Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Issues Consultation Paper

DRAFT

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1.0 Foreword

To be added

2.0 Introduction

Background

2.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council have embarked on the long journey of preparing a local plan together. The purpose of the Joint Local Plan is to ensure that long term policies and plans are in place to make sure the borough and the city take shape in the future in a way that is managed and meets the needs of local people and businesses. The Plan's time frame will therefore cover the period 2013 – 2033.

2.2 The councils already have a joint plan making partnership created as a result of adopting the Joint Core Spatial Strategy in 2009. However, this Strategy is six years old and the preparation of a Joint Local Plan is considered by both councils to be the most effective way of providing a robust and coherent strategy to protect and enhance the economic prosperity of both local authority areas, while continuing to respect the distinctive identities of our unique communities.

2.3 This consultation document is the Issues stage of the joint local plan production. It aims to make you aware of some significant issues identified from our latest research, which have future land use implications and are likely to influence the way Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent develop in the future. We are also looking for your views on whether or not we have identified the right issues facing the plan area.

2.4 At the next stage of consultation we will be setting the vision, aims and objectives of the plan. Your views on the challenges identified in this consultation paper will help to identify what these should be, and will help to identify and prioritise what the Joint Local Plan needs to focus on. This second stage of consultation will also set out options for managing future development needs and where it could take place.

What Area does the Joint Local Plan cover?

2.5 The Joint Local Pan covers the administrative boundaries of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and is the same plan area as the adopted Core Spatial Strategy.

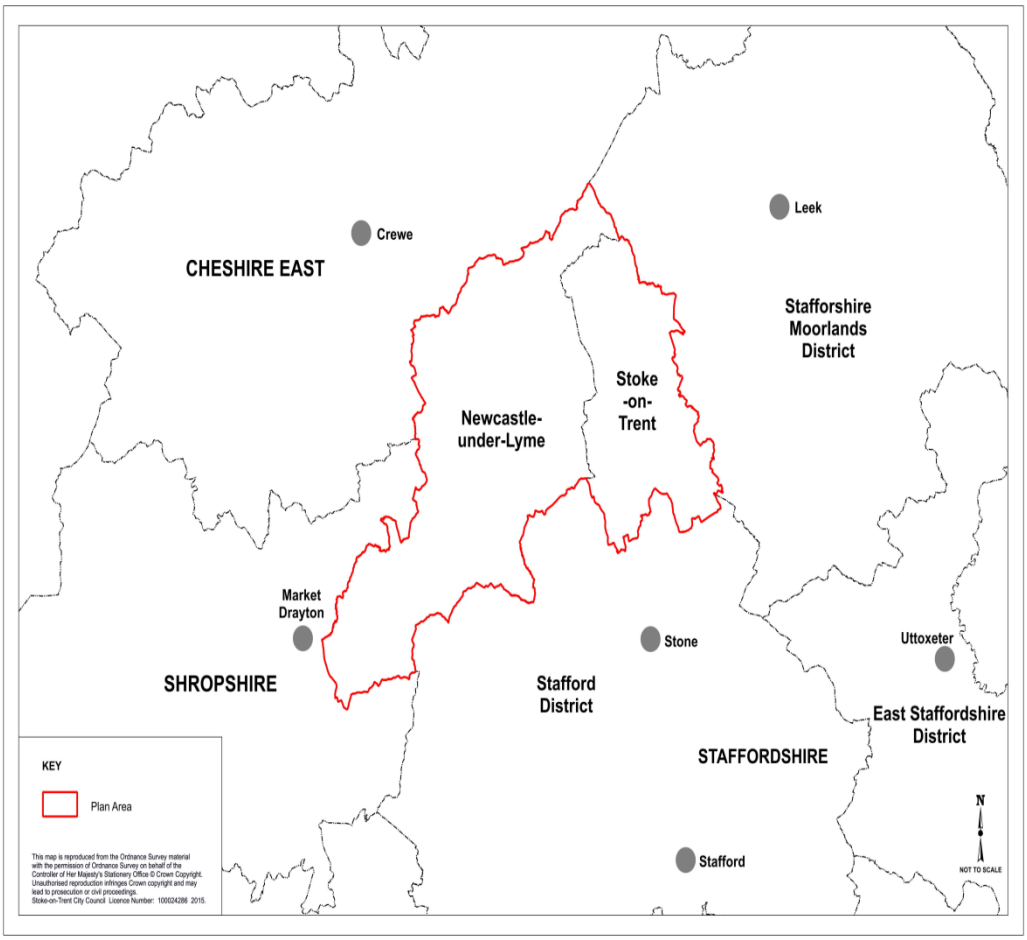

Figure 1 – Joint Plan Area (Administrative Boundaries of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme)

Joint Statement of Community Involvement

2.6 The councils have already adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (2015) which sets out how you will be consulted throughout the plan making process. This will be an important document to help understand when and how consultation on the Local Plan process will take place. A copy is available to view on the Planning Policy website for each council following the links below. Each consultation stage will be carried out in line with the agreed methods.

- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council: **www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/planning/planning-policy**
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council: **www.stoke.gov.uk/planningpolicy**

The plan making process and how it will affect you

2.7 Local Plans are identified by national policy as the key to delivering sustainable development that meets the needs and aspirations of local communities. Once a Local Plan is in place, it will be clear what types of development will be supported by each local planning authority, where significant development will take place and when it is likely to be built. This type of certainty will play an important role in (but not limited to):

- Attracting and directing investment in housing, jobs, shops and facilities
- Seeking to meet community aspirations
- Setting a framework for encouraging and managing development including resisting inappropriate development
- Securing the physical infrastructure to support new development

2.8 Without a Local Plan we will have much less control over the quality of development and where development takes place in Newcastle-under-Lyme and in Stoke-on-Trent. With a Joint Local Plan we will be more able to direct development to deliver local priorities and aspirations.

2.9 The National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance Document set out the steps that need to be taken into account in the preparation of the Joint Local Plan (See figure 2 below).

2.10 We have the collective responsibility of using the Joint Local Plan to: set a clear economic vision and realistic and deliverable strategy for the area; positively seek opportunities to meet the areas long term development needs; and to proactively encourage sustainable economic growth. In doing so we must take account of the potential environmental impact and the impact on social conditions, including the health and well-being of communities. In other words the local plan must promote sustainable development.

2.11 By setting out an interpretation of what sustainable development should look like locally the Joint Local Plan will give clear indications of what development will have a harmful effect and be resisted in the future.

2.12 More detailed information on specific national planning policy requirements which relate to the eight topics presented in this consultation document is provided in the set of accompanying technical papers.

Housing and Planning Bill 2015

2.13 On 13 October, the Government published the Housing and Planning Bill 2015, which sets out measures to boost house building and makes a number of changes to the planning system. This is not legislation at this stage and

therefore has not been taken into account. So far, the Bill has received its first and second readings in the House of Commons and is at Committee and Report stages.

2.14 As the bill progresses this will have important implications for the Joint Local Plan, particularly in how it addresses housing types but this is something which will be taken into account at the next Local Plan stage.

HS2

2.15 The Government's proposals to construct a high speed rail link from London to Manchester and the potential impact on the plan area of such a proposal have not been taken into account in the Joint Local Plan process, at this stage. An announcement was made by Government on the 30th November 2015 which set out the intention to locate the HS2 route between Fradely in the West Midlands and Crewe. Further consideration will need to be made regarding this government proposal as the Joint Local Plan progresses. It is therefore recognised that HS2 will have implications for the Joint Local Plan process, as well as, the long term development strategy itself. This position will be kept under continual review as the development plan progresses and when appropriate evidence will be updated to take account of the proposal.

What Happens to the Existing Local Plan Documents?

2.16 The joint Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006–2026 (Adopted in 2009) remains adopted policy throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. However as we move through the Local Plan process the emerging policies may be given greater weight at the more advanced stages in preparation, in line with guidance contained within the NPPF. Many of the Core Spatial Policies, upon which decision taking is currently based, are still robust and up to date; this will continue to be reflected in the decision taking at both councils. Once the local plan is in place it will provide a new overall development strategy by replacing the Newcastle-Under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and any existing 'saved' policies from previous plans. As such it will become the primary tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals. Furthermore it will set the overarching strategy that neighbourhood plans should conform to.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan 2010 – 2026

2.17 Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council act as Waste Planning Authorities throughout their administrative areas (excluding the Peak District National Park). A Joint Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2014 which covers the provision of waste planning to the period 2026.

2.18 The Joint Waste Local Plan relates to how waste will be managed after it has been collected from homes, offices, factories, farms or construction sites. The strategy addresses issues for all types of waste and not just waste collected by local authorities from households and offices. The aims of the Plan are to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the provision of waste management facilities to manage waste produced in the area and also to manage the change in the type of facilities that are required to re-use, recycle and recover more from the waste produced.

2.19 Given the plan was adopted in 2014 this remains a key up to date waste planning document which is in force across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Once the Joint Local Plan has reached a more advanced stage in production any further implications arising as a result of newly proposed policies and proposals relating to waste will be assessed. These issues papers therefore do not set out specific issues relating to waste at this stage.

How long will the Joint Local Plan process take?

2.20 The production of the plan is an iterative process where the overarching strategy is developed through a number of stages involving several rounds of public consultation.

2.21 The diagram below sets out the various stages of plan production. A full timetable can also be downloaded from INSERT LINK

	Stage	What it involves	Progress/ Timeframe
	Stage 1	Assembly of evidence base	Work on-going
	Stage 2	SCI and stakeholder engagement	Statement of Community Involvement has been adopted and is available to view on our website.
	Stage 3	Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report *	Draft SA Scoping Report consultation with statutory consultees completed in August/September 2015. Further Stakeholder consultation in 2016 at Strategic Options
Current Stage →	**Stage 4a**	**Issues Papers Consultation**	**Consultation timetabled for February/ March 2016**
	Stage 4b	Strategic Options Consultation *	Consultation timetabled for July / August 2016
	Stage 5	Draft Plan *	Consultation timetabled for May / June 2017
	Stage 6	Final draft: pre-submission joint local plan *	Timetabled to be published February / March 2018
	Stage 7	Submission of joint local plan to secretary of state*	May 2018

Stage 8	Public examination of joint local plan	May to October 2018
Stage 9	Adoption of final agreed joint local plan by council	December 2018

*** A Sustainability Appraisal Report will accompany the consultation at each stage of the plan making process (excluding Issues Papers)**

Figure 2 – Local Plan Making Process

Why we have prepared an Issues Paper?

2.22 The purpose of consulting on an issues paper is to set out some of the key local and regional matters which the evidence is flagging up and which could have a significant influence on how the area might change in the future. In this way we hope to encourage an early discussion on the key challenges that the area faces if it is to attempt to meet its future development needs.

2.23 With this in mind we have prepared eight strategic issues papers on the following topics:

- Housing
- Economy
- City, Town and Other Centres
- Transport
- Health and Communities
- Heritage
- Natural and Rural Environment
- Energy and Climate Change

2.24 Each strategic issues paper summarises the main issues identified from the research and evidence gathered so far and then identifies an initial set of key messages and challenges.

2.25 The housing and economy chapters explore the potential scale of growth by identifying a range of future housing and employment needs. At this early stage we are not setting any development targets or proposing where growth should happen. Options for the level of growth we could plan for and how this may be delivered will be provided at the next stage of consultation once the vision, aims and objectives of the plan are developed further, however the evidence starts to identify a direction of travel.

2.26 The topic papers each have an accompanying technical paper which summarises the policy background and evidence driving the strategic issues. We recommend reading the technical papers alongside each consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan will seek to address.

2.27 At the end of the consultation document we have set out a series of questions which you are invited to submit responses to, including suggesting other strategic issues which we may need to take into consideration or expressing the issues that you experience in living and working here.

2.28 Although we have tried to avoid technical language the papers do use some technical terms. These are explained in a Glossary. The Glossary is intended as an introductory guide to planning and should not be used as a source of statutory definitions.

Local Evidence

2.29 As set out above, the starting point of preparing any local plan involves gathering together up to date evidence that considers information about the economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area. This is important to identify what the development needs of an area are over a fifteen to twenty year period and the issues arising from these development pressures that need to be addressed.

2.30 The significant studies that we have undertaken so far and which some of the key issues identified in this consultation document reflect are as follows:

- **A Strategic Housing Market Assessment**
- **An Employment Land Review**
- **A Gypsy & Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment**
- **Retail & Leisure Studies** *(Stoke-on-Trent Retail and Leisure Capacity Study completed in 2014 & Newcastle-under-Lyme Retail and Leisure Study completed in 2011)*

2.31 These studies together with the councils' land use monitoring data provide vital information on:

- How much housing could be needed over the next 20 years depending on whether we want to grow to meet the expected change in population and/ or to help realise the areas full potential for economic growth. It also identifies the type of housing that could be required.
- The area's economic potential including an up to date assessment of the demand for economic land, including which employment sectors are likely to grow.
- The trends in retail and leisure and what the need for new retail and leisure developments will be in the future.
- The accommodation required to help our existing and future gypsy and travelling community to reside locally or to travel.

Sub - Regional and Local Strategies

2.32 In addition to local evidence the Joint Local Plan must consider the implications of sub regional plans across the West Midlands and key local

strategies such as those for housing, economic growth, health and well-being, green space, transport, sports and outdoor recreation etc. Relevant sub-regional strategies for each of the local plan topic areas is covered within each of the following sections and the accompanying technical papers.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

2.33 The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) brings businesses and local authorities together to drive economic growth and create jobs. Formed in 2011, the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP has a clear strategy – to create 50,000 jobs and increase the size of the economy by 50 per cent by 2021. The ambition is to see more businesses employing more people providing goods and services that are in demand nationally and internationally. The Joint Local Plan needs to take account of this vision and ambition alongside the local evidence.

Duty to Cooperate

2.34 The big issues identified in this paper are likely to have implications wider than the geographical area of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. Therefore we must also consult with neighbouring local authorities as well as organisations such as Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. We are also required to pay regard to the activities and proposals of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnership.

2.35 This consultation document also serves to notify these bodies of the intention to prepare a Joint Local Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.

Next Steps – Working Towards the Strategic Options

2.36 The research and evidence carried out so far is only the starting point for developing the local development strategy. After we have considered the comments on the issues and challenges facing the area in the coming years the next step will be to consider how we might tackle these big issues. Therefore, at the next stage of consultation we will set out options for meeting the range of future growth and the broad locations where this might take place. It's at this stage that we will consider factors affecting the supply of land, what is financially viable and how much infrastructure is necessary to support different options for growth.

2.37 It's not until the Draft plan stage that we will begin to set out site specific proposals and development management policies that we will use to guide future development.

2.38 Ultimately it will then be the councils' responsibility to consider all of the comments received at each consultation stage with the aim of balancing any competing interests in order to achieve sustainable development that is in the widest possible public interest.

How to Comment

2.39 Consultation on the Issues Paper will take place between…… and…….. therefore if you have any comments on any aspects of the issues consultation both in relation to Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, you can submit your comments to us by email or post.

2.40 To find out details of all the consultation activities please check the council's website ….. Alternatively details will be provided in …….You can also view documents and pick up response forms at these locations.

3.0 Housing

3.1 A Housing Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper. It summarises the policy background and evidence driving the strategic issues highlighted below. We recommend reading the Housing Technical Paper alongside this consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan is seeking to address. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

3.2 The conurbation of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent experienced rapid growth and development in the 19th and 20th Centuries, leading to a large stock of Victorian, industrial and post-industrial housing. Housing and industry developed side by side with each other throughout this era of growth and the two became interdependent. As traditional industries have declined, so too have some of these areas of traditional housing and the communities that have lived within them promoting a trend of out migration. As a result, of the decline in the local economy, low property prices and high vacancy rates it created a weak local housing market, acting as a deterrent to investment. In response, there were a number of interventions in the plan area including the establishment of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone in 1999 and the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) pathfinder programme (RENEW) in 2003. Both of these strategies operated under the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership which was established in April 2007 in order to co-ordinate transformational change. This programme operated until 2011 receiving government funding to facilitate comprehensive regeneration by improving the housing stock in terms of both the quality and choice of offer. The RENEW programme succeeded in building many new houses and contributed to the creation of better neighbourhoods but the degraded physical environment of older industrial areas persists and large areas of vacant land continue to present problems for the delivery of new housing due to high costs of development and the low value of the property market. Nevertheless new evidence is indicating there are signs of a tentative recovery in the housing market.

3.3 In stark contrast the rural area provides a highly attractive environment and this has contributed in recent years to increasing development pressure in the open countryside beyond the Green Belt.

3.4 The Core Spatial Strategy was prepared jointly and adopted in 2009 to ensure that policies were consistent across the urban area to facilitate the delivery of conurbation wide regeneration programmes, including the Housing Market Renewal programme and to deliver prevailing national and regional objectives, such as the strategy of rural renaissance. At the time it recognised that the housing market and local economy do not respect administrative boundaries, although there was no evidence to formally define the extent of the housing market.

3.5 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which has been jointly commissioned by the two authorities formally, identifies Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent as a single housing market area, whilst acknowledging that there are wider relationships with other authorities including Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford and Cheshire East. However, these relationships are not considered strong enough to include these authorities as part of the single housing market area (HMA).

3.6 In circumstances where authorities do share a HMA (and therefore the HMA is wider than a single borough/city boundary) the needs arising from one authority may need to be met by the other authorities to ensure all needs are met within the HMA. [Paragraph 47 NPPF] The role of the Joint Local Plan is to devise a strategy to ensure that this housing is shared across the housing market area and in a manner which is consistent with achieving sustainable development [paragraph 182 NPPF).

