

**Statement of Common Ground between Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**

This Statement of Common Ground establishes a framework for co-operation between Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. It primarily relates to the preparation of Development Plans and also sets out a framework for future collaboration on identified strategic cross boundary planning issues. It is made within the context of the Duty to Co-operate as required under Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011.

**1. Purposes**

- a. To establish areas of agreement in relation to strategic planning and development matters between the four local planning authorities
- b. To identify areas where further work is required
- c. To set the framework for future co-operation, including the monitoring and project management of required works

**2. Planning Context**

- 2.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council adopted a Core Strategy in March 2014. An early review of the Core Strategy, combined with site allocations, is now being prepared to provide the District with a single Local Plan to cover the period 2016 to 2031.
- 2.2 Stafford Borough Council adopted the Plan for Stafford Borough (Part 1) in June 2014, with Part 2 adopted in January 2017, covering the period 2011 to 2031. In July 2017 the Council commenced the New Local Plan process to cover the period 2020 to 2040, with the Issues & Options stage in July 2018.
- 2.3 Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle Borough Council are in the process of preparing a Joint Local Plan to cover the period to 2033. A Preferred Options consultation document was published in February 2018.

**3. Area**

- 3.1 The local planning authority areas of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. For the avoidance of doubt, this excludes the parts of Staffordshire Moorlands District that lie within the Peak District National Park. Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are in the process of preparing a Joint Local Plan. All four authorities share boundaries with one another, are located within Staffordshire and are located to the north and west of the county. Information considered in the preparation of Local Plans relating to housing, gypsies and travellers, employment and Green Belt which supports the establishment of this geographic area:

## **Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA)**

### **Stafford Borough SHMA (2012)**

- 3.2 Stafford Borough Council published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment in September 2012 as part of the evidence for the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 providing the total number of future market and affordable households based on housing and population forecasts. In conclusion the provision requirement is 500 new homes each year in Stafford Borough to fully meet the Objectively Assessed Need of which 210 affordable houses are required.
- 3.3 Between 2000 and 2011 the median house prices have increased by 151% with 87% being owner occupied / private rented and 13% social rented. Almost 75% of properties are houses, with 11% being flats, 11% bungalows and 3% others. The population of Stafford Borough will increase from 130,800 in 2011 to 146,000 by 2035, with over 65 year olds increasing by 45% and over 75 year olds by 102% during this period. In terms of household moves 62.9% took place within Stafford Borough so the area is not self-contained in terms of migration, which shows strong linkages with Stoke-on-Trent and Cannock Chase.
- 3.4 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be updated through the New Local Plan.

### **Staffordshire Moorlands SHMA (2014) and Update (2017)**

- 3.5 In terms of the definition of the Housing Market Area, the 2014 SHMA found that excluding long-distance movements, the District has a self-containment of between 60% – 61%. Although the former CLG Guidance recognises that the level of self-containment in rural authorities is often lower than elsewhere, it could not be argued that Staffordshire Moorlands represents a self-contained HMA. Consideration given to the objectively assessed need for housing, including affordable housing was also given but subsequently superseded by the 2017 Update.
- 3.6 The 2017 Update was undertaken to reflect the 2014-based household projections and new employment forecasts provided by Experian and Oxford Economics. The extent of the Housing Market Area was not re-visited. The study identified an objectively assessed need for 235 to 330 homes per year to the year 2031. The bottom of the range (235) relates to the demographic needs. The top of the range (330) relates to the level of housing growth required to support the projected increase in jobs by addressing the projected decline in the working age population. A net annual need for affordable housing of 224 to 432 homes per year was also identified.

### **Stoke –on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme SHMA 2015 and Update 2017**

- 3.7 Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme published an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment in July 2017 as part of the evidence for the Joint Local Plan Strategic Options consultation. The plan period is 2013 – 2033 with the SHMA providing evidence over a longer period to 2039 and incorporating the release of the 2014-based population and household projections and Cambridge Econometrics Jobs forecasts.

