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 2 – Core Policy 1 Development of the Borough (C/HSS2/CP1)

Date: 19/05/2006

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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 2 – of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document independent Examination.*

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[1] 2001-2021

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STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – CORE STRATEGY DPD EXAMINATION

**AGENDA FOR SESSION 2 – CORE POLICY 1
DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH**

1   Spatial planning

- Does this policy reflect other strategies and proposals of other service providers' requirements?
- Is it in conformity with the RSS and the Structure Plan?
- Does it reflect the community Strategy?
- Should the DPD more specifically refer to how this policy and others relate to these other plans?
- What other spatial strategies were considered at the options stage?

2   The detail to be included within the policy

- Does the policy provide sufficiently detailed guidance as to where development should be directed?
- Should it be more specific as to the amount and type of development that should go where?
- Should the approach and targets differentiate between retail, office and leisure development and, if so, how?

3   The split of development between the settlements

- Does the policy give sufficient and appropriate guidance as to the spread/split of development between Stafford, Stone and the villages?
- Could it be more specific and, if so, how?

4   Guidance on Stafford

- Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance to development in and around Stafford in terms of
- Scale – should more be said about the scale of development?
- Type – is the guidance appropriate and realistic?
- Location - should more be said as to how much can be accommodated within the town, how much would need to be on the edge of the town and what form that might take?

5   Guidance on Stone

- Does the guidance provide a clear and appropriate basis for decisions as to the scale and type of future development here?

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6   Guidance on the rural areas

- Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance on the scale and type of development to be directed to the villages?
- Does this reflect national, regional and strategic guidance?
- Is the two levels of rural settlements appropriate?

7   Previously developed land

- Does the policy adequately reflect the priority to be given to previously developed land?
- If not, how can the policy better reflect that?
- What should be the targets for development on previously developed land?

8   Any other matters

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RELEVANT SECTION
SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Core Policy 1:	Development of the Borough

The purpose of this policy is to direct most new development to Stafford whilst retaining and enhancing existing facilities elsewhere. Stafford is identified within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS) as an 'Other large settlement', a 'Local Regeneration Area' and a 'Strategic Centre'. Furthermore the RSS provides policies for market towns, such as Stone, to accommodate sustainable economic and housing development. Services and facilities referred to in this policy are defined to include the following: retail, health, community, cultural, social, sport, recreation and leisure.

SUBMISSION POLICY

The requirements for new development in the Borough will primarily be met by the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, excluding land used for sport and recreation. Where appropriate planning obligations will be used to secure the implementation of planning policies through acceptable development proposals.

1. Major new employment development, including office and industrial uses and significant sporting facilities will be concentrated in or adjoining the urban area of Stafford. Sustainable housing and tourism development, and providing major services and facilities to the Borough and the surrounding area will take place within the urban area of Stafford

2. The market town of Stone will be a focus for employment and tourism development as well as limited housing development and providing services and facilities to serve its rural hinterland

3. Services and facilities to serve rural areas will be maintained and enhanced in the following settlements:

Gnosall	Eccleshall	Great Haywood
Barlaston	Hixon	Little Haywood & Colwich

4. The retention and appropriate enhancement of existing services and facilities will be sought in other rural settlements

5. Sustainable employment development will be encouraged across the Borough

All new development must:

   (a) mitigate for environmental impacts where appropriate;
   (b) avoid the sterilisation of mineral reserves; and
   (c) protect the natural floodplain through Flood Risk Assessments as well as utilising Sustainable Drainage Systems to control flooding and maintain water quality.

All new developments and renovations will be encouraged to use energy saving systems and provide on-site renewable energy generation, where practical and economically viable, or provide acceptable sustainable energy alternatives.

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Core Policy 1 is linked to Spatial Objective 1, 9, 14, 16 & 17

Indicator

Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development.

Target: Increase provision for Stafford and Stone by 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres

Target: 60 – 80% completed in town centres (measured from 2007)

Renewable energy capacity installed by type.

