

Area Spatial Strategies

City Centre of Stoke-on-Trent Area Spatial Strategy

- 5.** This area includes the core, traditional city centre bounded by the Potteries Way ring road and the complementary Etruria Road Corridor. The complementary Festival Park / Festival Heights forms part of the Stoke-on-Trent Inner Urban Core.

Vision

- 5.** ***“To create a thriving, diverse and nationally recognised highly performing City Centre. By 2026 the City Centre will have an expanded core retail shopping area, a new business district, a distinct cultural quarter and provide for a range of City Centre living opportunities not currently available. These developments and others in the private, public and voluntary sector will be set within a network of accessible, attractive, safe and largely traffic free open spaces well served by all forms of public transport. Linkages to and from the City Centre to outlying areas will be capitalised upon through the creation of specific boulevards and welcoming gateways. Mixed use employment, commercial enterprise and residential accommodation not readily able to locate within a completed Potteries Way will be accommodated to the west of the Potteries Way. Destined to grow the City Centre will serve the needs and aspirations of all its user groups.”***
- 5.** This vision for the future of the City Centre will be achieved through the strategy outlined below and amplified through the City Centre and Etruria Road Corridor Area Action Plan.

Strategic Principles

ASP1 – City Centre of Stoke-on-Trent Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- 500 dwellings;
- 80,000m² of additional gross comparison retail floorspace to 2021 and a further 40,000m² to 2026;
- 85,000m² of additional gross office floorspace within or on the edge of the core city centre.

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ASP1 Continued:

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:-

- 1. The City Centre of Stoke-on-Trent is the largest retail destination in North Staffordshire and South Cheshire. The Centre has a primary role at a sub-regional level in attracting large scale shopping development. It is the popular location for business and brands of national renown. The aim is to promote a broad spectrum of uses, attractions and facilities, encompassing commercial development, shopping, leisure and cultural attractions, community facilities and housing. It will be important to ensure that the City Centre retains the focus for city centre type uses with new development in the remainder of the plan area fulfilling a complementary rather than competitive role and recognising the individuality of the other centres within the hierarchy.**
- 2. Over the plan period 2006 - 2026 mixed use proposals will provide for 80,000m² of additional gross comparison retail floorspace to 2021 and a further 40,000m² to 2026 plus 85,000m² of additional gross office floorspace within or on the edge of the core city centre.**
- 3. In addition the strategy seeks to repopulate the city centre and revitalise a housing market which is currently weak. Provision will be made for at least 500 dwellings designed to contribute positively to the character, vibrancy and sustainability of the city centre.**
- 4. The primary shopping core will be expanded between Stafford Street and the Potteries Way. An additional magnet of attraction will be created by the retail led redevelopment of the East and West Precincts to complement the developing retail focus at the Potteries Shopping centre.**
- 5. The Cultural Quarter will be enhanced and its appeal expanded to incorporate more creative activities and complementary functions.**

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ASP1 Continued:

- 6. A new, large scale, high density central business district will be provided in the south western sector of the centre to help diversify the local economy and support the shopping area. This is of critical importance to the delivery of the City Centre's long term growth prospects. Hope Village will become an exciting and vibrant quarter of the City Centre where people choose to live, work and visit. It will be a viable and high quality mixed use area including business, leisure and support retail provision, together with a high quality residential environment appropriate for a city centre location which respects the area's historical context. It will be important to consider the details of pedestrian and cycle movement in association with public realm and greenspace enhancements to ensure that the severance effects of the new Inner Ring Road do not create undue barriers to connections between the inner urban core area to the north and north west and the City Centre to the south and south east.**
- 7. High density city centre living will be encouraged and the Hope Village area will be regenerated to provide for residential and appropriate commercial uses, all in keeping with the leisure based activities within the area.**
- 8. The Etruria Road corridor and western links of the Potteries Way will be the focus for complementary city centre uses which cannot reasonably be accommodated within the traditional core and which would not prejudice the sustained regeneration of that core**
- 9. Land to the north and south of the corridor will be brought forward for a mix of residential and employment uses.**
- 10. The growth of traffic generation in the city centre will be reduced by the introduction of remote park and ride facilities. The city centre will be served by a strategic network of perimeter quality public car parks.**
- 11. Public transport access to the city centre will be enhanced by development of quality bus routes along radiating roads and linking to improvements for all public transport modes within the centre and to a new bus station in close proximity to the East and West Precincts development.**
- 12. The National Cycle Network passing through the area will be provided with better connections to the rest of the City.**
- 13. Public places and green spaces within the city centre will be improved for the benefit of pedestrians and better connections provided between Central Forest Park, Festival Park and Hanley Park via the city centre.**

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ASP1 Continued:

- 14. The missing links of the Potteries Way will be provided and steps taken to reduce the constraints to non-vehicular movement provided by the existing highway and connections along Etruria Road (the Business Boulevard) to Festival Park, the A500 and Newcastle improved. The connection between the city centre to the University Quarter, Stoke railway station and Stoke town centre by means of the University Boulevard will be enhanced. How to provide detailed better linkages to Burslem in the north and to the east of the City by means of the Hanley-Bentilee Link Road are being considered.**
- 15. High standards of urban design will be expected for the city centre which embrace the best principles of modern design and are sensitive to the existing, valued character of the area.**

Reasoned Justification

- 5.** This strategy is in general conformity with emerging regional spatial strategy RSS. It links to strategic aims SA1 - 5 inclusive, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18 and takes forward the adopted Community Strategy. The sustained regeneration of the City centre is a key plank in the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partners Business Plan.
- 5.** There is a need to further invest in the City Centre to improve its accessibility and performance as a regionally important shopping destination. RSS Revision and local retail projections indicate that there is retail growth potential above and beyond existing planning commitments to allow the City Centre to develop additional retail attractions and better compete with its peers in the regional arena. The strategy expands upon the existing primary shopping core in a measured manner. Development of two poles of attraction within the centre will help raise the centre's profile and spread pedestrian footfall for the benefit of all.
- 5.** Existing retail, leisure and other city centre type activities at Festival Park, Festival Heights and alongside the Etruria Road corridor is a fact of life. The strategy seeks to clarify the relationships with the traditional core city centre so that the component areas can operate in harmony.
- 5.** The vitality and vibrancy of the city centre is about more than just shopping. The development of the cultural quarter as a venue for the arts has been a success but it needs to be further developed and its appeal widened to embrace the creative activities. The continued focus of all forms of leisure and entertainment activities in all their many forms helps enrich the centre but must be properly planned to ensure peaceful co-existence.
- 5.** The diversification of the local economy is an important priority and provision should be made for a portfolio of office development from high density concentration to lower density offer and throughout the city centre as part of a mix of uses. This will help support the retail and other commercial functions

of the centre and complement attempts to repopulate the city centre. Additionally it is proposed to promote a Central Business District which is designed to establish a critical mass of new high quality office employment with national appeal to professional and service industries. The centrally located cluster of new modern offices will provide a high quality working environment for existing and new businesses providing a new direct investment and secondary investment in the service sector supporting an expanding office employment base.

- 5.** The concept of high quality city living is an important component of a vibrant, sustainable urban environment. This is a relatively new market for the city centre and there is known developer interest to bring forward such schemes. Modest minimum provision is made for residential development. In order to help create this new, quality residential market no provision for affordable housing will be sought within the Potteries Way for the foreseeable future. Detailed design considerations will be particularly important to ensure we can create an attractive residential environment.
- 5.** The reduction of reliance on the private car follows the strategic steer provided by national and regional policy and will help facilitate delivery of the radical transformation of the North Staffordshire Major Urban Area. To reduce traffic congestion motorists must be encouraged to switch from use of the private car to alternative means of travel choice. One mechanism to achieve this is through the development of park and ride facilities in key strategic locations and improving the delivery of bus priority measures. The provision of a park and ride system would also enable the rationalisation of car parking provision within centres to be investigated.
- 5.** Improvements to public transport and particularly use of buses will be a pragmatic response to changing travel behaviour and patterns. In terms of the City Centre this can be achieved by greater priority being given to public transport operations such as introduction of bus corridors
- 5.** The existing City Centre bus station is at the hub of the North Staffordshire bus and coach service. From a passenger perspective its waiting environment is unattractive and not conducive to encouraging bus travel. We wish to bring forward a new “state of the art” bus station to serve the sub region; provide a high quality and safe environment to meet the needs of increasing numbers of passengers from improvements to existing bus services, extra services from development areas and park and ride services, and as a multi-modal transport facility addressing any barriers to interchange.
- 5.** The National Cycle Network in the city is complete. To encourage cycling opportunities will be taken to improve local connections as part of the development of neighbouring areas.
- 5.** The attractiveness and comfort of the city centre is in part determined by the quality, variety and appeal of its public spaces and public realm. Detailed proposals are being worked up to enhance this aspect of the City Centre to complement commercial investment. Pedestrians should be able to more easily permeate the collar provided by the ring road to encourage use of the centre and connections to the commercial areas at Festival Park/Heights and the greenspaces at Central Forest Park and Hanley Park.

- 5.** Planning permission exists for completion of the Potteries Way as part of the requirements of neighbouring commercial development. The City Centre Development Framework identified the strategic advantages arising from the creation of the Business District and University Boulevards to better link areas of regeneration and connections to the city centre. These concepts are taken forward in this strategy.
- 5.** Improving the quality of built design which respects local sensitivities will be particularly important in the City Centre because of the number of people using the centre, and for many residents and visitors it will provide a lasting impression of how the plan area is changing for the better.

