

**South Staffordshire
Local Development Framework**

Core Strategy

Development Plan Document

**Alternative Strategies Consultation
with Key Delivery Agencies
including Outcomes from the
Delivery Agencies Workshop
held on 14th January 2008**



South Staffordshire Council



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1 . Introduction

In developing a preferred option for the Core Strategy, it will be important to ensure that it is capable of being delivered and that the capacity of existing services and infrastructure and the need for additional facilities is taken into account. The adequacy of existing infrastructure may influence the distribution and timing of development. It is also recognised that service and infrastructure providers need to have a clear picture of the future shape of local communities in order to plan ahead.

The Council has produced a paper 'Working Towards a Preferred Option' for the purpose of engaging in consultation specifically with key service and infrastructure providers. The Paper has been sent to all key service and infrastructure providers relevant to the South Staffordshire District. A number of consultation questions are included within the paper and comments on the paper are to be returned to the Council by the 21st January 2008.

To support and facilitate the consultation process the Council also invited all key service and infrastructure providers to attend a workshop. The workshop was held on the 14th January 2008 at The Council Offices in Codsall. The workshop consisted of 3 exercises each based on a set of questions. This Paper details the comments and discussions that took place during those workshop sessions.



2 . Workshop 1

Questions

- What are your views on the refined and alternative spatial strategy options?
- Are there any particular options you prefer?
- Are there any significant constraints or limitations that would affect the deliverability of the refined and alternative options?
- What are the implications of the refined and alternative options on service distribution and infrastructure provision?
- Are there any other factors we should consider?

Issues Highlighted

- Changing status of Brewood between the different spatial strategy options – Council officers explained that the status had changed following further work undertaken in the production of the Housing Market Assessment published in 2007 and in the updating of the Settlement Study originally published in 2003.
- Development in smaller villages makes them more viable and protects local services and shops.
- Consideration should be given to travel to work patterns and key destinations. Car trip are longer from villages further away from the MUA and villages closer to the MUA are more likely to provide viable public transport opportunities.
- There is very little public transport provision in the smaller villages and much of the public transport in the rural areas is subsidised.
- Creation of commuter villages



Questions

- Are there any constraints, which would need to be overcome in order to accommodate new development?
- Which villages currently have sufficient additional capacity to accommodate new development?
- Are there any thresholds (minima/maxima) or requirements for the deliverability of services in villages?

Group 1: Issues Highlighted

- SFRA will need to be developed at a more site-specific level
- Input from water authorities STW and SSW essential
- Potential problems with electricity supply on western fringe of District
- Highways Issues – A449 at Penkridge and also impact of i54 development on settlements, especially Coven. M6 alternative strategies currently being considered.
- Limited development in small villages will encourage car based communities contrary to LTP.
- Consideration of multi-use or mobile facilities to overcome problems in service provision. One Stop Shops.
- Consideration to the impact development will have on cultural services.
- Secure by Designs approach needed across the board with Design Guides and sustainable construction/waste/recycling issues taken into account from the outset
- If Green Belt land is to be developed, emphasis on eco build approach to minimise greenfield impact.
- Opportunity for further sustainable development in those locations where additional facilities have been provided eg Huntington, Brinsford if appeal allowed
- Land south of Stafford constrained by flood plain and prohibitive costs of mitigation measures
- Additional development in Penkridge would put increased pressure on areas of concern – lack of parking; location of Wolgarston and its relationship with M6; library facilities
- Swindon not seen as a sustainable settlement for further development
- Right mix of housing an important factor in deliverability, not just numbers
- Balance of affordable and private sector housing to meet needs

Group 2: Issues Highlighted

- Every service is different but can generally be divided into; residential (eg affordable and specialist housing), day services (eg schools) and transport.
- A new project is underway in Wombourne to create an enhanced Fire Station providing community facilities.
- The fire service can upgrade a fire station when additional development occurs but is more likely to engage in activities that drive down the risk such as promoting greater education and awareness.
- Employment development tends to have a greater impact than housing development on the fire service.
- Significant fire service time and resources are taken up by Brinsford prison.
- Flood Risk Assessment should play an important role in determining the location of development



3 . Workshop 2

- Development should account for the character of the area.
- Water Cycle Studies are a relevant consideration.
- Development should be focused in the main villages where there are public transport links
- Provision should be made for sustainable travel within villages, such as footpaths and cycle tracks.
- Travel plans could be included for residential developments as well as employment development.
- Maintaining services and facilities in villages requires large scale development
- To add a local bus service requires 600 passenger per day.
- Longer bus routes (which might be required to reach more remote villages) are subject to greater legislation
- Schools require 100 houses per pupil per age group
- Housing Associations may have difficulty delivering affordable housing if a large number of smaller sites are proposed.



