

**Plan for Stafford**  
**Documents Submitted and Related to Hearings**  
**Further Submissions on behalf of St Modwen Developments**

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**N2.5 – Annual Housing Completions**

The information provided by the Council lists completions since 2006/7. The completions are set against the requirement within the 2004 RSS Annual Dwelling with an apportionment as set out in the Ministerial Letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004. A shortfall is shown in only 2 of the seven year period to 2012/13.

The Plan for Stafford plan period begins in 2011. It is appropriate to consider what was the most up to date and objectively tested requirement for housing for the period from 2006. The Castleworks Appeal decision which has been referred to by a number of parties, concluded that the most up to date and tested requirement for that period was the RSS Phase 2 Revision Panel Report figure of 550 dwelling per annum. It would be appropriate for the Council to set out their annual completions against this most up to date and tested figure. In doing so it would demonstrate that only the year 2006/7 exceeded the requirement, with all other years in the 6 year since then under delivering. There is a clear record of past persistent under delivery against this most up to date and tested requirement for that period. This was the conclusion within the Castleworks decision.

**N2.11 – Settlement Boundaries**

The Council have confirmed here with withdrawal of Settlement Boundaries and given the points of our objections to those as included in the Plan, this is supported. However our preferred approach would have been to appropriately define new Boundaries within the Plan and include the sites at St Leonard's and Castleworks within the new Boundaries as set out in our objections. The position as now proposed within the Plan for Stafford means an absence of any defining Settlement Boundaries for what is likely to be a considerable period as the Council prepare the Allocations DPD. The Council's track record in Plan delivery suggests that the timeframe for preparing the Allocations DPD is likely to be considerable. The Plan needs to make clear the approach to determining planning applications for development on the edge of settlements in absence of any defined boundaries.

**N3a– County Council Letter re Western Access and CPO**

This letter was submitted on the day of the Hearing and was submitted by the Council as a suggested endorsement by the County of the use of CPO to acquire land required to deliver the Western Access Improvement. Its submission demonstrates how critical land assembly is to the delivery of the Western Access Improvement, however in fact is merely a letter from a Cabinet Member suggesting he is willing to take a report to Council to request use of CPO. There remains no endorsement from

either the District or County to the use of CPO. They have historically resisted the use of CPO and this is a position which they have consistently taken.

#### **N6a – Statement of Common Ground**

St Modwen was not party to this Statement of Common Ground, sent a draft or asked to sign it. St Modwen are a significant land owner within the SDL and control land essential for the delivery of the Western Access Improvement. The Statement of Common Ground adds no certainty to the delivery of the Western Access Improvement which is seen as critical infrastructure to the Plan and this SDL.

Equally, Network Rail were not a party to the Statement. The site promoters suggested at the Examination that they had an Option Agreement with Network Rail to deliver that element of the Western Access Improvement over the Network Rail land however;

- No copy of the agreement has been submitted as evidence
- No information has been submitted which states;
  - o When the Option expires
  - o The terms of the Option, including acquisition costs and drawdown requirements
  - o Whether the Western Access Improvement can be constructed at grade (ie crossing the line necessitating closure) or with air rights (ie to construct a bridge over the line)

The costs associated with any arrangement with Network Rail have clearly not been factored into the viability appraisal supporting the plan and must be included in order to fully understand viability.

#### **N6c – Bellway Letter 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

The letter was submitted to the Examination to highlight the expectation from the County Council that the land required to deliver the Western Access Improvement would be delivered by the developers at NIL cost to the County. Whilst that was the anticipation in 2011, to date no collaboration, contractual agreement or acquisition of land has been made by the promoters of the SDL to achieve this, with such concerns now suggesting that the County will need to seek CPO powers. It remains the position that no formal agreement is in place between St Modwen and the promoters of the site for the land required to deliver the Western Access Improvement. This was clear at the Examination. Further it is also the case (and as made evidently clear at the examination) that the viability work in support of the SDL (amongst other significant deficiencies), has not allowed for ANY land acquisition costs which clearly will be significant in these circumstances. This questions fundamental delivery of the proposed SDL and suggest further evidence is required in order to demonstrate that the land required to deliver the Western Access Improvement is under control of the promoters.