

# North of Stafford

## Strategic Development Location

Masterplan Framework





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# Executive Summary

The Plan for Stafford Borough ('PSB') represents the first part of the new Stafford Borough Local Plan covering the period 2011-2031. It sets out ambitious strategic policies that will see significant levels of development at the County Town of Stafford in recognition of its status as a Growth Point. The PSB provides the policy framework to enable Stafford to raise its national and regional profile through major new housing and employment developments that will assist in attracting significant inward investment. The vision, aims and objectives of the PSB have evolved over a number of years with a series of consultation exercises taking place at various stages of the Plan's preparation.

A key component of the PSB is the identification of four Strategic Development Locations ('SDL'), which collectively are envisaged to deliver a substantial amount of the housing required for the Borough, and Stafford town in particular. These SDLs include sites to the north, east and west of Stafford, the former of which (referred to within this masterplan as the 'North of Stafford SDL') is the subject of this document.

The North of Stafford SDL is located directly to the north of the urban area of Stafford town and is specifically identified in Policy Stafford 2 of the PSB for the delivery of 3,100 dwellings, 36ha of employment, education provision and local facilities. This masterplan framework document has been prepared by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd and Maximus Strategic Land, the developers/landowners that control the majority of the North of Stafford SDL, to satisfy the requirement of Policy Stafford 2 for a masterplan to be submitted to and agreed with Stafford Borough Council.

The vision for the North of Stafford SDL has evolved over a long period of time in partnership with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council, specifically through preparation of the PSB. The site can provide approximately 3,100 new homes, up to 36 hectares of employment, local centres, primary and secondary school provision, along with green infrastructure, community facilities and highway capacity improvements. A wide range of house types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, will help to meet housing demand and deliver a socially inclusive community. Community consultation was undertaken on a draft masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL in January 2013, which resulted in further changes being made to the overall design, helping to reach the proposals discussed in this document.

Throughout the iterative design process of the North of Stafford SDL, the objective has been to create a well-designed, sustainable urban extension to the north of Stafford town, which provides a mixed and balanced community for all, whilst ensuring the natural environment is conserved and enhanced. This document identifies potential constraints and opportunities within the SDL and provides a strategic masterplan framework to guide future development proposals.

Policy Stafford 2 enables individual planning applications to come forward within the North of Stafford SDL, provided that they do not prejudice the delivery or design of the new neighbourhood. It is considered that, at this stage, the detail shown on the masterplan provides a reasonable indication of how the North of Stafford SDL could come forward in a consistent and coordinated manner, however inevitably there may be some variations as further information becomes available over the PSB period (2011-2031). Further consultation exercises will be carried out as the various planning applications come forward. These will provide an opportunity for people to comment on the final detail of the development.

# Introduction

This masterplan document has been prepared by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd and Maximus Strategic Land, the developers/landowners that control the majority of the site referred to as the 'North of Stafford Strategic Development Location'.

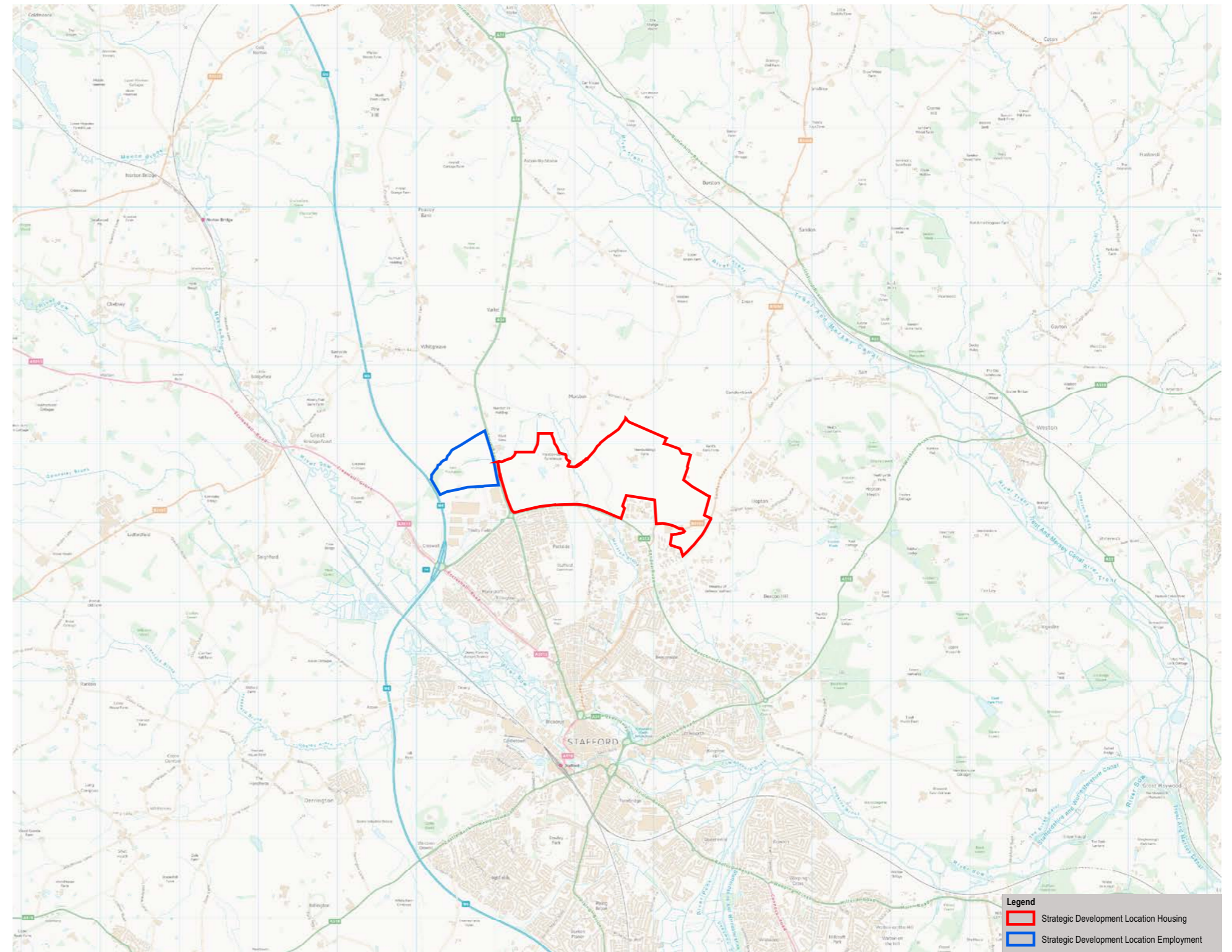
The adopted development plan for Stafford Borough is known as The Plan for Stafford Borough ('PSB') and sets out the local planning policy context for Stafford town. The PSB identifies four Strategic Development Locations ('SDL') which collectively are envisaged to deliver a substantial amount of housing required for the Borough, and Stafford town in particular. These SDLs include sites to the north, east and west of Stafford, the former of which is the subject of this document.

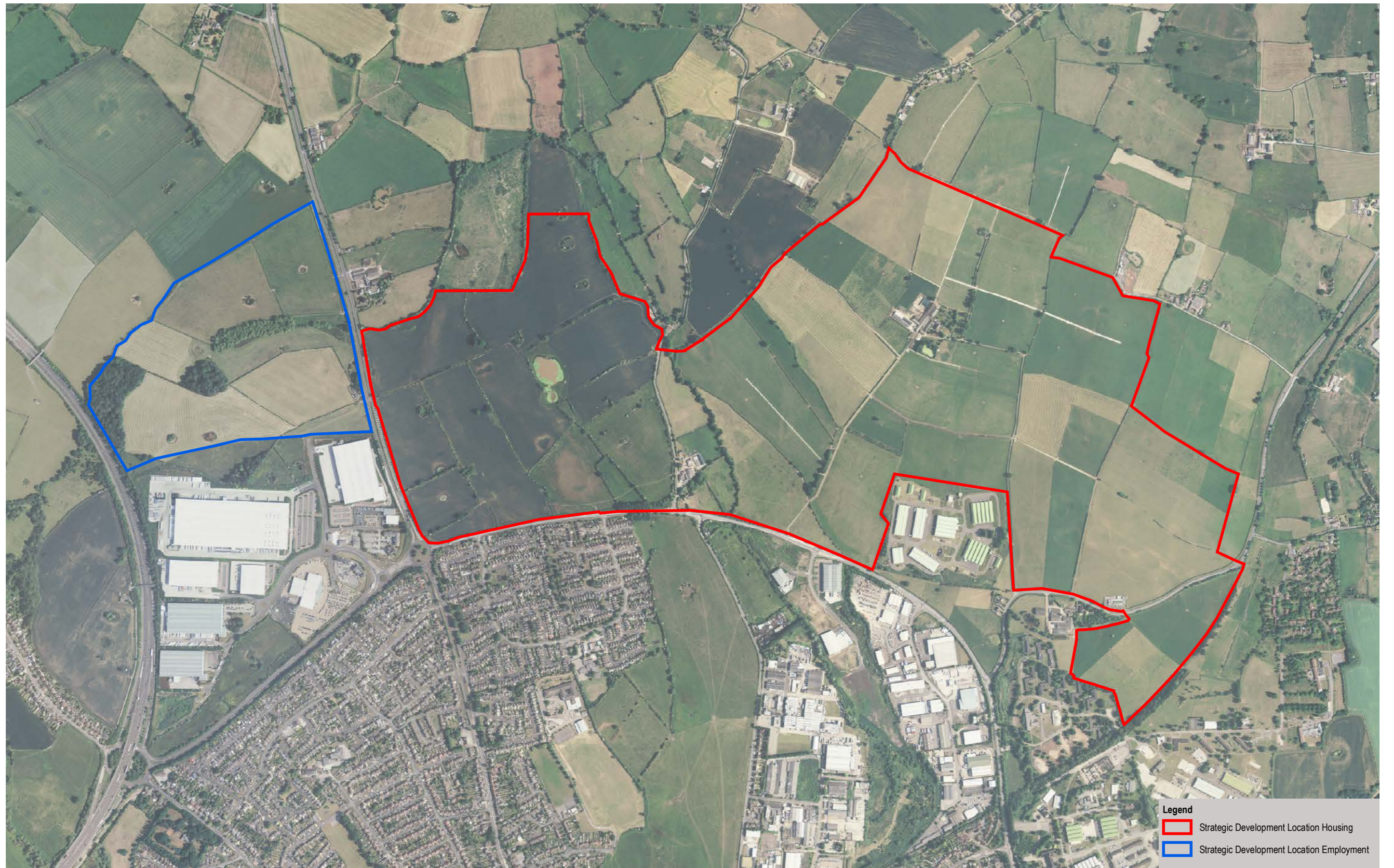
The North of Stafford SDL is specifically identified in Policy Stafford 2 of the adopted PSB for the delivery of 3,100 dwellings, 36 hectares of employment, education provision and local facilities. Parts of the SDL, namely land under the control of Staffordshire County Council and Taylor Wimpey, already have the benefit of planning permission and are now under construction.

