

The Plan for Stafford Borough - Part 2 - Examination - Hearing Statement - Issue 2



Issue 2 - Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

2.1 Is PSB2 supported by the SA and HRA?

2.2 Do any adverse effects identified in the SA require significant mitigation, and how does PSB2 address these issues?

We note the PSB2 does not specifically address sustainability in relation to the proximity of sites and adjacent facilities. We consider this is particularly relevant when considering edge of town sites for inclusion within settlement boundaries. Appendix 1 is an assessment that was prepared for a recent appeal for a site at the intersection of Tixall Road and Baswich Lane.

The outcome of this review is a sustainability assessment for the edge of town locations that rank locations in relation to access to usual facilities.



APPENDIX 1

Consultations

It is noted that the LPA Case Officer report lists consultation responses received and the Case Officer has considered these within the report and concluded that there is no residual consultation response that should prevent development other than the LPA's and Parish Councils view that the site is outside the Sustainable Settlement.

From the above review of the LPA Case Officer Report the Appellant concludes that the LPA review of the application did not fully follow the relevant Policies, whereas, in fact the application complies with the SBC Policies and, therefore, it is requested that this Appeal should be allowed..

3. Compliance with Policy SP7: SPATIAL PRINCIPLE 7 – SUPPORTING THE LOCATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

As noted the Appellant considers that the LPA has not considered compliance with Policy SP7 criteria in favour of simply assessing the site against the draft Settlement Boundary while acknowledging the draft does not carry full weight, this is evident by the lack of comment against the criteria of SP7.

In the Appellant's assessment of the criteria of Policy SP7 included in the submitted Design and Access Statement and the submitted Review of PSB Part 2 Draft this concludes that the site should be considered to be part of the Sustainable Settlement of Stafford.

Since the Decision Notice SBC agreed to provide their consideration of compliance with SP7 and this is discussed in the Common Ground section. From this SBC consider that the application did not satisfy Policy SP7 criteria a), c) and d) and it is these criteria that are further discussed to demonstrate the application's compliance. These criteria are repeated below.

“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;

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;

Criteria a) is in, or adjacent to, an existing settlement;

The SBC PSB Part 2 Draft document provides some clarification in Section 2.17 and 2.25 for the assessment of sites on the edge of settlements which are useful to confirm the development site should be included with in the Sustainable Settlement.

This aspect is further considered in the Common Ground section and it is concluded that the site should be considered to be part of the Sustainable Settlement.

Criteria c) is accessible and well related to existing facilities;”

This criterion is further discussed in the Common Ground section and the Sustainability section where it is clearly demonstrated that development at this location is better connected and served by the facilities of Stafford than many other sites around Stafford.

The LPA’s stated concern is that the site’s nearest services are at Littleworth.

It is assumed that the LPA’s reference to Littleworth is primarily in relation to proximity to local shops. Unfortunately, the LPA do not appear to have read the Design and Access Statement fully which shows the closest convenience store as being the Cooperative Food store on Baswich Lane which is 0.9 miles from the development site. The Littleworth Shops are 1.4 miles from the development site. However, since the application being submitted we are aware of new shops being opened on the Beacon Business and Retail Park which is 0.6 miles from the development site. This development now has outline planning permission.

The Sustainability Assessment section considers a range of typical facilities and services for 14 properties in addition to this site to provide a comparative assessment.

This property was ranked 5th of the 15 sites considered (1st being the best). This demonstrates that this site is in a more sustainable location than 66% of the edge of town site considered.

Criteria d) is accessible by public transport, or demonstrates that the provision of such services could be viably provided;

As above this criterion is further discussed in the Common Ground section and the Sustainability Assessment section where it is clearly demonstrated that development at this location is better connected and served by the facilities of Stafford than many other sites around Stafford.

The LPA’s stated concern is that the site is served by a rural bus service.

The nearest bus stop is shown on the appended bus time tables as “Stafford, adj. crematorium”. This bus stop is with 100m of the property. Staffordshire County Council (SCC) show the site is served by routes 826, 828 and 841. It is noted that SCC class the 828 and 841 bus services are “more frequent”.

The 828 service has two buses per hour and the 841 service has one bus per hour i.e. there are three buses per hour.

