

Stafford Borough Council Local Plan Examination
Hearing Sessions
Homework List

Review boundary (detail) of Stone SDL re: HLM land / planning application

Following the hearing session on Tuesday 29 October 2013 the Council has reconsidered the position and extent of the Strategic Development Location (SDL) Housing as part of Policy Stone 2 – West & South of Stone. It is important to set out the context for establishing this SDL when compared to other location options around Stone as well as the latest information for this site.

Following the Borough-wide Development Strategy (G9) consultation on alternative strategies, the Council established a preferred approach through the 'Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough: Issues and Options' document (G6). This document identified the market town of Stone as the second principle settlement in the Borough to accommodate new housing and employment development. Through the Issues and Options (G6) consultation a range of alternative location options to deliver new housing development were identified to the west, east and south of Stone. Due to the North Staffordshire Green Belt designation north of Stone no location options were identified adjacent to this part of the town. A Sustainability Appraisal (H7) was undertaken for the location options identified within the Issues and Options document (G6) to inform the plan-making process. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that development west of Stone would have the least negative impact when compared against the SA Objectives. In addition the Council also published the 'Stafford Borough Infrastructure Strategy: Stage 1 Final Report' (D58) which established that the most deliverable housing sites are located west of Stone.

Following consideration of the evidence, the Council identified land west of Stone for new housing development through Core Policies 7 & 8 within the Plan for Stafford Borough Draft Publication (G2). These policies were assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process, and reported in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (H4). There was one negative effect recorded for Core Policy 8 in terms of development on a greenfield site and a recommendation to include criteria to reduce the impact on the surrounding landscape together with a reference to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). The land west of Stone for new housing development was subsequently carried forward into the Plan for Stafford Borough Publication (A1), and identified on the Plan Stone Area inset map (A4). The extent of the SDL west of Stone was calculated based upon a 30 dwellings per hectare calculation. The specific part of the site was chosen for its accessibility off Eccleshall Road and its relationship with the school.

In November 2012 a Statement of Common Ground (E98) was signed between Stafford Borough Council and developer representatives for land west of Stone. This recorded an area of disagreement due to the developers seeking an extension of the site "from 18 hectares to 34 hectares made up of 16 hectares of housing and 18 hectares of green space, in the interests of a properly planned, more environmentally sensitive and technically deliverable scheme".

The period of seeking representations on soundness and legal compliance regarding the Plan (A1) took place in January and February 2013. On 25th July 2013 a planning application was submitted to the Council for land west of Stone to deliver new housing development encompassing a more

extensive site than that identified in the Plan. The application is for 500 new houses, areas of green infrastructure, access roads and additional land provided to Manor Hill First School. Currently the planning application has yet to be decided by Stafford Borough Council.

Following the hearing session held on Tuesday 29th October 2013, Stafford Borough Council has reconsidered the extent of the SDL to the west of Stone. The Council proposes to modify the boundary of the western housing SDL to more accurately reflect the submitted planning application. The extension of the site will allow an appropriate design that aligns with wider policy objectives and allows the provision of onsite SANGS.

The proposed new boundary for land west of Stone is shown on the amended Stone Area Inset map. It should be noted that the amended boundary does not increase or alter the amount of housing to be delivered on the site but enables an improved design solution to be implemented which better integrates green infrastructure and open space provision into the proposed new development. The Council considers that the proposed amendment is an alteration to the housing site west of Stone and is not a new allocation within the Plan (A1). The Council has re-visited the SA carried out during the Plan production and considers that the results of the SA would be the same for the slightly larger site, and therefore this is the most still the most suitable site.

The Council has considered the alternative approach of extending the Stone housing SDL south across the Eccleshall Road to include land previously identified as SN-3 within the Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough: Issues and Options (G6) consultation. Having considered the alternative site option the Council considers it more appropriate to extend the Stone housing SDL northwards. The proposed extension area is in close proximity to the local school, will have fewer transport implications and would deliver an integrated new neighbourhood with the existing adjacent residential areas. The Council notes the evidence presented at the hearing session on Tuesday 29th October 2013 from Staffordshire County Council – Education which stated that new development at this location would enable the school to be re-orientated to integrate with the new housing whilst also providing an extension to the school grounds. The Council considers that the northern amendment of land west of Stone is preferable as it will contain all of the new development on one site, as opposed to split across two sites on opposite sides of the Eccleshall Road which would require additional access points.

Throughout the plan-making and Sustainability Appraisal processes, as described above, the Council has considered alternative sites at Stone together with the infrastructure and viability evidence. The location of the SDL is soundly based; the alteration to the extent of the SDL permits an improved scheme which will better reflect the green infrastructure needs of the area. The Council considers that the proposed amendment to the SDL boundary included within Policy Stone 2 is soundly based and reflects a pragmatic consideration of the alternatives.

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Stone Area Inset

-  Stone Settlement Boundary
-  Strategic Development Location - Housing
-  Strategic Development Location - Employment
-  Green Infrastructure (GI)
-  Green Belt
-  Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)
-  Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt

Stone Town Centre Inset

-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Primary Shopping Area Boundary
-  Conservation Area Boundary