The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Housing Market Area

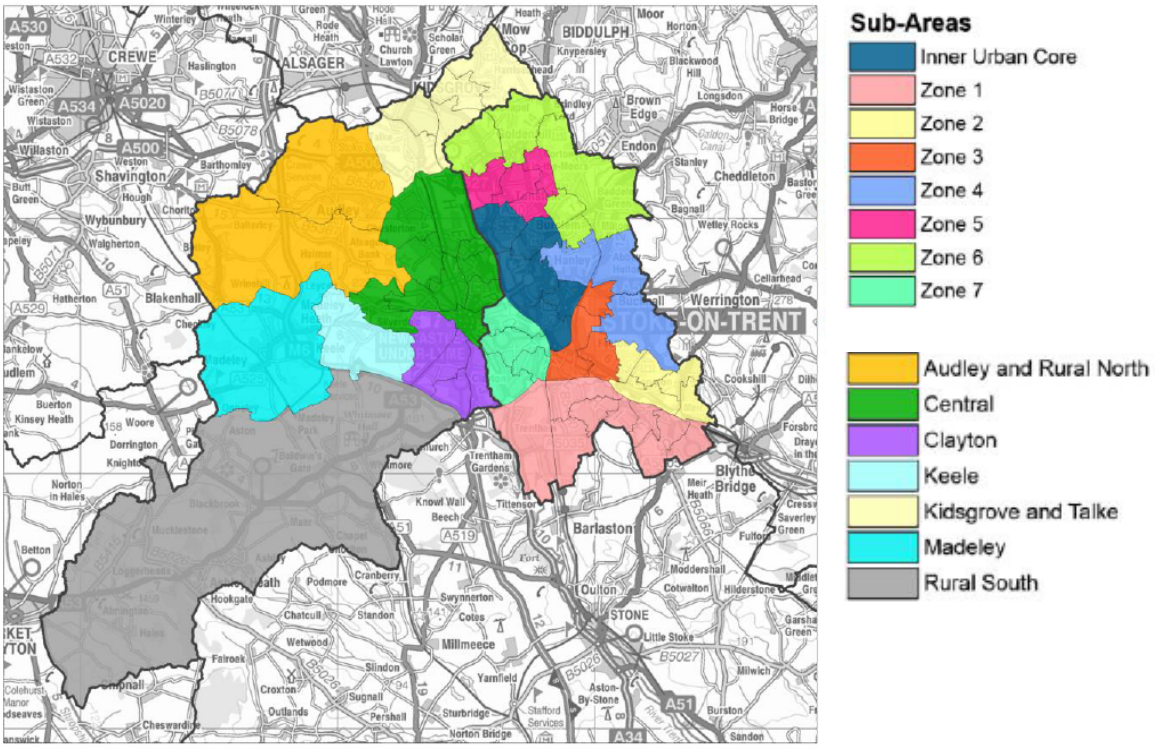

Figure 1: Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Housing Market Area

Source: Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

Introduction to the issues

3.7 A primary aim for the Joint Local Plan to address is locating new homes in sustainable locations to meet the identified needs and aspirations of the area. National policy therefore requires us to ensure that the Local Plan will meet the

'full, objectively assessed needs' for housing in the area. This means that we must take in to account factors such as likely future job growth in addition to local population change to work out how many new houses are likely to be needed in the future. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment plays a key role in identifying a range of suitable objectively assessed housing needs targets. This is only the starting point for developing the future housing requirement in the Local Plan. At this stage we are not taking account of planning policy matters, such as land availability and infrastructure demands, but we are seeking views on the approach taken in identifying local housing needs.

3.8 This will be developed further as part of the Strategic Options paper, which will consider whether the housing requirement can be set to meet the full objective assessment of housing need, or whether there are local policy considerations which could further affect the number of houses that can sustainably be provided. In determining this, a key issue for the Joint Local Plan at the next consultation stage, will be to identify whether enough sustainable housing sites can be delivered to meet local needs. In other words how the amount of housing is going to be distributed across the two authorities.

3.9 Aside from general housing needs, we are also required by national policy to consider the needs for all types of housing, such as affordable housing, housing for elderly people, people with disabilities, students and accommodation for gypsies and travellers.

3.10 This consultation paper aims to highlight the strategic issues relating to housing that have emerged from the latest SHMA evidence, including the scale of housing need. It is the start of the process of reaching agreement with the community and stakeholders on a future development strategy to be set out in the new Joint Local Plan. The next step after we have taken into account your views on the key challenges facing Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is to develop options for managing the potential level of growth proposed.

Issue 1: Housing Need

3.11 Previously, targets for new housing were set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (Phase Two Revision) and reflected in the Joint Core Spatial Strategy. However, national policy now suggests that such figures may no longer reflect the needs of the housing market area, meaning that we have to review our housing needs locally. The start of this process is done by preparing a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This aims to provide an accurate picture of local housing need across both areas and therefore a robust basis for determining a future housing target for the Joint Local Plan.

3.12 The SHMA has identified an objectively assessed need (OAN) ranging from **1,177 to 1,504 dwellings per annum across both authorities** between 2013 and 2039. This is well above the requirement previously set in the Core Spatial

Strategy, which had an indicative annual target for 855 dwellings across both areas.

3.13 The lower end of the OAN range reflects the future growth in households from population influences. These include factors such as an ageing population in Newcastle-under-Lyme, high birth rates in Stoke-on-Trent and the number of people likely to move into the area or likely to leave to live elsewhere. This lower figure also takes into account the fact that over many years large numbers of young people have not been able to form households due to rising house prices exceeding young peoples' incomes. The lower end of the OAN does not consider the economic trends across the plan area and therefore does not reflect the likely job growth required to support job creation. The lower end of the OAN will therefore have an impact on the potential to realise the true economic potential across both authorities.

3.14 The upper end of the range takes into account the need not only to accommodate the changing population but to build enough houses to accommodate a sufficient number of workers to help ensure the area realises its full economic potential. This upper end of the range would require the retention and attraction of more people to move into the area, as there would not be enough working age population generated locally, particularly in Newcastle-under-Lyme due to its ageing population, to realise the potential for future job growth and it proposes to increase the housing supply to help the housing market return to affordability levels last seen in 2001.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **The population in Stoke-on-Trent is naturally increasing due to a high birth rate whilst the population in Newcastle-under-Lyme is ageing.**
- **We need to build at least 1,177 houses per annum to meet our growing population and ensure young people can access local housing.**
- **We need to build at least 1,504 houses to ensure our economy grows to its full potential and to help young people to be able to afford to buy a house.**

3.15 A key task of the Local Plan is to narrow this range of housing needs down to a single figure, which will eventually become a housing target for the housing market area. However, even if we are to meet the lowest OAN figure this will not only require more people choosing to live and work in the area than have traditionally done, so but it will be necessary to build 27% more houses than the Core Strategy planned for. This suggests that the original aim of the Core Strategy which sought to halt outmigration and attract and retain the population would still appear to remain an important objective.

3.16 The OAN range presents a significant challenge not just in terms bringing about a significant improvement in the local housing market conditions but in ensuring that any growth is done in a sustainable manner. A key consideration in identifying locations for future housing growth will be the capacity and needs

of local infrastructure, for example; roads, health care services, schools and community facilities. An important example of this is the need for new school places and the councils will need to have regard to existing school locations, the projected capacity of schools and the potential for schools to expand or for new schools to be built when allocating housing sites. Work to examine this and other infrastructure capacity issues will be prepared to inform the Joint Local Plan's future strategies for growth and will help to identify where new development may need to contribute to new infrastructure provision.

3.17 At the Strategic Options stage of consultation it will be necessary to consider how much growth can reasonably be accommodated in the area. It is not possible to say at the moment whether we can or cannot meet our OAN range, because we don't have a robust picture of our housing land supply until our respective Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments are completed. If we can't demonstrate a sufficient supply of housing land without any change to the current development plan strategy then we would have to consider alternative policy options to deliver new housing.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To meet higher levels of future development needs without harming the sustainability of the area.**
- **Increasing the number of new homes that are built in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.**
- **Providing sufficient local facilities such as schools to meet higher housing need.**

Issue 2: Outmigration and Natural Population Decline

3.18 Both Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent have grown in population between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. In Newcastle this is due to people moving into the area as there are fewer births than deaths, with the result that the population is ageing. However, unlike neighbouring authorities, within Stoke-on-Trent there is still a net out-flow of population from Stoke-on-Trent to other areas of the UK, with the inflow of Staffordshire University students in the 15-19 year age group being the only exception. In Newcastle-under-Lyme, most age groups are balanced in terms of the number of people moving in and out of the area. However, there is also a large net inflow of people aged 15-19 due to students attending Keele University, which is then followed by a large net out flow of people aged 20-24. This suggests that it is likely that graduates or other young people move outside of Newcastle-under-Lyme to find work.

3.19 This trend could have a negative impact on higher earning job growth because of the difficulty in retaining a skilled workforce within both areas.

3.20 Even the lowest end of the OAN range would rely on us attracting and retaining higher levels of residents than in previous years, in order to address issues such as the high levels of outmigration which the area has already been experiencing.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **Large numbers of people continue to move out of Stoke-on-Trent**
- **The population in Newcastle-under-Lyme relies on people moving into the area to maintain its workforce.**
- **The HMA struggles to retain graduates who might be potential high earners of the future deterring investment in quality jobs.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To improve the areas economic competiveness by attracting and retaining residents within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.**
- **Accommodating higher levels of population as a result of reducing out-migration.**

Issue 3: Delivering new homes and strengthening the local housing market.

3.21 In recent years, both areas housing stock has grown slowly and significantly below comparable regional and national averages. This slow rate of housing growth reflects the market context (e.g. lower than average house prices and rents, particularly since the recession) but also change in national policy, with a move away from regeneration schemes – such as the RENEW Housing Market Renewal scheme – which sought to improve the housing stock of the housing market area and formed the basis of the previous Core Strategy's targeted regeneration within the urban areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. Evidence from the SHMA suggests that this may have played a role in constraining overall housing delivery and could have impacted on confidence within the local housing market area. It will be important to consider at the strategic options stage how the alternative options will work to strengthen the housing market.

3.22 The viability of sites across the plan area continues to be a significant challenge, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst there are some signs that the market is improving, there are still a number of major development sites that remain unviable due to them being on brownfield land with often significant contamination and remediation constraints. Due to the risk associated with developing some of these sites in the area, developers often require a higher level of return based on their committed investment and therefore this presents a significant obstacle to delivering new homes. The assessment of viability will therefore be a crucial element to be explored through the options stage and determining the most appropriate strategy going forward.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **A weak housing market continues to impact on the number of houses that have been built across both local authority areas.**
- **The viability of development sites continues to be a significant challenge across both local authority areas.**

3.23 Historically, there has been a notable gap between the number of dwellings given planning permission and the completions delivered in both authorities over the same period. Newcastle-under-Lyme has been unable to meet the Core Spatial Strategy annual housing targets since 2010/11, leading to a shortfall of 303 dwellings by 2014[1]. Likewise, Stoke-on-Trent has been unable to meet the housing requirement between 2008/09 and 2013/14 with only 368 net additional dwellings delivered on average each year due to the high levels of demolitions through both the RENEW programme and the economic downturn. This has subsequently led to a shortfall of 841 dwellings (2015) against the Core Spatial Strategy target. Furthermore, between the two authorities (HMA) only 643 net additional homes have been delivered on average each year between 2006/07 and 2014/15. This falls well short of the Core Strategy target of 855 dwellings per annum or any future target that would need to be set to achieve the SHMAs objectively assessed housing need range of 1,177 to 1,504 additional dwellings each year from 2013/14 onwards.

3.24 The SHMA highlights that the limited number of past completions reflects market factors and the deliverability of sites. Consultation with local estate agents indicates that there are signs that the local housing market is tentatively recovering, with the area viewed as a viable commuter location with relatively affordable property. However, a lack of inward investment and well-paid jobs, alongside potential increases in interest rates may pose a risk to this slight recovery. If there were more well paid jobs this could potentially reduce commuting to other areas to work which would promote more sustainable communities.

3.25 The comments received from consultees regarding the recovering local housing market are mirrored by the recently completed 2014/15 monitoring information that shows there have been 653 net completions in Stoke-on-Trent. This presents a positive picture in terms of housing delivery and an indication that the housing market is returning to levels seen prior to the recession. This positive picture is further supported by the number of units under construction (871) that will contribute towards 2015/16 completions. Similarly, Newcastle-under-Lyme's annual housing completions increased from a low of 183 in 2010/11 to a high of 414 in 2012/13. They have however dropped away again since then to 219 in 2014/15. In contrast to the lower completion rate, the remaining capacity of sites available for housing development in Newcastle-

[1] Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment for Newcastle-under-Lyme: 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2014)

under-Lyme increased by 962 dwellings between 2014 and 2015. These positive trends reflect changes to national policy which seek to loosen policy restrictions in order to boost the supply of housing.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **The current strategy of targeted regeneration has maintained a supply of housing but this has not been enough to meet needs due to market factors, including the high cost of bringing some sites forward.**
- **Many people who live in the area commute outside the area to work.**

3.26 This suggests that the authorities may need to consider whether the existing strategy of targeted regeneration of the urban areas is still the best strategy in light of our future housing needs. Nevertheless if investment does not take place within the more deprived areas then there is a danger that the outflow of people will continue resulting in a 'hollowing out' of the conurbation and the areas economic potential including the potential to create jobs not being realised due to a lack of investment and an insufficient workforce.

3.27 Comparing the two areas, the housing market within Newcastle-under-Lyme has historically performed better than Stoke-on-Trent's but still falls below regional and national averages. It has experienced higher house prices and has maintained a stronger level of completions even after the recession, compared to the significantly lower level of delivery in Stoke-on-Trent. In particular, the housing market appears to be strongest in the south of Newcastle-under-Lyme and in its rural areas, but housing development may be less viable outside of these locations, unless the above barriers to delivery can be minimised. Newcastle-under-Lyme's previous Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2013/14 also identified that the supply of deliverable brownfield housing sites within the borough was running out and that enough housing was not likely to be delivered to meet the targets used at the time from the Core Spatial Strategy.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **As future objectively assessed needs are significantly above the Core Spatial Strategy targets this situation is likely to become more demanding in the future. This all suggests that if past trends continue, current planning policies may not be delivering enough new housing sites which are attractive i.e. profitable for the market to develop to meet our future housing needs.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **The creation of a stronger and more balanced housing market promoting the area as a place to live.**
- **The creation of a housing market which supports the areas' potential for economic growth and job creation.**
- **Strengthening the housing market without undermining the long term sustainability of the area, the regeneration of the most deprived communities and without significantly harming the quality of life or environment.**
- **The creation of a stronger housing market while ensuring homes remain affordable, particularly for young people.**

Issue 4: Vacant Housing Stock

3.28 Long term empty properties in Stoke-on-Trent are greater than national and regional rates, with vacancy rates in Newcastle-under-Lyme being broadly in line with regional and national averages. In Newcastle the area with the largest proportion of empty properties is in the rural south. There is a particularly high level of vacant stock in Stoke-on-Trent's Inner Urban Core sub area; however all areas in Stoke-on-Trent are seeing higher levels of vacant stock than in Newcastle-under-Lyme. In the past, in order to address the high number of vacant properties in Stoke-on-Trent, the council has operated a scheme to utilise existing valuable community assets and to help bring vacant properties back into use for the nominal sum of £1 each. Whilst this scheme is no longer operational it provided an opportunity for members of the community to access the property ladder and, through a grant for home improvements, bring family homes back into use that may have otherwise been earmarked for demolition.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The number of empty homes is generally a bigger problem in Stoke-on-Trent than in Newcastle-under-Lyme.**

3.29 The assumption in the SHMA is that vacancy rates in the future will be the same as the 2011 Census, which is 3.8% in Stoke-on-Trent and 3% in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

3.30 Knowing how many empty homes there are is important because this needs to be factored into the housing target. The objectively assessed housing need figures recognise that there will be vacancies in the future in line with the 2011 Census.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Addressing the vacant housing stock and bringing properties back into use.**

Issue 5: Affordable Housing

3.31 Affordability is less of an issue in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent compared to the surrounding areas of Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands and England overall. However, affordability in the area has still worsened since 1997 and stakeholders suggest that low wages and limited job opportunities mean there are still areas of poverty despite the availability of cheaper housing. Affordability also remains an issue in the rural area. To purchase an entry level home in the rural south of the Borough, such Loggerheads, the average household income needs to be 34% higher than the average household income in Newcastle.

3.32 The SHMA suggests that to meet future affordable housing needs, the councils will need to meet their range of objectively assessed need (OAN) scenarios for market housing and deliver affordable housing as part of new market schemes. However, the SHMA also recognises that development viability issues in many weaker areas of the local housing market may limit the proportion of affordable housing which can viably be delivered alongside market housing. The strategic options consultation stage will need to consider how the location of housing sites can help to facilitate viable development.

3.33 The Housing and Planning Bill proposes a number of changes to the planning system to deliver more housing. The Bill proposes a commitment to deliver a number of starter homes for first-time buyers which may have an impact on the number of affordable rented homes developed in the future. As this does not form part of legislation at this point in time, the implications have not been considered in light of the evidence presented in the SHMA. The progress and the content of the Housing and Planning Bill will be monitored and considered as we progress through to Strategic Options.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Affordable housing should be provided on new schemes but the profitability of sites and suitability of housing proposed means that this is not always possible.**
- **Incomes do not always match with property prices so there is a need for affordable housing to be built in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent but this varies across the HMA.**

3.34 The SHMA identifies that, whilst private rented tenure is not included in the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF, it plays a significant role in housing residents who would otherwise need an affordable home, with many residents claiming housing benefit currently residing in private rented accommodation. However, the SHMA also raises the concern that cheaper housing stock in the private rented sector has associated quality issues, recognising that such housing may not always be suitable and appropriate to meet needs.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The private rented sector is meeting some of the needs for affordable housing but not always providing housing of an appropriate quality.**

3.35 Intermediate housing and in particular shared ownership housing is recognised as having some potential to help meet identified future needs for affordable housing in the housing market area. However, lower property prices and rents in certain parts of the area can mean open market housing is cheaper than some types of intermediate housing, which can challenge the viability of intermediate housing and reduce its appeal to potential buyers. This may mean intermediate products may not be delivered in these areas, despite their potential to meet affordable housing needs. We will have to consider at the strategic options stage whether or not intermediate housing is an appropriate way to meet affordable housing needs.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Choice is sometimes limited by the higher cost of bringing forward certain tenures e.g. intermediate housing in areas where incomes are more closely matched to property prices.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Meeting the evidence of need for affordable housing across both local authorities.**
- **The role of the private rented sector in meeting needs for affordable housing.**
- **Increasing choice of tenures that people can access.**

Issue 6: Specialist Housing Need

Housing for the Elderly

3.36 All the OAN scenarios identified by the SHMA indicate that Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent are expected to see a large increase in the elderly population between 2014 and 2039. Whilst it is not identified where this growth will take place within each authority, Newcastle-under-Lyme currently has a higher proportion of ageing residents than Stoke-on-Trent, in particular in the Audley and Rural North, Clayton, Madeley and Rural South sub areas, which may have implications for the type of housing required and the need for specialist accommodation, such as nursing and care homes. This would need to be considered alongside the need to accommodate market housing within areas such as these at the strategic options stage.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Special accommodation is required to meet the needs of an increasing number of elderly persons.**

High Value Housing

3.37 The SHMA identifies that historically there has been a comparatively limited number of higher income earners within both authorities, and that there is comparatively little high value housing stock (above £250,000) likely to be attractive to a more skilled workforce when considered against the regional and national average. This may have impeded peoples' ability to move up the housing ladder within the HMA. The SHMA recommends that following the completion of the ELR the councils should update the previously published Executive Housing Market Study – the ARC4 Report (2010).

KEY MESSAGE:

- **High value housing is required to attract a skilled and well paid workforce but more evidence is needed to understand what the implications are locally.**

Student Accommodation

3.38 Staffordshire University and Keele University are recognised as major economic drivers within North Staffordshire and the West Midlands. Their ability to continue to contribute to high value business growth and continue to invest in their world leading teaching and research relies on increasing the provision of sufficient student accommodation. According to Keele University's Strategic Plan for 2015-2020, Keele University is planning to increase the student base at the University by around 3000 students. The University plans to deliver additional student bed spaces to accommodate this growth, both on and off campus. If the University does not accommodate this extra demand, there will be an increased demand for student accommodation in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent to be provided by the private sector. This may need to be met through either additional purpose-built student accommodation or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

3.39 Staffordshire University recently announced plans to relocate the majority of courses, students and staff to Stoke-on-Trent campus, with an expectation that the Stafford campus will be vacated by 2016. It is anticipated that this would likely increase the number of students living in the area, meaning that additional supply of HMOs or purpose-built student accommodation may be required to meet the needs of students moving into the area.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The number of university students is expected to increase and this will increase the need for student accommodation some of which may have to be met by the private rented sector.**
- **Without additional student accommodation, the potential of the two universities to contribute to the economic growth of the area will be more limited.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Providing enough specialist accommodation for the growing elderly population.**
- **Creating market demand for high value housing in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.**
- **Providing enough student accommodation to support the success of the local universities without impacting on the general supply of housing.**
- **Meeting the needs for all types of housing in a balanced way.**

Issue 7: Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation

3.40 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, along with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, commissioned a new Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment in 2015. This study provides updated evidence to identify the future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and whether or not existing provision of accommodation for these social groups across the four local authority areas is sufficient to meet these future needs.