Policy Stafford 2 does, however, require that a masterplan should be prepared by the developers involved in the development of the North of Stafford SDL and agreed by Stafford Borough Council, prior to any planning applications being made within the area.

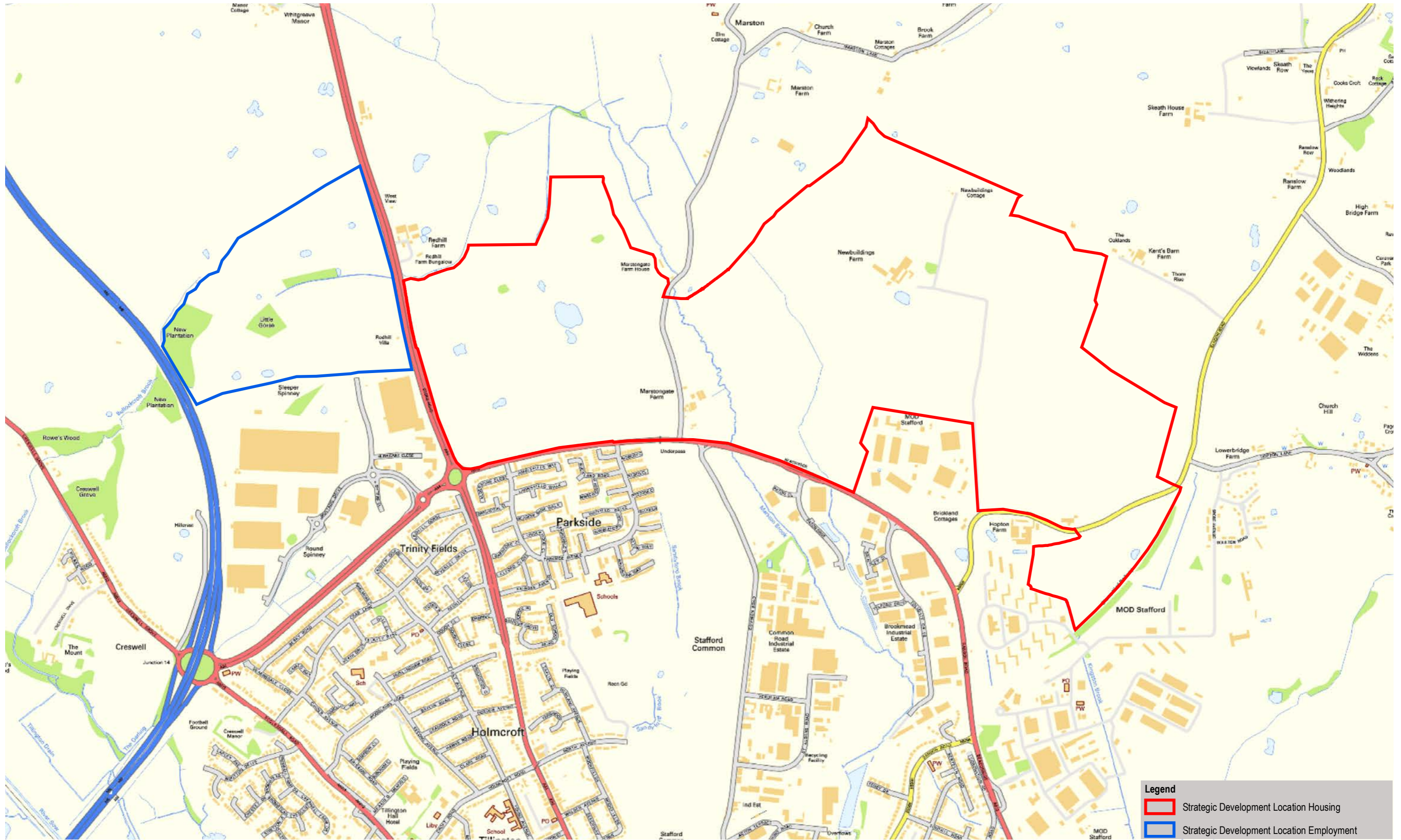
This document, therefore, addresses the need for a masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL and builds upon previous work by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd and Maximus Strategic Land, to promote the delivery of a comprehensive, sustainable, mixed-use development on the land. It should be noted that this document does not apply to those areas of the North of Stafford SDL which already have planning permission and are under construction, or are not shown for development in the PSB.

Wider Context Plan





Red Line Boundary Plan



Public consultation on a draft masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL was carried out by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd and Maximus Strategic Land, in January 2013. Changes to the masterplan were made, in light of the comments received, and these changes, along with details of the most recent consultation exercise carried out during July 2015, are described within separate Consultation Statements.

The current proposed masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL together with the information within this document, provides a framework for applicants and developers when making planning applications within the remaining areas of the North of Stafford SDL.







## Vision

*The vision for the North of Stafford SDL has evolved over a long period of time, in partnership with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council, specifically through preparation of the PSB. Throughout the iterative design process of the North of Stafford SDL, the objective has been to create a well-designed sustainable urban extension to the north of Stafford, which provides a mixed and balanced community for all, whilst ensuring that the natural environment is conserved and enhanced.*

*The North of Stafford SDL will provide approximately 3,100 new homes, up to 36 hectares of employment, local centres and primary and secondary school provision, along with green infrastructure, community facilities and highway capacity improvements.*

*The development aims to create a new community, based on a 'neighbourhood' approach, which is well connected and easily navigated on foot, cycle and other sustainable modes of transport. There will be an interconnected network of streets serving the development, producing discernible and distinctive neighbourhoods, which integrate with existing communities and connecting a network of multi-functional spaces. Akzo Nobel UK Limited, Maximus Strategic Land and Staffordshire County Council will work together to provide highway capacity improvements through, or around the perimeter of the site, or along Beaconside that will allow residents to access frequent bus services, which connect them with the town, local schools and amenities. They will also help ensure that traffic impact is minimised on the surrounding highway network.*

*The North of Stafford SDL will provide high quality, sustainable homes that every generation can enjoy, from starter homes to family homes of all sizes, including affordable housing and extra-care provision, together with all the facilities needed to create and sustain a vibrant community. The design of the development will ensure that there is a strong sense of local identity, safety and belonging that takes account of the local characteristics and context of Stafford town.*

*Growth will be planned in a sustainable manner and have regard to the protection and enhancement of valuable built and natural resources, including the use of sustainable construction methods, measures to enhance biodiversity, flood attenuation and the use of sustainable urban drainage systems to manage on-site water.*

# Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's objectives for the planning system, its planning policies and how they should be applied. It comprises of three main sections – Achieving Sustainable Development, Plan Making and Decision Taking.

The NPPF sets out that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, which should be pursued jointly and simultaneously through the planning system:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. Sufficient land of the right type should be available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation. Development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure, should be identified and co-ordinated.
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities. The supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations should be provided. A high quality built environment should be created with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and well being.
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. As part of this, planning should help to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

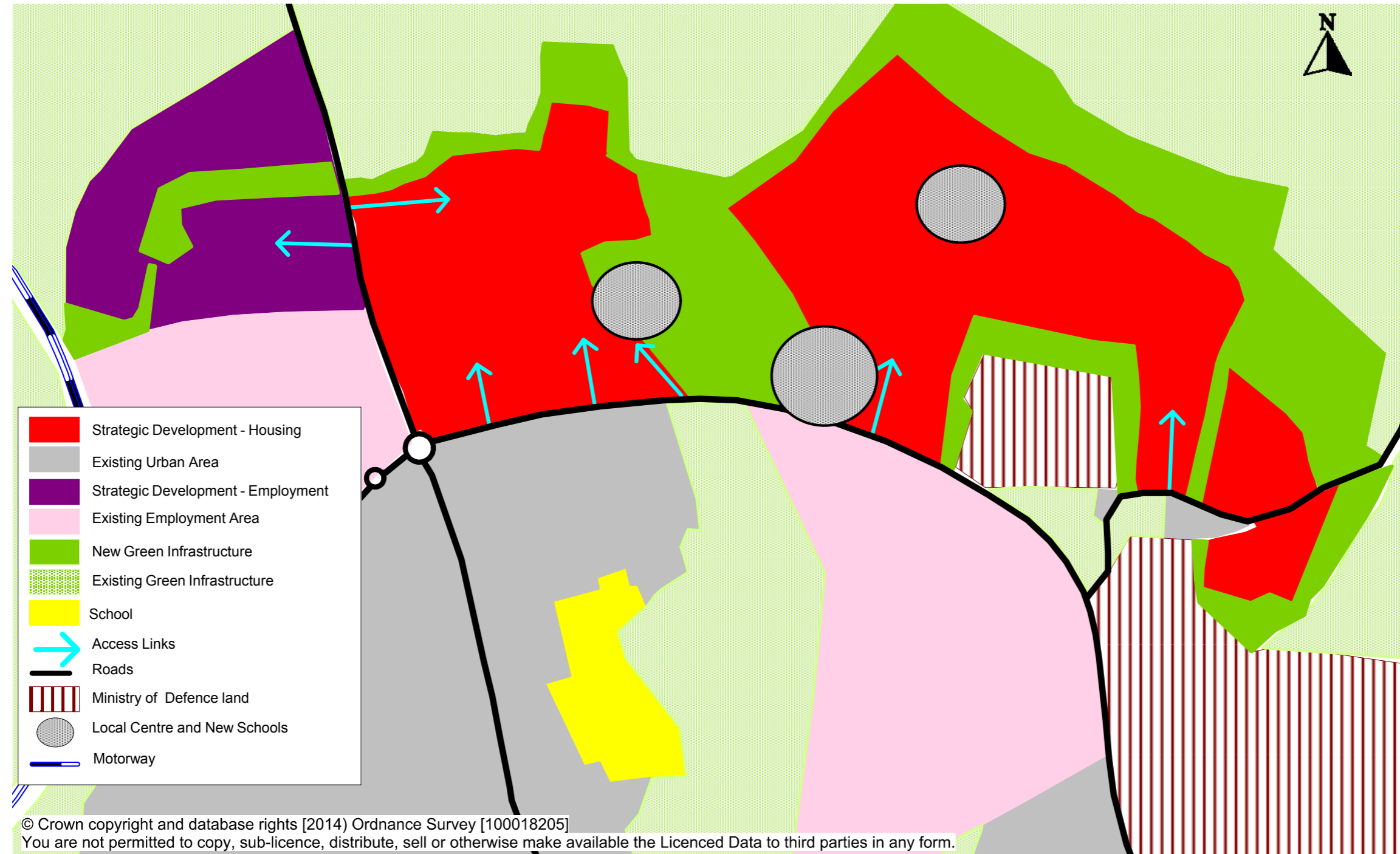
At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. The NPPF (paragraph 17) contains a set of core land use principles, which state that planning should:

- *“be genuinely plan led with plans being kept up to date and based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. Plans should provide a practical framework within which applications can be decided;*
- *not simply be about scrutiny but instead should be an exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places;*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet housing, business and other development needs, taking account of market signals and setting a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of main urban areas, protecting the green belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, and encourage the use of renewable resources;*

- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution;*
- *encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed provided it is not of high environment value;*
- *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas;*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;*
- *actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and,*
- *take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well being for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.”*

This document serves to demonstrate how the relevant principles discussed above can be incorporated into the development of the North of Stafford SDL, specifically with input at the decision making stage. The NPPF provides further guidance on delivering sustainable development by reference to a number of sub headings including ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’, ‘Promoting sustainable transport’, ‘Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes’, ‘Requiring good design’, ‘Promoting healthy communities’, ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’,

Map 5 Stafford North Concept Diagram



‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ and ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’. These issues are discussed further in this document.

The PSB, adopted on 19th June 2014, sets out the local planning policy context for Stafford Borough. The PSB, identifies housing and employment requirements for the Borough as a whole within its ‘Spatial Policies’, which specifically identify Stafford town as the principal settlement or key sub regional centre. Policy Stafford 1 identifies three

specific SDLs in Stafford, which collectively are envisaged to deliver a substantial amount of the required growth for Stafford (a total of 7,000 new market and affordable homes). These SDLs include sites to the north, east and west of Stafford, the former of which is the subject of this document.

The North of Stafford SDL is specifically identified in Policy Stafford 2 for the delivery of 3,100 dwellings, 36ha of employment, education provision and local facilities. The full text of Policy Stafford 2 is provided within Appendix 1.

This policy also requires that a masterplan should be prepared by developers involved in the development of the North of Stafford SDL and agreed by Stafford Borough Council prior to any application being made. This document addresses the need for a masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL and provides an overall framework within which individual planning applications can come forward.

# Site Opportunities and Constraints

The PSB identifies the North of Stafford SDL as a suitable area for growth, due to the numerous opportunities the site location holds. Where housing is proposed, the SDL has been subject to detailed surveys and assessment, which have identified the site's opportunities and constraints, to inform and structure the development proposals.

The following sections summarise the findings of these extensive studies, before outlining the main opportunities and constraints.

## Landscape

The North of Stafford SDL is located directly to the north of the urban area of Stafford town, which is characterised by major highways infrastructure, large scale industrial, commercial and military development at MOD Stafford (Beacon Barracks), along with residential development. It is surrounded by open (non-developed) land to the north and east, with the highways infrastructure associated with the A34 and M6 comprising significant features in the landscape on the SDL's western boundary. Land directly to the east, whilst currently undeveloped, also includes a number of villages including Hopton, Weston and Sandon Bank.

The North of Stafford SDL is not covered by any landscape (planning) designations. In terms of its character, both the SDL and its context are generally consistent with both national and local landscape character studies, displaying tree belts, arable fields, and the influence of the urban area of Stafford. The SDL also retains an 'urban edge' character, being influenced by the A513 and A34 corridors (including light spill and glare from lighting columns and vehicle headlights), and large visually prominent development, including employment and MOD Stafford (Beacon Barracks).

The North of Stafford SDL itself, though largely linear in plan form, extends from the M6 (north of Junction 14) at the western end of the site, across Marston Lane and Stafford Common in the middle, to MOD Stafford (Beacon Barracks) at the eastern end. The overall SDL generally comprises a number

of agricultural fields formed by mature hedgerows, with hedgerow trees and scattered ponds and ditches.

Land across the entire North of Stafford SDL generally has rising topography to the north, such that the vast majority of it 'faces' Stafford, with its northern section retaining strong visual links with the wider landscape. The far western section (between the M6 and A34) has a high point of around 109m AOD, with the central section (between the A34 and Marston Lane) around 111 AOD at its highest point. The largest eastern section (between Marston Lane and Sandon Road) rises up eastwards from Marston Lane to a high point of around 114m AOD, just south of Kent's Barn Farm, near Sandon Road.

The smaller area of land in the south eastern corner of the North of Stafford SDL (south of Sandon Road) is much flatter and generally enclosed, with a mature landscape framework generated by a disused railway line, to the south-east and around the built form, to the south-west.

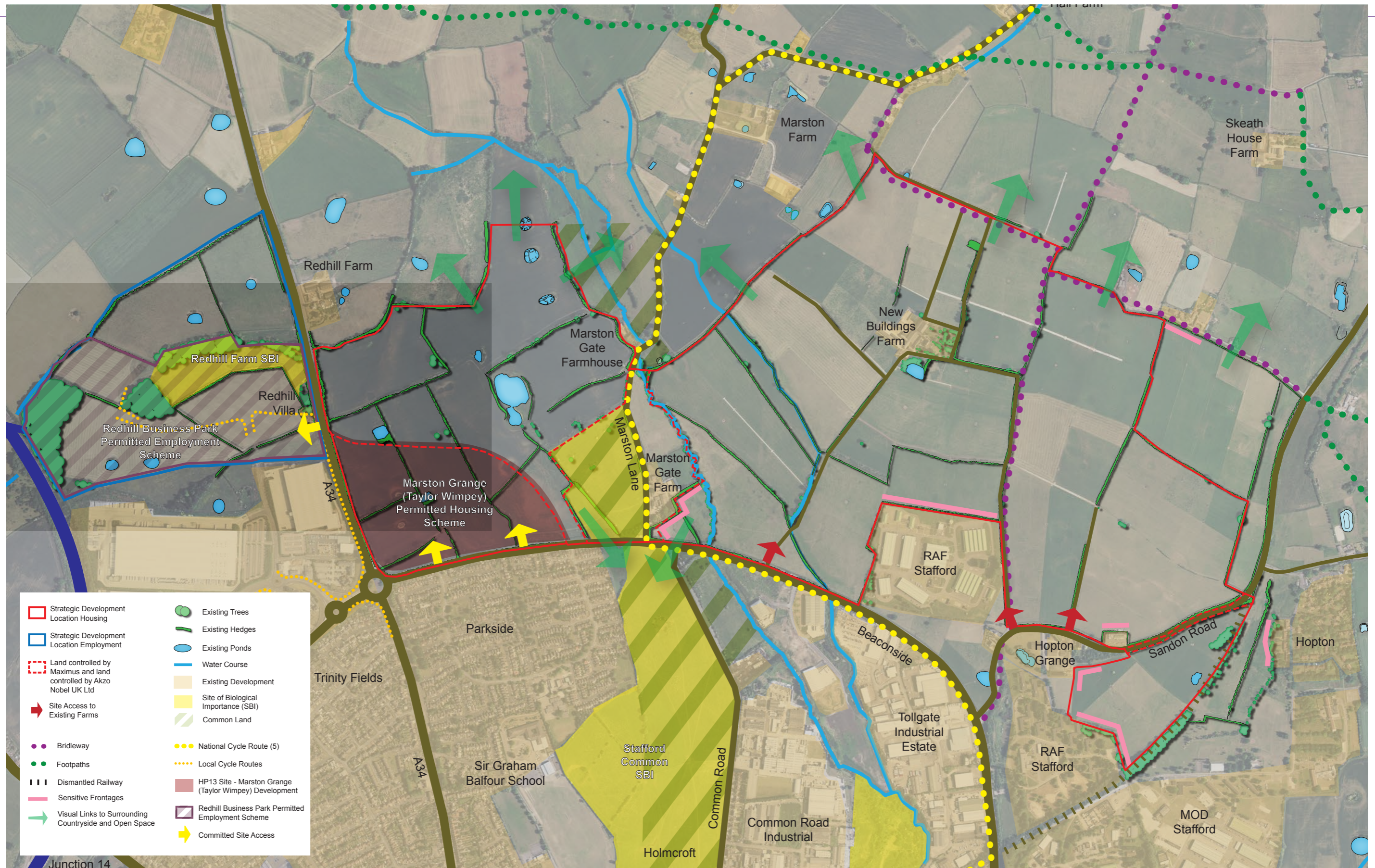
A public footpath/bridleway, to the west of Sandon Road, runs in a north-south alignment through the North of Stafford SDL, with a further bridleway connecting Sandon Road in the east, to Marston Lane and Enson Lane in the west. A Sustrans cycle route (National Route 5 Lichfield to Stoke) runs in a north-south alignment, along Marston Lane, from the A513 Beaconside. To the north of the SDL, a public footpath, which forms part of a wider recreational route (the 'Stones Circles Challenge'), runs in an east-west alignment, connecting to a wider network of footpaths.

Visually, the overall North of Stafford SDL is well contained by various different elements. These include the existing

and emerging urban form of Stafford town, to the south; and, where the eastern section of the SDL (between Marston Lane and Sandon Road) is concerned, the topographical ridge and localised plateau that extend along its northern boundary. In the longer term, the route of HS2 will influence the landscape and provide a definitive boundary to the north eastern edge of the SDL.

