

The Plan for Stafford Borough: Principles for Settlement Development



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Purpose of this Document 1

1 Purpose of this Document

1.1 The Stafford Borough area is facing a period of unprecedented change in terms of what its towns, villages and countryside will look like in the future, how land will be developed and used.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to seek your views on the principle of and methodology for identifying settlements with future development potential within Stafford Borough. This work will guide preparation of the new plan for our area, the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework, which will replace the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 and guide decisions on planning applications. Following this consultation the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy will determine those particular towns and villages in Stafford Borough considered to be suitable to accommodate new development allocations, and those settlements which will have development boundaries only, within which new dwellings may be provided.

1.3 To be clear, the purpose of this document is not to discuss possible amendments to existing development boundaries (known in the 2001 Local Plan as Residential Development Boundaries), as these will be evaluated as part of the Core Strategy.

2 Background

2 Background

2.1 National planning policy in Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) sets out that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. This approach is amplified through key principles and a general approach requiring that development plans should bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet future needs, improving access for all and reducing emissions by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car or reduce the impact of moving freight, promote renewable energy resources and take account of climate change in the location and design of development.

2.2 Furthermore decisions regarding the location of future development will take account of the following national planning policy documents:

- Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing (2006)
- Planning Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 - Transport (2001)

2.3 Key messages from these national planning policy documents are that:

- *Most new development should be directed to existing towns and cities, to help maximise accessibility to employment and services by walking, cycling and public transport. In rural areas, development should be focused on settlements which can act as service centres for surrounding areas.*
- *In the case of housing, only a limited amount of growth should be expected through the expansion of villages, with significant development, only being appropriate where: (a) it can be shown to be necessary for maintaining local services; (b) the houses are required to meet local needs; and (c) it will be in keeping with the character of the village.*

2.4 In June 2004 the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy became part of the statutory Development Plan under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act. The Regional Spatial Strategy focuses most new development into the Major Urban Areas of the West Midlands and North Staffordshire conurbations through a balance of urban and rural renaissance. This approach is said to be being maintained through the current revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy, which at present includes no new settlements and no significant areas of Green Belt identified for de-allocation to accommodate new development provision.

2.5 The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies the County Town of Stafford as a strategic centre, a local regeneration centre outside of Regeneration Zones and as an 'Other Large Settlement'. Furthermore the revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy identifies Stafford as a settlement of significant development. The document states that such settlements should be enhanced in order to provide services for local communities and act as drivers of economic growth.

2.6 The Regional Spatial Strategy's Policy RR3: Market Towns identifies their role as helping to regenerate rural areas and act as a focus for sustainable economic and housing development and providing services and other facilities to their rural hinterlands. Based on the characteristics set out in Policy RR3 it is considered that Stone is a market town capable of creating balanced housing and employment opportunities and already benefits from a range of local service provision.

Background 2

2.7 Stafford and Stone are considered to be the principal and secondary settlements in Stafford Borough based on the regional context set out above.

2.8 Within rural locations the Regional Spatial Strategy states that development within smaller village settlements is considered appropriate where this can help meet local housing requirements and promote local regeneration, or the support of local services. Priority should be given to those villages which already have the benefit of an existing service base.

2.9 Paragraph 5.20 in Chapter 5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy entitled 'Rural Renaissance' sets out the following paragraph regarding access to rural services.

"Access to the services people need is one of the most important determinants of quality of life in rural areas. A village shop, school, doctor's surgery and bank are likely to be important to most households, but many other services will be 'essential' to particular people, depending on their circumstances and stage in the life cycle. Where services are not provided locally, public transport to a service centre may be a vital lifeline."

2.10 Parts of the Regional Plan are currently being revised, with the following paragraph providing a context for the level of development that will be appropriate in the rural area.

"Depending on definition, the Region has approximately 2,300 villages. They perform an essential role in maintaining and enhancing the rural way of life by providing homes, jobs, services and other facilities for local people, many of whom cannot easily reach the nearest town. Consideration should be given to the extent to which sustainable development, which is appropriate in scale and nature, would enable villages to remain viable. It is not envisaged that any new villages will need to be developed."