3.41 The study identifies that there are currently 43 Gypsy and Traveller caravan pitches in Stoke-on-Trent, of which 33 are on a local authority site and 10 are private authorised pitches. In Newcastle-under-Lyme there are 21 pitches, 19 on a housing association site and 2 on private authorised sites. When comparing the levels of need for gypsy and traveller accommodation against the existing levels of provision, the study identifies a shortfall of 22 pitches in Stoke-on-Trent and 1 pitch in Newcastle-under-Lyme between 2014 and 2019. In the longer term, a further 16 pitches are required in Stoke-on-Trent and 6 pitches in Newcastle-under-Lyme between 2019 and 2034. In addition to the provision of permanent pitches, the study also identifies the requirement to plan for the transit pitch provision and therefore it is recommended that 10 transit pitches are provided across Stoke-on-Trent (5 pitches) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (5 Pitches) between 2015/15 and 2018/19.

3.42 The study included undertaking a number of fieldwork interviews with Gypsies and Travellers across the area living in differenct types of accommodation, including households living on sites, yards and bricks and mortar accommodation. In accommodating this need the Local Plan will need to recognise that there are different issues associated with each type of provision.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Existing provision of permanent and transit accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers is not sufficient to meet future needs over the next plan period.**

- **Over the plan period a total of 38 new permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches are required in Stoke-on-Trent.**
- **Over the plan period a total of 7 new permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches are required in Newcastle-under-Lyme.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Providing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.**

4.0 Economy

4.1 The Joint Local Plan can play a crucial part in delivering a stronger local economy. This can be done specifically, through ensuring the right amount of land is available for employment focused development, at the right time, and that this is supported by appropriate infrastructure. This section identifies key issues and challenges relating to economic development that need to be considered during the development of the options that will be taken forward and appraised through the preparation of the Joint Local Plan.

4.2 We would recommend reading the accompanying Economy Technical Paper alongside the consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues highlighted below.

INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

4.3 The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent areas have traditionally been dominated by coal mining and heavy manufacturing industries. The ceramics industries which have traditionally been a dominant industry in Stoke-on-Trent have resulted in the area becoming known as 'The Potteries'.

4.4 Whilst these traditional industries have seen significant declines in the latter half of the twentieth century, the area does retain some firms that continue to operate successfully, including Emma Bridgewater, Steelite, Leoni and JCB.

4.5 The dominance of these traditional industries has given way to advanced manufacturing and a more mixed economy, with new industries that have grown successfully, including Bet 365, Vodafone and Fedex, and retail distribution centres for ASDA, New Look and T.K. Maxx.

4.6 Keele and Staffordshire universities also provide significant economic value in the fields of education, research and development. The large rural area within Newcastle-under-Lyme has an economy based on agriculture, food and drink and other related professional and private services.

Introduction to the Issues

4.7 A primary aim for the Joint Local Plan will be to encourage sustainable economic growth. The Government attaches significant weight to this within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and it is also reflected in local and sub-regional strategies such as the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and each authority's Economic Development Strategy.

4.8 The Strategic Economic Plan sets out a vision for *"an economic powerhouse driven by the transformation of Stoke-on-Trent into a truly competitive and inspiring Core City and by accelerated growth in our County Corridors and*

urban centres". This is supported by an aim to grow the economy by 50% and generate 50,000 new jobs between 2014 and 2024.

4.9 In the context of these national and sub-regional aspirations, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council commissioned the production of a new Employment Land Review to identify the needs for economic development at a more local level across the two authority areas. This new study has identified a range of employment land requirements for the Joint Local Plan to address and these are explored in more detail below.

4.10 This consultation paper aims to highlight the strategic issues relating to economic development that have emerged from the latest evidence, including the scale of economic development needs. It is the start of the process of reaching agreement with the community and stakeholders on a future development strategy to be set out in the new Joint Local Plan. The next step after we have taken into account your views on the key challenges facing Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is to develop options for managing the potential level of growth proposed.

Issue 1: Future Employment Land Requirements over the Plan Period

4.11 The Employment Land Review identifies a need for 190 to 334 hectares of employment land to be delivered across both Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent over the next plan period. This overall need range is derived from each authority's needs identified by the study (44 -133 hectares in Newcastle-under-Lyme and 146 - 201 hectares in Stoke-on-Trent).

4.12 As this need range is based on more up to date evidence and analysis, the Employment Land Review considers that the previous Core Spatial Strategy target for 332 hectares of employment land to be provided across both authorities is now out of date. Furthermore, this target was derived from the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which has now been revoked.

KEY MESSAGE

- **A minimum of 190 hectares of employment land across both areas will be needed to meet the needs of projected population growth.**
- **A maximum of 334 hectares of employment land across both areas will be needed to meet a continuation of past development trends and projections of future economic growth.**

4.13 The identification of this need range has been informed by an analysis of the projected demands generated from a growing population, the demands generated by projected future economic growth and the operation of the economic market in the plan area. Population changes have been taken from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment work (see Housing section for more information).

4.14 It should be noted that as the top end of the range is identified from projected national economic change it does not therefore take account of specific local economic circumstances. Therefore this end of the range may be subject to change before the strategic options stage as further analysis of local economic projections will be undertaken. This will include the analysis of specific growth aspirations identified in the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and the recently successful bid for Enterprise Zone status.

4.15 Also, the operation of the market in the plan area will have changed since the previous plan target identified in the Core Spatial Strategy was developed. Newer ways of working are progressively being introduced which require less floorspace to accommodate jobs. Examples of this include increased use of hot desking arrangements, more home working and technology improvements which change the way firms and employees interact. This in turn affects the amount of land required to accommodate new employment development.

4.16 How this range is narrowed down to a new employment land target for both authorities and how development will be distributed across the plan area to meet these needs will be explored taking into account the recommendations of the Employment Land Review prior to the next consulation stage.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To provide a large enough workforce and sufficient land to support economic growth across the plan area.**
- **To meet future development needs without harming the sustainability of the area.**

Issue 2: The Availability of Sites

4.17 The Employment Land Review identifies a total supply of 220 hectares of land with potential to accommodate new employment development. This is comprised of 85.17 hectares in Newcastle-under-Lyme and 134.81 hectares in Stoke-on-Trent.

4.18 Most of this supply comes from 57 sites (164.19 hectares) that were identified in the previous Employment Land Review from 2011. 13 additional sites providing a potential supply of 50.38 hectares have also been identified as suitable to be included within a new portfolio of employment land supply. Out of this total of 70 sites across both areas, 15 are within Newcastle-under-Lyme and 55 are within Stoke-on-Trent.

4.19 This total supply of 220 hectares would be sufficient to meet the lower end of the needs identified under Issue 1 (190 hectares across the plan area), however based on the current identified supply we would struggle to meet the mid to top end of this range.

4.20 Stoke-on-Trent has a need for between 146 to 201 hectares of employment land but has a potential supply of 134.81 hectares. This supply is therefore insufficient to meet any of the needs identified. Newcastle-under-Lyme has a need for 44 to 112 hectares of employment land but has a potential supply of 85.17 hectares. This demonstrates that there is sufficient land to meet the lower to mid-range scenarios, however would be unable to meet the top end of the range. There would therefore be insufficient land across the plan area to meet the full range of economic needs.

4.21 Whilst options for accommodating employment development to meet the identified local needs will be developed at the next stage of plan production, this does raise a significant issue which is important to highlight at this stage. It will therefore be critical for additional sites to be identified if full economic growth is to be realised over the plan period for both authorities.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **There appears to be sufficient land supply to meet the lower economic needs across the plan area, but there is insufficient land to meet identified needs at the top end of the range for both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. If we are to realise the full economic potential then this would require the identification of additional sites to meet the supply.**

Profile of Sites

4.22 Newcastle-under-Lyme's potential site supply is made up of up of a small number of large sites – predominantly Chatterley Valley West and Keele Science Park. These two areas constitute 52 hectares (61%) of the potential site supply. Relying on a small number of strategic sites means that the ability to deliver economic development in these locations becomes even more important.

4.23 Phase 1 of Keele Science Park has seen considerable development, most notably the construction of the Innovation Centre buildings, David Weatherall Building and the Sustainability Hub at Home Farm. Proposals are now being delivered for phases 2 and 3 of the Science Park and this part of the site has been laid out with the necessary infrastructure to support this, including roads and utilities. There are a further 46.3 hectares of land to the South and East of Keele Science Park that could also be brought forward in the future. This land is currently in the Green Belt and would therefore require us to consider a review of Green Belt boundaries if it were to be allocated within the Joint Local Plan. This would require a detailed assessment of whether there are exceptional circumstances that may justify the amendment to the Green Belt boundary (for example whether land within the Green Belt continues to contribute to its openness). This will be explored further at the options stage.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **If exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, there is potential further supply of employment land which is located within the Green Belt but would otherwise be suitable for economic development.**

4.24 Chatterley Valley West, on the other hand, has remained undeveloped since it was designated as a Regional Investment Site by the Core Spatial Strategy and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. It contains reserves of Etruria Marl which may be economically viable to extract and it would also need significant infrastructure investment to support its delivery. It was always intended to be a significant site that would deliver employment development over a long period of time but it was designated at a time when there were greater levels of public funding available to support its delivery, which was not taken up and delivered. It is likely that this site will still need to rely on public funding being made available to support its future development.

4.25 In Stoke-on-Trent whilst 74 sites were assessed as part of the Employment Land Review, a number of sites were considered unsuitable for future employment use and therefore should be considered for alternative uses. The Trentham Lakes appeal in 2013 resulted in the loss of 13.6 ha of prime employment land to housing within the city as the inspector determined that the loss of the site was not detrimental given the availability of alternative sites. The Employment Land Review however concludes that against the backdrop of high losses of industrial space in recent years, Stoke-on-Trent's industrial market is characterised by a general shortage of good quality, well located, second hand industrial accommodation which is often multi storey, Victorian manufacturing buildings in deteriorating states of repair leading to higher vacancy rates. To ensure that the area is responsive to future accommodation requirements for key growing sectors, including existing and new businesses in the area, the ELR suggests that there will need to be a rebalance to address the existing portfolio of sites and ensure a more responsive high quality supply is identified.

4.26 The NPPF is clear that the long term protection of existing allocated employment sites should be avoided where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being developed for that use. This is particularly the case where the proposed employment use can be demonstrated as no longer being economically viable. The options stage will therefore need to consider the appropriateness of taking these and other sites forward as employment allocations within the Joint Local Plan.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Some long standing employment sites that have remained undeveloped, may not be viable and are unlikely to be developed for employment uses in the future. These sites therefore may need to be reconsidered for alternative land uses.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **To deliver an appropriate good quality supply of employment land that can respond to local economic needs and deliver a sustainable pattern of development.**

- **Ensuring that the future supply of employment land does not come under pressure to be developed for other land uses.**

Location of Sites

4.27 Employment land within Stoke-on-Trent is spread across the urban area due to the historic growth of the six towns (Hanley, Tunstall, Burslem, Stoke, Fenton and Longton). These six towns have all grown and expanded to create the urban conurbation and historically, each town contains an element of retail within the town centre and a mixture of industrial uses within the immediate surrounding area. Whilst the historic ceramics manufacturing base declined several decades ago and more recent development has principally been located in areas along the A500 and A50 corridors, there is a number of existing employment sites across the urban area that are performing well and provide important localised sustainable job opportunities for the workforce within the immediate area.

4.28 Newcastle-under-Lyme's employment land is similarly spread across the urban area, with concentrations of sites mainly in the north of the borough around the A500 and the A34. Employment sites in this area contain large concentrations of warehousing, storage and distribution (B8) uses. Notable areas which continue to have a supply of vacant employment land available for development include Chatterley Valley, Lymedale Business Park, Rowhurst (Chesterton) and Keele Science Park. Newcastle town centre and Kidsgrove also have a number of smaller sites available for employment or mixed use development. There are currently no known sites that are immediately available for employment development in the rural area.

4.29 Evidence in the Employment Land Review and Strategic Housing Market Assessment define the local labour market area and sets out the commuting flows for both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, concluding that around 79% of locally employed residents also work in the area. In Stoke-on-Trent this is particularly pertinent as the area is characterised by relatively high levels of labour containment, particularly in the east of the authority. There is therefore an important role for localised employment opportunities across the plan area that supports sustainable job opportunities and communities.

KEY MESSAGE:

Whilst the recent provision of employment floorspace has been developed along the A500, A50 and A34 corridors localised sustainable employment provision is important to support the localised labour force.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Ensuring that the future supply of employment land is located where it can benefit both the needs of business and the needs of the labour force.**

Issue 3: Economic Sectors

4.30 Traditional manufacturing industries have seen a progressive decline in the area in recent years, especially in Stoke-on-Trent which saw a 25% decline in industrial floorspace between 2000 and 2012[2], however this declining trend appears to have halted in Stoke-on-Trent since 2010. Newcastle-under-Lyme has seen a 22% increase in industrial floorspace between 2000 and 2012, although it had much lower levels of industrial floorspace to begin with (700,000m2 compared to 3,400,000m2 in Stoke-on-Trent).

4.31 A similar pattern is evident from losses of industrial and employment land to other uses. Stoke-on-Trent saw large scale losses of such land from 2006 to 2010, amounting to over 85 hectares. This level of losses has also reduced to much lower levels since 2010. Newcastle-under-Lyme whilst saw higher losses in 2004 – 2006, there has been lower losses seen since that time and has been relatively stable (less than 0.5 hectares in most years). This is on a much smaller scale than in Stoke-on-Trent as most of these losses have occurred through the change of use of existing buildings to other land uses, such as residential.

4.32 The Stoke & Staffordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan has a growth agenda that is focused on advanced manufacturing, tourism and business/professional services.

4.33 Newcastle-under-Lyme's Economic Development Strategy 2012-2017 seeks an increase in knowledge intensive employment (e.g. further and higher education) and high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution. Again, this plays on the existing economic strengths of the area.

4.34 The Employment Land Review has identified that these sectors already have a significant presence in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. Furthermore, the economic need modelling undertaken within the Employment Land Review identifies that B8 development (warehousing and distribution) has

[2] Business Floorspace Statistics (VOA, 2012)

the greatest need for employment development land over the next plan period in both local authority areas.

4.35 These types of employment sectors therefore present the greatest opportunity to deliver economic growth in both areas.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Traditional manufacturing and heavy industries are being replaced by new industrial sectors such as advanced manufacturing, business and professional services, wholesale and retail, transport and storage.**
- **Storage and distribution are the economic uses that are likely to require the most amount of land for development in the future.**
- **Losses of industrial land and buildings are not expected to be as large a scale as in the past, and data since 2010 shows an overall increase in industrial land.**

4.36 The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire City Deal seeks to deliver a district heat network in Stoke-on-Trent. This would see a concentration of industrial sectors working together in the area to take advantage of the opportunities that the natural resources in the area provide. These sectors include advanced manufacturing (e.g. medical and agricultural technologies) and applied materials (e.g. the ceramics industry) which already have a significant presence in the area, as well as energy and renewables industries which would be a new emerging sector. The Keele Smart Energy Network Demonstrator is also promoted by the City Deal and will further support the emergence and clustering of low carbon industries.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Significant emerging sectors with potential to grow in the plan area are advanced manufacturing (e.g. medical and agricultural technologies), applied materials (e.g. ceramics), renewable energy and low carbon industries.**

Issue 4: Clustering and Networks of Industry

4.37 The Employment Land Review has shown that most existing businesses in the area are located in and around the major city and town centres within the urban area, along transport corridors such as the A34, A50 and A500, and that there are smaller scale groupings of businesses in and around rural settlements such as Audley, Loggerheads and Madeley. This presents an issue in terms of connectivity across the plan area and transport infrastructure required to support expanding industries. Indeed, the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan identifies that there are internal connectivity constraints which limit the economic potential of both local authority areas. This is therefore a major issue which is preventing the achievement of realising the maximum economic potential of the area.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Transport connectivity and movement is an issue that is constraining economic development within Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Supporting future economic growth by remodelling the local economy in order to support the growth of new and emerging industries.**

- **Addressing transport connectivity problems across the plan area in order to realise the maximum potential of the local economy.**

Issue 5: Inward Investment

4.38 The Core Spatial Strategy directs economic development towards the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone. This zone was in place before the adoption of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the implementation of the RENEW programme, however it was an initiative that was incorporated in to them. As both of these strategies and programmes are no longer relevant in the area, we will need to consider at the options stage whether or not this is the most appropriate strategy going forward, or if we should be seeking an alternative approach to support future economic growth.

4.39 The Government recently released the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015. This data includes the identification of the most economically deprived areas, including those deprived due to income, employment and education or skills. The most deprived areas in the two local authority areas identified by this data are in broad alignment with the former regeneration zone, with large areas of Stoke-on-Trent and the north of Newcastle urban area being identified as the most deprived.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Inward investment priorities and initiatives have changed since the Core Spatial Strategy was adopted but the principle of economic regeneration remains.**

KEY CHALLENGES

- **New initiatives and areas for inward investment will need to be identified.**

4.40 There is clearly a mismatch between the skills of the workforce who live in each local authority area and the types of employment that exist in both areas. Income data shows that average wages for those who live in Stoke-on-Trent

are lower than the average wages of those who work in Stoke-on-Trent. This shows that there must be large numbers of people commuting in to higher paid jobs within the city but who live elsewhere.

4.41 Newcastle-under-Lyme on the other hand has higher average wages for those who live in the area than those who work in the area. This indicates that there must be a large number of people who commute out of Newcastle-under-Lyme for work.

4.42 This implies that there is a strong relationship between people who live in Newcastle-under-Lyme but work in Stoke-on-Trent. Analysis within the SHMA of commuting data from the 2011 Census shows that there is a stronger relationship between the two local authority areas than anywhere else. 16,237 people live in Newcastle-under-Lyme but work in Stoke-on-Trent, whilst 11,756 people live in Stoke-on-Trent but work in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The next strongest relationship exists between Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent, where 9,529 people who live in the former area commute to work in the latter.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The skills of the local workforce do not currently match the needs of businesses in either area. This limits economic potential and leads to an unsustainable pattern of development, with people travelling greater distances to work.**

4.43 City Deal seeks to deliver the Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub; contributing to 3,900 additional apprenticeships, 1,100 traineeships, and 9,000 people not in employment, education or training receiving employability skills training by March 2024.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Workforce skills will be developed in order to meet the needs of Advanced Manufacturing and Ceramics Industry.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring that the skills of the local workforce match the needs of businesses in the area in order to capture local job opportunities, maximise economic growth and minimise unemployment.**

5.0 City, Town and Other Centres

5.1 This section discusses issues relating to the city, towns and local centres across the plan area, we would recommend reading the accompanying City, Town and Other Centres Technical Paper alongside this consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan is seeking to address. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

5.2 One of the most distinctive features of the plan area is that the conurbation is polycentric and has developed as a series of distinct places with a number of highly distinctive centres. This settlement pattern is largely the result of the way that many individual communities developed overtime in response to the topography and opportunities presented by the availability of coal and clay which led to the development of traditional industries in the area.