The central section of the North of Stafford SDL (between Marston Lane and the A34) is also strongly influenced and contained by the A34 and the existing employment development beyond. There are a number of short and (filtered) mid distance views of the SDL from the east and west, and from the Stones Circles Challenge footpath, to the north. Otherwise, the majority of views are from the SDL boundaries.

From this evidence, it has been demonstrated that the North of Stafford SDL retains many attributes, which provide good development potential. The topography, surrounding built form and vegetation of the SDL contain the site and there are opportunities to capitalise on the open views. The SDL has limited features of interest, however the hedgerow field network, vegetation, and key visual links will be incorporated into the proposals to help avoid and mitigate any significant impacts. The masterplan also provides an opportunity to preserve existing public rights of way and to provide new links across the SDL and to/from the surrounding area. Further information regarding the landscape strategy for the SDL, is considered later in this document.



## Ecology

The North of Stafford SDL predominantly consists of agricultural arable land and intensively managed grassland with hedgerows and watercourses along field boundaries, which overall provide limited ecological value. However, the SDL does exhibit some habitats of value, including hedgerows, which are a UKBAP priority habitat, associated mature trees, water courses and ponds. Habitats present within and bounding the SDL provide potential suitable habitat for great crested newt, roosting bats, breeding and wintering birds, and badgers, which have been taken into consideration within the proposals for the SDL.

In principle, the ecological findings do not pose constraints to the development of the SDL, although consideration will be given to the SDL's detailed layout and design in order to ensure that areas and species of value are not unacceptably impacted upon, and are retained and enhanced, where feasible. The masterplan seeks to retain hedgerows, vegetation and watercourses/ponds, where possible and desirable. The masterplan also provides potential for habitat creation, including new tree and shrub planting. As the proposals progress, consideration will be given to providing additional detailed enhancements, such as installation of bird and bat boxes. The provision of such enhancements would be in accordance with local and national planning policy.

There are no statutory designated wildlife or nature conservation sites within the North of Stafford SDL boundary. However, it is acknowledged that the West Midlands Mosses SAC/Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site is located within 10km of the SDL; that the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Pasturefields Salt Marsh (SAC) are located within 8km of the SDL; and that the Doxey and Tillington Marshes Site of

Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located within 1.9km of the SDL. Any potential effects on these sites will be considered in all planning applications in the North of Stafford SDL and where appropriate, through Habitat Regulations Assessments by the competent authority. In initial discussions with Stafford Borough Council, it has been confirmed that Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS) does not need to be provided on the North of Stafford SDL, however there is an opportunity to provide green infrastructure and open space throughout the development.

The non statutory Stafford Common Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and the Redhill Farm Wet Woodland SBI are located within the North of Stafford SDL boundary. The Astonfields Balancing Lakes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located within 1.4km of the SDL. These sites will be considered to ensure that development does not have any unacceptable adverse effects when the detailed design and layout of proposals for the SDL are progressed.

## Archaeology and Heritage

The nature and extent of the known and potential cultural heritage resource has been investigated within the majority of the North of Stafford SDL.

There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Conservation Areas, or Listed Buildings within the North of Stafford SDL boundary.

No pre-medieval archaeological remains have been recorded within the areas of the North of Stafford SDL that have been investigated, although there is potential for previously

unrecorded remains. There is historic evidence of areas of ridge and furrow and a post-medieval water meadow; however these features are no longer visible on site inspection. A large number of marl pits are recorded, largely surviving as broad, shallow water-filled hollows. These are common across Staffordshire and Shropshire, and the surviving examples within the SDL are considered to be of negligible cultural heritage value.

Newbuildings Farm is located within the North of Stafford SDL land to the east of Marston Lane and, although unlisted, could be considered of some low cultural heritage value. The hedgerows within the SDL may also be considered of some cultural heritage interest. The masterplan is mindful of these features and has ensured that field patterns are retained where possible, and development surrounding the farm is appropriately designed. The now disused Stafford and Uttoxeter Railway also runs along the eastern boundary of the SDL, from Stafford town centre to the north-east and then along the Trent Valley, and survives as a substantial earth bank.

## Access and Movement

The North of Stafford SDL is located on the northern edge of Stafford and has good access to the town centre and railway station, approximately 3.5km from the proposed development, which provides routes both locally and nationally. The SDL also exhibits good access to the existing highway network, specifically the A513 and A34, and further afield the M6. Several local bus services currently operate along roads bounding the SDL and could serve the early phases of development. However, in the longer term new or improved frequent services will be required to connect residents to the town, employment at Redhill, local schools and amenities.

A Sustrans cycle route (National Route 5) is situated on Marston Lane and Beaconside, adjacent to the southern perimeter of the North of Stafford SDL, with National Route 55 to the east of the town centre. A number of other local cycle and pedestrian routes and crossings also offer opportunities to access local employment provision, services and the town centre. The SDL's location, in accordance with national and local policy, therefore exhibits the potential to utilise the existing infrastructure, whilst also facilitating the delivery of improvements, specifically interventions to enable residents to use sustainable modes of transport.

The primary access points to the North of Stafford SDL will be taken from the A34 Stone Road, various points along the A513 Beaconside and the B5066 Sandon Road. These roads are capable of facilitating the site access and egress of the associated traffic and will be subject to design at the planning application stage. The masterplan also makes provision for a local distributor road (linking the A34 Stone Road to the B5066 Sandon Road, through the proposed residential areas), together with junction and link improvements along Beaconside, where required. A local distributor road could also remove traffic from the A34 north of Redhill roundabout and along the northern section of Beaconside. New dedicated footway/cycleways will be provided to allow connectivity across the SDL and beyond, including the opportunity to create a footway/cycleway along Sandon Road, connecting to the Isabel Trail (off-road section of cycle route National Route 5) and Stafford town centre.

The transport and movement strategy will be developed to provide an integrated and strategic approach to infrastructure provision and highways improvements between all of the development parcels within the North of Stafford SDL. Travel Plans will be produced at the planning application stage to promote and incentivise the use of alternative and sustainable means of transport.

Local facilities will be provided that are appropriate to the scale of the housing development, and will be conveniently accessed by walking and cycling to internalise trips. High permeability within the North of Stafford SDL for such modes of transport is considered key in the design of the proposals, ensuring maximum connectivity to existing and future points of destination.

## Drainage and Flood Risk

National and local policy is directed at ensuring that new development is located in the most appropriate areas, according to the likelihood of flooding. Marston Brook runs through the centre of the North of Stafford SDL, although the majority of the SDL lies within Flood Zone 1, where flood risk is not a significant issue. Flood modelling has confirmed there are small areas of the SDL that lie within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b. However, these areas have been factored into the development design and could indeed provide an opportunity for enhancement, particularly in relation to biodiversity provision, green infrastructure and visual amenity.

Policy Stafford 2 includes a requirement for a comprehensive drainage scheme, which includes measures to alleviate flooding downstream on the Marston Brook and Sandyford Brook. These details will be provided following further engagement with the Environment Agency on scheme delivery, as part of the planning application process. Where feasible, the on-site drainage scheme will include the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), for example attenuation ponds and swales, which will control surface water run-off to less than greenfield rates, in addition to enhancing biodiversity. Based on preliminary information on ground conditions, infiltration measures such as soakaways are unlikely to be feasible, but this will be subject to further testing.

The main opportunities and constraints can be summarised as follows:

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity for a range of house types, sizes and tenures which will help meet local need;
- Opportunity to provide family homes within a high quality landscaped setting;
- Make efficient use of land through the application of appropriate density assumptions;
- Provision of a strong landscape character, based on retention of existing trees and hedgerows, including utilising the disused railway line, and provision of additional native species within new green infrastructure provision;
- Opportunity to capitalise on open views of the countryside, particularly to the north-east;
- Retention and enhancement of existing footpath links across the North of Stafford SDL and additional links to surrounding areas, including the opportunity to create a foot/cycleway along Sandon Road connecting to the Isabel Trail and Stafford town centre;
- Opportunity to utilise the existing highway network, whilst facilitating the delivery of transport infrastructure improvements, services and interventions to specifically encourage future and existing residents to use sustainable transport modes;
- Provision of a suitable drainage strategy to ensure that the proposed development does not increase the risk of flooding within the wider area, and to improve the existing situation in relation to Marston and Sandyford Brook; and

- Opportunity to provide linkages with the Marston Grange (Taylor Wimpey) housing development and the Parkside housing estate to the south of the A513 Beaconside, as well as the existing and new employment areas.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Existing topography, including the embankment which marks the course of the disused railway line, and general visual amenity with the surrounding countryside;
- The Initial Preferred Route for HS2 crosses the north east corner of the North of Stafford SDL and may influence the design of latter phases of development;
- Existing ecology and habitats in and around the North of Stafford SDL, including the potential impact of development on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- Stafford Common Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and Redhill Farm Wet Woodland SBI;
- Existing trees and hedgerows and other landscape features within the North of Stafford SDL, especially those of ecological interest and those that have potential to act as wildlife habitats;
- Interface of proposed development with existing development, including Newbuildings Farm, Marstongate Farm, and the MOD Depot on the southern boundary; and
- Marston Brook, Sandyford Brook and surrounding areas at risk of flooding.



# Development Concepts and Principles

Successful urban design is dependent upon achieving an appropriate relationship between community needs, market requirements, development principles, development form and a positive response to local (site) conditions.

The masterplan has therefore evolved to its present position by taking into account the planning policy context and baseline evidence (as discussed above) and through engagement with statutory and local stakeholders (including Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and the local community).

This work has enabled firm principles to be developed to help steer the design of the new community and to ensure the delivery of a high quality development, which accords with the core land use principles set out within the NPPF. These issues are discussed in the sections below.

The landscape analysis of the North of Stafford SDL has, in particular, been fundamental in shaping the proposals, and the masterplan has been led by a clear landscape strategy. The proposed landscape strategy responds to matters of local landscape resources, character, visual amenity and the broader planning context within which the North of Stafford SDL lies. A hierarchy of central public spaces defines the structure / organisation of the masterplan. In turn, density is focused around these public spaces, softening as development radiates out towards the perimeters of the SDL. Areas that are well related to the wider landscape are retained as open space. The proposals have been developed inherently with this landscape strategy, in order to provide a balanced setting for the development.

