

**CANNOCK CHASE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

CORE STRATEGY

ISSUES and OPTIONS

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATIONS

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 2007

Preface

Following discussions held with Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) on their representations on the Core Strategy – Issues and Options 2005 and in the light of the recent outcome of the first two Examinations of the soundness of Core Strategies under the new LDF system, the Council has been advised by GOWM to carry out a further round of consultation, on a modified version of the Core Strategy – Issues and Options.

This revised version has therefore been produced to address aspects of the Core Strategy - Issues and Options, that the GOWM considered to be deficient or had not been covered in sufficient detail. This additional stage of consultation is therefore part of the Core Strategy- Issues and Options stage. It is intended that consultation on the Core Strategy – Preferred Options will take place later on in 2007.

Comments are therefore being invited on the amended version of the Core Strategy – Issues and Options, but only on those sections of the revised text shown in red italics.

Comments are not being invited on those parts of the Core Strategy – Issues and Options document that was subject of consultation between 27th March to 8th May 2006. Any representations made at that stage are still valid and do not need to be repeated now.

CORE STRATEGY

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1. **SPATIAL PORTRAIT OF THE DISTRICT**

1.1 The new development plan system formally commenced in September 2004, when the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, took effect. The main objectives were to reform and speed up the preparation of development plans, involving the production of shorter documents that can be updated much more rapidly and to involve the community and key stakeholders on a much more intensive basis from the outset of plan preparation, up to and including an independent Examination.

1.2 The **Cannock Chase Core Strategy** is the first of several Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that the Council will be producing over the next few years as part of the new Cannock Chase Local Development Framework, i.e. the Core Strategy, Site Allocations, Development Control Policies, and the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan. In addition, the spatial implications of these documents have to be shown on an up to date Proposals Map. A series of Supplementary Planning Documents which provide more detailed information on the Development Plan Documents will also be prepared. These are all detailed in the Local Development Scheme, a three year programme detailing which documents the Council is to prepare, the topics they will cover and a timescale for production. However, the **Core Strategy** is the **primary Local Development Document** and all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have to be in conformity with it.

1.3 The **Cannock Chase Core Strategy** provides a statement of:-

- The Council's long-term **spatial vision** to be used in promoting and controlling development throughout the District, while complementing the vision set out in the Cannock Chase Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Clear **strategic objectives** for the development and improvement of the environment within a set timetable.
- A **spatial strategy** for delivering these objectives.
- **Core Policies** to shape development and deliver the strategy, which would then form the basis for development control decision making. The Core Policies will cover the key issues of sustainable development, sustainable environment, sustainable living, site selection, housing, economic development, transport, design and Green Belt, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and nature conservation issues.
- **The broad location of new housing and employment land requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy.** Site specific land use allocations are not included in the Core Strategy, as these will be contained in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- **A monitoring and implementation framework.**

- 1.4 It also draws on other plans and strategies that have implications for the development and use of land. These include the Cannock Chase Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, strategies for education, health, social inclusion, waste, biodiversity, recycling and environmental protection, urban and rural regeneration strategies, local and regional economic and housing strategies and community development, including close consultation with those bodies responsible for preparing these strategies.
- 1.5 The Core Strategy has to last for at least 10 years. It also has to be in conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy and therefore will have a time horizon up to 2026, and will be updated as appropriate.
- 1.6 The preparation of the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework gives the community and stakeholders the opportunity to influence policies for the future development and spatial planning of the District. In particular, community involvement is set out in the Regulations * and, the Statement of Community Involvement. It is therefore important that local people and key stakeholders become involved and make their views known during the preparation process, including this Core Strategy - Issues and Options stage.
- 1.7 The Council has been involved in evidence gathering over the last five years, starting with the public consultation carried out on the Replacement Local Plan Issues Paper in January 2001. However, the Issues and Options report represents the first opportunity for meaningful involvement by the community and stakeholders in the Core Strategy DPD.

Evidence Base

- 1.8 *A summary of the key elements of the evidence base is set out in Annex 1. This covers information on population, employment, education, skills, crime, health, together with studies specifically commissioned to enable the Core Strategy to be taken forward on Housing Need, Housing and Employment Land, Retailing and Town Centres, Open Space, Sport and Recreation.*

Issues and Challenges Facing the District

- 1.9 *Based on this evidence set out in Annex 1, the key issues which the Core Strategy needs to address are:-*
 - i). *How to make a positive contribution to resolving issues of deprivation in relation to the quality and choice of housing, to meet local need and the skills of and job opportunities for the workforce.*
 - ii). *How to provide a better balance of new housing, employment, retail and business development in a sustainable way making best use of previously developed land in appropriate locations which reduces the need to travel.*

** The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.*

- iii). *How to accommodate new development in a way which emphasises the quality of the built environment and protects valuable landscapes and habitats.*

Description of the District

1.10 *Cannock Chase District is situated in Southern Staffordshire on the northern edge of the West Midlands conurbation. Cannock is 10 miles from Walsall, 10 miles from Stafford, 12 miles from Wolverhampton and 18 miles from Birmingham. It is the second smallest District in Staffordshire after Tamworth.*

1.11 *The District extends 9.4 miles north to south and 6 miles west south west to east south east with a total area of 7,888 ha. The north eastern boundary is the Trent Valley at an elevation of 65 m AOD with the land rising to the south to the dissected plateau of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which reaches a height of over 230 m in several places. The topography then falls away to the south to between 145 and 110 m at the southern boundaries of the District with Pelsall and Wedges Mills respectively.*

1.12 *The pattern of growth of the urban areas of the district was historically associated with coal mining and more recently (since the 1960's) the substantial growth in residential development to meet both local and regional needs. The urban areas now take the form of three main blocks of development:-*

1. *The largest area in the south western quarter of the District comprising Cannock, Longford and Bridgtown, Chadsmoor, Hawks Green, Heath Hayes, Hednesford, Pye Green, Wimblebury, Rawnsley and Hazel Slade (called Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes for the purposes of this document) with an area of 2,009 ha. The population is 61,000.*
2. *The second largest area in the north east is Rugeley and Brereton 661 ha, with a population of 24,000.*
3. *Towards the south west of the District the smallest area comprises the large village of Norton Canes 208 ha and a population of 6,000.*

1.13 *In addition to these urban areas are three freestanding villages, Slitting Mill (near Rugeley) with a population of 610, and 16 ha in area, together with Cannock Wood, population 900, 22 ha in area, and Prospect Village, population 626 and 11 ha in area, situated to the east of the Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes urban area.*

Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes

1.14 *The settlements of Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes have merged together as a result of substantial housing development taking place from the 1960's to date, the most recent major development being over 2,500 dwellings built from 1985 onwards at Hawks Green.*

1.15 *The overall urban form is characterised by a mixture of local authority former*

coal industry and private housing estates building on much smaller groups of Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses originating from the early days of the mining industry. Most development is at medium densities of 20-30 dwellings per hectare. The environmental quality of some of the older estates of former coal industry and local authority housing is poor but there are areas of high quality low density housing particularly to the west of Cannock along the B5012.

- 1.16 Dereliction created by past mining and other heavy industry within this area has largely been dealt with by reclamation for open space use or new employment developments.*
- 1.17 Within this area are the 6 largest urban/urban fringe open spaces in the District. Hednesford Hills Local Nature Reserve (118 ha), Cannock Park and golf course (46 ha), Mill Green/Hawks Green Meadow proposed Nature Reserve (30 ha), Pye Green Valley Open Space (36 ha), the former Hednesford Brickworks Community Forest (13 ha) and Hazel Slade Nature Reserve (14 ha), the latter being situated just beyond the eastern edge of the urban area. An application has been made to Natural England to include Hednesford Hills within the boundary of the AONB.*
- 1.18 Cannock town centre is the main shopping centre (gross retail floorspace 48,600 m²) and the location of the main Council Offices, offices of Government Departments (Tax and Social Security) a Community Hospital and a Technical College. Hednesford is the second largest shopping centre (gross retail floorspace 8,900 m²) with a smaller District Centre at Hawks Green and local centres at Heath Hayes, Chadsmoor and Bridgtown. There are 3 out of centre retail parks at Linkway and Vine Lane on the A5 between Longford and Bridgtown and the Orbital Centre east of the A460 and north of the M6 Toll with a gross floorspace of 36,000 m².*
- 1.19 There are four secondary schools, and nineteen primary schools. A new multi practice health centre recently opened in Hednesford and a further one is planned for Cannock.*
- 1.20 Most industrial and warehouse development is situated along the A5 corridor and on the adjoining principal roads of the A460 and A34 in the Bridgtown and Longford areas with a number of small businesses together with large industrial warehouse developments. The most recent employment development has been at the Kingswood Lakeside Employment Park situated east of the Orbital Retail Park and north of the M6 Toll and A5, development of which has so far comprised a mixture of large distribution depots and small office units. Other small industrial estates are situated within this urban area in the Hawks Green area at the Keys Business Park and Anglesey Business Park at Hednesford partly built on land reclaimed from former mining or brick making.*
- 1.21 Housing development extends up to the District boundary along a substantial part of the western boundary of Cannock, Chadsmoor and Longford, where it adjoins rural areas within South Staffordshire District, the former mining village of Huntington and rural areas within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Employment development extends along the southern boundary of*

The District south of the A5 Longford to Churchbridge where it also adjoins the District boundary with South Staffordshire beyond which is urban development within the villages of Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay.

- 1.22 There are 22 listed buildings in this part of the District and two conservation areas comprising part of Cannock town centre focused on High Green and St. Luke's Church and North Street, Bridgtown which is a relatively unchanged Victorian shopping street.*

Rugeley and Brereton

- 1.23 Situated on the south west side of the Trent Valley, Rugeley originated as a market town and Brereton as a separate village. Mining and power generation brought major growth and resulted in coalescence of the urban areas of the two settlements in the 1960's. Large estates of private housing development were built from the late 60's through the 70's particularly north west of Rugeley in the Etching Hill area linking the older village of Etching Hill to the main urban area of Rugeley. Etching Hill is now a low density suburb of high environmental quality. Elsewhere a number of local authority, former coal industry and private housing estates dating from the 1950's onwards are the dominant parts of the urban form, some exhibiting poor quality environments. Recent private housing development has been at a much smaller scale than in the Cannock area, the largest estate built since 1980 having just over 400 dwellings situated on the A460 one mile south west of the town centre completed in the period 2001-2004.*
- 1.24 There is a small town park (Elmore Park) adjoining Rugeley town centre and larger open spaces at Ravenhill in Brereton Green Lane in Rugeley and Etching Hill on the north western boundary of Rugeley urban area. A distinctive feature of Rugeley is the fact that a large area of open space of Green Belt status comprising playing fields extends from the A51 adjoining the town centre between the two secondary schools to provide a distinctive open view of the rising land of Cannock Chase beyond the town.*
- 1.25 Shopping is focused on the historic street pattern of the town centre extended in 1985 with a large supermarket at its north eastern end. The centre has a gross retail floorspace of 31,500 m2. There are a few specialist retail shops on industrial estates but no purpose built out of town retail park. An Action Area Plan DPD for Rugeley Town Centre will be prepared as part of the Local Development Framework.*
- 1.26 There are two secondary schools and eight primary schools. A new multi-practice health centre is due to open shortly and a second centre to serve the north end of the town has planning permission and funding in place.*
- 1.27 Rugeley B Power Station dominates the landscape locally, the former Rugeley A Station having been demolished some years ago. Rugeley B is likely to remain in power production for up to 30 years as a result of major investment in flue gas desulphurisation plant. Adjacent to the power station is the site of the former Lea Hall Colliery now the Towers Business Park being developed alongside Phase 1 of*

the Rugeley Eastern Bypass. Other older industrial estates exist at Power Station Road in Rugeley and at The Levels/Redbrook Lane in Brereton. Rugeley and Brereton have some Victorian and Edwardian streets or groups of buildings of sufficient quality to justify a Conservation Area designation and there are five Conservation Areas within this part of the District, three comprising older residential parts of Rugeley, Rugeley town centre and the historic core of Brereton. In addition the whole of the Trent and Mersey Canal 2 miles of which pass through the District is a Conservation Area. There are 37 listed buildings.

