

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
STATEMENT BY STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL ON THE INSPECTOR'S MATTERS,
ISSUES & QUESTIONS

MATTER 8

Allocations - Villages

Issue 1 - Identification of Sites
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- 1.1 Is the approach within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to assessing the suitability and screening of sites in the settlements robust?**
- 1.1.1 Yes. The approach is the same for all settlements in the Local Plan and provides a robust analysis of potential sites for residential development in the District. The SHLAA (SD 26.1) identified and assessed the availability, suitability and deliverability of land as potential housing and sets out a clear methodology. Appendix A and B provides a summary of the large and small site assessments and detailed assessment forms for the larger sites (SD 26.2 & 26.3).
- 1.2 Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocations in the large villages?**
- 1.2.1 Yes. The Green Belt Review Study 2015 (SD 22.4 & 22.4f) assessed sites WE052 and WE003 against the purposes of the Green Belt and concluded both sites were suitable to be considered for release from the Green Belt if there were exceptional circumstances.
- 1.3 Does the LP provide for a range of sites of different sizes in the rural area?**
- 1.3.1 Yes. Policy H2 details the housing allocations, the 6 allocations vary provide for a range of site sizes from 13 dwellings at Alton (AL012) to the large strategic site at Blythe Vale.
- 1.4 What is the up to date position in relation to planning permissions affecting the proposed allocations?**
- 1.4.1 Blythe Vale**
- 1.4.2** SMD/2011/0304 approval to replace extant planning permission 06/00984/FUL, pursuant to the original Outline Planning Permission SM.97-0216 for a Premium Employment Site on land adjoining A50 (T), Blythe Bridge, to extend the time for submission. Site separated into 4 phases.
- 1.4.3 SMD/2017/0512 approval for 118 dwellings, access, cycle linkages, car/cycle parking, play/open space, landscaping on land to the south east of A521/A50 Blythe Bridge Bypass Blythe Bridge. (Relates to part of the allocated site- equivalent to phase 1)
- 1.4.4 SMD/2018/0443 Reserved matters application for the phase 2 for access road and associated infrastructure, including drainage to serve the road, tree removal, levels, landscaping, safeguarding area, great crested newt mitigation, pursuant to planning application ref SMD/2011/0304. Decision pending.
- 1.4.5 **Werrington:** No current permissions.
- 1.4.6 **Endon:** No current permissions.
- 1.4.7 Anzio camp**
- 1.4.8 SMD/2014/0693 approval for extra care housing, live work units, ancillary social centre and facilities

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building and COU to Holiday Park.

1.4.9 DOC/20182018/0102 discharge condition 3 (phasing) and part 4 (materials).

1.4.10 **Froghall:**

1.4.11 SMD/2016/0245 Approval Retrospective application for boundary fence

1.4.12 SMD/2016/0246 Approval part COU industrial unit manufacturing to storage/distribution

1.4.13 SMD/2016/0567 Approval COU industrial unit from manufacturing to storage/distribution

Issue 2 - Blythe Vale (DSR1)

2.1 Is the Council satisfied that landscape, green infrastructure, biodiversity, heritage, highway, transport and flood risk impacts can be mitigated so that development of the site would be acceptable?

2.1.1 Yes. The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary questions regarding the Development Site policies and proposes a main modification to the site policy which makes reference to site specific requirements and appropriate mitigation measures. (MM55)

2.1.2 Landscape

2.1.3 The site lies in the countryside extending south east from Blythe Bridge and is located either side of the A50. It contains some existing development housing and farm buildings. The Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study 2016 (ED 22.5) found the site was of medium to high landscape sensitivity and recommended site specific landscape mitigation measures. The site policy DSR1 includes specific reference to landscape mitigation. The proposed main modification to the policy makes reference to site specific landscape mitigation measures. Policy DC3 relates to Landscape and Settlement Setting.

2.1.4 Green Infrastructure

2.1.5 The Blythe Bridge Opportunity Corridor is identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The site has potential to contribute to GI networks for people and wildlife. The site policy makes specific reference to the need for development to have regard to the GI Strategy and the proposed main modification to the policy makes reference to protecting and extending green infrastructure.