The development principles borne from the analysis of the North of Stafford SDL, in line with the NPPF, include the following;

## Function and Quality

- New development provides the opportunity to establish a distinctive identity to a place which, whilst having its own character, integrates with the surrounding built form and landscape context;
- Retention of the existing landscape features on the North of Stafford SDL;
- Provision of a Sustainable Drainage System as part of the flood mitigation proposals;
- Establish a distinctive identity through well-designed spaces and built form;
- Make efficient use of land through proposing a development with an appropriate density;
- Minimise the impact of the development on the open countryside and surrounding context; and
- Protection of the existing floodplain in the vicinity of the North of Stafford SDL to ensure that the development does not increase the risk from flooding in the area.

## Quality of Public Realm

- Provision of a clear hierarchy of connected spaces and places, including streets, accessible by a variety of users, which consider the design of the space as well as its function as a movement corridor;
- Integration of existing and proposed landscape features in order to soften the built form, particularly towards the countryside edge of the development;
- Creation of a clearly defined public realm, through the provision of continuous building frontage lines and variations in enclosure of private spaces; and
- Provision of a variety of accessible public open spaces and recreation areas to meet the needs of the local community, whilst encouraging social activity.



## Accessibility

- Integration of the development into the existing movement network, including new public transport provision with bus stops located within easy walking distance of all the new dwellings;
- Convenient, safe and direct access for all residents to the existing and proposed local services and facilities including schools, retail, community uses and employment opportunities;
- Provision of new access points into the development forming part of a permeable network of streets, which assists in dispersing traffic (vehicular and pedestrian);
- Enhancement and extension of the existing public rights of way network as an integral part of the development, particularly facilitating access to the surrounding countryside and the existing urban areas;
- Maximisation of the opportunities for alternative modes of transport to the car, particularly walking, cycling and bus travel;
- Creation of a clear movement hierarchy providing easily recognisable routes which balances the street as a space alongside its function as a movement corridor; and
- Maximisation of the connections to Stafford town centre, via sustainable routes for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

## Response to Context

- Integration of the development into the existing built fabric of north Stafford, particularly in relation to scale, height and massing;
- Respond to the existing North of Stafford SDL topography, including the consideration of views into and out of the SDL;
- Retention of the existing landscape features and habitats on the site, where possible; and
- Protection of existing and proposed residential amenity through the use of frontage development and seeking to enclose rear gardens.

## A Place for Everyone

- Provision of mix of housing, employment, retail, open space and local facilities to create and sustain a vibrant community life.
- Consideration of the proposals in relation to existing buildings and development in close proximity to the North of Stafford SDL.
- Consideration of the relationship between various uses and transport infrastructure, particularly recognising the needs of those with disabilities.

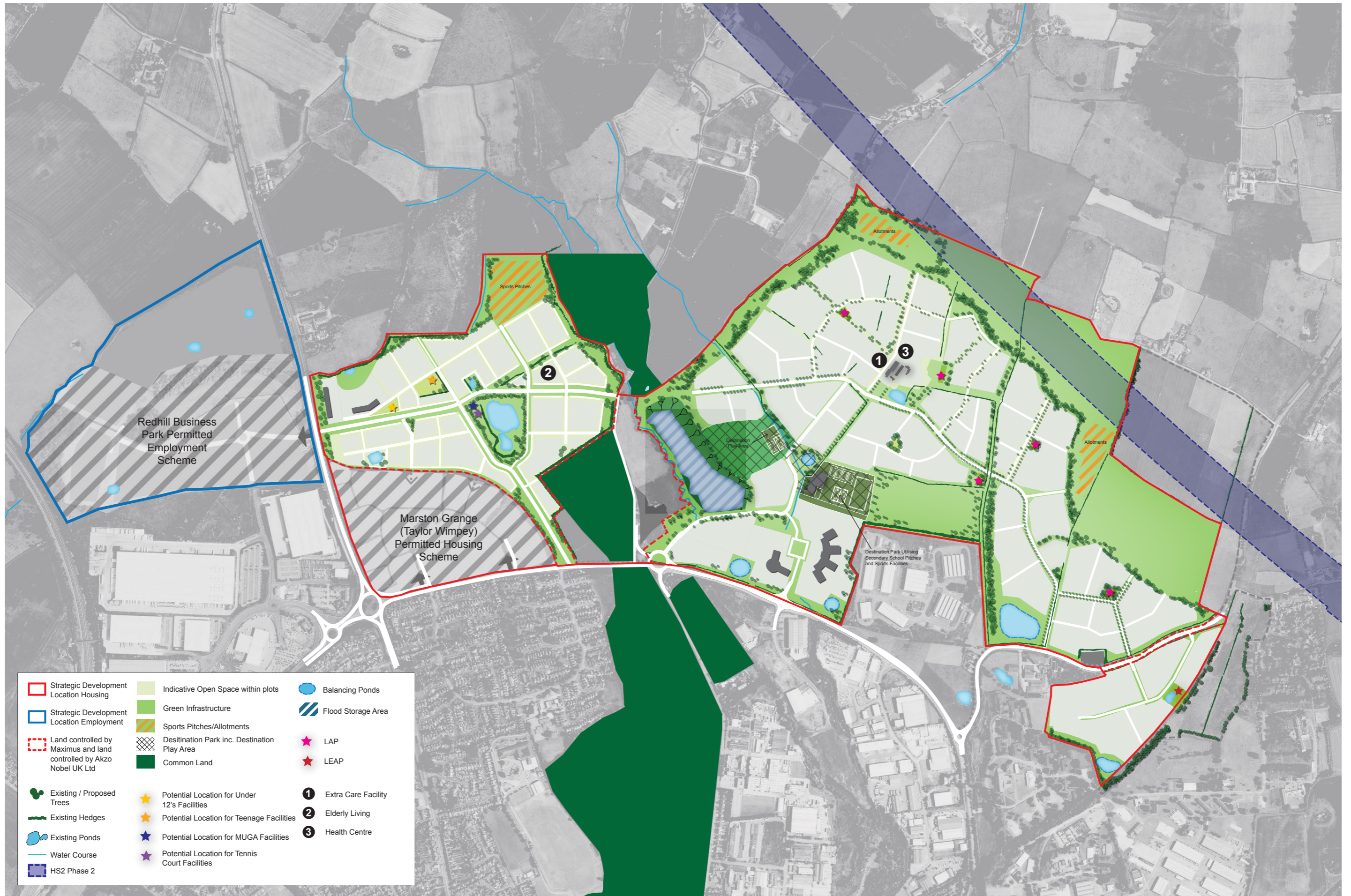


# Green Infrastructure Strategy

The SDL will make provision for Green Infrastructure to accord with the requirements of Stafford Policy 2 and where appropriate, having regard to advice contained in Stafford Borough Council's Green Infrastructure, Greenspace and Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy, produced by Kit Campbell Associates (June 2013). This will include an appropriate location for a new 'Destination Park' comprising play areas and multi-use games areas, in accordance with part xviii of Policy Stafford 2.

In addition to this provision, there will be a network of smaller equipped play areas, comprising of LEAPs, LAPs, and green infrastructure throughout the development.





Strategic Development Location Housing	Indicative Open Space within plots	Balancing Ponds
Strategic Development Location Employment	Green Infrastructure	Flood Storage Area
Land controlled by Maximus and land controlled by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd	Sports Pitches/Allotments	LAP
Existing / Proposed Trees	Destination Park inc. Destination Play Area	LEAP
Existing Hedges	Common Land	Extra Care Facility
Existing Ponds	Potential Location for Under 12's Facilities	Elderly Living
Water Course	Potential Location for Teenage Facilities	Health Centre
HS2 Phase 2	Potential Location for MUGA Facilities	
	Potential Location for Tennis Court Facilities	

# Masterplan Framework

The constraints and opportunities (discussed previously), along with the technical work have influenced the design process during the masterplanning stage. The masterplan for the North of Stafford SDL illustrates a new sustainable urban extension to Stafford that respects the landscape and natural features of the site.

The proposed development at the North of Stafford SDL will assist in achieving the vision and policy objectives for the area, specifically by:

- Delivering a large proportion of housing in an identified principal settlement, including a mix of types, tenures, sizes and styles. This will assist in meeting the need for both market and affordable homes;
- Providing new employment land which will ensure permeability to existing employment areas, with comprehensive links through a range of transport modes to the housing development areas;
- Delivering social and community facilities, including primary and secondary education facilities, local convenience services and sport and recreational provision to create a sustainable mix used development, which will meet the needs of future residents;
- Delivering transport infrastructure improvements and services and specifically encouraging a range of sustainable modes of transport, which can be utilised by future and existing residents in the area to make the North of Stafford SDL acceptable in transport terms and to accord with the Transport and Infrastructure requirements of Policy Stafford 2;
- Providing a range of accessible open space to cater for all ages, including sports pitches, children's play areas, new footpaths, cycleways and large areas of natural open space and green infrastructure, which will help assimilate the development into its surroundings; and
- Creating a well designed, interconnected and socially inclusive neighbourhood which will help create a sense of community, place and well-being.

