

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

The Town and Country Planning (Local
Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Submission Core Strategy
Development Plan Document

Hearing Statement of Stafford Borough Council
For Session 3 – Core Policy 4
The Balance of Economic Growth
(C/HSS3/CP4)

Date : 19/05/2006

Hearing Statement 1 of Stafford Borough Council
For Session 3 – Core Policy 4
The Balance of Economic Growth

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Hearing Statement 1 of Stafford Borough Council For Session 3 – Core Policy 4 The Balance of Economic Growth

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 *The key objective for planning policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document is to deliver the strategic approach for spatial planning across the Borough Council area. The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will be the principal planning document in the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework and will form part of the new Development Plan for Stafford Borough alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS). The Core Strategy will aim to cover the same time period as the Regional Spatial Strategy.¹*
- 1.2 *The purpose of this Hearing Statement is to prepare for the independent Examination into the Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and requirements set out in the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. This Hearing Statement presents the Council's response to the agenda for Session 3 – Core Policy 4 The Balance of Economic Growth of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document independent Examination.*

¹ 2001-2021

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – CORE STRATEGY DPD EXAMINATION

AGENDA FOR SESSION 3 CORE POLICY 4 – THE BALANCE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

1 The location of future employment development

Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance to the locational spread of employment development in the Borough?

Is the distinction between Stafford, Stone and elsewhere appropriate and clear?

Should the DPD express separate targets for the two main towns?

2 The protection of existing employment provision

Should this policy and/or policy 9 be more specific about the protection/loss of established employment areas?

If so, what should it say

3 Potential employment development areas

Are there any major proposals/potential areas that should be mentioned in this policy?

4 Any other matters

RELEVANT SECTION
SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Core Policy 4: The Balance of Economic Growth

The purpose of this policy is to promote economic prosperity and support the Borough's employment base through targeted employment allocations and development proposals.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Diversification of the Borough's economy will be encouraged through the promotion and development of targeted employment allocations and attracting inward investment to the urban areas of Stafford and, to a lesser extent the market town of Stone, with an emphasis on creating greater opportunities for development, maintaining and enhancing social and environmental benefits and support for existing economic activities by:

- a) enabling the economy to diversify and modernise through the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new enterprises;
- b) maintaining and improving the Borough's economic position;
- c) enhancing the Borough's role as a centre of governance, a high technology business centre and University location within the Regional economy; and
- d) improving accessibility by a choice of means of transport to employment opportunities for the Borough's residents in order to meet local employment needs, maintain viable and sustainable local communities.

Economic growth and tourism opportunities in rural areas will be encouraged by locating development where:

- (i) it includes the re-use of existing buildings and assists with appropriate rural diversification; and
- (ii) it can help create more sustainable communities by generally providing a better balance between housing and employment, and limiting the need for commuting.

Existing economic activities in the Borough will be encouraged to modernise both to stay competitive and to embrace the opportunities offered by new technologies including Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The potential for existing and new industries to apply renewable energy technology to help address the implications of climate change will be encouraged, where practical and economically viable.

In all cases, the scale and nature of development should ensure that it meets the Borough's economic needs and does not encourage further outward movements of people and jobs from Stafford and Stone as well as the major urban areas identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Core Policy 4 is linked to Spatial Objective 3, 17 & 18

Indicator

Amount of land developed for employment by type.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Amount of land developed for employment, by type, which is in development and / or regeneration areas defined in the local development framework.

Target: To be determined by Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

Percentage of land developed for employment, by type, which is on previously developed land.

Target: 60 – 70% average per annum (measured from 2007)

Employment land supply by type.

Target: To have 10 hectares of employment land immediately available (measured from 2007)

Losses of employment land (i) development / regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area.

Target: Less than 5 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Amount of employment land lost to residential development

Target: Less than 3 hectares per year (measured from 2007)

Renewable energy capacity installed by type.

Target: Increase provision by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Staffordshire County Council
Instaffs
Business Link
Stafford Borough Council – Economic Development

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

COUNCIL RESPONSE

2.1 *The Council has considered each of the key questions raised in the agenda for Session 3 in turn, as set out below:*

The location of future employment development

- **Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance to the locational spread of employment development in the Borough?**

2.2 *The purpose of Core Policy 4 is to set out more details regarding the type of economic development provision which will be encouraged in different locations across the Borough area. The first part of Core Policy 4 describes the approach for the urban areas of Stafford and, to a lesser extent the market town of Stone, for targeted employment allocations and inward investment through delivery of criteria (a) to (d). The second part of Core Policy 4 addresses economic growth and tourism opportunities in the rural areas across the Borough with the exception of Stafford and Stone. The relationship between Stafford and Stone to the rest of the Borough area is further amplified in the last paragraph of Core Policy 4 where the locational focus for economic growth will occur in Stafford and Stone to avoid the outward movement of people from these urban areas to work other areas of the Borough. Therefore Core Policy 4 builds upon the approach for employment development set out in Core Policy 1 – Development of the Borough, as summarised below:*

- *Major new employment development in or adjoining the urban area of Stafford*
- *The market town of Stone to be a focus for employment and tourism development*
- *Sustainable employment development across the Borough*

2.3 *In terms of the locational spread of employment development in the Borough the Core Policy focussed on the urban areas of Stafford and the market town of Stone. However Core Policy 4 does not provide a percentage split or hectarage figure between the level of employment land developed in the urban areas for comparison with the rural areas. The Council does not consider that it is necessary or appropriate to provide further detail through the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.*

2.4 *It is anticipated that the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document will be progressed following adoption of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, based on the annual average rate of economic development*

provision set out in Core Policy 9. The Council considers that the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document will set out the sites for delivering the economic development provision set out in Core Policy 9 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document as well as policies for particular types of economic development to be located on individual sites, reflecting the approach set out for particular areas of the Borough in Core Policy 4.