Questions

- Do you think that the preferred approach can be delivered?
- Is it the best option and are there any limitations?
- Do you think that we should consider other factors/issues in the settlement hierarchy?

Group 1: Issues Highlighted

- Some support to preferred option subject to mitigation measures being in place
- General support for hierarchy approach as it is relatively flexible to increasing numbers, however further detail is required on actual numbers per village. Questioned whether we were going to give each village an equal proportion.
- Accessibility to villages/current road network issues
- Emphasis on use of brownfield land and sustainable construction methods
- Development at Penkridge is feasible but a number of concerns need to be addressed

Group 2: Issues Highlighted

- Proximity to job opportunities focused on the area around Featherstone should be a consideration
- The preferred option is deliverable but not giving best value
- Evidence base required demonstrating that development is deliverable without damage to the environment – there is some environmental capacity but also some 'pinch points'
- Need a step change in approach to provision of open space – people should be provided with the opportunity to experience the natural environment.
- May be some difficulties in building North of Penkridge.



5 . Conclusion

Some support for the preferred option was evident in Group 1 however Group 2 were more sceptical about whether a dispersed pattern of development would enable the delivery of services and infrastructure. It was suggested that larger scale development than that being proposed in some of the villages would be required to deliver services and facilities.

Both groups expressed concerns around transport issues including public transport provision and highways constraints. It was generally felt that a more detailed evidence base was required in relation to the natural environment, electricity supply, flood risk, parking and cultural facilities.

The importance of design for both safety and climate change was emphasised during the workshop. Housing mix was also identified as an important consideration in maintaining the deliverability of services and infrastructure.

The workshop was successful in bringing people together who are responsible for or involved with the delivery of services and infrastructure. Many issues have been highlighted during the workshop sessions, which can be taken into consideration by council officer as they progress to the preferred options stage for the Core Strategy DPD. Council Officers are grateful to all those who attended for their time and for their contribution to the discussions that took place during the workshop.



Appendix 1 . Consultee Responses

Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire County Council has provided responses from a number of different departments within their organisation.

a) Transportation

The key transport issues are;

- Reducing out-commuting by increasing local employment opportunities
- Consider the movement of traffic when locating new development
- Provision of an effective rural public transport service as a priority
- Innovative transport solutions between villages in the district

The dispersed and emerging Preferred Option would rely on rural transport services, which are subsidised or funded by the County Council being enhanced. There is limited funding and some services rely on the assistance of volunteers. The level of funding is decreasing.

New developments that are located in rural villages are unlikely to contribute financially to community transport services or other 'innovative transport solutions' between villages.

It is expected that developers will fund necessary mitigation measures in line with the LTP objectives and appropriate to the scale of the development. The types of schemes that developers are most likely to fund include;

- Safe access provision
- Footways and pedestrians crossing
- Cycle facilities
- New or improved bus stops on existing bus routes
- New or extended bus services to large development sites
- Local junction improvements to mitigate safety and/or congestion issues

There are the following concerns, in transport terms, about the 'Preferred Option' Option 3c;

- Development should be located where public transport currently exists or can easily be provided by the developer. This will not be the case for development (which could be as much as 45 houses) in a small number of the small service villages (Trysull, Bobbington and Bednall). These small villages currently rely upon very infrequent County Council subsidised services, the funding for which is not guaranteed for the plan period.
- The hierarchy of settlements should take into account accessibility of services and facilities by sustainable modes.
- It is more sustainable in transport terms to locate development in the main service villages rather than local and small service villages.
- Development should be focused in the main service villages as developers in the main service villages can benefit and contribute financially, as appropriate, to schemes within the LTP District Transport Strategy. There is likely to be very few opportunities in the small and local villages to secure sustainable transport provision even though most trips from these developments will be by car.

b) Waste Management



Appendix 1 . Consultee Responses

A waste treatment gap has been identified within Staffordshire County. Although South Staffordshire does not have a treatment gap itself it has a regional role to play in the provision of waste treatment facilities by virtue of its location close to those authorities that do have a treatment gap.

