

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Council Assembly

19th July 2017

TITLE:	Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Wain – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development & Property
CONTACT OFFICER:	Pranali Parikh – Regeneration Manager
WARDS INVOLVED:	All areas outside of the Peak District National Park

Appendices Attached

Appendix 1 – Draft Local Plan Preferred Options document

Appendix 2 – Draft Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan

Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan

Appendix 4 – Site Proformas (site recommendations on 2016 Preferred Options sites and newly recommended Preferred Options sites, summary of consultation feedback, key issues and evidence on these sites)

Appendix 5 – Alternative site suggestions (additional sites suggested in response to 2016 Preferred Option Sites and Boundaries consultation)

Appendix 6 – Summaries of individual consultation responses and petitions submitted to each question included in the 2016 Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries consultation with recommended Council responses

1. **Reason for the Report:** To consider and agree the Local Plan Preferred Options for consultation purposes and the timetable for the preparation and submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State

2. **Recommendation**

2.1 That Councillors consider the background evidence and subsequent analysis referred to in this report and accompanying appendices.

2.2 That Councillors agree the Preferred Options Local Plan for public consultation purposes

2.3 That Councillors agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director (Place) to make non-material amendments to the Preferred Options Local Plan document ahead of the public consultation

2.4 That Councillors agree to the proposals for public consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan

2.5 That Councillors agree to the proposed timetable for taking the Local Plan forward. This will form part of the Local Development Scheme.

3. **Executive Summary**

3.1 The adopted Core Strategy makes a commitment to undertake an early and comprehensive review of the plan for the period 2016 – 2031 to take account of longer term development requirements. The review of the Core Strategy would also roll it forward into a single local plan combined with site allocations.

3.2 To date, two public consultations have been undertaken alongside the gathering of extensive new evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan. On 8th March 2017, the Council agreed the development requirements for housing (average of 320 homes per year) and employment (27ha in total) up to the year 2031 in light of new evidence regarding housing and employment needs.

3.3 This Preferred Options Local Plan seeks to provide an overarching strategy for the development of the District up to the year 2031 which delivers the agreed development requirements and wider objectives in a sustainable manner. The plan provides both strategic and more detailed development management policies and identifies specific sites and boundaries to help determine future planning applications.

3.4 The plan builds on the approach taken for the adopted Core Strategy with modifications to reflect new evidence, feedback and new Government policy and regulations. Key changes include amendments to Preferred Options sites, a new approach to support limited infill in the Rural Areas, an adjustment to the Spatial Strategy to increase the percentage of housing in the Rural Areas

by 3% with a corresponding increase in Cheadle. These changes have enabled a significant reduction in the amount of Green Belt release when compared to the previous sites and boundaries.

- 3.5 It is proposed the Preferred Options Local Plan will be subject public consultation from 31st July to 22nd September. This equates to nearly eight weeks. This goes beyond the standard six week period of consultation in order to account for the summer holiday period. It must be noted that the proposals agreed for consultation at the Preferred Options stage may be subject to change following further consideration prior to publication of the Submission Version Local Plan scheduled for February 2018. The submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State is proposed to follow in June 2018.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Local Plan will have implications for all four aims of the 2015-2019 Corporate Plan, namely:

Aim 1 -To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work

Aim 2 - To meet our financial challenges and provide value for money

Aim 3- To help create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages

Aim 4 - To protect and improve the environment

5. **Options and Analysis**

- 5.1 Option 1 – (recommended). The Local Plan Preferred Options is agreed for public consultation along with the timetable for taking the plan forward. This option is considered to accord with relevant national policy, guidance and the Council’s evidence base. The proposed timetable also sets an ambitious timeframe for the submission of the Local Plan to ensure that it can be adopted as soon as possible.
- 5.2 Option 2 – (not recommended). This option relates to a decision being taken by the Council to support alternative proposals for the Local Plan and timetable. This option is not supported as unless the Local Plan is based on credible evidence, relevant policy and legislation, it will increase the risk of the plan being found “unsound” at examination. Alternative timetables for the preparation of the Local Plan either increase the risk that the plan will be delayed or that insufficient consideration is given to issues arising from the consultation ahead of the submission of the Local Plan.
- 5.3 Option 3 – (not recommended). The Council does not support issuing the Preferred Options Local Plan for public consultation. This would

result in delay in submitting the Local Plan and therefore reduce the Council's ability to control development in the District.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

None direct

6.2 Workforce

Highlighted in the report

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan accompanies this report (Appendix 3).