- 1.28 Residential development extends up to the District boundary with the rural parts of Stafford Borough to the north west of Rugeley. Employment development including the Power Station extends up to the boundary of the Trent flood plain on the north east side of Rugeley and Brereton. Part of the former A Power Station is within Lichfield District and is a site of major housing development of 500+ dwellings, construction of which has just commenced on land to the east of The Towers Business Park which will effectively form an urban extension to Brereton separated from the nearest settlement in Lichfield District, Armitage, by about one mile.*
- 1.29 The remaining sections of the Rugeley Eastern Bypass are currently under construction with completion due in late 2007. This will provide a complete replacement for through traffic for the existing A51/A513 which pass through the urban areas of Rugeley and Brereton.*

Norton Canes

- 1.30 Originated as a mining village with very few pre 1914 buildings and comprises local authority and private housing estates dating mostly from the 1950's onwards. The latest residential development at Brownhills Road south of the village centre comprising 300 dwellings on a former colliery site.*
- 1.31 The village centre has a small group of shops with a supermarket and a library. There is also a community centre 300m south of the village centre. There are two primary schools, a secondary school and a new multi-practice health centre is currently under construction.*
- 1.32 Industrial development took place from the early 1970's onwards in the centre south of the village centre on the former Conduit Colliery to add to earlier development including an aluminium works on the south west side of the village. The M6 Toll and the Norton Canes Service Area are major recent developments which have taken place immediately to the south of the village.*
- 1.33 The largest area of open space is that associated with the recent housing development at the Conduit Colliery and there are others areas associated with the community centre and at Chapel Street on the western side of the village.*
- 1.34 Development extends up to the district boundary along much of the eastern side of the village where it adjoins Chasewater Reservoir and Country Park which are situated within Lichfield District.*

- 1.35 *The Parish of Norton Canes also has boundaries with Brownhills West (Walsall) and rural areas of both Walsall MBC and South Staffordshire District.*
- 1.36 *Slitting Mill is a small village with no public housing comprising low density housing mostly dating from the 1950's onwards. It has a pub and village hall but no shop. It is situated within the AONB and separated from the main urban area of Rugeley by less than 1 kilometre.*
- 1.37 *Cannock Wood is a larger hilltop settlement situated within the AONB. There is a mixture of low and medium density private housing, together with small groups of local authority housing. It has a pub and village hall but no shop. It is served by a primary school just across the administrative boundary at Gentleshaw within Lichfield District. It also has very poor levels of public transport. It is situated about 2 kilometres beyond the eastern edge of the main urban area of Cannock.*
- 1.38 *Prospect Village which is situated between the eastern urban edge of Cannock and Cannock Wood on the southern boundary of the AONB, consists almost entirely of former coal industry and local authority estates. It has a village hall with associated open space but no school or shop.*

The Rural Areas

- 1.39 *Over 38% of the district is situated within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty between Hednesford and Rugeley/Brereton the urban edges of which are approximately 3 miles apart. The landscape of the AONB within the district is dominated by Forestry Commission plantations. Agricultural land, now largely given over to equestrian activities forms a distinct belt between the forestry plantations and the Rugeley urban area and also to the south of Brereton. Part of Cannock Chase Country Park at Brindley Heath including the visitors centre are situated within the district. Substantial parts of the Country Park and other land within the Brindley Heath area are either Special Areas of Conservation or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Stile Cop is a separate detached area of Country Park within the AONB close to the southern boundary of Rugeley. The Stile Cop and Brindley Heath areas of country park exhibit more of the characteristic heathland landscape which was the main reason behind AONB designation.*
- 1.40 *One major area of dereliction arising from former mining exists in this part of the District in the form of a partial restored spoil tip of Brereton colliery.*
- 1.41 *Apart from one farm at West Cannock which is also given over to equestrian activity the forestry plantations extend up to the northern edge of the urban area of Hednesford forming the boundary of the AONB. The former West Cannock Colliery and its associated spoil tip are geographically within the AONB but not included within the designation. The colliery site is now an enterprise centre for small businesses and the reclaimed spoil tip is part of the Country Park.*
- 1.42 *East of Heath Hayes, the rural area south of the forestry plantations of the AONB but also including Prospect Village and Cannock Wood contain agricultural land*

mostly in the form of relatively small fields around those villages given over to equestrian use but to the south of this a substantial open area of larger scale agricultural landscape much of which comprised former opencast working at Bleak House. East of the urban area and separated from it by a kilometre is the former Cannock Wood Colliery now an industrial estate within the Green Belt beyond which is the other major area of dereliction within the rural part of the district being the former spoil tip of the colliery now partly colonised by vegetation and of important nature conservation value. There are SSSIs at Cuckoo Bank and No Mans Bank within this tract.

1.43 South of greater Cannock north of the M6 Toll and west of Norton Canes is an area of disturbed landscape part of which has been restored to low grade agriculture and woodland from former opencast working and part of which is now in the process of being developed as the Kingswood Lakeside Employment Park on the edges of which are substantial blocks of woodland planting. On the north-western edge of this area is the large Poplars Landfill Site which dominates the landscape in this part of the district in a largely negative way.

1.44 South of the A5 the Little Wyrley area is a flat agricultural landscape of small fields and small dispersed woodlands which in addition to the small hamlet of Little Wyrley contains pockets of development largely given over to business uses at Lime Lane, the Watling Street Business Park and the former Grove Colliery. Some of the former spoil tip of Grove Colliery is currently given over to landfill operations and other parts have naturally vegetated. The Cannock Extension Canal passes north south through this area and is a Special Area of Conservation. This area of the District is part of a large tract of rural land part of which to the west is situated in South Staffs and to the south and east within Walsall Metropolitan Borough. The southern tip of the district adjoins a large area of common land at Pelsall. There are several sites of biological interest in this area including Wyrley Common a formerly disturbed mining landscape which has to a large extent naturally regenerated.

Communications

1.45 The District is linked together north south by the A460/A4601 from Rugeley to the M6(Jc 11) and Wolverhampton and the Birmingham to Walsall, Cannock and Rugeley railway with stations at Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley Town. These two transport routes run parallel to each other. The other north south route in the district is the A34 link to Stafford in the north through Huntington and Cannock to Great Wyrley, Bloxwich and Walsall in the south.

1.46 In the Trent Valley the trend of communications is north west to south east with the A51 Stafford to Lichfield Road running through Rugeley and Brereton and the A513 Rugeley to Tamworth Road. The West Coast Main Line railway is just outside the District to the north east to the River Trent with a station and associated small industrial estate at Rugeley Trent Valley within Lichfield District.

1.47 In the south of the district the main trend of road communications is east to west with the A5 Telford to Brownhills section and the M6 Toll (including the

Churchbridge junction), which run parallel with each other through the district between Churchbridge and Norton Canes. The other east west route out of Cannock town centre is the A5190 Cannock to Burntwood and Lichfield Road.

1.48 The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the north east part of Rugeley and Brereton. The Cannock Extension Canal is a branch of the Wyrley and Essington canal which extends north from Pelsall to its terminus immediately south of the A5 at Norton Canes. There is a proposal to restore the Hatherton Branch Canal along a new alignment in the District south of the A5 to form a connection with the Cannock Extension Canal at Little Wyrley.

What Happens Next

1.49 The next stage is for consultation to be carried out with key stakeholders on the Core Strategy – Issues and Options- *2nd version*. After this has been completed the Council will need to consider the responses received *on the 1st and 2nd versions* and produce a public consultation, Preferred Options version of the Core Strategy.

Questions

- *Does the ‘Spatial Portrait of the District’ provide an accurate reflection of the area?*
- *If not, are there any additional characteristics or features that should be included?*

2. SPATIAL VISION

2.1 The Council has a reputation for being a forward looking and innovative local authority. This approach will be continued in the preparation of the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework and is reflected in its vision:-

“to create a District which is attractive, safe, prosperous, accessible and of diverse character, providing for the needs of Cannock Chase residents and its business community in an equitable and sustainable way.”

2.2 The Council also has its own vision:-

“By 2015, Cannock Chase Council will be recognised as a place where everyone’s lives are enriched by a strong cultural identity, vibrant local economy and pride in the outstanding natural environment.”

2.3 Since the Council published its first Performance Plan in 1999, it has used the acronym **CHASE** to identify issues of concern to the local communities, which have become the primary objectives. These were reviewed in 2005 to ensure that they remain relevant.

2.4 **CHASE** stands for:

CULTURE and SPORT. “Increasing participation in culture and sporting activities.”

HEALTH – “Developing a healthy community.”

ACCESS to SKILLS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – “A sustainable job for everyone, learning opportunities for all.”

SOCIAL INCLUSION and HOUSING – “Reducing Inequality, Decent Homes for all.”

ENVIRONMENT – “A clean, safe and sustainable environment.”

2.5 The Local Development Framework is intrinsically linked to the Cannock Chase Community Strategy – Creating Change, 2004-05. It contains a vision which states:-

“ By 2010 we will improve the quality of life in the District by:

- **Achieving higher educational standards and developing lifelong learning.**
- **Providing opportunities for high quality employment.**
- **Improving long-term health.**
- **Ensuring that we can live and work in a safe and attractive environment.”**

2.6 The Cannock Chase Core Strategy has to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, 2004. The RSS also has a vision, which states:-

“The overall vision for the West Midlands is one of an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable Region, which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life for future generations.”

2.7 From the above, it can be seen that the Local Development Framework is not being prepared in isolation and has to be prepared in parallel with the Community Strategy and other strategies internally within the Council, and externally with the southern-Staffordshire sub-region, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and ultimately with Government Policy.

2.8 In addition to the Issues and Options identified in Chapter 6, the Council would like to receive your views on the Spatial Vision.

Questions

- Has the Council identified the right Spatial Vision for the Local Development Framework?
- If you think there is a better alternative vision, what should it be?
- Should it cover a longer time-span to the end of the LDF period in 2021?

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Since the Cannock Chase Local Plan was adopted in 1997, sustainable development has become established as a key theme of national, regional and local policy-making.
- 3.2 The most widely used definition of sustainable development is “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This is linked to quality of life, and to improve quality of life we all need access to jobs, decent homes in which to live and good access to community facilities and other services.
- 3.3 In 2003, the Government published ‘Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future.’ This sets out the main priorities for local development frameworks to take on board in order to create sustainable communities.
- 3.4 PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, published in 2005, identifies sustainable development as “the core principle underpinning planning.” It is of key importance for the delivery of sustainable communities and developments and its key themes will underline all documents produced as part of the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework.

It contains six key principles for the delivery of sustainable development:-

- The need for planning authorities to take an integrated approach to sustainable development and ensure that environmental, economic, and social, objectives are achieved.
 - The need to ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change.
 - The need to adopt a spatial planning approach.
 - The promotion of high quality inclusive design.
 - Inclusion of clear, comprehensive and inclusive access policies.
 - The need for community involvement through the plan preparation process.
- 3.5 As part of the introduction of the new Local Development Planning system, the Government is currently producing new Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) to explain how sustainable development should be integrated into land use planning policies. As of September 2005, nine PPS’s had been published.
- 3.6 Sustainable development is a key element of the annual Cannock Chase Local Community Strategy and will be the main theme of the emerging Cannock Chase Local Development Framework.

- 3.7 Any development scheme coming forward will need to demonstrate that it supports the principles of sustainable development. The degree to which these schemes will be able to contribute towards sustainable development will vary according to their nature, size and location.
- 3.8 In summary, a key element of sustainable development is to strike the right balance between the ability to serve economic development and the ability to protect the environment and sustain future quality of life.

