

LAND AT **UTTOXETER ROAD, STONE**

A sustainable choice for new homes in Stafford

May 2021



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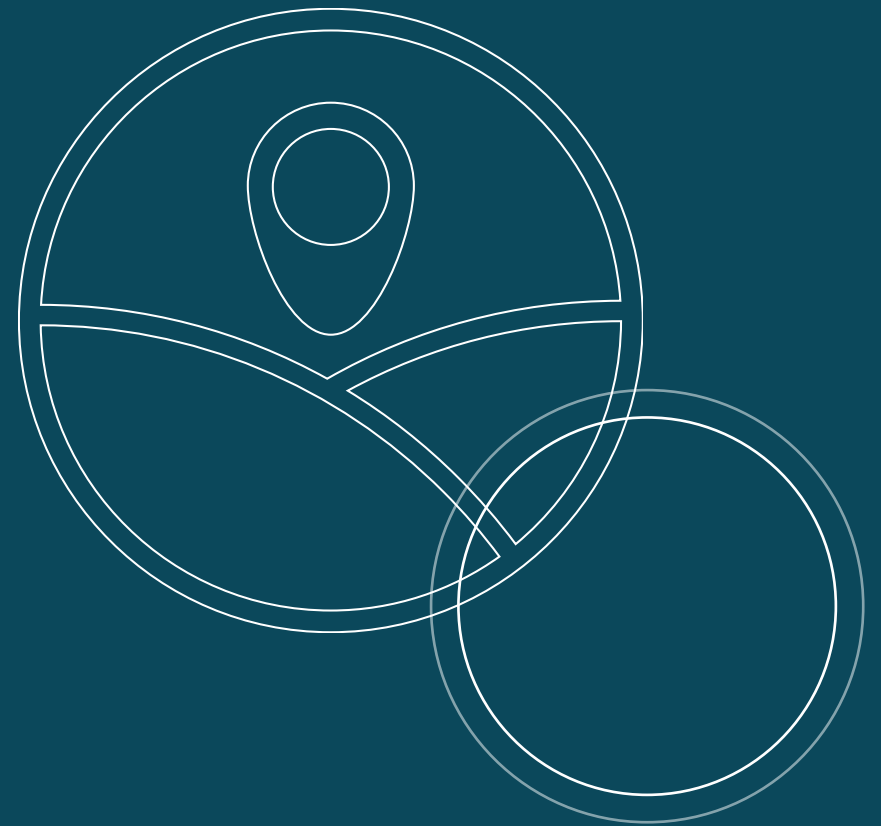
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Introduction



This section explains the purpose of the document, and the site to which it relates.



Introduction

The land adjoining Uttoxeter Road in Stone is being promoted for housing development by The Strategic Land Group, a company with a track record of promoting strategic sites through the planning system before selling to a developer.

The site is capable of providing a range of attractive family homes benefiting from the highest standards of design and layout. It could deliver circa 125 new homes, an extensive network of public open space, and the potential for a new convenience food retail store.

This Development Statement presents a thorough analysis of the site context and the technical considerations for developing it. A range of technical assessments have been used as the basis for identifying constraints and opportunities in order to develop an illustrative masterplan that compliments the characteristics and valued aspects of the site and the surrounding area.

It also includes analysis of the planning policy context.



View north across the site



Approximate **site boundary**

Site shown edged in red

Site and surroundings

Site

The site is located to the north of Uttoxeter Road in Stone. It totals approximately 6.2 hectares and is shown edged in red on the plan on the previous page.

The land slopes gently away from the road towards Blackies Lane, a public right of way and access track which crosses the site. Beyond the lane, the land rises up again towards the existing residential properties of the Aston Lodge Park estate.

Currently used for cattle grazing, the site's boundaries are marked by existing hedgerows. A belt of trees crosses the centre of the site following the route of Blackies Lane as well as an existing watercourse. The Lane and watercourse diverge towards the site's eastern boundary, with the tree line following the route of each.

Surroundings

The site relates well to the surrounding area with the nature and location of adjoining land uses

allowing any new development to be integrated into the town.

Beyond the northern and western boundaries is Aston Lodge Park, a substantial housing development built from the early 1980s through to the mid-1990s. The homes on that part of the development closest to the site are predominantly two storey detached homes of a traditional brick construction. There is an area of Local Green Space crossed by a footpath immediately adjoining the site's northern boundary.



Little Stoke Cricket Club opposite the site



Existing properties at Oakleigh Court adjacent to site's western boundary

Also adjoining the site's western boundary is a greenfield site which was recently granted planning permission for the construction of up to 20 affordable homes on appeal (reference APP/Y3425/W/18/3202676).

The site's southern boundary is marked by Uttoxeter Road which provides access to the centre of Stone via Lichfield Road.

To the south, across Uttoxeter Road, is Little Stoke Cricket Club and Stone Crown Green Bowling Club. Part of the eastern boundary is marked by the building of Aston Lodge Stables, while the remainder is open fields.