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

Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality

Target: Less than 1% average per year (measured from 2007)

Milestones 2011, 2016 & 2021

Implementation

Development industry
Landowners
Environment Agency
Stafford Borough Council

Timescale for Delivery

2001 - 2021

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COUNCIL RESPONSE

2.1   The Council has considered each of the key questions raised in the agenda for Session 2 in turn, as set out below:

Spatial planning

- **Does this policy reflect other strategies and proposals of other service providers' requirements?**

2.4.1   The Council considers that from the Pre-production stage in February 2004 to Submission the Council has drawn on a variety of other strategies.

2.4.2   In February 2004 the Council sent out a Gathering Evidence Questionnaire (Core Document 012) to all Local Development Framework consultees and a wide range of other groups. The Gathering Evidence Questionnaire was also made available on the Borough Council's website and newspaper articles were written asking for comments from the general public relating to land use and spatial issues which may be considered during the production of the new Local Development Framework. In addition leaflets were placed in the Council Offices and a radio interview carried out to raise awareness of the process. The 102 replies received are reported, together with a number of other matters, in the Gathering Evidence Report (Core Document 013) The full range of data sources are listed in Appendix 2 of the Gathering Evidence Report.

2.1.3   In January 2005 consultation took place through the Issues and Options stage, where the consultation responses are reported in Core Document CD025 and the Preferred Option stage, where the consultation responses are reported in Core Document CD025 .

2.1.4   The Pre-submission Consultation Statement (Core Document CD047) lists the Statutory and Non-statutory Consultation bodies consulted at each stage of preparation of the Core Strategy. This is in addition to all members of the Local Strategic Partnership, other bodies and organisations or individuals who have responded at any stage. The consultation list includes over 800 bodies and individuals who are consulted at each stage of the preparation of DPDs.

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2.1.5   Account has been taken of a range of strategies and other policy documents as identified in the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report, (Core Document CD038) in which Section 9 is most relevant, listing the plans, policies and programmes which have been appraised as part of the assessment process.

2.1.6   Also in the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Technical Appendix 1, (Core Document CD039) particularly the Review Tables from page 3 to 49 which set out a range of documents and their implications.

2.1.7   We have not found any relevant examples where strategies of other bodies are in conflict with Core Strategy Policies. All relevant bodies have had several opportunities both to make their positions known and to make representations.

- **Is it in conformity with the RSS and the Structure Plan?**

2.1.8   The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is referred to in Paragraph 5.6 of the Core Strategy and in more detail in the Settlement Strategy Topic Paper (TP002). Representations concerning the RSS were taken into account at the issues and options and Preferred Options stages.

2.1.9   The Council believes that Core Policy 1 fully accords with the RSS. The Regional Planning Body, West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), (representation CON/G/0015/5050) concludes that the document is in general conformity and makes no representation in respect of Core Policy 1.

2.1.10 The Council does not now consider that the Policy has to accord with the extant Structure Plan that will cease to be effective in 2007 (3 years after the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 becoming effective). This change of approach followed representations from Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) and others on the Preferred Options. It is not considered, however, that the policy is in conflict with the Staffordshire and City of Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011.

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- **Does it reflect the Community Strategy?**

2.1.11 *Significant reference has been made to the Community Strategy at each stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy, including in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the Submission Core Strategy Document and more extensively in the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Technical Appendix 1 (Core Document CD039). This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Session 1. The relationship to the Core Policy is set out in Review Tables from page 3 to 49 which set out a range of documents and their implications.*

- **Should the DPD more specifically refer to how this policy and others relate to these other plans?**

2.1.12 *The Core Strategy contains a section entitled 'Policy Context' which sets out the national, regional, strategic and local policy context for the document. The references to other documents are made elsewhere, particularly in the Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Technical Appendix 1, (Core Document CD039) as well as the Review Tables from page 3 to 49.*

- **What other spatial strategies where considered at the options stage?**

2.1.13 *The Spatial Strategies considered at the Issues and Options stage are included in the Core Strategy DPD - Issues & Options Paper Issue Date: January 2005 (Core Document CD023)*

2.1.14 *The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Core Strategy Issue Date: January 2005 (CD027) evaluated the Spatial Objectives and Policy Options*

The detail to be included within the policy

- **Does the policy provide sufficiently detailed guidance as to where development should be directed?**

2.1.15 *The policy was intended to set out the strategic policies required to deliver the spatial vision, in accordance with paragraph 2.9 of PPS12, by distinguishing between broad*

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locations for development and identifying a range of settlements in terms of function and broad locational factors.