Principles of Sustainable Development

Effective protection of the environment

- Conserving historic and architecturally important buildings, areas and other structures.
- Protecting sites of archaeological and historic interest and their settings.
- Conserving green space and trees.
- Safeguarding protected and attractive landscapes.
- Incorporating trees and other landscape features into development.
- Reducing the need to travel, especially by car, by:
 - ensuring development is in the right location.
 - promoting mixed use development.
 - providing facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
 - making provision for parking that will not encourage use of the private car.
- Promoting sustainable freight development, particularly by rail.
- Protecting the quality of water, land and air.
- Minimising the risk of flooding.
- Reducing gases causing climate change.

Prudent use of natural resources

- Using brownfield land before greenfield.
- Utilising the highest density of development consistent with high quality design, the amenity and character of the locality and acceptable impact on adjoining development.
- Creating development which is energy-efficient by means of layout, design, construction and landscaping.
- Using energy from renewable sources, including maximising solar gain.
- Re-using materials wherever possible or using materials from sustainable sources.
- Creating buildings and environments which require low maintenance and which have a long life-span or can be readily adapted to alternative future uses.

- Minimising waste.

Social progress which meets the needs of everyone

- Creating attractive urban environments.
- Ensuring that specific groups of the population are not disadvantaged by development.
- Reducing disparities in income, access to jobs, housing and services.
- Providing good accessibility to jobs, services and community facilities.
- Providing an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and affordability to meet the needs of all households.
- Incorporating measures to deter crime.
- Protecting and improving personal and community health.
- Promoting and enhancing quality of life.

Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

- Manufacturing in ways which are environmentally sensitive.
- Minimising unemployment, including making provision for a diversity of employment.
- Ensuring good accessibility to and movement of goods, by businesses.
- Taking account of and making provision for developments in communications and information technology.

Questions

- Has the Council identified the right Sustainable Development Principles to underpin the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework?
- If not, what other sustainable development principles should be included?

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The Core Strategy has the following Strategic Objectives to help secure the vision for the District identified in 2.1. They reflect objectives contained in the saved Cannock Chase Local Plan, 1997; the Replacement Local Plan Issues Paper, 2001; and the Cannock Chase Community Strategy. Similarly, they also contribute to the Cannock Chase Community Strategy.

Effective Protection of the Environment

- 4.2 To protect, conserve and enhance landscape character, particularly the Cannock Chase AONB and to restore damaged areas of countryside and urban land, thereby creating new landscapes, particularly in respect of the Forest of Mercia.
- 4.3 To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, particularly those internationally, nationally and locally designated sites.
- 4.4 To protect, enhance and extend the Green Space Network within the built up areas and increase the amount of accessible natural greenspace generally.
- 4.5 To protect, conserve and enhance the archaeological, architectural, historic and cultural environment generally and in particular the designated areas.
- 4.6 To improve the quality of the built environment with the emphasis on securing high quality design in new development, enhancing public safety and amenity and improving air quality.
- 4.7 To promote new development in sustainable locations which are well served by public transport and which will help reduce the need to travel by car by encouraging alternative forms of movement, including walking and cycling.
- 4.8 To help secure the provision of an effective, reliable and sustainable system of transport which provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and contributes to the relief of congestion.
- 4.9 To reduce the incidence of flooding of residential properties, businesses and roads.

Prudent Use of Natural Resources

- 4.10 To encourage energy efficiency in new development, promote the use of renewable materials and energy sources and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill sites.

Social Progress Which Meets the Needs of Everyone

- 4.11 To ensure an adequate supply of land for new housing to meet identified needs which:

- (i) provides for a range of house types and tenure to meet the diverse needs of the community, including affordable housing for those on low incomes and provision for gypsies;
 - (ii) makes the best use of land within urban areas at densities appropriate to the location;
 - (iii) maximises the use of previously developed land and buildings.
- 4.12 To maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford Town Centres, identifying a range of potential development opportunities, ensuring that they are the principle foci for new retail development, whilst monitoring and developing the role of district and local centres in providing local shopping and community services.
- 4.13 To secure the provision of necessary and relevant infrastructure services and facilities to a high standard in conjunction with development.
- 4.14 To integrate land use planning policies with the development of strategies of health, education and social service providers through the Community Strategy, reflecting their proposals for expansion, improvement, new provision or closure of facilities.
- 4.15 To maintain and enhance existing opportunities for leisure, recreation and sport including facilities for organised sport and recreation and the use of open spaces and the countryside and encourage expansion and new provision, without conflicting with other land use or conservation interests.

Maintenance of High and Stable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment

- 4.16 To maintain a high quality portfolio of employment land *to increase the total and range of job opportunities available to a growing workforce* and to help increase the competitiveness of local businesses through:-
- (i) the regeneration and improvement of established employment areas;
 - (ii) the retention of good quality employment sites in sustainable locations and the prevention of their loss to other uses;
 - (iii) the identification of new high quality employment sites in sustainable locations.
- 4.17 To encourage the development of sustainable tourism through the development of new and the improvement of existing tourism facilities, balancing the needs of visitors with those of the local community and the protection of the environment.

Questions

- Are the Strategic Objectives the right ones for the District?
- Which Objectives do you support and why?
- Which Objectives do you object to and why?
- Are there any Objectives we have overlooked, what are they and how can they be included?

5. SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Cannock Chase Local Development Framework is not being prepared in isolation. As well as having to take into account other plans and strategies, it also has to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, 2004. The main purpose of the RSS is to provide the Spatial Strategy, to guide the preparation of this and other local authority development plans and local transport plans, throughout the West Midlands Region, in order to provide a framework for Regional development up until 2026.
- 5.2 This section is concerned with setting out the Council's spatial strategy for the District, its broad land use proposals, economic and social development and management of the environment, in the context of its overall compliance with the RSS.
- 5.3 The Spatial Strategy is therefore guided by the following key principles:-
- To be in conformity with the RSS, including support for future development in the Major Urban Areas. (Locally these include Birmingham and the Black Country and North Staffordshire).
 - Restricting development to requirements identified in the RSS.
 - Directing development sequentially to previously developed land within urban areas and on the edge of the urban area.
 - Protecting open countryside and protected landscapes and other areas.

The District

- 5.4 The geographical characteristics of the District mean that the relationships between town and country, the physical environment and natural environment and subsequent development patterns are largely pre-determined. The District is relatively small, being 9.4 miles north to south, about 6 miles *maximum* in width and 78.88 sq. km in area. 61% of the District lies within the West Midlands Green Belt, much of which is also within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To the north, development opportunities for Rugeley are restricted by its close proximity to the Stafford Borough and Lichfield District boundaries, together with the Trent Valley floodplain, Green Belt and AONB boundaries. Similarly to the south, development opportunities in Cannock are restricted by the adjacent boundaries of South Staffordshire District and Walsall Metropolitan Council and again by the Green Belt and AONB. Historically, development patterns and transportation corridors have therefore tended to follow a north-south linear pattern. Accordingly, established patterns of land use development and transport are unlikely to change significantly during the Development Framework period. These constraints, together with the ever-increasing demand for new residential and employment land have therefore created strong development pressures within the District.
- 5.5 However, the Council recognise that it is important that it starts the plan preparation process with a blank piece of paper and does not seek to impose pre-

conceived ideas prior to consultation with stakeholders taking place. To this end, the Council is seeking to develop options through the Sustainability Appraisal and full community engagement. When the responses to the processes have been received and assessed, it will then be possible to be more specific on policies and proposals.

The Town Centres

- 5.6 Government policy is to ensure the continuing vitality and viability of town centres, to maintain town centres as the focus for new development and to plan for growth.* This approach will therefore be applied to Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford town centres. Development which attracts a lot of people (particularly retail, employment and leisure uses), will need to be located in the three town centres in the first instance, following a sequential approach to site selection.
- 5.7 The three town centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford are all of varying size and each has individual characteristics. In particular, Cannock, the largest of the three centres, is the focus of many journeys by workers, shoppers, visitors to health and educational establishments, service sector employees and service deliveries. It is also identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy, June 2004, as one of 25 town centres that will be the focus for:-
- (i) major retail developments, over 10,000 sq.m gross floorspace;
 - (ii) uses attracting large numbers of people for cultural, tourist, social and community activities;
 - (iii) large scale leisure and office (B1a) developments over 5,000 sq.m gross floorspace.
- 5.8 *The RSS Phase 2 Revision Spatial Options, out to consultation in January 2007, suggests net additional comparison retail floorspace in Cannock 2005-2021 to be up to 20,000 m2.*
- 5.9 In 2003 the Council commissioned a retail health check study for Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford town centres (completed in 2004), the findings of which will be used in the preparation of the Local Development Framework. As a follow-on a further capacity assessment for Rugeley Town Centre was completed in April 2005. The findings of this, together with the earlier retail health check, will be fed into the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD.
- 5.10 The Council's vision for the three town centres is therefore to build on their respective strengths, their distinct and individual characteristics and their range and quality of services, facilities and activities, particularly those related to retailing, employment and leisure activities. In addition, in the interests of sustainability, vitality and security, the Council will seek to maintain the town centres as attractive and safe locations in which to live.

* PPS6, para 2.1, 2005

5.11 In order to achieve this the Council will promote:

- A safe and attractive environment, through design, landscaping and tree planting.
- A strong day and evening economy.
- The development or redevelopment of key sites that would act as a catalyst for further regeneration.
- Mixed use development, including business, retail, leisure and housing.
- Improved accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling.
- A parking strategy which gives priority to residents, shoppers and business users, with improved safety and information, based on the provision of maximum parking standards.

5.12 The three town centres contain a number of sites which already have recognised development potential. Some of these are in use as car parks and represent opportunities to improve the appearance and functions of the town centres. It will also be important to ensure that details of the street scene which create interest, such as shop fronts, paving, seats, signs, landscaping and public art, are well designed and maintained.

Offices

5.13 The office employment sector includes development appropriate to town centres (particularly Use Class A2 services principally to visiting members of the public) but also Class B1 offices and PPS6 requires a sequential approach to the location of office floorspace similar to that for retail and commercial businesses. Capacity of centres is an issue in Cannock Chase and is recognised in the RSS Phase 2 Revision as an issue across the region. Identification of new out-of-centre sites is considered in the RSS to be necessary to provide appropriate employment benefits. The suggested ratio between centres and out-of-centre is 40-44% with an overall allocation for Cannock Chase District of 40-60,000 m² 2001-2021.

Housing

5.14 The RSS Phase Two Revision Spatial Options out to consultation in January 2007 sets out three options for the number and distribution of new dwellings across the Region 2021-2026. The Regional totals and the thinking behind them is as follows:-

5.15 Option 1. 381,000 new dwellings gross based on the principles of the existing RSS of supporting of the existing RSS of supporting urban and rural renaissance, taking into account existing commitments and identified urban capacity, additional requirements which cannot be met by identified urban capacity being allocated to the 'foci' settlements including Burton-on-Trent.