3 Principle and Methodology for Settlement Development

3 Principle and Methodology for Settlement Development

3.1 Across Stafford Borough's area there are a range of settlements with locally distinctive characteristics. The role that settlements will play in delivering new development for Stafford Borough through the new Development Plan will vary widely. The new Plan for Stafford Borough must be prepared on robust and sound evidence when considering how, when and where new development will take place.

3.2 Therefore to establish the principle and methodology for settlement development in Stafford Borough for the future evidence was gathered from the Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities which was consulted upon in January and February 2008. An amended version taking into consideration comments received during the consultation period is published alongside this document.

3.3 The Settlement Assessment provides an up-to-date record of the services and facilities in each of Stafford Borough's towns and villages to inform the policy decision-making process for the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework (LDF). Note that separate assessments for Stafford and Stone have also been carried out.

3.4 The methodology for selecting settlements is based on a scoring system of services and facilities and is set out in full in Appendix 1: Principles for Settlement Development - Scoring..

Question 1

Do you agree with the methodology being based on a scoring system of services and facilities?

First Group

3.5 Settlements where boundaries may be adjusted to accommodate significant Greenfield development and new housing allocations provided they are not in the Green Belt. In addition Stafford and Stone are considered to be Principal and Secondary Settlements within Stafford Borough and will be included in this group when considered in the LDF Core Strategy.

Second Group

3.6 Settlements where boundaries may be adjusted to accommodate a less significant amount of Greenfield development but nevertheless may comprise some Greenfield releases on the edge of the settlement if not in the Green Belt.

Third Group

3.7 Settlements where boundaries will be retained to provide for development in the future but it is not envisaged that expansion would be appropriate other than for Rural Exception Sites to deliver affordable housing.

Principle and Methodology for Settlement Development 3

| Group 1 | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Barlaston* | Blythe Bridge* | Eccleshall | Gnosall |
| Great & Little Haywood | Meir Heath & Rough Close* | | |
| Group 2 | | | |
| Brocton & Brocton A34* | Derrington | Great Bridgeford | Haughton |
| Hixon | Oulton* | Swynnerton* | Tittensor* |
| Trentham/Dairyfields* | Weston | Woodseaves | Yarnfield* |
| Group 3 | | | |
| Adbaston | Aston by Stone | Barlaston Park* | Bradley |
| Church Eaton | Clayton* | Cotes Heath* | Creswell |
| Hyde Lea | Milford* | Milwich | Norbury |
| Ranton | Salt | Seighford | Stowe by Chartley |

Question 2

Do you agree with the three broad groups of settlements?

3.8 It should be noted that some of these settlements listed above may not be identified in the forthcoming Core Strategy document as providing a future development role. Settlements either located within or adjacent to the Green Belt where peripheral development expansion may be limited by national planning policies on Green Belt designations are identified by the * symbol.

Question 3

Are there any settlements which you consider should / should not be included in any of the 3 groups? If so please state the settlement and give reasons.

Question 4

Do you agree that settlements located within or adjacent to the Green Belt should not be considered for peripheral expansion?

3 Principle and Methodology for Settlement Development

Question 5

Do you agree that the settlements are identified in the appropriate group? If not please identify the settlement and give reasons.

3.9 Further details about the individual scores of particular settlements are listed in Appendix 2. It should be noted that all of the settlements listed currently have a Residential Development Boundary (RDB) in the adopted Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 except for Stowe by Chartley which is considered comparable in terms of services and facilities. For further information about specific settlements and RDB's please click [here](#) for information on the Local Plan or the Settlement Assessment.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Please provide your responses to the Borough Council by **12 noon on Friday the 1st August 2008** so that this information can be used in the next stage of the decision making process. A more detailed development strategy for the Borough Council area will be consulted upon later in the year.