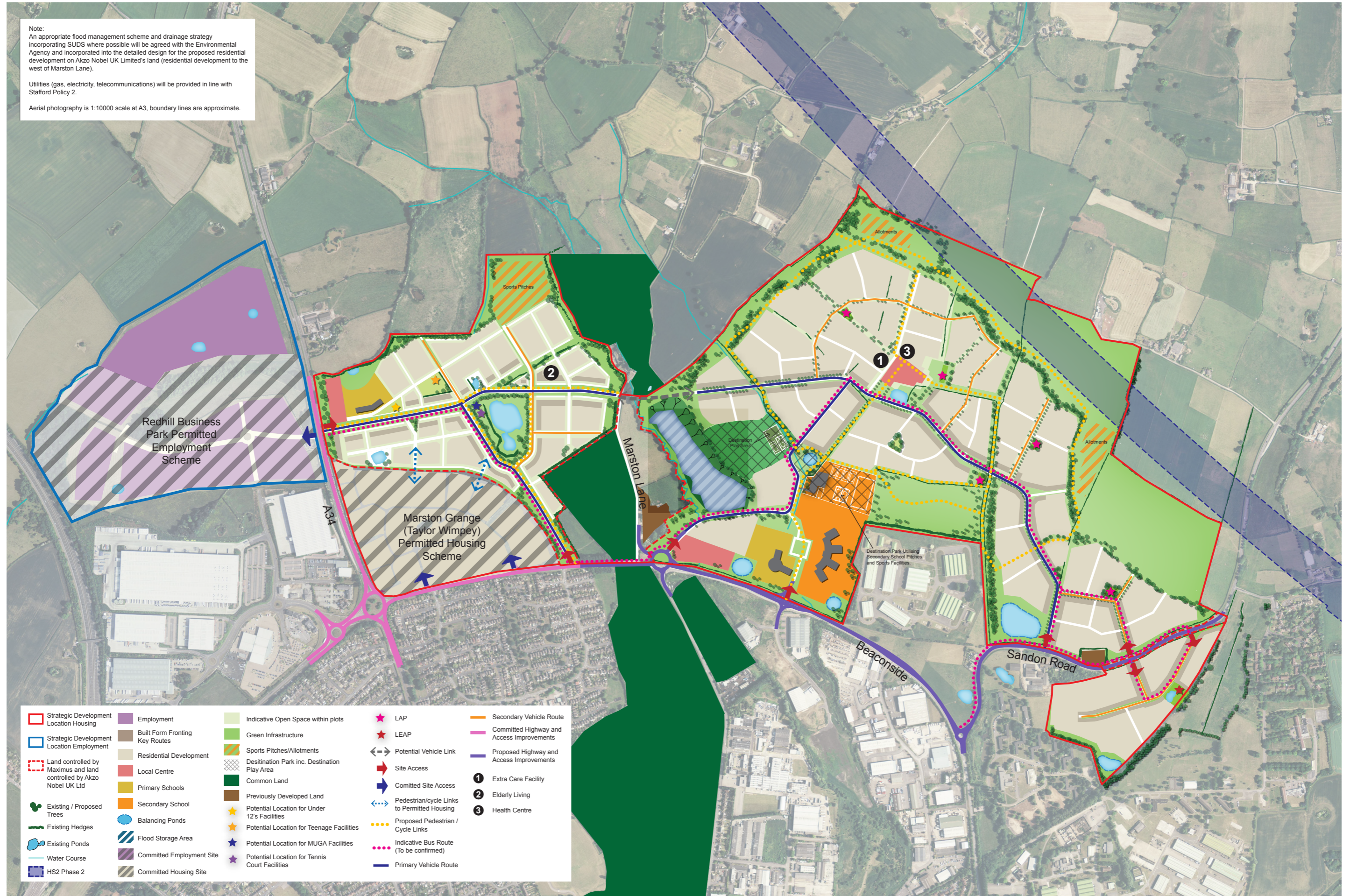


Illustrative Masterplan

Note:  
An appropriate flood management scheme and drainage strategy incorporating SUDS where possible will be agreed with the Environmental Agency and incorporated into the detailed design for the proposed residential development on Akzo Nobel UK Limited's land (residential development to the west of Marston Lane).

Utilities (gas, electricity, telecommunications) will be provided in line with Stafford Policy 2.

Aerial photography is 1:10000 scale at A3, boundary lines are approximate.



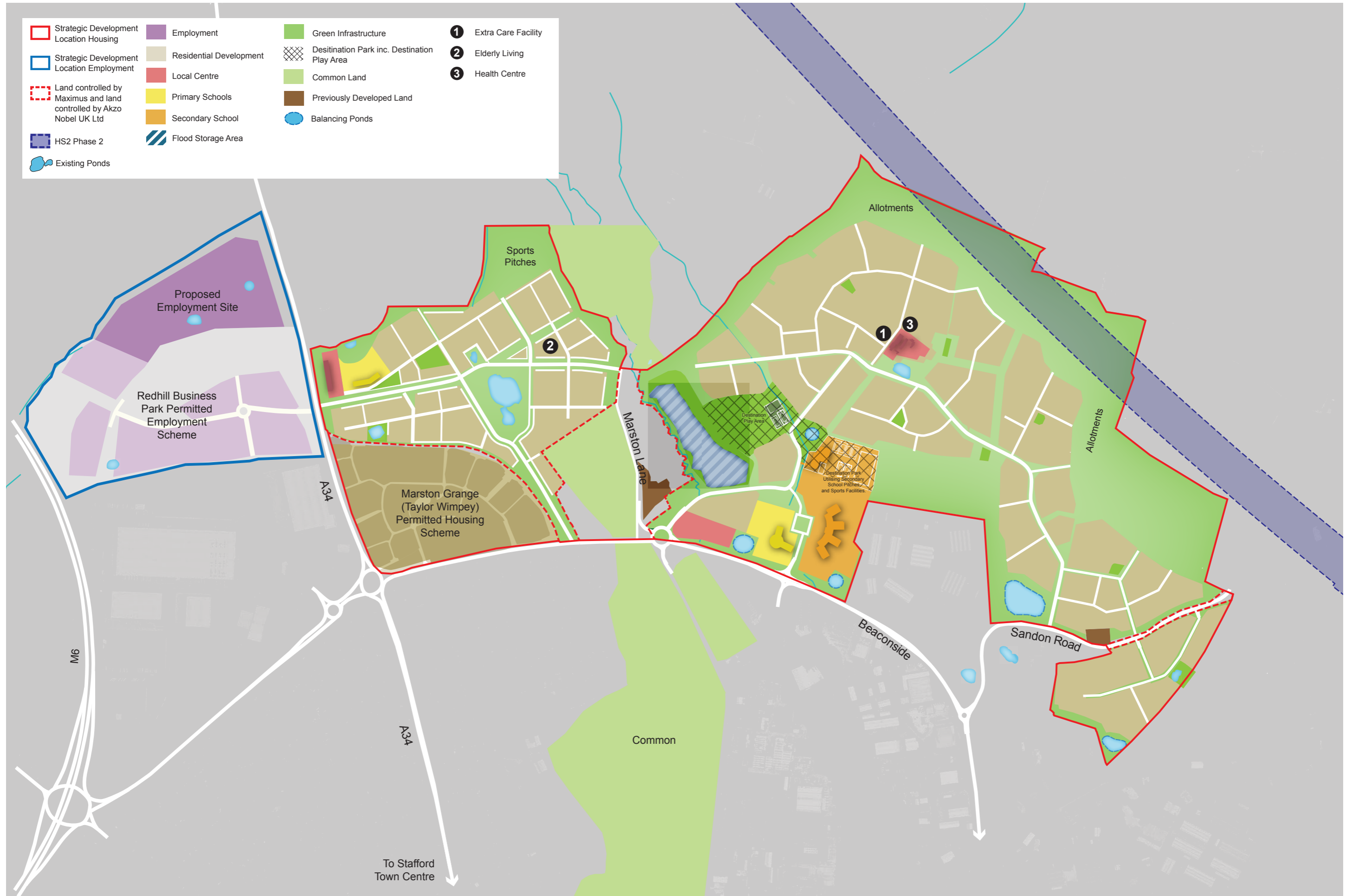
- |   |                                |  |   |   |
|---|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Strategic Development Location Housing                              | Employment                     | Indicative Open Space within plots             | LAP   | Secondary Vehicle Route                   |
| Strategic Development Location Employment                           | Built Form Fronting Key Routes | Green Infrastructure                           | LEAP  | Committed Highway and Access Improvements |
| Land controlled by Maximus and land controlled by Akzo Nobel UK Ltd | Residential Development        | Sports Pitches/Allotments                      | Potential Vehicle Link                      | Proposed Highway and Access Improvements  |
| Existing / Proposed Trees   | Local Centre                   | Destination Park inc. Destination Play Area    | Site Access                                 | Extra Care Facility                       |
| Existing Hedges   | Primary Schools                | Common Land                                    | Committed Site Access                       | Elderly Living                            |
| Existing Ponds  | Secondary School               | Previously Developed Land                      | Pedestrian/cycle Links to Permitted Housing | Health Centre                             |
| Water Course  | Balancing Ponds                | Potential Location for Under 12's Facilities   | Proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Links           |   |
| HS2 Phase 2   | Flood Storage Area             | Potential Location for Teenage Facilities      | Indicative Bus Route (To be confirmed)      |   |
|   | Committed Employment Site      | Potential Location for MUGA Facilities         | Primary Vehicle Route                       |   |
|   | Committed Housing Site         | Potential Location for Tennis Court Facilities |   |   |

# Land Use

In accordance with Policy Stafford 2, the following land uses are proposed to create a highly sustainable and well-designed new neighbourhood to Stafford:

- Approximately 3,100 new homes, including affordable housing, comprising of a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to respond to the identified needs of the community;
- Approximately 36 hectares of employment;
- Assisted living and extra care housing to meet the needs of older people;
- Two new primary schools, along with a new secondary school, which will act as an important community resource;
- Three new local centres providing groups of shops, as well as other community services and facilities, including health care provision;
- A Destination Park located in an accessible location in the heart of the development, as well as a range of children's play and multi-use game areas; and
- A flood storage area that will alleviate flooding downstream.







# Delivery Strategy

The North of Stafford SDL is currently planned to come forward over a 16 year timeframe (by 2031), with the necessary infrastructure delivered in a timely fashion, to support the development and ensure that a sustainable new neighbourhood is created.

The planning application process will determine the exact triggers for the delivery of infrastructure for each phase of development. At this stage the main infrastructure requirements are as follows:

## Highways

New junctions onto the A34 Stone Road, the A513 Beaconside, and the B5066 Sandon Road will enable the North of Stafford SDL to be brought forward in response to local and development generated demand in a phased manner (such phasing to be identified in detailed Transport Assessments at the planning application stage). Internal infrastructure will be developed in a phased manner, so that landholdings within the SDL can be interconnected to allow some development related traffic to access the network without impacting upon the A513 Beaconside and some wider, non-development related traffic movements to divert through the site to avoid sections of the A513 Beaconside. The final design (of off-site and on-site highway improvements), as well as phasing, will be considered / assessed at the application stage.

The access strategy to the North of Stafford SDL will ultimately extend the boulevard treatment, which will be delivered along the A513 Beaconside (from Parkside to the Common Lane junction) by the Marston Grange (Taylor Wimpey) development. The boulevard will provide segregated west and eastbound carriageways with a central median, together with foot and cycleways on either side. This will provide an attractive and consistent environment for all road users.

It is envisaged that for early phases of the development (0-5 years) the main points of access would be established with development focused on these locations. During this stage:

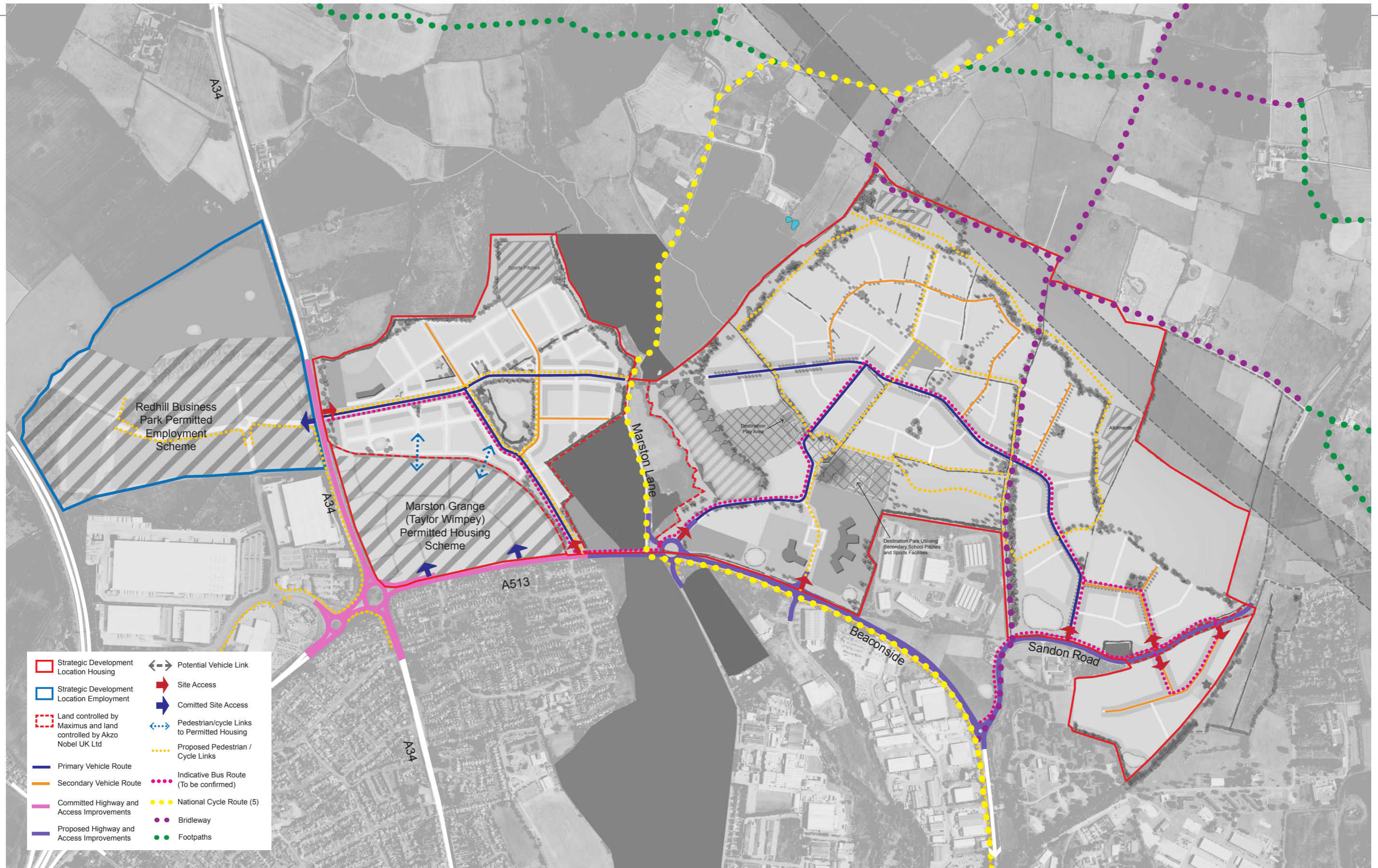
- Development at Sandon Road would deliver a new roundabout at the junction of the B5066 Sandon Road and the A513 Beaconside, together with localised improvements for pedestrians on Sandon Road.
- Development on the eastern section of the site (between Marston Lane and Sandon Road), adjacent to Beaconside would deliver:
  - o Improvements to the Beaconside – Common Road junction, combined with a site access and alterations to the Marston Lane junction;
  - o A new a pedestrian and cycling access point in the vicinity of Patton Drive to serve the local centre; and
  - o A new access to Sandon Road.
- Development on the central section of the site (between the A34 Stone Road and Marston Lane) would deliver:
  - o An access onto the A34 Stone Road, integrated with the, now completed, Staffordshire County Council Redhill Business Park junction works; and
  - o A new signal junction, integrated with the Marston Grange (Taylor Wimpey) highway works, onto the A513 Beaconside, to south east of the development site.
- The upgrading of Beaconside to an urban boulevard would be delivered in conjunction with the Beaconside access works, which would also incorporate Toucan and Pelican crossings to create a connected sustainable transport network.

The establishment of a link through the central section of the North of Stafford SDL (the land between the A34 Stone Road and Marston Lane) from the A34 Stone Road to the A513 Beaconside will provide a short north to east route for traffic to avoid the Redhill roundabout and Beaconside, which borders the residential area of Parkside. This link responds to Staffordshire County Council highlighting a need for additional capacity to relieve the Redhill roundabout junction at peak times and to provide interconnectivity for bus services. In any event, it is anticipated (subject to feasibility/viability considerations) that the link would be provided at completion of around 30% of the development on the central section of the SDL, in order to facilitate the introduction of the overall public transport routing, rather than being triggered based on capacity considerations.

The masterplan provides for flexibility in the routing of bus services to serve the North of Stafford SDL from the B5066 Sandon Road, or A34 Stone Road corridors. The establishment of the link roads through the central and eastern sections of the SDL will provide a route through, benefiting the local community within the Beaconside corridor and the SDL as a whole.

Any other off-site highway works required will be identified at the planning application stages through the appropriate Transport Assessment work.

The internal design of the North of Stafford SDL's road network will facilitate the ability to provide a future direct link between the central and eastern sections, via a connection to Marston Lane, thus avoiding the A513 Beaconside, if it were found to be necessary. However, at this time the land to provide this direct connection is not available.



## Education

Land will be made available for a 5 FE Secondary School (7 ha in size) along with two primary schools (one 1 FE circa 1.1 ha in size and one 2 FE circa 2 ha in size).

The developers and landowners within the North of Stafford SDL will work with Staffordshire County Council to facilitate early transfer of land to enable them (the County Council) to deliver the schools.

A proportionate financial contribution towards the new primary schools and secondary school will also be made in appropriate circumstances. 1 FE (of the 2 FE primary school) will be available for use on the occupation of the 250th dwelling on the North of Stafford SDL land to the east of Marston Lane. The remaining 1FE (of the 2FE primary school) will be available for use on the commencement of the 1,000th dwelling on the SDL land east of Marston Lane.

The 1 FE primary school will be available for use on the occupation of the 250th dwelling on the North of Stafford SDL land between the A34 and Marston Lane.

It is anticipated (subject, inter alia, to Stafford Borough Council's Housing Trajectory) that the new secondary school will be available for use by 2019.

## Public Open Space

With regard to open space, sport and recreation provision, a 'Destination Park' of a maximum of 10 ha will be made available for community use on the occupation of the 1,000th dwelling (on the North of Stafford SDL land to the east of Marston Lane).

A new Destination Play area of a maximum 3,000 sqm in size will form part of the Destination Park. Land for the 'Destination Park' will be provided on land to the east of Marston Lane. Contributions for the laying out of the area will be sought as necessary, taking into account the extent of on-site provision. Any contributions which are sought would need to satisfy the relevant policy and legal tests (e.g. NPPF (para 204) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (Reg 122).

Sports pitches, including an artificial turf pitch (TP) and tennis courts will be provided as part of the secondary school sports provision and these facilities will contribute towards the 'Destination Park' requirement, available from 2019 onwards.

A range of accessible open space to cater for all ages, including sports pitches, children's play areas, new footpaths, cycleways and large areas of natural open space and green infrastructure will be provided across the North of Stafford SDL. Details of on site public open space provision will be established through the planning application process as each development parcel comes forward.

## Flood Management and Drainage

The North of Stafford SDL will provide a flood storage area(s) to control flooding of Marston Brook on-site to help reduce the risk of properties further down-stream from flooding. The flood storage area(s) will be designed and provided to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and could be functioning by 2020-2024.

In terms of drainage for the development itself, the development will incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and, where possible, these will be introduced as part of the North

of Stafford SDL's Green Infrastructure. The details of the SDL drainage will become apparent at the application stage.

## Local Centre

It is envisaged that at least two local centres will be required to support the development and provide the day to day facilities to support the new communities. The Local Centres will provide a range of shops (e.g. convenience stores and pharmacy) as well as other neighbourhood and community facilities, including health care provision. A Local Centre will be available for use on the North of Stafford SDL land to the east of Marston Lane when 1,000 new houses have been completed on this part of the SDL.

Discussions have taken place with Stafford & Surrounds Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regarding the North of Stafford SDL. It is understood that Primary Care is well catered for in the north of Stafford town in the short to medium term. However, this position may change, therefore dialogue will need to continue to take place to ensure health care needs are met and provided to the satisfaction of the Stafford & Surrounds CCG.

## Other Infrastructure

Specific triggers for the timing of the delivery of infrastructure will be established through the planning application process and infrastructure will be phased with the delivery of new homes and businesses. Statutory undertakers and universal service providers, in conjunction with landowners/developers, Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council will be responsible for delivering adequate infrastructure to serve the development.



# Planning Applications

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Planning applications will be guided by the principles and issues identified in this Masterplan document. It is considered that, at this stage, the detail shown on the masterplan provides a reasonable indication of how the North of Stafford SDL could come forward. However, inevitably there may be some variations as further information becomes available over the PSB period (2011-2031).

Planning applications will need to be accompanied by a number of supporting technical reports, in accordance with Stafford Borough Council's Local Validation Checklist, or as otherwise agreed with Stafford Borough Council officers.



Redhill Business Park Permitted Employment Scheme

Marston Grange (Taylor Wimpey) Permitted Housing Scheme

Destination Park Utilising Secondary School Pitches and Sports Facilities

A34

Marston Lane

Beaconside

Sandon Road

Sports Pitches

Allotments

Allotments

2

1

3



# Appendix 1

## 7 Stafford

## Stafford - Strategic Development Locations

**POLICY STAFFORD 2 – NORTH OF STAFFORD**

Within the area North of Stafford identified on the Policies Map a sustainable, well designed mixed use development will be delivered by 2031. Any application for development on a part or the whole of the area should be consistent with a master plan for the whole Strategic Development Location. The master plan for the whole site should be produced by all developers involved in the development of the site and agreed by the Council prior to applications being submitted. Any application for a component of the whole site must be accompanied by a specific master plan which shows the relationship of the application area to the wider Strategic Development Location. The design of the application should not prejudice the delivery or design of the wider Strategic Development Location. Development must deliver the following key requirements:

**Housing**

i. Delivery of approximately 3,100 new homes with 30% being affordable housing in the context of Policy C2 through a mix of housing types, tenures, sizes and styles with proportions of 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed properties in the context of Policy C1;

ii. Provision to meet the needs of an ageing population through new extra care and specialist housing;

**Employment**

iii. At least 36 hectares of new employment land with comprehensive links for a range of transport modes across the A34 to housing development areas;

**Environment**

iv. A comprehensive drainage scheme will be delivered to enable development of the Strategic Development Location which will include measures to alleviate flooding downstream on the Marston Brook and Sandyford Brook;

v. The development will provide on-site renewable or low carbon energy solutions including associated infrastructure to facilitate site-wide renewable energy solutions in the context of Policy N2;

vi. 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;

vii. Existing hedgerows and tree lines to be retained and enhanced to support the provision of a network of green infrastructure including wetlands and water corridors, play areas, green corridors allowing wildlife movement and access to open space;

**Transport**

viii. An access, transport and travel plan strategy 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 road access points to the site and between the site and the existing settlement. It shall also identify construction access arrangements that do not disrupt existing residents and improvements to transport capacity along the A34, A513 Beaconside Road and the Redhill roundabout;

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

## Stafford 7

**Design**

x. The development takes place on a 'neighbourhood' approach with the provision of a mix of uses including local retail facilities, social and physical infrastructure, a primary school, secondary education provision, a library service, health facilities and public open space;

xi. The development will be based on using sustainable construction methods in the context of Policy N2;

**Infrastructure**

xii. Highway capacity improvements, either through or around the perimeter of the site, or along Beaconside, will be required North of Stafford. Enhanced bus services and improved bus reliability, through bus priority, will be required along the A34 between the site and the town centre as well as real time bus passenger information, increased frequency of existing and new bus services;

xiii. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) required through on-site / off-site provision / management at Cannock Chase;

xiv. Gas infrastructure serving the employment land north of Primepoint will be re-inforced. Gas infrastructure up-grading not required for the housing development other than standard connections into the system. Part of the North of Stafford Strategic Development Location extends over a National Grid high pressure gas pipeline (FM21 Audley to Alrewas). Development within the zone of influence must address the presence of the pipeline and not affect the functioning of this installation;

xv. Flood management scheme and less than greenfield surface water run-off to Sandyford Brook and Marston Brook through open water storage solutions, maximising opportunities for multi-functional open space provision;

xvi. Electricity connections and sewage capacity improvements required to meet additional housing development;

xvii. New primary school provision required as well as a new secondary school or extensions to existing secondary schools;

xviii. A new Destination Park including children's play areas and multi-use games areas in association with SANGs requirement if provided on-site;

xix. Standard telecommunication connections will be provided to link to the Stafford exchange enabled with Superfast Fibre Access Broadband;

xx. Primary health care provision delivered by increased capacity at existing facilities.

Developer contributions will be required to provide the strategic infrastructure needed to achieve a comprehensive sustainable development at this Strategic Development Location.

**Context**

**7.25** Development to the north of Stafford is located beyond the main residential areas to the north of the town and the Primepoint employment area, with the MOD Beacon Barracks to the east. The key housing areas are to be located north of the A513 Beaconside road with the key employment area north of Primepoint and west of the A34 leading north towards Stone. The area will have implications for the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation which will require mitigation measures to address the recreational impacts of the new housing development.



## 7 Stafford

### **Proposed Development**

**7.26** The land north of Stafford will comprise two housing sites delivering a total of approximately 3,100 new homes and an employment site delivering 36 hectares as an extension to the existing Primepoint employment area next to Junction 14 of M6. Primary and secondary schools are within 20-30 minutes walking distance of some areas of the development, although the GP surgery on Holmcroft Road is further away. It should be noted that part of the area has outline planning permission for 400 new houses.

### **Development Requirements and Implementation**

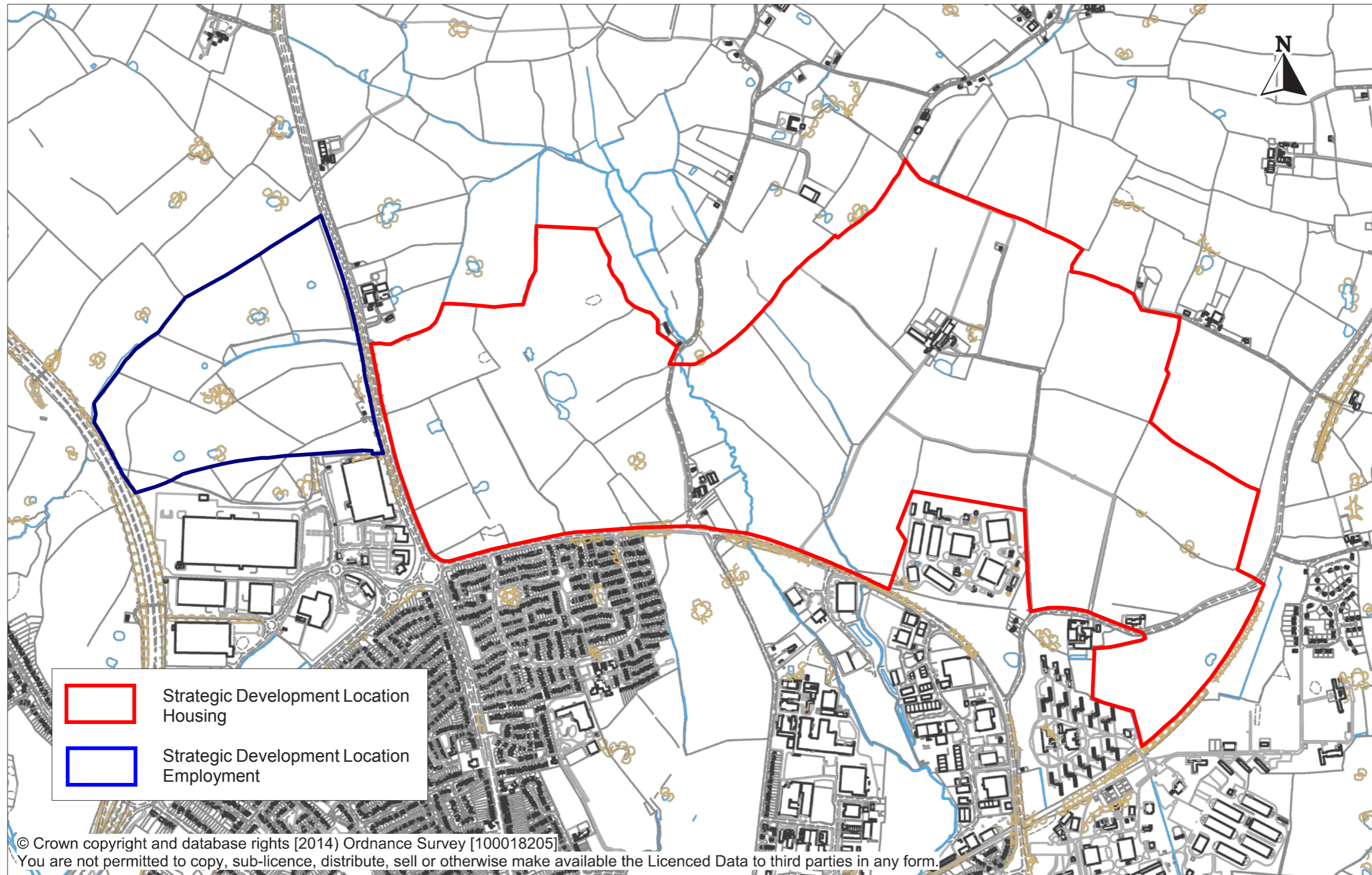
**7.27** Infrastructure requirements are listed in the Policy, and further details are provided in Appendix D. Of these requirements the following have been identified as critical to the delivery of the Strategic Development Location:

- Highway capacity improvements along the A513 Beaconside as well as transport improvements with new or enhanced bus routes as well as cycling & walking links to existing routes to the town centre and other key destinations. This infrastructure will overcome severance issues along the A513 Beaconside road to integrate the existing community of Parkside with the new developments to the north.
- Suitable Alternative 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.
- Planned electricity reinforcement works and connection to the grid in order to meet the needs of the new communities.
- Flood management scheme and less than greenfield surface water run-off to Sandyford Brook and Marston Brook through open water storage solutions, maximising opportunities for multi-functional open space provision. This infrastructure will address surface water run-off issues and contribute to new green infrastructure north of Stafford.

**7.28** Based on current information from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and working in partnership with developers for the land north of Stafford, it has been established that the scale of development is capable of delivering the infrastructure requirements listed.

# Map 4 Development to the North of Stafford Town

Development North of Stafford



# Map 5 Stafford North Concept Diagram

## Stafford North Concept Diagram

