

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
PLAN FOR STAFFORD BOROUGH
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS
LAND EAST OF STAFFORD

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Memorandum is to confirm the main areas of agreement, identify the main areas where further work is required for completion before the Plan for Stafford Borough independent Examination to prove soundness to the Inspector and highlight the main areas of dispute / disagreement between the parties and Stafford Borough Council. Further information and work outstanding linked to this Memorandum is set out in the Stafford Borough Infrastructure Strategy Stage 2 Report (the Infrastructure Delivery Plan) published in July 2012. The Memorandum should therefore establish a range of actions and rough working assumptions, including timings, for the delivery of land east of Stafford.

SITE ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Land East of Stafford.

Residential and employment developments, public open space, Eastern Access Improvement scheme, access, parking and landscaping. All development will take place within the site plan (Appendix 1) attached to this Statement of Common Ground.

PROMOTERS:

First City Limited
Commercial Estates Group

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Stafford Borough Council

This statement addresses the following areas of common ground:

1. Description of the site.
2. Description of the area.
3. Development Plan context.
4. Main Areas of Agreement.
5. Main Areas requiring further work.
6. Main areas of Disagreement / Dispute.

1. Description of the Site

The housing and employment sites extend to 46.36 hectares.

Development to the east of Stafford will link with existing residential development in a sustainable location due to its relationship to existing employment at Stafford Technology Park and adjoining Staffordshire University campus with existing primary and secondary schools nearby. The development east of Stafford is located approximately 2.5 km east of Stafford town centre adjoining the main residential and employment areas to the east of the town.

The site has principal access from Beaconside (A513), Weston Road (A518), Tixall Road and Blackheath Lane leading to Baswich Lane / St Thomas' Lane along existing vehicular routes next to the sites.

2. Description of the area

To the north of the housing site is Stafford Fire Station and Staffordshire University whilst to the south of the housing site is the River Sow valley area. To the west of the housing site is existing residential area and to the east is Stafford cemetery / crematorium and open countryside.

To the north of the employment site is open countryside and to the south of the employment site is existing employment areas and Staffordshire University. To the west of the site is open countryside and the Ministry of Defence land at Stafford and to the east of the site is Blackheath Covert and open countryside.

3. Development Plan context

Stafford Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan known as the Plan for Stafford Borough. Issues and Options on the new Plan were published in February 2009 and a Pre-Publication Draft was published for consultation in September 2011 with a further re-consideration of Strategic Policy Choices for development set out in a further consultation in June & July 2012.

At the end of November 2012 the Full Council for the Stafford Borough area is meeting to consider approving the new Local Plan to 2031 for the pre-submission stage and 6 weeks to formally receive representations on soundness and legal compliance for the subsequent Examination next Spring / Summer 2013. Therefore this is the Council's final version of the Plan for Stafford Borough which is considered to meet the statutory tests of being sound having been positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy as well as complying with the Duty to Co-operate.

Significant work has been progressed on proving deliverability of the new Plan through on-going engagement with key stakeholders' interests, particularly for the Strategic Development Locations at Stafford and Stone. In relation to Stafford East extensive background studies have been undertaken to establish the site constraints and opportunities associated with its development. These include:

- Tree Survey
- Infrastructure Assessment
- Biodiversity Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Assessment
- Archaeological Assessment
- Land Contamination Assessment

- Topographical Survey

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states "Plans should be deliverable. Therefore the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viable is threatened." A collaborative approach between the local authority and the parties promoting the site with knowledge of market and development economics, and who will be directly involved in delivering the plan is now well advanced. However further work is now required to reduce the risk of difficulties at the Examination and potential delays by addressing the following key questions:

- Is the land east of Stafford capable of delivering the scale of development as set out in the Plan for Stafford Borough based on the land area (i.e. approximately 600 new houses and 20 hectares of employment land)?
- What are the infrastructure requirements for land east of Stafford?
- Can the land east of Stafford be delivered with the resources made available and is there sufficient commercial viability?
- What level of affordable housing provision can be delivered for land east of Stafford?

4. Main Areas of Agreement

There are no issues of contention and it is common ground between the parties that (Refer to page 6 for current Areas of Disagreement):

- A sustainable, well designed mixed use development will be delivered by 2031. Any application for development on a part or the whole of this area must be preceded by, and consistent with, Master Plans for the whole Strategic Development Location which have been submitted and agreed by the Council

Housing

- Delivery of approximately 600 new homes within the existing site boundaries,
- The site will deliver a target proportion of 30% affordable housing in the context of Policy C2;
- A mix of housing types, tenures, sizes and styles will be delivered with a greater proportion being 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed properties;
- The development will include specialist housing to meet the needs of an ageing population;

Employment

- The site will deliver at least 20 hectares of new employment land at Beacon Hill with comprehensive links to existing and new housing development areas;