Therefore, it is apparent that the development is readily accessible by public transport.

Local bus time tables are included in Appendix B with partial extracts included below.

Monday to Fridays										
Service	828	828	828	828	828	828	828	828	828	
Service Restrictions	1									
Notes	NSch									
Stafford Town Centre, Gaol Square (Stand 1)	0725	0755	0825		25	55		1455	1525	1555
§ Stafford Town Centre, Chell Road (Stand B1)	0728	0758	0828		26	56		1458	1528	1558
Stafford Town Centre, Guildhall Shopping Centre (Stand 1)	0728	0758	0828		28	58		1458	1528	1558
§ Stafford Town Centre, adj Mill Bank	0729	0759	0829		29	59		1459	1529	1559
Stafford Town Centre, opp Railway Station	0731	0801	0831		31	01		1501	1531	1601
§ Stafford Town Centre, adj Pilgrim Street	0731	0801	0831		31	01		1501	1531	1602
Stafford Town Centre, adj The Sun	0732	0802	0832		32	02		1502	1532	1602
Littleworth, adj Lammascote Road	0734	0804	0834		34	04		1504	1534	1604
Littleworth, opp Metropolitan	0734	0804	0834		34	04		1504	1534	1605
Littleworth, opp Cull Avenue										1605
Littleworth, opp Coton Avenue										1606
Stafford, at Stafford General Hospital										1608
§ Stafford, adj Katherine House										1608
Kingston Hill, opp Morris Man										1609
Kingston Hill, adj Sheringham Covert										1610
Beaconside, opp University										1612
§ Beaconside, adj Staffordshire University										1613
Stafford, adj Beacon Business Park										1613
Littleworth, adj St Thomas Street	0735	0805	0835		35	05		1505	1535	
Kingston Hill, opp Perkins	0735	0805	0835		35	05		1505	1535	
Kingston Hill, adj Avon Rise	0736	0806	0836		36	06		1506	1536	
Kingston Hill, opp 256 Tixall Road	0737	0807	0837		37	07		1507	1537	
Kingston Hill, adj Wolseley Road	0738	0808	0838		38	08		1508	1538	
§ Stafford, adj Crematorium	0738	0808	0838		38	08		1508	1538	
§ Tixall, opp Little Brancote	0742	0812	0842		42	12		1512	1542	1618
Tixall, opp Church	0745	0815	0845		45	15		1515	1545	1621
§ Great Haywood, adj Abbeyfields	0749	0819	0849		49	19		1519	1549	1625
Great Haywood, nr Clifford Arms	0750	0820	0850		50	20		1520	1550	1626
§ Great Haywood, adj Rockhouse Drive	0750	0820	0850		50	20		1520	1550	1628
§ Little Haywood, opp Lamb & Flag	0752	0822	0852		52	22		1522	1552	1628
§ Little Haywood, adj St Marys Abbey	0753	0823	0853		53	23		1523	1553	1629
Colwich, opp St Michael and All Angels Church	0754	0824	0854		54	24		1524	1554	1630
§ Colwich, adj Dobree Close	0754	0824	0854		54	24		1524	1554	1630
§ Bishton, opp Shell Garage	0756	0826	0856		56	26		1526	1556	1632
§ Bishton, adj Bishton Lane	0756	0826	0856		56	26		1526	1556	1632
Wolseley Bridge, adj Garden Centre	0758	0828	0858		58	28		1528	1558	1634

841 / 841A **Stafford - Great Haywood - Hixon - Uttoxeter**

Direction of stops: where shown (eg: W-bound) this is the compass direction towards which