5.3 Between the late 16th and the 19th centuries the expansion of coal mining, pottery and brickworks the hamlets of Stoke-on-Trent developed into six independent towns, benefitting from the patronage of wealthy industrialists, the legacy of which we see today in the towns' rich built heritage. Newcastle became a significant industrial town and banking centre for the pottery towns but retained much of its character as a historic market town dating from the 12th century. This market town heritage remains an important part of the town's identity.

5.4 The hinterland remained largely rural throughout this period of industrial development, but over time village settlements developed according to their proximity to agricultural industries and industries such as coal and iron working.

5.5 During the mid-twentieth century the industrial base declined significantly but the distinctive pattern of closely situated but distinct places still characterises the area. There has been progressive infilling in the latter part of the twentieth century between centres as pressure from "out of town" development has taken place outside the original settlements. This 'out of town' trend has been facilitated by the mobility brought by the private car and the effect of the dispersal on the role of the centres.

5.6 Despite the pressure on existing centres the diverse, social and economic landscape has led to the development of a hierarchy of centres which has been reinforced by previous plans. The hierarchy is characterised by a number of centres that have individual roles across the plan area. This has led to the development of the City Centre at Hanley as the largest retail destination in North Staffordshire and South Cheshire and fulfils an extremely important retail destination as well as cultural and leisure offer. Newcastle Town Centre as the principal market town has a catchment shopper population covering a 6.2 mile radius, in the order of 336,340 and therefore

plays a complementary role to the City Centre. Both centres are also the primary focus for large scale leisure and office development and benefit from the proximity of two universities which act as powerful economic drivers.

5.7 In order to compliment the role of the two strategic Centres, there are a number of significant urban centres across the plan area and they provide a complementary role to both Stoke City Centre (Hanley) and Newcastle Town Centre to meet local needs for retail and service provision. These include Longton, Stoke, Tunstall, Meir, Fenton, Burslem, Kidsgrove, Wolstanton, Chesterton and Silverdale.

5.8 There are also has a number of smaller local and neighbourhood urban centres across the plan area and rural villages in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough. Three Rural Services Centres are identified in Core Spatial Strategy as locations that provide the most comprehensive range of essential rural services in the borough. These are Audley Parish, Loggerheads and Madeley.

Introduction to the issues

5.9 A primary aim for the Joint Local Plan to address is to ensure the future vitality, viability and vibrancy of the city, town, urban and village centres within the two authority areas. As part of this, the unique roles and strengths of each of the centres will need to be reviewed so that an appropriate future strategy for their success can be identified and implemented through the planning process.

5.10 Retail is typically the predominant land use in town centres and this is true of the centres that exist within the plan area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also identifies leisure (e.g. food and drink), entertainment facilities (e.g. cinemas, casinos, bingo halls and nightclubs) intensive sport and recreation uses (e.g. health and fitness centres), offices, and arts, culture and tourism (e.g. theatres, museums, galleries, hotel and conference facilities) as ‘main town centre uses’. The Joint Local Plan will also need to identify the need for these non-retail uses including community and residential development within each of the centres and respond to these needs where appropriate.

5.11 Both local authorities have undertaken Retail & Leisure studies which provide the most up to date assessments of the vitality of each of the centres in the plan area and their capacity for to accommodate future retail and leisure development. These studies have provided some of the key evidence to inform the identification of the issues within this paper. It is envisaged that both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme will update the existing retail evidence to inform the development of policies in the Joint Local Plan.

Issue 1: Retail Hierarchy

5.12 The current hierarchy of centres aims to ensure an appropriate balance of development will contribute towards enhancing the vitality and viability of centres in the hierarchy and maximising access to services and employment opportunities for all parts of the community. The hierarchy as set out in the Core Spatial Strategy is as follows:

Figure 2 – Stoke-on-Trent & Newcastle-under-Lyme Existing Retail Hierarchy (Core Spatial Strategy 2006 – 2026)

5.13 The Stoke-on-Trent Retail & Leisure Study (2014) suggests that the existing retail hierarchy (see the Retail and Centres Technical Paper) should be reviewed to distinguish the role of the individual centres. The evidence therefore suggests the reclassification of the hierarchy that is resilient to the future retail economic changes.

5.14 A key objective of the Joint Local Plan will therefore be to consider how best to maintain the vitality of each centre and create a strong network of complementary centres each with a thriving role that meets local needs and contributes to the overall offer.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The current hierarchy of centres set within the Core Spatial Strategy will need to be reviewed.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Recognising and working towards a new distinctive and sustainable settlement hierarchy, whilst still respecting the areas special historic character.**

Issue 2: Vitality, Viability and Vibrancy of Centres

5.15 National policy requires planning policies to be positive and seek competitive town centre environments. The success of our city, town and local centres is also a priority for both local authorities and this is also reflected in the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. There are however a number of issues that are challenging the ambition for successful centres. Those that have been identified are detailed below.

Mix of uses

5.16 A wide range of uses can be beneficial to centres in order to generate activity and footfall. Most city and town centres nationally have traditionally been dominated by retail uses, however these have been in decline in recent years due to the economic downturn and changing consumer shopping patterns (for example increasing use of online retailing). As a result, many centres are now looking to offer a wider range of uses to remain attractive to residents and visitors in order to ensure that footfall and consumer spending can be sustained.

5.17 The appropriate mix of uses and role of each centre will depend on what that centre is most able to capitalise on, or what its unique selling point is. For example, the technical paper has identified that Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (Hanley) is the leading retail centre in the region, and Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre is continuing its historic role as a market town and also as a university town.

5.18 The Newcastle-under-Lyme Retail & Leisure Study (2011) recommended that the primary shopping frontage in Newcastle town centre should be condensed and that a secondary shopping frontage, which makes allowance for a greater range of uses, should be introduced.

5.19 The Stoke-on-Trent Study (2013) recommends the review of existing town centre boundaries and the introduction of primary shopping areas in order to direct future retail development. Given the current economic position of the wider economy and current vacancy levels in the existing town centre, primary and secondary shopping frontages are not recommended as this

would be too restrictive and may discourage new investment, and changes of use.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Centres need to increase their range of uses and not depend on retail as predominant land use.**
- **A review of existing town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas is likely to be required.**
- **The strengths and unique selling points of each centre need to be identified and capitalised upon in order to be successful.**

Out of Centre Development

5.20 Stoke-on-Trent monitoring data has shown that there have been significant levels of out centre retail and office development since 2004 (Out of centre retail completions 43,273 sq.m and 33,007 sq.m office completions)

5.21 Significant office developments have occurred outside the existing centres in locations such as Etruria Valley. This may indicate that existing office accommodation within the centres may not be fit for the purpose and needs of modern office-based businesses, particularly in terms of the quality of buildings and availability of suitable car parking.

5.22 The Joint Urban Design SPD draws attention to the way in which this trend has contributed to a highly dispersed pattern of housing and business which does not support the hierarchy of centres strongly. Furthermore, areas of out of centre development combined with areas of former industry and roads have weakened the identity of centres by cutting them off from areas around. Consequently the wider settlement pattern is not focussed on nor well integrated into the centres contributing to a confusing street network and undermining a sense of place.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **The clustering and networking of business in centres is weakened by out of town centre development affecting the economic success of individual centres.**
- **The dispersal of uses and activities resulting from out of centre development has a significant impact on townscape character and quality and undermines the image of the conurbation as a city.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring that new housing and business strengthen the role of centres or support the economic sustainability of centres.**

- **Ensuring that out of centre development does not weaken the identity and positive character of existing centres.**

5.23 Centres represent the image of a place both to the outside world and to local communities. A high quality, well designed environment is therefore essential to the success of individual centres and the performance of the plan area as a whole. A key objective of the local plan will be to create a strong sense of place and more immediate positive image for the conurbation. Achieving this will work to transform the quality of life of people living and working in the area, particularly in the deprived urban areas (where the environmental quality is often poor), and support the economic sustainability of centres.

5.24 Given the complex issues which have shaped the urban form, the creation of a strong sense of place will need to be done by taking both a strategic approach (macro) to urban design i.e. considering the relationship between the City Centre, the town centres and rural area and also one at street level (micro).

5.25 The strategic approach will give consideration to developing a strong network of complementary centres, well connected network of high quality places, each with its own distinctive character as well as aiming to achieve a balanced mix of uses appropriate to each centre.

5.26 The form and character of development and the quality of the public realm will be critical to the success of centres.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **Creating a positive and memorable image is essential to supporting the vitality and viability of centres.**
- **A well designed, vibrant network of centres will contribute to sustainable development.**
- **Addressing the quality of future development in areas with little environmental quality has the potential to enhance the identity and prosperity of the conurbation significantly.**
- **To tackle the complex issues which have shaped the urban form of the conurbation a strategic approach to urban design is required.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Creating a more legible and more distinct pattern of settlements and a well-connected network of high quality places, each with its own distinctive character.**

5.27 The settlements within the rural areas have a variety of settlement patterns and character shaped by their historical pattern of development. Some settlements are under pressure from intensification and this is having a significant influence on their character and identity.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring that development in existing rural settlements responds to the unique character and setting of each settlement.**

Issue 3: Potential for Future Development

Newcastle-under-Lyme

5.28 The Newcastle-under-Lyme Retail & Leisure Study 2011 identified a capacity for 14,912 square metres of comparison retail floorspace in Newcastle town centre between 2011 and 2026. This compares to 25,000 square metres that was the target set by the Core Spatial Strategy for the period 2006 to 2021. Although these are two different 15 year periods it is clear to see that the updated evidence was showing a lower capacity for comparison retail floorspace in Newcastle town centre than previously envisaged. This may be reflective of the economic downturn and changing trends in the retail economy, with more people shopping for comparison goods online.

5.29 No target was set in the Core Spatial Strategy for comparison retail floorspace in other centres in the borough or for convenience retail floorspace in Newcastle town centre or any centre in the borough

5.30 Despite the reduction in retail capacity, the study did identify that the new figures would support a significant extension to the town centre and that the redevelopment of the former Sainsburys site at Ryecroft presents the best opportunity to achieve this.

5.31 In Kidsgrove, the study identified a capacity for 1,430 square metres of comparison retail floorspace and 398 square metres of convenience retail floorspace between 2011 and 2026. Two sites are identified as potentially being suitable to accommodate this additional development – the lower car park at Heathcote Street and land between Liverpool Road and Kidsgrove railway station.

5.32 Outside of these sites recommended to be delivered for retail development, almost all of the other vacant sites within Newcastle town centre that were identified in the study as having potential for development have now already either been redeveloped or have more detailed proposals coming forward for future redevelopment. Examples of this include the redevelopment of the former Jubilee Baths site for the new Sky student accommodation building and the new Aldi supermarket on the Blackfriars Road site. This means that the potential for further future expansion of town centre uses in and around Newcastle town centre are now more limited.

Stoke-on-Trent

5.33 The Stoke-on-Trent Retail and Leisure Study 2014 identifies the future development requirements for both convenience and comparison floorspace. The study identifies that without any extant planning permissions taken into account, the capacity in the long term (2028) for the city is between 26,300 sq.m (net) and 43,000sq.m (net based on the existing market shares being retained). If the market share is increased this is predicted to increase to 36,600sq.m (net) and 61,100 sq.m (net) and allowing for other planning consents this figure would reduce to between 29,400 sq.m (net) and 49,000 sq.m (Net). The Core Spatial Strategy set out a gross comparison requirement between 2006 and 2026 of 120,000 sq.m and therefore like Newcastle-under-Lyme, this represents a reduction of comparison floorspace previously envisaged through the Core Spatial Strategy.

5.34 In terms of convenience floorspace, the evidence suggests that given the level of convenience floorspace in Stoke-on-Trent and the number of extant permissions, there is limited capacity in the short to medium-term. It is likely that capacity will begin to emerge beyond 2023 and it is estimated to be between 3,200 sq.m and 5,500 sq.m.

5.35 The study makes a number of recommendations to accommodate the additional floorspace including the City Sentral site, the potential redevelopment site to the west of the Asda store in Tunstall, The former Spode factory site in Stoke Town, two area within Longton town centre (eastern portion of the Longton Exchange Shopping Precinct and a number of properties along Market Street) and potential development site in Fenton on land bounded by City Road. The study however considers that with increasing floorspace trading efficiencies and less spend available to retail destinations there is likely to be an increased pressure to consolidate the existing portfolio of retail floorspace in the longer term. The study therefore emphasises the need for the City of Stoke-on-Trent to consider looking beyond retailing to create thriving town centres.

5.36 The distribution of new retail development across the plan area will be explored further at the Strategic Options stage.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The evidence from 2011 indicates that there is sufficient capacity within Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres to accommodate the identified potential retail growth up to 2026.**
- **The evidence in the Stoke-on-Trent Retail & Leisure 2014 Study makes a number of suggestions regarding the future allocation of retail floorspace.**

- **A holistic approach should be applied to future land uses within existing centres and there will be a need to look beyond retailing to create thriving town centres.**

Issue 4: Rural Service Centres

5.37 Three Rural Service Centres are currently designated within the Core Spatial Strategy within Newcastle-under-Lyme. These are Audley Parish, Madeley and Loggerheads. They were designated as Rural Service Centres within the Core Spatial Strategy because they provided "the most comprehensive range of essential rural services" at that time. Evidence about the availability and accessibility of services in the rural area is currently being updated and will be considered at the Strategic Options stage.

5.38 The Core Spatial Strategy currently aims to locate most residential development in the rural area to brownfield sites within the village envelopes of these three settlements. This strategy has been undermined since the publication of the NPPF, as this is a policy which relates to the supply of housing and paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that *"Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites"*. The Borough Council has not been able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land since 2010. This has led to housing development porposals being submitted and approved outside the designated villae envelope boundaries in Newcastle's rural area. Therefore the extent of the current village boundaries will be reviewed within the Joint Local Plan.

5.39 The need for housing and the five year housing land supply are explored in greater detail in the housing technical paper. Furthermore, the designation of the three Rural Service Centres followed the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) priority of achieving a 'rural renaissance' (i.e. pursuing regeneration opportunities in rural areas). Now that the RSS has been revoked this wider priority no longer exists and the focus of national policy is instead on supporting a prosperous rural economy which will has its own different priorities, largely related to business growth and the success of rural communities.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The existing designation of Rural Service Centres in Newcastle-under-Lyme will need to be reviewed.**
- **The existing village envelope boundaries will need to be reviewed to ensure that they are up to date.**

Issue 5 -The Role of Local and Neighbourhood Centres in the Urban Environment

5.40 The plan area includes many local and neighbourhood centres which perform a role in catering for the everyday shopping and other needs of communities within a more confined catchment. There is a need to clearly define the role of both local and neighbourhood centres across the plan area and update and review the existing centres to ensure that they thrive without competing with the larger city and town centres through inappropriate expansion that would not be of a scale and nature appropriate to their character and role.

5.41 The accessibility and location of local and neighbourhood centres can provide for the diverse daily needs of the community by providing a mix of key services. The location of accessible local services within the immediate area can ensure that local shops are within a walkable distance of most properties within the immediate catchment and can reduce the reliance on cars. In Stoke-on-Trent, a walk-time analysis has been completed for each of the neighbourhood and local centres in order to review the current distribution of the centres across the authority and to illustrate their current catchment area they are likely to serve.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The existing designation of local and neighbourhood centres should be reviewed across the plan area.**
- **The need to clearly define the role of local and neighbourhood centres to create a vibrant and healthy place to live and work.**
- **The accessibility of local and neighbourhood centres is important to ensure that communitites have access to key services.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Clarify the specific role of local and neighbourhood centres within the overall retail hierarchy, and the definition to be associated with them.**
- **Review the distribution and location of local and neighbourhood centres to meet the top-up shopping and other service needs of their immediate catchment.**
- **To ensure that new and existing local communities are located within walking distance of key local services.**

6.0 Transport

6.1 A Transport Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper. It summarises the policy background and evidence driving the strategic issues highlighted below. We recommend reading the Transport Technical Paper alongside this consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan is seeking to address. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

6.2 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent are centrally located within England, almost equidistant between the cities of Manchester and Birmingham. There are good transport links to both cities via the West Coast Mainline, the A500, M6 and A34. The latter road also provides access to the county town of Stafford. The A500 and the A50, and the North Staffordshire railway line provide east-west transport accessibility to locations such as Crewe and Nantwich, Uttoxeter, Derby, Nottingham and the M1.

6.3 The structure of the urban area, which contains the six town centres of Stoke-on-Trent and the town centres of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove, together with their suburbs and surrounding villages, means that there is a complex network of transport routes that has developed. These include the major roads identified above as well as more local distributer roads connecting each of the centres. There is also an extensive network of existing and former canals, watercourses, and railway lines throughout the urban area. Many have been transformed in to accessible green corridors that provide opportunities for pedestrian and cycle transport. This gives the area a unique structure and character, with the numerous urban centres interspersed by greenery.

6.4 The rural area of Newcastle also contains a number of settlements that are interspersed by transport corridors, only here the routes in between travel through open countryside and are mainly comprised of roads – most notably the A51, A53 and A525. The Crewe branch of the West Coast Mainline Railway does also run through the rural area and although there are no stations on this line within the borough, it does form a significant corridor and a landscape feature. In comparison to other areas, the rural area is generally more limited in its offer of routes specifically tailored to pedestrians and horse riders.

Introduction to the issues

6.5 Transport plays an essential role in helping to ensure that areas and their residents reach their potential. Transport is an enabler of economic activity; it can improve productivity, support extensive labour markets and allow businesses to benefit from agglomeration. Transport, therefore plays a vital role in the economy; businesses require their workforce, customers and

goods to travel with ease; individuals require access to jobs and education, want a wide choice of goods in shops, and need some goods/services to be delivered direct to their homes. Good transport connectivity is a strong influencing factor in making somewhere a good place to live.

6.6 Convenient, safe and secure parking can support the vitality of town centres. Development also requires appropriate parking and servicing arrangements. Demand for parking is affected by the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; and car ownership levels.

6.7 The issues described below are those that have been identified through the detailed review of evidence and information contained with the Part 2: Technical Paper. This is the start of the process of reaching agreement with the community and stakeholders on the future strategy for development in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent to be set out in the new Joint Local Plan. The next step after we have taken into account your views on these key issues and challenges, is to develop options for the future development of transport in the plan area.

Issue 1: Walking and Cycling

6.8 According to the 2011 Census, there is a high proportion of households with limited access or no access to a car in both Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent when compared to other areas of the country. This means that there is a greater reliance on non-car transport and especially routes for walking and cycling. However there are a number of issues that have arisen from the analysis in the technical paper that have an impact on people's ability to walk and cycle.

6.9 Walking and cycling opportunities between Newcastle town centre and surrounding areas are limited because of the physical barrier presented by the ring road. Most pedestrian routes that cross the ring road involve walking through a subway which lengthens the route to be walked and reduces people's feelings of safety and security.