5.16 Option 2. 491,200 new dwellings gross based on Strategic Authority advice proposing distribution based on local knowledge of opportunities and

- constraints, seeking to meet an appropriate distribution of housing proposals across the Region including growth in other settlements as well as 'foci.'*
- 5.17 *Option 3. 575,000 new dwellings gross – the level required to meet the high levels of demand set out in the Government's 2003 based household projections distributing the additional dwellings to those areas of relatively higher demand in line with the approach in PPS3.*
- 5.18 *The implications for Cannock Chase would be 6,000 dwellings with Option 1 and 7,000 with both Options 2 and 3. A continuation of existing RSS based on existing Structure Plan distribution within Staffordshire would give in a region of 8542 for Cannock Chase.*
- 5.19 *Until the Regional distribution is settled in the Phase 2 Revision, it is considered appropriate to examine the implications for Cannock Chase of the range between 6,000 and 8,842 in both the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs.*
- 5.20 The RSS will secure a major change in the distribution of housing provision, where provision in this District will be at lower levels than were previously specified in the past, based on meeting local needs and discouraging decentralisation.
- 5.21 However, the majority of new development is likely to occur within the existing urban areas and substantially on brownfield sites. *Recently updated urban capacity information indicates that a five year supply of housing post adoption of the Site Allocations DPD can be achieved from identified urban capacity for the 6,000 and 7,000 options.* The RSS contains a target for housing development on previously developed land in Staffordshire of 66% for the period 2001-2011. (This compares to a target of 45% for the District within the saved Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan, 2001).
- 5.22 The Cannock Chase Local Plan 1997, identified three sites having development potential beyond 2001, at land West of Pye Green Road; *east of Wimblebury Road*, Heath Hayes; and *south of Norton Canes*. Assessments of the merits of these sites *and other sites put forward by landowners/developers will be* carried out and any decision will be incorporated in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 5.23 Optimum use will be made of sites which are subject to redevelopment. Higher densities for housing development, and lower provision of car parking will be encouraged within the town centres or at sites near to local centres having access to frequent public transport services. Densities will be determined on an individual site basis, taking account of current guidance in PPS3, site-specific circumstances and the character of the adjacent area.

Employment

- 5.24 Having gone through the traumas of the demise of its traditional coal mining employment base in the early 1990s and subsequent regeneration of redundant sites, the District has emerged as an attractive location for new employment development, related to the light industrial, office and distribution sectors.
- 5.25 The Cannock Chase Local Plan, 1997 has provided the previous focus for the redevelopment of the 56ha Towers Business Park (former Lea Hall colliery) in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council and Advantage West Midlands and the 36 ha Kingswood Lakeside site, Cannock, in conjunction with the County Council and the private sector. However, the location of future employment sites will be developed through full consultation with stakeholders, and in particular Advantage West Midlands, in accordance with the RSS *and its Partial Revision*.
- 5.26 The opening of the M6Toll motorway in late 2003 has acted as a major catalyst for economic regeneration along its length, the Cannock area being no exception. The motorway has led to the trebling of employment land values on this corridor, the 36 ha Kingswood Lakeside employment park being a particular beneficiary.
- 5.27 Consideration will be given through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to the merits of releasing additional employment land on this corridor.
- 5.28 The Regional Spatial Strategy (Policy PA6) states that local authorities should aim to provide a range and choice of readily available employment sites in accordance with a hierarchy. In the light of existing major site commitments, it is unlikely that any Regional Investment Sites (RIS), Major Investment Sites (MIS) or Regional Logistics Sites (RLS), will be provided in the District, all of which would require sites of 25-50 ha and above. *Cannock and Rugeley are identified as Local Regeneration Areas (Policy UR2)*.
- 5.29 The saved Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 employment land requirement for the District for this period, is 80 ha. As of April 2005, a balance of 7.3 ha has still to be identified to 2011.
- 5.30 *The approach to employment land taken in the RSS Phase 2 Review Spatial Options is to identify a 5 year reservoir of readily available land to roll forward and to be maintained throughout the period 2001-2026, together with a land bank of other sites with development constraints which could be brought forward to top-up readily available supply.*
- 5.31 *The two indicative reservoirs are based on average completions (in hectares) for the period 1995-2004, with 2.2% and 2.4% growth ratio respectively. This gives a range of overall land requirements, 2001 – 2026 of 85 – 95 ha.*
- 5.32 *The RSS indicates requirements of between 3.4 ha and 3.8 ha per year is less than the Structure Plan Plan requirement of 5.3 ha per year.*
- 5.33 *Taking account of the following factors, the RSS proposals are not considered to be*

adequate to meet the needs of the District:-

- a). The status of Cannock and Rugeley as local Regeneration zones reflecting higher than average unemployment; lower than average skills/educational attainments.*
- b). The recent significant acceleration in annual take-up rates of employment land.*
- c). The sustainability advantages of providing a better balance between a growing workforce and local job availability.*

5.34 A more realistic approach would be based around 6-8 ha per year.

Transport

- 5.35 With a population of 93,000 and strong employment links with the conurbation, the District faces major transport challenges. Cannock in particular, as a centre for employment, education and leisure, attracts major commuter flows within and out of the District.
- 5.36 Chapter 9 of the Regional Spatial Strategy on Transport and Accessibility became the Regional Transport Strategy with the commencement of the Act in September 2004. The key theme will be to improve “accessibility and the performance of the transport system whilst not perpetuating past trends in car traffic and trip length growth.” (RSS - 9.18).
- 5.37 The LDF will be developed in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan 2006-11 through:
- promoting sustainable forms of transport as attractive and realistic alternatives to the car;
 - providing better facilities for walking, cycling and public transport;
 - facilitating movement and accessibility;
 - securing the continued development of the Stafford-Rugeley-Hednesford-Cannock-Walsall-Birmingham, Chase Line, as the preferred option for journeys to the conurbation;
 - locating residential and employment development at locations that would make the use of public transport, walking and cycling, realistic and attractive transport options;
 - securing the continued development of green travel plans for existing and new development, including developer contributions for the provision of new and improved infrastructure.
 - promoting the development of sustainable freight distribution, by road and rail.
 - *protecting transport corridors that are needed to allow future transport schemes to be implemented, the main one being the Winchester Road Extension to complete the Cannock eastern primary route from Pye Green to Churchbridge.*

Green Belt

- 5.38 A substantial part of the District, 60%, is within the designated Green Belt, much of which shares a common boundary with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in the northern half of the District. Faced with increasing pressure for development, the Green Belt plays a fundamental role in maintaining the character of the District.
- 5.39 The LDF, in accordance with the RSS, will seek to protect this important environment from inappropriate development, in order to prevent urban sprawl and coalescence with other neighbouring settlements and to maintain its openness.

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.40 A major part of the District's attraction is the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which attracts 1.5 million visitors per year. The Local Development Framework will seek to conserve, enhance and protect this important environment from development likely to cause harm to the natural beauty of the area. In particular, it will support a co-ordinated and comprehensive planning and management structure for the AONB in accordance with the statutory Management Plan, 2004, prepared by the five partner authorities of Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Stafford Councils.

Forest of Mercia

- 5.41 The Regional Spatial Strategy gives support for the continuing development of the Forest of Mercia. (RSS - Policy QE8).
- 5.42 The Forest of Mercia was one of 12 Community Forests established in 1990, covering nearly 24,000 ha, including the partner authority areas of Cannock Chase, Lichfield and South Staffordshire District Councils, Staffordshire County Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. Other partners include the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission. Funding was originally committed until 2005 when the Countryside Agency's financial support ends. A number of options have been assessed to secure the continuation of the initiative. As a result, this Council has agreed to provide funding until March 2006, but not beyond. The Countryside Agency will therefore need to review the options for the continued operation of the Forest of Mercia. In the event that the Council's desire that the Forest of Mercia Community Forest Partnership can be continued post 2006, the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework will provide appropriate policy support.

Green Space Network

- 5.43 The previous Cannock Chase Local Plan introduced a network of Green Spaces throughout the built-up areas of the District, considered to be of amenity, recreational and ecological value and protected from prejudicial development. The LDF will seek to extend this network.

Questions

- Do you think the Council has got the spatial strategy broadly correct for the purpose of steering future development of the District, town centres, housing, employment, transport, Green Belt, Cannock Chase AONB, Forest of Mercia and Green Space Network issues?
- If not, what issues should be included and why?

6. ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 6.1 The Preferred Options version of the Core Strategy will contain detailed Core Policies and will form the heart of the Cannock Chase Local Development framework. These will seek to provide a broad context on which to implement both the LDF vision and the Spatial Strategy for the District detailed in section 5.
- 6.2 However, prior to this stage being reached, it is important that options are developed through the Sustainability Appraisal and full community engagement. This will also help to establish a clear audit trail as to how the plan has been developed throughout the process.
- 6.3 The Core Strategy Issues and Options identified below relate to strategic issues as well as allowing the broad locations for new housing and employment to be identified. As such they will inform both the progress of the Core Strategy to its ultimate adoption, together with the preparation of the site specific Land Use Allocations DPD.
- 6.4 While the Issues and Options identified for consultation do not represent all possible scenarios, they have emerged from the work carried out to date. The next stage is therefore to obtain the views of the community and stakeholders and decide whether any other options or combination of options should be considered. This could include proposals for alternative development sites that will help to meet the needs and requirements identified now. Response sheets on the issues and options presented here are provided at the end of this document.

ISSUE 1 - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Proposed scope and content

Overarching Core Policy establishing the LDF's commitment to the principles of sustainable development and the Council's intention to promote a sustainable pattern of development with the District.

The policy will set out the main criteria that will be used to assess whether a proposal would contribute to delivering sustainable development. This will include the need to:

- Make the most efficient and effective use of land and buildings giving priority to the use of developable brownfield land.*
- Bring forward sufficient land of suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, industry, retail, commerce, leisure and recreation and other uses.*
- Conserve or enhance natural resources and environmental assets and minimise all forms of pollution.*
- Promote development which contributes to the economic and social well being of the area, supports local communities and improve their access to*

affordable housing, employment, health, education, and leisure services and facilities.

- *Reduce the need to travel and increase opportunities to access facilities and services by public transport, cycling and walking.*
- *Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside and the local distinctiveness of the town and rural settlements.*
- *Ensure high quality development through good and inclusive design, creating places which are attractive, accessible and safe for all.*
- *Make provision for essential infrastructure and services.*
- *Promote the need to use renewable energy or recycled materials in new construction.*
- *Demonstrate that the effects of climate change have been taken into account in new development.*

Sustainable Development

6.5 A universally accepted definition of sustainable development from 1987 is “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable development has now become established as a key theme of national, regional and local development plan making. The Government places great emphasis on planning authorities taking a positive approach to planning based on the aims of sustainable development and the achievement of sustainable development objectives. It is linked to quality of life issues such as access to jobs, living in a quality environment, good housing, facilities and services. It is a theme that will therefore underpin every part of the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework. The principles of sustainable development are detailed in 3.8.

Options

6.6 PPS1 makes clear that sustainable development is at the heart of the development plan system. The preparation of the Core Strategy therefore has to be in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, *as detailed in PPS1 and PPS7. However, various reports on climate change have been published during the preparation of this document, including the Stern Report in November 2006. Decisions will therefore need to be made on what degree of change will need to be incorporated when authorising new development. For instance it may be reasonable to require new housing and commercial developments to generate 10% of their energy needs from renewable sources. It terms of the use of building materials, it may desirable that certain targets are set for the use of recycled materials in new developments.*

Questions

- Do you consider that the wording is strong enough to steer future development within the District?

- Do you consider that sustainability should be at the centre of the Local Development Framework?

ISSUE 2 - SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Proposed scope and content

This Core Policy will provide the basis for promoting the development of a sustainable environment. This will seek to ensure that new development proposals will:

- *Have regard for the emerging national climate change agenda.*
- *Accord with the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, in order to minimise the risk of flooding;*
- *Avoid harming the setting of the area;*
- Conserve or enhance landscape character;
- Conserve or enhance the best of the built and natural environments, particularly interests of acknowledged importance and their settings;
- Safeguard and promote biodiversity;
- Not give rise to harmful levels of pollution to land, air or water (surface or ground);

Sustainable environment

6.7 The Cannock Chase Community Strategy seeks a sustainable environment. It includes the following sub-themes:-

- Conservation and improvement of the man made heritage;
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- Creation of new buildings, spaces and landscapes in urban areas that improve the environment and do not contribute to traffic congestion;
- Minimise the pollution of air, water and land;
- Increase the amount of waste recycling, whilst consuming resources wisely;
- Provide opportunities for people to participate in the conservation and improvement of the environment through practical action and education;
- Continue to balance the needs of the visitor, local community and the environment in the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6.8 The LDF can contribute to these aims by seeking to control the impact of development on landscape, buildings and wildlife. Further advice is detailed in the Protocol for Validation of Planning Applications background document.