- 3.8 In terms of the definition of the Housing Market Area, the 2015 SHMA found that Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme collectively formed a single Housing Market area based on migration and containment of moves. A high proportion of labour is also retained within the two authorities and there are similarities in house prices. However, the SHMA (Appendix 2) also highlighted the complex nature of local geographies and recognised that both authorities share a strong relationship with Stafford Borough, Cheshire East and Staffordshire Moorlands, with a notable rate of out migration from the two authorities to these authorities. In this respect the 2011 Census shows that when moves from Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent to the Staffordshire Moorlands are taken into account the level of containment within this geography is 77% (surpassing the 70% threshold in the PPG). Nevertheless, this relationship is weaker than that shared by Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 3.9 The 2017 update was undertaken to consider the findings from the ELR finalised in December 2015, particularly the forecast level of job growth and labour force availability, as well as the release of new 2014-based sub-national population and household projections in May and July 2016. The extent of the Housing Market Area was not revisited.
- 3.10 The updated analysis indicated that there is an objectively assessment need (OAN) for 1,390 dwellings per annum in the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent housing market area (HMA), this sits within the range previously concluded in the 2015 SHMA (1,177 – 1,504 dwellings per annum). The total requirement over the plan period is a need for 27,800 dwellings (16,080 within Stoke-on-Trent and 11,720 within Newcastle-under-Lyme).
- 3.11 In respect of Newcastle-under-Lyme the study recommended a housing requirement of 586 per annum per year to the year 2039 to support the projected increase in employment growth. In respect of Stoke-on-Trent the study recommended a housing requirement of 804 dwellings per annum to 2039 to support the projected increase in employment growth.
- 3.12 The update also recognises an updated calculated annual need for 453 affordable homes across both Stoke and Newcastle-under-Lyme over the next five years to clear the backlog and meet newly arising need over the next five years (242 Newcastle-under-Lyme and 210 Stoke-on-Trent) with this reducing to 265 affordable homes per annum thereafter (199 Newcastle-under-Lyme and 66 Stoke-on-Trent) once the backlog is cleared.

**Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stafford Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (2015)**

- 3.13 The assessment was jointly commissioned by the four authorities. The identified need, as at 2015, for pitches was as follows in Table 1. However the latest position is set out on Page 9 within the section 'Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople'.

**Table 1: Summary of overall pitch and plot requirements over five years and up to 2033/34**

District/Local Planning Authority		Gypsy and Traveller Pitch requirements	Showperson Plot requirements
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5 yr shortfall 2014/15 to 2018/19	1	0
	2019/20 to 2033/34*	7	0
Stoke-on-Trent	5 yr shortfall 2014/15 to 2018/19	22	0
	2019/20 to 2033/34*	16	0
Staffordshire Moorlands	5 yr shortfall 2014/15 to 2018/19	6	0
	2019/20 to 2033/34*	2	0
Stafford Borough	5 yr shortfall 2012/13 to 2016/17	19	0
	2017/18 to 2026/27*	24	0
Total	5 yr shortfall 2014/15 to 2018/19	48	0
	2019/20 to 2033/34*	48	0

**Table 2: Summary of transit requirements 2014/15 to 2018/19**

Authority	Five year pitch requirement (single van use)	Total maximum caravans with towing vehicles that could be accommodated
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5	10
Stoke-on-Trent	5	10
Staffordshire Moorlands	-	-
Stafford Borough	-	-
Total	10	20

### Employment Land Reviews

#### **Stafford Borough Employment Land Review**

- 3.14 Stafford Borough Council published an Employment Land Review in 2012 as part of the evidence for the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 which concluded that 160 hectares of employment land is required for the area at 8 hectares per year.
- 3.15 Stafford has median earnings of £26,603 per year with 68.2% of people living and working in the Borough. Of the 31.8% working outside the Borough, 8.5% work in Stoke-on-Trent whilst 19.2% work elsewhere in the West Midlands and 4.2% beyond.
- 3.16 The 2011 Census data shows that 67% of residents live and work in Stafford Borough so therefore the area is part of a broader functional market area with the strongest links being to Stoke-on-Trent.
- 3.17 The Economic Development Needs Assessment will be produced for the New Local Plan.

#### **Staffordshire Moorlands Employment Land Review (2014) and update (2017)**

- 3.18 In terms of the Functional Economic Area for the District, the study concluded that it would fall within the wider economic area of Stoke-on-Trent, within which some 76% of the District's economically active residents work. The need for employment land was also considered in the report but this was subsequently updated in 2017 to take account of new data.

- 3.19 The 2017 Update identified an objectively assessed need employment land of 13 to 27ha up to the year 2031. The upper end of this range corresponds with the top of the assessed need for housing to provide a consistent approach and was derived by consideration of Experian and Oxford Economics jobs forecasts. Development at the top of each range would support approximately 800 additional jobs in the District up to the year 2031.

#### **Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Employment Land Review (2015)**

- 3.20 The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Employment Land Review 2015 concluded that Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme together comprise a Travel to Work Area and a Functional Economic Market Area. Stoke-on-Trent remains a net importer of labour, with a net total of 6,108 in-commuters according to the 2011 Census. In contrast, Newcastle-under-Lyme is a net exporter of labour, with a net total of 8,058 out-commuters. Very strong commuting relationships exist between Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme and at the same time it acknowledged the strong commuting relationships with Stafford Borough, Staffordshire Moorlands and Cheshire East.
- 3.21 Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme's employment space is still dominated by industrial uses which account for around 70% of total employment floorspace. Whilst this is increasing in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the level of industrial stock in Stoke-on-Trent has been declining for a number of years. The 2015 study identified that for Stoke-on-Trent between 146 Ha and 201 Ha was identified as being required over the 26 year plan period to 2039. For Newcastle-under-Lyme between 44 ha and 133 ha was identified as being required to 2039. Across the FEMA overall the forecasting suggests a need for between 190 Ha and 334 Ha over the 26 year plan period.
- 3.22 Following the 2015 study a SHMA update was carried out in 2017 which linked housing and employment evidence to ascertain an Objectively Assessed Need and therefore narrow down on the range that was set out in the ELR. This identified that the OAN for employment land requirements, based on the most appropriate forecasting for the area – Cambridge Econometrics was that a requirement of 199 Ha of employment land was required across the plan area to 2033 (131 Ha in Stoke-on-Trent and 68 Ha in Newcastle-under-Lyme). This amount of employment land would support in the region of 17,372 jobs (approximately 869 new jobs per annum).
- 3.23 Both Councils have been reviewing employment land monitoring information from 2013 to 2017 and the evidence from 2013 to 2017 and the evidence provided by the Joint Employment Land Review 2015 to determine how much employment land could be delivered in order to support the provision of more and better quality jobs. The total employment land supply is summarised in the table below.

	Hectares of Employment Land		
	Newcastle under-Lyme	Stoke-on-Trent	Joint Local Plan area
New employment land developed between 2013 and 2017	4	37	41
Vacant land with planning approval for new employment development at 1 April 2017	29	87	116
Other land from the Employment Land Review (2015) which is considered to be suitable and could be allocated for employment development:	30	43	73
<b>Total Potential Employment Land Supply:</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>230</b>

### **North Staffordshire Green Belt**

3.24 The North Staffordshire Green Belt was approved by Staffordshire County Council in 1967, and by extension the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan (June 1983) to prevent the coalescence of town and villages around the Potteries.

### **Stafford Borough**

3.25 The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (June 2014) identifies the Green Belt boundaries for the Borough, located to the north of Stone forming part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt area and south east of Stafford as part of the West Midlands Green Belt area. As there is sufficient land to serve the development needs of Stafford Borough outside of these Green Belt areas no safeguarded land or boundary changes have been identified. However Policy E5 does identify Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt at Hadleigh Park, Moorfields Industrial Estate and the former Meaford Power Station site where employment uses are supported on previously developed areas.

3.26 The North Staffordshire Green Belt will be maintained through the New Local Plan in line with the national policy position and the local context.

### **Staffordshire Moorlands**

3.27 In Staffordshire Moorlands, the 1998 Local Plan replaced the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan and made amendments to the inner boundaries of the Green Belt around Blythe Bridge, associated with the construction of the A50 which created enclosed land which could be readily parcelled for development. During the consideration of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, the planning inspector acknowledged that a comprehensive review of the Green Belt would be required in order to support housing growth Biddulph to be identified in a Site Allocations DPD. In turn, Staffordshire Moorlands Green Belt Review (2015) has identified numerous sites which may be suitable for release from the Green Belt in exceptional circumstances. The review has informed the preparation of the new Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan with Green Belt release proposed in Biddulph, Werrington and Cheadle.

