



Stafford Borough  
Local Development  
Framework



Stafford  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



## Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Development Strategy - approach</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Housing Growth</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Provision for Employment, Retail &amp; Offices</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Importance of New Development</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Questions and Next Steps</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Further Information</b>	<b>7</b>

## 1 Introduction

### 1 Introduction

- 1** Stafford Borough Council is currently preparing the new Development Plan, known as 'The Plan for Stafford Borough', to provide for future development across the Borough. This new Development Plan will replace the existing Stafford Borough Local Plan of 2001.
- 2** The key purpose of this Local Choices consultation document is to give you an opportunity to comment on future development needs for our area. It is important that new development meets local needs, whilst protecting and enhancing the existing high quality of life in the Borough.
- 3** This consultation gives the Council an opportunity to set out its current thoughts and seek community views as part of the process to prepare and finalise the Plan for Stafford Borough. The responses will be used to produce a more detailed document, for consideration by members of the local community in Summer 2011.

## Development Strategy - approach 2

### 2 Development Strategy - approach

**4** In total Stafford Borough covers an area of over 230 square miles including the County town of Stafford, the market town of Stone, numerous smaller villages, the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and two areas of Green Belt. **We think it is important to protect the Green Belt, and are therefore not proposing any changes to current Green Belt boundaries, or present policies.**

**5** The new Development Plan needs to provide at least a 15-year timescale after being agreed, to ensure that the development strategy and the preferred core policies are delivered for the Stafford Borough area. **Therefore, it is suggested that the Plan period will cover the extended period from 2006 to 2031, rather than 2026 as previously.**

#### Housing Growth

**6** During the last 10 years approximately 500 new homes have been built each year across Stafford Borough. However, in the last year this figure has reduced to less than 200, due to the recession. It may be some time before the housing market in the Borough fully recovers.

**7** We consider that a future annual rate of 500 new homes, similar to what we have experienced in the last 10 years, is adequate to meet local needs for the Borough, with most being provided in and around Stafford town. Currently, there is planning permission for approximately 3,000 new homes across the Borough area, equivalent to 6 years supply. We will also need to provide family housing for Service personnel due to return to Stafford from Germany in the next 5 years.

**8** **We are suggesting that the Plan should guide the development averaging 500 new homes each year across Stafford Borough, of which the majority should be at Stafford town.**

#### Question 1

Do you agree that 500 new homes should be provided to meet local need across Stafford Borough each year for the Plan period, of which the majority of new homes should be at Stafford town?

**9** Previously, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy / Regional Plan proposed that 70% of new development should be built at Stafford town. It is the principal settlement within the Stafford Borough area with approximately 60,000 residents, a number of large-scale employers, significant infrastructure, services and facilities, together with excellent access to the road and rail networks. **It remains the Council's policy that new housing development in the County Town must have the necessary road and other key infrastructure associated with this increased growth.**

## 2 Development Strategy - approach

### Question 2

On this basis do you agree that most new development should be in and around the County Town of Stafford?

**10** Stone has experienced significant housing growth in recent years. **We suggest, therefore, that land should only be allocated for limited new housing in Stone of approximately 500 new homes, and for this to be built after 2021.**

### Question 3

Do you agree that limited new housing land should be identified in Stone to meet future local needs?

**11** We are suggesting that no new housing development should be allocated in the rural areas, apart from small-scale infill within existing village boundaries. We are not suggesting any changes to existing Residential Development Boundaries except where local communities wish to have new development. There will still be scope for barn conversions, and housing on previously developed (brownfield) land within settlements.

**12** There is an exception to this: the coalition Government is giving local communities the option to build new housing and other developments. However, this will only take place where there is strong local approval, demonstrated through a parish survey. Some communities feel that limited affordable housing should be permitted to meet local needs, as young families are being priced out. **We will support small sites on the edge of settlements for housing, where there is overwhelming local interest demonstrated through a parish survey.**

### Question 4

Do you agree with this general restriction on new housing in the rural areas outside of Stafford and Stone?

### Provision for Employment, Retail & Offices

**13** Providing sufficient jobs for local people is a top priority for the Council. Employment land, and retail and office development should, therefore, be provided as part of the new Development Plan for the area. A variety of employment sites are required in the future to provide for the expansion of existing businesses, the attraction of new businesses, and to support graduate retention after completing studies at local Further & Higher Educational institutions.