Options

6.9 PPS1 makes clear that sustainable development is at the heart of the development plan system. The preparation of a Core Strategy that is not in accordance with the principles of a sustainable environment is not an option. *It is not possible for a sustainable environment to show no regard for the effects of*

climate change and difficult choices will need to be made. Some of these are outlined in Issue 1 concerning options for the use of renewable energy and recycled materials in new development. The impact of strategic flood risk assessments will also influence the location of future development.

Questions

- Is the wording adequate for protecting the environment, improving air and water quality, preventing pollution and promoting renewable energy?
- If not, what issues need to be addressed and why?

ISSUE 3 - SUSTAINABLE LIVING

This Core Policy will seek to ensure that new development will:

- Recognise the need to avoid causing unacceptable harm to the amenity of adjoining land users and the locality;
- Not result in levels of traffic to and from the site attaining an environmentally unacceptable level;
- Make adequate provision for security and the prevention of crime and disorder;
- Actively seek to promote development that minimises the risk of and fear of crime, through its layout, scale and design;

Sustainable living

- 6.10 Urban and rural areas have the potential to contribute to sustainable development by providing a high quality of life. In order to do so, they need to provide attractive, safe, secure and liveable environments for the whole community. The above objective is complemented by the Cannock Chase Sustainable Community Strategy, which seeks to secure attractive, safe and sustainable town centres as well as being one of the broad themes of the Local Development Documents.

Options

- 6.11 None. PPS1 makes clear that sustainable development is at the heart of the development plan system. The preparation of a Core Strategy that is not in accordance with the principles of sustainable living is not an option.

Questions

- Do you consider that all the right issues have been identified in Issue 3?
- If not, what issues should be included?

ISSUE 4 - SEQUENTIAL APPROACH TO SITE SELECTION

Proposed scope and content:

The policy will set out the main criteria that will be used to assess whether a housing, employment, retail and town centre development proposal would comply with prevailing national, regional and strategic policy on the need, to follow a sequential approach to site selection and development.

In particular, town centre development proposals, would need to:

- *Demonstrate that a thorough assessment of options has been carried out.*
- *Only consider alternative sites where no suitable sites or buildings for conversion were or likely to become available.*
- *Only consider such alternative locations firstly at edge of centre locations, followed by out-of-centre sites.*

Residential development would need to give priority:

- *To developable brownfield land and buildings within urban areas identified in the urban capacity study,*
- *Followed by urban extensions,*
- *and finally by new development based on public transport nodes.*

Sequential approach

- 6.12 The need to follow a sequential approach for new housing, employment and retailing/town centre related development, has been established in Government policy for several years. The distribution of development, particularly that which attracts a lot of people, can play an important role in sustainability by helping to reduce the need to travel, distances travelled and congestion, by promoting more sustainable transport choices. The application of a sequential approach to the location of development is therefore essential in making existing urban areas more sustainable. This approach reflects PPS3, Housing; PPS6, Planning for Town Centres and PPG13, Transport.

Options

- 6.13 The selection of sites for development following a sequential approach is set out in Government policy, *however this is not to say that it needs to be applied on the same basis throughout the District. Rugeley and Hednesford town centres are not as large as Cannock and may warrant greater protection.*

Questions

- Do you agree with the general approach taken in Issue 4, in which sites are selected for development in sequence, e.g. retail development should be

located in town centres first before edge-of-town or out-of-town sites are considered, and new housing should be built on previously developed land before greenfield sites are considered?

- Should previously developed land outside urban areas also be considered for development?

ISSUE 5 - HOUSING

Proposed scope and content

Land for new housing:

The Core Policy will:

- *Make provision for sufficient land for new housing development for the period up to 2026, to comply with the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy – Partial Revision. In the short term this will focus on providing a 5 year supply of allocated sites and a 10 year potential supply, based on the saved Structure Plan proportions up to 2011 and probably beyond.*
- *Ensure that for the period 2011- 2026, the amount of land allocated for new housing will be provided to comply with the outcome of the Regional Spatial Strategy- Partial Revision and will be based on meeting local needs and discouraging decentralisation.*
- Allocate sites based on the principles of sustainable development which encourage access by public transport, walking and cycling to employment, education, health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services.
- Release sites on a phased basis in order to control the speed of development over the plan period, in which housing supply will be based on annual rates of provision and figures should be seen as maximum levels.

Developable brownfield land:

- *Establish a target for the amount of new housing to be built on previously developed land.*
- *Seek to make the most efficient use of land.*
- *Ensure that* sustainable windfall land development will be consistent with the principles of sustainable development and not conflict with Green Belt, AONB, Green Space Network, ecological or other interests of acknowledged importance within the Local Development Framework.

Affordable Housing:

To meet local housing needs, this Core Policy will outline the Council's overall approach to planning for a well integrated mix of new housing in terms of dwelling size, house type, tenure and affordability. It will:

- *Seek the provision of an appropriate mix of new housing in terms of dwelling size, house type and affordability across the District over the plan period.*
- *Indicate the amount, size and type of affordable housing required within the District.*
- *Set the proportion of affordable housing to be sought on qualifying sites.*
- *Set the site size threshold for qualifying sites within both urban and rural areas.*

Density:

To meet the RSS housing targets, new housing development will need to make the most efficient use of land. This may involve new housing being built to higher densities in accordance with prevailing Government planning policy, particularly in town centres or at sites located at public transport nodes.

Housing

- 6.14 The framework for the provision of new housing land in the District is the Regional Spatial Strategy, adopted in September 2004, *including the Partial Revision*. As stated above, this will focus on the provision of a 5 year land supply of allocated sites and a 10 year potential supply and is also dependent on the completion of the partial review of the RSS, *now anticipated in 2008*.
- 6.15 Beyond 2011, as indicated in Issue 5 and the Spatial Strategy – Housing, housing figures will be determined by the Partial Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Effective monitoring will be a key part of the process. Housing supply will be based on annual rates of provision and should be seen as maximum levels. Consultations on the RSS – *Phase Two Revision Options* document, *were carried out between 8th January – 5th March 2007*. Dependent on the outcome of the RSS Partial Revision, it may be necessary to conduct an early review or partial review of the Core Strategy. Cross-boundary working with other local authorities is likely to be involved in this new approach to housing provision, *in accordance with PPS3*.
- 6.16 *The RSS - Phase Two Revision Options document details three levels of housing growth (gross) for the Region for the period 2001 – 2026. Option 1 is based on a continuation of RSS policies of supporting urban and rural renaissance, Option 2 is based on the Strategic Authority advice and Option 3 reflects the high levels of demand set out in the Government Household projection, 2003. Option 4 is based on a continuation of existing RSS based on existing Structure Plan distribution within Staffordshire. At a District level this translate to the requirements detailed below. An update of the Urban Capacity Study has been carried out as part of this process.*

New Land Requirements to 2026
(based on data at 1st April 2006, but with estimated Urban Capacity at 31st December 2006)

	Option 1	Options 2 & 3	Option 4
Maximum Provision 2001 – 2026:	6000* (240dpa)	7000* (280dpa)	8542** (342dpa)
Less completions, commitments and revised Urban Capacity to 2026: -6541			
Residual provision to find 2006 – 2026:	-541	459	2001

* based on West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase 2 Revision Spatial Options, 8th January – 5th March 2007, and corresponding housing trajectories in the Core Strategy.

** based on continuation of West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, September 2004.

6.17 This represents work in progress and will change as the Partial Revision of the RSS progresses *up to its anticipated adoption in 2009*. Prior to the publication of the RSS, the basis for the provision of housing within the District had been the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan, 1996-2011. This specified that the housing land requirement for the District for this period was the construction of 7,300 dwellings, including 500 in the Rugeley Eastern Regeneration Zone.

6.18 In promoting a more sustainable pattern of development, the Government is committed to making the best use of land within urban areas. There are a number of strands to this approach, set out in *PPS3*, which dictate how the development plan will go about identifying, allocating and releasing land for housing development.

6.19 The Council-commissioned Housing Needs Survey, 2003, recommended that *130* new affordable housing units should be provided each year in the District in order to meet local housing needs. Currently the annual delivery of newly built affordable housing varies each year but at present does not exceed an average of 50 units. New developments exceeding 25 units are normally expected to provide at least 25% of the development for affordable housing needs, subject to negotiations on each individual proposal. One of the aims of the Council's Housing Strategy is to develop a range of new initiatives, policies and procedures, in order to increase the range of housing options in the District and encourage innovation in the provision of affordable housing, through partnerships based on knowledge of supply and demand.

Options

Land for New Housing

6.20 Broad location suggestions are included in the Spatial Options chapter.

Developable Brownfield Land

- 6.21 In making provision for housing, the Government expects local authorities to maximise the re-use of *developable* brownfield land and the conversion of existing buildings. National and regional brownfield targets have been set. Within this context, PPG3 asks individual local authorities to adopt their own recycling targets. In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, a target of 55% is considered achievable and is included in the Structure Plan May 2002. To achieve this, and to provide guidance for Development Plans, the Explanatory Memorandum sets out indicative targets for each District. For Cannock Chase, the guidance figure is 45%.
- 6.22 In recent years, the proportion of new housing being built in the District on brownfield land has been high. Some 65% of all dwellings developed since 1996 have been on brownfield sites. However, at April 2005, 63% of the committed land supply (including sites under construction) was based on brownfield land. It may be difficult to sustain such a high rate of completions on brownfield sites over the long term.
- 6.23 Under the new Development Plan system, the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework has to be in accordance with the RSS, June 2004. As such for the period 2001-2011, the RSS contains a target for housing development on previously developed land in Staffordshire of 66%. For the period 2011-2021, the West Midlands Regional Assembly is carrying out further work on appropriate targets.
- 6.24 Taking the above into account and the associated difficulties in maintaining high rates of completions, would the realistic target for development on previously developed land within the District be:-
- Option A: 45% based on the Structure Plan target for the District;
Option B: 55% based on the Structure Plan target for Staffordshire; or
Option C: 66% based on the RSS target for Staffordshire.

Affordable Housing

- 6.25 The Government's policy on planning and affordable housing is set out in detail in *PPS3 and its policy statement, Delivering Affordable housing Policy Statement, 2006. Within this, Local Planning Authorities are advised to set targets for the amount of affordable housing to be provided, in accordance with the Government's revised definition of affordable housing, which includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Local authorities also need to reflect an assessment of the likely economic viability of housing land.*
- 6.26 *The Council produced a draft Housing Choices Supplementary Planning Document for consultation in 2007, which includes consideration of affordable housing issues. Adoption of the final version is envisaged during 2007. In particular, it establishes the short term threshold and percentage of affordable*

housing units to be sought on development sites. Applying the standards to developments of 15 or more residential units, the affordable percentage requirement for new developments would be 36%. This is considered to form an appropriate basis for delivery of affordable units using the PPS3 definition for the short term up to 2008. An update of housing need and further work on overall housing allocation are likely to require the formula to be revised for the period beyond 2008.

- 6.27 In July 2003, 'Outside Research and Development' carried out a new Housing Needs Survey on behalf of the Council. In July 2005, the Council's Social Inclusion and Housing Select Committee reviewed the Council's approach to the provision of affordable housing. The Select Committee's recommendations propose requiring affordable housing to be provided in line with evidence of needs that is above 30% of new dwellings. The Select Committee suggested a figure of 35%. It was also proposed to reduce the threshold for providing affordable housing down from 25 dwelling sites to 15 and to require a local connection (in terms of residence or employment) for those occupying affordable housing.
- 6.28 The majority of affordable housing which has been completed in the District over the period 1991-2005, has been mainstream development by housing associations, in partnership with the District Council. In total, some 704 social housing units have been built at an average of 54 dwellings per annum, 16% of all dwellings completed during the period. This falls short of the 35% target identified by Select Committee.