Mondays to Fridays

Service	841		841		841		841		841		841A		841		841	
	Notes	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	Sch	NSch	
Stafford, adj Kingsway												1535				
Stafford, opp Rowley Avenue												1536				
Stafford Town Centre, adj Pilgrim Street												1539				
Stafford Town Centre, adj The Sun												1540				
Stafford Town Centre, adj Shrewsbury Arms		0715	0715	0900	1000	1100	1300	1400				1545	1545	1740		
Littleworth, adj Lammascote Road		0718	0718	0903	1003	1103	1303	1403				1547	1548	1743		
Littleworth, opp Metropolitan		0718	0718	0903	1003	1103	1303	1403				1548	1548	1743		
Littleworth, opp Cull Avenue		0719	0719	0904	1004	1104	1304	1404				1549	1549	1744		
Kingston Hill, opp Perkins		0720	0720	0905	1005	1105	1305	1405				1550	1550	1745		
Kingston Hill, adj Avon Rise		0721	0721	0906	1006	1106	1306	1406				1551	1551	1746		
Kingston Hill, opp 256 Tixall Road		0722	0722	0907	1007	1107	1307	1407				1552	1552	1747		
Kingston Hill, adj Wolseley Road		0723	0723	0908	1008	1108	1308	1408				1553	1553	1748		
Stafford, adj Crematorium		0724	0724	0909	1009	1109	1309	1409				1554	1554	1749		

From the above specific review of points of Policy identified by SBC as being non compliant the Appellant concludes that the LPA review of these points is not consistent with SBC stated criteria (SP7 criteria a) or the LPA review has been misinformed of the relevant facts (SP7 criteria c & d). Therefore, it is requested that this Appeal should be allowed.

4. Sustainability Assessment

The Appellant’s Design and Access statement section 4.1 provides a comprehensive list of services and facilities in close proximity to the application site. The Appellant has noted that key services are within a short walking distance. This demonstrates the sustainable location of the application site. It is noted that the list contains a significant error i.e. the distance from the appeal site to Stafford Town Centre is only 2 miles and not 4 miles as written.

The Decision Notice reason for refusal states that the development would represent an unsustainable form of development. It is considered that primarily this comment is made on the basis that the LPA consider the site to be outside the Settlement Boundary. The issue of sustainability is also reflected in the LPA’s consideration of the criteria listed in Policy SP7 (refer to the Compliance with Policy SP7 section and the Common Ground section and Appendix C4).

The LPA Officer report confirms that the site benefits from the associated local services and facilities of Stafford, however, the post Decision Notice response received 16/10/15 states that there are concerns about the proximity of the site to services, in particular shops and regular bus routes. Specific responses

to these points are provided in Compliance with Policy SP7 section. It is noted that these issues are not included in the Policy SP7 criteria and should not form part of the consideration.

Notwithstanding the specific SP7 criteria clearly the issue of 'Sustainable Development or Settlement' is topical and this is often related to proximity to services and facilities. To assess this with some science the development site is compared to 14 other sites spread around Stafford, all within the proposed settlement boundary by either 200m or 1km. Appendix B1 shows the sites considered.

It is appreciated that many different studies could be made to consider a host of criteria but it is hoped that this study can be accepted to be representative.

The study records the travel distance to each facility/service and simply totals these distances with the lower scores being more sustainable sites. Each site is ranked against each criterion.

The following Sustainability Assessment presents the data both in a table and graphically.

Appendix B shows the location of sites considered and the facilities/ services closest to each site. Please note that the maps do not attempt to show, for example, all pubs, they to show relevant facilities around each site being considered. The following categories are considered:

A - Schools, further education: Primary School, High School, College or University. The nearest non fee paying (other than university) education site is considered. Faith schools have not been included other than Church of England.

B - Health care: Doctors Surgery/Pharmacy, Hospital. Private Health care site are not included.

C - Shops: Local Shops, Supermarket and Town Centre. Local convenience stores are considered. Small corner shops are not included.

D - Transport links: Bus Stop, Train Station. Distance to 'more Frequent' bus services are included. Refer to SCC bus route maps in Appendix B for 'more frequent' and 'less frequent' lists.

E - Faith: Church. Church of England site only are considered as being more mainstream.

F – Restaurants and Public Houses: The nearest restaurant or public house that serves food is considered. Fast food or takeaway stores are not considered.

G - Fitness: Sports ground, Gym, Open space for walking. Open space for walking has been assessed as being a 20 minute walk and this has been taken as being at least 800m or an area greater than 0.4ha.

