

**Hixon Parish Council**

**Hixon Neighbourhood Plan**

**Basic Conditions Statement**

**November 2015**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared by Hixon Parish Council to accompany its submission version of the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan. These two documents along with a Consultation Statement will be submitted to Stafford Borough Council, under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood (General) Planning Regulations 2012.
- 1.2. A Basic Conditions statement has been prepared to demonstrate how the pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions set out in [paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). A Neighbourhood Plan must meet these conditions if it is to proceed to a referendum and be made. The Basic Conditions are:
  - Have regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State
  - Contribute to sustainable development
  - Have general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area or any part of that area
  - Doesn't breach or is otherwise compatible with EU obligations – this includes the SEA Directive of 2001/42/EC
- 1.3. This statement addresses each of the four points and explains how the requirements of the Basic Conditions have been met.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Hixon Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council submitted proposals to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Hixon based on the Parish boundary.
- 2.2. Following a six week public consultation, the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan area was formally approved and designated by Stafford Borough Council on 4 July 2013. A Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was subsequently developed consisting of local people from the Parish. This group has met regularly to prepare the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3. The pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood Plan has been developed through effective consultation with the people of Hixon, including key stakeholders within the Parish. A robust community consultation supports the evidence base and justification for the development of the draft plan and, more importantly, the policies.
- 2.4. The feedback of a community survey identified key priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan to address. The Consultation Statement, which accompanies the Basic Conditions Statement and the Hixon Neighbourhood

Plan, details the consultation exercises that have taken place and summarises the key findings of the survey.

- 2.5. Hixon Parish Council has worked alongside officers at Stafford Borough Council throughout the preparation of the draft plan.

### **3. Pre-submission Public Consultation**

- 3.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has undergone a pre-submission public consultation for the statutory six week period between the 10<sup>th</sup> July and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015. The comments received have been recorded, considered and summarised in the submitted Consultation Statement.

### **4. What is being proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan?**

- 4.1. The pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood Plan proposes a range of planning policies. It establishes a settlement boundary for Hixon which includes sites for new housing development, most of which have recently been permitted. The Plan seeks to protect and enhance Hixon's natural and built heritage, protect and improve local highway networks and encourage new economic development within designated industrial estates that provide opportunities to match a local skills base. The plan designates Local Green Spaces so that they are retained for their use and protected from future development.

- 4.2. The Plan sets out a vision to deliver nine priorities underpinned by subsequent planning policies. The nine priorities of the pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood Plan are:

1. Residential settlement boundary and number of residential properties
2. Housing mix
3. Housing design, access and landscaping
4. Open spaces and the natural environment
5. Heritage and culture
6. Community facilities, amenities and services
7. Highways, gateways and public transport
8. Employment land
9. Local Green Spaces

- 4.3. The policies in the pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area and have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General)

Regulations 2012. The Plan period covers the whole of the Parish for the period up to 2031, which is the same period as the Plan for Stafford Borough.

- 4.4. The Plan does not deal with County matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Plan does not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area and there are no other Neighbourhood Plans in place within the Neighbourhood Area.

## **5. Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to National policy and conform to the local development plan.**

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- 5.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local strategic planning policies set out in the adopted Local Plan – the Plan for Stafford Borough (PSB).
- 5.2. The PSB sets out a development strategy which includes a sustainable settlement hierarchy. This has been identified to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth and to meet the scale of housing and employment need over the plan period
- 5.3. The PSB provides a clear framework for delivering housing and employment growth in the towns of Stafford and Stone and the 11 Key Service Villages (KSVs). The scale and distribution of growth is set out in the development strategy of the PFSB Spatial Principles.
- 5.4. Spatial Principle 4 requires the provision of 1,200 dwellings to be delivered across the 11 KSVs and 800 dwellings for the rural parts of Stafford Borough. A large proportion of these targets are already committed through approved planning permissions. The pre-submission Hixon Neighbourhood Plan, particularly policies 1 and 2, help support the PSB and contribute to achieving the housing provision by delivering approximately 125 new dwellings within the defined settlement boundary.
- 5.5. Policy 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan help support Spatial Principle 2 and 5 in the PSB, in contributing towards the delivery of new employment space to help provide prosperity for local residents.
- 5.6. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a total of 9 local policies. The table below shows these policies and how they conform to the PSB and the NPPF.