6.10 Whilst there is an extensive cycle network across Stoke-on-Trent, with over 180km of routes and over 100km of which is off road, the amount of cycling is low compared to other areas, and relative to the many short trips made in the area. Severance caused by the national rail and road network through the area, plus busy local roads form a barrier for walking and cycling for all but the most confident. The Newcastle-under-Lyme Integrated Transport Strategy identifies that there are gaps in the cycle network within the urban area of Newcastle, especially between Chatterley Valley and Kidsgrove, between the A34/Cedar Road junction and Lower Milehouse Lane (Knutton) and between Dark Wood (Clayton) and Keele/Newcastle town centre.

6.11 Signange to support walking and cycling falls short of best practice wayfinding systems successfully implemented in many other areas. Wayfinding is a tool to assist people to navigate a place by understanding where you are, where you want to get to and how you are going to get there. Wayfinding alleviates a number of reasons why people do not walk and cycle. It has been shown to complement improvements to public realm to support behaviour change from car usage to active forms of transport. This in turns creates a virtuous circle whereby traffic and congestion eases, more people are walking which lessen people's concerns of safety.

6.12 The Staffordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) identifies that there is a mismatch between the demand for walking routes and their availability in the south west of Newcastle-under-Lyme borough, around Ashley, Keele, Loggerheads and Whitmore.

6.13 The ROWIP also identifies a wider mismatch between the needs of horse riders and the provision of routes throughout Newcastle borough, with the exception of areas around Knighton and Madeley Heath.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The infrastructure to meet the needs of people to walk, cycle, and ride horses is limited, most notably alongside and across busy roads (such as Newcastle ring road), in the rural south of Newcastle (for walking and horse riding) and across the urban area.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Providing walking and cycling infrastructure to support transport and leisure needs.**
- **Recognising and integrating connections to existing public rights of way**

Issue 2: Public Transport

6.14 Public transport refers to travel by train, bus and other shared transport.

6.15 The area is relatively well served by rail transport. The West Coast Mainline runs through the area, and the principal station at Stoke-on-Trent provides direct intercity services to destinations such as London, Manchester, Bournemouth and Bristol. There are also railway stations at Kidsgrove, Longport and Longton which provide regular local and national services, including east-west services between Crewe and Derby. Accessibility is a problem at these stations for people with mobility problems or heavy luggage due to the lack of a lift or escalators between the platforms. The access for all scheme will address these issues at Kidsgrove.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Whilst National and local rail connections are generally good, these services are of a low frequency and capacity and pedestrian accessibility at the smaller stations presents a problem for those with lower mobility.**

6.16 The Newcastle-under-Lyme Integrated Transport Strategy identifies that the core bus network in the borough is good, but usage for travelling to work is low compared to other areas. This is especially so in the rural area, where bus services are less regular and the timing of services often mean that buses are an impractical means of transport for those who travel to work.

6.17 Bus usage overall is declining faster in Stoke-on-Trent than nationally and regionally, with 3 million less journeys each year in 2015 compared to 2010. This has led to a reduction in bus services provided due to the costs of running routes with low usage. At the same time, the punctuality of bus services in Stoke-on-Trent has declined. This can be caused by a range of factors, however road congestion, the lack of dedicated infrastructure for buses and reduced regularity of bus services are leading causes. Recent improvements have been made to bus infrastructure, most notably the development of the new bus station in the City Centre.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The core bus network is good, with the exception of rural areas. Across both urban and rural areas there are problems with accessibility, bus punctuality, infrastructure and usage.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Improving accessibility and increasing usage of bus and rail services.**
- **Working with partners to recognise and improve rural services, including cross boundary connections.**

Issue 3: Connectivity and Tackling Traffic Congestion

6.18 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent are very well located geographically and have direct access to national transport networks via the M6, A50, A500 and the West Coast Mainline. However there is strong evidence to suggest that transport networks within the conurbation suffer from high levels of congestion and so travel between different locations within the plan area may not be as efficient as it potentially could be.

6.19 The Integrated Transport Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme identifies that the town centre ring road displays symptoms of traffic congestion at peak times, and the North Staffordshire Connectivity Study identifies that congestion is a problem on principal roads.

6.20 Poor internal connectivity has a negative impact on the social and economic success of the area, with people being less easily able to access services and employment opportunities by public and private transport, and businesses less able to access workforce and move goods efficiently.

6.21 In addition access problems to development sites form barriers to regeneration of brownfield sites, reducing the viability of economic development.

6.22 High levels of congestion also have a negative effect on the air quality of the area. The whole of the City of Stoke-on-Trent and areas within Newcastle-under-Lyme have been declared Air Quality Management Areas.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **There are good transport connections to other parts of the country via the M6, A500, A50, A34 and the West Coast Mainline Railway.**
- **Transport connections within the conurbation provide less efficient movement, with high levels of traffic congestion on many routes.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Improving access and internal connectivity to enable better access to services, employment opportunities and housing.**
- **Providing better access to development sites to facilitate brownfield regeneration.**
- **Improving access and connectivity will in turn help to alleviate traffic congestion on the strategic road network**

7.0 Health and Communities

7.1 The Joint Local Plan can play an important role in addressing the challenge of ensuring the health and wellbeing of people who live in the borough of Newcastle under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. This section presents key issues and challenges relating to health matters that will be taken in to consideration as the Joint Local Plan is prepared. A Health Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper and we recommend reading this alongside the consultation paper to gain a better understanding of the strategic issues highlighted below. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

7.2 The health of people in Newcastle-under-Lyme is varied while the health of people in Stoke-on-Trent is generally worse than the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women within the plan area is lower than the England average. However, there are health inequalities throughout the plan area. A person born in Newcastle-under-Lyme could expect to live two years longer than a person born in Stoke-on-Trent. Deprivation within Stoke-on-Trent is far higher than Newcastle-under-Lyme as well as the regional and national average. In Stoke-on-Trent, over half of the population live in highly deprived areas with a quarter of children living in poverty and low birth weight significantly higher than the national average. Although Newcastle-under-Lyme has lower levels of deprivation than the national average, high levels of inequality exist. A person living in the least deprived areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme is expected to live nine years longer when compared with the most deprived areas. A person living in the least deprived areas in Stoke-on-Trent are expected to live ten years longer when compared to the most deprived areas.

7.3 Excess weight in children at reception age, year six and adults is significantly higher in Stoke-on-Trent than the national average. Excess weight in adults is significantly higher than the national average in Newcastle-under-Lyme and the proportion of healthy eating adults is below the national average throughout the plan area. The proportion of active adults is significantly lower than the national average and diabetes is significantly higher than the national average throughout the plan area. Premature deaths (aged under 75) in Stoke-on-Trent are significantly higher than the national average for cancer and cardiovascular disease related deaths. Newcastle-under-Lyme has an ageing population alongside a recent increase in the number of excess winter deaths which is higher than the national average.

7.4 There is growing recognition that access to green space is beneficial to mental well-being. Although Newcastle-under-Lyme is surrounded by agricultural land and greenery, the proportion of this green space which is publicly accessible without charge is far lower than the regional average. Stoke-on-Trent has far higher levels of publicly accessible green space

compared to the regional average. The proportion of adults accessing mental health services within the plan area is higher than the national average, with Newcastle-under-Lyme having a slightly higher proportion than Stoke-on-Trent. Suicide rates are significantly higher than the national average in Stoke-on-Trent.

7.5 The broad range of health and inequality issues within the plan area present a diverse range of challenges to be considered. Key issues arising from these which are relevant to planning policy are set out in this issues paper.

Introduction to the issues

7.6 The post-industrial nature of the plan area shapes the environment in which we live. Traditionally, industry and housing were situated close together, enabling workers to walk to work. Extensive rail and canal networks were built to support the growing industries and allotments were provided for workers in the area. Following the decline of these extractive industries in the plan area, the industrial sites closed creating open space or the sites were converted for residential use. New employment land was situated away from residential areas leading to increased use of car transport to travel work. Investment in roads and parking to meet increasing capacity has led to impermeable environments throughout the plan area and an increasing reliance on vehicular transportation. The consequences of these development patterns and reliance on car use impact on air pollution, physical activity, mental well-being and a wide range of health issues.

7.7 Stoke-on-Trent is a member of the global Healthy Cities movement which recognises that no single agency can tackle all the issues that affect our health. In Healthy Lives, Healthy People (2010), the Department of Health adopt a broad view of health, recognising the range of societal factors that affect physical and mental well-being and acknowledging that individual health and wellbeing cannot be seen in isolation from wider society. Locally, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire University are working together to ensure that health issues are considered as an integral part of the planning and development process and this is also reflected in policy development.

7.8 Housing, the economy, transport, social infrastructure and climate change all impact on health. It is therefore essential that a holistic approach is taken to addressing the health issues outlined above. For example, there is a recognition that as people live longer, there will be an increased prevalence of age-related health conditions, as well as an increased risk of social isolation. It is therefore important to ensure that policies, plans and services identify those factors which support independence, health and wellbeing for an ageing population. Stoke-on-Trent has formally recognised this and is a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. Using a multi-agency approach, work is taking place to ensure that key strategies and decisions affecting the city take into account the needs of older people.

7.9 A primary aim for the Joint Local Plan will be to ensure that the environment contributes positively to health and wellbeing through the location and design of new developments. In this respect, the location, quality, choice and adaptability of housing will be especially important, as well as, the way new housing helps to facilitate social interaction to create healthy and inclusive communities. Transport systems can play a role in this as they can have a major impact on lifestyles and the quality of the environment, as well as, the location of development. Therefore through the Local Plan it will be necessary to give consideration to the way in which places are connected. This will be not just in terms of the way people travel but how far they have to travel to access services and places of employment. Other key factors to be considered will be the amount of access to good quality, well maintained public spaces, including green infrastructure, and access to healthy food options. The way a place can also contribute to reduced crime and violence through good urban design can be important too. Other matters that will need to be taken into consideration will be the location and accessibility of social and healthcare facilities, an issue which is likely to be more challenging to address in the rural area than in the conurbation.

7.10 A primary aim for the Joint Local Plan will be to ensure that developments contribute positively to health or do not worsen life expectancy and health. National policy states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. National policy also requires local planning authorities to work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being. By identifying the health issues within the area and how planning can influence these, future policies can be developed to ensure that future developments do not worsen these health issues and aim to actively improve them.

7.11 The preparation of the Joint Local Plan will consider how planning can directly and indirectly influence health. This consultation paper aims to highlight the key strategic health issues that national, regional and local policy requires us to pay regard to and the key challenges that these raise in preparing the future development strategy for the plan area. It chiefly focuses on healthy ‘urban design’ i.e. the way in which we manage the built environment to maintain and promote good health. By identifying the health issues within the plan area and how planning can influence these, policies can be developed to ensure that future developments do not worsen these health issues and aim to actively improve them. Going forward, it will be important for both councils to evaluate the impact on health from any development strategies proposed and to develop policies to protect and enhance the health of the population.

Issue 1: Quality Environments

7.12 The quality of the environment as well as building design can influence a person's health and this can either be a positive or negative influence. For example, developments which only consider vehicular access, reduce walkability or fail to consider cycling infrastructure can increase sedentary behaviour and impact on obesity levels. This in turn can increase diabetes or cardiovascular disease, impact on quality of life and ultimately reduce life expectancy. The location and quality of housing can influence the exposure to noise, air pollution and ensure adequate heating and insulation which can have an impact on the number of excess winter deaths.

7.13 Physical activity levels in adults within the plan area are lower than the national average and have recently decreased. Diabetes is higher than the national average and is increasing. The majority of commuters within the plan area travel in a car or van with roughly 1 in 10 walking or cycling to work which is well below the national average. Between 2001 and 2011, there has been a 12-16% increase in the number of cars or vans within the plan area with fewer households without access to a vehicle or access to only one vehicle alongside an increase in the number of houses with access to two or more vehicles. Public transport use has fallen and is much lower than the national average, particularly in Newcastle-under-Lyme. However, it is not known whether this decrease in usage is due to a reduction of services or greater car ownership has decreased demand for public transport.

7.14 A potential way planning can directly influence physical activity is through ensuring developments create permeable and walkable environments. Investing in cycling infrastructure and public transport can also overcome barriers to active travel. Prioritising vehicular transport over public transport and active travel serves to encourage car use which can lead to an increase in the number of vehicles on the road, increase air pollution and further decrease uptake to public transport. This can potentially lead to a worsening spiral with greater reliance on vehicular transportation which needs to be met through unsustainable infrastructure investment. The plan area has the potential for a very well-connected cycling infrastructure if 'gaps' are addressed through development. The area's canals and green corridors are an asset which can be developed to encourage active travel within the area as well as promote health and well-being and encourage engagement within the natural environment.

7.15 As previously discussed, excess weight in children and adults is higher in the plan area than the national average, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent. Being overweight or obese can have a huge impact on an individual's health and there is a strong link between excess body weight and diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart and liver disease. The Foresight report Tackling Obesities: Future Choices (2007) highlight a connection between the consumption of takeaway food and obesity stating that diet is one of the key determinants of obesity levels. The National Obesity Observatory (2010) note

that there is a strong association between deprivation and the density of fast food outlets, with more deprived areas having more fast food outlets relative to the size of the population. In Stoke-on-Trent, the number of hot food takeaways relative to the size of the population is far higher than the national average. Newcastle-under-Lyme is comparable to the national average.

7.16 Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a Cross-Government Strategy for England (2008) states that the planning system can and should play a role in reducing the number and managing the location of takeaway shops, particularly in relation to schools. This is further emphasised in the Department of Health White Paper Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England (2010) which acknowledges that the planning system can be used to limit the growth of takeaway shops and encourages local government to decide on what action is needed locally. The proximity of hot food takeaways to areas such as primary and secondary schools and concentration of hot food takeaways in other areas is considered a material consideration in planning due to the detrimental impact on health and deprivation in an area.

7.17 Stoke-on-Trent City Council is currently developing a Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document to guide planning decision relating to hot food takeaways. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is also considering a similar approach.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The surrounding environment and relationship between land uses has an influence on health related outcomes (e.g. physical activity and obesity). This can be a positive or a negative influence on resident's health.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To ensure that developments positively influence health by being well designed, well connected, permeable and promote walking and cycling over car use.**

Issue 2: Location of development – distance and severance

7.18 Historically, employment within the plan area has been situated within a short distance to residential areas, with walking and public transport being the most common method of commuting to work. As the plan area has developed and changed over the years, some employment land has become residential and new employment land sites have been located further afield. Increasing distances between employment and residential sites require employees to commute further distances. With a greater need for mobility comes a demand

for greater transport infrastructure. This means that vehicular transport is a primary consideration during development. As cycling infrastructure has not had a similar consideration over the years this has limited choice of transport options. Over-reliance on vehicles exacerbates air pollution and the health of the population as well as disadvantaging potential employees without access to a vehicle (22% in Newcastle-under-Lyme, 31% in Stoke-on-Trent). Transport infrastructure which priorities vehicles over walking and cycling can create severance issues between communities, green space and can limit pedestrian movement. Careful design such as considering the surrounding community, appropriate crossings, traffic calming and high quality cycling infrastructure can alleviate and overcome severance.

7.19 The location and layout of a development (e.g. a neighbourhood) to surrounding health and community facilities can influence an individual's opportunity to access them. Those with limited mobility or lack of public transport links may be disadvantaged if they do have access to a car or are unable to drive. Those who rely on public transport and walking can be disadvantaged by any severance created by transport infrastructure and non-permeable environments. The location of new houses in relation to the surrounding environment can also influence health, for example, houses that are set back from the road have a buffer between air pollution and noise pollution. The location of a development can also serve to promote or limit social interaction between residents living in the area. Access to allotments, green space, community centres and walkable neighbourhoods all serve to stimulate social interaction. This is an area of focus in Stoke-on-Trent as the number of elderly residents living alone is significantly higher than the national average. If such communal areas are not a walkable distance or require crossing busy road then this may limit the positive benefit of the facility.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The location of developments can influence health in a number of ways. This can be by preventing access due to distance or severance, promoting access through permeable and dense designs, exposure to noise and pollution or limiting social interaction.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

To ensure that new developments positively influence health by considering surrounding facilities, infrastructure and access points to prevent severance, promote interaction and encourage health behaviours.

Issue 3: Infrastructure

7.20 The proportion of people with a long term condition or disability is significantly higher in the plan area compared to the national average. The proportion of people reporting bad or very bad health within the plan area is also significantly higher than the national average. Mental wellbeing within the plan area is also a cause for concern as the proportion of adults accessing NHS specialist mental health services is higher in the plan area than the national average. Suicide rates are significantly higher than the national average in Stoke-on-Trent. Engaging with the natural environment is established as being important for our physical health and mental wellbeing and a key strength for Stoke-on-Trent is the high levels of publicly accessible green space, canal infrastructure and green corridors. However, there is a perception within Stoke-on-Trent that there is a lack of quality green space which could be explained by a lack of appropriate signage, promotion and maintenance. Maintenance and promotion of available infrastructure through investment and appropriate signage can serve to improve awareness of surrounding infrastructure and improve uptake to green space and allotments throughout the plan area. There is also potential for improving signage and awareness of public transport and cycling infrastructure as well as connecting cycling infrastructure and green ways through development to promote active travel. A further opportunity is to develop areas around the canals to encourage active travel.

7.21 Provision of freely accessible playing pitches and play areas can serve to promote physical activity as well as encourage social interaction within the community. Linking with the car-orientated approach to development, increasing demand for on-street parking has limited the communal areas for play and sport participation in neighbourhoods. Designated play areas and formal playing pitches are usually beyond walking distance and not always freely available.

7.22 Improving quality and awareness of surrounding infrastructure through signage and promotion serves to create connected communities. The number of pensioners living alone in Stoke-on-Trent is significantly higher than the national average which is worthy of consideration when designing neighbourhoods in order to promote social interaction, such as allotments, gardens, communal spaces, provision of benches and access to public transport. This same approach can be used to create inclusive communities throughout the plan area which is a national policy.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Developments can positively influence health through the investment of high quality infrastructure such as active travel, public transport, green space and appropriate signage.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring investment in cycling infrastructure, green space, public transport and signage.**

- **Increasing awareness and use of surrounding infrastructure through promotion of public transport, green corridors, allotments, canals, green space and playing pitches.**

Issue 4: Cohesive, inclusive and active communities

7.23 National Policy states that planning can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities by ensuring access to high quality open space and opportunities for sport and recreation. The design, location and quality of the public realm can influence the flow of footfall, the time a person spends in the area and can promote a feeling of belonging. The public realm can provide a focal point for shared experiences, shared values and community pride. The provision of benches in public areas provides an opportunity for rest and social interaction which can help to tackle social isolation, loneliness as well as promote physical activity. Without places to rest or socialise, this can disadvantage those with limited mobility, reduce the time spent in retail areas or open space and diminish a sense of community.

7.24 There is recognition that as people live longer, there will be an increased prevalence of age-related health conditions, as well as an increased risk of social isolation; it is therefore even more important to ensure that policies, plans and services identify those factors which support independence, health and well-being for an ageing population. Stoke-on-Trent has formally recognised this and is a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. Using a multi-agency approach, work is taking place to ensure that key strategies and decisions affecting the city take into account the needs of older people. Social isolation is considered a severe health risk for both physical and mental well-being. Green space provides the possibility for social interaction for members of the community, opportunities for physical activity and improving community cohesion. Provision of publicly accessible green space such as parks and allotments can help to tackle social isolation, particularly for those from deprived backgrounds or those vulnerable to social exclusion such as young people, older people, ethnic minorities or those with disabilities. Provision of benches in parks, centres and any walkable environment is important to ensure those requiring rest points are not excluded. Benches also serve to promote community cohesion and provide opportunities for social interaction.

