necessary satellite dishes and television should be discreetly located on the rear slope and set to the corner of the building.
- 4.20. Metal flues should not exceed the ridge of the building, be thin and painted in an unobtrusive colour such as matt black finish. Brick chimneys of a domestic style are not generally considered acceptable.
- 4.21. Historic eaves and verge details such as corbelling or ventilations should be retained and repaired. As originally built the majority of traditional farm buildings had closed verges clipped eaves with guttering (where present) supported on rise and fall brackets with no fascia boards. Standard modern box eaves with deep projecting fascia boards, flat soffit board and projecting barge boards will not be acceptable on traditional farm buildings.

### Gutters

- 4.22. Historical gutters, where present, should be retained or repaired where possible. Replacements should be simple in character. Guttering and down pipes should be appropriately painted with a colour.

### Photovoltaics

- 4.23. Energy efficiency initiatives such as photovoltaics are welcomed provided that they do not compromise the setting and are of a suitable design that is sympathetic to the building and its landscape setting, and are not positioned on principal elevations.

## Extensions and Outbuildings

### Extensions

- 4.24. If it is necessary to extend the building from the outset to make the proposed use viable, then the building is not a suitable candidate for conversion, as stated in Policy E2 (h) in the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough.



## Garaging and Storage

- 4.25. Small scale appropriately designed new buildings may be considered depending upon the location and design.
- 4.26. The use of Up-and-Over garage doors of a suburban style should be avoided



## 5. The Setting of the Building and Immediate Surroundings

### Landscaping

- 5.1. A sensitive conversion must respect the ties the building has to the landscape setting and avoid imposing alien features. This requires careful consideration and an understanding of what features characterise the setting.
- 5.2. Surviving features on site such as ponds, drinking troughs and water pumps are important farmyard features and must be retained.

### Entrances and Parking



- 5.3. Original gates, gateposts and railings should be retained in situ and refurbished where necessary. New gates and posts, where required, should be sympathetic to the rural environment with a plain and simple character either in timber or wrought iron. The addition of large or ornamental metal gates will be resisted.
- 5.4. Car parking should be considered from the outset of the scheme and should ideally be situated outside the farm group in a well-screened area. This may be achieved by using existing enclosures or by screening.
- 5.5. Existing paving materials such as cobblestones or stone paving should be retained. Courtyards need to be surfaced in a material that corresponds to the setting, but is not so formal as to detract from the building's character. Bonded aggregate dressed surfaces may be appropriate, as may brushed concrete. Car parking spaces should not be demarcated using white lines.

- 5.6. External lighting, including for security, should be kept to a minimum and be of simple functional designs.

### **Boundary Features and Gardens**

- 5.7. Features that artificially divide the farmyard into separate areas, such as domestic fencing and other suburban solutions will not be acceptable. Suitably scaled brick/stone boundary walls within close proximity to the built form can provide privacy, and gardens should be bounded with post and rail/ wire fencing with hedgerows using indigenous species.
- 5.8. The introduction of non-native species such as ornamental hedges, Cypress, particularly *Laylandii* will not be acceptable.

## 6. Listed Buildings - Internal Features and Design

- 6.1. It is important to note that a building may not be listed in its own right, but listed due to being within the curtilage of the principle Listed Building. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 paragraph 5 (b) states that a Listed Building can include ‘any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before July 1946’ (see web-link below). For further guidance please contact Stafford Borough Council.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/1>

- 6.2. Where a building is listed, particular care is needed to conserve the internal historical character and surviving internal fabric and fittings, as well as the external.



- 6.3. Applicants will be expected to support their proposals with a Heritage Statement describing the significance of the heritage asset, and demonstrate how the proposals will protect that significance in their Design and Access Statement.
- 6.4. The conversion of listed buildings will often involve leaving the key internal space open, with all the roof framing retained and exposed. Where repair of the roof timbers is necessary this should be undertaken using appropriate materials and methods in consultation with the Borough Council. If the timbers need cleaning this should be limited to washing and brushing and they should be left unstained to retain as much of the agricultural character as possible. Sandblasting and other abrasive cleaning techniques are not considered acceptable. Listed Building Consent will generally be required for cleaning works.
- 6.5. Some higher status agricultural buildings, especially stables, have lime plaster ceilings. These should always be retained and repaired.