6.4 Financial Considerations

Highlighted in the report

6.5 Legal

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for the preparation of the Local Plan. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on councils to keep a register of individuals and community groups locally who want to acquire land for self-build homes and to have regard to these registers in carrying out its planning function.

6.6 Sustainability

A Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan and alternative options has been undertaken (Appendix 2). Its findings have informed the recommendations made in this report.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

A period of public consultation will commence on the Local Plan Preferred Options and Sustainability Appraisal on 31st July. The recommendations in this report have been informed by external feedback obtained during the Local Plan Options consultation held during the Summer of 2015 and Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries consultation published in April 2016. Internal feedback

from Councillors and officers has also informed the preparation of the plan to date.

6.8 Risk Assessment

If the Council does not agree to consultation on a Local Plan that is informed by evidence and relevant national policy and legislation, it will increase the risk that the Local Plan will be found “unsound” at Examination. Without an up to date Local Plan in place, there is an increased risk of development coming forward under the National Planning Policy Framework rather than local policy. This provides less control over applications than is desired. This risk will be minimised, but not eliminated, if the Council decides to support the option recommended in Section 5. The Preferred Options Local Plan does not include a site allocation to meet the identified need for gypsy and travellers accommodation. This carries a degree of risk as the plan does not fully demonstrate how this need will be met. The risk is in part mitigated through the criteria based policy in the plan which allows for future sites to be approved if they are suitable. It should be noted that at this stage, the Council is not declaring that it considers the Local Plan to be “sound”. The purpose of the proposed consultation is to test and refine the plan if necessary so that the Council can publish a plan which it declares sound at the formal publication stage due in 2018.

7. **Background and Detail**

Background

The Core Strategy

- 7.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy was adopted in March 2014. The Core Strategy identified a housing requirement of 300 homes per year and an employment land requirement of at least 24ha over the period 2011 to 2026. The Core Strategy also established the appropriate distribution of development across the District with the emphasis being on development in the market towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle with a more modest scale of development in the villages that lie within the Rural Area. However, the Planning Inspector who considered the Core Strategy determined that an early and comprehensive review of the Core Strategy for the period 2016 – 2031 would be required to take account of longer term development requirements. The review of the Core Strategy would also roll it forward into a single local plan combined with site allocations. The proposed Preferred Options Local Plan consultation is a key element of this process.

The Local Plan

- 7.2 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan will be a District wide development plan which replaces the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, Biddulph

Area Action Plan (AAP) and previous 1998 Local Plan to provide a framework for delivering development for the period 2016 to 2031.

- 7.3 The Local Plan sets out the development strategy, strategic and development management policies and land designations for the District. It influences how and where the Staffordshire Moorlands will develop in the future. It sets out what the District Council would like to achieve in each of the main towns and the rural areas outside the Peak District National Park. The Local Plan also provides the framework for future detailed guidance to supplement the policies.
- 7.4 The Local Plan covers only that part of the District for which the Council has responsibility as a local planning authority. It therefore excludes the Peak District National Park which is covered by a separate policy framework prepared by the Peak District National Park Authority.
- 7.5 The proposed consultation seeks views on the above elements of the Preferred Options Local Plan. The Core Strategy provides the basis for many of the proposed policies. Where amended or new policies are proposed in response to new evidence or Government policy, the proposed consultation document identifies the degree to which they are consistent with the Core Strategy. This also applies to other element of the plan such as the Challenges and Vision where some minor amendments from the Core Strategy are proposed.
- 7.6 This consultation builds on two previous public consultation regarding the Local Plan:
- **Site Options** consultation held between July and September 2015. Over 5500 responses were received regarding site and boundary options for housing, employment, mixed-use, open space, town centres, retail frontages, settlement boundaries and infill. Views were also sought on policy matters and potential changes to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). An updated SCI was adopted by the Council on 13th April 2016.
 - **Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries** consultation held between April and June 2016. Over 8600 responses were received. Analysis of the consultation responses has informed the content of this consultation and updates to the evidence base. Summaries of responses are provided in Appendix 4, 5 and 6 to this report.
- 7.7 On 8nd March 2017, the District Council agreed new housing and employment land requirements for Staffordshire Moorlands to be taken forward into the Preferred Options Local Plan. The agreed requirements took account of the latest evidence including an updated housing needs assessment and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. The agreed requirements were as follows:

- Housing – annual average requirement of 320 homes per year. This requirement would support a net growth of over 800 jobs in the District by the year 2031 took account of wider issues such as the demand for affordable housing
- Employment – 27ha (gross) in total to support the preferred level of housing and employment growth

Policy context and evidence

7.8 The Preferred Options Local Plan seeks to respond to national policy and legislation and evidence as highlighted in this section of the report. Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Local Planning Authorities are required to submit a Local Plan for examination that is considered to be “sound” – namely that it is:

- **“Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities which it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.”

7.9 In order for the Local Plan to be recommended for adoption by the Secretary of State, it must also be found to be legally compliant in terms of the relevant statutory requirements for undertaking a Local Plan. These include compliance with the Duty to Co-operate, the preparation and consideration of a Sustainability Appraisal of the plan, and compliance with consultation procedures as set out in the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and regulations.

7.10 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is a critical element of national planning policy both in relation to the preparation of Local Plans and in determining planning applications. As such, in order to pass the tests of soundness, it is essential that Local Planning Authorities to comply with its requirements. In relation to plan-making, the paragraph states that:

*“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.*

For plan-making this means that:

- *local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted¹*

7.11 It is therefore clear that identified development needs for the District should normally be met. This issue was discussed in more detail in the report to Council Assembly on 8th March 2017 regarding the Local Plan development requirements for housing and employment. In terms of how this may be achieved, Paragraph 157 of the NPPF states that “...*Local Plans should:*

- *...indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map*
- *allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate*
- *identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the use of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation*
- *identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance...*”

7.12 The NPPF specifies that the **Green Belt** is of great importance in order to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The NPPF is clear that “*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of a Local Plan*” (Para. 83). However, as outlined in this report, the NPPF is equally clear that “*Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs...unless specific policies...indicate development should be restricted*” (Paragraph 14).

7.13 With regards to **housing land**, Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities “to identify a specific deliverable² sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements” with a buffer to provide choice and competition. In the medium to long term, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should “identify a supply of

¹ “For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.”

² “To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.”

specific, developable³ sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15”.

- 7.14 The NPPF allows for a windfall allowance to be included in the local planning authorities housing land supply calculations. This matter is discussed later in this report.
- 7.15 With regards to **employment land**, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to set criteria or identify strategic sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period (Paragraph 21). It goes on to state that when there is not a reasonable prospect of a site being used for employment, alternative uses should be considered (Paragraph 22).
- 7.16 In relation to **retail and town centres**, the NPPF places a strong emphasis on the need to support the vitality and viability of town centres. Paragraph 23 requires Local Plans to; define a network and hierarchy of centres, define the extent of town centres and related primary and secondary frontages. Primary frontages are defined as parts of a town centre with a high proportion of retail units. Secondary frontages include opportunities for a wider range of town centre uses such as restaurants and other businesses.
- 7.17 Paragraph 23 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the need for additional retail floorspace and for Local Plans to allocate land to accommodate identified needs.
- 7.18 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires that Local Plans provides sufficient land for **open space, sports and recreation** as identified by a needs assessment. Detailed policy for **traveller’s accommodation** is not set out in the NPPF. However, Paragraph 159 makes it clear that housing needs of different groups of the community should be assessed. The footnote 34 of the NPPF cross references to a separate Government policy statement, which determines how the needs for traveller sites should be assessed. Paragraph 9 of the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites states that local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.
- 7.19 Paragraph 162 of the NPPF set out policy in relation to **infrastructure provision**. It states that local planning authorities should assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure to meet forecast demands.
- 7.20 In order to address strategic matters as required under the Duty to Co-operate as set out in section 110 of the Localism Act, the Council has worked with a number of relevant public bodies to identify and address such matters. This

³ “To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.”

process will continue during the preparation and implementation of the Local Plan. To date, the following issues have been identified:

- The provision of suitable supporting infrastructure for planned growth, including transport, education, utilities, green infrastructure and health with Staffordshire County Council, Highways England, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other bodies
- The need to protect the setting of the Peak District National Park
- Meeting development requirements across the entire District, including the Peak District National Park and neighbouring areas with shared housing market and economic relationships
- Engaging in the emerging proposals for economic growth and investment through the Constellation Partnership which seeks to benefit from planned investment in HS2 at Crewe and beyond

7.21 In preparing this Local Plan, consideration has also been given to other new or emerging policies and regulations, including; the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Self-Build and Custom House Building Act 2015 and associated Regulations (2016), the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017, Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017, Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and the Housing White paper published in February 2017.