## **Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme**

- 3.28 A Joint Green Belt Assessment has been prepared in respect of the areas within Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent City Council designated as Green Belt. Approximately 45% of Newcastle-under-Lyme's area is designated as Green Belt. The Assessment forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Joint Local Plan.
- 3.29 The purpose of the Green Belt Assessment was to provide Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme with an objective, evidence-based assessment of how the Green Belt contributes to the five purposes of Green Belt set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The assessment considers the history and origins of the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme Green Belt and how it has evolved since its inception. It provides a review of current national policy and guidance and carries out a two stage assessment:
- Stage 1 involves dividing the whole Green Belt into General Areas and assessing them against the five purposes of the Green Belt;
  - Stage 2 involves defining smaller greenbelt parcels adjacent to the urban areas and inset settlements, and assessed as making a weak, moderate or strong contribution.
- 3.30 In total 15 General Areas were assessed as part of Stage 1 and a further 186 parcels were assessed at Stage 2. The Green Belt Assessment was published in November 2017 as evidence for the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation.
- 3.31 In Newcastle-under-Lyme the preferred options consultation document showed that additional housing and employment land is required beyond the existing supply within Newcastle-under-Lyme. This situation forms part of the exceptional circumstances evidence behind a proposal to release sites in the Green Belt within Newcastle-under-Lyme, within the vicinity of Keele University Campus and the Keele University Science and Innovation Park and sites at Kidsgrove, Talke and Chesterton.
- 3.32 In Stoke-on-Trent the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (para. 4.3) states that it is not considered justifiable to go into the Green Belt for the delivery of development as the current requirements (in line with the SHMA 2017) can be met within the City Council's urban area. However it is considered that some very minor amendments to the boundaries within Stoke-on-Trent may be required to align the Green Belt boundary with the latest Ordnance Survey base and technological advancement in mapping. This will be set out at the Draft Joint Local Plan stage.

## **4. Strategic cross boundary matters**

- 4.1 The following are agreed by the four authorities as being strategic cross boundary matters which require co-operation:
- a. Working towards meeting development requirements
    - I. Housing – the provision of housing across the four local planning authority areas
    - II. Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople – provision for accommodation
    - III. Employment – the provision of employment across the four local planning authority areas
  - b. Co-ordination of shared infrastructure
    - a. Green Infrastructure
    - b. Traffic growth on A50
    - c. Education

- c. Green Belt –co-operation on the approach to Green Belt
- d. Constellation Partnership – co-operation on any future joint strategy in support of the potential HS2 hub at Crewe
- e. Blythe Vale Strategic Allocation – consideration of the cross boundary implications of the allocation as identified in the proposed Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

**5. Agreed matters**

Working towards meeting development requirements

Housing provision

- 5.1 The proposed Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan makes provision for an average annual development of 320 dwellings up to the year 2031. This is towards the top of the range of the objectively assessed need for housing identified for the District in the 2017 SHMA Update (235 to 330dpa). This is supported by Green Belt release to enable housing growth in Biddulph and the Rural Areas. There is a shortfall of 190 homes from the top of the objectively assessed need range over the period 2012 to 2031.
- 5.2 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is unable to accommodate any potentially arising unmet housing needs from neighbouring authorities due to development constraints. In particular, the supply of land in the District is limited by Green Belt which should only be released in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the District also partly lies within the Peak District National Park
- 5.3 The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough makes provision for an average annual development of 500 dwellings up to the year 2031 in accordance with the objectively assessed need for housing identified for the Borough in the 2012 SHMA. Housing growth is focussed at Stafford and Stone on large-scale Strategic Development Locations as well as being delivered across a number of Key Service Villages. Since 2011 a total of 3,337 new homes have been completed with 3,509 having planning consent. Stafford Borough currently has more than a 5 year supply of housing land.
- 5.4 In February 2018 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council made a request to Stafford Borough to assist with meeting the shortfall of 190 new homes. However based on this need having to be met within the relevant Housing Market Area, the adjoining area between Stafford Borough and Staffordshire Moorlands is contained within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and therefore delivery is severely constrained in this area. At this stage no request has been received from the City of Stoke-on-Trent Council or Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to accommodate any unmet housing needs within Stafford Borough, although it is noted that the Joint Local Plan currently has a shortfall of over 1,200 new homes compared to deliverable sites
- 5.5 Taking into account the Joint Local Plan evidence base Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has published for consultation purposes, with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, a preferred growth strategy which seeks to provide for 11,720 homes over a twenty year plan period between 2013 and 2033 within Newcastle-under-Lyme. However, within the urban area of Newcastle-under-Lyme the Borough Council can only demonstrate delivery of 6,611 dwellings against this requirement. The Council has therefore proposed and consulted on the release land within the Green Belt to help meet its housing needs. At this stage the Council has identified sites within the



Green Belt with a capacity of 3,010 dwellings. The total delivery against the requirement is 9,621 (82% of their apportionment) leaving a shortfall of -2099. Between, 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017, 1,080 homes have been completed in the borough.

- 5.6 Taking into account the Joint Local Plan evidence base Stoke-on-Trent City Council has a housing need requirement of 16,080 dwellings which is the city council's appointment of the joint plan area's requirement of 27,800 dwellings. The city council has published for consultation purposes, with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, a preferred options growth strategy which seeks to deliver 16,892 homes over a twenty year plan period between 2013 and 2033 within Stoke-on-Trent (105% of their appointment). How this supply is calculated is set out at paragraph 2.76 of the Preferred Options Consultation Document. Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017, 2,235 homes have been completed in the city.
- 5.7 Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are both unable to assist in meeting SMDC's housing development requirements due to the fact that the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme Joint Local Plan is in the early stages of preparation.
- 5.8 The councils are still gathering evidence and have just completed a consultation on the Preferred Options which aims to meet the needs of the Joint Local Plan area. The Joint Local Plan will need to be at a more advanced stage before the councils can consider the needs of adjoining authorities as the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options consultation identifies a shortfall in housing supply within the Housing Market Area of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent and which would need to be resolved before the consideration of housing need arising from Staffordshire Moorlands could be considered.
- 5.9 All four authorities will liaise on future consideration and evidence gathering in relation to housing requirements and provision undertaken as part of future plan making.

#### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 5.10 The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (2015) identified the requirement as identified in this Statement of Common Ground.
- 5.11 There are 4 pitches in Staffordshire Moorlands. The residual requirement for pitches in the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 in the District is 3.
- 5.12 The proposed Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan does not identify any land to accommodate the identified needs due to a lack of suitable and available land. Policy H4 of the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan will help to deliver the shortfall in pitches through the determination of appropriate windfall sites
- 5.13 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is unable to accommodate any potentially arising unmet needs from neighbouring authorities due to the lack of available land.

- 5.14 There are currently 69 households living on Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Stafford Borough, 12 pitches on a Local Authority site and 56 on authorised sites alongside 8 unauthorised.
- 5.15 The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 identifies current new provision for 43 pitches over the period 2011 to 2027 of which 36 new pitches having planning consent at St Alban's Road, Stafford. There is an unidentified need for 7 pitches which will be delivered through windfall sites over the Plan period in line with Policy C7 of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough.
- 5.16 The Stafford Borough New Local Plan will allocate a new gypsy site to meet requirements through to 2040 but will be unable to accommodate any potentially arising unmet needs from neighbouring authorities due to the lack of available land despite having a request from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to do so in February 2018. Stafford Borough will need to update the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment through the New Local Plan either jointly with neighbouring authorities or independently.
- 5.17 The Joint Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (2015) identifies a shortfall of one pitch between 2014 and 2019 for Newcastle-under-Lyme. A further six pitches are required between 2019 and 2034, bringing the total requirement to seven permanent pitches. In addition to the provision of permanent pitches, the study identifies the requirement to plan for five transit pitches across Newcastle-under-Lyme between 2015/16 and 2018/19.
- 5.18 Within Stoke-on-Trent the Joint Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (2015) identifies a shortfall of 22 pitches between 2014 and 2019 and a further requirement for 16 pitches between 2019 and 2034, bringing the total requirement to 38 permanent pitches. In addition to the provision of permanent pitches, the study identifies the requirement to plan for five transit pitches across Stoke-on-Trent between 2015/16 and 2018/19.
- 5.19 Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council have cooperated on the preparation of a Joint methodology to identify the provision of pitches. Preparations are underway to consult on the Joint methodology and potential land to accommodate the requirement later in 2018. Therefore, at this stage the borough council is not in a position to identify suitable and/or available land within Newcastle-under-Lyme to accommodate its needs, or the needs of other local authorities. However, the shortfall of housing and employment land within Newcastle-under-Lyme means that the borough council is unable to accommodate any potentially arising unmet gypsy and traveller needs from neighbouring authorities due to a lack of available land.