Aston Lodge Stables at the site's eastern boundary



An existing property on Oakleigh Court



Existing properties on Farrier's Close, adjacent to site's northern boundary



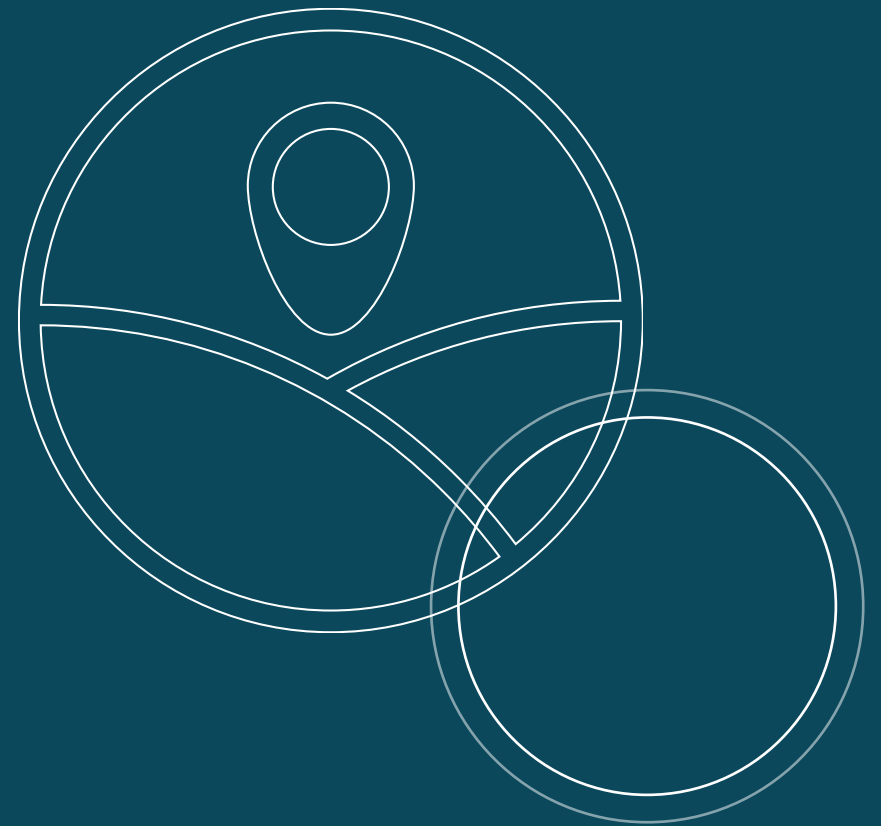
Site **context**

Site shown edged in red

Policy analysis



This section includes an overview of the planning policy that is relevant to the site.



Policy overview

Existing Development Plan

Development in Stone is currently managed by the Plan for Stafford Borough (adopted in 2014) which is intended to plan for development needs from 2011 to 2031.

Local Plan Review

Since the adoption of the Plan for Stafford Borough, there have been a number of changes in national policy, notably the introduction of a revised National Planning Policy Framework in 2019. Following a review of the existing Plan, the council have decided to start work on preparing a new Local Plan for the borough which will guide development until 2040.

Work on this replacement plan started in 2017, with the aim of submitting it for examination during 2022. The latest stage in that plan-making process was the Issues and Options consultation, carried out in the spring of 2020, which invites comment on those matters that the new Local Plan will deal with and different ways in which development could be planned for.

The Issues and Options consultation document sets out a variety of potential housing requirements ranging from 435 to 746 dwellings per annum. This compares to a requirement of 500 dwellings per annum in the existing Local

Plan. It is probable, therefore, that the new Local Plan will have to identify new sites for development to ensure that housing need is met.

It is also recognised that, as the second largest town in the borough, Stone will have to accommodate some of that new development. All of the potential options for the distribution of new homes anticipate Stone making a contribution.

Stone Neighbourhood Plan

Stone Town Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan which covers the period from 2016 to 2031, a shorter period than that proposed by the new Local Plan. The Plan has been through examination and has been found to meet the basic conditions. A referendum was due to be held in May 2020 which, if successful, would have allowed the Plan to be formally made. However, restrictions imposed as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic have caused the referendum to be delayed until May 2021.