7.25 The design, location and quality of housing sites and neighbourhoods can influence opportunities for social interaction and promote community

cohesion. Flexible and adaptable housing which are built to lifetime homes standards can enable residents to remain within their community should they choose to do so. Access to an allotment or a communal space provides an opportunity for residents to interact and tackle social isolation. Consideration of the location to health services, public transport connections and surrounding green space can have a direct impact on the well-being of the residents. The layout of the neighbourhood can alleviate fear of crime by improving visibility and providing adequate lighting. Provision of adaptable 'homes for life' allows an individual to remain within their community as they can adapt their home to meet their mobility needs.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The surrounding environment can be designed to create inclusive communities and promote physical and mental well-being. This can be a positive or a negative influence on resident's health.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring that the surrounding environment positively influences health, promotes social interaction and cohesive communities.**

- **Ensuring that housing developments consider flexible lifetime homes standards, permeable and inclusive neighbourhoods which promote walking and social interaction.**

8.0 Heritage

8.1 A Heritage Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper. It summarises the policy background and evidence informing the strategic issues highlighted below. We recommend reading the Heritage Technical Paper alongside this consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan is seeking to address. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

8.2 Until the 17th century, large areas of north Staffordshire remained sparsely populated. With the exception of Newcastle-under-Lyme, an established urban centre by the late 12th century, much of the area was characterised by small dispersed settlements and farms. Significant change did not occur therefore until the industrialisation of the area in the 17th century. Industrial growth in north Staffordshire was fuelled by rich coal and, to a lesser degree, iron and clay resources. Early industry was typically undertaken by individuals who combined activities such as mining and potting with part-time farming.

8.3 Urban growth within the Potteries area was initially made up of an irregular mix of potteries, pits and houses, often on land parcels close to existing roadways. As the industrialisation of the pottery towns gathered pace during the 18th century, they acquired a commercial, civic and cultural identity distinct from that of the borough of Newcastle. This was furthered by the creation of a transportation network of turnpike roads and canals geared towards the needs of the pottery industry, that essentially by-passed the borough. The borough however benefitted from significant industrial wealth which came about from the trading in ceramics.

8.4 Although some early sites remain visible within north Staffordshire (e.g. Hulton Abbey Scheduled Monument just outside Hanley), the legacy of industrialisation dominates the area's heritage, with particular emphasis on the pottery industry. Following the widespread closure of former factory sites across north Staffordshire, a significant percentage of the area's industrial heritage now exists only in the form of archaeological sites, which are open to redevelopment with the built historic fabric dominated by a wide range of building and surfacing materials including red brick, Staffordshire blue brick, clay roof tiles, geometric floor tiles, and decorative wall tiles.

8.5 Before brick became the material of choice a variety of materials were used across the area. Timber frame construction remains very evident in Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural hinterland, particularly at Betley. Several large timber-framed buildings existed in the Potteries during the 16th and 17th centuries, including Shelton Hall, Rushton Grange and Stoke Hall, but none of these persisted beyond the 19th century. Only Ford Green Hall (built in 1624) has survived intact to the present day, although elements of a probable 16th-

century timber-framed building remain within a later farmhouse at Farm Cottage, Baddeley Green.

8.6 Relatively little bespoke middle-class housing was built before 1901 however alongside factories a small number of manufacturers, notably Wedgwood at Etruria and Theophilus Smith at Greenfield, Tunstall, created industrial villages, which featured a principal residence, factory and workers' housing. In the mid-19th century, Herbert Minton established a small planned community, with a church, school and housing, close to his home in Hartshill. Further attempts were made to create middle-class enclaves in the second half of the 19th century, with developments at 'Stokeville' (The Villas) and at the Brampton. More typically, however, middle-class housing formed part of larger building schemes, particularly within new surburban areas such as Dresden and Florence to the south of Longton. The creation of new private and municipal estates during the inter-war housing boom, created sufficient urban sprawl for Newcastle and the six Potteries towns, creating the larger conurbation area.

8.7 Historically, each of the pottery towns expressed its individual civic identity through the provision of high-quality public buildings and open spaces. As a result, the Potteries are well provided for with town halls, public markets, chapels and parks. Newcastle town centre features many Georgian buildings, which reflect the continuing mercantile prosperity of the medieval borough, supported by industries such as ironworking, hat making, clay pipe manufacturing and silk throwing. Investment across the area continued well into the 20th century, as the quality of 1930s architecture demonstrates.

8.8 Away from Potteries, settlement within the rural hinterland of Newcastle exhibit a variety of patterns, influenced by both agriculture and industrial wealth. In addition to the villages this is evidenced by the traditional farmsteads and old manor houses in estate grounds, which make a special contribution to the landscape character and distinctiveness. Agriculture continues to play a major role shaping Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural identity, although arguably the relationship between the urban and rural area has been weakened by the fact that the town no longer has a cattle market.

8.9 In terms of economic and cultural regeneration, the decline of the traditional industries has left significant, highly visible voids within the Potteries landscape. These sites, coupled with those still engaged in industrial processes, act as detractors both to the image of the modern City and an appreciation of the area's recent history. The consequent social and environmental issues have impacted on investment and contributed towards migration from former residential areas within the Potteries. Positive steps have, however, been made in reclaiming former industrial sites to create green spaces for recreation. Disused mineral lines have been transformed into greenways and occasionally present tourism opportunities. River and canal corridors, which form distinctive character areas within themselves,

have been exploited for recreation and tourism, and encouragement has been given for new residential schemes built close to the water's edge. The fluvial areas along the River Trent and its tributaries also encouraged many green amenities and sports grounds in the urban area. The restoration is underway of rural areas affected by industrial extraction on the conurbation's western edge, transforming the quality of the landscape.

8.10 The area's history is well-represented in established institutions such as The Potteries Museum, Gladstone Pottery Museum and Borough Museum at Brampton Park. The processes and products of the local ceramics industry are also promoted at working sites such as the Middleport Pottery and Emma Bridgwater factory outside Hanley town centre.

8.11 There are currently 23 designated Conservation Areas in Stoke-on-Trent and 20 within Newcastle-under-Lyme. In terms of buildings at risk, as recorded by Historic England, there are 3 heritage assets in Newcastle-under-Lyme on the 'at risk' register and there are 11 'at risk' in Stoke-on-Trent. There is also one Conservation Area in Newcastle-under-Lyme on the Historic England 'at risk' register and 5 Conservations Areas in Stoke-on-Trent. Both councils also have a local list which identifies buildings or structures that, whilst not of national importance, are important locally. There are currently over 450 buildings on the Local List in Stoke-on-Trent and just over 100 in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Introduction to the issues

8.12 Distinctive places draw on the unique characteristics surrounding their development, including how places have changed over time, the historic value of buildings and places and the local traditions of particular features.

8.13 The adopted Core Spatial Strategy seeks to ensure that sites and areas of particular heritage value are safeguarded not just for their own merits but to create a sense of place. This objective is set out in more detail in the Joint Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document which promotes a well-designed vibrant network of centres which contribute to the cultural value of a place; to the quality of life for local communities; towards economic regeneration and sustainable development.

8.14 It recognises that the rich and diverse historic environment, including historic landscapes, townscapes, buildings and industrial archaeology should be a significant influence in shaping a distinctive sense of place for the future.

8.15 The Joint Local Plan will consider the action we need to take if the area is to enjoy a vibrant and sustainable future and continue to recognise, safeguard and integrate the historic environment as part of a plan-led approach.

Issue 1: Importance of heritage assets

8.16 The importance of heritage assets and the positive impact heritage assets can have on the environment of an area is recognised at a national level in the NPPF. With regards to conserving heritage national policy, NPPF, places different levels of significance on heritage assets depending on their status. It is important that local historic evidence such as conservation area character appraisals and local list information, is kept up to date as this can help determine and assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to the area.

8.17 The area has several unique characteristics that derive from its past development and form which, in order to ensure this is recognised positively, need to be recognised. The reasons for why something was built and its form and purpose can help to lead to positive reuse or integration with new development.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The area has several unique historic characteristics that should be recognised for their positive contribution they make to the area.**
- **It is important to understanding the original purpose of historic buildings to help provide context and find suitable new uses.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Heritage is often seen as a barrier to development.**
- **Ensuring that heritage assets have a positive impact on the environment of the area.**
- **Ensuring that the setting of historic assets is taken into account.**

Issue 2: Conserving Heritage Value

8.18 The area has a complex built heritage and one especially founded around its principal historic industries of pottery making, coal mining and iron and steel manufacture within the urban areas. Those industries have experienced severe decline or total closure over the last half-century and have not been replaced substantially by new economic activity. This has left the urban area with a low level of economic performance, high levels of unemployment and social deprivation together with a legacy of underused or derelict sites and buildings.

8.19 Within Newcastle's rural area traditional farmsteads make an important contribution to landscape character and local distinctiveness. However permitted development rights are increasing for agricultural holdings to be converted to new uses and therefore it is essential to only encourage those new uses which are sensitive to the historic character and significance of the buildings.

8.20 Historically the pottery industry developed within and alongside residential areas and town centres throughout the urban area. With the decline of the pottery industry, there are many redundant and cleared sites, some of them very large, scattered throughout the centres, civic areas and along principal transport corridors.

8.21 Both councils have buildings/ structures/ monuments and conservation areas that have been identified as being at risk by Historic England. The challenge is to find appropriate and viable uses for heritage assets in order to conserve their heritage value. The history of the city means there is widespread duplication of civic buildings as well as industrial and religious buildings. These are usually located within the heart of centres.

8.22 The scale of the assets therefore creates both a unique opportunity but also a challenge in ensuring new uses are economically viable, and sensitive to their value as a heritage asset.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **There is a complex built heritage as a result of the pottery industry, coal mining and iron and steel industry within the urban areas.**
- **There is duplication in the type of civic, industrial and religious buildings in each of the towns.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To try to increase the attraction of the area as a tourist destination based on its industrial heritage.**
- **Securing funding opportunities.**
- **Understanding the size and scale of heritage assets as they are often large in scale due to the industrial history of the area.**
- **To give the right protection to historic farmsteads.**

Issue 3: Integrating new developments into the existing historic setting

8.23 The city does not have a large number of listed buildings but of these a small number are a significant size. Often their principal significance is historic rather than purely architectural. Most of these pottery buildings are in a poor

state of repair because they have not been maintained for decades, even when they were in productive use.

8.24 Some of them were not built from high quality materials. The city's most iconic listed building, the bottle oven, was built for a short life; it has no resistance to weather penetration when not being fired (as none have for over 50 years) and has no commercial value today because of its lack of ready adaptability.

KEY MESSAGE:

Whilst the city does not have a large number of listed buildings they have a clear historic significance in the area.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character of the area by ensuring new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and their context.**
- **Understanding what important settings should be safeguarded from new development.**
- **Safeguarding buildings that do not have statutory protection.**
- **Encouraging sensitive reuse of historic assets.**
- **Recognising focal points and integrating different forms of development.**

Issue 4: Rural Village Settings

8.25 Until the 17th century, large areas of north Staffordshire remained sparsely populated. With the exception of Newcastle-under-Lyme, an established urban centre by the late 12th century, much of the area was characterised by small dispersed settlements. This pattern of dispersed rural villages still exists today within the extensive countryside to the west and south of the urban areas. Preserving this historic form is important from an historic perspective.

KEY MESSAGE:

Newcastle-under-Lyme is characterised by a number of dispersed rural villages which form an important part of the historic landscape of the area.

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Recognising and preserving the rural settlement pattern.**
- **Integrating new development which meets the needs of rural areas.**
- **Ensuring that the setting of historic assets is taken into account.**
- **Recognising landscape setting and character.**

9.0 Natural and Rural Environment

9.1 This section presents key issues and challenges relating to the natural environment that will be that will be taken into consideration as the Joint Local Plan is prepared. A Natural Environment Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper and we recommend reading this to gain a better understanding of the issues highlighted below.

INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

9.2 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent have a rich and varied network of green infrastructure spread across both the urban and rural areas within the two authorities. Green infrastructure can be defined as a strategic network of multi-functional green spaces which support natural and ecological processes and provide a wide variety of distinctive landscapes and functions which can play an important role in creating sustainable healthy communities.

9.3 The two authorities lie within an area containing a series of shallow valleys, running from north west to south east, with the conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme sitting across these valleys. Newcastle-under-Lyme's urban area is surrounded to the west by gradually flattening countryside containing a diversity of wetland habitats, irreplaceable Ancient Woodlands and gently rolling plains. These provide much of the borough's rural area with distinctive and high quality landscapes and this hinterland has remained largely rural despite the area's legacy of industrial development. To the east of Stoke-on-Trent the landscape rises upwards into the grit uplands of the Staffordshire Moorlands countryside, which contains the Peak District National Park.

9.4 The urban conurbation itself also contains many former industrial areas which have now been converted to parks and other green spaces, which help to provide a more tranquil character in areas that are otherwise densely developed. This urban area is also tightly bounded by Green Belt, which surrounds both authorities and extends westward from the conurbation to the West Coast Mainline Railway.

9.5 Due to the wildlife and geological value of many sites within the plan area, a diverse range of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites can be found in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. These include two Ramsar sites in Newcastle-under-Lyme, which are of international importance. There are also seven Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) across both areas, which are of national importance. Locally important sites have also been designated, such as the thirteen Local Nature Reserves and large number of Local Sites present in both local authority areas. Stoke-on-Trent in particular benefits from a high number of Local Sites within the city, with 41 sites covering an area of 567.5 hectares identified. Newcastle-under-

Lyme also contains 650 hectares of Ancient Woodland, the vast majority of which is in the countryside to the west of Newcastle-under-Lyme's urban area. There is also a limited amount of Ancient Woodland in Stoke-on-Trent, with approximately 7.85ha present in the city.

9.6 Mineral resources are also present in Stoke-on-Trent which provides a reserve of coal and clay. Whilst active mineral operations are limited across the city there are permitted clay workings at Bankeyfield, Tunstall and Cophurst Quarry, Lightwood.

9.7 The variety of landscapes and functions provide a mixture of rural and urban areas within the two authorities. This presents a diverse range of challenges to be considered.

Introduction to the Issues

9.8 Preservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a key requirement of national planning policy and is vital to ensuring sustainable development. To deliver this we have a number of key duties to consider in preparing the Joint Local Plan. Key examples of these include directing development towards land of lesser environmental value, protecting valued landscapes and using areas of poorer quality agricultural land. As well as fulfilling these national policy objectives we also need to ensure any future development strategy complies with European legal requirements to protect certain sites and species of international importance, such as Ramsar sites.

9.9 To protect and enhance the range of designated sites in both areas, we are required by national policy to create local policies that can be used to assess any development on or affecting any relevant wildlife and geological designations. In doing so we need to offer a level of protection to these sites that is proportionate to their status (i.e. whether they are a international, national or local designation) and contribution to wider ecological networks. However, it should be recognised that even locally designated sites still make an important contribution to local ecological networks. We also have a wider duty to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

9.10 To offer further protection to areas of environmental value, we are also required to direct development towards brownfield sites. It is therefore important to recognise that such brownfield sites can still be of high environmental value, and this needs to be taken into consideration in planning any future development.

9.11 This consultation paper aims to highlight the key strategic natural environment and green infrastructure issues that national policy requires us to pay regard to and the key challenges that these raise in preparing the next development strategy.

Issue 1: Increasing development needs and their impact upon locally designated sites.

9.12 Local Sites and Local Nature Reserves are areas designated due to their local biodiversity and geological importance and are a vital component of the natural environment in both authority areas. The number of designated Local Sites and Local Nature Reserves has grown substantially in Newcastle-under-Lyme in recent years, forming an important natural asset for the authority. Similarly, Stoke-on-Trent has a large amount of land identified as Local Nature Reserves within the city and a vast amount of Local Sites, which cover roughly 6% of the authority area. Mapping to identify opportunities to increase biodiversity in Stoke-on-Trent also identifies that improving the quality, quantity and connections between natural sites within the city is of key importance to increasing biodiversity within the urban area. Similar mapping for Newcastle-under-Lyme also identifies that such sites and the linkages between them play an important part to contributing to local biodiversity, particularly in the urban area. This demonstrates the local importance of such sites to both authorities in the past, as well as highlighting that opportunities to improve such sites, and the linkages between them, may be important to increasing biodiversity within both areas in the future. This is reflected in national planning policy, which recognises the importance of Local Sites and Local Nature Reserves to local biodiversity and geology, as well as their contribution to local ecological networks.

9.13 Whilst recognising the importance of locally designated sites, national policy also requires us to seek to meet our full objectively assessed needs for future development and offer a level of protection to natural sites which recognise their status. These pressures may potentially increase the density and concentrations of development within the urban area in order to meet local development needs.

9.14 There is therefore a risk that these development needs may create pressures for such sites being lost to development or limit the creation of new locally important sites, as they cannot be afforded the same level of protection as internationally or nationally designated sites. The Joint Local Plan must therefore be based on a clear strategy for recognising and protecting the most important local sites and ensure that the important functions Local Sites and Local Nature Reserves perform, particularly in terms of local biodiversity, are recognised in preparing any future development strategy.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **There are large areas of local ecological and geological importance in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent**

- **Future development needs may limit opportunities to improve and expand networks of locally important sites and place development pressures on existing sites**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Balancing the need to plan for new development with the protection and improvement of local natural assets.**
- **Plan positively to create, protect, enhance and manage a multifunctional network of green infrastructure.**

Issue 2: Sustainable use of minerals

9.15 Minerals are an essential resource to support economic growth in the area and Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme are both underlain by coal and clay reserves. In Newcastle-under-Lyme, future planning policies for the sustainable use of minerals are being developed by Staffordshire County Council as part of the emerging Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015-20130). This proposes areas where valuable brick clay from the Etruria Formation will be safeguarded, as this is the principal brick clay resource in Staffordshire and is found in many locations in Newcastle-under-Lyme's urban hinterland.

9.16 Active mineral operations in Stoke-on-Trent are limited due to the urban form and permitted clay working is located at Bankeyfield, Tunstall and Copshurst Quarry, Lightwood. These areas are identified in the adopted Core Spatial Strategy as Mineral Safeguarded Areas. This means that where such reserves are believed to exist and sterilisation is threatened by built development in accordance with national policy then special measures need to be put in place to confirm the existence of viable reserves and take steps to recover them prior to building the developmentIn consultation with the County Council mineral safeguarding is of continued importance in Stoke-on-Trent which will need to be addressed within the Joint Local Plan.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **Whilst Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme are underlain by coal and clay reserves, active mineral operations in Stoke-on-Trent are limited due to the urban environment.**
- **The emerging Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015-30) will set policies governing the sustainable use of minerals in Newcastle-under-Lyme**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Balancing the need of development and mineral extraction to avoid sterilisation of mineral resources.**

Issue 3: The role of brownfield land in promoting biodiversity

9.17 The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent conurbation has a rich industrial heritage and consequentially contains many areas of brownfield land, which have often been previously developed but now lie vacant. This is particularly the case in Stoke-on-Trent and as such a key principle of the existing Core Spatial Strategy's policy for both areas is to direct development towards the existing conurbation and to prioritise the development of brownfield land. One of the key aims of this existing policy is to protect the countryside and other important green spaces within the area. However, despite the importance of prioritising brownfield land for development, such sites can sometimes contain, or have the potential for, a wide range of important habitats and species. This is particularly the case where sites have been subject to significant soil disturbance and have been left vacant for a considerable amount of time, allowing vegetation to form. Consequentially, national planning policy encourages the use of brownfield land, but only where such land is not of high environmental value, therefore the assessment of the environmental and ecological value of relevant brownfield land needs to be included in order to determine its value.