#### Employment provision

- 5.20 The proposed Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan makes provision for 27ha of employment land up to the year 2031. This is the top end of the objectively assessed need for employment land for the District and supports the growth of approximately 800 jobs within the District.
- 5.21 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is unable to accommodate any potentially arising unmet employment needs from neighbouring authorities due to development

constraints. In particular, the supply of land in the District is limited by Green Belt which should only be released in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the District also partly lies within the Peak District National Park

- 5.22 Stafford Borough Council published an Employment Land Review in 2012 as part of the evidence for the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 which concluded that 160 hectares of employment land is required for the area at 8 hectares per year.
- 5.23 The Plan allocates a total of 89 hectares of new employment land on strategic development areas at Stafford, Stone, Ladfordfields and Raleigh Hall. Currently 23.2 hectares have been completed since 2011 and 70 hectares (gross) have planning commitments, with 50.4 hectares allocated. At this stage no request has been received from neighbouring authorities to accommodate any unmet employment needs within Stafford Borough.
- 5.24 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council agreed a Joint Employment Land Review in December 2015 to inform the preparation of a new Joint Local Plan. The ELR together with the SHMA, recommends that the OAN for employment land should be set to meet the Cambridge Econometrics LEFM, amounting to 199 hectares of land to be delivered for B-Class uses over the plan period 2013 to 2033. This OAN is made up of 68 hectares for Newcastle-under-Lyme and 131 hectares for Stoke-on-Trent.
- 5.25 However the availability of land for employment development in the plan area has led the councils to identify a preferred employment land supply of 230 hectares, which is approximately 15% higher than the OAN. Both councils propose to maintain this high level of supply across the plan area so as to help deliver wider economic aspirations and give flexibility and choice for the market.
- Within Newcastle-under-Lyme this supply is made up of the following:
- 4 hectares of completed employment land between 2013 and 2017
  - 28 hectares of vacant land with planning approval
  - 18 hectares of vacant employment land that is currently considered to be suitable and available.
- 5.26 Within Newcastle-under-Lyme there is currently an identified shortfall of 18 hectares of employment land. However in support of the delivery of an innovation led, higher value employment growth, as advocated by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP, the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document has proposed the development of 12.5 ha of B1a/B1b land within the Green Belt adjacent to the existing Keele Science and Innovation Park. This leaves a shortfall of 5.5 hectares against the identified need of 68 hectares. However, as indicated above this shortfall can be met across the Functional Economic Market Area.
- 5.27 The new jobs that are projected to be created under the OAN total 17,372 jobs. Of this total job growth figure, 7,613 are projected to be in Newcastle-under-Lyme and 9,759 in Stoke-on-Trent. Within Stoke-on-Trent the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document (para. 2.32 – 2.35) identifies a supply of 167 hectares of employment land (against a requirement of 131 hectares) within Stoke-on-Trent, the supply is made up of the following:
- 37 hectares of completed employment land between 2013 and 2017
  - 87 hectares of vacant land with planning approval
  - 43 hectares of vacant employment land that is currently considered to be suitable and available.

- 5.28 In Stoke-on-Trent 89% of the employment land supply comprises of previously developed land and the preferred sites are all identified within the urban area of Stoke-on-Trent and are concentrated close to the City and Town centres and around major transport corridors (that is the A50 and A500 and the Manchester-Stafford and Crewe-Derby railway lines). The Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone covers a large proportion of this employment land supply, from Cliffe Vale and Etruria Valley in the centre of the conurbation to Chatterley Valley and Tunstall in the north. The updated monitoring evidence identifies that Stoke-on-Trent is experiencing a marked improvement in the take-up of employment land in recent years and this is now at a level that is comparable to longer-term trends. All four authorities will liaise on future consideration and evidence gathering in relation to employment requirements and provision undertaken as part of future plan making.