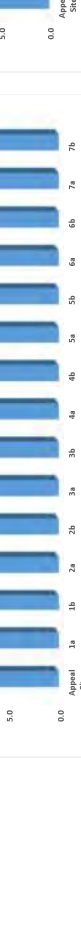
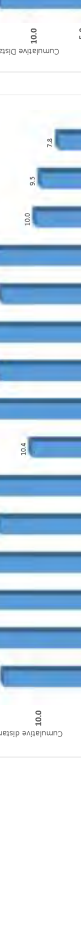
H - Employment sites: Industrial estates, Trading estates, Retail park, Town centre. Small site are not considered.

Sustainability Assessment and Summary with Site Ranking

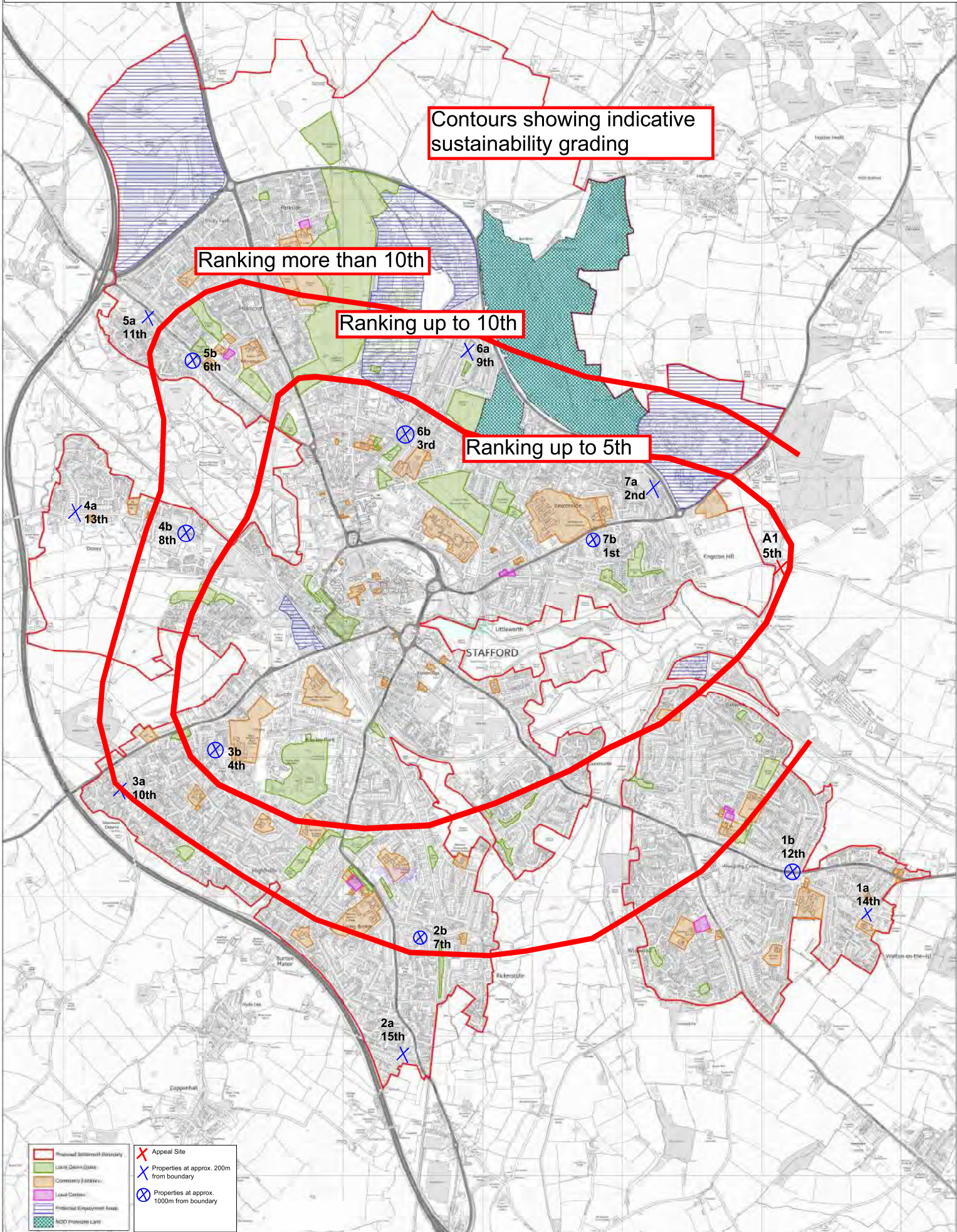
Planning Application 15/2261/FUL Appsi-
 Distance is a measure of the accessibility of a site to the nearest supermarket, primary school, bus stop, health care, employment sites, and other facilities that may be required by the majority of people/families. For this reason mainstream options are considered of 4th schools are not considered other than Church of England.
 location 'a' properties are approx 200m within the proposed settlement boundary
 location 'b' properties are approx 1 km within the proposed settlement boundary