## Development Strategy - approach 2

**14** During the last 10 years approximately 8 hectares of employment land has been delivered each year across the Borough, and we wish to continue providing a similar level of new employment sites over the Plan period, mainly focused at Stafford. Currently there is planning permission for 86 hectares of new employment land across the Stafford Borough area, equivalent to 120 full size football pitches and 11 years of supply.

**15** **We are committed to providing 8 hectares of new employment land each year over the Plan period to 2031. At Stafford town, at least 40 hectares of new employment land will be allocated at the start of the Plan period.**

**16** To ensure that new employment land is delivered for Stafford town over the Plan period the following preferred locations have been identified:

- Up to 36 hectares of land north of Primepoint 14, west of A34, Stafford
- Up to 16 hectares of land east of Beacon Business Park, Stafford

**17** In line with evidence from recent studies, 38,000 square metres of non food (comparison) retail development and 45,000 square metres of office development will be provided in the Borough to support local jobs. There is currently planning permission for 22,000 square metres of retail, mainly at Stafford and Trentham Gardens, together with 58,000 square metres of office developments, mainly at Stafford.

**18** **We are suggesting the allocation of up to 20,000 square metres of new retail land for non-food shopping in Stafford town centre.**

### Question 5

*Do you agree that Stafford town centre should see further growth in non-food shopping space, to provide for future population growth and remain competitive with other regional shopping centres?*

**19** In common with other built-up areas, Stone town has been losing employment land to housing. **We consider that replacement employment land should be allocated to provide for future needs in the Stone area.** However, 34 hectares of land already has planning permission for employment use at the former Meaford Power station site. At Stone there is a choice, either no additional employment land will be allocated, or a new site could be provided on land extending to the south of Stone Business Park (approximately 10 hectares).

### Question 6

Do you agree that some new employment land should be allocated, in addition to the Meaford site, as an extension to the Stone Business Park?

**20** In areas outside of Stafford and Stone, we suggest that either no additional employment land will be allocated, or limited growth could be identified on land north of Ladfordfields industrial estate near Seighford, and west of Raleigh Hall industrial

## 2 Development Strategy - approach

**estate near Eccleshall.** However, there are existing planning permissions for employment use at Hixon's industrial estates, which may mean that no further land needs to be identified elsewhere in the rural areas of the Borough.

### Question 7

Do you feel that additional employment land should be allocated near Seighford and Eccleshall, in addition to the existing permissions at Hixon?

### The Importance of New Development

**21** We consider that future development growth is vital to the local area and future generations. The implications of not providing for local communities in the future would be to price out many people from the housing market, reduced investment in Stafford and Stone town centres, less job creation and employment development, as well as poorer quality infrastructure such as schools, roads, health services and utilities.

## Questions and Next Steps 3

### 3 Questions and Next Steps

**22** You are invited to make your comments on the content of any paragraph and question in the document. If you are doing this using the on-line consultation you can click to the right of each paragraph. If you choose to use e-mail or letter we would ask you to identify the paragraph number or question to which your comments refer. All comments received will be published and made available to view on-line by clicking on the 'View Comments' tabs above the paragraphs.

#### Next Steps

**23** Please provide your responses to the Borough Council by **12 noon on Friday 28 January 2011** so that this information can be used in the next stage of preparing the Plan for Stafford Borough.

**24** In Summer 2011 we anticipate publishing detailed information for 'Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough' including preferred core policies and showing strategic development locations

**25** Relevant research studies and evidence supporting this document can be viewed on the Stafford Borough Council website at [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans)

**26** If you wish to discuss this consultation paper in more detail please contact the Forward Planning team on 01785 619000. If you need this information in large print, Braille, other languages or on audio cassette please contact 01785 619000.

#### Further Information

**27** For further information about this document or any other part of the Plan for Stafford Borough please contact the Forward Planning section using the details below:

#### Forward Planning section

Stafford Borough Council

Civic Centre

Riverside

STAFFORD

ST16 3AQ

Telephone: 01785 619000

Fax: 01785 619473

E-mail: [forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk)