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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
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20th September 2018

Dear Mr Dakeyne

**Re: Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Examination.
MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (MIQ) FOR THE EXAMINATION AND HEARING
SESSIONS**

I write in connection with the above and especially with reference to the site in Cheadle known as Stoddards depot (CH015). You refer to this site on page 18 of the above MIQ and it cited in draft policy SS7.

I act on behalf of the sole owner (Stoddard family) of the site. The question you pose is the following:

6.1 Is the Stoddards Depot site (CH015) deliverable taking into account contamination issues and other abnormal costs?

The draft policy (SS7) in respect of the site reads:

'Cheadle Area Strategy

The Council and its partners will seek to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and a market town. This will be achieved through the following actions:

*1. Expand the housing market area and community provision by:
Increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, including for first time buyers and families;*

The development of specific housing sites through new site allocations in the Local Plan. This will include two strategic housing clusters to the north and south of the town, namely:

Cheadle North Strategic Development Area - housing and school development will be supported in line with policy DSC1

*Mobberley Farm - housing development will be supported in line with policy DSC3
Protecting, increasing and improving the provision and accessibility of open space, sport and recreational facilities in line with the updated Open Space Study, Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sports Facility*

Providing additional educational, health and community facilities, including a new primary school to serve north Cheadle at the Donkey Lane site

Ensuring development of site CH015 Stoddards Depot, Leek Road adjacent to the Conservation Area enhances the frontage with sensitive design as set out in the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study."

This site has been advanced by the site owner and it is also supported and promoted by the Council.

The site is already included as development site within the Cheadle town centre masterplan. It is site 10 as set out on page 55 which states that the 0.73 ha opportunity site would be suitable for redevelopment for residential and/or employment uses. On page 140 the masterplan indicates that up to 22 dwellings could be built on the site. The masterplan notes (correctly) that matters such as levels and potential contamination are potential development constraints.

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It remains true that the site owner, who is also the main site user, will not have a need for the site in the future for their business ventures. The site has provided an operational base for a coach hire business for holidays, day trips and school contract hire (this part of the business has now ceased to operate) and serves as a depot for a fuel delivery service including fuel storage. The site also has a former library, library van garage and careers office in addition to a small car parking and servicing area which is presently in use for car parking.

The Stoddard family, who own this site, have operated and managed their business from this site for three generations. The family ties and interest in the business is changing significantly (as mentioned earlier the coach hire business has now ceased trading). As the family members consider their future and their livelihoods over the next few months, the need to utilise the site for present business purposes will continue to change. Indeed family members have already indicated that if the site is allocated for development in the plan they will take that as their opportunity to sell the remaining businesses and cease trading. This makes the site to all intents and purposes available for development as soon as the plan is adopted.

The site is indeed likely to have site clear up costs and the council have previously been made aware in general terms that these costs along with other constraints such as levels will mean that normal developer profits will be hard to obtain and in allocating the site have been advised not to require or expect contributions towards affordable housing or other community works (via section 106) . It is of course completely impossible to put any figures forward as to the site clearance and preparation costs at this stage as this would only come after detailed site investigations which a prudent developer/buyer would undertake. It is however possible to confirm that many brownfield sites such as this have been developed both within Staffordshire Moorlands and of course across the country providing the LPA have in those cases understood and accepted the tight financial viability of such projects. The owner has already had direct experience of this financial challenge as they were the owners of Hursts Yard (another site in the Cheadle town centre Masterplan) which had significant design and development constraints due to its legacy uses, highway problems and heritage constraints. Planning permission in respect of that site is presently being implemented and is well advanced. It is a development for housing purposes but with no upfront contributions (section 106) to public works due to the demonstrated lower than normal project viability and profit.

It is based upon the above that the site owner and respondent instructs me to confirm the following:

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1. The site will be available for development with immediate effect upon adoption of the plan.
2. The site will be suitable for residential use and that providing the council accept and understand development costs and constraints; which will be set out within a future viability report, they see no reason why the site cannot be developed for housing.

Thank you for giving this submission your further time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Gerald Willard

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