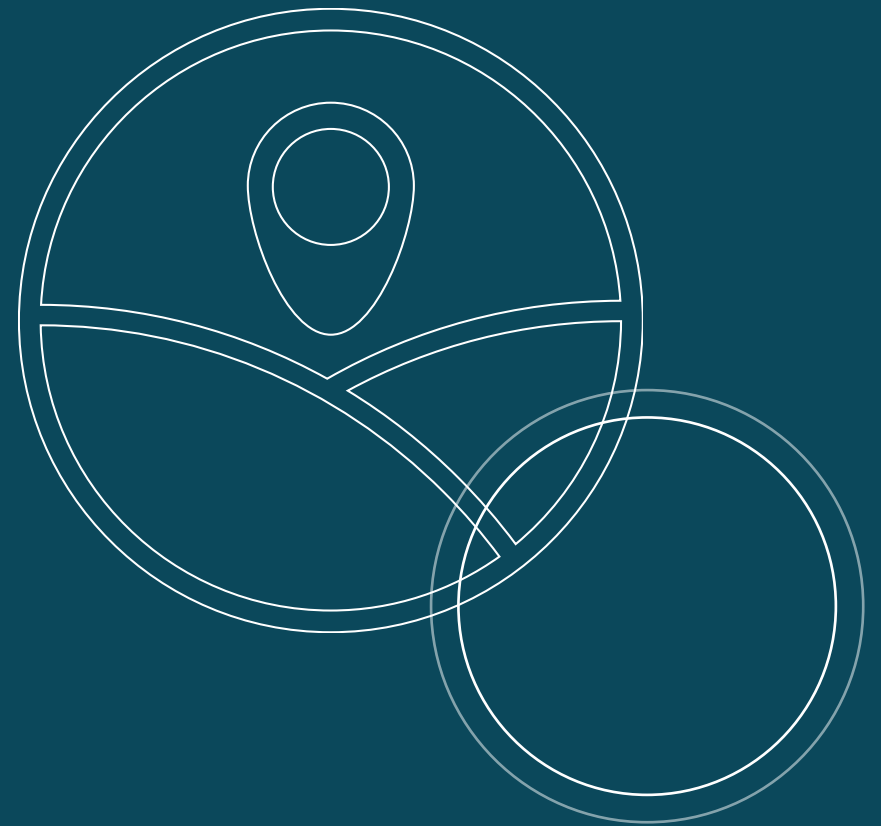
The Neighbourhood Plan area excludes the majority of the site. Only the northern-most field - adjacent to the designated Local Green Space to the rear of Farrier's Close - falls within it.

Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not

allocate any housing development sites - instead relying on the allocations in the Plan for Stafford Borough - it does include a number of policies which deal with the form of new housing development. The delivery of affordable housing and homes suitable for older people are specifically highlighted. There are also a number of design requirements which include issues relating to transport, layout and character.

Technical considerations

This section includes an overview of the various technical considerations which could influence the suitability of the site for development.



Technical considerations

Highways and accessibility

Impacts upon the local highway network alongside the sites proposed accessibility off Uttoxeter Road have been assessed by i-Transport.

Vehicular access will be taken directly from Uttoxeter Road. It is proposed that the access will be at least 80m east of the existing access to Oakleigh Court. This provides adequate spacing between the junctions as well as allowing appropriate visibility splays to be accommodated. No third party land is needed to deliver this access.

A development of up to 150 new homes would be expected to generate around 80 new vehicle movements in the peak hour - equivalent to slightly more than one per minute. The local highway network would be able to comfortably accommodate that level of additional trips.

A footway along the northern side of Uttoxeter Road, adjacent to the site boundary, provides a suitable pedestrian access. In addition, Blackies Lane - an existing public right of way crossing the centre of the site - will be incorporated into the layout. This will provide an additional pedestrian access into the Aston Lodge Park development.

Bus stops, The Three Crowns pub, Smartys Day Nursery and the shop at the Fairway Service Station are all within a circa 500 metre walk. These facilities could be supplemented by a new convenience food retail store for everyday needs on the site's Uttoxeter Road frontage.

Slightly further afield - but still within a reasonable walking distance of about 2km - are the full range of facilities and services provided by Stone's town centre.

Many of Stone's key recreational facilities - including the cricket and bowling clubs - are located on Uttoxeter Road adjacent to the site. This provides an opportunity to develop housing in close proximity to these resources, and improve access to them - especially given the new routes that will be provided through the site.

Indeed, in a recent appeal decision relating to an adjoining site (APP/Y3425/W/18/3202676), the Inspector noted that "*the site is accepted as being a sustainable location for housing in general*" (§53).

There is therefore no reason in highways terms why the site could not be developed.

Ecology

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site were carried out by Hacking Ecology, while a Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment was completed by Urban Green.

As a result of the grazed nature of the land, it is dominated by improved grassland, which offers no cover for wildlife and is of low ecological value. There was not considered to be any suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts while no evidence of badger activity was found.

The main features of ecological value are the existing trees and hedgerows around the site's boundaries and following the route of Blackies Lane through its centre. These could provide suitable roosting and foraging habitat for bats. An existing watercourse also crossed the centre of the site, largely following the route of Blackies Lane.

These features will all be accommodated in the masterplan as far as possible and will form the centre piece of an extensive new landscaping scheme incorporating a range of native species and creating a variety of new habitats. This will include designing the site's surface water drainage system so as to provide new aquatic and semi-aquatic habitats. Through measures like this, any development would look to achieve

a 10% net gain in biodiversity value.

No statutory protected sites lie within the site or immediately adjacent. Two statutory protected sites lie within 3km of the site boundary. The closest is Crown Meadow Local Nature Reserve which is located approximately 1.7km to the west. At these distances, and with barrier habitats between them there is expected to be no negative impact on the protected sites from the development.

There is therefore no reason in ecological terms why the site could not be developed.