- **Is the distinction between Stafford, Stone and elsewhere appropriate and clear?**

2.5 *The Council considers that the distinction between Stafford, Stone and elsewhere has been appropriately defined through Core Policy 1 – Development of the Borough and Core Policy 4 – The Balance of Economic Growth. The distinctions have been described in more detail through paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of this Hearing Statement. The Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document will identify particular sites for economic development provision together with policies regarding the type of employment development considered appropriate for specific sites.*

- **Should the DPD express separate targets for the two main towns?**

2.6 *Core Policy 4 has established targets based on the national core indicators set out in Government guidance ‘Local Development Framework Monitoring’ (March 2005). The targets associated with Core Policy 4 do not express specific employment land supply targets for the two main towns of Stafford and Stone. The Council does not consider that it is appropriate to provide separate targets for Stafford and Stone, but in any event the major part of development will be located in Stafford.*

The protection of existing employment provision

- **Should this policy and/or policy 9 be more specific about the protection/loss of established employment areas?**

2.7 *Core Policy 4 does not make any reference to the protection / loss of established employment areas. The Council would not oppose amendments being made to the introductory text and policy wording to be more specific on this matter. With regards to Core Policy 9 last paragraph states the following:*

“Development which would lead to the loss of business or general industrial land considered to be necessary to meet market requirements and provide a diverse local portfolio of employment opportunities, will be resisted.”

- **If so, what should it say?**

- 2.8 *The Council would not oppose this paragraph being added to Core Policy 4 in order to provide clarification on this matter. Previously the Council has sought to avoid the duplication of text between different policies and consider that the policy text is more appropriate for Core Policy 9 than Core Policy 4. However the Council would not oppose the last paragraph of Core Policy 4 and Core Policy 9 being amended for further clarification, as set out below:*

“To protect the local economy and established employment areas across the Borough development which would lead to the loss of business or general industrial land considered to be necessary to meet market requirements and provide a diverse local portfolio of employment opportunities, will be resisted”

- 2.9 *The Council would not oppose the introductory text being amended for Core Policy 4 to read as follows:*

“The purpose of this policy is to promote economic prosperity and support the Borough’s employment base through targeted employment allocations and development proposals. The policy aims to encourage economic development and re-use of buildings for employment uses in rural areas. The policy aims to promote economic growth in urban areas. For further information refer to Section 2.0 Character of the Borough and Section 3.0 Key Issues. Further policy details will be set out in the Economic Development Control Development Plan Document, Development Plan Document Number 2 and the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.”

- 2.10 *The Council would not oppose the introductory text being amended for Core Policy 9 to read as follows:*

“The purpose of this policy is to meet the employment needs of the Borough. Currently there is a lack of readily available employment land and the Borough is performing poorly through economic productivity and performance indicators. Stafford Borough has, and continues to experience manufacturing decline as well as lose to its employment and knowledge base. This situation will be addressed through the retention of existing employment sites and site allocations through the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document. For further information refer to Section 2.0 Character of the Borough and Section 3.0 Key Issues. Further policy details will be set out in the Economic Development Control Development Plan Document and the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.”

Potential employment development areas

- **Are there any major proposals / potential areas that should be mentioned in this policy?**

2.11 *Although Core Policy 4 does not specify any major proposals / potential employment areas the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document will identify particular sites for economic development provision together with policies regarding the type of employment development considered appropriate for specific sites. The Council does not consider it is appropriate at this stage to identify major proposals / potential areas as such areas will be considered through the consultation processes of preparing the Site-specific Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.*

Any other matters

2.12 *A number of representations were received to Core Policy 4 – The Balance of Economic Growth through the consultation period of the Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document. In March 2006 Stafford Borough Council provided a response to each of these representations. For further details refer to the individual Written Statements prepared for the respective representations set out below:*

- *Government Office West Midlands – U8/CP4/0011/5040c*
- *West Midlands Regional Assembly – U7/CP4/0015/5051*
- *Defence Estates – U7/CP4/0017/5058*
- *Development Planning Partnership for Tesco Stores Ltd – U4B/CP4/0021/5075*
- *Paul Sharpe Associates for Fradley Estates – U4B,U6,U7,U9/CP4/0022/5089*
- *Creswell Parish Council – U7/CP4/0038/5173*
- *Creswell Parish Council – U7/CP4/0038/5174*

2.13 *The Council considers that the details of this Core Policy are appropriate for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.*