The Regional Spatial Strategy paragraph 8.91 identifies land 'on the edge of settlements, or at a distance from sensitive receptors' as possible locations for sites for waste treatment facilities. Other relevant RSS policies include W3, W5, W6, and W7.

Staffordshire County Council has announced that it has purchased 10 acres of land at Four Ashes for a sub-regional waste management facility with a capacity of about 300,000 tonnes per year in line with the 'Zero Waste to Landfill' strategy, which is the basic tenet of the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Staffordshire.

c) Education

The residential development associated with the current RSS level of housing provision in South Staffordshire will have an impact on education provision, whether in the form of enlarging existing provision or new additional provision. It is impossible to say how much or where the education provision is required without identification of possible housing sites. However, schools in some areas are currently full and are projected to remain full for the foreseeable future without additional new residential development. Other rural areas may also be of some concern if significant residential development was proposed.

The Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate does not have sufficient resources to construct buildings and other infrastructure to keep pace with the rate of new development. In keeping with legislation, contributors towards providing additional educational infrastructure have been, and continue to be sought from developers, through Planning Obligations. A review has recently been undertaken to examine the Authority's roles and responsibilities in relation to Section 106 Agreements and to determine how the relationship between the County Council and District Councils in Staffordshire could be enhanced. Following this Scrutiny review, Members of the Section 106 Agreements Member Working Group recommend that the Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate:

- Review and update the existing Education Planning Obligations Policy, to take into account the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and latest Admissions Code of Practice.
- Request that each District/Borough Council include education requirements within supplementary planning documents on planning obligations.

Early in 2008, Staffordshire is hoping to be invited into the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project. This will influence the way our pupils are educated in the future. Construction work is planned to commence in 2011 and be completed in 2021. This programme may well have an impact on the size, types and location of secondary schools that we have throughout the county and within the South Staffordshire District. South Staffordshire is not an area identified in the first wave of this programme and at this stage it is difficult to say when it is likely to be affected. The scale and location of future development will be taken into account in the preparation of these BSF proposals.



Highways Agency

The implications of the respective options, on traffic impact and transport infrastructure remain the Highway Agency's primary consideration. The Highway Agency continues to favour Option 1, however the Preferred Option put forward by South Staffordshire is for a geographic spread of development based on a hierarchy of settlements (option 3c). The Highway Agency is of the opinion that this option is not ideal as a dispersed development pattern in South Staffordshire seems likely to foster a reliance on use of the private car where new housing takes place in villages with little public transport provision and where overall housing numbers might make new public transport services uneconomic. However, subject to the assessment of the impact of developments close to the trunk road network (such as those at Penkridge and Coven) and the securing of necessary mitigation measures, option 3C does appear deliverable.

It is recognised that the outcome of the three public inquiries (yet to be published) and the final housing figures for the region (yet to be confirmed) could impact upon the potential deliverability, or need for, the preferred option. Both the M6 widening and the M54 link with the M6 Toll projects are still pending final decision, and as such confirmation of their approval and implementation cannot be given at this time. Should either of these projects proceed it is highly likely that there will be an impact upon how growth takes place in the area.

Environment Agency

The response from the Environment Agency covered a number of topics.

a) Flooding Issues

In principle, there are no issues with option 3C however much will depend on where specifically the houses will be located. Consideration should be given to your Authorities SFRA in deciding where the development should be located.

Penkridge lies partially within flood zones 3 and 2. All new development should be steered away from these areas where feasible. However, there may be areas of land in all settlements, which should likewise be assessed.

b) Foul Drainage Capacity

The development proposals are concentrated on villages which are currently served by public foul sewers. Whilst some of the sewage treatment works may require investment this should not be a show stopper to the proposals.

You are advised to review the Water Issues Paper undertaken to inform the West Midlands RSS to establish the capacity of existing sewage treatment works.

c) Water Supply Issues

We advise you to consult South Staffordshire Water Ltd to establish whether adequate water supplies would be available to service the proposed development. The West Midlands RSS Water Issues Paper may once again contain some relevant data to show whether water supply is available for the proposed options.

d) Sustainable Development and Climate Change



Appendix 1 . Consultee Responses

We recommend that consideration be given to maximising the potential for the use of sustainable transport wherever possible in preference to an increase in car traffic.

