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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 matter 2 (strategy) and matter 8 (allocations-Cheadle).

Yours Sincerely

Gerald Willard

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## **Matter 2 (strategy)**

5.1 The plan clearly needs to provide for the release of some land from the Green Belt to meet the need to develop in sustainable locations. Given the amount of land within the Green Belt the release of some land at Cheadle and Biddulph was and is necessary.

However in promoting and supporting the release of large allocations at Cheadle north, Mobberley Farm and Cecily Brook and other brownfield sites the council has shown a simple preference for the release of larger sites. An alternative strategy for the release of Green Belt land (such as that at Mobberley farm) could have been to change the settlement boundary so as to provide for a range of smaller sites.

This could have included small sites such as that off Park Lane and Nursery Close. These sites together would have served to round off the Green Belt boundary in this location and have had the following planning benefits:

- The land is in a highly sustainable location within a 5 minute walk of the town centre along a fairly flat route.
- The sites and land lie to the west of the town and would therefore have primary traffic movements towards the west and the North Staffordshire conurbation minimising traffic congestion in the town.
- The small size of the sites and single ownership (in each case) mean that these sites could easily and quickly be started, completed and occupied whereas the opposite is the case in respect of larger sites such as Mobberley Farm where it is clear there are very significant development constraints to address before commencement.
- The sites and land ownership are fairly small and would be of no interest to large scale house-builders. They sites would however have been of interest to self-builders or small scale custom builders. This view is evidenced by the fact that in the past all dwellings served off Park Lane were built by self-builders or small scale local builders. This is self evident by looking at the area.

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5.1 If the plan is to be revised the sites off Nursery Close and Park Lane could be held as safeguarded sites to meet and future housing needs not taken up say within the next 3 years. At that point they would be wholly suitable for self or custom house-builders.

## **Matter 5 Specific Housing Needs**

3.1 Policy H1 is clearly a problem in many areas. In respect of (2) there are the following problems.

The first sentence is simply a repetition of national requirements. It has no need or place in policy and should be moved into the supporting text.

The rest of the clause seems to assume that much if not all of the need for self/custom build will be provided as part of larger site development. It is understandable that policy mantra might consider this to a response to the Government ambitions. It fails however to understand Or appreciate the needs and attraction of a self/customer builder. The kinds of people who undertake these challenging ventures do so mainly because they seek to design their own homes. Living as an adjunct to a larger estate is an anathema to the kind or person that aspires to this kind of house.

What is needed instead is to allocate by revised settlement boundaries and new settlement boundaries a plan that will deliver a large number of smaller sites say up to 4 or 5 houses in size. The smaller sites will be taken up by local people and they will be built by small scale local builders. Allocations as part of an estate development are not what self/custom builders seek. Policy ought to be designed to make the provision for that which is sought and not to try to create its own demand which simply will not appear.

3.3 The limitation on sub-division to only sustainable locations falls into the same trap that most council's did in the early decisions taken in respect of Class Q agricultural conversions. Until directed by central Government planning authorities had often res

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resisted these permitted development conversions because they were in isolated locations. Strange that council's didn't understand that in introducing Class Q PD rights the Government didn't know that agricultural barns were in the countryside and by that spatial fact often relatively isolated. Government had introduced policy to boost housing in the countryside in an organic and sustainable way by using an existing resource.

The same is true about the sub division of larger houses. By such means over large properties can be converted at limited environmental cost and bring the following wider benefits irrespective of location:

- Improved energy efficiency of existing living accommodation.
- Keep housing stock in longer term use
- Minimise the waste of space and maximise housing density
- Help older people to stay within their communities
- Encourage and support families who wish to live next to each other but not within the same single dwelling.

Surely better in this case to adopt a more positive policy 'nudge' by adopting policy which supports conversion where it can be shown that the new and existing dwelling will be more energy efficient and where measures are introduced to share vehicles and or to use electric charging points. Special support could be given to schemes that can demonstrate the generation on site of power.

## **Matter 8 allocations-Cheadle**

1.3 It is considered that the town boundary for Cheadle fails to provide for smaller sites in close proximity to the town centre and which would be especially interesting to those seeking to self build/custom housebuilding sites. A revised town boundary could achieve this.

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## **Suggested changes**

A Change/introduce settlement boundaries (especially Cheadle) so as to encourage and provide for small scale sites suitable for self/custom builders in locations where they will be taken up.