Options

PPS3 specifies that residential developments in excess of 15 units should provide for at least 36% of affordable housing.

Option A – Should PPS3 be used a minimum standard for the provision of affordable housing?

Option B – Do the characteristics of the District in having above average levels of deprivation require that a higher level of affordable housing provision be sought above 36%?

Density

- 6.29 *Government Policy detailed in PPS3 is for local authorities to make the most efficient use of land. In the past build rates had been on average 25 dwellings per hectare, but have been as low as 20 dwellings per hectare. Local authorities are therefore required to have regard to housing density policies identified in the RSS, as well as developing their own housing density policies based on six defined criteria. Until local density policies have been defined, 30 dwellings per hectare is identified as a national indicative minimum.*

Options

- 6.30 While increased density may result in less land being needed for new development, it may lead to accusations of town cramming. Should density for new housing developments be set at:-

Option A – 30 dwellings per hectare

Option B – 40 dwellings per hectare

Option C – 50 dwellings per hectare

Questions

- New housing beyond 2011 – should the District housing allocation be split between Cannock(*including Hednesford and Heath Hayes*), Rugeley *and Brereton and Norton canes* on the basis of population ratios?
- Should the Council identify potential housing sites now for the period 2011 – 2021?
- Should any provision be made for rural housing and if so at what locations?
- Should saved Local Plan housing allocations that have not been developed, not received planning consent, or not had development briefs prepared, be de-allocated?

ISSUE 6 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Scope and Content

This Core Policy will aim to provide and maintain a sufficient range and choice of readily available employment sites, in terms of their quality, size and location, in accordance with the RSS, for the period up to 2026.

It will seek to promote the growth and diversification of the local economy and the creation of a wider range of local employment opportunities in a sustainable way. It will establish the priorities for economic development including the need to:

- *Encourage inward investment and new enterprise.*
- *Support the growth of existing businesses.*
- *Support the development of schemes which can act as a catalyst for future economic development.*
- *Promote the continued regeneration of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford town centres.*
- *Develop an employment land portfolio based on a suitable range and choice of sites.*

- *Improve accessibility to jobs and services through education, training, improved public transport and ICT infrastructure.*
- *Encourage allocations* based on the principles of sustainable development, which encourage access by public transport, walking and cycling to areas of employment and sustainable freight distribution.
- Take into account the potential impact on air quality, possible increases in air pollution and *climate change*.
- Secure environmental improvements of existing industrial estates through partnerships.
- *Encourage* town centre developments including retail, commercial, public offices, entertainment and leisure, educational establishments and hospitals, which would attract a significant number of trips, within the town centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford.
- *Maintain the vitality and viability of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford town centres and the Hawks Green district centre and neighbourhood shopping facilities.*

Economic Development

- 6.31 The RSS (Policy PA6) requires local authorities to provide a range and choice of readily available employment sites in accordance with a hierarchy of sites, i.e., first tier sites/locations of Regional significance and second tier, locally-significant sites. In the light of existing major site commitments already identified in the saved Local Plan, it is unlikely that any first tier sites will be allocated. These include sites of 25-50 ha and above, including Regional Investment Sites (RIS), Major Investment Sites (MIS) or Regional Logistics Sites (RLS). The future employment needs of the District are identified in the Site Allocations DPD.
- 6.32 *As stated in the Spatial Strategy, the approach to employment land taken in the RSS Phase 2 Partial Revision, is to identify a 5 year reservoir of readily available land to roll forward and to be maintained throughout the period 2001-2026, together with a land bank of other sites with development constraints which could be brought forward to top-up readily available supply.*
- 6.33 *The RSS indicates a requirement of between 3.4 ha and 3.8 ha per year. However, in view of the status of Cannock and Rugeley as local regeneration areas, the recent uptake in employment land and the sustainability of providing local jobs, the Council consider that a more realistic requirement would be 6 – 8 ha per year.*
- 6.34 The opening of the M6 Toll in 2003 has improved the accessibility and attractiveness of sites along this corridor and in particular at the Kingswood Lakeside Employment Park, Cannock. This is likely to influence the allocation of future employment sites in the south of the District.

Options

- 6.35 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan (1996-2011) makes

provision for 80 hectares of new employment land to be developed in Cannock Chase District. Most of this provision (72.7 hectares; 90.1%) is either built or committed and the level of additional provision required to meet the Structure Plan allocation is relatively small, at 7.3 hectares.

The preparation of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document will therefore determine what further land allocations are required. These are likely to be relatively modest and will be aimed at complementing the current portfolio of sites.

The partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for 2011-26 will contain the County and District level allocations of new employment land, although the outputs are not expected until 2006.

6.36 In the light of the above, should the outstanding allocation of employment land until 2011 be:-

Option A: Evenly distributed through the District?

Option B: Concentrated at Cannock and Rugeley?

Option C: Restricted to 'brownfield' sites?

Questions

- Should potential future employment sites for the period 2011-26 be identified now or left until the results of the partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy have been published?
- If yes, what potential sites can be identified?
- Are there any particular gaps within the current portfolio of employment land in terms of size, type, location and availability of sites, which the LDF should seek to address?
- Are there any specific sites, including those allocated for other uses, that could be considered for employment use? If so, where are they located and what benefits do they offer?
- Should the opening of the M6 Toll in late 2003, justify the allocation of additional employment land on this corridor, above and beyond that already identified in the saved Local Plan, including the deletion of existing areas of Green Belt? Would this be a more sustainable option than seeking sites elsewhere in the District or should the M6 Toll be seen as a corridor of movement rather than growth, as originally envisaged?
- Should the LDF seek to protect existing good quality employment sites from loss to other competing uses, e.g. retail or roadside facilities?

- Should these 'key' employment sites be identified and defined on the Proposals Map?
- Should the LDF be more specific in stating the range of employment uses appropriate on allocated sites?
- Should undeveloped sites that are allocated in the existing Local Plan be deallocated and/or reallocated for an alternative use?

ISSUE 7 - SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Proposed Scope and Content

This Core Policy will set out a sustainable transport strategy for the District that will:

- Incorporate the principles of sustainable transport *as detailed* in the policies of the Regional Transport Strategy/RSS, *and* the Local Transport Plan.
- *Promote a pattern and scale of development which will help to* minimise the need to travel, *reduce the length of journeys* and provide attractive and realistic alternatives to the car, including access by public transport, walking and cycling, *as well as reducing vehicle emissions;*
- Meet the needs of people with disabilities, including the provision of adequate accessibility for vehicles, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists *as well as addressing the wider issues of social inclusion created through inadequate transport;*
- Meet travel demands in safe and energy efficient ways;
- *Provide the context for setting* maximum car parking levels that will encourage walking, cycling and public transport and discourage use of the private car;
- *Involve the submission of a* Green Travel Plan and Transport Assessment as part of planning proposals for development likely to have significant transport implications.
- *Promote the use of* planning obligations to provide funding towards the upgrade of bus and rail station infrastructure and services at Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford, bus quality partnership schemes, and walking and cycling initiatives.
- *Support* sustainable freight distribution proposals/partnerships, including road/rail interchange schemes, together with the protection of land and former rail lines from prejudicial development, needed for such proposals.

- *Safeguard land required for future road, rail and water based transport schemes.*

Sustainable Transport

- 6.37 An efficient transport system is needed to support a strong and prosperous economy and is crucial to the economic and social prosperity of the District. However, road congestion is damaging the environment, economy and our health. It is now realised that the environmental and financial consequences of attempting to cater for unrestricted traffic growth on a ‘predict and provide’ basis, is no longer acceptable. With this recognition, it is now necessary to manage demand and move towards more sustainable transport policies. The social and economic needs of the District’s population and commerce must be met within the overall principles of environmental sustainability, in a way which accords with the objectives of minimising the need to travel.
- 6.38 The provision of a transport system which is accessible, efficient and safe, can contribute to sustainable living by reducing pollution and achieving better access to development and facilities and can support the economy by reducing congestion.
- 6.39 The Community Strategy, ‘Creating Change’- 2004/5 Action Plan seeks to develop a Sustainable Travel Plan, including the development of targets for reducing single occupancy journeys to work and the promotion of alternative modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking.
- 6.40 Staffordshire County Council commenced work in 2004 on the second Local Transport Plan 2006-11. Close working will be required to ensure consistency between local development documents and the Local Transport Plan.
- 6.41 Further guidance on maximum car parking standards, travel plans and developer contributions towards sustainable transport, is given in the Supplementary Planning Document, April 2005.
- 6.42 *It has been accepted for the last decade that new road construction cannot be justified to meet demand, on a ‘predict and provide basis.’ However road schemes may be justified where it can be demonstrated that they bring environmental benefits and where the Transport Authority have sought such protection. Such schemes include the Winchester Road Extension. Other protection schemes may include land required to allow former or disused rail infrastructure to be reinstated, particularly for rail freight. In addition, there is also a long standing proposal to reinstate the Hatherton Branch Canal in the south of the District, which may involve a number of route options. Detailed alignments will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD and Proposals Map.*

Options

- 6.43 The Local Plan 1997, contained a transport strategy comprising five strands, based on road and rail development which have now been largely achieved.

While the major decisions on transport infrastructure be in the hands of the Government and Staffordshire County Council, the Council still has a significant impact on transport through the allocation of land for development, the control and management of car parks, bus stations and taxi ranks, developer contributions towards transport, concessionary fares and town centre management.

6.44 On the assumption that the Core Strategy will need to incorporate a new transport strategy, should this be based on:-

Option A – restricting new development locations to sites having access to good public transport.

Option B – locating development with easy access to the road network.

Questions

- Are there any criteria missing from the wording that should be included?
- What could the LDF be doing to make alternatives to the car, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport, more attractive and realistic?
- What are the road, rail or canal related projects that need to be identified and promoted in the Local Development Framework?
- Should minimum criteria for the provision of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and services, be specified for all new large housing and employment developments likely to generate significant transport flows?
- Should the Council be encouraging employment uses that currently rely solely on the road network, to consider using existing and proposed rail freight terminals within the District?
- Should heavy goods vehicle movements be limited to defined routes for access to town centres and employment sites by means of freight quality partnerships?

ISSUE 8 - QUALITY DESIGN

Proposed scope and content

This overarching Core Policy will aim to raise the standards and quality of the built environment, in the interests of sustainable, economic, social and environmental objectives. Development will need to:

- *be visually attractive through* a high standard of architectural design, *use of materials and landscaping;*

- complement and respect neighbouring development and the character of the locality and/or landscape;
- *be sustainable, durable and adaptable to changing circumstances, addressing considerations such as climate change, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, sustainable construction and drainage (SUDS).*
- take into account flood risk measures, *including the findings of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;*
- minimises the consumption of water;
- prevents the creation of pollution and waste;
- reflect biodiversity interests;
- respect and *be* sympathetic to features of historic, archaeological and cultural value;
- *be safe, secure and accessible to all, creating places which are well connected, easy to get to and move through and not reliant by access by car;*
- *avoid causing harm to the architectural integrity of buildings or the erosion of surrounding open space (in the case of extensions or alterations to existing buildings).*

Quality Design

- 6.45 Good design is a key element in producing attractive, high quality, sustainable places in which people want to live, work and relax, i.e. the creation of ‘sustainable communities.’ It also has an effect on the social, economic and cultural image of the District.
- 6.46 In 2001 the Staffordshire Residential Design Guide was produced jointly with the other district authorities, including Cannock Chase Council, to secure higher design standards in new residential development. This covers the key principles of urban design and architectural design. Together, these define the overall layout of a place, its scale in terms of building height and massing, its appearance as expressed in details and use of materials, and its landscape, built and green spaces.
- 6.47 More recently a House Extensions Design Guide was produced in 2003. The *Protocol for the Validation of Planning Applications background document, 2006*, partially replaces sections of the Residential Design Guide. The Council will take account of this in determining planning applications.

