

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
PLAN FOR STAFFORD BOROUGH
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS
LAND WEST OF STAFFORD

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Statement of Common Ground is to establish the main areas of agreement, and identify any main areas of dispute / disagreement between the parties and Stafford Borough Council. The Statement of Common Ground should therefore establish a range of actions and rough working assumptions, including timings, for the delivery of land west of Stafford.

SITE ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Land West of Stafford (Burleyfields), Stafford.

Residential-led, mixed use development, including a new primary school, neighbourhood centre, public open space, part of the Stafford Western Access Improvement scheme from Martin Drive to Doxey Road, access, parking and landscaping. The development location is identified on the site plan (Appendix 1) attached to this Statement of Common Ground.

**DEVELOPER and
landowner interests:**

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited
Lord Stafford's Estate
Bellway Homes Ltd
St Gobain

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Stafford Borough Council

This statement addresses the following areas of common ground:

1. Description of the site (including agreed dimensions).
2. Description of the area.
3. Development Plan context.
4. Main Areas of Agreement.
5. Main areas of Disagreement / Dispute.

1. Description of the Site

The site extends to around 109 hectares.

The Western Strategic Development Location (SDL) is located approximately 1 km to the west of Stafford town centre across the main West Coast mainline beyond the main residential areas to the west of the town and through to the M6 motorway.

The site is a mix of Greenfield and previously developed land. Although the majority of the site is Greenfield, it lies very close to the town centre, and has urban development to the north, south and east. To the west lies the M6. The site has principal access from Martin Drive off Newport Road and Doxey Road, Doxey has existing vehicular access points into the site.

2. Description of the area

To the north of the site are the existing residential areas of Doxey and to the south of the site is Stafford golf club and beyond is Stafford Castle with residential properties along Newport Road. To west of the site is the M6 motorway and to the east of the site is the Castlefields Estate, Castletown and Stafford town centre. To the north east, the site adjoins the line of the main West Coast railway line which is partly in a cutting with vegetated embankments.

Stafford Railway Station is located approximately 1km to the south east of the site.

The Way for the Millennium runs through the site, providing a strategic pedestrian and cycle access to both the town of Stafford and the countryside beyond.

3. Development Plan context

The site is proposed for allocation in the Plan for Stafford Borough. Part of the site is an existing local plan allocation under Policy HP9 of the adopted Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 for residential development. The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies a potential capacity of 170 homes on the existing allocation.

The site has been the subject of sustainability appraisals and assessment as part of the new Local Plan process, and been found to be a sustainable location and appropriate for allocation.

Significant work has progressed on proving deliverability of the new Plan through on-going engagement with key stakeholder's interests, particularly for the Strategic Development Locations at Stafford and Stone.

4. Partnership working

Taylor Wimpey (UK) Ltd, Bellway Homes Ltd, Lord Stafford's estate and St Gobain have been working collaboratively with Stafford Borough Council and other partners in relation to the West Stafford SDL for a number of years.

Taylor Wimpey (UK) Ltd has an option over approximately 69.3 hectares owned by Lord Stafford's estate. Lord Stafford's estate owns a further 7.2 hectares of land comprising Stafford Rugby Club and training ground. Bellway has an option over approximately 19.5 hectares owned by St Gobain.

Taylor Wimpey and Bellway are two of the UK's leading housebuilders and are committed to the delivery of a high quality, mixed use new neighbourhood along with the supporting infrastructure and homes to make the scheme a sustainable urban extension to Stafford.

In order to deliver the SDL a Major Projects Team has been established, working with the support of the HCA's Advisory Team on Large Applications (ATLAS). The approach being taken follows the ATLAS model approach and establishes a series of working structures. The structures established includes a Project Steering Group comprising Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and representatives of Taylor Wimpey (UK) Ltd, Bellway Homes Ltd, St Modwen Properties PLC, Lord Stafford's estate and St Gobain. The Steering Group oversees the management of the project and provides a forum for the resolution of issues.

The parties remain committed to partnership working to bring forward a planning application following the adoption of the Local Plan.

5. Main areas of agreement:

The parties are agreed that, the Land West of Stafford SDL:

- is a sustainable location for accommodating significant growth;
- should be a high quality, well designed mixed use development;
- will deliver approximately 2,200 new homes by 2031,
- will deliver strategic infrastructure including:
 - a link from Martin Drive to Doxey Road as part of the Stafford Western Access Road together with new or enhanced bus routes as well as cycling & walking links to existing routes to the town centre and other key destinations.
 - a network of green spaces in accordance with the principles set out in Appendix 2
 - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS), which may provide through a combination of on-site / off-site provision / management at Cannock Chase to provide recreational areas for communities to use rather than using the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - A range of housing types and tenures to provide a mixed and balanced community, including through the delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Policy C2.
- There are no ground or geo-environmental issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed through design or by planning condition.
- There are no ecology or bio-diversity issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved through design or addressed by planning condition.
- There are no noise or noise attenuation issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed through design by planning condition.
- There are no site layout, landscaping or design related matters relevant at this stage and the outline parameters of the proposed development, that are in disagreement to deliver up to 2,200 new houses and mixed use development.
- There are no flood risk or site drainage issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed through design or by planning condition.
- Provision of new extra care and specialist housing provision close to Stafford town centre will be delivered as part of the site;
- The development will take place on a 'neighbourhood' approach with the provision of a mix of uses including local retail facilities, small-scale employment areas, public open space, social and physical infrastructure, a primary school, and community facilities including provision for a library service and health facilities;
- Future planning proposals must relate to the whole Strategic Development Location or if less do not in any way prejudice implementation of the whole development;

Environment

- Necessary measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, will be provided as well as existing hedgerows and tree lines being retained where appropriate and enhanced to support the provision of a network of green infrastructure including wetlands and water corridors, play areas, green corridors allowing wildlife movement and access to

open space; (Site delivery must address Policy N6 of the Plan in terms of the Cannock Chase SAC through appropriate mitigation measures to meet the requirements of the Habitat Regulations Assessment and the NPPF paras 117 & 118)

- The agreed design principles and approaches agreed with English Heritage will enable development which conserves and enhances historic environment assets including the setting of Stafford Castle and sight lines to St Mary's Church in Stafford town centre;
- The development will protect nature conservation interests including Doxey Brook & Doxey Marshes SSSI

Transport

- An access, transport and travel plan strategy will be provided for the Strategic Development Location that maximises travel and accessibility by non-car transport modes via safe, attractive and conveniently designed street, pedestrian and cycling connections within the development and to Stafford town centre, nearby existing and new employment areas. The strategy shall identify access points to the site and between the site and the existing settlement. It shall also identify construction access arrangements;
- The development will support delivery of the Western Access Improvement Scheme and associated transport improvements specifically providing phase 1 from Martin Drive to Doxey Road;
- There will be an interconnected network of streets serving the development producing discernible and distinctive neighbourhoods and places integrated and linked to existing areas, taking into account the existing Rights of Way network.

Infrastructure

A new primary school will be provided, together with the expansion of existing secondary school provision

- The development will include creation of a new destination park for children's play areas and multi-use games areas in association with SANGs requirement on-site, where appropriate;
- Primary health care provision will be delivered by increased capacity.
- A range of Developer contributions will be required to deliver strategic infrastructure needed to achieve a comprehensive sustainable development

Work through the Major Project Team has led to an Initial Concept Plan (Appendix 3) which demonstrates a feasible solution and physical feasibility to deliver the new neighbourhood taking into account of the key constraints for the area.

All parties remain committed to working through the Major Project Team structure to bring forward the development and enabling a start on site in mid 2015.

Based on current information from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all parties working in partnership it has been established that the scale of development is capable of delivery

All parties agree that a s.106 planning obligation should be capable of agreement to secure the following;

- an element of affordable housing
- a new primary school
- Contributions toward secondary school education provision
- open space provision and a commuted sum towards maintenance if such open space is to be adopted by the Council
- the cost of the County Council to monitor the implementation of the Residential Travel Plan

All parties will be working towards the completion of such a planning obligation to be prepared

through the formal planning application process.

All parties will also work on a series of conditions which without prejudice to any parties case, could be imposed.

6. Main areas of Disagreement / Dispute

The main areas of disagreement between the parties, which are explained more fully in representations and examinations statements, can be summarised as follows:

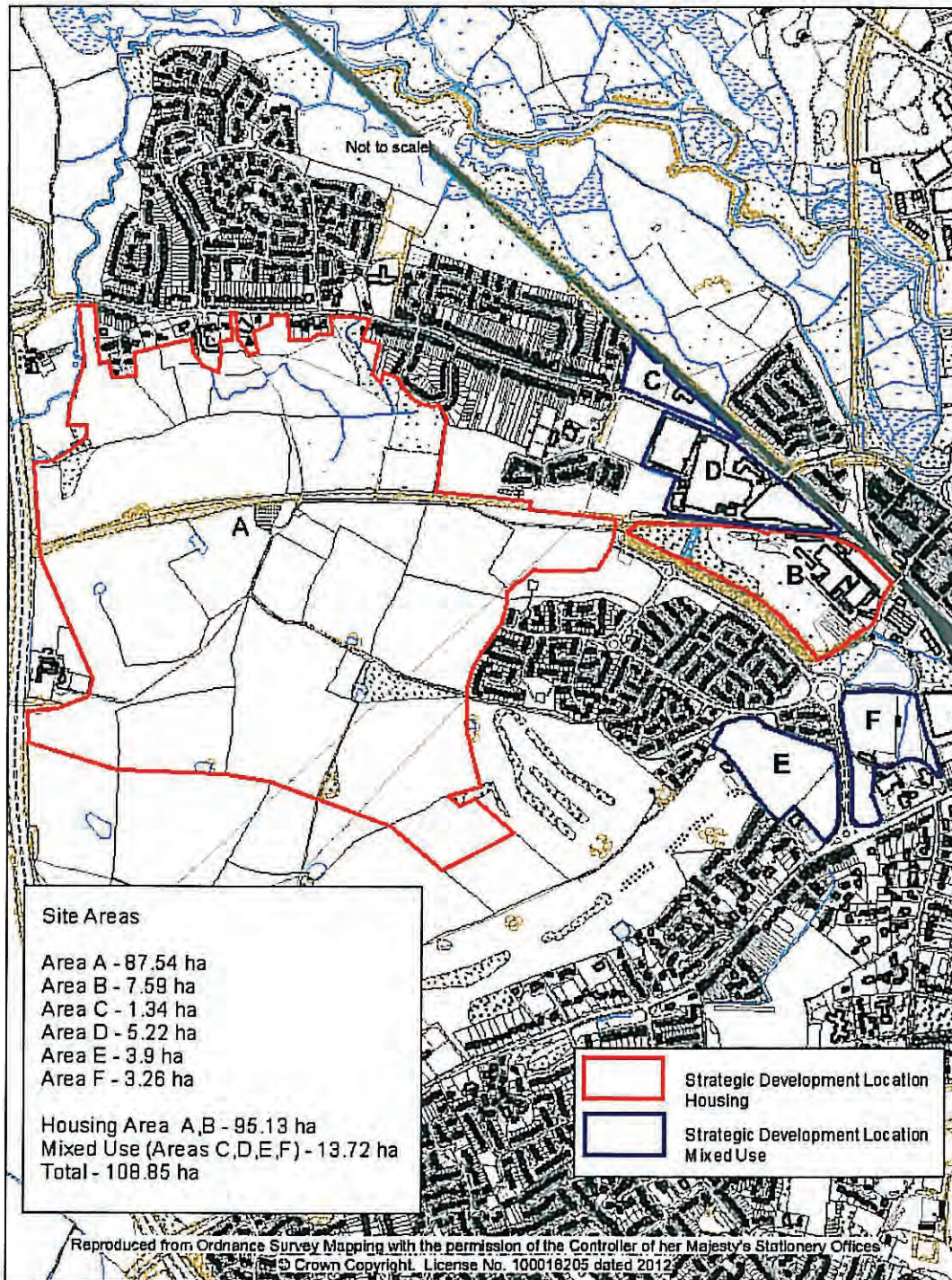
- The developers and landowners consider that the requirements for any application for development on a part or the whole of this area to be preceded by, and consistent with, a comprehensive Master Plan for the site including building Design Statements which have been submitted and agreed by the Council should be deleted from the plan; This approach is not accepted by the Council as a Master Plan will provide certainty to the local community in terms of new development and key strategic infrastructure.
- It is agreed that a range of housing types and tenures will be provided, however, the developers and landowners consider that types of accommodation should not be limited to 2, 3 & 4 bedroomed properties;
- The developers and landowners consider that the environmental performance of the development (including requirements for on-site renewables) should be left to the Building Regulations and any National standards. The Council consider that the development will be based on maximising opportunities to use sustainable construction methods;
- The Council consider that development should maximise on-site renewable or low carbon energy solutions including associated infrastructure; (The Whole Plan Viability Reports sets out that the cumulative effects of all policies in the Plan together does ensure that viability and deliverability can be achieved. The NPPF (para 97) and the Examination Document D34 & E65 supports renewable energy);
- The developers and landowners consider that given the location close to the town centre the site should not be identified as a strategic employment location and that such a designation is not consistent with the contents of the policy
- The developers and landowners consider that the approach to SANGs is insufficiently justified;
- The developers and landowners accept the need for drainage and flood management measures to ensure that the development is not at significant risk from flooding and that risk elsewhere is not increased. However, they consider that it is unduly onerous to require the development to alleviate existing flooding downstream.
- The developers / landowners consider that the requirement for improvements to Newport Road is not supported by the transport evidence and should be deleted. This is not accepted by the Councils.

Signed on behalf of the Developers/landowners	Signed on behalf of Local Planning Authority
Date: 29 October 2013	Date: 29 th October 2013
Position: PLANNING DIRECTOR	Position: PLANNING POLICY MANAGER

APPENDIX 1

LAND WEST OF STAFFORD AREAS

Development to the West of Stafford





Stafford West Concept Diagram