Hixon Neighbourhood Plan Policies	Plan for Stafford Borough	National Planning Policy Framework
<p><i>Policy No.1: Residential development</i></p> <p><i>Proposals for new housing development will be permitted within the new Settlement Boundary as identified on Map 1 herein subject to other policies. Proposals for new development within the new Settlement Boundary of up to 30 dwellings, and that are no more than two storeys in height, will be supported.</i></p>	<p>SP2 – Stafford Borough Housing &amp; Employment Requirements</p> <p>SP3 – Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy</p> <p>SP4 – Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution</p> <p>SP6 - Achieving Rural Sustainability</p> <p>SP7 – Supporting the Location of New Development</p> <p>C1 – Dwelling Types and Sizes</p> <p>N1 - Design</p>	<p>NPPF paragraph 14 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 17 – Core planning principles</p> <p>NPPF paragraphs 47, 49, &amp; 50 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 157 – Local plan making</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 184 – Neighbourhood plan strategy</p>
<p><i>Policy No.2: Housing Mix</i></p> <p><i>Proposals for new housing developments should seek to provide a diverse range of housing provision. Proposals that include ten or more dwellings shall include 20% of single storey dwellings (bungalows).</i></p>	<p>C1 – Dwelling Types and Sizes</p> <p>C2 – Affordable Housing</p> <p>C3 – Specialist Housing</p> <p>N1 – Design</p>	<p>NPPF paragraphs 47 &amp; 50 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 159 – Housing evidence base</p>

**Policy No.3: Housing, Design, Access and Landscaping**

*The design and layout of future housing developments must seek to complement the existing pattern of streets and connectivity within Hixon village. Design and layouts should seek to create street scenes that have evolved over time. Innovative use of brick colours, window frame colours, of cladding/rendering, front doors, different colour brick under window-sills, window-sill treatments, roof pitch of ≥ 35°. New developments should seek to provide attractive and high quality open spaces within the proposed development sites. Housing developments shall respect adjoining properties and not be intrusive or over-bearing in relation to existing properties. Future development sites should aspire to include innovative self-design and build properties within the site.*

**Policy No.4: Open spaces and the natural environment**

*Future development shall help deliver a diverse range of local open spaces for play and leisure activities for all ages and abilities. New housing developments of 10 dwellings or more should seek to provide attractive, high quality and well-equipped open spaces within proposed development sites. This could include improvements to existing open spaces within the village and not necessarily the creation of new open spaces.*