2.1.6 Biodiversity

2.1.7 Policy NE1 and NE2 seek to ensure biodiversity is conserved and enhanced.

2.1.8 Heritage

2.1.9 The Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Study 2016 (ED 22.5) considered the site is suitable for development in heritage terms. There is a grade II listed building within the 400m buffer but there is no visibility between the site and the asset. Policy DC2 states the Council will preserve and enhance heritage assets.

2.1.10 Highways/ transport

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2.1.11 County Highways and Highways England have been consulted throughout the plan preparation and have no objections. Their comments have been incorporated into the site policy.

2.1.12 See below 2.4.

2.1.13 Flood risk

2.1.14 The site is within flood zone 1. Consultation with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority has taken place throughout the plan preparation process; their comments have been taken into account in the LP and they have no objections to the site allocation. The application of policy SD5 can adequately address issues regarding flooding.

2.2 Is the allocation in a location where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable travel modes can be maximised? Can reasonable connectivity to the village be secured from the development, particularly the housing component?

2.2.1 Yes. Blythe Bridge is defined as a larger village in the Settlement Hierarchy. It is one of the largest villages in the District with a range of services and facilities. It is in a sustainable location with good transport links. It is close to an existing railway station enabling the use of existing transport infrastructure. The site is located to south of Blythe Bridge and the A521. The site policy makes specific reference to development providing sustainable transport routes and connectivity with Blythe Bridge, including the provision of suitable crossing facilities to enable pedestrian/cycle access to existing schools. The proposed main modification to the policy requires the provision of safe walking and cycle routes to Blythe Bridge from the development. The residential approval includes crossing facilities.

2.3 Would the residual cumulative impacts of the development on A50/A521 junction be less than severe taking into account any improvements that can be carried out?

2.3.1 Yes. The policy requires a transport assessment to consider the traffic impacts of the development on the surrounding road network including the A50 and potential mitigation measures. The Council will continue to work with partners including SCC, neighbouring authorities, Highways England, landowners and developers to consider transport implications and appropriate improvements. (Duty to Cooperate Statement and Statement of Common Ground ED 9).

2.3.2 An assessment of the cumulative traffic impacts will be carried out when there is further information is available regarding the details of development in neighbouring authorities. Highways England (LPPS 178) have no objections to the allocation and wishes to continue joint working with the Council and partners to consider traffic implications and mitigation measures.

2.4 Should the policy be more prescriptive in terms of the employment component and phasing, noting the requirement for master planning?

2.4.1 No. The policy no longer restricts development to B1/B2 as in the Core Strategy but seeks a more flexible approach to employment to encourage delivery of employment uses on the site. The proposed main modification to the policy includes a requirement for a phasing programme within the masterplan.

2.5 Are all the policy requirements necessary and clear to the decision maker?

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- 2.5.1 Yes. The policy requirements detail relevant site specific matters which need to be taken into account in determining a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers, the local community and the decision maker. The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary questions regarding the Development Site polices and proposes a main modification to delete reference to generic requirements are covered by other plan policies.
- 2.6 Is the site deliverable taking into account multiple ownerships, infrastructure requirements and the possible need for cross-subsidy?**
- 2.6.1 Yes. St Modwen have been granted permission for residential development on part of the site - 118 dwellings on land to the north of the A50/south east of the A521 at Blythe Bridge. They have submitted a further reserved matters application for phase 2 access road. (See 1.4 above).
- 2.6.2 The residential approval is designed to include a junction and access road to specifications that are suitable to serve the allocated site. The phase 2 access road will provide the infrastructure to support the development of this part of the site and safeguards access to the remaining area of the site.
- 2.6.3 The Council has had discussions with the two land owners of the area to the south and who support the development of the site.

Issue 3 - Land off Ash Bank Road, Werrington (DSR4)
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3.1 Have exceptional circumstances been demonstrated to justify the removal of land from the Green Belt?