7.22 The Housing White Paper published in February 2017 which sets out a number of potential policy changes and information relating to the provision of housing, design and Green Belt amongst others. However, the final outcome of consultation on the White Paper is awaited. The Self-Build and Custom House Building Act 2015 and associated Regulations (2016) introduced a new requirement for District Council to maintain a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire a plot of land to provide their own home. Councils are then required to have regard to the register in carrying out its planning and regeneration functions. The Regulations require that sufficient land is granted planning consent to meet the demand on the register within three years.

7.23 The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 makes provisions for Councils to maintain a register of brownfield sites that are suitable for residential development irrespective of their planning status. The first register must be published by the end of 2017. Sites identified in Local Plans may be included on the register alongside others that are considered suitable for development. Permission in Principle (PiP) may then be granted for some sites on the register. Further information is due to be published by Government to set out how PiP will be implemented. This issue will require further consideration in the next iteration of the Local Plan.

7.24 In addition to national policy, the Preferred Options Local Plan seeks to reflect the extensive evidence base which has been commissioned to ensure that the plan is robust. Key studies include:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2014) and Update (2017)

- Employment Land Study (2014) and Update (2017)
- Updated Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (2015)
- Retail Study (2013)
- Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update (SFRA) (2015)
- Ecological Study (2015) and update (2017)
- Cheadle Town Centre Transport Study (2015) and Phase 2 Assessment (2017)
- Green Belt Review (2015) and Updates (2016 and 2017)
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2015)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (2017)
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study Interim Report (2017)
- Development Capacity, Viability and Community Infrastructure Levy Study, including
 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016-2017)
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment (2017)
 - Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Assessment (2016):
 - Development Capacity Study (2008/9, and update 2010/11)
 - Landscape & Settlement Character Appraisal (2008)
 - Renewable Energy/Low Carbon Energy Study (2010)
 - Tourism Study (2011)
 - Ecological Surveys (2010/11)
 - Historic Environment Character Assessment: Staffordshire Moorlands (2010)

7.25 Full details of the evidence base are available on the Council's website. Where directly applicable to a site, a summary of relevant evidence is provided in the site pro formas (Appendix 4). Proposed changes to policies in response to the new evidence are identified within the proposed Preferred Options Local Plan document (Appendix 1).

7.26 The Local Plan Preferred Options document is supported by a Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2). The appraisal has helped to inform the content of the Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal itself is also proposed to be subject to public consultation alongside the Local Plan. The appraisal considers options for development requirements, sites and policy proposals. The Sustainability Appraisal incorporates a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment Report which any impacts of the Local Plan against the conservation objectives of sites of European importance for nature conservation in, and outside the plan area, to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of any sites concerned. These sites, often just referred to as European sites, include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

7.27 An Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) has also been undertaken to consider how the Local Plan may impact upon different groups within the community. A summary of relevant findings are included in the site pro formas (Appendix 4). Where changes to policy are proposed in response to feedback from the Sustainability Appraisal, this is recorded in the proposed Preferred Options Local Plan document (Appendix 1).

Consultation feedback

7.28 A further key consideration for the Preferred Options Local Plan is consultation feedback. A total of 8603 individual responses were received from 2643 individuals and organisations. A site-by-site summary of feedback regarding specific sites received in response to the Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries consultation is provided in the site pro formas in Appendix 4. Feedback in relation to additional suggested sites is summarised in Appendix 5. A summary of individual responses to each of the 41 questions that were subject to the 2016 Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries is provided at Appendix 6. This includes the nine petitions that were submitted which were as follows:

Petition	Number of signatures
Save the Mount, Leek	1092
Against proposed site, Kingsley	184
Against development of Akesmore Lane, Biddulph	450
Against Travellers Site (Forsbrook Parish Council)	1450
Checkley (non) Travellers site	222
Against housing, Newpool Road, Knypersley, Biddulph	883
Against development adj to Knypersley Hall, Biddulph	114
Support for revised ADD03 (from north Biddulph residents)	361
Cheadle South West Housing and lack of open space	952

7.29 Many of the consultation responses submitted in relation to proposed development sites came from residents or representative groups who were concerned about the impacts of development. Common concerns include:

- Loss of countryside and/or Green Belt
- Infrastructure constraints (highways, schools, health, utilities)
- Highway safety
- Ecological / environmental impacts
- Over-development / harm to character of the area
- Development boundaries which are either too restrictive or not restrictive enough

7.30 As highlighted above, consultation feedback from residents, statutory bodies, developers, landowners and other stakeholders is set out along with recommended Council responses in Appendices 4 to 6. This includes support from landowners with sites in the 2016 Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries consultation and others promoting alternative sites.

Proposed Preferred Options Local Plan

7.31 The Preferred Options Local Plan (Appendix 1) comprises of the following main elements:

- A Portrait of Staffordshire Moorlands - a description of the District
- The Challenges - a summary of the key challenges facing the District
- The Vision – detailing what the Staffordshire Moorlands will be like in 2031
- Aims and Objectives – stating what the Local Plan is proposing to achieve
- A Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies – setting out the over-arching strategy and policies for the District
- Development Management Policies – setting out specific measures to manage development
- Strategic Development Site Policies - specific policy to guide the development of strategic sites
- Implementation and Monitoring - a framework for how the plan will be implemented and monitored
- Maps - for Leek, Biddulph, Cheadle and the Rural Areas which identify proposed sites and boundaries

7.32 The Local Plan carries forward the above details from the adopted Core Strategy with various exceptions where amendments to the Core Strategy are proposed. Amendments include re-worded policies, new policies and the provision of specific maps to illustrate proposed sites and boundaries in more detail. Where amendments to key elements of the Core Strategy are proposed, the Preferred Options Local Plan document identifies them (Appendix 1). Reasons for changes vary and include:

- New policies to address matters not included in the Core Strategy e.g. site allocations
- Updated vision, challenges, objectives, policies or supporting elements of the Local Plan to reflect:
 - New evidence
 - Factual updates
 - New Government policy or regulations
 - Consultation feedback

7.33 The following list identifies some of key proposals and changes suggested for the Preferred Options Local Plan:

- **Amended spatial distribution of housing** across the District as follows; Leek 30%, Biddulph 20%, Cheadle 25% and Rural Areas 25% This amends the approach of the Core Strategy by reducing the housing requirement for the Rural Areas by 3% and increasing Cheadle's requirement by the same amount (Policy SS3). This change is proposed in response to significant constraints identified in the supply of suitable sites to serve the Rural Areas. In particular, Green Belt limits opportunities for growth across much of the Rural Areas. The plan still seek to focus the majority of development in the towns and larger villages which are more sustainable

- **Reduced Green Belt release** when compared to the 2016 Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries (Maps in Local Plan appendices). Green Belt can only be released in exceptional circumstances. The Core Strategy acknowledged that some Green Belt release would be necessary to enable sufficient housing growth in Biddulph. The Preferred Options Local Plan seeks to deliver Biddulph's housing requirement whilst ensuring that Green Belt release is kept to a minimum and is therefore exceptional. 251 homes are now planned in land currently designated as Green Belt in Biddulph (part of Wharf Road and Tunstall Road sites) compared to 480 in the 2016 consultation. This has been achieved by amendments to the proposed site allocations. Housing in the Green Belt in the Rural Areas has also reduced significantly from 554 to 75 through adjustments to recommended sites and the Spatial Strategy.
- **Residual housing requirement** for the District of land for 3859 new homes to be delivered between April 2017 and March 2031 (Policy SS4). This takes account of the housing backlog since 2012, housing completions between 2012 and 2017 and housing commitments (homes with planning consent) as of 31 March 2017. The housing trajectory identified in Appendix 7 of the Local Plan sets out the anticipated rate of development from 2012 to 2031. This is expected to be below the average annual rate of 320 homes per year until 2020/2021. The average rate of development is then projected to be above 320 per year between 2022/2023 and 2028/2029 before falling again for the final two years of the plan. This is due to the expected lead in times and build out rates for the proposed site allocations.