Options

- 6.48 None. PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, February 2005, places strong emphasis on the need to plan for high-quality and inclusive design in new development, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. The Cannock Chase Local Development Framework will therefore have to accord with this.

Questions

- Are there any other design related matters that should be incorporated in any future policy?
- Should greater emphasis be placed on promoting sustainable designs and energy efficiency for new development?

ISSUE 9 - GREEN BELT

Proposed scope and content

This Core Policy will:

- *Seek to ensure that the Green Belt is protected from inappropriate development in accordance with Government policy and the RSS.*
- *Indicate that only limited types of development and redevelopment will be permitted in the Green Belt, being subject to rigorous planning policy considerations.*
- *Not propose any significant changes to the Green Belt boundary.*
- *Consider minor alterations to the Green Belt to take account of changing circumstances.*

Green Belt

- 6.49 Approximately 60% of Cannock Chase District is situated within the southern Staffordshire portion of the West Midlands Green Belt. Faced with increasing pressure from development, the Green Belt plays a fundamental role in maintaining the character of the District.
- 6.50 The saved Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan, 1996-2011, contains a proposal for “a minor redrawing of the Green Belt boundary to follow the Eastern Bypass south of the A513,” related to the development proposals for the Rugeley Eastern Regeneration Zone. (Policy H1, Housing Provision).
- 6.51 The saved Local Plan, 1997, contains three ‘safeguarded sites’, which were removed from the Green Belt in order to accommodate potential development needs beyond 2001. As a result there are unlikely to be further major development areas removed from the Green Belt to accommodate development in the period to 2011. Government planning policy advice was also that any changes to the Green Belt boundary made at that time should not be confined to one plan period but should roll forward into the next plan period, in this case the new Local Development Framework. Collectively, the three areas removed from Green Belt in 1997 for development beyond the plan period, the Government’s move to increase housing densities, plus the anticipated lower housing targets for the District post 2011, arising from the partial review of the RSS, may remove the need for any further large incursions into the Green Belt for housing development. Similarly for employment land, the saved Structure Plan notes

that the development of the Towers Business Park, Rugeley, will avoid the need for major Green Belt incursions or harm to the AONB, while to the south, the 36ha Kingswood Lakeside Employment Park development will provide a continuing supply of serviced employment land, related to the economic upturn created along the M6Toll corridor.

Options

6.52 A significant proportion (approximately 60%) of Cannock Chase District is situated within the Southern Staffordshire part of the approved West Midlands Green Belt. Faced with increased pressure for development, the Green Belt plays a fundamental role in maintaining the character of the District. The Council has protected the Green Belt in accordance with the policies set out in the Local Plan.

6.53 In the light of this and existing Government and RSS policy should future Green Belt policy:-

Option A – Resist any form of new development regardless of the circumstances?

Option B – Be more receptive to boundary amendments in existing transport corridors such as the M6 Toll related to future employment opportunities?

Option C – Maintain strict compliance with prevailing guidance from the Government and the RSS?

Questions

- Are there any other issues that need to be included?
- Are there any exceptional circumstances where the Green Belt boundaries should be amended as part of the new Local Development Framework, including the identification of new safeguarded areas for possible development beyond 2011? If so, what is the justification for any changes and at which sites?
- Are the issues and options adequate for protecting the Green Belt?

ISSUE 10 - CANNOCK CHASE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Proposed scope and content

This Core Policy will:

- *seek to ensure that the greatest possible protection is given to Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from inappropriate development;*

- *have due regard to the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2004 and its duty under S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;*
- *Ensure that only limited types of development and redevelopment are permitted in the AONB.*

Cannock Chase AONB

- 6.54 40% of Cannock Chase District lies within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a landscape designation of national importance. Designated in 1958, it is characterised by its high sandstone heathlands and pine plantations fringed by historic parklands and enclosed farmland. Recent years have seen increasing conflict between users of the AONB and conservation interests. Of particular concern has been the increase in proposals for equestrian activity within the Green Belt and the AONB.
- 6.55 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2004, required the preparation of a statutory Management Plan for the AONB, adopted in 2004. It also placed a duty on the partner authorities of Staffordshire CC, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Stafford councils, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB and to increase public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

Options

- 6.56 None. The AONB has to be managed in accordance with a Statutory Management Plan.

Questions

- Are there any other issues that need to be included?
- Is the wording adequate for protecting the Cannock Chase AONB in any future Core Policy?

ISSUE 11 - NATURE CONSERVATION

Proposed scope and content

This strategic policy will establish the Council's commitment to protect, manage and enhance the whole hierarchy of designated sites of nature conservation interest from international to local level, which helps define the area's local character and distinctiveness. The policy will have particular regard to the following main designations:

- *Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);*
- *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);*
- *Local Nature Reserves (LNR);*
- *Sites of Biological Interest (SBI).*

The policy will also make reference to the need to protect species and habitats from the adverse effects of development. In the context of the two SACs, this will be assisted by the findings of an Appropriate Assessment. It will also promote opportunities for habitat creation and enhancements.

Nature Conservation

- 6.57 A wide variety of habitats exist throughout the District, ranging from forest and internationally important heathland areas in the north, to flat agricultural countryside in the south. A number of sites within the District contain internationally and nationally recognised rare and endangered species. The District contains a number of nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), *two* European Union *designated* Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as well as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and local Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs). The need to protect all of the above and other sites of nature conservation interest will be of paramount importance.

Options

- 6.58 None. The Core Strategy needs to include broad policies relating to conserving and enhancing the natural environment of the District in order to conform with the Government objectives for sustainable development and to meet statutory requirements.

Question

- How should the Core Policies protect and enhance sites of nature conservation importance and wildlife habitat corridors and prevent them being adversely affected by potential developments?

ISSUE 12 - PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES & DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Proposed scope and content

This Core Strategy Policy will detail general principles on the use of planning obligations. It will indicate that:

- *Development proposals should contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where this is necessary to make a scheme acceptable in planning terms.*
- *The nature and scope of any planning obligation sought for this purpose will be directly related to proposed developments, their scale and form and their potential impact upon the surrounding area.*
- *Developer Contributions will either be in kind or in the form of a financial contribution. They may also include payment of a commuted sum towards future maintenance and other recurrent expenditure.*
- *Where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, developer contributions may be pooled to allow the infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way.*
- *In addition to the provision of affordable housing, contributions may be necessary for some or all of the following:*
 - Transport infrastructure and access improvements (including highways, footpaths/cycle ways).*
 - Open space, sport and recreation provision.*
 - Education provision.*
 - Community facilities.*
 - Health facilities.*
 - Environment, art and public realm improvements.*
- *The range and level of contributions will be assessed on a comprehensive basis taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and priorities and using standards/formulae for calculating contributions.*

Provision of infrastructure, facilities and developer contributions

- 6.59 Development proposals often give direct rise to a need for new or improved infrastructure or facilities, either on or off site. If these are not provided, permission for the development will usually not be granted.
- 6.60 Such infrastructure and facilities can include:
- Proper servicing of the site, including sewerage and land drainage to an approved standard.
 - Measures to manage increased movement to, from, and into the site.
 - Essential community facilities required as a direct result of a development, such as play space, libraries, fire and educational facilities.
 - Affordable housing.
 - Sustainable Transport initiatives.
- 6.61 The requirements of the policy may be met by one or more of a number of means:
- Direct provision by a developer;
 - Payment of an agreed sum to cover provision by others;
 - Conditions attached to a planning permission;
 - Section 106 planning obligations.

- 6.62 The Council's requirements for developer contributions towards sustainable transport initiatives are detailed in the Parking Standards, Travel Plans and Developer Contributions for Sustainable Transport SPD, 2005.

Options

- 6.63 Developer contributions will need to be in accordance with prevailing Government policy and adopted policy in Supplementary Planning Documents. *However, there may be flexibility in provision at local levels. This may relate to the setting of local standards relating to the provision of open space, sport and recreation. Similarly, for developments that are remote from public transport nodes or access to realistic levels of public transport, it may be necessary to seek higher levels of contributions to improve sustainable alternatives to the car, to make up for any local deficiencies.*

Questions

- Should any future policy include more detail or should this be left for inclusion in the Development Control DPD or other supplementary planning documents?

ISSUE 13 – CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposed scope and content

The Core Strategy policy will aim to secure the development of new or retention/upgrading of existing cultural or community facilities through the District. The protection and provision of community and essential facilities is an important factor to be taken into account. Community facilities are essential elements of sustainable communities and include village halls, local shops, petrol stations, post offices, cemeteries, libraries, banks, play areas, open space, sport and recreation facilities, doctors surgeries, pubs, police stations/police posts, day centres for the very young or elderly and recreation uses. A full range of these facilities cannot be provided in all areas and therefore the facilities available need to cover a number of communities or a range of facilities. The provision of new local facilities in towns and villages is important in terms of sustainability as it can reduce the need to travel by car as well as providing a service to those who do not have access to any transport. Consideration of new community facilities may be necessary to address issues of social exclusion as new community facilities may help to cater for the elderly and young people in order to encourage and enable them to stay in the community.

All communities need access to a range of community facilities and it is considered that a full range of facilities should be provided wherever possible and all community facilities and services should be given a similar level of protection as suggested for rural areas in PPS7.

There are however, difficulties associated with funding of public facilities and it is often commercial factors rather than need, which determine the location of facilities provided by the private sector. Therefore the District Council cannot guarantee that all the facilities required will be provided.

The most appropriate location for these facilities may be within town centres, or within or adjacent to settlements where the greatest concentration of residents or visitors can be served and any impact on the open countryside minimised. However, in some instances, it may be more appropriate to site the facility next to settlements, such as community or village halls.

Culture includes visual arts and music, the performing arts and music, the performing arts, crafts, museums, libraries, theatre, cinema, sport, tourism, the natural and built environment, as well as creative industries such as advertising, architecture, design, publishing, television and radio, film and video, software and computer services and antiques. Cultural energy and creative energy is the mark of an innovative community, helping attract and retain well-qualified people and businesses. It fosters higher inward investment, more partnership working and greater diversity in the workforce.

Question

- *Are there any other types of cultural or community facilities that should be included in Issue 13?*

7. SPATIAL OPTIONS

- 7.1 *The spatial options for future housing and employment development and supporting infrastructure are constrained by a combination of a relationship of existing development to District boundaries and the current Green Belt affecting all three urban areas Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes, Rugeley/Brereton and Norton Canes. The AONB is a major constraint in relation to Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes, Rugeley/Brereton and two of the villages Cannock Wood and Slitting Mill.*
- 7.2 *As assumption is made here that the national policy position requiring protection of AONBs should rule out any major development within the Cannock Chase AONB and also requires sensitive handling of the landscape impact of any development proposed near to the boundary of the AONB.*
- 7.3 *The key issues which will determine the future shape and pattern of land use and development in the District are:-*
- (i) The quantity of new housing to be accommodated.*
 - (ii) The amount of new employment land required.*
 - (iii) The amount of new retail office and commercial leisure development appropriate for the three centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford.*
 - (iv) The standard of provision of open space sport and recreation facilities to be provided.*
 - (v) The infrastructure requirements for new housing, employment, retail and commercial leisure development including roads, education and health facilities.*
 - (vi) The need for protection of the historic built environment particularly in Conservation Areas.*
 - (vii) The need to protect landscape and wildlife habitats including the Cannock Chase AONB.*
 - (viii) The protection of Green Belt.*
 - (ix) Achieving a sustainable pattern of development particularly in relation to maximising the use of previously developed land in appropriate locations.*
- 7.4 *Two options are generated which deal with the overall distribution of new housing employment land, the functioning of town centres and urban green space.*

7.5 Option A – Dispersed balanced development

Principles:

- *Each of the 3 urban areas (i. Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes, ii. Rugeley/Brereton, iii. Norton Canes) meet their own housing needs in proportion to their population size. No further development in the villages of Slitting Mill, Cannock Wood and Prospect Village.*
- *Density of development in the range of 30-40 dwellings per hectare.*
- *Employment land is distributed between the 3 urban areas with the aim of providing new jobs in proportion to population.*
- *Presumption against the loss of existing employment land to housing.*
- *Presumption against the loss of urban green space.*
- *Retail development is concentrated in the town centres and district centres serving the 3 urban areas.*

Up to date Urban Capacity information indicates that the broad implications for Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes are that there would be sufficient capacity to accommodate all the needs arising from RSS Option 1 and a large proportion of RSS Options 2 and 3.(10-11 hectares of new land would be needed). Option 4 would require consideration to be given to substantial urban extensions (45-50 hectares of new land would be needed) on greenfield/Green Belt land in one or more of the following locations:-

- (i) West of Pye Green Road.*
- (ii) South of Lichfield Road A5190.*
- (iii) East of Wimblebury Road/South of Littleworth Road.*

An option outside the District boundary in South Staffordshire District would be land west of Wellington Drive, Longford.