Implementation

- 5.** The City Centre Development Framework set out a prospectus to develop the City Centre and was complemented by an Investment Strategy. This forms the basis for the preparation of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnerships' Business Plan to take forward key regeneration projects. Subject to detailed appraisals there are no known insurmountable physical constraints to implementation of the strategy set out above.
- 5.** There is active developer and landowner interest seeking to bring forward retail aspirations in a measured manner which will complement the regeneration aspirations of the city centre. We all share a common aim to see the city centre prosper in accordance with the parameters set out in strategic planning policy.
- 5.** A joint venture partnership has been established between the City Council and private developers to bring forward the East and West Precincts mixed use regeneration proposals as a short term priority including the provision of the replacement bus station and strategic car parking facilities in the south eastern sector of the City Centre. Potential exists for beneficial dialogue with developers to then bring forward mixed use regeneration and expansion of the northern part of the primary shopping core including strategic car parking provision. Planning permission exists for the relocation of the Tesco store and creation of new Retail and Leisure Park off Waterloo Road incorporating provision of the missing links of the Potteries Way and site preparation has commenced.
- 5.** The Partnership is also working to produce detailed investment strategies and masterplans to secure the development of the Cultural Quarter to stimulate the production and consumption of high quality creative services linked to Business District and Primary Shopping Core. This will help facilitate a stronger twilight economy enhancing the appeal of the centre in the evening and at night.
- 5.** The embryonic business district is in multiple ownership. The Partnership is working to develop viable proposals to secure the comprehensive mixed use regeneration of the south western sector of the City Centre incorporating office and strategic car parking provision.
- 5.** There is active developer interest in respect of residential development and detailed schemes are being worked up for examination by the planning authority.

- 5.** Land, particularly to the south of the Etruria Road corridor has latent development potential and is being assembled by developer interests to progressively bring forward a package including investment in essential infrastructure, all in accordance with this strategy.
- 5.** Investment in the transport infrastructure of the city centre will be derived from a cocktail of funds including developer contributions. A preliminary city centre transport study has been completed and will form the basis of detailed schemes and investment programmes, in full consultation with stakeholders and interested parties. Of particular importance will be investment in the public realm of the city centre. Following an international design competition consultants have been appointed to remodel the public realm in the core area and investigate the connectivity to neighbouring areas.
- 5.** High standards of urban design will be expected for the city centre. Steps are being taken to provide more detailed design guidance for the whole of the plan area and to inform city and town centre design. Consideration is also being given to the extension of the existing City Centre conservation area to strengthen design considerations.

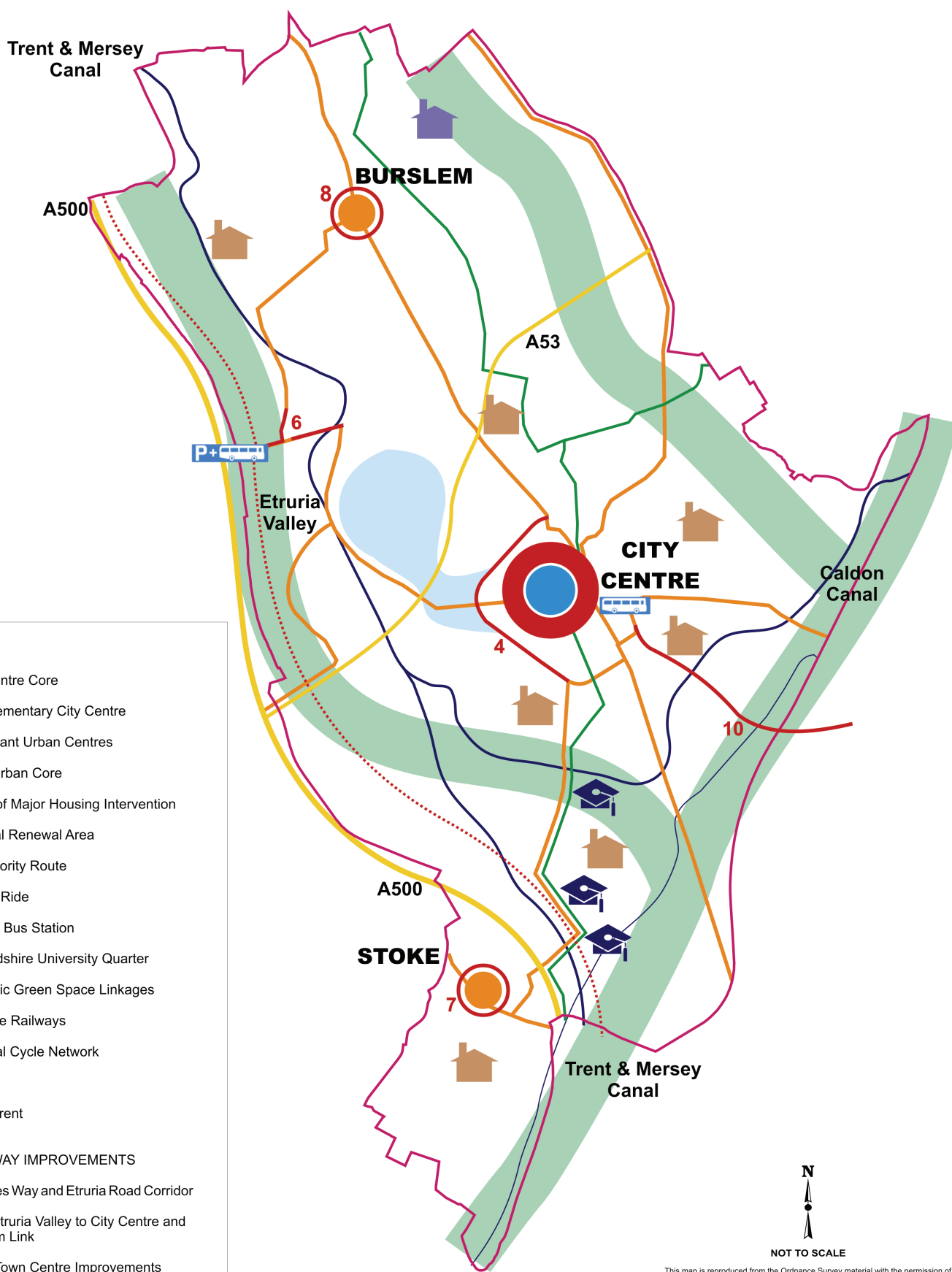
Stoke-on-Trent Inner Urban Core Area Spatial Strategy

- 5.*** The Inner Urban Core (excluding the City Centre), extends from Burslem in the north to Stoke-upon-Trent in the south; and from the A500 and City Council administrative boundary in the west to the valley of the River Trent and Fenton Manor in the east. It contains the historic heart of the conurbation, the town centres of Burslem and Stoke-upon-Trent and includes the seats of higher education in the City.

Vision

- 5.*** ***“To create attractive, vibrant and sustainable communities in the heart of the City. The Strategy will provide for increased vitality and vibrancy of Burslem and Stoke upon Trent town centres and improve accessibility and availability of modern local facilities. Housing growth will be focused to address specific regeneration priorities at general densities of 50 dwellings per hectare, and the creation of new employment opportunities through major new development will maximise economic potential. The towns of Burslem and Stoke-upon-Trent will re-establish their distinctive roles within the hierarchy of town centres. Burslem town centre will be developed as a centre for cultural and creative enterprise and be recognised as a prime example in the West Midlands of heritage led regeneration. Stoke-upon-Trent town centre will retain its role as an administrative centre, a University town and a nationally important destination for ceramics factory shopping. Surrounding areas, including Middleport, Cobridge, City Waterside, Northwood, Shelton and Stoke, will have a fusion of different uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial and community facilities enhanced by a welcoming and inviting high quality built and natural environment.”***
- 5.*** This vision for the future of the Inner Urban Core will be achieved through the strategy outlined below as illustrated on Plan 5 and amplified through the Inner Urban Core Area Action Plan.

Plan 5 - City Centre and Inner Urban Core Spatial Strategy



- KEY**
- City Centre Core
 - Complementary City Centre
 - Significant Urban Centres
 - Inner Urban Core
 - Areas of Major Housing Intervention
 - General Renewal Area
 - Bus Priority Route
 - Park & Ride
 - Central Bus Station
 - Staffordshire University Quarter
 - Strategic Green Space Linkages
 - Mainline Railways
 - National Cycle Network
 - Canals
 - River Trent
- HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS**
- 4** Potteries Way and Etruria Road Corridor
 - 6** A500 Etruria Valley to City Centre and Burslem Link
 - 7** Stoke Town Centre Improvements
 - 8** Burslem Town Centre Improvements
 - 10** Hanley Bentilee Link Road (under review)

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 NOT TO SCALE

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Strategic Principles

ASP2 –Stoke-on-Trent Inner Urban Core Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- **5,700 net dwellings**

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:-

1. **The creation of more sustainable communities based on a programme of progressive urban renewal providing improvements to the urban fabric and building stock and taking advantage of the area's proximity to services, greenspace, watercourses and topography.**
2. **Delivery of a minimum of 5,700 net dwellings in the period up to 2026 where they will best support renewal of the local housing market, communities and town centres.**
3. **Appraisal of detailed proposals to determine their impacts and appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision.**
4. **Investment in health and education, possibly including higher level school facilities.**
5. **Further investment in sports, leisure facilities and greenspace where shortfalls are identified.**
6. **Bus priority measures along radial routes.**
7. **Cycleway improvements.**

Continued:

ASP2 Continued:

- 8. Burslem providing opportunities for a wide range of housing, bringing vacant land and buildings into new uses. Accessibility and connections to surrounding communities will be improved and highway improvements carried out in the town centre. The town's image will be enhanced by high standards of conservation, improvements to the public realm and design and innovation in the ceramics industry will be supported. Sustainable mixed use schemes will provide for some 2,000m2 of additional retail development.**
- 9. Middleport having a range of housing types, including significant amounts of family housing. Access and circulation will be improved for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, including provision for public transport services and linkages.**
- 10. Etruria Valley being a major mixed use area for employment in the south and housing in the north. Improved sustainable transport facilities will be used as a catalyst for a major inward investment offer. A new link from the A500 to the city centre and Burslem plus park and ride facilities will be a critical element.**
- 11. City Centre North West becoming a gateway to the city centre with high quality and well connected residential neighbourhoods, employment, community infrastructure and open spaces.**
- 12. City Centre East (Northwood) having improved connections, particularly for pedestrians, to the city centre and Northwood Park. There may be opportunities for selective infill or small scale development.**
- 13. City Centre South providing attractive waterside developments at City Waterside and Etruria. Linkages to key hubs such as the city centre, city approaches, railway station and university quarter will be strengthened. Opening up the Caldon Canal offers a key opportunity to provide a sustainable and well connected neighbourhood led by a range of good quality market housing with strong pedestrian linkages to the city centre.**
- 14. South Shelton (University Quarter) providing integrated education-led development with both local and sub regional impact. Enhancement of the University Boulevard (College Road) to provide a quality strategic link between the railway station, University Quarter and city centre. The quality of existing housing environment will be raised and new housing will respond to the potential attraction of the area to younger residents, higher income households and the needs of local black and minority ethnic communities.**

Continued:

ASP2 Continued:

- 15. Stoke being a focus for regeneration led by employment and services with housing in a supporting role. At least 4,000m2 net retail floorspace will be brought forward. There is an opportunity to create high quality mixed use including a commercial residential boulevard linking a regenerated town centre to its surroundings. Access problems will need to be resolved including an inner relief road.**
- 16. Burslem Park and Smallthorne having minor development opportunities and environmental enhancement to support further stabilization of the housing market.**
- 17. The Hanley-Bentilee link road remains under review.**

** The transformation of the Inner Urban Core of the City is a regeneration priority of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership. The historic heart of the conurbation has suffered marked decline over recent years with the loss of population and employment opportunities. Turning the area around for the benefit of existing and future residents will be critical to the health and well being of the conurbation.