On Listed Buildings where brickwork needs cleaning, the advice of the Borough Council should be sought. Inappropriate cleaning methods such as sandblasting may cause substantial damage.

- 6.6. Inserted partitions should be kept to a minimum. Where partitions are necessary, they should be carefully considered so as to retain the openness of the structure and be detailed to complement the building.
- 6.7. Existing subdivisions and openings are often key to the functional interpretation and character of agricultural buildings and should be retained wherever possible. Non-standard floor plans and creative thought will often be required to work around and protect significant historic features.
- 6.8. Roof insulation should be placed between exposed roof trusses and have a finished surface so as to avoid the need to plaster around the exposed rafters. Works to insulate external walls are likely to be required to meet current building regulations. Historic finishes should be retained or reproduced wherever possible; these may be tiles, panelling, lime plaster, exposed brick or stone, or limewash. Lime plasters and washes allow the walls to retain their shape and individuality as well as allowing the building to breathe. In certain circumstances breathable paints with flat finishes could be used.
- 6.9. Where historic floors and finishes exist these should be retained and repaired in situ wherever possible. Floor strengthening, and increased thermal or noise insulation, can all be provided whilst retaining historic fabric in situ, and may often not be necessary
- 6.10. Where flooring is needed to make the building habitable, a gap should be left around the perimeter of the slab to ensure ventilation. Limecrete is often considered suitable due to being breathable and its ability to deal with naturally occurring moisture.
- 6.11. Every effort should be made to retain internal historic fittings, such as hay racks, plank doors, tether rings, and stall dividers; preferably in situ, though relocation may be necessary.
- 6.12. The introduction of overtly domestic fixtures should be avoided to retain the functional character of the building.

## 7. Permitted Development Rights

- 7.1. The conversion of a rural building to a dwelling is considered to be an exception to rural planning policy, which would not normally permit new houses to be developed in the countryside. Similarly, permission would not be given for the replacement of a traditional rural building with a new house.
- 7.2. The retention of the building's character and setting in the long term is considered to be the key element in the justification for conversion. A good architect, skilled in rural conversions, can help understand and explain the building and its relationship to its immediate surroundings and landscape character. This will help owners to achieve a sensitive and successful scheme.
- 7.3. In order to achieve its long term objectives of conserving both the building and its relationship with the landscape, the Council uses planning conditions to remove permitted development rights. This is the approach used by other Councils in Staffordshire and elsewhere in the country.

### Justification for the removal of Permitted Development Rights

- 8.5 Conversion schemes for rural buildings that are carefully designed in accordance with the principles outlined in sections 4 to 6 above, could be harmed at a later date by ill-conceived alterations, many of which are classed as permitted development where the building is not listed and is used as a dwelling.

Removal of permitted development rights means that the following alterations will require planning permission:-

#### **Alterations such as:-**

- Insertion of new doors and windows;
- Replacement and alteration of doors and window joinery or openings;
- Insertion of roof-lights and dormer windows;
- Introduction of new chimney flues and other external pipework;
- Replacement of roofing materials;
- Introduction of solar panels to roofs or walls;
- Attachment of wind turbines;
- Adding render, stone or other cladding to walls;

**Extensions including:-**

- Substantial single storey extensions to the building, using flat or pitched roof.
- Two storey extensions (providing that the eaves and total height does not exceed the original building);
- Conservatories, garden rooms and orangeries;
- Bay windows, porches and similar minor extensions;

**A variety of other detached buildings and structures including:-**

- Garages and car ports;
- Sheds, summerhouses, gyms and home offices;
- Greenhouses and other ancillary garden buildings;
- Swimming pools and pool houses;
- Sauna cabins,
- Kennels,
- Stables
- Tennis courts,
- Oil, and LPG tanks,
- Lych gates, columns, porticos, loggias and other kinds of structure for a purpose 'incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse'.

***Walls, fences, gates*** and other means of enclosure, in any materials but limited to a maximum of 2 metres in height (one metre next to a highway).

- 8.6 Such alterations, extensions, other buildings and structures individually or cumulatively could adversely affect the rural character and setting of the original. The removal of these rights brings such proposals within planning control and applies the need for planning permission for any alterations to the buildings external fabric or its curtilage. Planning applications for works which would otherwise be 'permitted development' do not currently require the payment of application fees to the Council.