4.2 If you wish to discuss this paper in more detail please contact the Forward Planning Team on 01785 619536 or 619538

Appendix 1: Principles for Settlement Development - Scoring

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Set out below is the proposed scoring system for assessing settlements:

| | |
|--|--|
| Schools | Score = 3 Primary School |
| | Score = 4 More than single Primary School Provision |
| Medical Facility | Score = 3 (permanent Doctor's surgery) |
| | Score = 2 (permanent Dentist's surgery) |
| | Score = 1 (Doctor visit to community facility at least weekly) |
| | Score = 5 (Both Doctor's surgery & Dentist's surgery) |
| Retail Provision | Score = 1 (Local Convenience Store / Post Office) |
| | Score 2 (2 - 5 Local Convenience Stores) |
| | Score = 3 (More than Local Convenience Stores) |
| Community Facilities | Score = 1 (Village Hall / Community Hall) |
| | Score = 2 (More than 1 Village Hall / Community Hall) |
| Church | Score = 1 (Church / chapel) |
| | Score = 2 (more than 1 Church / chapel) |
| Public House | Score = 1 (Public House) |
| | Score 2 (More than 1 Public House) |
| Library | Score = 1 (Mobile Service) |
| | Score = 2 (Permanent Building) |
| Public Transport | Score = 4 (1/2 hourly bus service) |
| | Score = 3 (hourly bus service) |
| | Score = 2 (2 - 3 hourly bus service) |
| | Score = 1 (daily service) |
| Rail services not included as only relates to Barlaston & Blythe Bridge. | |
| Fire / Police Facility | Score = 1 |

Appendix 1: Principles for Settlement Development - Scoring

| | |
|---|--|
| Other Facilities such as petrol station / garage, bank, vet, restaurant / café, take-away, opticians | Score = 1 (Single Other Facility) |
| | Score = 2 (2-5 Other Facilities) |
| | Score = 3 (More than 5 Other Facilities) |
| Population | Score = 4 (More than 1,500) |
| | Score = 3 (1,000 – 1,500) |
| | Score = 2 (500 – 1,000) |
| | Score = 1 (Less than 500) |
| Access to 'A' Road | Score = 2 (passes through settlement) |
| | Score = 1 (within 300 metres of settlement) |
| Open Space, Sport & Recreation such as playing field, children's play area. Public footpaths and incidental areas of open space have been excluded. | Score = 1 (Single sport and recreation resource) |
| | Score = 2 (2-3 sport and recreation resources) |
| | Score = 3 (More than 5 sport and recreation resources) |

Appendix 2: Settlement Scores

Appendix 2: Settlement Scores

Set out below are the scores achieved for each settlement within Stafford Borough:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Gnosall | 33 |
| Eccleshall | 31 |
| Great Haywood | 27 |
| Meir Heath & Rough Close | 22 |
| Blythe Bridge | 21 |
| Barlaston | 21 |
| Weston | 20 |
| Little Haywood and Colwich | 20 |
| Hixon | 19 |
| Haughton | 18 |
| Brocton & Brocton A34 | 18 |
| Trentham / Dairyfields | 17 |
| Tittensor | 15 |
| Swynnerton | 15 |
| Woodseaves | 14 |
| Oulton | 13 |
| Yarnfield | 13 |
| Great Bridgeford | 13 |
| Derrington | 13 |
| Milford | 12 |
| Cotes Heath | 12 |
| Aston by Stone | 12 |
| Fulford | 11 |
| Clayton | 10 |

Appendix 2: Settlement Scores

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Church Eaton | 10 |
| Hopton | 9 |
| Adbaston | 9 |
| Milwich | 9 |
| Seighford | 9 |
| Croxton | 9 |
| Norbury | 9 |
| Hilderstone | 9 |
| Bradley | 9 |
| Creswell | 8 |
| Stowe by Chartley | 8 |
| Salt | 7 |
| Hyde Lea | 7 |
| Barlaston Park | 7 |
| Ranton | 7 |

For further information on services and facilities please refer to the Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities.