** Investment is required to create more sustainable communities based on a programme of progressive urban renewal providing improvements to the urban fabric and building stock and taking advantage of the areas proximity to services, greenspace, watercourses and topography.

** The strategy aims to take full advantage of the canals and watercourse including the River Trent and Fowlea Brook threading through the area and enhance the strategic green space corridors flowing north east to south west and north west to south east through the area.

** RENEW North Staffordshire's aspirations support the creation of mixed communities by encouraging developments with a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures and if possible the diversification of existing housing areas. There are Areas of Major Housing Intervention at City Centre South, Hanley East and North West, Middleport, Burslem and Etruria Valley, South Shelton and Stoke-upon-Trent. These areas will be subject to progressive renewal by a cocktail of new development, redevelopment and improvement having regard to area specific circumstances. The Housing Market Renewal programme has advanced Area Regeneration Frameworks (ARF) which have been the subject of stakeholder consultation and helped determine investment streams.

5.*** At least 5,700 homes will be built in this area in the period up to 2026, where they best support renewal of the local housing market, communities and town centres. Detailed proposals will be subject to appraisal to determine their impacts and appropriate contribution to infrastructure provision.

5.*** The primary school system in the City has been subject to substantial investment in new and improved facilities and consideration is being given to

investment in higher level school facilities taking into account the wider regeneration strategy.

- 5.*** Investment is also required in the primary health care system in the Inner Urban Core to ensure that new provision is informed by the Core Spatial Strategy.
- 5.*** An audit has been carried out of existing sports and greenspace facilities in the area to determine projected shortfalls and to support the case for further investment in sports and leisure facilities and greenspace to complement the core spatial strategy.

Burslem/Middleport

- 5.*** Historically Burslem has been characterised by a town centre surrounded by a ring of industry surrounded, in turn, by an area of residential areas. Due to economic changes the ring of industry has significantly declined in terms of its size and level of industrial activity. This has left a number of unattractive areas which do however, provide opportunities for future development. In recognition of shifting economic patterns and sustainability aspirations, the area adjoining the town centre will include significant new areas of housing. Employment uses will remain on a number of sites to ensure the provision of some locally accessible jobs.
- 5.*** Burslem town centre is important in the retail hierarchy as an historic town centre and has a vibrant cultural quality. It has limited comparison shopping but provides an important local convenience and service role and serves as a magnet for visitors to Stoke-on-Trent. Planned developments through the Housing Pathfinder Initiative to develop and enhance the local housing market will create an increased demand for retail provision. Such provision can be accommodated within sustainable mixed use schemes for approximately 2,000 square metres of additional retail development. Burslem contains many relics of the past but it is a living community that needs to develop as a focus for modern living, service provision and employment. Measures will be introduced to improve traffic circulation around the town centre so as to enhance the centre's attraction to visitors and residents alike.
- 5.*** Burslem town centre and its surrounding area provides an opportunity for a wide range of housing opportunities. In addition a masterplan has already been prepared for Burslem Town Centre, which seeks to
 - develop the town as a housing destination of choice;
 - manage it to high standards of conservation;
 - reconnect the town with its surrounding communities and facilities;
 - increase accessibility by a range of modes of transport;
 - improve the public realm;
 - bring vacant land and buildings into new uses;
 - support design and innovation in the ceramics industry and
 - enhance the town's image to developers.
- 5.*** Middleport is currently characterised as a series of residential communities, and in many cases situated adjacent to industrial businesses still in operation or now vacant and derelict. The area will be predominantly residential, with

some employment and local retail and community uses. It will provide a range of housing types, including significant amounts of family housing. In this area it will be fundamentally important to stitch new forms of residential development into the existing residential area, to rationalize the relationship with business uses and storage/industrial activities and to improve access and circulation arrangements for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians, including adequate provision for public transport services and linkages.

Burslem Park and Smallthorne General Renewal Areas (GRAs)

- 5.*** The Burslem Park and Smallthorne General Renewal Areas to the east of Burslem Town Centre currently accommodate a range of residential properties, mainly older terraced family housing; the overall feel is one of defined traditional residential areas. Although there may be some minor development opportunities and opportunities for environmental enhancement to support further stabilization of the housing market, most of these two GRA areas are not the subject of major proposals.

Etruria Valley

- 5.*** The future of the previously developed land at Etruria Valley, a major area of 39 hectares of land sitting in close proximity to the City Centre and Burslem, needs to be resolved and properly integrated with the rest of the conurbation. The North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership wants to see this area developed as a major mixed use area for employment (in the south), housing (in the north) and improved sustainable transport facilities which will be used as a catalyst for a major inward investment offer. It is also important to provide jobs for local people and to help them access these jobs through up-skilling. Critical to the development of this area will be provision of improved connections from the A500 to both the City Centre and Burslem with provision for park and ride and sustainable transport.
- 5.*** The Etruria Road Corridor and Festival Park / Heights will continue to complement the traditional City Centre core of Stoke-on-Trent and the Etruria Road transport links upgraded.

City Centre North West (CCNW)

- 5.*** The CCNW area will become a popular and diverse area comprising high quality, connected and sustainable residential neighbourhoods supported by thriving employment uses, attractive open spaces and excellent community infrastructure. It will act as a gateway to the City Centre and embrace its heritage and setting, preserving and enhancing architecture of merit and strength through quality design and development. As opportunities arise there will be attention to improving the Waterloo Road Corridor and Cobridge Lights junction to allow enhanced provision for this important north-south public transport corridor.

City Centre East (Northwood)

- 5.*** No substantial new developments are planned for this area, although there may be opportunities for selective infill and smaller-scale redevelopment,

especially closer to the City Centre. Fundamental to the future of Northwood will be reconnecting it to the City Centre which should include improved pedestrian linkages, ensuring safe quality routes accessible to all. There is recognition that the gateways and hubs facing the City Centre should be a priority for future investment to improve the poor quality environment adjacent to the ring road. In addition Northwood Park is the 'green heart' of the neighbourhood, where improving accessibility and linkages will be important.

City Centre South

- 5.*** There is an opportunity to make the most of potentially attractive waterside locations to the east (City Waterside) and west (Etruria) of the area to ensure quality residential environments. It will be important to strengthen linkages to the key hubs such as the City Centre, City Approaches, University Quarter and the Railway Station. A key area within this AMI is City Waterside, a flagship regeneration area offering opportunities to open up the Caldon Canal and to provide a sustainable and well connected neighbourhood led by a range of good quality market housing with strong pedestrian linkages back to the City Centre.
- 5.*** The vision responds to the distinct qualities that exist in the Hanley area; the heritage streets and buildings, the dramatic hillside topography and the canal are integrated into the masterplan, alongside the need for different types of homes within walking distance to local schools, crèches, medical centres, greenspaces and convenience stores. The mix of housing here will reflect its location close to the City centre, with higher densities to the canal and family homes elsewhere. The balance of accommodation will need to be carefully managed to avoid oversupply of particular types and sizes of accommodation.
- 5.*** A truly sustainable residential neighbourhood will be provided featuring a high quality and mixed tenure urban living environment close to the Caldon Canal and the University Quarter that will provide a safe and sustainable community for residents, including attracting new knowledge workers to Stoke-on-Trent.

South Shelton (University Quarter)

- 5.*** The main driver for this area will be the education led University Quarter, which will have a local as well as a sub-regional impact. Key to supporting this will be the enhancement of the College Road Boulevard, creating and maximizing the potential of a quality strategic link between the Train Station / University Quarter and the City Centre. The opportunity for significant new building housing development is limited but investment in the existing housing environs to raise the quality of the wider environment will be essential. Access improvements and environmental quality will need careful attention and the relationship to the regeneration of Stoke Town Centre will also be developed as more detailed work is brought forward for these adjoining areas. The types of housing will respond to the potential attraction of the area to younger residents and to higher income households using public transport for access to work and to the City Centre. Attention will also be given to the range of BME community requirements – especially in the local communities living in the west and south of the area.

- 5.*** The University, Stoke College and Sixth Form College make a major contribution to the life of North Staffordshire. Facilities need to be modernised in a way which maximises the integrated development of the educational establishments and assist wider regeneration of neighbouring communities. The University Quarter is an integrated project that aims to generate a thriving knowledge economy that is globally connected, leading to sustainable prosperity and an ambitious and dynamic community. It will create an integrated learning experience, focused upon creativity, skills and employability, promoting participation and progression.
- 5.*** Proposals for the University Quarter (UQ) will incorporate a comprehensive regeneration of an extensive area of the City around the main railway station, College Road and Leek Road. The University Quarter development framework has the common theme of a high quality living environment for all and centre for employment and specifically includes the creation of new shared education floor space as part of the Knowledge Hub and Media Place development; complementary commercial floorspace and focus for new residential development.
- 5.*** The role of Fenton Manor is subject to ongoing investigation to determine the degree to which land or premises should remain in education use and the scope to extend the strategic sports and leisure focus of the area.
- 5.*** The connections between the City Centre and the University Quarter, Stoke railway station and Stoke town centre by means of the University Boulevard will be improved by creating new direct links and improving the existing highway.