- 3.1.1 Yes. The Green Belt Study (ED22.4 & 22.4f) considered the site was suitable for release from the Green Belt if there are exceptional circumstances. It is considered in this case there are exceptional circumstances to justify the release of the sites from the Green Belt. The Green Belt is tightly drawn around Werrington and there is limited capacity in the settlement for further growth. The settlement has a range of facilities and services and is considered to be a sustainable location to support some growth and contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the rural areas. The sites are in public ownership, they were previously owned by the Ministry of Justice and are currently are owned by Homes England who are proposing carry out work to ensure the delivery of the housing through an appropriate developer.

3.2 Have exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the LP?

- 3.2.1 Yes. The Council has proposed a main modification in response to the Inspector preliminary questions to add an additional text to the supporting text to the policy to justify the exceptional circumstances. (MM58)

3.3 Are the landscape impacts acceptable?

- 3.3.1 Yes. The Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Study 2016 (SD 22.5 page 72) found WE052 was of low landscape sensitivity and WE003 was of medium landscape sensitivity and site specific landscape mitigation measures would reduce the site's visual prominence and create a well-defined settlement

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edge.

3.3.2 The Green Belt Review Study 2015 (SD 22.4 pages 84 & 85) considered the top part of WE003 fronting Ashbank Road should remain as open space as it is one of the few remaining gaps along the A52.

3.3.3 The impact of the development on the landscape can be satisfactorily addressed through the application of policies in the Local Plan in particular DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting and the site policy DCR4 which reflects the evidence base and requires landscape mitigation measures. The Council has proposed a main modification to the site policy to provide more detail regarding the landscape mitigation measures. (MM59)

3.4 Can safe and suitable accesses and sustainable links to village facilities be achieved for the sites?

3.4.1 The County Highway Authority considers access can be achieved to the site and the site policy reflects their requirements. The site is in close proximity to village facilities. There is an existing pedestrian crossing at Salters Lane.

3.5 Will living conditions for future occupants be acceptable given the proximity of the allocations to the prison?

3.5.1 Yes. The impact on residential amenity can be satisfactorily addressed through noise mitigation measures and the design and layout of the development. The site policy requires a noise impact assessment and appropriate mitigation measures.

3.6 Are all the policy requirements necessary and clear to the decision maker?

3.6.1 Yes. The policy requirements detail relevant site specific matters which need to be taken into account in determining a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers, the local community and the decision maker. The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary questions regarding the Development Site polices and proposes a main modification to delete reference to generic requirements are covered by other plan policies.

Issue 4 - Housing allocation at Endon (EN128)
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4.1 Can a safe and suitable access be achieved to the site?

4.1.1 Yes. Access can be achieved through the large through Stonybrook a large plot on the corner of Stoney Lane and Brookfield Avenue. The highway authority considers Stony Lane can be widened and made up to adoptable standards to provide a satisfactory access and visibility at the access to Brookfield Avenue is good. A further point of access is possible with the demolition of 14 Brookfield Avenue which is in the site owner's ownership.

4.2 Should the site be safeguarded as Local Green Space, GI or open space?

4.2.1 No. The site comprises a small field of rough grassland and is a gap in the development in Endon. It was originally designated as a Visual Open Space (VOS) in the Local Plan 1998 (ED 32.8 Proposal Map).The Landscape Character Assessment 2008 reviewed the VOS designations and found the site to be unsuitable as VOS. (ED 22.1e site EN01). The study concluded the site appears suitable for sympathetic development. The Landscape, Local Green Space & Heritage Study 2016 did not identify the site as a

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potential LGS and concluded the development would fit in well with the existing settlement pattern. (ED 22.5).

4.2.2 The site does not meet the criteria for LGS designation set out in NPPF paragraph 77 as it is not demonstrably special or has particular local significance.

4.2.3 The site has no public access and the Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey 2015 (ED 14.5 ref FID 193) found the site was of low biodiversity value with poor connectivity to the wider countryside. It therefore has a limited role in contributing to GI.

4.3 Are the effects on the character and appearance of the area and biodiversity acceptable?

4.3.1 Yes. The site is within a residential area within Endon. Development will be subject to policies in the LP which seek to protect the character of the area. Consideration will be given to the scale of the development and its impact on the surrounding area. Policy DC1 details design considerations and states development should be well designed and contribute to the character of the area.