B Revise policy H (f)

Change the policy as follows:

The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling into 2 or more dwellings will be supported provided it can be shown that both the existing dwelling and new dwelling (S) will bring about more energy efficient housing and where they can show means to generate power on site and/or to provide for shared vehicular use and/or non carbon vehicular use.

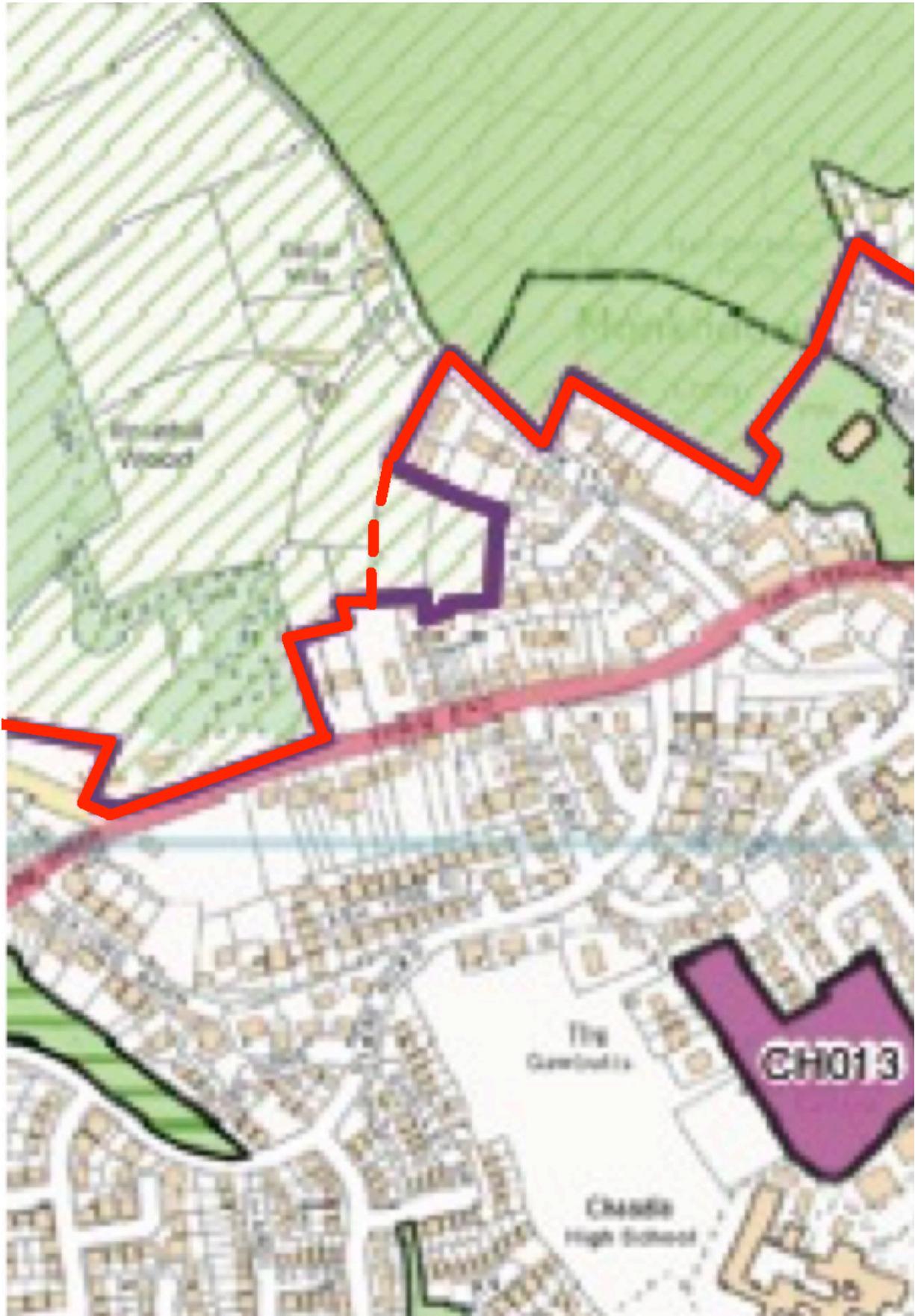
C Change map on page 225 (see attached )

To revise the town boundary to include space for a number of small urban extensions suitable for self/custom house-builders such as the inclusion within the town boundary of sites of Nursery Close and Park Lane.

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Revised Town boundary for Cheadle-suggestion

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