9.18 Therefore, this presents a challenge, as pressures to meet future development needs and the visual appearance of brownfield sites can often lead to them being prioritised for development over greenfield sites, despite their relative ecological and biological value in some instances. Any future development strategy will therefore need to pay close attention to the potential to protect and create natural assets on previously developed land where this is appropriate, and ensure the nature conservation value of such assets is evaluated and recognised in future policy.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **Brownfield sites within the urban area can contain important habitats and species.**

- **The visual appearance of such sites and development pressures can often lead to such sites being prioritised for development over greenfield sites, despite their relative ecological value.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring future development strategies recognise the environmental value of brownfield land as well as greenfield sites.**

Issue 4: Protecting and enhancing landscape character

9.19 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent contain a distinct variety of landscapes within and outside of the conurbation. These are based around a number of natural assets, ranging from the reclamation of former industrial sites to create landscaped parks within the urban area; to the countryside fields, wetlands and Ancient Woodlands which create a characterful landscape in Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural area. These characteristics are set out in more detail in Natural England's National Character Areas for the Potteries and Churnet Valley and the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain.

9.20 This is particularly important in Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural area, where areas of different levels of landscape quality are identified in the 'Planning for Landscape Change' Supplementary Planning Document, adopted by Staffordshire County Council in 2000. This work evaluates the borough's landscape and maps its quality and effective strength of character. The result has been a framework for policy guidance in five defined categories: Landscape Conservation; Landscape Maintenance Areas; Areas of Landscape Enhancement; Areas of Landscape Regeneration. This approach was carried forward by the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011, which established a set of differentiated policies for the five categories and which continue to guide decision making. In areas of Landscape Maintenance, such as Loggerheads and Keele, new development should avoid any harm to the maintenance and active conservation of these high quality natural landscapes. However, elsewhere in the rural area opportunities to enhance, restore and regenerate declining and lower quality landscapes are identified for example the countryside to the north of Silverdale. It will be necessary to review these policies as part of the development of the Joint Local Plan to ensure they remain valid and up to date. However, to meet the requirements of national planning policy it will be necessary to demonstrate how the areas diversity and distinctiveness, as well as, the quality of any part of the landscape is protected or enhanced.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **A range of natural assets which contribute to the local landscape are present in both areas.**

- **Areas of varying landscape quality are present in Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural area, where new development can raise both risks to the existing landscape and opportunities to improve it.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring future development strategies safeguard characteristic landscapes in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, whilst taking opportunities to improve lower quality landscapes.**

Issue 5: Green Belt

9.21 The urban area of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is tightly bound by Green Belt. This policy designation is designed to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, by protecting them from inappropriate development pressures. In particular, national planning policy makes it clear that development such as housing and employment uses are inappropriate in these locations, except in very special circumstances. Therefore, whilst Green Belt policy is not a landscape or natural environment policy, it often has the effect of protecting natural areas from development. This in turn means that development pressures often end up being redirected to non-Green Belt locations. Generally this means that development is redirected into existing urban areas, but this policy can also have the effect of pushing development pressures past the Green Belt into the open countryside, which is not given the same level of protection under national policy.

9.22 Therefore, in light of increasing housing and employment land pressures and existing Green Belt policy, areas of relatively high natural and landscape value within existing urban areas and open countryside past the Green Belt may come under pressure to be developed. For example, as highlighted elsewhere, brownfield sites of biodiversity value and sites designated for their local ecological or geological value create significant natural assets in the urban area. Furthermore, the areas of highest quality landscape and best quality agricultural land within Newcastle-under-Lyme's rural area are often found in countryside beyond the Green Belt boundary, where speculative development pressures are more likely due to the lack of Green Belt designation. The next development strategy will therefore need to consider the effect Green Belt policy has in redirecting development and any potential impacts this may have on the natural environment and landscape.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Green Belt policy has the potential to redirect development to areas which may be of relative importance to the natural environment and landscape.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **To ensure we deliver sustainable development by balancing the need to protect the openness of the Green Belt with the need to protect and enhance areas of value to the natural environment and local landscape.**

Issue 6: National and internationally designated wildlife and geological sites

9.23 Two Ramsar sites (which form part of the wider Midlands Meres & Mosses Phases 1 & 2) are present on the western boundary of Newcastle-under-Lyme, with other Ramsar sites existing in close proximity to the boundary of the borough. The councils are required by law to assess the likely impacts of the Joint Local Plan on such internationally important sites. At this stage there are no development proposals being put forward for assessment, but as the future development strategy is being prepared, the councils may be required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment to establish any likely effects on these sites and to inform the overall development strategy.

9.24 Within Newcastle-under-Lyme there has also been a decline in the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) land, which is a nationally protected nature designation. In 2008, roughly 76% of land designated as a SSSI in Newcastle-under-Lyme was either of an acceptable condition or improving in condition but this has fallen to 36% as of 2015. Further consideration needs to be given as to why this trend is taking place and to establish whether this is related in any way to increased development within the borough. Whilst local planning authorities are not specifically responsible for managing the condition of such sites, we must seek to ensure that any future development strategy does not further undermine the condition of SSSIs within the plan area.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **The presence of internationally designated environmental sites within and near to Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent will be carefully considered in planning future development**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Making sure any future development strategy protects rare species and designated sites.**

Issue 7: Future Maintenance of Green Infrastructure

9.25 The urban fabric is not continuous and incorporates many green spaces both formal and informal. These spaces are extremely important to both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, in terms of providing wildlife habitats, as well as contributing to the urban landscape and providing an amenity and recreational resources. They are also important in providing ecological networks that allow species to cross otherwise built up areas, by creating semi-natural corridors linking wildlife habitats.

9.26 Green infrastructure in both areas is also closely tied to local water resources, such as ponds, rivers, streams and canals. These resources offer numerous opportunities to contribute to key functions of green infrastructure. For example, waterbodies can provide important linear habitats for fauna and flora, forming wildlife corridors. Furthermore, water resources can contribute to the character of the local environment by providing key landscape features, and can enhance publicly accessible open spaces where they are left open. The issue of flood risk raised by these water resources is dealt with in the Climate Change section of this paper.

9.27 This network of green infrastructure helps to maintain the species diversity of individual sites and provides the opportunity for residents living in the urban area to have contact with wildlife.

9.28 Both councils have commissioned new assessments to understand the quality and quantity of green spaces in the plan area, so that they can be effectively planned for in the Joint Local Plan. Green and open spaces require a significant amount of upkeep in order to ensure that their quality is maintained and improved, allowing the community to feel safe and utilise local facilities whilst also maximising their contribution to local biodiversity. Maintaining such spaces across the plan area therefore requires a significant amount of investment and funding from both the councils and partners. Consequently, we will need to consider this issue further in order to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between the quantity and quality of green spaces within the plan area.

Key Messages

- **The future management of green infrastructure is likely to change as pressures are placed on public funding and partnership resources. Consideration will need to be given to different delivery mechanisms and management arrangements.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Balancing quality and quantity in the future management of green infrastructure.**

10.0 Energy and Climate Change

10.1 A Energy and Climate Change Technical Paper has been written to accompany this consultation paper. It summarises the policy background and evidence informing the strategic issues highlighted below. We recommend reading the Energy and Climate Change Technical Paper alongside this consultation paper to give a better understanding of the strategic issues which the Joint Local Plan is seeking to address. INSERT WEB LINK TO TECHNICAL PAPER

Background

10.2 Climate change and flood risk are important issues which require consideration at a local level. Planning has the potential to play a key role in responding to these issues, through shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce carbon dioxide emissions and ensuring any risks flooding may pose to development are minimised. We therefore need to make sure we consider how these issues affect our local area so we can plan positively to address climate change and flood risk through delivering sustainable development.

10.3 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent have key characteristics that relate to climate change and flood risk, which will require close attention in preparing the Joint Local Plan. Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent both occupy high altitude settings which contain a number of river catchments, which have a significant effect on local areas at risk of flooding. Newcastle-under-Lyme is served by the Upper Trent, the Sow, the Bollin, the Tern and the Wheelock, whilst Stoke-on-Trent is drained by three rivers, with the River Trent being the largest.

10.4 The urban area has been formed around a number of historic towns, with Stoke-on-Trent in particular comprising a number of towns, each with their own distinct centre. Much of the existing development around these towns has taken place alongside large periods of historical growth in industry. This means that a large amount of existing housing in Stoke-on-Trent is old nineteenth century properties, resulting in much of the area's existing housing performing poorly by modern energy efficiency standards. There have also been limited examples of large scale renewable energy schemes being delivered in the past, particularly in Newcastle-under-Lyme where development schemes have tended to be too small in scale to facilitate this. Furthermore, as the area has an extensive industrial past, there are significant areas of contaminated land in Stoke-on-Trent, and other potential sources of contamination throughout both areas.

10.5 Both areas have low levels of car ownership, and it is often easier to move around the urban area using car transport rather than public transport networks. There are therefore air quality issues in both authorities due to high levels of vehicular emissions, with the entirety of Stoke-on-Trent being

identified as an Air Quality Management Area. However, both areas also contain a relatively large amount of green space dispersed through the conurbation, which contributes to lessening the warming effects of climate change within the area and to absorbing emissions created by vehicular travel.

10.6 With the increasing cost of energy and a large amount of the energy consumed in the UK being for heating from the burning of fossil fuels alternative sources of energy are being looked at across the UK including Stoke-on-Trent. Schemes such as district heating can help protect against the rising prices and could provide significant carbon reduction opportunities. District heating networks (DHN) is based around a system of underground pipes that use hot water within a closed loop pipe system to heat residential and commercial premises which are connected to it. The water within the system can use waste heat and energy from commercial / industrial buildings or from ground sources. This deep geothermal energy from ground sources is harnessed by drilling a borehole into natural occurring geothermal reservoirs and pumping the hot water to the surface. This renewable heat is then captured via a heat exchanger in the energy centre and the hot water will be recycled back down into the ground via a second borehole.

10.7 Through working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Stoke-on-Trent City Council has been successful in securing a significant amount of capital funding from the government to implement a DHN scheme. DHN will help protect consumers against rising fossil fuel prices and provide significant carbon reduction opportunities and bring significant health benefits by providing secure, price predictable, low carbon heat. Planning will play a key role in facilitating the delivery of such renewable energy schemes if these are identified as being necessary to support sustainable development within the plan area.

10.8 The local area's geography, geology, industrial past and current transport issues present a number of issues and challenges to consider. The Local Plan needs to ensure that a number of infrastructure methods are considered in order to best support future development opportunities.

Introduction

10.9 National policy gives us a number of key considerations to take into account in plan making. Local Plans need to consider measures which could help us to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, such as creating renewable and low carbon energy sources and promoting sustainable transport solutions. To manage the risk of flooding, new development should be located in areas of lower flood risk, where possible, unless other sustainability considerations clearly outweigh any flood risk issues. In areas with an industrial heritage, land contamination also needs to be considered

including the examination of whether to adopt strategic policies to deal with potential contamination. Pollution from a variety of sources, including air pollution, is also a major issue for planning authorities to consider, as new development needs to avoid contributing to or being negatively affected by local air quality issues. These issues require careful consideration in working out how we will plan for the future of our areas.

Issue 1: Renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in new development

10.10 In order to meet the requirements of the NPPF, a key strategic issue for the Joint Local Plan will be to consider how it can deliver development which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources and this was also a key strategic aim of the existing adopted Core Spatial Strategy.

10.11 The Local Plan will need to balance the requirements by central government initiatives for delivering low-carbon development with the evidence for what can be achieved locally. The government have recently announced in the 2015 report 'Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation,'[3] that it does not intend to proceed with its previous target to move towards zero-carbon homes. Furthermore, recent changes to government legislation prevent local authorities from seeking additional energy efficiency standards on new housing development[4]. Therefore, these changes may limit the ability of both councils to reduce carbon emissions through the design of new housing development.

10.12 Stoke-on-Trent City Council is a partner of a European Union project called PLEEC (Planning for Energy Efficient Cities), which seeks to examine existing strategies and best practices to develop a model for energy efficiency and sustainable city planning. PLEEC suggests that for the construction of new housing units, the council and developers should follow The Code for Sustainable Homes, launched in 2006 by the Department for Communities and Local Government, it is a national standard for sustainable design and construction for new homes. The Code measures the whole housing unit as a complete package and minimum standards for compliance have been set above the requirements of Building Regulations established elsewhere and in 2010 SOTCC signed a protocol that requires up to 10% renewable energy for any new building whether commercial or residential. This is a key issue for the Joint Local Plan.

10.13 The CAMCO 'Staffordshire County-wide Renewable / Low Carbon Energy Study' identified limited potential to deliver renewable energy schemes in

[3] Fixing the Foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation (July 2015) HM Treasury

[4] Deregulation Act 2015, s.43 'Amendment of Planning and Energy Act 2008'

Newcastle-under-Lyme, with the exception of rural wind turbine development. This was because potential housing sites were generally small in scale, meaning that it was unlikely to be economically viable to promote renewable energy schemes such as district heating as part of these developments. This is in part due to the financial cost of delivering these renewable energy schemes and the effect this has on the financial viability of smaller development sites, which generally generate smaller profit margins from which to fund such schemes. Therefore, without large scale development sites, there may be limited opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting renewable and low carbon energy solutions as part of new development.

10.14 As in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the Pleec work identifies that the costs faced by housing developers can often limit the ability of developers to pursue energy efficiency measures as part of new schemes, particularly where small developers are involved. Stakeholders consulted as part of the Pleec project suggest that these smaller developers can easily be put off by requirements which may have a significant impact on the external appearance of properties or final sales prices, with technologies that can easily be "sold" to final consumers being easier to implement.

10.15 With regard to the development of new commercial buildings there is no current policy relating to the requirement for new businesses to provide and use renewable energy resources, such as a communal wind turbine. There could, however, be wider long-term benefits to businesses from incorporating such renewable energy resources into new development namely cheaper, long-term fixed price energy costs. The use of renewable energy to supply new commercial development may have the greatest potential where new businesses are located in close proximity to one another such as on a business park.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **The Local Plan will need to identify what alternative energy schemes have been considered to meet the development needs of the area and the reduction of energy use, such as district heat networks.**
- **There may be opportunities for the use of renewable energy sources for development of new business parks.**
- **Smaller residential developments in both areas can struggle to deliver renewable energy schemes and energy efficiency measures, particularly due to the associated costs.**
- **If the government's 'zero-carbon homes' policy is ended, this may further limit both councils' ability to deliver energy efficiency in new development.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Promoting renewable and low carbon energy sources in light of changing national policy and viability concerns, for all new development, including commercial development and particularly on smaller housing schemes.**
- **Recognising how the design of new development can improve energy efficiency such as south facing roofs to increase the use of solar gain and increase daylight into properties.**

Issue 2: Poor energy efficiency in existing housing

10.16 A key part of the PLEEC project is to identify existing energy efficiency issues within the city. This work has identified that the city currently performs poorly in terms of energy efficiency and that a number of factors are driving this trend. In particular, housing is the largest energy consumer and is a high priority in improving energy efficiency within the city. The large amount of nineteenth century housing within Stoke-on-Trent limits the ability of the city to meet modern energy efficiency standards, as much of this stock was built before energy efficiency became more fully integrated into modern design practices and requires significant investment in order to be brought up to modern standards. Similar issues are present in Newcastle-under-Lyme, particularly in the significant proportion of flats, pre-1919 dwellings and private-rented sector housing. In addition large parts of the Borough's rural area are off gas. These factors have implications not only for climate change, but also raise wider issues, as poor energy efficiency and high fuel costs can be a significant factor in contributing to the high levels of fuel poverty within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

10.17 Consequentially, both the City and Borough Councils have made considerable strides towards improving the energy efficiency of the city's private and public housing principally through the North Staffordshire Warm Zone and Decent Homes Programmes. This has been done to help reduce both CO2 emissions and levels of fuel poverty, where households cannot afford to pay fuel bills alongside other living costs.

10.18 There are also potential opportunities for lowering energy costs and creating more sustainable energy generation in Stoke-on-Trent, with the council having successfully obtained funds to deliver a district heating network. This will supply up to 45GWh per annum, lowering heating costs by up to 10% and saving approximately 10,000 tonnes of CO^2 per annum. Therefore, as well as creating opportunities to lower energy costs and boost skills, innovation and investment in the area, this could also contribute to lessening the climate change impacts of existing housing stock in Stoke-on-Trent.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **Existing housing within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme performs poorly in terms of energy efficiency, which can have impacts on both climate change and fuel poverty in the city.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Providing low-cost renewable and low carbon energy to help address energy efficiency issues in existing housing in both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.**
- **Working in partnership with other organisations and accessing funding opportunities to improve energy efficiency in older housing stock.**

Issue 3: Air quality and sustainable transport solutions

10.19 Stoke-on-Trent is 'poly-centric', meaning that it contains a number of centres which are based around the towns within its urban area. These have grown over time to form the wider city of Stoke-on-Trent, but still offer distinct centres in their own right. However, this lack of a single centre is highlighted in the PLEEC work as creating difficulties for energy efficient transport measures. This is because growth and investment is not focused towards a single central location and consequentially it is difficult for public transport operators to efficiently plan routes. The resulting complex travel patterns and wider problems with congestion on the road network mean that bus journeys are relatively slow and pricey.

10.20 There is also a downward trend in the number of people using bus transport in Stoke-on-Trent, typically bus modal share in a city would be 15-18%, in Stoke it is 11%,and despite an extensive network of cycle routes the number of people cycling within the city is lower than in other areas, currently 2%. Similarly, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the proportion of people who travel to work by bus, train, cycling or walking is below the West Midlands and England averages, with a greater proportion of residents relying on private cars to get to work.

10.21 Equally, issues exist in the variable quality of the public realm and walking environments in the urban area, where poor urban design and busy roads can act as a barrier to walking. On the other hand, use of the local rail network is increasing, but overcrowding due to lack of capacity remains an issue. These problems within existing modes of sustainable transport present a challenge to reducing vehicular emissions. Consequentially Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme both produce significant amounts of carbon emissions each year from road transport.

10.22 Alongside the climate change impacts these carbon emissions create, there is also a substantial challenge raised by local traffic emissions and the air quality issues these create for both areas. In Newcastle-under-Lyme, some specific locations have been identified as exceeding acceptable levels of road traffic emissions, primarily around Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres and the A527 through May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill. Within Stoke-on-Trent, numerous areas are also known to be failing to meet air quality standards. As a result, the entire city has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area, recognising existing air pollution issues in numerous areas throughout the city such as major roads, road junctions and narrow, busy residential streets.