4.3.2 The Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey 2015 (ED 14.5 ref FID 193) found the site was of low biodiversity value with poor connectivity to the wider countryside. Consideration would be given to the impact of the development on biodiversity interests though the application of policies in the LP. Policy NE1 and NE2 seek to ensure biodiversity interests are conserved and enhanced.

4.4 Can any flood risk and surface water issues be mitigated?

4.4.1 Yes. The site is in flood zone 1 (ED 28.1 Figure B1c). Neither the Environment Agency nor LLFA consider flooding would preclude development. The Environment Agency has not raised any site specific issues. Staffordshire County Council as LLFA identified potential flood risk issues from a watercourse and surface water flood plain along the southern boundary and recommend a flood risk assessment and early engagement with the County Council and Environment Agency. Policy SD5 requires developers to undertake early discussions with the EA and LLFA where the site is in flood risk areas and where a watercourse is present.

Issue 5 - Allocations at Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor and Bolton Copperworks, Froghall

5.1 Do the policies for the two sites meet the tests of soundness?

5.1.1 Yes. Neither of these sites contribute to the employment or housing land requirement. They are existing unused brownfield sites in the countryside which have the potential to be redeveloped and may offer opportunity for environmental improvements as well as helping to meet the needs of the rural areas.

5.1.2 Policy SS10 identifies the Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor and Bolton's Copperworks, Froghall as opportunities for regeneration suitable for a range of uses. This reflects Policy SS6c of the adopted Core Strategy (ED3 2.7) and the Council's desire to enable the redevelopment of these brownfield sites.

5.1.3 The Council has proposed a main modification following the Inspectors preliminary questions to include additional policies for both sites in Chapter 9. (MM61)

5.2 Should the site at Anzio Camp refer to extra care housing taking into account its isolated location?

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5.2.1 The reference to extra care housing reflects the existing planning permission. (see 1.4.4 above)

Issue 6 - Local Green Space

6.1 Are the Local Green Space designations at Ox Pasture, Cheddleton and north of Cotehill Road, Werrington justified?

6.1.1 Yes. The sites were assessed in the Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study 2016 (SD22.5) against the criteria for LGS in the NPPF paragraphs 76 and 77. The study found the sites meet the criteria and recommended LGS designation.

Issue 7 – Infrastructure

7.1 Will the infrastructure to support the scale of development proposed in the villages be provided in the right place and at the right time, including that related to transport, the highway network, health, education and open space?

7.1.1 Yes. Policy SS12 states that development proposals will be required to provide, or meet the reasonable costs of providing the on-site and off-site infrastructure, facilities and/or mitigation necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms.

7.1.2 The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (ED8.2) that sets out the level of new or improved infrastructure required to deliver the Local Plan. It has been produced through a proactive and on-going process of engagement with all infrastructure providers, including those involved in delivering health, education, utility and highway infrastructure. Table 43 of the IDP (page 131) sets out a schedule of infrastructure requirements, with costings and delivery agencies identified where known. The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers to ensure the right infrastructure will be delivered in the right place and at the right time.

7.2 What measures can be put in place to maintain or enhance rural bus services?

7.2.1 Policies T1 and T2 outline measures to support bus services. In some circumstances developments which will have a significant traffic implication may be required to contribute to improved public transport provision in accordance with policy T1.

Issue 8 – Delivery

8.1 Are the assumptions about the rate of delivery of houses from the allocations realistic?

8.1.1 Yes. The housing trajectory provided at Appendix 7 to the Local Plan Submission Version illustrates projected completions over the plan period as of 31 March 2017. An updated trajectory along with background data as of 31 March 2018 is provided at Appendix 3 to the Policy and Strategy Topic Paper (Library Ref 13.5). The Policy and Strategy Topic Paper (paras 2.55 – 2.60) explains how the housing trajectory is underpinned by assumptions regarding the rate of development and sales. This is based on evidence in the Local Plan and Site Allocations Viability Study (Library Ref 24.1) regarding the local housing market combined with officer's knowledge and experience of the area.