2.1.16 The Core Strategy avoids site or area specific proposals or allocations which will be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 2.12 of PPS12

- **Should it be more specific as to the amount and type of development that should go where?**

2.1.17 The Core Strategy identifies the amount of housing (in accordance with RSS methodology and PPS12 para 2.10) and area of employment land (projection of Structure Plan targets) in Core Policies 9 and 10

2.1.18 The distribution and location of the sites to provide for new development will be a matter for consideration within site allocation DPDs in accordance with PPS12 paragraph 2.12.

- **Should the approach and targets differentiate between retail, office and leisure development and, if so, how?**

2.1.19 The target in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) seeks only to relate to the proportion within Town Centres. There may be a case for differentiation between retail, office and leisure developments in later Development Plan Documents (DPDs) dealing with specific allocations and in Area Action Plans.

The split of development between the settlements

- **Does the policy give sufficient and appropriate guidance as to the spread/split of development between Stafford, Stone and the villages?**

2.1.20 The Policy distinguishes between the function of the identified settlements rather than identifying a quantum of development for each. This will be the purpose of the DPDs which follow the Core Strategy and will accord with the Core Policies.

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- **Could it be more specific and, if so, how?**

2.1.21   The Council had no intention of apportioning development via the Core Strategy and has not considered in any detail, either quantitatively or as a proportions of the total amount of development as a split between settlements.

Guidance on Stafford

- **Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance to development in and around Stafford in terms of**
- **Scale – should more be said about the scale of development?**

2.1.22   The scale and location of new development will be determined through the Sites and Allocations and other DPDs, taking into account a range of locational factors and the type and nature of the development proposed. Stafford will remain the focus for most new development including employment, housing, retail and other uses.

- **Type – is the guidance appropriate and realistic?**

2.1.23   The Core Strategy is a strategic document designed to be the basis for the consideration of broader spatial issues in addition to subsequent DPDs, which will provide detail of site specific proposals and generic development control policies. In setting the context against which other DPDs can be prepared it is considered to be clear and concise without the inclusion of inappropriate detail. The Council considers that it is reasonable, realistic and in accordance with national and RSS policy.

- **Location - should more be said as to how much can be accommodated within the town, how much would need to be on the edge of the town and what form that might take?**

2.1.24   The Council has chosen not to set targets for Stafford or other individual settlements within the Core Strategy DPD and has not carried out work beyond the scope of the Urban Capacity Study (Core Document CD006). To meet current RSS housing requirements it is not considered that edge of town development of Greenfield sites would be needed.

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2.1.25 If RSS requirements are increased, as appears likely in the light of the major increase in household forecasts, and if previously developed land (PDL) sites within the urban area prove inadequate to meet the increased requirements, it may be necessary to consider the use of Greenfield sites later in the plan period to 2021 or 2026 with allocations considered using a sequential approach such as is currently included in PPG 3 – Housing, (or its successor PPSs).

2.1.26 For employment uses much may depend on the potential future of the former RAF Stafford. In the absence of this location for new employment uses there is a possibility that edge of town Greenfield sites may be needed.

2.1.27 Significant sports facilities may require edge of town locations and would be considered in the light of Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation, the Companion guide, or their successor documents.

2.1.28 Overall it is believed that the Policy strikes the appropriate balance in expression of strategic policy in a clear and concise manner.

Guidance on Stone

- **Does the guidance provide a clear and appropriate basis for decisions as to the scale and type of future development here?**

2.1.29 It is anticipated that the Market Town of Stone will have a lesser role and a more limited scale of new development than Stafford. New development in Stone will be directed to meeting the needs of the town and its surrounding rural area and would have a particular focus on regeneration and the development of the local economy.

2.1.30 New housing would now be expected to be limited to appropriate redevelopment within the urban area, principally to meet local needs. Greenfield development would not be expected and, if proposed, would be likely to be opposed.

2.1.31 *It is considered that the guidance is clear and appropriate to the Core Strategy.*

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Guidance on the rural areas

- **Does the policy give clear and appropriate guidance on the scale and type of development to be directed to the villages?**

2.1.32 The Core Strategy seeks to promote and direct the development of the selected settlements to provide services to meet the needs both of the settlement and their surrounding rural areas. The scale and types of development would be expected to be limited to meeting local requirements. It is considered that the guidance is clear and appropriate to the Core Strategy.