## Appendix A – Local Plan Policies

### ***Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031***

- Policy E2 Sustainable Rural Development
- Policy C5 Residential Proposals outside the Settlement Hierarchy
- Spatial Principle (SP6) – Achieving Rural Sustainability
- Spatial Principle 7 (SP7) – Supporting the Location of New Development

and;

***Neighbourhood Planning Policies if applicable.***

A brief overview of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 policies are provided below:

## **Policy E2 Sustainable Rural Development**

### **Policy E2 Sustainable Rural Development**

For those rural areas outside the settlements identified in Spatial Principle SP3, and outside the Green Belt (within which development is controlled in accordance with national guidance, and Policy E5), support will be given to the achievement of rural sustainability by encouraging:

- i. development on Recognised Industrial Estates consistent with Policy E3;
- ii. provision for the essential operational needs of agriculture, forestry or rural businesses;
- iii. provision of infrastructure needed to support a sustainable rural economy;
- iv. proposals which meet the essential, local development needs of a community, to be evidenced by the developer, and which cannot demonstrably be met within the Settlements identified by Spatial Principle SP3 and in the context of criteria in Spatial Principle SP7;
- v. diversification of the agricultural economy;
- vi. proposals which help to conserve or improve the rural environment;
- vii. facilities for tourism, consistent with Policy E6;
- viii. recreation uses appropriate to a rural location;
- ix. provision for renewable energy generation, in accordance with Policy N3;
- x. residential development in accordance with Policy C5;
- xi. protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land by using areas of poorer quality land in preference to higher quality land for new development.

All development in these areas should, where appropriate and feasible:

- a. make use of suitable existing buildings or previously developed land before proposing new buildings or development of Greenfield land;
- b. be well related to an existing farmstead or group of buildings, or be located close to an established settlement, except where there is an agricultural or other justification for a use in a specific location;
- c. be complementary to, and not prejudice, any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses;
- d. respect and protect the natural landscape, the built vernacular character of the area, and any designated or undesignated heritage asset;
- e. be of a high quality of design, consistent with the requirements of Policy N1;
- f. be appropriately designed for its purposes;

**g. not be detrimental to the amenity of the area, or it is demonstrated that alternative uses are preferable for reasons of heritage interest;**

**h. provide appropriate crime prevention measures, including for safety and security.**

**Provision should be made for any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any harmful implications.**

**Within rural areas, developments that provide for the sustainable use and re-use of rural buildings for appropriate uses will be permitted where:**

**a. it gives priority to economic uses before residential uses and it has been demonstrated that every attempt has been made to secure a suitable commercial re-use;**

**b. in the case of alterations and replacements of residential properties, it accords with Policy C5. Permitted development rights may be removed from dwellings;**

**c. it is complementary to and does not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses;**

**d. the building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without the need for extension, or significant alteration or rebuilding;**

**e. the form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings, and the proposal and any associated development will not harm the character of the countryside and the landscape setting. This should be assessed through an appraisal of character and significance of the building including, its context, its sensitivity in terms of landscape setting, and its potential for change. Proposals should have regard to the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project or successor documents when making such assessments;**

**f. the building is well related to an existing settlement and has access to local services and / or is close to a regular public transport service to settlements identified in Spatial Policy SP3 or those outside the Borough;**

**g. it will not harm the historic fabric or character of any traditional building or historic farmstead and, in the case of a Listed Building, the proposal will not harm the significance of the building and is supported by an understanding of the significance of the farmstead and its landscape setting;**

**h. the building is large enough to be converted without the need for additional buildings, new extensions or significant alteration;**

**i. development does not harm any protected species or habitats on site and provide habitat mitigation and enhancement.**

## Policy C5 Residential Proposals outside the Settlement Hierarchy

### Policy C5 Residential Proposals outside the Settlement Hierarchy

#### A. New Development

In areas outside the settlements identified in Spatial Principle SP3, proposals for new residential development will need to meet the criteria listed in SP7, together with all of the following criteria:

1. It is demonstrated that provision can not be accommodated within the Settlement Hierarchy (Spatial Principle SP3);
2. A Parish based Local Housing Needs Assessment, and an appraisal of the scheme, shall accompany any planning application, proving that it will meet the defined needs;
3. The development is of a high quality design that reflects the setting, form and character of the locality and the surrounding landscape;

Affordable housing will be permitted on 'rural exception sites' provided that it meets the following criteria:

- a. The site is well related to existing development by being within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
- b. The site delivers 100% affordable housing (defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing) in perpetuity (there is no Right to Buy or Right to Acquire on rented properties and that shared ownership sales and re-sales are capped at 80%);
- c. Provide an element of specialist housing, subject to local need;
- d. The housing is justified by a Parish based Local Housing Needs Assessment;

Housing is to be justified on the grounds of local needs, unless the initial and subsequent occupancy of such developments is controlled through planning agreements or conditions via a Registered Provider, to ensure that the accommodation remains available in perpetuity, to meet the need for which it was permitted.