Criteria	Reference Sheet	Notes	A	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	5a	5b	6a	6b	7a	7b
Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance
I	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
II	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
III	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
IV	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
V	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
VI	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
VII	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
VIII	Health care	Wentley Academy Primary School	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

- i The nearest non-fee paying education site is considered (excluding faith schools except C of E).
- ii Local convenience stores are considered (eg Co-operative, Spar, Tesco express, plus the nearest supermarket. If a supermarket is closer this is measured twice. It is noted that the Bascos Business and Retail Park site has got planning permission but is not yet constructed.
- iii While the nearest bus stops is considered it is noted that some services may be 'less frequent'. These locations are highlighted in red. The distance stated is to the nearest 'frequent' service.
- iv The nearest large open space for walking eg. large park, canal, wood for a 20 minute walk (minimum 0.4ha or 800m length).
- v The nearest 2 employment sites or the town centre are considered. Small employment sites are not considered. The distance is considered to be the entrance of the site or where 2 town centre locations are closest, the second distance is to the market square.
- vi All distances are in miles and are taken as the shortest walking route.



Sustainability Assessment: - Summary Ranking and Ranking Contour



Contours showing indicative sustainability grading

Ranking more than 10th

Ranking up to 10th

Ranking up to 5th

	Proposed Settlement Boundary		Appeal Site
	Local Green Space		Properties at approx. 200m from boundary
	Conservation Features		Properties at approx. 1000m from boundary
	Local Centre		
	Protected Employment Area		
	MOO Proposed Land		

As can be seen this property was ranked 5th of the 15 sites considered (1st being the best). This demonstrates that this site is in a more sustainable location than 66% of the edge of town site considered.

The Sustainability Contour map is clearly indicative but it is helpful to illustrate relativity between the Appeal site and others site around Stafford.

From the above Sustainability Assessment the Appellant concludes that the development site is in fact better placed in relation to the town's services and facilities than many other edge of town sites that are within the proposed Settlement Boundary. Therefore, it is requested that this Appeal should be allowed.

5. Common Ground

The Appellant has attempted to establish common ground with the LPA and copies of emails with the LPA included in Appendix C.

In particular, the email from SBC's M Ellis of 16/9/15 provides a further interpretation of the LPA's view of the Appeal site and the draft Settlement Boundary. An extract of this email follows:

"It has not yet been possible to review all of the representations which have been made to the consultation on the draft Plan for Stafford Borough part 2, however, given the defensible boundary in the form of Baswich Lane and the change in character from what will likely be a fairly dense urban form in the Eastern SDL to the looser pattern of housing on the opposite side of the Baswich Lane the Council does not consider at this point in time that it is likely to recommend that the settlement boundary is moved. You will, of course, appreciate that this comment is made without having had the benefit of reviewing all of the representations and your submission will be fully considered in relation to the draft plan."

We are of the opinion that the LPA's reasons given above for not considering 1 Brancote Row and other adjacent properties to be part of the Settlement of Stafford are not in accordance with the clear criteria presented in both Policy SP7 and the PSB Part 2 Draft. For example, concepts such as 'change of character' and 'density' are not mentioned as part of the criteria for SP7 or in the Methodology listed in the Part 2 Consultation document. Even so, it is difficult to believe that the five houses directly fronting on to Baswich Lane are not of a similar density being a terrace of three and a pair of semi-detached houses.

The LPA's view of a 'defensible boundary' appears to hark back to a Residential Development Boundary approach to contain development rather than the requirement to firstly define the existing settlement plus identify additional land for future housing. For this site it should simply be a matter of the facts as