- **Does this reflect national, regional and strategic guidance?**

2.1.33 National guidance, particularly in Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, paragraphs 2-4 advocates including policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including through the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment. Core Policy 1, other Core Policies and emerging DPDs introduce policies in accordance with PPS7.

2.1.34 Regional Spatial Strategy has also been taken fully into account in Core Policies 1 and 2, relevant details of and extracts from RSS are given in Topic Paper 2 Settlement Strategy (TP002)

- **Is the two levels of rural settlements appropriate?**

2.1.35 Topic Paper 2 Settlement Strategy (TP002) paragraph 2.11 gives details of the facilities currently provided by the identified rural settlements. The identified settlements, with the exception of Hixon, have more facilities than any of the other, significantly smaller, settlements in the Borough.

2.1.36 Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing advocates that away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to

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ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development. The identified settlements meet these criteria and it is considered that the identification of settlements is appropriate in Core Policy 1.3.

2.1.37 Draft PPS3 also suggests that Planning authorities should set out in Local Development Documents (LDDs) their policies for allowing some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities. In particular, authorities should be supportive of small-scale development of this nature where it provides the most sustainable option in villages that are remote from, and have poor public transport links with, service centres. This is covered by Core Policy 1(4) and Core Policy 2 and will be dealt with in more detail in other emerging DPDs.

Previously developed land

- **Does the policy adequately reflect the priority to be given to previously developed land?**
- **If not, how can the policy better reflect that?**

2.1.38 The Council considers that Core Policy 1 makes it clear that the requirements for new development will be met primarily by the re-use of previously developed land and buildings (whilst not precluding Greenfield development in appropriate circumstances). This approach is continued in other Core Policies such as Core Policy 2 (e), Core Policy 3 (c), Core Policy 4 (i), Core Policy 6(a), Core Policy 9 (a) and Core Policy 10 (f). It is not considered necessary to re-word the policy, although this would not be opposed if considered appropriate.

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- **What should be the targets for development on previously developed land?**

2.1.39   The targets for development on previously developed land are set in Core policies 4, 9 and 10 rather than in Core Policy 1. If considered appropriate they could be repeated in CP1.

Any other matters

2.1.40 A number of representations were received to Core Policy 1 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:

Representee	Reference
Peacock & Smith on behalf of WM. Morrison Supermarkets plc	U4B,U6/CP1/0006/5009
Sport England	U4B,U4C/CP1/0008/5020U4B
Government Office West Midlands	U8/CP1/0011/5040b
Environment Agency	U7/CP1/0014/5047
McDyre & Co. for J F Bostock Settlement	U4B,U4C,U9/CP1/0019/5063
McDyre & Co. for Bassett Group Holdings Ltd	U4B,U4C,U9/CP1/0020/5068
Development Planning Partnership for Tescos Stores Ltd	U9/CP1/0021/5073
Paul Sharpe Associates for Fradley Estates	U4B,U4D,U7,U9/CP1/0022/5086
JVH Town Planning Consultants	U7,U9/CP1/0023/5095
Home Builders Federation	U0/CP1/0025/5102
St. Modwen Properties PLC	U7/CP1/0027/5110 U7/CP1/0027/5111

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King Sturge for Akzo Nobel UK Ltd	S/CP1/0029/5115
First City for The Stott Family	S/CP1/0031/5120
RPS Planning for Barratt West Midlands	U7/CP1/0033/5130
Gough Planning Services for George Wimpey Strategic Land	U4B,U4D,U6,U7,U9/CP1/0035/5135
Hulme Upright Manning for Trent Vision	U9/CP1/0036/5139
English Nature	U4B,U7/CP1/0037/5147
Creswell Parish Council	U7/CP1/0038/5170
Tetlow King Planning for West Midlands RSL Planning Consortium	U0/CP1/0039/5197
Drivers Jonas	CP1,CP3/0041/5206
Staffordshire County Council (Development Services Dept.)	U7/CP1/0042/5208
Network Rail	C/CP1/0047/5227

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