#### Co-ordination of shared infrastructure

- 5.29 Signatories to this statement will co-ordinate green infrastructure strategies and any subsequent delivery plans to ensure a consistent and complementary approach
- 5.30 Highways England has identified the need to consider the cumulative impact of development at Blythe Vale along with growth identified in the Joint Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle Borough Local Plan and East Staffordshire Local Plan on the A50 with a detailed assessment of the impact of the A50/A521 junction a priority.
- 5.31 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council will work with partners, including the signatories to this Statement of Common Ground and others such as Staffordshire County Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Highways England, landowners and developers to implement the requirements of Policy DSR1 to ensure that cross boundary strategic planning matters are addressed. This will include consideration of the transport implications for the A50, associated improvements as required by Highways England and the Derby-Crewe railway line and services.
- 5.32 There are cross boundary movements of pupils between the respective authority areas. The signatories to this statement will liaise with one another and Staffordshire County Council to address matters that may arise in terms of accommodating growth and the subsequent demand for school places.

#### Green Belt

- 5.33 The adopted and proposed Green Belt boundaries in Staffordshire Moorlands prevent urban sprawl and the merging of towns and villages along the border of the Local Plan areas.
- 5.34 The North Staffordshire Green Belt boundary was originally defined in 1967 and its function defined in The North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan adopted in 1983 (Summary of Survey and Issues Section, para 1.02) as directing the continuing pressure for development in rural areas to the regeneration of the older parts of the urban areas and maintaining the valuable tracts of open countryside near the built up area.

5.35 At paragraph 2.03, it sets out the established aims of the Green Belt in North Staffordshire, as originally approved by the County Council in 1967. This is as follows:

a) "To limit the expansion into adjoining open country of the urban areas of North Staffordshire forming part of the Potteries Conurbation.

b) To prevent the following towns and settlements in the adjoining open area from merging with the Potteries Conurbation and with other settlements;

a) The built up areas of Kidsgrove (within Newcastle-under-Lyme) and Biddulph;

b) The settlements of:

Brown Edge, Endon, Stanley, Bagnall, Stanley Moor, Norton Green, Baddeley Green, Baddeley Edge, Light Oaks, Werrington, Cellarhead, Caverswall, Cookshill, Blythe Bridge, Forsbrook, Meir Heath, Barlaston (within Stoke-on-Trent)

Alsagers Bank, Halmer End,

Miles Green, Wood Lane, Bignall End and Audley. (within Newcastle-under-Lyme)

c) To prevent the coalescence of the following towns and settlements around the Potteries Conurbation:

Madeley Heath with Madeley;  
Betley with Audley. (within Newcastle-under-Lyme)

Leek with Longsdon;  
Leek with Cheddleton;  
Longsdon with Cheddleton;  
Longsdon with Endon;  
Cheddleton with Folly Lane;  
Folly Lane with Wetley Rocks;  
Wetley Rocks with Cellarhead;  
Cheadle with Kingsley Holt;  
Kingsley with Kingsley Holt;  
Cheadle with Dihorne;  
Cheadle with Forsbrook;  
Fulford with Meir Heath;  
Stone with Oulton;  
Stone with Yarfield;  
Tittensor with Barlaston;  
Barlaston with Stone;

5.36 The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (June 2014) identifies the Green Belt boundaries for the Borough, located to the north of Stone forming part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt area and south east of Stafford as part of the West Midlands Green Belt area. As there is sufficient land to serve the development needs of Stafford Borough outside of these Green Belt areas no safeguarded land or boundary changes have been identified. However Policy E5 does identify Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt at Hadleigh Park, Moorfields Industrial Estate and

the former Meaford Power Station site where employment uses are supported on previously developed areas. The North Staffordshire Green Belt will be maintained through the New Local Plan in line with the national policy position and the local context.

- 5.37 The authorities will liaise on any future Green Belt reviews that would affect shared the Green Belt boundaries in order to consider the merits of a consistent approach.

#### Constellation Partnership

- 5.38 All signatories to this statement form part of the Constellation Partnership which is in the process of developing a growth strategy to maximise the economic benefits of the potential HS2 hub at Crewe across Cheshire and Staffordshire.
- 5.39 Joint working between the signatories of this statement and the wider partnership are set out in the terms of the Constellation Partnership Concordat.
- 5.40 Emerging or future Local Plans will have regards to the Constellation Partnership's Growth Strategy.

