

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS TO REVISED CORE STRATEGY (PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 2011)**

### **Introduction**

Following the Submission of the Revised Core Strategy to the Secretary of State in September 2012 for examination and the subsequent Hearing Sessions conducted by an independent Planning Inspector, between the 5th and 8th February 2013, an Interim Conclusions Report was published by the Inspector in March 2013. This identified some key areas which he believed needed to be modified to help make the plan sound. The Inspector has invited the Council to consider what form the modifications should take and consult on these before he issues his final report.

The main modifications concern amendments to the content of some of the policies and their supporting text which are considered necessary for the Core Strategy to be sound in planning terms. A full schedule of these modifications has been produced and this document provides a summary of them.

The proposed main modifications have been the subject of a review of the Sustainability Appraisal which is an integral part of the preparation of the Core Strategy. This review identifies the positive and negative impacts on sustainability arising from the modifications.

A list of minor modifications has also been produced. These relate to minor textual and grammatical amendments as well as updates to references made to national and regional policy. A separate schedule is available listing the minor modifications. These minor modifications are published for information only and do not form part of this consultation.

### **Key Documents Forming Part of the Consultation**

The key documents to view in relation to this consultation, which can all be found on the District Council's website at [www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sm/cs-main-modifications](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sm/cs-main-modifications) are:

- Revised Core Strategy
- Main Modifications Schedule
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Summary of Proposed Main Modifications to Revised Core Strategy (i.e. this document)
- Supporting Evidence for Modifications to Policy SS2 'Development Rates'

If you wish to make representations on the documents, please also refer to:

- Statement of Representation Procedure
- Representation Form
- Guidance Notes for Completing Representation Form

### **Summary of Main Modifications**

**(N.B. references to policies are from the Revised Core Strategy which should be viewed in conjunction with this list)**

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#### **Policy SS1a: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (New Policy) – MODIFICATION NUMBER M7**

This new policy reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Planning applications that accord with policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no relevant policies, or policies are out of date the Council will also approve applications unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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#### **Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development - MODIFICATION NUMBER M8**

The changes to this policy include:

- An increase in housing provision from 5500 to 6000 additional dwellings to be completed in the Staffordshire Moorlands during the period 2006 to 2026.
  - Reference to the affordable housing target as part of the overall housing provision has been removed.
  - A commitment to an early review of the Core Strategy which will be rolled into a single Local Plan combined with the Site Allocations DPD.
  - Changes to the development rates post 2016 (supported by additional evidence).
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#### **Policy SS4: Managing the Release of Housing Land – MODIFICATION NUMBER M15**

New paragraph added to confirm that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will identify specific deliverable sites sufficient for 5 years supply of housing and an additional buffer of 5% or 20% where appropriate.

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#### **Policy SS5: Towns - MODIFICATION NUMBER M18**

The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development is reflected in amended figures for the three towns.

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**Policy SS5a: Leek Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M19**

Amendment to reflect changes to Policy SS7: Churnet Valley Area Strategy.

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**Policy SS5b: Biddulph Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M24**

An amendment has been made to this policy to clarify that the small urban extensions in the green belt will be identified as part of a review of the green belt boundary through the Site Allocations DPD and the review of the Core Strategy.

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**Policy SS5c: Cheadle Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBERS M29 & M30**

The extension to the urban area to the north east of Cheadle (Area 2) has been deleted. The policy states that the Council will assess the need for other broad locations through the review of the Core Strategy. References to the need for a bypass and other infrastructure improvements have been moved to the supporting text.

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**Policy SS6: Rural Areas - MODIFICATION NUMBER M34**

The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development is reflected in amended figures for the rural area.

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**Policy SS6a: Larger Villages Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M36**

A minor change has been made to the text to refer to 'built-up' area rather than 'urban' area to provide a clearer description.

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**Policy SS6b: Smaller Villages Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M37**

An amendment has been made to this policy so that new housing in smaller villages no longer has to meet an 'essential local need' as required in the countryside, but there is still a need to meet a 'local need'.

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**Policy SS6c: Other Rural Areas Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBERS M39 – M42 (inclusive)**

Amendments to this policy include:

- Clarification to include the types of housing development that would be acceptable in the countryside and green belt.
- Deletion of the reference to Blythe Business Park as expansion and redevelopment of existing businesses are covered by general guidance under Policy E1: New Employment Development.
- Amendment to text in part 5 relating to the Churnet Valley which reflects changes to Policy SS7: Churnet Valley Area Strategy.