Design

- The development will take place on a 'neighbourhood' approach with the provision of a mix of uses including public open space, social and physical infrastructure including financial

contributions, based on additional school places, on a needs basis for new facilities at existing primary and secondary schools;

- The development will be based on using sustainable construction methods in the context of Policy N2;
- The site will include at least 1 acre for the future expansion of the existing cemetery / crematorium with appropriate landscaping next to adjacent housing and within new road corridors;
- Proposals must relate to the whole Strategic Development Location or if less should not in any way prejudice implementation of the whole development;

Environment

- Necessary measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace will be provided;
- Provision of a network of multi-functional green infrastructure including natural grasslands, play areas, green corridors allowing wildlife movement and access to open space taking into account existing on-site features, such as hedgerows, drainage ditches and archaeological remains;
- A comprehensive flood management scheme will be delivered to implement development at the Strategic Development Location including off-site measures consequential to the development, to alleviate flooding and surface water management on the River Sow;
- The development will maximise use of on-site renewable or low carbon energy solutions, in the context of Policy N2;
- The development will include measures to conserve and enhance heritage assets and landscape character including St Thomas' Priory, its setting and landscapes such as Blackheath Covert;
- The site will protect nature conservation interests including Kingston Covert Site of Biological Interest;

Transport

- An access, transport and travel plan strategy will be provided for the Strategic Development Location that maximises travel and accessibility by non-car transport modes via safe, attractive and conveniently designed street, pedestrian and cycling connections within the development and to Stafford town centre, nearby existing and new employment areas. The

strategy shall identify access points to the site and between the site and the existing settlement. It shall also identify construction access arrangements that minimises disruption to existing residents and improvements to transport capacity along the A518 Weston Road in the vicinity of the University roundabout and along the Tixall Road;

- There will be an interconnected network of streets serving the development producing discernible and distinctive neighbourhoods and places integrated and linked to existing areas.

- The development will ensure timely delivery of Phase 1 of the Eastern Access Improvement Scheme (Weston Road to Tixall Road) and associated transport improvements from Tixall Road to Baswich Lane.

Infrastructure

- Transport improvements to Baswich Lane, new cycle link over the River Sow (provided by SCC funded scheme), A34 Beaconside Road traffic management, and potential park and ride at the new employment area;
- Financial contributions based on a demonstrated need for additional school places at existing primary and secondary schools to meet projected growth in pupils and mitigate the education impacts of the development;
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- The development will include children's play areas and multi-use games areas in association with SANGs requirements if provided on-site
- Standard telecommunication connections will be provided to link to the Stafford exchange enabled with Superfast Fibre Access Broadband
- Gas reinforcement work required for the employment site
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- Primary health care provision will be delivered by increased capacity at existing facilities, based on demonstrated local needs;
- Developer contributions will be required to provide the strategic infrastructure needed to achieve a comprehensive sustainable development at this Strategic Development Location

An illustrative Concept Diagram is attached (see Appendix 2). An initial sketch layout will be provided by the promoters in the near future to demonstrate a feasible solution to deliver new development of approximately 600 new houses and associated land use requirements taking account of the key constraints for the area.

Based on current information from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all parties working in partnership it has been established that the scale of development is capable of delivering the infrastructure requirements listed below:

- Transport improvements required along the A513 Beaconside / A518 Weston Road roundabout together with principal access to the sites, including delivery of Phase 1 of the Eastern Access Improvement Scheme (Weston Road to Tixall Road) and associated transport improvements from Tixall Road to Baswich Lane. This infrastructure is required to provide access routes to the main development areas
- Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANGS) required through on-site / off-site provision / management at Cannock Chase to provide recreational areas for communities to use rather than using the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation
- Connection to the grid in order to meet the needs of the new communities

- Potable water reinforcement works for the water supply in order to meet the water resource needs of the new communities
 - Sewage capacity improvements required due to site topography draining to Beaconside terminal sewage pumping station linked to Brancote sewage treatment works. This infrastructure is required to meet the water resource needs for the new communities.
- There are no ground or geo-environmental issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed by planning condition.
 - There are no ecology or bio-diversity issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed by planning condition.
 - There are no noise or noise attenuation issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed by planning condition.
 - There are no site layout, landscaping or design related matters relevant at this stage and the outline parameters of the proposed development, that are in disagreement to deliver up to 600 new houses and 20 hectares of new employment development.
 - There are no flood risk or site drainage issues which would prevent the development of the site as proposed and which cannot be resolved or addressed by planning condition.

All parties agree that a s.106 planning obligation should be capable of agreement to secure the following, on a needs basis and subject to necessary viability testing;

- the phased provision of affordable housing
- new school places and enhanced facilities at the primary and secondary school level within the catchment area
- open space provision and a commuted sum towards management and maintenance of on-site open space if such open space is to be adopted by the Council
- the cost of the County Council to monitor the implementation of the Residential Travel Plan

All parties will be working towards the completion of such a planning obligation to be prepared through the formal planning application process.