Stoke

- 5.*** Stoke provides an opportunity to significantly enhance the Town Centre, giving the centre a distinctive identity which does not compete with the City Centre. The focus will be on employment and services led regeneration with housing providing a supporting role. However the opportunity does exist to create a high quality mixed use including a commercial residential boulevard linking a regenerated town centre to the surrounding areas. Access improvements will be required and the relationship to adjoining areas will need to be considered as part of the access studies to be completed.
- 5.*** The prospects of Stoke-upon-Trent, the centre of civic administration, have been considerably enhanced following completion of the A500 trunk road scheme. Stoke-upon-Trent is a small town centre, principally serving local convenience shopping needs in a subordinate role to the larger neighbouring strategic centres. It has developed as a centre for administration over the last few years. In order to reflect the opportunity to improve retail provision within Stoke town centre and to improve the character, appearance and attractiveness of the centre provision for at least 4,000 square metres net retail floorspace should be brought forward. Stoke town centre will be subject to traffic improvements including delivery of the Stoke Inner Relief Road.

Transport

- 5.*** Bus Priority measures will be further developed including the following routes

- Longton – Fenton – City Centre;
- Fenton – Stoke – Newcastle;
- Stoke - Stoke Station – City Centre;
- City Centre - Bucknall – Bentilee;
- City Centre – Burslem – Tunstall;
- City Centre – Smallthorne – Sneyd Green; and
- City Centre – Etruria Valley – Burslem.

5.*** It is proposed to develop the following transport infrastructure proposals:

- Etruria Valley Park and Ride Facility
- Cycleway improvements
- Canal enhancements
- Etruria Valley to City Centre and Burslem Link
- Stoke Town Centre highway improvements including the Inner Relief Road
- Burslem Town Centre highway improvements
- The future of the Hanley-Bentilee Link Road remains under review

Reasoned Justification

5.*** This strategy is in general conformity with emerging Regional Spatial Strategy RSS. It links to strategic aims SA1 - 6 inclusive, 8, 10 and 12 -18 inclusive and takes forward the adopted Community Strategy and the NSRP Business Plan.

5.*** Comprehensive and sustained regeneration of the Inner Urban Core is wholly consistent with adopted Regional Spatial Strategy and the approved housing market renewal and regeneration zone strategy and programme. Maximising the contribution of the Inner Urban Core as the focus for housing development will go a long way towards stabilising the local housing market. If the Inner Urban Core continues to fail then this will drag down the rest of the major urban area. The prospect of additional public regeneration funding coming forward outside of these designated areas is remote.

5.*** This strategy provides the focus for the integration of investment programmes to breathe new life into our education; health care; community, sports, leisure, greenspace and transportation systems and improve healthy urban living. The aim is to maximize sustainable residential development within the Inner Urban Core without undermining its continued economic function. The Strategy supports initiatives to help reduce health inequalities and promote higher educational attainment.

Implementation

5.*** An Area Action Plan is being prepared to cover the Inner Urban Core which will provide a co-ordinated and more detailed delivery framework to:

- Support planning applications which bring about positive and high quality development to support delivery of the strategy

- Assemble land by voluntary agreement or failing that compulsion in justified circumstances;
 - Secure community benefits through section 106 agreements
 - Integrate with transport investment programmes;
 - Manage in a positive and innovative fashion public sector land assets to facilitate development which supports the strategy
 - Work in partnership with the private sector and the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership to develop and deliver a better future.
- 5.*** The NSRP Business Plan co-ordinates the sustained regeneration of the area. The sustainable communities' strategy is underpinned by the Housing Market Renewal Programme which is regularly reviewed and rolled forward by Government. This is complemented by the City Council and Health Authorities schools and health facilities programmes. Working in partnership with the development industry is central to the development of viable proposals. For example control of Etruria Valley is held by Stoke-on-Trent Regeneration Company a partnership venture between the City Council and lead developers, St Modwens. Development partnerships have also been established for each of the housing intervention areas identified in the Housing Market Renewal Programme.
- 5.*** A specific partnership arrangement and steering group was formed to guide the development of the vision for the University Quarter and its eventual implementation. The partners involved include Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent College of Further Education, City of Stoke-on-Trent 6th Form College, Advantage West Midlands and North Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council. An agreed detailed investment programme is being developed to translate partners' aspirations into reality. The Core Spatial Strategy will provide the statutory planning framework to support the agreed investment strategy in schools and healthcare.
- 5.*** It is recognised that each of the towns in North Staffordshire has a distinction of function and place which can add more to the economic up-lift of the economy. To achieve this, a regeneration company has already been established for Burslem. Consideration is being given to setting similar arrangements in place for Stoke-upon-Trent. This will focus on prioritising the nature and scale of investment that will be required.
- 5.*** There are no known insurmountable infrastructural limitations to delivery of the aspirations set out in this strategy. The City Council, as both highway and planning authority will carry out detailed transport modelling to ensure maximization of the contribution of the green travel agenda and fair apportionment of public and private investment in transport infrastructure.
- 5.*** The detailed planning of the area will benefit from the detailed design guidance being jointly prepared by the City and Borough Council for the whole of the plan area.

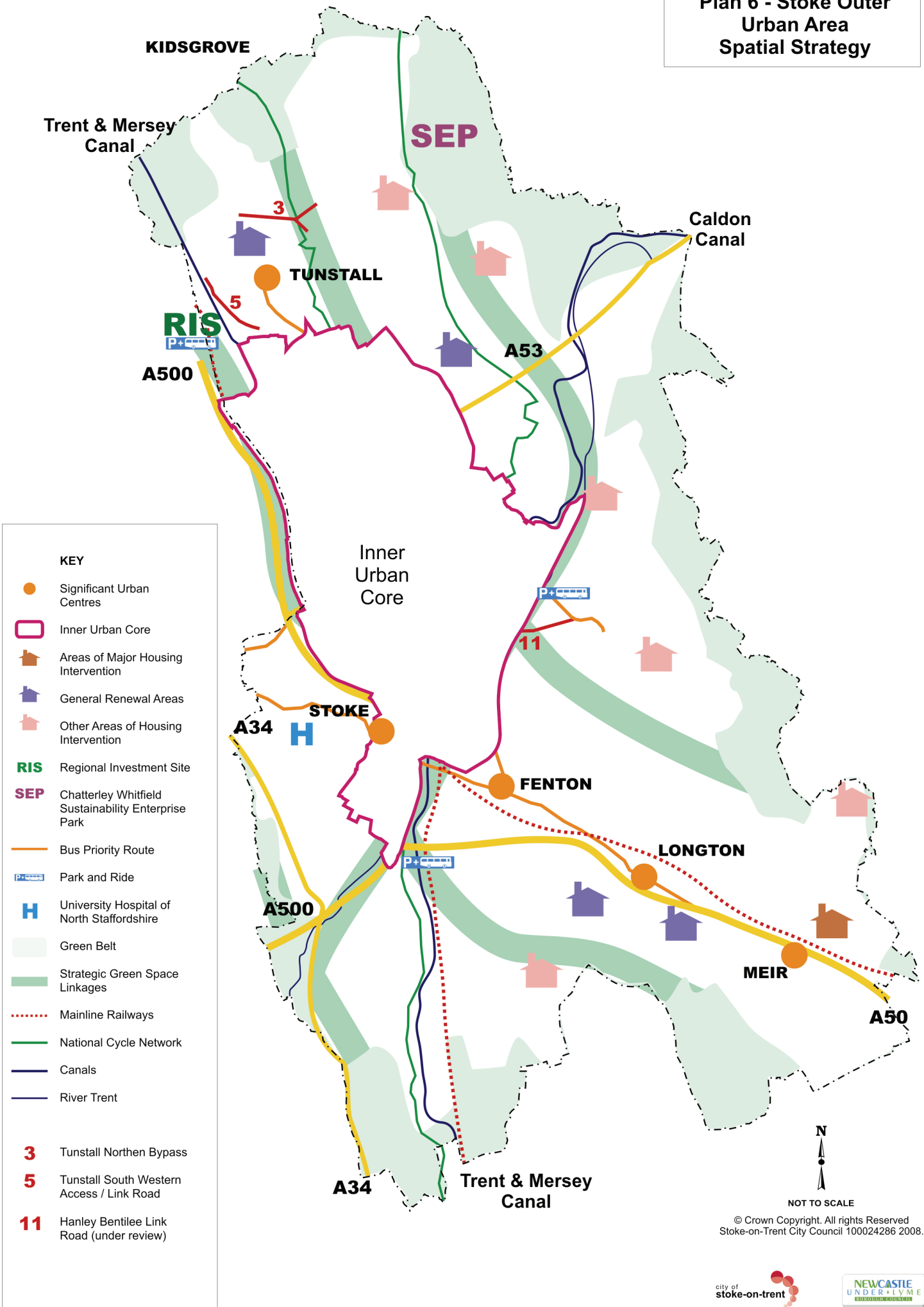
Stoke Outer Urban Area Spatial Strategy

- 5.*** The Stoke Outer Urban Area comprises the rest of the City beyond the Inner Urban Core boundary. The Outer Urban Area includes the historic townships of Tunstall, Fenton and Longton and suburban Stoke-on-Trent including large social housing estates built after the Second World War.

















Vision




- 5.*** ***“The Strategy will provide for increased vitality and vibrancy of Longton, Tunstall, Fenton town and Meir centres and improve accessibility and availability of modern local facilities. Housing growth will be focused to address specific regeneration priorities at general densities of 50 dwellings per hectare, and the creation of new employment opportunities through major new development will maximise economic potential. Regeneration of the Outer Urban Areas will create sustainable communities, which complements the major growth planned for the City Centre and Inner Urban Core. Tunstall and Longton will continue to provide important district centre facilities serving the north and south of the City. Fenton and Meir remain as important centres in their own right. The character form and function of older residential areas will be improved and steps taken to improve and diversify the tenure of many social housing estates built in the suburbs of the City.”***
- 5.*** This vision for the future of the Outer Urban Area will be achieved through the strategy outlined below, illustrated on Plan 6 and amplified through the Development Portfolio Development Plan Document and the Meir Area Action Plan.