The residual requirement will be met through site allocations and windfall allowances. The Core Strategy incorporated a "slippage allowance" of 10% of the housing requirement for each area to allow flexibility in the supply. This was based on an assumption that 10% of sites would not come forward as anticipated. This allowance is no longer incorporated into the housing calculations as it is considered that the proposed approach to monitoring and housing supply as set out in Local Plan provide a greater degree of flexibility than the Core Strategy. Furthermore, in Biddulph and the Rural Areas, the slippage allowance placed greater pressure on the need to release land from the Green Belt. It should be noted that the total planned level of housing delivery does not precisely match the residual requirement in Leek and the Rural Areas. In Leek, planned delivery exceeds the requirement over the plan period by 32 homes. In the Rural Areas, the requirement is exceeded by 86 homes. This is due to the fact that the sum total of site capacities and windfall allowances do not always correspond exactly with outstanding number of homes to be provided. This results in the Local Plan exceeding the residual requirement by a total of 118 homes.

Area	%	Gross requirement ⁽⁴⁾	Completions	Commitments	2017 net requirement
Leek	30%	1794	241	538	1015
Biddulph	20%	1196	205	106	885
Cheadle	25%	1495	85	244	1166
Rural	25%	1495	148	554	793

Residual housing requirement (2017 to 2031)

- **Identification of housing requirements for Neighbourhood Plan areas** taking account of factors including Local Plan proposals in the Parish and sustainability (Policy SS4). They are as follows:

Neighbourhood Plan Area	Housing Requirement 2017 - 2031 (dwellings)
Biddulph Parish	900
Brown Edge Parish	25
Checkley Parish	60
Draycott-in-the-Moors Parish	5 - 10
Leekfrith Parish	4 - 8
Rushton Parish	4 - 8

- **Employment land requirements** of 8.1ha for Leek, 5.4ha in Biddulph, 5.4ha in Cheadle and 8.1ha for the Rural Areas (Policy SS4)
- **Development boundaries** are proposed for the towns and larger villages but not in the smaller villages as previously indicated in the Core Strategy and 2016 Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries consultation (Policy SS3 and maps in Local Plan appendices). Amendments are suggested to some of the development boundaries to reflect consultation feedback, development that has occurred since the original boundaries were set in 1998, sites with planning permission and proposed allocations.
- **Area Strategies** for the towns, villages, other rural areas and Churnet Valley to set out the key principle and considerations within each of the respective areas (Policies SS5 to SS11). These strategies are broadly consistent with those previously identified in the Core Strategy.

- **Requirement for developer contributions and potentially the Community Infrastructure Levy** to support improvements to infrastructure and services to accommodate growth (Policy SS12)
- **A new approach to support small infill developments** adjoining larger villages and well related to the existing pattern of development in the smaller villages, subject to landscape, infrastructure and other considerations (Policy SS3, SS4 and H1)
- **Consolidation and clustering of development sites** to support deliverability and support infrastructure improvements. Major development sites and clusters include (see Policy H2, E2 and Strategic Development Site Policies for full lists):
 - Land at the Mount, Leek – residential development of approximately 417 homes and a new school
 - Land at Newton House, Leek – residential development of approximately 179 homes and employment
 - Cornhill East, Leek – mixed-use development of approximately 50 homes and employment
 - Wharf Road Strategic Development Area, Biddulph – mixed-use development of approximately 588 homes, employment and retail
 - Biddulph Mills (Yarn and Minster) – residential development of approximately 57 homes
 - Tunstall Road Strategic Development Area, Biddulph – mixed-use development for approximately 80 homes and employment
 - Cheadle North Strategic Development Site – development of approximately 320 homes and a new school
 - Cecily Brook Strategic Development Area, Cheadle – development of approximately 106 homes
 - Mobberley Strategic Development Area, Cheadle – development of approximately 430 homes
 - Blythe Vale, Blythe Bridge – mixed-use development including residential development of approximately 300 homes and employment
 - Land off Ash Bank Road, Werrington – residential development of 75 homes
- **Policy support for self-build and custom-build housing** developments which will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis having regard to the Self and Custom Build Register (Policy H1)
- **Policy support for housing for particular groups, including elderly people.** This includes provisions to apply the optional nationally described space standards and optional accessibility standards as set out in Part M of the Building Regulations to help ensure that homes offer enough space and accessibility to support adaptability (Policy H1)
- **Affordable housing requirement of 33%** as per the Core Strategy but with new mix of affordable to include 60% social/affordable rented and 40% intermediate/starter homes (Policy H3)