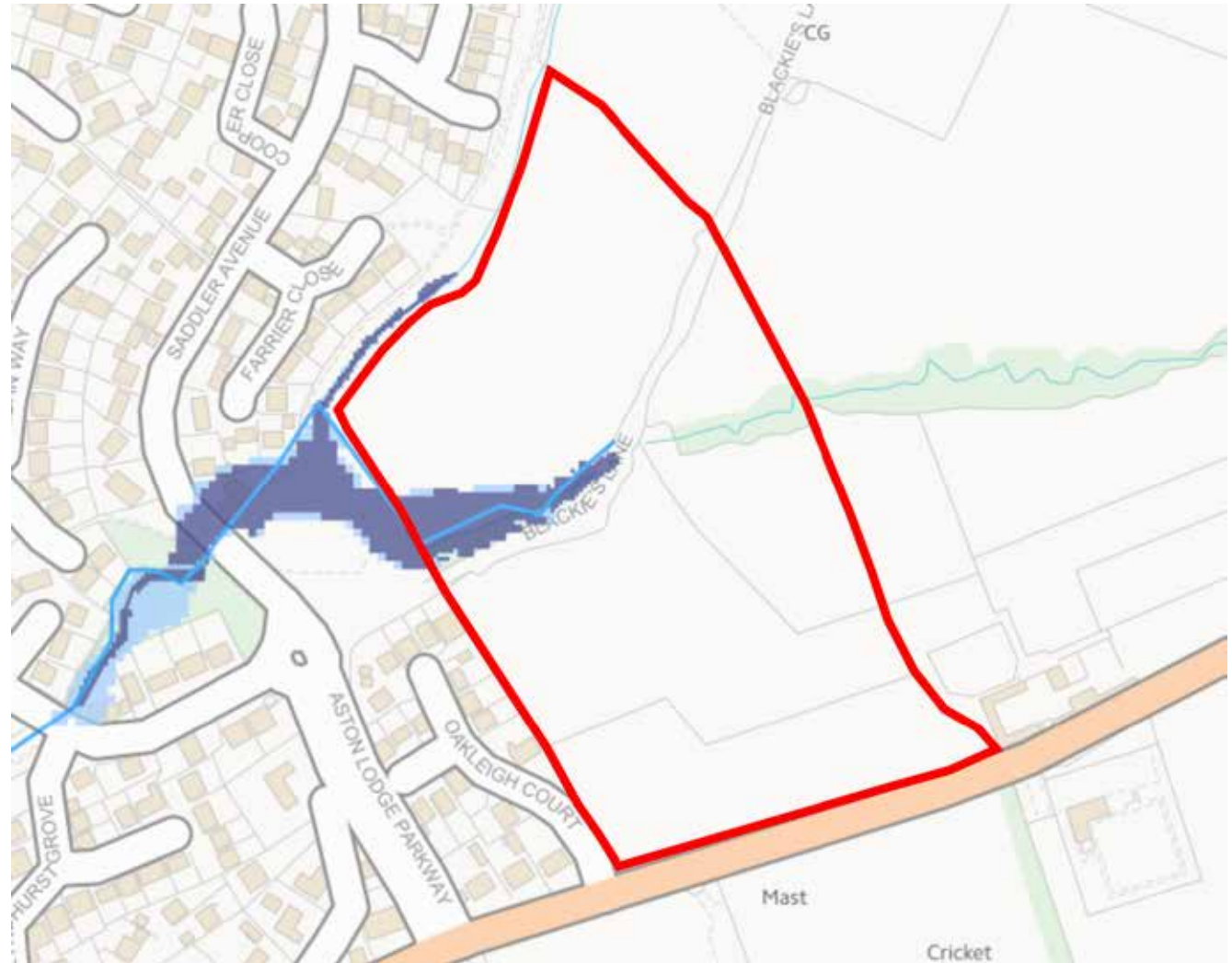
Ground Conditions

A Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Assessment has been carried out by Earth Environmental and Geotechnical.

The site is greenfield with historical mapping confirming that it has never been developed. There is not expected to be any contamination.

Geological mapping indicates that there are no recorded risks from either coal mining or radon in the area.

Consequently, the site is considered to be suitable for residential development.



Extract from Flood Map for Planning, showing site edged in red and an area designated Flood Zone 2 and 3

Flood Risk and Drainage

Betts Hydro have carried out an initial drainage assessment. That assessment identifies that the majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is considered to be low. A small portion of the site, to the western boundary and adjacent to the watercourse, is in Flood Zones 2 and 3. No housing development would be proposed in these areas.

Any development would incorporate a sustainable drainage system ('SuDS'). This would be designed to limit surface water flows to the greenfield run-off rate plus an allowance for climate change, so as not to increase the risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere.

As development would increase the impermeable area of the site, it is likely that storm water will need attenuating as part of any scheme. That could be done by way of a storage pond, which could be designed in such a way as to also provide ecological benefits.

Two ponds would be located to the west of the site - one either side of the watercourse - where levels are lowest. A swale is also proposed alongside the primary road. Additional SuDS features such as rainwater harvesting and permeable paving could be incorporated into the scheme at detailed design stage.

From the storage pond, surface water would be discharged in accordance with the following SuDS hierarchy:

1. Into the ground (via infiltration).
2. Into a watercourse.
3. Into a surface water sewer.
4. Into a combined sewer.

Infiltration may be a technically acceptable solution subject to further investigations of ground conditions. The existing watercourse also provides a suitable point of discharge.

Further investigation is required to identify the exact point of discharge for surface water drainage. However, it is clear that the site can be satisfactorily drained.

There are therefore no flood risk or drainage reasons why the site could not be developed.

Services

Searches of the main utility providers have been carried out. These have confirmed that all main services are available in this locality, and that connections can be made.