The occupants of affordable housing must be able to demonstrate they are in local housing need and unable to access the housing market. Each occupant of rural exception housing must demonstrate that they are unable to secure or maintain a dwelling in the open market, due to lack of available capital or income.

#### B. Replacement Dwellings

In areas outside the settlements identified in Spatial Principle SP3, proposals for a replacement dwelling will be supported if all of the following criteria are met:

- a. The present dwelling has a lawful unrestrictive residential use and is not in a state of abandonment, partial or complete demolition or collapse;
- b. The present dwelling is not the result of a temporary planning permission, a temporary form of construction or a caravan / mobile home;
- c. The building is not capable of retention through renovation;
- d. Appropriate measures have been taken to reuse or recycle materials from the original dwelling;
- e. The replacement building will be more energy efficient than that of the original dwelling;
- f. The replacement building is of a similar floor area, volume and massing as the original, whilst respecting the character of the existing site and its surroundings;
- g. The number of new dwellings is no more than the number of dwellings to be demolished and replaced;
- h. Any new replacement dwelling should be positioned on the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless on design, landscape, highway safety, residential amenity, or other environmental grounds a more appropriate location can be agreed; and
- i. The existing building is not worthy of retention because it lacks architectural merit and does not harmonise with the established character of the area.

Permitted development rights may be removed from replacement dwellings.

#### C. Extensions or Alterations

In areas outside the settlements identified in Spatial Principle SP3, extension or alteration of an existing building should not result in additions of more than 70% to the dwelling as originally built unless:

- (i) The existing floor area is less than 41 square metres, where development up to 75 square metres will be acceptable, and / or
- (ii) The design and appearance of the proposed extension is proportionate to the type and character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

### **Spatial Principle (SP6) – Achieving Rural Sustainability**

#### **SPATIAL PRINCIPLE 6 (SP6) – ACHIEVING RURAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Priority will be given to supporting the rural sustainability of the Borough by protecting and enhancing its environmental assets and character whilst sustaining the social and economic fabric of its communities. This will be achieved by promoting:

- i. A sustainable rural economy
- ii. Conservation or improvement of the rural environment
- iii. Appropriate rural housing schemes to achieve sustainable communities
- iv. The appropriate re-use of redundant buildings
- v. Use of sources for renewable energy.

#### **SPATIAL PRINCIPLE 7 (SP7) – SUPPORTING THE LOCATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Settlement Boundaries will be established for the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy defined in Spatial Principle SP3. Development or activities of a scale and nature appropriate to secure the sustainability of each settlement, where in the case of housing proposals this is consistent with the delivery of the proportions of development intended by Spatial Principles SP2, SP3 and SP4, will be supported within the Settlement Boundaries.

Development in other locations (in settlements or in the countryside) will only be supported where:

- i) If located within the Green Belt, it is consistent with national policies for the control of development, and Policy E5;
- ii) It is consistent with the objectives of Spatial Principles SP6, Policies E2 and C5 in supporting rural sustainability;
- iii) It does not conflict with the environmental protection and nature conservation policies of the Plan;
- iv) Provision is made for any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any harmful implications.