SP7 – Supporting the Location of New Development

T1 – Transport

T2 – Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities

C1 – Dwelling Types and Sizes

C5 - Residential Proposals outside the Settlement Hierarchy

C7 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation

N1 - Design

C7 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation

N1 - Design

N4 – The Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

NPPF paragraph 17 - Core Planning Principles

NPPF paragraphs 56, 57, 58, 59 & 61 – Requiring good design

NPPF paragraphs 69, 70 & 73 – Promoting healthy communities

NPPF paragraph 58 – Requiring good design

NPPF paragraph 69, 70, 73, 74 & 75 – Promoting healthy communities

<p><b>Policy No.5: Heritage Assets and Culture</b></p> <p><i>Initiatives that promote Hixon’s heritage assets will be supported, as will schemes which help preserve, protect and enhance Hixon’s historic buildings (not just Listed Buildings) and their settings. Projects which preserve and protect heritage assets by well-considered and appropriate restoration will be supported subject to consideration of other impacts on the landscape, highway infrastructure and the environment.</i></p>	<p>Policy N1 - Design</p> <p>Policy N4 – The Natural Environment &amp; Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Policy N8 – Landscape Character</p> <p>Policy N9 - Historic environment</p>	<p>NPPF paragraphs 56, and 58 - Requiring good design</p> <p>NPPF paragraphs 126, 128 &amp; 129 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</p>
<p><b>Policy No.6: Community facilities and amenities</b></p> <p><i>Future new developments (housing or employment) shall address identified shortfalls in local service provision. This will be by planning gain agreements set within the conditions of planning permissions or financial contributions from developers to improve services and/or create new facilities that make a positive contribution to local sustainability in terms of community facilities, amenities and services.</i></p>	<p>SP7 - Supporting the location of new development</p> <p>E8 – Town, Local and Other Centres</p> <p>I1 – Infrastructure Delivery Policy</p>	<p>NPPF paragraph 21 – Building a strong, competitive economy</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 28 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy</p> <p>NPPF paragraphs 69 &amp; 70 – Promoting healthy communities</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 176 – Ensuring viability and deliverability</p>
<p><b>Policy No.7: Highways, Gateways and Public Transport</b></p> <p><i>New development (housing and employment) will be expected to provide suitable measures to mitigate impacts on the local highway and visual landscape at</i></p>	<p>SP7 - Supporting the location of new development</p> <p>T1 – Transport</p>	<p>NPPF paragraphs 56 &amp; 58 – Requiring good design</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 69 – Promoting healthy communities</p>

*key gateways of the village, reduce carbon emissions, while protecting long views across the open countryside. Developments should be integrated within the public transport network to encourage public transport use. New housing development should seek to provide an integrated network of safe cycling and user friendly pedestrian routes within the settlement boundary, while promoting road safety. Where necessary, developments should seek to improve the visual landscape of key gateways in to the village*

T2 – Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities

NPPF paragraph 29 & 35 – Promoting sustainable transport

N1 - Design

NPPF paragraph 109 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

N2 - Climate Change

N4 – The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

NPPF paragraph 162 - Infrastructure

N8 - Landscape

NPPF paragraph 184 – Neighbourhood Plans

**Policy No.8: Employment Land**

*New economic development will be considered within the Recognised Industrial Estates (RIE's are shown on the appended Maps 3, 4 and 5). Industrial development sites will be a separated from existing and future residential properties by significant and sufficient buffer areas of open fields or woodland. Proposals which provide employment opportunities that suit the local demographic profile and skills base of Hixon; Hi-Tec Information Technology, Research and Development, scientific, administration, education and social enterprises will be supported.*

SP2 – Stafford Borough Housing & Employment Requirements

NPPF paragraphs 19, 20 & 21 – Building a strong, competitive economy

SP3 – Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy

NPPF paragraph 28 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy

SP5 – Stafford Borough Employment Growth Distribution

NPPF paragraph 109 & 111 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SP6 - Achieving Rural Sustainability

E1 – Local Economy

E2 – Sustainable Rural Development

	<p>E3 – Development within Recognised Industrial Estates</p> <p>N1 – Design</p> <p>N8 – Landscape Character</p>	
<p><i>Policy No.9: Local Green Spaces</i></p> <p><i>Local Green Spaces have been identified and designated on Map 2 for protection. New development is not permitted on any of the Local Green Spaces identified. Only in very special circumstance should this policy be over-ridden</i></p>	<p>N4 – Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>NPPF paragraph 76, 77 &amp; 78 - Promoting healthy communities</p>

## **6. Neighbourhood Plans must contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development**

- 6.1. One of the basic conditions underlying a Neighbourhood Plan should be that it contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development.
- 6.2. The Government's approach towards sustainable development is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). This is essentially about enabling growth for the current needs of the population and for future generations to come.
- 6.3. The NPPF describes three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
- An Economic Role - Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
  - A Social Role - Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - An Environmental Role - Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.4. There are many ways of demonstrating how Neighbourhood Plans contribute towards achieving sustainable development. Although Neighbourhood Plans are not required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal, such an approach can be used to show how Neighbourhood Plans support the achievement of sustainable development. In order to do this, it is necessary to identify sustainability objectives that comprise a balance of socio-economic and environmental benefits.
- 6.5. For the purpose of the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan, an approach has been undertaken using the sustainability objectives applied in the Plan for Stafford Borough, to show how the policies of the draft plan compare against sustainability objectives and contributes towards achieving sustainable development. The sustainability objectives are listed below.