A foul water sewer crosses the northern part of the site and will need to be reflected in the proposed layout. Low voltage overhead electricity cables cross the front part of the site

and will be diverted as part of any development.

Landscape and Visual Impact

The site is an agricultural field located on the current edge of the urban area. It has an edge of settlement character and is contained by roads and existing development on three boundaries.

The development of any greenfield site will inevitably result in a change to the landscape character. It is the impact of that change which needs to be considered.

In this case, the development would not be incongruous in the location and setting at the edge of the settlement. It would fit in with the existing urban fringe character created by the road network, the built form of the Aston Lodge development and Aston Lodge Stables.

The site would retain its key character elements of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, maintaining much of the visual screening already afforded. This could be reinforced by additional planting along the Uttoxeter Road frontage.

There is little visual relationship between the wider landscape and the site due to the topography, built form and intervening vegetation, which all limit views directly into the site.



Watercourse crossing the centre of the site



Blackies Lane, crossing the centre of the site



Uttoxeter Road along the site frontage

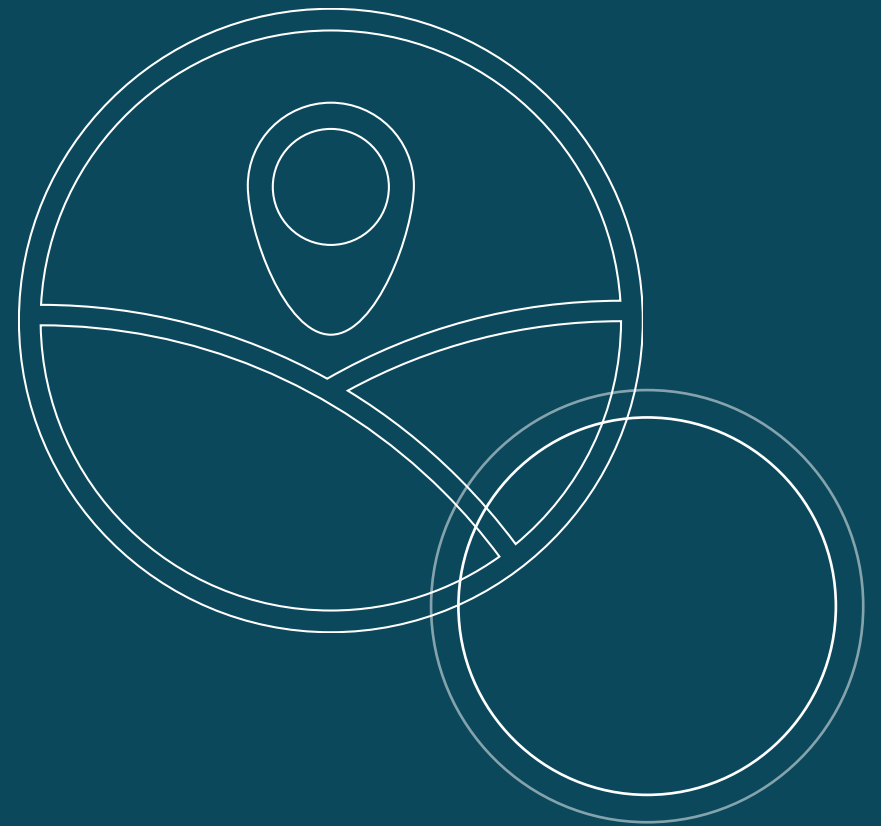


Oakleigh Court, adjacent to the site's western boundary

Design proposals



This section explains how the site context was analysed and an illustrative masterplan for the site developed.



Design proposals

The first stage of the masterplan process was to establish a set of design principles.

Taking into account the various technical assessments that have been carried out, the design principles plan shown to the right outlined how the site could be developed in a way that works with the site's constraints and maximises the opportunities to create a high quality development.

Through a series of iterations, those basic principles were then refined to produce the illustrative masterplan, shown on the next page, demonstrating one way in which the site could be developed.

This design takes into account the new National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, borough-wide design policies, and those design policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Based on that masterplan, the site could accommodate around 125 new homes, a potential convenience food retail store and a network of open space.



KEY

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  INDICATIVE DWELLING POSITION
-  SHARED SURFACING
-  PRIMARY ROUTE
-  DRIVEWAYS
-  SECONDARY ROUTE
-  FOOTPATHS
-  ATTENUATION
-  CYCLE PATH
-  SWALE
-  RETAIL USE
-  PUBLIC FOUL GRAVITY SEWER AND EASEMENT



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

LAND AT UTTOXETER ROAD, STONE



CLIENT: Strategic Land Group DRAWN: TR CHECKED: MR APPROVED: MK
 SCALE: 1:2500 DATE: 24/03/21 DRAWING NO: UG_831_UD_DRG_MPLAN_Rev C

Access and Layout

The vehicular access point will be located approximately mid-way along the frontage with Uttoxeter Road. This is located in a position that provides appropriate visibility and is a suitable distance from the entrance to Oakleigh Court.

A primary, tree-lined road crosses the centre of the site splitting it into two development parcels. The western-most parcel will include the convenience food retail store - with an active frontage to Uttoxeter Road - and residential development behind. The eastern-most parcel will be solely residential and will be of a lower density to reflect the transition to the countryside.