All parties will also work on a series of conditions which without prejudice to any parties case, could be imposed.

5.. Main Areas requiring further work

The main areas where further work is required between the parties can be summarised as follows:

- a. Transport Assessment
- b. Site Master Plan
- c. Historic Environment Assessment
- d. Noise Assessment
- e. Air Quality Assessment

Further information is required to establish that the scale of development is capable of delivering the

infrastructure requirements listed below from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan:

- Economic Viability Assessment

6. Main areas of Disagreement / Dispute

The current area of disagreement is as follows:

- a. The developers do not accept the quantum of green infrastructure shown on the illustrative Concept Diagram is reasonably related to the scheme and is excessive on the eastern boundary with the cemetery.

Signed on behalf of the Promoters

Signed on behalf of Local Planning Authority

Date:

Date:

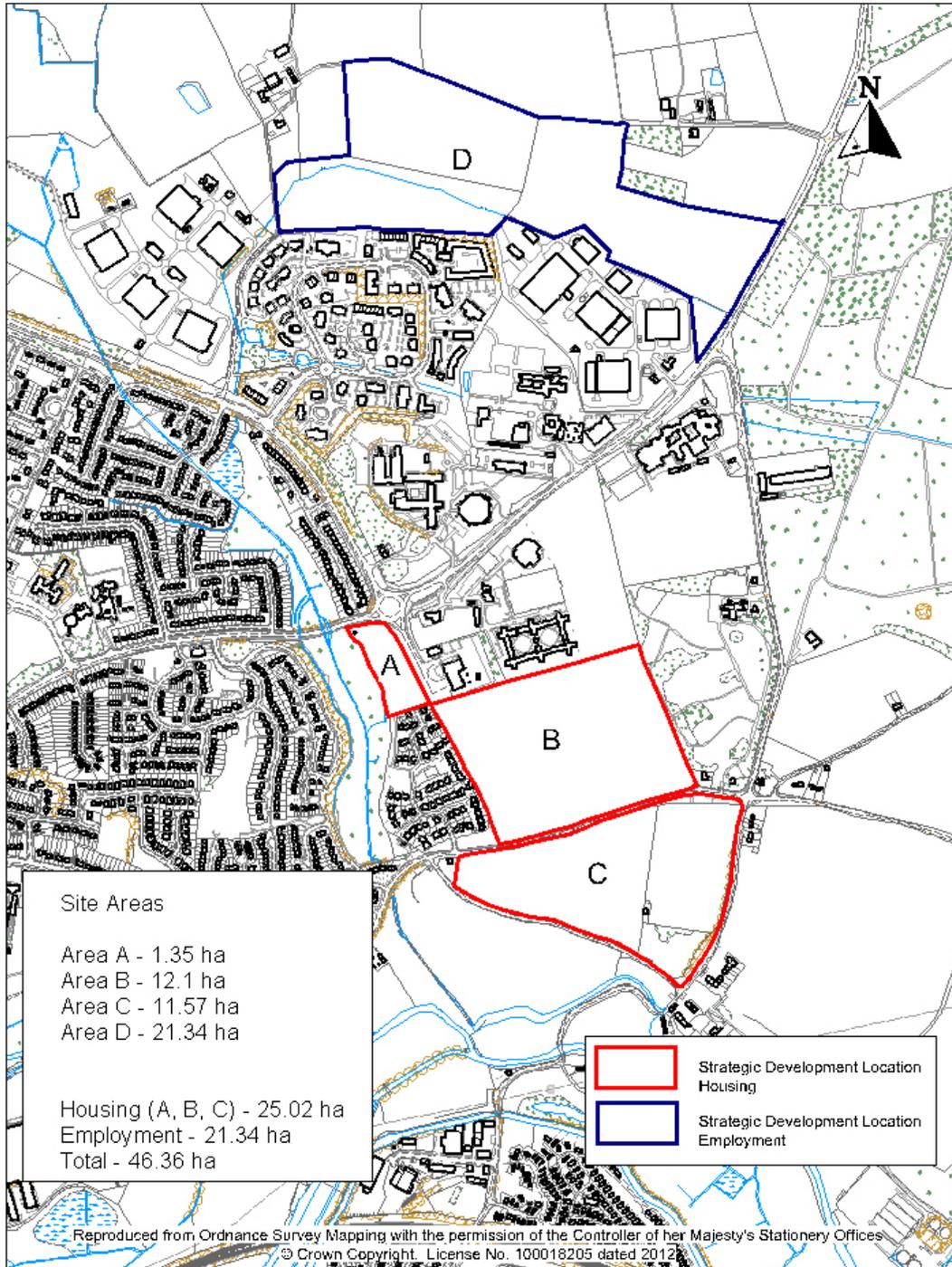
Position:

Position:

APPENDIX 1

LAND EAST OF STAFFORD AREAS

Development to the East of Stafford



APPENDIX 2

ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT DIAGRAM

Stafford East Concept Diagram