### **Economic Objectives**

- 1. To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment*
- 2. To ensure high and stable levels of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues*
- 3. To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities*
- 4. To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities*
- 5. To reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as risk of flooding, on public well-being, the economy and the environment.*

### **Social Objectives**

- 6. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home*
- 7. To improve opportunities for access for all to work, education, health and local services*
- 8. To reduce and prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime*
- 9. To reduce the impact of noise and light pollution*
- 10. To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community.*

### **Environmental Objectives**

- 11. To reduce societal contributions to climate change*
- 12. To protect and enhance biodiversity*
- 13. To protect and conserve soil*
- 14. To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity and achieving sustainable water resource management.*
- 15. To protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, and historic and cultural character.*

### **Community Objectives**

- 16. To create a sense of community identity and belonging*
- 17. To ensure tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs recognising their rights and responsibilities*
- 18. To ensure that all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage in issues relating to their community*
- 19. To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector*
- 20. To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride.*

6.6. The sustainability objectives shown above have been applied in the Appraisal Table below to carry out an appraisal of the policies contained in the plan. The sustainability objectives are shown in the columns and the Neighbourhood Plan policies in the rows.

## Appraisal Table

Hixon Neighbourhood Plan Policies	Sustainability Objectives – Economic				
	1	2	3	4	5
Policy No.1	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral
Policy No.2	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral
Policy No.3	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral
Policy No.4	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Policy No.5	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral
Policy No.6	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral
Policy No.7	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Policy No.8	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Policy No.9	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
	Sustainability Objective – Social				
	6	7	8	9	10
Policy No.1	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral
Policy No.2	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.3	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.4	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Policy No.5	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.6	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.7	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.8	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.9	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
	Sustainability Objective – Environmental				
	11	12	13	14	15
Policy No.1	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.2	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.3	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.4	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.5	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.6	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.7	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.8	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Policy No.9	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
	Sustainability Objective – Community				
	16	17	18	19	20
Policy No.1	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.2	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.3	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible
Policy No.4	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Policy No.5	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible

<b>Policy No.6</b>	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
<b>Policy No.7</b>	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
<b>Policy No.8</b>	Compatible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Compatible
<b>Policy No.9</b>	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible	Neutral	Compatible

- 6.7. The appraisal above indicates that all of the policies contained in the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan are either compatible or neutral compared with the sustainability objectives. Neutral is considered as having no significant effect, while compatible shows support towards achieving a sustainability objective.
- 6.8. The Parish Council is satisfied that this appraisal shows the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan contributes towards achieving sustainable development.

**7. Neighbourhood Plans must be compatible with EU obligations including human rights requirements.**

- 7.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to EU obligations and the human rights requirements. It is compatible with all requirements.
- 7.2. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to secure new housing developments within a defined settlement boundary. It seeks to encourage new economic activity and also safeguard open spaces that are considered of high value to the Parish.
- 7.3. In order to meet the basic conditions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Plan including the proposals and policies set out in the plan must be screened / assessed to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required and if any significant environmental effects are likely to occur from the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.4. Stafford Borough Council has carried out and prepared a screening assessment on the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan and has determined that in their opinion, the plan meets the basic conditions of not breaching, and otherwise being compatible with EU Obligations and Human Right requirements. The screening assessment confirms there are no likely significant environmental effects arising from the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan and a SEA or HRA will not be required.
- 7.5. Changes in Neighbourhood Planning Regulations now require Neighbourhood Plan areas to submit either: a statement of reasons; environmental report; or an explanation of why the plan is not subject to the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive to accompany a Neighbourhood Plan when it is submitted to a local planning authority. The Screening Assessment undertaken by Stafford Borough Council fulfils this statutory requirement and will accompany the final submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.