Within the site, a series of secondary roads will provide access to the individual development zones, which will be designed as low traffic neighbourhoods. These secondary routes will include a series of modal filters ensuring that they are permeable to non-car modes of transport, encouraging future residents to walk and cycle.

Alongside the primary access road will be a footway and a segregated cycleway which will connect with Blackies Lane in the centre of the site. Blackies Lane itself will also be improved, creating a safe, easy connection into the Aston Lodge development for those using active travel modes. That existing development, in turn, provides a quiet-streets route to the centre of

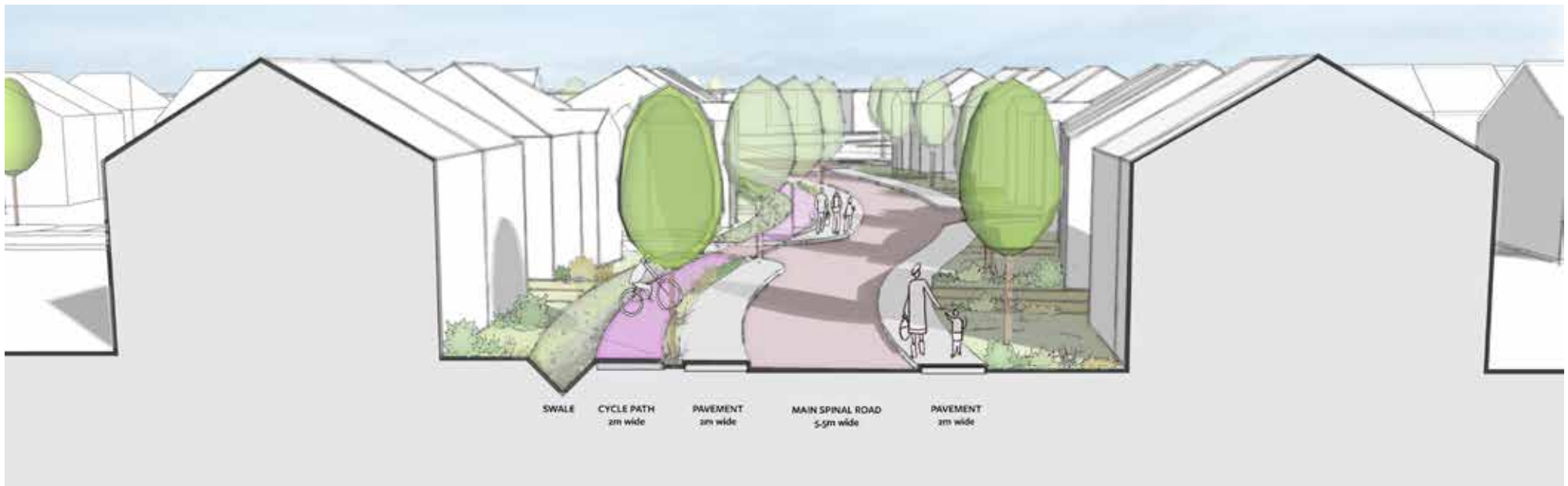
Stone via Mercer Avenue, Kingsland Road and the existing bridge at Pingle Lane.

A further pedestrian access will be provided on to Uttoxeter Road at the site's vehicular entrance, connecting with the existing footway in that location.

Parking will be provided in a variety of ways to avoid the street scene becoming overly dominated by cars. Parking areas will also include electric vehicle charging points.

Residential Layout

A variety of types and sizes of homes - including affordable homes and properties suitable for



older people - will be provided as part of the development. The housing layout will be at its densest close to the existing built form on Oakleigh Court with a lower density on the eastern fringes to mark the transition to the countryside.

Homes will be positioned to front onto streets providing active frontages. They will also overlook the proposed new areas of open space providing natural surveillance.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

The urban fringe location of the site means that landscaping has been put at the heart of the layout design, with particularly careful consideration given to the site's boundary with the existing Local Green Space to the north. The plan on the next page illustrates the proposed landscape framework.

Additional tree planting along the site frontage to Uttoxeter Road could reinforce the existing urban fringe character and signal the green, leafy feel of the development itself.

Existing trees and hedgerows have been retained as far as possible, with the number of punctuations required for the road network kept to a minimum.

Three main areas of open space are proposed, each of which would have a different character and use.

The main area of open space will be located to the east of the site between two existing belts of trees and adjacent to the countryside. It's location next to Blackies Lane will ensure it is easily accessible by everyone - including existing residents of the area - and can form the heart of the new community. It's setting between two existing belts of mature trees will give it a distinctive character, and would be an ideal location for new habitat creation.

To the northern boundary, an area of open space will respect and enhance the existing Local Green Space beyond the site's boundary. This location will be readily accessible not just to new residents but also existing ones given its proximity to the existing footpath network. As such, it is intended to include a new equipped play area designed around "natural play" principles, in keeping with the site's countryside-edge location.

The final area of open space - which is illustrated on the following pages - will incorporate the route of Blackies Lane and the existing watercourse from the western boundary to the centre of the site. This area will also include the required surface water attenuation

ponds, which will be designed with a focus on habitat creation.