- **A criteria based policy travellers sites** is proposed to determine applications that would support the identified need of 6 travellers pitches to 2018/19 and a further 2 up to 2033/34. No site allocations are included in the Local Plan due to a lack of available sites. The risks associated with this approach are considered in Section 6.8 of this report. (Policy H4)
- **Policies to support the vitality and viability of town centres.** This includes support for a new food store in Biddulph. (Policies TRC1, 2 &3 & SS6)
- **Policies to support the implementation of draft and emerging strategies for Green Infrastructure, Sports, Open Space and Recreation** (Policies C2 & C3)
- **Policies to support tourism and cultural developments** in the District (Policy E4)
- **Design and conservation and landscape and setting policies** to ensure high quality design and the preservation of landscapes (Policies DC1, 2 & 3)
- **Newly proposed Local Green Spaces to protect green areas** which are special to local communities due to their beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. This designation will replace some of the former Visual Open Space designations as identified in the previous Local Plan (Policy DC4)
- **Applying the Ministerial Statement regarding wind turbines whereby development is restricted without community support** (Policy SD2)
- **A new policy to protect and enhance trees, woodland and hedgerows** (Policy NE2)
- **Transport policies to ensure the provision of suitable transport links.** Changes include the provision of parking guidance to help shape developments (Policies T1 and T2)

Local Plan timetable and consultation

- 7.34 It is proposed the Preferred Options Local Plan and associated Sustainability Appraisal will be subject public consultation from 31st July to 22nd September. This equates to nearly eight weeks. This goes beyond the standard six week period of consultation in order to account for the summer holiday period. Costs for the consultation will be met from the Regeneration Service's budget.
- 7.35 Properties in the District and contacts on the consultee database will be notified directly about the details of the consultation alongside wider publicity in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This includes wider press releases, site notices and evening public consultation events.

Consultation documents will be available on the Council’s website, Moorlands House, Biddulph Town Hall, Cheadle One Stop Shop and local libraries. Events are currently planned as follows:

- Biddulph - Town Hall, 9th August
- Leek - Moorlands House, 16th August
- Werrington – Methodist Chapel, 24th August
- Blythe Bridge – Village Hall, 30th August
- Cheadle – Guild Hall, 7th September

7.36 It must be noted that the proposals agreed for consultation at the Preferred Options stage may be subject to change following further consideration prior to publication of the Submission Version Local Plan scheduled for February 2018. At this stage formal representations will be invited for a period of six weeks. Consultees at this stage should state whether they believe the Local Plan to be sound of legally compliant. Subject to consideration of the representation by the Council, the submission of the Local Plan and associated representations and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State is proposed to follow in June 2018. The following key milestones are recommended to be incorporated into a future iteration of the Local Development Scheme which establishes the timetable for the Local Plan:

Stage	Dates
Preferred Options Local Plan	
Consultation start	31 July
Consultation end	22 September (7.5 weeks)
Publication of Local Plan	
Publish Local Plan (statutory 6 week period for representations)	February 2018
Closing date for representations	March 2018
Submission of Local Plan to Secretary of State	
Submit Local Plan	June 2018

7.37 Subject to the approval of the Preferred Options Local Plan, officers will continue working to plan and implement the consultation arrangements. This will include updates to the website, preparation of the online consultation system and response forms.

7.38 Approval is also sought for the Executive Direct (Place) to make non-material amendments to the Local Plan and supporting material in the run up to the consultation start date. This will include the inclusion of monitoring indicator tables in Chapter 10, details in Appendix 9 which will summarise which Local Plan policies will supersede those in the Core Strategy, Appendix 12 (Glossary), grammatical, typographical and formatting issues.

Dai Lerner
Executive Director - Place

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

National Planning Policy
Framework, National Policy for
Travellers Sites and Planning
Practice Guidance:

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

Local Plan evidence base:

<https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/article/1163/Evidence-base>

Location

Regeneration Services
Moorlands House,
Leek

Contact details

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