#### Blythe Vale Strategic Allocation

- 5.41 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan includes a 48.5ha mixed-use allocation for approximately 300 dwellings, employment and supporting infrastructure at Blythe Vale. The site lies adjacent to the A50 and is in close proximity to the boundary with Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford Borough.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.42 Policy DSR1 (Blythe Vale) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan includes a requirement for the preparation of a comprehensive master plan for the site, the provision of a Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, flood risk assessment, landscaping scheme, ecological survey and management plan, measures to improve sustainable transport routes and connectivity with Blythe Bridge and contributions towards open space, education and other community needs as required.
- 5.43 Stafford Borough Council notes the significant mixed use development at Blythe Vale including 300 new homes and over 48 hectares of employment land, which is supported through the Constellation Partnership provided this notes new development at Hadleigh Park, a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt of Stafford Borough. However the Borough Council wish to be consulted on further detailed studies regarding new infrastructure at Blythe Vale as well as a master plan for the area setting out links to adjoining areas and landscape implications. Whilst the Borough Council welcomes the Blythe Bridge Opportunity corridor for green infrastructure, areas designated for potential new floodplain and riparian woodland within Stafford Borough Council's area should be removed from the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan's Green Infrastructure Strategy maps

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<sup>1</sup> On 2nd November 2017, full planning consent was granted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council on part of the allocation for 118 dwellings, access, pedestrian and cycle linkages, open space, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage measures.

- 5.44 The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Employment Land Review 2015 identified the Blythe Bridge strategic site as playing an important role in meeting the investment needs of the Stoke and Newcastle conurbation in the early 1990s.
- 5.45 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council considers that the proposed employment land allocation at Blythe Vale (southern part of the 'site) should be protected from being developed for housing and promoted for B2/B8 uses.
- 5.46 Stoke-on-Trent City Council considers the Blythe Vale site to be an important strategic employment site on the boundary of Stoke-on-Trent, as recognised within the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Employment Land Review 2015. The allocation of the Blythe Vale site is supported, particularly for employment generating uses and in particular the southern part of the site should be protected for employment uses (B2/B8).
- 5.47 Policy DSR1 (Blythe Vale) of the Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan Submission Version) states that the "residential development should be located to the north of the site". The development will be subject to a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site, including the delivery of employment land to the south of the A50
- 5.48 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council proposes to introduce a more flexible approach to the site by opening the potential range of employment to all B-use class developments, including B8. This departure from the former approach to the Regional Investment Site is proposed in order to facilitate the delivery of the site which to date has been restricted to B1 and B2 (where appropriate) without success.
- 5.49 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council will work with partners, including the signatories to this Statement of Common Ground to implement the requirements of Policy DSR1 to ensure that cross boundary strategic planning matters are addressed.

## **6 Decision-making & project management**

- 6.1 An officer working group with representatives from each authority shall liaise quarterly to determine and agree the scope for further engagement on strategic planning matters. This will include consideration of the need to involve wider stakeholders, including those named in this Statement of Common Ground.
- 6.2 Details of activities undertaken in relation to this Statement of Common Ground shall be recorded and published in a monitoring report in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012.
- 6.3 This Statement of Common Ground shall be reviewed in whole or in part as required and as a minimum at the time of a relevant Development Plan update or Development Plan review. Any such review will require Member approval from each respective authority.

## **7 Limitations**

- 7.1 For the avoidance of doubt, this Statement of Common Ground shall not fetter the discretion of the local authorities in the determination of any planning application, or in the exercise of any of its statutory powers and duties, or in its response to

consultations, and is not intended to be legally binding. The terms of the Statement of Common Ground can be dissolved at the written request of either party.

**Signed**

**Date**

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

4-6-2018

~~S. E. Ralphs~~

leader.

Stafford Borough Council

~~Geoff~~ Cabinet Member  
Economic Development  
& Planning

16-7-18

Stoke-on-Trent City Council

A. Munday

PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

25.6.2018

~~Pr. Northcott~~ PR. NORTHCOTT

Portfolio Holder for  
Planning + Growth.

23.5.2018