These areas of open space will be connected by a series of green corridors - such as the one adjacent to the primary road which will include a tree-lined verge and a swale.

Together, these landscape features will combine to create a 10% net increase in the site's biodiversity value.

The development will also accommodate other wildlife features such as bat boxes, bird boxes and "hedgeway highways."

KEY

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  SEGREGATED CYCLE PATH
-  ON-SITE FOOTPATH CONNECTIONS
-  PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
-  POTENTIAL LOCATION OF PLAY PROVISION
-  GREEN CORRIDOR (BLACKIE'S LANE)
-  ATTENUATION
-  SWALE

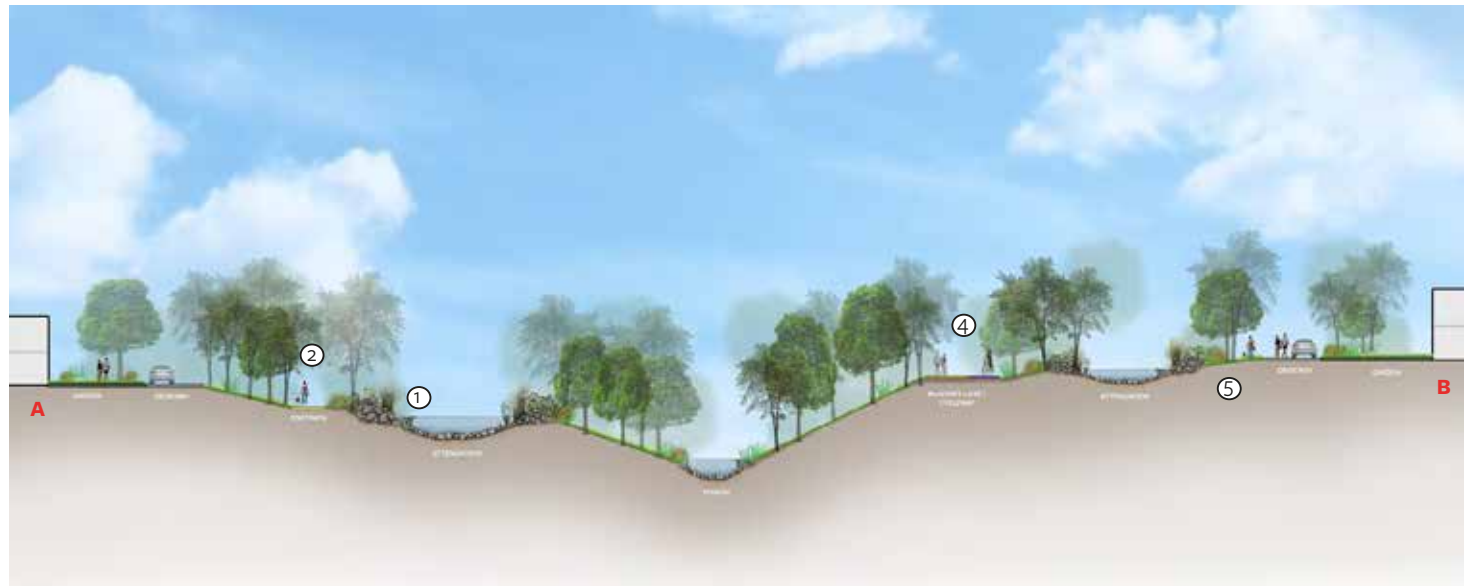


LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

LAND AT UTTOXETER ROAD, STONE

CLIENT: Strategic Land Group
SCALE: 1:2500 DATE: 07/04/21

DRAWN: TR CHECKED: MR APPROVED: MK
DRAWING NO: UG_831_UD_DRG_LFP_06



SITE SECTION - BLACKIE'S LANE

LAND AT UTTOXETER ROAD, STONE

URBAN
GREEN



CLIENT: Strategic Land Group
SCALE: 1:2500 DATE: 07/04/21

DRAWN: TR CHECKED: MR APPROVED: MK
DRAWING NO: UG_831_UD_DRG_SS_07

Development Benefits

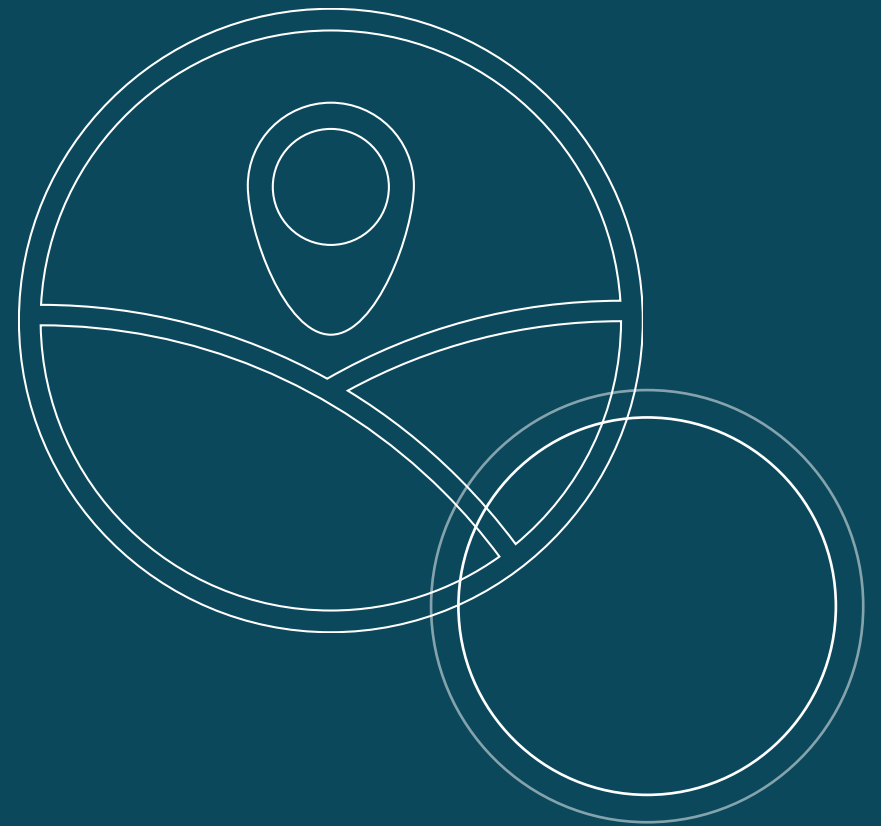
- A range of types, sizes and tenures of new homes.
- Policy compliant affordable housing provision.
- Potential provision of a new convenience food retail unit.
- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows.
- Landscape buffer to existing Local Green Space.
- Provision of a new play area.
- 10% net gain in biodiversity value.
- No unacceptable impact on the highway network.
- Well integrated with existing settlement form.
- Close to existing services and facilities.
- Designed to encourage active travel through the use of modal filters and low traffic neighbourhoods.
- Drainage network designed around SuDS principles.
- Upgrade of Blackies Lane to provide improved walking and cycling connectivity.
- Electric vehicle charging points.



Conclusion



This section summarises the contents of this document and considers the suitability of the site for residential development.



Summary and conclusion

The land adjacent to Uttoxeter Road provides an opportunity to address the need for housing in both Stafford Borough generally and Stone specifically.

Stafford Council is working to prepare a new Local Plan that will guide the development in the area up to 2040. It is apparent that the housing needs of the borough cannot be met from previously developed land alone - some greenfield sites in sustainable locations will be needed to ensure housing needs are met.