Plan 6 - Stoke Outer Urban Area Spatial Strategy



KEY

-  Significant Urban Centres
-  Inner Urban Core
-  Areas of Major Housing Intervention
-  General Renewal Areas
-  Other Areas of Housing Intervention
-  Regional Investment Site
-  Chatterley Whitfield Sustainability Enterprise Park
-  Bus Priority Route
-  Park and Ride
-  University Hospital of North Staffordshire
-  Green Belt
-  Strategic Green Space Linkages
-  Mainline Railways
-  National Cycle Network
-  Canals
-  River Trent

-  3 Tunstall Northern Bypass
-  5 Tunstall South Western Access / Link Road
-  11 Hanley Bentilee Link Road (under review)



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Strategic Principles

ASP3 – Stoke-on-Trent Outer Urban Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- 4,600 net dwellings

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:-

1. The Outer Urban Area must be allowed to grow in a manner which meets local needs but which does not prejudice the sustainable regeneration of the Inner Urban Core. During the plan period, development within the Outer Urban Area should complement the growth planned for the Inner Urban Core. This will be achieved as follows.
 - Longton is the third largest retail centre in North Staffordshire and principally serves the southern part of the City. There is scope for additional retail development in the region of 11,000m² within the existing town centre to 2021.
 - Tunstall serves a local catchment in the northern part of the City and has the potential to accommodate a further 8000m² of retail floorspace within the town centre by 2021 in a manner which can support the core of the centre. Work is progressing to complete the Tunstall Northern Bypass and provision is made for the south western access road to release substantial areas of development land to the south west of the centre.
 - Fenton – has limited existing retail provision and has scope for an additional 500m² of retail development, to serve a local catchment only. Fenton also serves as a sport and leisure focus for the City.
 - Meir – provides the eastern gateway to the City and serves a localised catchment. There is potential to accommodate a modest additional 500m² of retail floorspace.
2. About 4,600 homes (net) will be built in the Outer Urban Area during the period up to 2026. Such development will be located where this best supports the renewal of the local housing market, communities and town centres, and will seek to address the imbalances caused by a predominance of social housing, and generally improve the quality of the housing stock.
3. Housing development in the outer parts of the City will play a part in meeting local needs and delivering the national housing growth agenda having regard to local circumstances. Specific housing development will be focused in the following regeneration priority areas:

Continued:

ASP3 Continued:

- **the Meir ‘Area of Major Intervention’ (AMI) - The overarching objective for Meir is to establish the area as a strong sustainable neighbourhood that retains the existing community and attracts new residents to help establish a critical mass of population that can help to support the regeneration of the housing stock and sustain an improved range of local shops and services.**
 - **‘General Renewal Areas’ (GRA’s) at: Birches Head, Dresden, Normacot, Smallthorne and Tunstall; There is no identified need for large scale redevelopment in Birches Head. It is intended the focus should be on strengthening routes, creating gateways: enhancing key routes through the neighbourhood, and improving the quality of key gateway locations. The future investment in other GRAs is under review.**
 - **‘Suburban Estates’ at: Abbey Hulton, Bentilee, Blurton, Coalville, Fegg Hayes and Norton. The aspiration for the suburban estates is to provide high quality affordable family housing that should not compete with the Inner Urban Core.**
4. **Of the total allocation for the sub area about 300 dwellings and 900 dwellings respectively are reserved for the transformation of the Meir Area of Major Intervention and other areas of housing intervention including general renewal areas and suburban estates.**
 5. **Diversification of the economy will be achieved through focused major employment development, including Chatterley Whitfield Sustainable Enterprise Park and the Chatterley Valley Regional Investment Site.**
 6. **The ongoing redevelopment and expansion of the University Hospital of North Staffordshire will be supported, for both health and education purposes including better public transport connections to Newcastle and the town centres of Stoke-on-Trent.**
 7. **Improved connectivity between the various communities and the wider plan area will be achieved by introduction of further bus priority measures including the following routes:**
 - **Longton – Fenton – City Centre;**
 - **Fenton – Stoke – Newcastle - Keele;**
 - **City Centre - Bucknall – Bentilee;**
 - **City Centre – Burslem – Tunstall;**
 - **City Centre – Smallthorne – Sneyd Green.**

Continued:

ASP3 Continued:

The following transport infrastructure proposals will be promoted:

- **Sideway Park and Ride Area of Search**
 - **Bucknall Park and Ride Area of Search**
 - **Chatterley Valley Park and Ride Area of Search**
 - **Cycleway improvements**
 - **Canal enhancements**
- 8. The detailed investigation of park and ride provision is a key component of changing travel behaviour to complement development of alternative sustainable solution to avoid reliance on the use of the private car. This first generation will be supplemented by additional provision dependent on progress.**
- 9. The availability of, and access to modernised local facilities e.g. health facilities, shopping, education, sport and recreation, leisure, transport and employment will be improved.**
- 10. The enhancement of the built and natural environment, together with increased access to greenspace and watercourses will be supported and guidance produced to improve design and address issues such as crime and the fear of crime.**
- 11. The realisation of brownfield development opportunities alongside strategic transport corridors should be supported, where this does not prejudice the sustained regeneration of the Inner Urban Core and City Centre.**

Reasoned Justification

- 5.*** The above Strategy is in general conformity with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy RSS and the adopted Community Strategy. It links to Strategic Aims SA1 - 6 inclusive and 8 – 18 inclusive and takes forward the adopted Community Strategy and the NSRP Business Plan.
- 5.*** The Strategy is supportive of Housing Market Renewal objectives in terms of taking a targeted approach to new housing development in priority regeneration areas (AMI's, GRA's and Suburban Estates), in order to address problems of a low demand housing market and widen the range of available accommodation. In the event that strategic housing development targets are raised during the process of RSS Phase 2 Revision then additional capacity can be released in this sub area during the latter half of the plan period to ensure that such development does not prejudice regeneration of the Inner Urban Core.
- 5.*** This strategy provides the focus for the integration of investment programmes to breathe new life into our education; health care; community, sports, leisure, greenspace and transportation systems and improve healthy urban living. The Strategy supports initiatives to help reduce health inequalities and promote higher educational attainment.

- 5.*** The promotion of major employment developments at Chatterley Valley accords with proposals set out in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).
- 5.*** The strategy supports the sustained regeneration of the complex of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monument at Chatterley Whitfield.
- 5.*** The Strategy aims to comply with general sustainability objectives as set out in planning policy at all levels. For example, the focusing of new development in sustainable locations including existing centres, improving accessibility to local facilities/services to reduce the need to travel, prioritization of brownfield land and protection of natural assets.

Implementation

- 5.*** At present the development of detailed planning policy for the Outer Urban Area is being progressed through the preparation of an Area Action Plan for the delivery of the Meir Area of Major Intervention (AMI) and a Development Portfolio Development Plan Document for the remainder of the sub-area. These will provide the planning framework for the delivery of the detailed regeneration programmes as set out above.
- 5.*** Within the Outer Urban Area, development will be primarily private-sector led, with the exception of public sector intervention in the Housing Market Renewal priority regeneration areas.
- 5.*** Development of the Chatterley Valley Regional Investment Site is led by Advantage West Midlands and is high in the NSRP Business Plan priorities.
- 5.*** Practical and financial support for the Chatterley Whitfield Sustainable Enterprise Project is provided by English Heritage.
- 5.*** It is recognised that each of the towns in North Staffordshire has a distinction of function and place which can add more to the up-lift of the economy and takes account of existing planning permissions. To achieve this consideration is being given to establishing a regeneration focus for Longton and Tunstall to help focus on prioritising the nature and scale of investment that will be required.
- 5.*** There are no known insurmountable infrastructural limitations to delivery of the aspirations set out in this strategy. The City Council, as both highway and planning authority will carry out detailed transport modelling to ensure maximization of the contribution of the green travel agenda and fair apportionment of public and private investment in transport infrastructure.
- 5.*** The detailed planning of the area will benefit from the detailed design guidance being jointly prepared by the City and Borough Council for the whole of the plan area.

Newcastle Town Centre Area Spatial Strategy

- 5.*** This area includes the Primary Shopping Area, bounded by the inner ring road, and the complementary areas adjoining it.

Vision

- 5.*** ***“Newcastle-under-Lyme is a University town and its Town Centre will be a place recognised not only for this, but in its own right for its attractive heritage townscape, its high quality new developments, its vibrant public realm, its public open air market and its high quality shops, services and businesses. It will be a focal point for the economy of the Borough, and a place where people want to spend their time and money. Employment opportunities will be sustained and improved and the emerging residential market will be strengthened. The environment will be pedestrian-friendly and welcoming for all those who live, work and visit the Town Centre. Action will have been taken to address any damage done to the town’s historic character in the twentieth century, to create a more appealing historic Town Centre where the quality of the environment and its heritage is a key selling point. New development in particular, will be well managed and sensitive to the best traditions of historic development in the town. New opportunities will have been grasped to enhance the historic heart of the town and to regenerate areas where sites and land are underused or otherwise detract from the image and identity of the town. Major gateways and the town’s public face will be improved, with environmental assets such as the Lyme Brook adding to local distinctiveness.”***

Strategic Principles

ASP4 – Newcastle Town Centre Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- 1400 new dwellings
- 25,000m² of additional gross comparison floorspace to 2021 and a further 10,000m² to 2026
- 60,000m² of additional gross office floorspace within or on the edge of the town centre

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:

Continued:

ASP4 Continued:

- 1. As one of the two strategic centres in the conurbation, the Town Centre will continue to develop in a balanced way as a complementary service centre to the City Centre with a strong retail offer, a strengthened financial and professional sector, and as a focus for new leisure and residential opportunities, all accommodated within mixed development wherever practicable.**
- 2. The Town Centre's unique market town character and ambience will be enhanced through directing public investment and developer contributions towards enhancing the attractiveness and viability of the Open Market and the Town Centre's award winning public realm and open spaces. A greater mix and intensity of Town Centre uses will be encouraged to create a stronger gateway to the Town Centre from the north and north west and to capitalise on natural features such as the Lymebrook, so long as the main function of the primary shopping area is maintained and enhanced.**
- 3. A spatial framework will be formulated, identifying distinct zones both within the primary shopping area and beyond, aimed at maintaining their distinctive characters and helping to break through the perceived barrier of the inner ring road.**
- 4. Over the plan period (2006-2026) proposals will provide for -**
 - 25,000m² of additional gross comparison retail floorspace to 2021 and a further 10,000m² to 2026; this will be appropriate in terms of the role of the Town Centre and capable of meeting the needs of Town Centre users.**
 - 60,000m² of additional gross office floorspace within, or on the edge of the town centre, to accommodate new employment of a type in keeping with the role of the Town Centre.**
 - 1400 new dwellings, of which 25% will be affordable, primarily as part of high density, mixed use schemes, designed to contribute positively to the character, vibrancy and sustainability of the Town Centre.**

Continued:

ASP4 Continued

- 5. All development within the Town Centre will work with the topography and be required to meet the high quality design standards set out in supplementary planning documents and in keeping with the Town Centre's distinctive market town character, and will enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre by contributing towards the existing vibrant mix of retail, nightlife, leisure, employment and residential uses. New development will recognise the importance of landmark sites and work to improve connections to and within the town Centre and particularly the need to overcome the severance created by the inner ring road.**
- 6. On the outer north western edge of the Town Centre, the Borough Council will work with partners to help to secure a Sports Village complex on land adjacent to the new College development.**
- 7. Links with Keele University and Science Park, the University Hospital of North Staffordshire and Newcastle College of Further Education will play a key role in marketing the town as a university town and place for research and learning.**

Reasoned Justification

- 5.***** Newcastle Town Centre is the borough's largest employment area, with excellent connections to Keele University and the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. This cluster of prestigious, high value medical technologies and research industries makes a major contribution to the social and economic character of the town. Its role and status is further enhanced by it being the base for local government in the Borough, the location for the district's cinemas and for the Borough's main college of further education affording quick links between shopping, business, cultural and leisure facilities. The daily historic market and the parks and open spaces in and around the Town Centre are also an essential part of its life and character. It is essential to capitalise on these assets to realise the full social and economic potential of the plan area.
- 5.***** This strategy will ensure locally expressed needs as defined within the Sustainable Community Strategy for Newcastle under Lyme 2008 to 2020 are met. The need to create stronger neighbourhoods with a greater sense of community pride is a clear priority together with the need to address anti social behaviour; improving the quality of the borough's public open spaces; and improving access to education and training.
- 5.***** This approach is in line with the Sustainability Appraisal which indicates that focusing development in identified priority areas is by far the most effective strategic option for achieving sustainability objectives such as meeting housing needs, enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres, reducing the need to travel and conserving natural resources.

- 5.*** The North Staffordshire Retail and Leisure Study 2005-21 identifies the potential, and the need, for future growth to consolidate the town centre's position within the local hierarchy of centres and its ability to provide a complementary and supporting role to the City Centre. The Study identifies a capacity for approximately 16,000 – 19,000m² of additional net, non retail floor space to 2021 within the Town centre.
- 5.*** The scale of retail development targets in this strategy reflects guidance in the West Midlands RSS Phase Two Revision which establishes the amount of retail and employment space for which provision should be made within the Town Centre. The RSS Phase Two Revision states that additional gross comparison retail floor space should be phased as follows: 25,000m² to 2021 and a further 10,000m² to 2026. The scale proposed seeks to maintain, at the very least, the Town Centre's existing retail offer, whilst at the same time provide a climate for new retail opportunities to come forward to support Newcastle's continued role as a market and university town and as the borough's largest employment area (approximately 8,500 jobs).
- 5.*** Within the Town Centre there is a distinct and successful geographical concentration of financial and professional services. A significant proportion of these businesses are located within, or close to the town centre, particularly in areas such as the Brampton, Queen St, King St, and Marsh Parade. The North Staffordshire Integrated Economic Development Strategy 2005 identifies Newcastle's Professional and Financial Services sector as a locally and sub regionally important cluster and a key driver for the future economic growth and prosperity of the borough.
- 5.*** The importance of the office sector and the attractiveness of the Town Centre for this industry sector are reflected in the ambitious targets for additional office floor space set in the RSS Phase Two Revision.
- 5.*** One of the main objectives of the Core Spatial Strategy is to secure a vibrant housing market catering for a mixed income community with diverse needs. Much of the Town Centre is located within what RENEW North Staffordshire has identified as the 'Area of Intervention'. RENEW has identified the Town Centre as having the potential to 'accommodate a vibrant housing market which caters for a mixed income community'. The notion of high quality Town Centre living is recognised as being an important component of a vibrant, sustainable urban environment.
- 5.*** The North Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007 will form the basis of key evidence to identify the appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.
- 5.*** Protecting the heritage assets and promoting high quality design to create distinctive places is a major objective of the Core Strategy. In accordance with Policies CSP1 Design Quality and CSP2 Historic Environment, the design of all development will be a significant concern in all proposals. The market town character and visual quality of Newcastle Town Centre is central to its vitality and viability and efforts need to be made to ensure it does not lose its character. This is consistent with community views that have been expressed.

- 5.*** The Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm Strategy 2004 provides a highly detailed analysis of the potential for significant improvements to the public realm. Public funding and developer contributions is being directed towards a number of the strategy's recommendations, in particular – the upgrading and enhancement of the subways that provide essential pedestrian routes across the ring road, the upgrading of the Midway car park, and the planned refurbishment of the Open Market.
- 5.*** These physical improvements, combined with the plan to provide a new sporting and leisure complex in close proximity to the town centre, a vibrant retail core and strong evening economy, will make a major contribution to providing a modern environment which will work to retain young people, employees and graduates, encourage the growth of high value business clusters and professional services, and attract people to chose the town centre as a place for living. The sports village will also assist the wider regeneration of neighbouring communities.
- 5.*** The strategy outlined above conforms to the broad objectives of the Local Transport Plan by concentrating development in the most accessible locations, encouraging the production of travel plans and by seeking developer contributions towards the delivery of the key objectives of the LTP.

Implementation

- 5.*** The strategy requires mixed use development throughout the Town Centre, and this should be instrumental in increasing the amount of new office development. It is intended that office development will be achieved through a combination of planning policy, direct provision and joint venture agreements with the private sector as well as marketing and public realm enhancement aimed at raising the profile of the Town Centre and its attractiveness.
- 5.*** The adopted Borough Council Developer Contributions SPD sets out the guidelines for the circumstances in which Section 106 contributions will be sought for the provision of affordable housing, transport infrastructure, open space, education, and public safety measures. Public investment and developer contributions in the Town Centre will be directed towards: addressing congestion; enhancing access to public transport and opportunities for walking and cycling; and ensuring the public safety of the Town Centre's residents and visitors.
- 5.*** The Borough Council is preparing a Supplementary Planning Document for Newcastle Town Centre. This document will set out details of the spatial framework with design guidance specific to the Town Centre. Further detailed guidance will be included in the North Staffordshire Design Guidance SPD and the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. The SPD will also provide guidance for private investment and for public investment in the Town Centre's public realm. The document will be an invaluable tool for the Council to achieve its vision for the future of the Town Centre and will set the high standards of development which will be required.
- 5.*** Together with any appropriate identification of specific sites in an Allocations DPD, the SPD will help to encourage appropriate development in accordance with the strategy set out above.

- 5.*** The draft Newcastle Urban Transport and Development Strategy 2008/09 – 2012/13 produced by Staffordshire County Council will balance the aims of the North Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011 with the transport infrastructure requirements of future development in the borough. Initiatives and actions arising from this strategy are likely to include – measures to deliver a parking strategy for the town centre; improvements to passenger facilities; bus priority and traffic management measures to improve pedestrian safety; addressing the severance for pedestrians and cyclists from the primary shopping area by the ring road. Developer contributions will play a significant role in funding the various actions and initiatives of this Transport Strategy.
- 5.*** The development of high tech sectors and research facilities at Keele combined with a highly performing higher and further education sector can encourage the provision of high quality housing and facilitate the image of the Town Centre as a dynamic university and market town. The North Staffordshire Integrated Economic Development Strategy provides a specific and robust approach to planning for employment growth and together with the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership will work to attract strategic funding to help realise the full potential and spread the benefits of these internationally and sub regionally significant institutions. This will include targeting investment to improving the quality of the Town Centre to provide an environment commensurate with its status as a university town. The Borough Council will continue to work in association with InStaffs (UK) Limited, the inward investment agency for Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire to market Newcastle Town Centre to new investors and facilitate links between education and business.
- 5.*** The provision of a sport village complex as part of the planned Newcastle colleges move to a brand new campus is the subject of ongoing discussions between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, and the College. Should the development of the sports village on the college campus ultimately prove not to be feasible, the Borough Council will look at alternative means of provision. Newcastle College has already obtained planning permission to build its own sports facilities as part of its 52 million pound campus redevelopment, to be opened in 2010.
- 5.*** The North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy 2007 will set out the strategic framework for improving the quality of greenspace resources.

Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Strategy

- 5.*** This part of the urban area of Newcastle, consists of the former coalfield and brick manufacturing communities of Silverdale, Chesterton, Knutton and Cross Heath and widespread suburban areas, some of which grew extensively in the 70's and 90's. The town of Kidsgrove is located to the north, which, although physically part of the conurbation, linked via the canals and the A50 to the northern towns of Stoke on Trent, is geographically separate from Newcastle town. The area spatial strategy is illustrated on Plan 7.

Vision

- 5.*** ***“By 2026 the prosperity of the Urban Neighbourhoods of Newcastle and Kidsgrove will be significantly enhanced through sustained investment to create a strong and stable local economy which will provide access to a wide range of high value jobs. This will be sustained by; a high achieving education sector; increased opportunities for life long learning; a broad skills base and an attractive portfolio of readily available employment land.***

There will be a balanced housing market catering for a mixed income community with diverse needs, within a sustainable environment where people are easily able to access countryside amenities, and an attractive network of parks and open spaces. Together these will work to support thriving, safe and well connected neighbourhoods. Knutton, Cross Heath, Silverdale, Chesterton, and poor quality areas in Kidsgrove, will be transformed into confident communities where the local needs and aspirations of all residents are fulfilled regardless of background, income or age. In Kidsgrove this will play a key role in strengthening its vitality as a district centre serving the north part of the conurbation.