Your authority should seek to ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity. Following the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 your authority should also be seeking to deliver some biodiversity enhancements through development proposals.

Travel West Midlands

Option 3a

We believe option 3a to be the preferable of those presented. Within this option we believe that development would be better concentrated in Wombourne, Perton, Codsall/Bilbrook, Brinsford/Featherstone and Cheslyn Hay/Great Wryley; a lesser amount of development should take place in Kinver and Penkridge.

We are aware of the risk that these settlements closer in to the major Urban area could become purely dormitories for those working in the West Midlands metropolitan districts, however as employment opportunities are limited at locations within the District this is likely to be true also for new residents at other locations.

Option 3b

This is the spatial strategy option that we least support. The additional development at settlements that we already serve is unlikely to have any noticeable impact in terms of encouraging the development and retention of current services.

Option 3c

This option has some of the benefits of 3a, although the absence of development at Brinsford/Featherstone and displacement of this development to local and small villages means that the residential population thus located is unlikely to enjoy good public transport.

Advantage West Midlands

The focus of the sustainable communities policy is upon the creation of a network of high-quality, attractive and sustainable urban and rural communities which attract and retain competitive businesses and highly skilled people as well as promoting economic and social inclusion. The development of the settlements across South Staffordshire will need to deliver the most sustainable solution with a balanced approach to housing and employment land development that reduces transport needs and energy use, contributes to an environmentally efficient and well designed physical environment and where communities have access to all necessary services.

In order to make maximum use of its physical resources South Staffordshire will need to ensure the re-use of brownfield land and vacant premises, particularly where the objectives of sustainable economic development can be delivered. The West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) under priority 2.3 highlights the need to ensure an appropriate supply of employment land and premises which accords with the region's economic, environmental and spatial priorities as well



Appendix 1 . Consultee Responses

as meeting the needs of business and communities. In order to achieve this it is recognised that the region needs to make optimal use of its physical resources by removing barriers to the re-use of brownfield land and the rejuvenation of premises.

The WMES under priority 2.2 recognises the need to improve transport and communications to enable business and people to access markets, opportunities, jobs and services. The proposed expansion of settlements in the north of the district will need to be combined with improved accessibility, particularly public transport, to the significant employment opportunities that will be generated by the development of the i54 site, opportunities at Hilton Cross and any new employment opportunities that may come forward at locations such as Featherstone.

In conclusion, the preferred option 3c which proposes a geographical spread of development based upon a hierarchy of settlements would seem an acceptable way forward as long as South Staffordshire Council makes a clear assessment of the levels of development each settlement can sustain. As discussed above, this must be based upon sustainable economic growth, the maintenance of viable villages and the provision of sufficient affordable housing.

Framptons

Severn Trent Water support Option 3c focusing development on the main service centres.

Centro-WMPTA

Centro is keen to work with South Staffordshire and rail partners to maximise the opportunities for rail within South Staffordshire including Codsall and Bilbrook rail stations. Centro is currently promoting the upgrade of the Cannock Rail Line.

Centro does not have a preference to which spatial options are progressed however new development must be located in alignment with the West Midlands Regional Transport Strategy 'T2 Reducing the Need to Travel' and ensure that new housing development is focused around public transport nodes such as bus stops or rail stations.

Summary

- Need to increase rural employment opportunities.
- Difficulties presented by the lack of resources available for improving public transport facilities.
- Lack of potential for new development to deliver community transport services
- Development should be focused in the main service villages where there is the greatest potential for the use of and improvement to sustainable forms of transport
- Consideration must be given to the Waste Treatment Gap in the region.
- Many of the schools in the district are already full and there are currently, limited resources to invest in increasing the capacity of those schools.
- Section 106 agreements can make a contribution to the improvement and expansion of school facilities.



Appendix 1 . Consultee Responses

- Staffordshire is being invited into the Building Schools for the Future Project in early 2008, which may lead to investment in schools in South Staffordshire District.
- The Highways Agency consider option 1 to be the most sustainable option but consider that option 3b is deliverable.
- The SFRA should guide development away from areas at risk of flood.
- Travel West Midlands believe option 3a to be preferable of those presented.
- AWM consider option 3c to be deliverable subject to an assessment based on sustainable economic growth, the maintenance of viable villages and the provision of sufficient affordable housing.
- Severn Trent Water support Option 3c focusing development on the main service centres.
- Development should be focused around public transport nodes such as bus stops or rail stations.