10.23 In preparing the Joint Local Plan, both authorities will therefore need to consider the potential cumulative effect of future developments on air quality and whether new development in areas of poorer air quality can support measures to reduce emissions. This will be a key consideration for any potential future growth within the urban area, where air quality is a significant issue. It will therefore be important to consider how the improvement of sustainable transport options and other measures may contribute towards addressing this problem.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **Inefficient existing public transport networks and the lack of a single centre create barriers to delivering energy efficient transport networks in Stoke-on-Trent.**
- **Relatively few journeys are made by energy efficient modes of transport in Newcastle-under-Lyme, with a large amount of people using cars to get to work.**
- **Areas of poor air quality exist in central locations of Newcastle-under-Lyme and throughout Stoke-on-Trent.**

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Reducing emissions by increasing the use of sustainable methods of transport.**
- **Mitigating the impacts of new development upon air quality within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.**

Issue 4: Flood Risk

10.24 Flood risk is an issue for areas of both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, with numerous areas in each authority being affected by a variety of types of flood risk. These include sources such as flooding from local rivers, surface water run-off and drainage systems. In planning to meet future

housing and employment needs we need to ensure that we consider flood risk from a variety of sources, to ensure we deliver sustainable development in areas at low risk of flooding. Therefore, ensuring we have a robust evidence base with which to do this is a key issue for both authorities. Strategic Flood Risk Assessments which considered the risk of flooding in both areas were previously undertaken in 2008. It is therefore likely that these pieces of evidence will need to be refreshed to ensure we give proper consideration to flood risk in planning future development.

KEY MESSAGE:

- **We must seek to locate new development in areas at lowest risk of flooding, where it is sustainable to do so**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Ensuring new development is sustainable, taking full account of all sources of flood risk.**

Issue 5: Contaminated Land

10.25 The North Staffordshire region has historically been a significant centre of industry and numerous sites associated with these functions are still present throughout the conurbation, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst modern industry is now more heavily regulated in terms of any potential environmental impacts, historic developments often carry with them a potential risk of contamination. Currently there is one area of contaminated land in Stoke-on-Trent that meets with the statutory definition of contaminated land. There are also several thousand other sites within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme that are contaminated to a lesser extent. Therefore, future growth in areas such as those affected heavily by historic industrial uses may raise significant constraints in terms of contamination and require remediation. This could in turn affect the suitability and viability of development if not adequately addressed, as costly remediation is often required in order make sites suitable for development when they are contaminated.

KEY MESSAGES:

- **New development located in areas affected by contamination needs to ensure appropriate remediation measures are delivered.**

KEY CHALLENGE:

- **Remediating contaminated land and potential sources of contamination through new development.**

11.0 Summary of Key Issues

Local Plan Issues Consultation

Economy

Issue 1: Future Employment Land Requirements

- The ELR has identified an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) ranging from 190 to 334 hectares across both authorities between 2013 and 2039.
- To provide a large enough workforce and sufficient land to support economic growth across the plan area.
- To meet future development needs without harming the sustainability of the area.

Issue 2: The Availability of Sites

- To deliver an appropriate good quality supply of employment land that can respond to local economic needs and deliver a sustainable pattern of development.
- Ensuring that the future supply of employment land does not come under pressure to be developed for other land uses.
- Ensure that the future supply of employment land is located where it can benefit both the needs of business and the needs of the labour force.

Issue 3: Economic Sectors

- Supporting future economic growth by remodelling the local economy in order to support the growth of new and emerging industries.

Issue 4: Clustering/Networks of Industry

- Addressing transport connectivity problems across the plan area in order to realise the maximum potential of the local economy.

Issue 5: Inward Investment

- New initiatives and areas for inward investment will need to be identified.

Issue 6: Workforce Skills and the Needs of Business

- Ensuring that the skills of the local workforce match the needs of businesses in the area in order to capture local job opportunities, maximise economic growth and minimise unemployment.

Transport

Issue 1: Walking and Cycling

- Providing walking and cycling infrastructure to support transport and leisure needs.
- Recognising and integrating connections to existing public rights of way.

Issue 2: Public Transport

- Improving accessibility and increasing usage of bus and rail services.
- Working with partners to recognise and improve rural services.

Issue 3: Connectivity and tackling traffic congestion.

- Improving access and internal connectivity to enable better access to services, employment opportunities and housing.
- Providing better access to development sites to facilitate brownfield regeneration.
- Improving access and connectivity will in turn help to alleviate traffic congestion on the strategic road network.

Heritage

Issue 1: Importance of Heritage Assets

- Heritage is often seen as a barrier to development.
- Ensuring that heritage assets have a positive impact on the environment of the area.
- Ensuring that the setting of historic assets is taken into account.

Issue 2: Conserving Heritage Value

- To try to increase the attraction of the area as a tourist destination based on its industrial heritage.
- Securing funding opportunities.
- Understanding the size and scale of heritage assets as they are often large in scale due to the industrial history of the area.
- To give the right protection to historic farmsteads.

Issue 3: Integrating new developments into the existing historic setting

- To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character of the area by ensuring new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and their context.
- Understanding what important settings should be safeguarded from new development.
- Safeguarding buildings that do not have statutory protection.
- Encouraging the sensitive re-use of historic assets.
- Recognising focal points and integrating different forms of development.

Issue 4: Rural Village Settings

- Recognising and preserving the rural settlement pattern.
- Integrating new development which meets the needs of rural areas.
- Ensuring that the setting of historic assets is taken into account.
- Recognising landscape setting and character.

City, Town, Local and Other Centres

Issue 1: Retail Hierarchy

- Working towards a new distinctive and sustainable settlement hierarchy, whilst still respecting the areas special historic character.

Issue 2: Vitality, Viability and Vibrancy of Centres

- Ensuring that new housing and business strengthen the role of centres and support the economic sustainability of centres.
- Ensuring that out of centre development does not weaken the identity and positive character of existing centres.
- Creating a more legible and more distinct pattern of settlements and a well-connected network of high quality places, each with its own distinctive character.
- Ensuring that development in existing rural settlements responds to the unique character and setting of each settlement.

Issue 3: Potential for Future Development

- The evidence from 2011 indicates that there is sufficient capacity within Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres to accommodate the identified potential retail growth up to 2026.
- The evidence in the Stoke-on-Trent Retail & Leisure 2014 study makes a number of suggestions regarding the future allocation of retail floorspace.

Issue 4: Rural Service Centres (Newcastle)

- The existing designation of Rural Service Centres and village envelopes in Newcastle-under-Lyme will need to be reviewed.

Issue 5: The Role of Local and Neighbourhood Centres in the Urban Environment

- Clarify the specific role of local and neighbourhood centres within the overall retail hierarchy, and the definition to be associated with them.
- Review the distribution and location of local and neighbourhood centres to meet the top-up shopping and other service needs of their immediate catchment.
- To ensure that new and existing local communities are located within walking distance of key local services.

Housing

Issue 1: Housing Need

- The SHMA has identified an objectively assessed need (OAN) ranging from 1,177 to 1,504 dwellings per annum across both authorities between 2014 and 2039.
- To meet higher levels of future development needs without harming the sustainability of the area.
- Increasing the number of new homes that are built in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.
- Providing sufficient local facilities such as schools to meet higher housing need.

Issue 2: Outmigration and natural population decline

- To improve the areas economic competiveness by attracting and retaining residents within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- Accommodating higher levels of population as a result of reducing out-migration

Issue 3: Delivering new homes and strengthening the local housing market:

- The creation of a stronger and more balanced housing market promoting the area as a place to live.
- The creation of a housing market which supports the areas' potential for economic growth and job creation.
- Strengthening the housing market without undermining the long term sustainability of the area, the regeneration of the most deprived communities and without significantly harming the quality of life or environment.
- The creation of a stronger housing market while ensuring homes remain affordable, particularly for young people.

Issue 4: Vacant housing stock

- Addressing the vacant housing stock and bringing properties back into use.

Issue 5: Affordable Housing

- Meeting the evidence of need for affordable housing across both local authorities.
- The role of the private rented sector in meeting needs for affordable housing.
- Increasing choice of tenures that people can access.

Issue 6: Specialist Housing Need

- Providing enough specialist accommodation for the growing elderly population.
- Creating market demand for high value housing in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.
- Providing enough student accommodation to support the success of the local universities without impacting on the general supply of housing.
- Meeting the needs for all types of housing in a balanced way.

Issue 7: Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation

- Providing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Health and Communities

Issue 1: Quality Environments

- To ensure that developments positively influence health by being well designed, well connected, permeable and prioritise walking and cycling over car use.

Issue 2: Location of Development

- To ensure that new developments positively influence health by considering surrounding facilities, infrastructure and access points to prevent severance, promote interaction and encourage health behaviours.

Issue 3: Infrastructure

- Ensuring investment in cycling infrastructure, green space, public transport and signage.
- Increasing awareness and use of surrounding infrastructure through proportion of public transport, green corridors, allotments, canals, green space and playing pitches.

Issue 4: Cohesive, inclusive and active communities

- Ensuring that the surrounding environment positively influences health, promotes social interaction and cohesive communities.
- Ensuring that housing developments consider flexible lifetime homes standards, permeable and inclusive neighbourhoods which promote walking and social interaction.

Energy and Climate Change

Issue 1: Renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in new development

- Promoting renewable and low carbon energy sources in light of changing national policy and viability concerns, for all new development, including commercial development and particularly on smaller housing schemes.
- Recognising how the design of new development can improve energy efficiency such as south facing roofs to increase the use of solar gain and increase daylight into properties.

Issue 2: Poor energy efficiency in existing housing

- Providing low-cost renewable and low carbon energy to help address energy efficiency issues in existing housing in both Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- Working in partnership with other organisations and accessing funding opportunities to improve energy efficiency in older housing stock.

Issue 3: Air quality and sustainable transport solutions

- Reducing emissions by increasing the use of sustainable methods of transport.
- Mitigating the impacts of new development upon air quality within Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Issue 4: Flood Risk

- Ensuring new development is sustainable, taking full account of all sources of flood risk.

Issue 5: Contaminated Land

- Remediating contaminated land and potential sources of contamination through new development.

Natural and Rural Environment

Issue 1: Increasing development needs and their impact upon locally designated sites

- Balancing the need to plan for new development with the protection and improvement of local natural assets.
- Plan positively to create, protect, enhance and manage a multifunctional network of green infrastructure.

Issue 2: Sustainable use of minerals

- Balancing the need of development and mineral extraction to avoid sterilisation of mineral resources.

Issue 3: The role of brownfield land in promoting biodiversity

- Ensuring future development strategies recognise the environmental value of brownfield land as well as greenfield sites.

Issue 4: Protecting and enhancing landscape character

- Ensuring future development strategies safeguard characteristic landscapes in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, whilst taking opportunities to improve lower quality landscapes.

Issue 5: Green Belt

- To ensure we deliver sustainable development by balancing the need to protect the openness of the Green Belt with the need to protect and enhance areas of value to the natural environment and local landscape.

Issue 6: National and internationally designated wildlife and geological sites

- Making sure any future development strategy protects rare species and designated sites.

Issue 7: Future Maintenance of Green Infrastructure

- Balancing quality and quantity in the future management of green infrastructure.

12.0 Consultation Questionnaire

To be added

13.0 Glossary

Affordable housing: Comprises of social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing for households whose needs are not met by the market. Social rented housing is owned and rented out to households by local authorities, private registered providers or other approved landlords. Affordable rented housing is let under similar arrangements but at no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing comprises of homes for sale and rent and can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans) and other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

Air Quality Management Areas: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives within certain specified deadlines.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Brownfield land: see 'previously developed land'

Core Spatial Strategy: The existing, overarching development plan document for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent. It sets out the long-term spatial vision for areas, the spatial objectives and strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision. The Core Spatial Strategy was adopted by both councils in 2009 and will be replaced by the Joint Local Plan.

Development Management (decision-taking): A function of the respective councils which considers and decides submitted planning applications against relevant planning policy and any other material considerations.

Development Plan/Development Plan Documents (DPDs): planning strategies and policies to direct the future development of an area. They include Local Plans and neighbourhood plans (as defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and are prepared by the local planning authority or qualifying neighbourhood plan body in consultation with the community.

Draft Local Plan: this stage of the plan production process follows on from this Issues consultation and the forthcoming Strategic Options stage. It is at this stage that both councils will present their preferred strategy and planning policy approaches to address the planning issues raised in this paper and any other issues that arise through the plan production process.

Duty to cooperate: This is a legal requirement in introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It requires that public bodies should engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

Ecological networks: sites and corridors of biodiversity importance that are linked together.

Economic development: Development that generates jobs and economic growth. This can include industrial uses, warehousing, offices, retail and leisure.

Employment Land Review: This is an evidential study that identifies different levels of economic and employment growth over the plan period and the amount, type and location of land that is best suited to meeting the projected levels of growth.

Enterprise Zone: areas designated by the government which have the backing of the local authority and Local Enterprise Partnership. Within these areas planning processes are streamlined, lower rates of tax are applied and there is greater investment in infrastructure (including superfast broadband) to better enable economic development to take place.

Evidence base: Up-to-date and relevant studies, data, information and analysis on the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area to inform and support the preparation of the Local Plan.

Examination in Public: Before it can be adopted, a Local Plan must be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is considered 'sound'. To be 'sound' a document must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Green Belt: Designated areas of countryside surrounding large urban areas. These are designated to prevent urban sprawl, safeguard the countryside from encroachment, prevent towns from merging together, preserve the setting and character of historic towns and to assist regeneration within the urban areas. Green Belt boundaries can only be amended when the local plan for the area is reviewed.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental benefits and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure can encompass both urban and rural areas.

Greenfield Land: Land that has not previously been developed (see entry for 'previously developed land'). This includes land currently or last used for agriculture and forestry and private garden land.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas as well as assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Housing Market Area: this is the area within which the local housing market operates. The extent of the Housing Market Area is defined within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see separate entry below).

Intermediate Housing: A type of affordable housing (see 'affordable housing')

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area. The body that covers Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Local Nature Partnership (LNP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local Plan: The Joint Local Plan is being prepared by the city council and borough council to guide future development across the two local authority areas. The final, adopted version of this development plan document will detail the strategy for development across the two areas up to 2033 and will contain detailed policies which Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will use to manage future development.

Local Planning Authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area, such as creating planning policies or deciding planning applications. Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are the local planning authorities for their respective areas.

Main town centre use: Retail development, leisure, entertainment facilities, offices, arts, culture and tourism development. Examples include shops, cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, bingo halls, theatres, museums, galleries, hotels and conference facilities.

Mineral Safeguarding Area: An area covering known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development. In the Joint Local Plan area Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council are responsible for designating Mineral Safeguarding areas.

Monitoring: Involves the collection and analysis of data and statistics to understand how patterns of development are changing. An example of this is the collection of housebuilding statistics. Monitoring data can show how effective planning policies are

in influencing development. Such information is reported by local planning authorities in their Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The Government's planning policies for England, which provide a policy framework that sets the parameters under which Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should be prepared, and decisions on planning applications should be made.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG/PPG): The Government's more detailed online guidance on national planning policies, which adds further detail to the NPPF.

Neighbourhood Plans: Development plan documents which can be prepared by local communities, such as neighbourhood forums, business forums or parish and town councils. Neighbourhood Plans must conform to the strategic development priorities of the Local Plan but can shape and direct local development within their neighbourhood area.

Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN): also called a 'full, objective assessment of housing needs' (FOAN), this is an assessment undertaken within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see separate entry below) which identifies the extent of the need for new housing, without being influenced by planning matters such as the ability of the land supply to accommodate the levels of development – these matters are considered within the Local Plan preparation process.

Open space: Space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Out of centre: A location which is neither within nor on the edge of a town centre.

Parish and town councils: Elected local authority bodies responsible for civil parishes. Parish and town councils have the ability to be designated as bodies to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their local areas.

People with disabilities: People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Planning policy (plan-making): A function of local planning authorities that prepares planning policies and development plan documents to direct decisions on development proposals within the authority's area.

Pollution: Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils and which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure. This excludes land occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings, restored land previously used for minerals extraction or landfill and private residential gardens.

Primary shopping area: Area in a town or city centre that is defined within planning policy documents where retail development is concentrated as the dominant use in that location.

RAMSAR Site: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): Previously a development plan document prepared at the regional level to direct the development strategy that local authority development plans were to conform with. Regional Spatial Strategies were revoked by the Localism Act 2011 and no longer apply.

RENEW North Staffordshire: This was an organisation that was set up to coordinate the renewal of the housing market in North Staffordshire as part of the previous government's Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder programme. This programme ended in.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. 'Renewable' covers sources of energy that occur naturally and repeatedly, for example wind, water, sun and also biomass and geothermal heat from below the ground. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Saved policies: Older local plan policies that can remain in place following a direction given by the Secretary of State under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A list of currently saved policies in Newcastle-under-Lyme or Stoke-on-Trent is available on the websites of either authority.

Site allocation: a site designated within a development plan document for a specific type of use. For example, housing, employment or retail development.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Social housing, or social rented housing: A type of affordable housing (see 'affordable housing')

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A document adopted by a local planning authority which describes how the public, business and interest groups within a local authority area can get involved in plan-making and the decision-taking.

Strategic Economic Plan (SEP): this is a document produced by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP – see separate entry above) which sets out the vision, aims and objectives for economic growth within the LEP area.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA): this is an assessment of sites across a local planning authority area that may be capable of accommodating housing development. It is an assessment of all known sites in the area but it does not constitute a council's view on which sites should or should not be developed for housing. The assessment is intended to identify whether or not sites are suitable, available and achievable for housing development.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): this is an evidential study that examines the extent and the operation of the local housing market. It also identifies the extent of the housing needs that exist or are likely to arise within the defined housing market area.

Strategic Options: this is the next stage in preparing the Joint Local Plan. At this stage the different ways that the issues identified within this paper can be addressed will be explored. For example this could include identifying how much development could be accommodated in different areas within both authorities. No particular solution will fixed at this stage as this will be done within the draft local plan. Further issues to consider may however be identified at the Strategic Options stage.

Submission: this is when the final version of the Joint Local Plan will be sent to the Secretary of State to be subject to an independent Examination in Public. There will be a final round of public consultation prior to submission and any resulting comments received will be considered by the appointed Planning Inspector who will oversee the Examination.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): documents which add further detail to policies contained within Development Plan Documents. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.

Sustainability Appraisal: An assessment of the impacts of policies and proposals on economic, social and environmental objectives, i.e. 'sustainable development'.

Sustainable development: Development which contributes to meeting the long term economic and social needs of the community, whilst balancing this against the need to avoid creating an unacceptable long term impact on the environment.

Sustainable transport: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Viability: Refers to the financial implications of development. If the costs of development do not allow for a sufficient financial return to the developer then the development will not be viable. Viability can be affected by the costs of developing the land, the costs of providing wider benefits such as open space or affordable housing, and the sale value of the completed development.

14.0 List of Evidence Base Documents

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

Employment Land Review 2015

Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showperson Accomodation Assessment 2015

Retail & Leisure Studies (Stoke-on-Trent Retail and Leisure Capacity Study completed in 2014 & Newcastle-under-Lyme Retail and Leisure Study completed in 2011)