The environment will be well maintained and characterised by high quality, environmentally sensitive buildings, which have a positive impact on streets and public spaces and which are themselves inspiring and contribute to a strong sense of well being.

Residents will have greater access to high performing local services including access to excellent modern sporting and leisure facilities enabling them to enjoy higher levels of physical activity and live independent healthy lives. Journeys to these services and other destinations will be safer, less congested and will increasingly be made by public transport, walking and cycling.

The quality of life will be significantly enhanced by vibrant local centres and the close proximity to: - a thriving Market Town Centre providing a key focal point for civic, cultural, leisure and retail activities; employment; and a revitalised City Centre.”

Strategic Principles

ASP5 – Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- 3400 net additional dwellings
- 104ha of employment land

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:

1. Close partnership working between the Council, RENEW North Staffordshire, Staffordshire County Council, local RSLs, and the private sector, will create an urban community that boasts a number of distinctive, attractive and vibrant residential neighbourhoods offering a greater choice of housing types, tenures and prices.
2. For the period 2006 – 2026, a minimum of 3400 net additional dwellings will be provided, of which approximately 25% will be affordable.

These will be broadly distributed as follows -

Knutton and Cross Heath - 600 net additional dwellings

Silverdale – 600 net additional dwellings

Chesterton – 300 net additional dwellings

Kidsgrove – 600 net additional dwellings

Thistleberry – 300 net additional dwellings

Newcastle East – 700 net additional dwellings

Newcastle South – 300 net additional dwellings

3. The density of new development will balance the need to make the most efficient use of land and the need to provide a wide range of housing types, tenures, sizes and prices. In some areas it may be appropriate to plan for lower densities where there is an identified need for higher value housing.
4. A minimum of 104ha of employment land will be brought forward over the plan period.

Continued:

ASP5 Continued:

- 5. The Chatterley Valley site currently being brought forward by Advantage West Midlands will provide a significant volume of high value added employment opportunities in accordance with its identified role as the plan area's Regional Investment Site.**
- 6. Retail development outside of Newcastle Town Centre will be of a nature and scale appropriate to the role of each local centre and will primarily be to meet identified local requirements.**
- 7. Significant qualitative improvements will be made to the Borough's green spaces and sports facilities in accordance with the Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy and the Newcastle under Lyme Leisure Needs Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy.**
- 8. The Council will work with partners, including the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone, to link the most disadvantaged communities with new employment and learning, particularly in the further and higher education sectors, in order to promote social cohesion and create a modern labour market.**

Reasoned Justification

- 5.*** The structural transformation of the borough's economic base in the latter part of the 20th century has had, in common with the City, a significant impact upon social and environmental conditions within the borough's urban areas, with some communities suffering from significant socio-economic deprivation, poor health, limited access to employment opportunities, and weak housing markets.
- 5.*** In accordance with the WMRSS Phase Two Revision this spatial strategy aims to concentrate new housing development primarily within those areas identified as priorities for intervention through the Housing Market Renewal programme. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Option Report indicated that focusing development in these identified priority areas is by far the most effective strategic option for achieving sustainability objectives such as meeting local housing needs, enhancing the vitality and viability of the key centres, reducing the need to travel, improving access to employment and educational opportunities, improving health and conserving natural resources.
- 5.*** The communities of Knutton and Cross Heath, where housing market failure is particularly severe, have been designated as an 'Area of Major Intervention' (AMI) by RENEW North Staffordshire. The first phase of this intervention will involve – the development of new high quality housing (including a significant proportion of affordable housing) on former industrial land; the clearance and high quality re-development of part of the Lower Milehouse Estate; qualitative improvements to the neighbourhood's green spaces and play areas; and improvements to the transport network to create greater connectivity to the rest of the conurbation. In addition planning permission has been granted for

an 'extra care' retirement village on a site adjacent to Lower Milehouse Lane comprising a state-of-the-art health centre and 60 one and two bedroom apartments for rent or part ownership. The design, layout, access and densities of all new development within the AMI will be guided by the Knutton and Cross Heath Design SPD.

- 5.*** As part of the Renew programme Chesterton has been identified as a 'General Renewal Area', with intervention limited to environmental improvements to raise the appearance and perceptions of the area. Similar interventions are also taking place within the AMI in Knutton and Cross Heath.
- 5.*** Silverdale, although within the Renew HMR Pathfinder area, is not a current focus for intervention by Renew. However, the English Partnerships led redevelopment of the former Silverdale Colliery will be instrumental in transforming the area. This development will comprise approximately 300 high quality dwellings, a community building and new public green space on a 100ha brownfield site and is anticipated to act as a catalyst for increased investor confidence in the area.
- 5.*** The Council is continuing to work closely with Renew, a preferred developer, and local RSLs to identify an appropriate approach towards achieving genuinely transformational change in the Galleys Bank area of Kidsgrove. A significant proportion of the housing in this area has been classified as defective, and the difficulties in obtaining mortgage finance on these properties has led to:- an over representation of private rented accommodation, a decline in the condition of many properties, depressed property values, and a relatively high proportion of transient residents. It is anticipated that the strategic approach taken will also involve significant improvements to Kidsgrove Town Centre, the public realm and the local transport network.
- 5.*** This strategy clearly aims to concentrate residential development within specific priority areas. However it must be recognised that the neighbourhoods outside of these priority areas such as May Bank, Wolstanton, Porthill and Bradwell to the north of the town centre; and Clayton and the Westlands to the south, provide highly sustainable locations for additional residential development. These neighbourhoods do not require the level of direct intervention needed elsewhere in the conurbation, as they provide excellent access to essential services, the Town and City Centres, major employment areas and support diverse and vibrant local service centres. As such, a degree of managed growth within these neighbourhoods must be accommodated to support their continued vitality and sustainability. Not to allow these neighbourhoods to continue to grow and prosper could place them at risk of suffering from an ageing population, a decline in the vitality and viability of local shopping facilities and key services and would fail to make optimum use of the borough's brownfield assets. The targets for housing in these neighbourhoods reflect both this need and the need to complement and support the revitalization of the housing markets within the priority areas.
- 5.*** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007 will provide the key evidence base for determining local affordable housing requirements and for identifying the appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to be delivered.

- 5.*** In accordance with national and emerging regional planning policy the density of new residential development will ensure the efficient use of available brownfield land. The appropriate density for residential development will be determined on a site by site basis, taking account of the existing built form, the nature of the development to be provided and the need to provide a wide range of housing types, tenures, sizes and prices. Therefore it may be appropriate in certain circumstances to plan for development at lower densities where there is an identified need for a higher value housing offer.
- 5.*** The RSS Phase Two Revision sets a target for the provision of 112ha of additional employment land within the Borough for the period 2006 - 2026. Current commitments and permissions within the urban area accounts for approximately 80ha (a further 8/9ha will be brought forward at Keele University and Science Park which, although closely linked to the conurbation, is geographically part of the rural area).
- 5.*** Additional sites will need to be identified and brought forward towards the end of the plan period to ensure a continual reservoir of deliverable employment sites. Whilst priority will be given to brownfield land, it is recognised that with the immediate priority of making the optimum use of our finite supply of brownfield sites for housing, greenfield sites in sustainable locations may need to be identified and allocated for employment uses.
- 5.*** The Borough Council is working closely with Staffordshire County Council to ensure that this strategy and the North Staffordshire Local Transport Plan conform to, and complement each other. The LTP provides a detailed evidence base regarding transport problems and opportunities which is informing the LDF process, for example, detailed congestion analysis, accessibility planning and road casualty analysis. The North Staffs LTP pays particular attention to identifying schemes that both support regeneration and are informed by this evidence base.
- 5.*** The key actions of the North Staffs LTP include –
- traffic management measures in strategic/local centres
 - pedestrian accessibility to local facilities
 - cycle routes between regeneration areas and Newcastle town centre
 - safer routes to school schemes
 - local safety schemes
 - bus stop and bus information improvements
- 5.*** The Strategy supports initiatives to help reduce health inequalities and promote higher educational attainment.

Implementation

- 5.*** Within the urban neighbourhoods of Newcastle and Kidsgrove, development will be primarily private-sector led, with the exception of public sector intervention in the Housing Market Renewal priority regeneration areas.
- 5.*** Development of the Chatterley Valley Regional Investment Site is led by Advantage West Midlands and is high in the NSRP Business Plan priorities.

- 5.*** There are no known insurmountable infrastructural limitations to delivery of the aspirations set out in this strategy. The County Council, as the highway authority in partnership with the Borough Council will carry out detailed transport modelling to ensure maximization of the contribution of the green travel agenda and fair apportionment of public and private investment in transport infrastructure. The framework for matching developer contributions to the capital programme for the delivery of the North Staffs LTP will be set out in the Newcastle Urban Transport and Development Strategy to be published later in 2008.
- 5.*** The provision of high quality parks, green spaces and recreational facilities is central to the creation of genuinely sustainable urban neighbourhoods. The Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy 2007 (and the associated action plans) and the Newcastle under Lyme Leisure Needs Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy provide the key evidence base and the strategic framework for the provision of additional greenspace and leisure facilities as well as improvements to existing resources. Public investment and developer contributions will be directed towards - ensuring the public safety of the borough's residents; qualitative and quantitative improvements to the quality of the area's green space assets; and the provision of essential community facilities.
- 5.*** The Newcastle Local Strategic Partnership will continue to work with the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership (SSP) in order to collectively deliver the Sustainable Communities Action Plan and Local Area Agreements as part of the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough. The Sustainable Communities' Strategy is underpinned by the Housing Market Renewal Programme which is regularly reviewed and rolled forward by Government. This is complemented by the County Council and Health Authorities schools and health facilities programmes.
- 5.*** The North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership including RENEW North Staffordshire will work to ensure finite funding resources are used effectively to deliver this strategy and that the agreed targets and outcomes are achieved. Renew has advanced Area Regeneration Frameworks which have been the subject of stakeholder consultation and are helping to determine investment streams.
- 5.*** The Site Allocations DPD will identify and allocate suitable sites for additional housing and employment development to meet the projected plan period targets.
- 5.*** The design of all development will be in accordance with guidelines set out in the North Staffordshire Generic Design Guidance SPD and, where appropriate, the Conservation and Heritage Guidance SPD and the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

Rural Areas Spatial Strategy

- 5.*** The rural area refers to the land within the Green Belt and the land beyond it. It also includes the "village envelopes" defined within the Green Belt and includes Mow Cop and the narrow ribbon development that connects it to Harriseahead. The area spatial strategy is illustrated on Plan 8.