- Amendment to clarify the process for undertaking a review of the green belt boundaries.
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### **Policy SS7: Churnet Valley Area Strategy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M44**

Amendments include:

- Changing the title of the policy to exclude the term ‘tourism corridor’;
  - Changes to clarify the aims of the strategic policy for the Churnet Valley;
  - Guidance on the broad principles of development which the Council would support; and
  - Stronger emphasis on the considerations regarding impact on the natural environment etc.
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### **Policy SD1: Sustainable Use of Resources - MODIFICATION NUMBERS M50-M57 (inclusive)**

This policy has been amended so that:

- Previously developed land targets have been deleted;
  - It has clarified circumstances for development on previously developed land and greenfield sites;
  - Only major-scale planning applications will need to provide a Sustainability/Energy Statement (originally most applications needed this);
  - It is no longer required that the ‘Building for Life’ tool standards are applied to new developments, although the benefits will be incorporated into the supporting text.
  - The target of 25% of minerals used from recycled / reused content in new-build schemes has been deleted and replaced with the need for developers to investigate the potential;
  - The reference to site waste management plans has been removed as these are covered by separate legislation;
  - There is no longer a requirement that all new development achieves the highest viably possible water conservation standards; however the Council’s support for elevated water conservation standards remains.
  - Reference to how all new development should consider Sustainable Drainage Systems has been removed.
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### **Policy SD2: Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy - MODIFICATION NUMBER M60**

In order to improve clarity, the previous Policy SD2 has been sub-divided into two separate policies: the first Policy ‘Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy’ is the new SD2 Policy – this carries forward the Policy about stand-alone renewables from Part (1) of the original Policy. This is unchanged apart from the removal of the requirement for considering brownfield sites first. The second Policy (new “SD3”) ‘Carbon-Saving Measures in New Development’ is set out below.

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**Policy SD3: Carbon-Saving Measures in Development (New Policy) - MODIFICATION NUMBER M60**

This Policy consolidates Parts (2-5) of original Policy SD2; but the original requirements from these Parts have been substantially reworded to:

- Remove requirements/expectations upon developers that were considered over-onerous, not justified by evidence, unclear/imprecise, or not required because of other legislation (i.e.: the elevating of thermal efficiency standards in new development; elevating sustainability standards even further upon major-scale sites; and the investigation of District Heating opportunities off-site for major-scale sites;); and
- More clearly give an indication of those measures that the Council will support.

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**Policy E1: New Employment Development - MODIFICATION NUMBER M63**

Policy amended to include general guidance for the redevelopment, intensification or improvement of existing employment sites.

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**Policy E3: Tourism and Cultural Development - MODIFICATION NUMBER M64**

Policy amended to provide greater clarity on those forms of tourism and cultural development which are appropriate and to reflect modifications to Policy SS7 (Churnet Valley).

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**Policy H2: Affordable and Local Needs Housing - MODIFICATION NUMBER M69**

This policy has been amended to reflect a reduced scale of 33% affordable housing obligations to 2016 to be consistent with the current evidence of viability. This was previously 40% in the towns and 50% in the larger villages. This target will be reviewed from 2016. Removed requirement for all housing in rest of rural areas to be either affordable or meet a local need which cannot be met elsewhere.

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**Policy H3: Gypsy and Traveller Sites - MODIFICATION NUMBER M74**

The requirement for applicants to first prove a 'need' when determining planning applications for gypsy and traveller sites has been deleted.

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**Policy R2: Rural Housing - MODIFICATION NUMBER M78**

The removal of the requirement for conversions to be affordable or meet an identified local need.

## **How to Comment**

The proposed main modifications and the results of the Sustainability Appraisal review are now subject to a period of consultation to be held between the **24th June and 5th August 2013**. This consultation however **only** concerns the proposed modifications to the Revised Core Strategy so there is no need to resubmit representations made previously as these have already been considered as part of the Examination.

Anyone is free to comment on the main modifications whether you have previously been involved in the examination process or not. The results of this consultation will be sent to the Inspector for him to consider before he produces his final report.

If you wish to make a Representation on the proposed modifications this can be done:

- By emailing [forward.plans@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk](mailto:forward.plans@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk); or
- In writing to – Freepost RRLJ-XCTC-JBZK, Regeneration Manager, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek, ST13 6HQ.

When making your representation, the Council would prefer it if you could complete a representation form electronically and respond by email as this will enable us to process your representation more quickly and efficiently. Representation forms are available on the Council's website, from the Council offices in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle and libraries in Biddulph, Blythe Bridge and Werrington.

**IN ALL CASES, WHEN MAKING A REPRESENTATION PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE MODIFICATION REFERENCE TO WHICH IT REFERS IS CLEARLY STATED. TO FIND THE CORRECT NUMBER YOU WILL NEED TO LOOK AT THE MAIN MODIFICATION SCHEDULE OR THE SUMMARY ABOVE AS EACH MODIFICATION HAS BEEN SEPARATELY NUMBERED.**

**THIS CONSULTATION IS RESTRICTED TO THE PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS ONLY. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON OTHER PARTS OF THE PLAN WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

If you have any questions about this consultation please contact Planning Policy using the email address above or by telephoning 01538 395570.