An investigation of the technical considerations affecting the site confirms that it is **suitable** for development, and that a development would be **achievable**. There are no technical impediments to the site being developed.

Existing services and facilities are easily accessible from the site and it is well integrated with the existing settlement form. Its development would not have a detrimental impact on the existing highway network and could enhance active travel opportunities. There is no risk of flooding and the site can be adequately drained, whilst it will also be possible to make appropriate service connections.

Although any development of a greenfield site will result in a change in character, this proposed development would not have an

unacceptable impact on the landscape. The site is not currently of any particular ecological value with development offering the opportunity for a net gain in biodiversity.

The site is being promoted by The Strategic Land Group who have an established track record of delivering sites of this nature. It is therefore **available** for development.

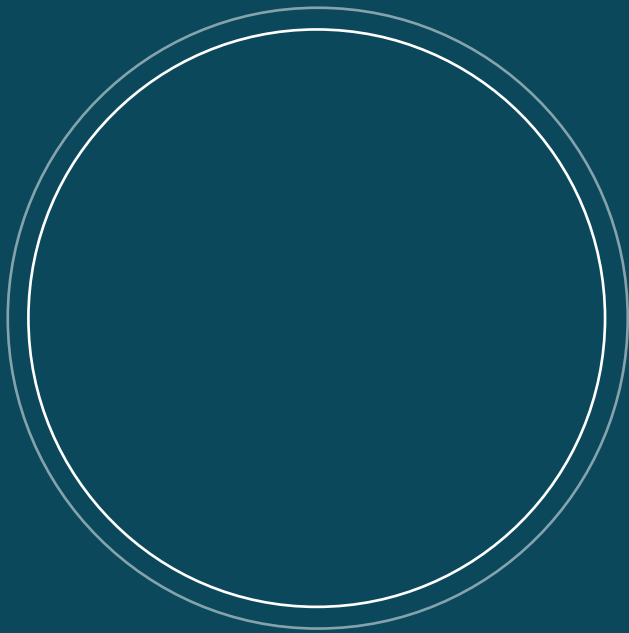
The masterplan demonstrates that the site can accommodate approximately 125 new homes, including affordable housing and a potential convenience food retail store. It provides for substantial areas of public open space, and the retention of key features such as trees and hedgerows. The use of modal filters to create a low traffic neighbourhood will encourage the use of active travel.

The provision of high quality homes would boost housing supply, improve housing affordability and choice, generate jobs at the construction stage and increase spending in the local economy across the lifetime of the development.

Overall, the site is a sustainable location for the development of approximately 150 high-quality homes. It would provide an attractive, sustainable living environment, integrate well with the existing settlement and contribute to meeting the borough's identified housing needs.

The site is suitable for development, development would be achievable and the site is available for development.

It represents a logical, sustainable choice for delivering a high-quality development that can make a meaningful contribution to housing need in Stone.



SLG
Strategic Land Group