Vision

- 5.*** ***“The rural quality of life will be characterised by the attractiveness, diversity, vitality and sustainability of its landscapes and communities. Focused growth, combined with investment in a safe and more sustainable transport network, will support the provision of and access to essential local services and help to ensure a diverse range of local housing needs and employment opportunities are catered for.***

The rich built heritage will be further protected and enhanced by sensitive new developments, which make efficient use of resources and respect existing settlement patterns. Where appropriate, innovative buildings will be part of the distinctive landscape. The special quality of the countryside, its canals, network of rights of way and bridleways, its built heritage and historic environment, will sustain an attractive setting for village life and work to maintain a high quality, well resourced, and attractive tourist and leisure destination, which not only raises the image of the conurbation, but also promotes the vitality of rural businesses and enterprise.”

Strategic Principles

ASP6 – Rural Areas Area Spatial Principles

The development targets for the area are:

- 900 net additional dwellings

These will be provided for in accordance with the following principles:

1. A maximum of 900 net additional dwellings of high design quality primarily located on sustainable brownfield land within the village envelopes of the key rural service centres (see Key Diagram), namely - Loggerheads, Madeley and the villages of Audley Parish, to meet identified local requirements – in particular, the need for affordable housing.
2. A positive approach will be taken towards development for supported and special needs housing where it supports the Housing Strategy for Newcastle Borough.

Continued:

ASP6 Continued:

- 3. The Council will take a positive approach towards rural enterprise where it –**
 - Assists in the sensitive and sustainable diversification of traditional rural economies**
 - Makes a positive contribution towards enhancing local landscape and biodiversity**
 - Involves the appropriate re – use, conversion, or replacement of existing buildings in sustainable locations**
 - Contributes towards the provision of essential rural services**
 - Relates to the availability of the local workforce**
- 4. Investment in Keele University and Science Park will be fostered to help strengthen the local knowledge and skills base and facilitate the growth and competitiveness of high value business development, thereby increasing local job opportunities in these sectors.**
- 5. The quality of the village and canal conservation areas will be preserved and enhanced through the completion of a rolling programme of conservation area appraisals and management plans by 2012.**
- 6. All new development will need to reflect the following policies: Design Quality, Built Heritage, and Natural Assets.**
- 7. The implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Staffordshire will work to facilitate the improved provision of off road routes for horses and cyclists and its integration with an enhanced public network.**
- 8. The strategic location of Apedale Community Country Park will continue to be exploited to provide a key leisure and recreation resource with wide visitor appeal and will act as a catalyst for a new Community Park in the Lower Apedale Valley and other community recreational facilities, thereby affording excellent access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility impairments.**

Reasoned Justification

- 5.*** Rural Newcastle under Lyme, whilst dominating the borough in spatial terms is home to just 21% of the borough's population. However, the importance of the rural area to the communities and economy of the plan area as a whole should not be underestimated. Its diverse range of rural economic activities; the distinctive rural landscape; the wealth of international, national and locally designated wildlife sites and nature reserves; and distinctive and attractive villages are all central to the image of the plan area as a pleasant and attractive location for both, people and inward investment as well as bringing both social and economic benefits to its communities.
- 5.*** This strategy is intended to ensure that local rural housing needs are adequately met; the rural economy can continue to diversify, grow and prosper; access to essential services and facilities such as doctors, schools, shops and community facilities is maximised; and the area's distinctive landscapes and natural resources are preserved.
- 5.*** The level of new housing development required to enable North Staffordshire to continue to grow and prosper could easily be accommodated on existing brownfield sites within the urban area. However to achieve genuinely sustainable rural communities and economies, it will be necessary to enable limited new housing to meet the needs of people working within the rural areas. Not to do so would result in a static and aging population, increasing social exclusion, increased pressure upon social and health services, and economic stagnation. However, the strategy is clear that there is no scope for development of a scale beyond that required for natural growth and in locations where there are very few local services.
- 5.*** The Sustainability Appraisal clearly demonstrated that limiting rural growth to meet identified local requirements will provide the most effective approach towards minimising any undesirable impacts upon international, national and local designated wildlife habitats and geological features. In addition, the Sustainability Appraisal clearly identifies the spatial strategy as the most effective and sustainable approach towards supporting the regeneration of the Major Urban Area whilst simultaneously reducing the need to travel and preserving the borough's finite natural resources.
- 5.*** The Borough's Rural Services Survey (2007) has identified Loggerheads, Madeley and the villages of Audley Parish as providing the most comprehensive provision of essential local services. These villages all have relatively good access to the conurbation by public transport. It should also be noted that the villages to the northwest of the borough are well linked to cross - border centres of employment and consumption i.e. Crewe and Nantwich.
- 5.*** This strategy conforms to policy RR1 – Rural Renaissance in the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision. This highlights the need for identifying and establishing a sustainable network of rural services centres and states that the provision of new housing should generally be restricted to meeting local housing requirements and to support local services.
- 5.*** The disparity between household incomes and house prices is, with the exception of the villages of Audley Parish, most pronounced in the Borough's rural settlements, therefore the identification and provision of appropriate levels of affordable housing is a key strategic priority. The Strategic Housing

Market Assessment (2008) provides a detailed picture of the housing market and affordability within the plan area and provides the primary evidence base for identifying affordable housing needs. The rolling five year programme of parish needs assessments provides further, locally specific evidence for identifying current and likely future housing requirements within the rural area – including the provision for affordable housing.

- 5.*** In accordance with Policy CSP6 Affordable Housing, where evidence highlights a local need not capable of being met through normal housing provision policy, sites may be released as Rural Exception Sites – as defined in PPS3. If such a site cannot be accommodated within an existing village, then a site immediately adjoining the village may be deemed appropriate. Housing on these sites will remain affordable in perpetuity. The delivery of such a scheme will require close partnership working between the council, the Housing Corporation and relevant RSLs.
- 5.*** Whilst the priority is to make the maximum use of brownfield land, it is recognised that it may be necessary to identify greenfield sites to meet the area's housing requirements later in the plan period and if necessary the boundaries of village envelopes will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD.
- 5.*** In accordance with PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural areas, it is recognised that the re-use of existing buildings in appropriate locations, for economic, community or residential uses can make a significant contribution towards the sustainability of rural areas. As such, it is anticipated that sustainable windfall developments will play a considerable part in meeting local development requirements.
- 5.*** The West Midlands Economic Dimensions (2007) report commissioned by the West Midlands Rural Accord and West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum highlights the predominance of low value added/low wage employment opportunities in the rural areas as a key issue to be addressed, in order to create genuinely sustainable rural communities. The Science Park, which once fully developed, will have the capacity to accommodate up to 2500 employees: will make a significant contribution towards providing access to high quality jobs in the rural areas and throughout the plan area. It will also make a major contribution to transforming the skills base, attracting inward investment, particularly in the development of research facilities and businesses reliant on and complementary to such research processes and encouraging the provision of high quality housing.

Implementation

- 5.*** The delivery of affordable housing in the rural areas will involve close partnership working between both local authorities, Parish Councils, land owners, developers, the Housing Corporation and local RSLs. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will identify suitable sites for housing and will inform the allocation of housing land in the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

- 5.*** Both Councils will support rural development that contributes towards the delivery of the Actions Plans produced by Advantage West Midlands to deliver the Rural Development Programme in the West Midlands.
- 5.*** The planned Phase 3 expansion of the Keele University and Science Park is being led by the University with support from the Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Advantage West Midlands and the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone. It will provide approximately 16ha of new development on an attractively landscaped 28ha site. Approximately 8ha will be for employment development primarily for research and development industries, including a new £3 million patient research facility. The Science Park will build upon its location, environment and linkages to the University to attract highly skilled employees.
- 5.*** Development of the higher education sector and med tech sectors as a means of fostering growth will be further facilitated by: strengthening the infrastructure links between the universities, other educational and training institutions and the Regional Investment Site; the maintenance of a balanced portfolio of employment land and public investment in the quality of the environment across the plan area.
- 5.*** Public investment and developer contributions will be directed towards – the provision of affordable housing, improvements to the public realm, the management and delivery of key community facilities and services, including community transport schemes and subsidised bus services, and improving safety through junction improvements and traffic management schemes in villages. The adopted Developer Contributions SPD sets out detailed guidelines in respect of this. The Borough Council will prepare a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on affordable housing, which should be adopted in November 2008.
- 5.*** Any development within the North Staffordshire Green Belt will be in accordance with policies set out in national planning policy - PPG2 and local development plan policy.
- 5.*** The completion of a rolling programme of conservation area appraisals and management plans by 2012 will put in place a series of measures to preserve and enhance the built heritage and historic environment.
- 5.*** The implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Staffordshire 2008 will be taken forward by Staffordshire County Council in partnership with the joint Local Access Forum, user groups, parish councils, the Borough Council and landowners.
- 5.*** As part of The Three Dales Vision, Staffordshire County is committed to sustained investment in Apedale Community Country Park. This investment will provide new visitor facilities, including the development of state of the art eco facilities at the Apedale Energy Station, complementing the existing Heritage Centre and Museum. Negotiations are also taking place with, English Partnerships and the Land Restoration Trust for the County Council to take over the management of the void and waste farm at the former Silverdale Colliery site once they have been restored. This will work to extend the sphere of influence of Apedale by forming a new Community Country Park significantly enhancing community access to the countryside.