Settlement Boundaries will be established in accordance with the following criteria. Prior to the establishment of the actual boundaries these principles will be used to assess the acceptability of individual proposals at the Settlements. Settlement Boundaries will be defined to ensure that development within that boundary will, in principle, be acceptable because it:

- a) is in, or adjacent to, an existing settlement;
- b) is of an appropriate scale to the existing settlement;
- c) is accessible and well related to existing facilities;
- d) is accessible by public transport, or demonstrates that the provision of such services could be viably provided;
- e) is the most sustainable in terms of impact on existing infrastructure, or demonstrate that infrastructure can be provided to address development issues;
- f) will not impact adversely on the special character of the area, including not impacting on important open spaces and views, all designated heritage assets including, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and locally important buildings, especially those identified in Conservation Area Appraisals;
- g) will appropriately address the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment, and the conservation and enhancement actions of particular landscape policy zone / zones affected;
- h) will not lead to the loss, or adverse impact on, important nature conservation or biodiversity sites;
- i) will not lead to the loss of locally important open space or, in the case of housing and employment, other locally important community facilities (unless adequately replaced);
- j) will not be located in areas of flood risk or contribute to flood risk on neighbouring areas;
- k) will ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access as well as cycle and short stay parking facilities on the site; and
- l) will not adversely affect the residential amenity of the locality.

Development proposals should maximise the use of brownfield redevelopment sites within the Borough's towns and villages to reduce the need for greenfield sites. Only where insufficient sites on previously developed land, in sustainable locations, are available to meet new development requirements should greenfield sites be released.

### **Policy N1 Design**

To secure enhancements in design quality, development must, at a minimum, meet the following principles:

#### **Use**

- a. Ensure that, where relevant the scale, nature and surroundings, major applications are comprehensively master planned or, where appropriate, are accompanied by a development brief;
- b. Be designed, sited and grouped in order to provide access for all;
- c. New development of ten dwellings or more should demonstrate compliance with the Building for Life 12 assessment and any successor documents, unless it makes the development unviable or it has been sufficiently demonstrated, through a Design & Access Statement, that each of the twelve Building for Life questions has been optimally addressed, or conversely why it is not practical or appropriate to do so;

#### **Form**

- d. Incorporate sustainable construction and energy conservation techniques into the design in accordance with Policy N2;
- e. Require the design and layout to take account of noise and light implications, together with the amenity of adjacent residential areas or operations of existing activities;
- f. Retention of significant biodiversity, landscaping features, and creation of new biodiversity areas that take into account relevant local information and evidence;
- g. Include high design standards that make efficient use of land, promote activity and takes into account the local character, context, density and landscape, as well as complementing the biodiversity of the surrounding area;
- h. Designs must have regard to the local context, including heritage assets, historic views and sight lines, and should preserve and enhance the character of the area including the use of locally distinctive materials;

#### **Space**

- i. Strengthen the continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space;
- j. Development should clearly distinguish between public and private space, and provide space for storage, including for recycling materials;
- k. Streets and public open spaces are designed to be usable, easy to maintain and productive for the amenity of residents by being overlooked to create a safe environment;
- l. Require the design and layout of new development to be safe, secure and crime resistant, by the inclusion of measures to address crime and disorder through environmental design and meet "Secured by Design" Standards;

**m. Development should be well-connected to public transport and community facilities and services, and be well laid out so that all the space is used efficiently, is safe, accessible and user-friendly;**

**n. Where appropriate, development should ensure that there is space for water within the development layout to facilitate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs).**

**Movement**

**o. Ensure that places inter-connect using important routes and linkages, including Rights of Way, which are pedestrian, vehicle and cycle friendly, whilst allowing for ease of movement, legibility and permeability through a clearly defined and well structured public realm;**

**p. Ensure car parking is well integrated and discreetly located.**

## Appendix B – Useful Contacts and Links

### Useful Contacts

#### ***For general planning enquiries:***

Development Management  
Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ  
Tel: 01785 619337  
Email: [planning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordbc.gov.uk)

#### ***For Listed Building and conservation enquiries:***

Conservation  
Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ  
Tel: 01785 619000  
Email: [conservation@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@staffordbc.gov.uk)

#### ***For building control enquiries:***

Building Control  
Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ  
Tel: 01785 619340  
Email: [buildingcontrol@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@staffordbc.gov.uk)

### Useful Links

#### ***Plan for Stafford Borough:***

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp>

#### ***National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

#### ***Planning Practice Guidance:***

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

#### **Historic England Guidance:**

#### ***The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good Practise***

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conversion-of-traditional-farm-buildings/>

***Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings***

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/living-buildings-in-living-landscape/>

***The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings*** (this guidance will be relevant where urgent work is needed to prevent the further deterioration of a buildings fabric).

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/maintenance-repair-trad-farm-buildings/>

***Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings*** (this document should be used to resolve conflicts between the conservation of historic and traditionally constructed buildings and energy efficiency requirements).

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-pt/>