The broad implications for employment in Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes would involve a mixture of brownfield and greenfield development along the A5/M6 Toll corridor. Some of this would be on Green Belt land.

The requirements of Option 1 for Rugeley and Brereton could be met within the Urban Area. Options 2 and 3 would involve relatively small urban extensions of 3-4 hectares, making choices between greenfield/Green Belt sites situated between the edge of the urban area and the boundary of the AONB or considering options outside the administrative boundary of the District in Stafford Borough (greenfield/Green Belt north west of Rugeley either side of the A51 and south west of the new bypass) and/or brownfield land south east of Brereton in Lichfield District which is likely to become surplus to power industry needs. Option 4 would involve larger urban extensions of 13-17 hectares which would be likely to involve consideration being given to most or all of the locations mentioned above.

Employment land options outside Rugeley Town Centre are seriously constrained by administrative boundaries and confined to locations close to the bypass north west and south east of the urban area also in Stafford and Lichfield respectively.

Urban capacity in Norton Canes is very limited. Options 2 and 3 would require less than 1 hectare of new land, Option 4 would require 3-4 hectares. The broad implications for Norton Canes involve development of land south of the village between it and the M6 toll which forms a distinctive barrier/boundary where there are both brownfield and greenfield sites suitable for housing or employment or mixed use development. Development to the north of Norton Canes would result in coalescence of the village with Heath Hayes contrary to this important element of Green Belt policy.

7.6 Option B – Concentrated high density development

Principles:

- Housing development is concentrated in the Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes and Rugeley/Brereton areas. Rugeley meeting its own needs, Cannock/et al meeting the needs of the rest of the District south of the AONB. This reflects the higher comparative demand for the Cannock/et al area and its better access to sustainable transport than areas such as Norton Canes and the 'villages'.*
- Minimum development on greenfield and Green Belt land outside of the urban areas.*
- Aim to achieve stretched targets for development on brownfield land say 75% of all development to be on previously developed sites.*
- Outside of 'special character' areas, housing to be developed at higher densities, say 40 – 50 dwellings per hectare..*
- Within the urban areas there is a presumption in favour of the redevelopment of former employment land for housing purposes in mixed use and lower demand areas, e.g. East Cannock, Bridgtown, Redbrook Lane.*
- Green Space Network land is reviewed for development potential albeit within the requirements of Sport England and the PPS17 strategy.*
- Employment development is concentrated (a) within the 3 town centres, with the aim of significantly increasing the amount of commercial floorspace and jobs in each centre and (b) in locations with significant potential demand including the M6 Toll/A5 corridor; Rugeley Bypass corridor; main feeder routes to the M6 Toll A5 (e.g. Cannock Eastern Bypass; A34); adjacent to public transport nodes.*
- Removing more land from Green Belt in the locationally advantageous M6 Toll/A5 corridor to maximise growth potential.*

Use of more brownfield sites including employment land and some surplus green space within the urban area in Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes, would enable urban land to meet the housing

land requirements of RSS Options 1, 2 and 3. The 4th Option we have examined, would still require some urban extensions in the way described in Spatial Option A.

An expanded town centre would provide some capacity for office employment but more new employment land would need to be allocated in the Green Belt, M6 Toll/A5 corridor.

In Rugeley and Brereton, the housing requirement of RSS Options 1,2 and 3 could be met within the urban areas but Option 4 would need some, but less, urban extension land either in the Green Belt within the District or outside the administrative boundary as described in Spatial Option A.

An expanded town centre would provide more capacity for office employment (subject to their being sufficient demand) but new industrial/warehousing employment land requirements could only be met on land outside the administrative boundaries mostly on brownfield land in Lichfield District.

The implications for Norton Canes is that no further growth would occur for housing or employment within the village.

Questions

- *Two Spatial Options have been identified, namely Option A - Dispersed balanced development and Option B – Concentrated high density development. Do you consider that there are any other options that should be identified?*
- *If so what are they?*
- *Are there any more 'key issues' identified in 7.3 that should be included?*

8. Monitoring and Implementation Framework.

- 8.1 Government policy over a number of years has been that local authorities should as a matter of best practice, publish the results of plan monitoring on a regular basis. The Council has always been proactive on this matter and has now published eight annual monitoring reports since the Cannock Chase Local Plan was adopted in 1997.
- 8.2 Great emphasis is placed by the Government on effective monitoring and it is an integral part of the new development plan preparation process. Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires every local planning authority to submit an annual monitoring report to the Secretary of State detailing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (the three-year programme for the production of the new development plan documents). The Council is also required to detail the degree to which plan policies have been achieved.
- 8.3 Monitoring is an essential part of the development plan making process. It allows present and likely future trends to be established and then compared with existing policies and targets to see if they are serving their intended purpose or need to be updated or deleted.
- 8.4 The AMR will provide information as to whether the policies, targets or milestones within the Core Strategy (and other Development Plan Documents), have been satisfied. In the event that these have not been complied with, reasons will be given - together with actions taken to address the issues concerned.
- 8.5 In March 2005, the Government published Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide. As well as confirming that the Council is required to submit its Annual Monitoring Report by the end of December, it is also required to supply information on a number of core output indicators. These number twenty-two in total and cover such matters as business development, housing, transport, local services, minerals and waste (for minerals and waste planning authorities only), flood protection and water quality, biodiversity and renewable energy.
- 8.6 In future years, Planning Delivery Grant will be based on compliance with these milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme and will become increasingly important as a measure of the Council's performance in production of development plan documents.

Spatial Statistics

Area of Cannock Chase District 7888 h.a.

Urban Areas

<i>Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes</i>	<i>2009 h.a.</i>
<i>Rugeley/Brereton</i>	<i>661 h.a.</i>
<i>Norton Canes</i>	<i>208 h.a.</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i><u>2878 h.a.</u></i>

Villages

<i>Cannock Wood</i>	<i>22 h.a.</i>
<i>Slitting Mill</i>	<i>16 h.a.</i>
<i>Prospect Village</i>	<i>11 h.a.</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i><u>49 h.a.</u></i>

Green Space Network within urban areas 516 h.a.

<u>Industrial Estates/Business Parks</u>	<i>335 h.a.</i>
<u>Norton Canes MSA</u>	<i>10 h.a.</i>

<u>Town Centre</u>	<u>Existing Boundary</u>	<u>Proposed Boundary</u>
<i>Cannock</i>	<i>19 h.a.</i>	<i>43 h.a.</i>
<i>Rugeley</i>	<i>12 h.a.</i>	<i>42 h.a.</i>
<i>Hednesford</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>19 h.a.</i>

Out of Town Retail Parks 25 h.a.

Green Belt 4810 h.a.

AONB 3008 h.a.

Nature Conservation Sites

<i>SSSIs which are also SACs</i>	<i>357 h.a.</i>
<i>SSSIs</i>	<i>132 h.a.</i>
<i>SBIs</i>	<i>544 h.a.</i>
<i>SPESs</i>	<i>22 h.a.</i>

TOTAL: ***1055 ha***

- 36.5% of the district is urban.
- Within the urban areas 18% of the land is in the Green Space Network.
- 61% of the District is Green Belt.
- 38% of the District is within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6% of the District is within designated Special Areas of Conservation or Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 8% of the District has local nature conservation status as Sites of Biological Interest or Sites with Protected Species.

A number of studies have also been carried out to inform the emerging Cannock Chase Local Development Framework. These include the:-

- Housing Needs Survey, July 2003, Outside Research & Development;

The Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey in 2003, which concluded that 130 new affordable housing units (excluding low cost market housing) need to be provided each year in the District in order to meet the local housing needs up until 2008. Based on current trends beyond 2008, this figure of 130 is expected to increase. Therefore, based on the current Housing Needs Survey there will be a total requirement of at least 2600 affordable dwellings up to 2026 (130 x 20 yrs). A new Housing Needs Survey is to be commissioned jointly with neighbouring authorities within the C3 Housing Market Area. This will provide a more up-to-date assessment of housing needs, particularly beyond 2008, together with the Housing Choices SPD, 2007.

- Housing & Employment Land Strategy, April 2005, Cannock Chase Council;

The purpose of the Housing and Employment Land Strategy (HELs) is to provide the framework for the allocation of sites for future development and related planning policies in the LDF.

The HELs Strategy builds on the work already undertaken as part of the preparation of the Replacement Local Plan. It draws on annual monitoring which is undertaken in respect of the saved Local Plan 1997 and the responses to the consultations carried out on the Local Plan Issues Paper and the Urban Capacity Study.

- Town Centres Retail Health Check. March 2004, White Young Green;

Government town centre and retail development policy as detailed in PPS6 and formerly PPG6, requires local authorities to monitor the health of their town centres by collecting information on a number of key indicators in order to provide a measure of the vitality and viability of those centres.

The Council therefore engaged consultants to carry out a Retail Health Check on the town centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford in 2003. The findings of the study were intended to:-

- Inform work on the LDF.*
- Assist in the determination of planning applications for new development proposals.*
- Ensure that the Council's decisions best reflect the needs and aspirations of residents, shoppers, visitors, businesses and commercial interests in the town centres.*
- Provide baseline information for the purposes of future monitoring.*

- Rugeley Town Centre Future Retail Expenditure Study, April 2005, White Young Green;

In 2004, the Council commissioned consultants to undertake a retail capacity assessment of Rugeley. This assessment provides an evaluation of the likely quantum of floorspace that can be supported in Rugeley through to 2016. In addition, this assessment provides a brief overview of shopping patterns in the defined catchment (which is focussed around Rugeley Town Centre).

The aim of this assessment is to provide information that would underpin the LDF strategy adopted for future retail development within Rugeley and how it can best respond to increasing competition from other centres.

In particular, the study provides:

- a detailed assessment and analysis of future trends in retailing in Rugeley;*
- assess the amount of comparison and convenience floorspace 'required' in Rugeley up to 2016; and*
- details the role and functions of Rugeley Town Centre and how this impacts on food and non-food shopping patterns.*

- Assessment of Needs, Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategies, September 2004, Strategic Leisure;

PPG17, 2002, has important implications for the planning of open space, sport and recreation, in that the District Council is required to carry out an open space audit the findings of which will be used to feed into the LDF. PPG17 also contains a presumption against the development of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities, unless an assessment has been carried out which demonstrates that the existing facility is surplus to requirements. It also states that open space standards should be set out at a local level rather than using national standards.

In 2003, the Council agreed to commission consultants to carry out a Playing Pitch Strategy and Open Spaces Assessment in conjunction with the Sports Council to assess current levels of public and private provision

against existing and likely future demand. The results of this will be incorporated in the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework.

The consultants were appointed in 2004 to carry out the study in two parts. The first dealt with the Indoor Facilities/Playing Pitch Strategy and has been completed. The Outdoor Facilities/Green Space Audit was completed in draft form in 2005. Sport England are part funding the playing pitch audit.

The recommendations of the Indoor Facilities Audit include the following items:

- Development of a community accessible swimming pool in Rugeley.*
- Development of a full size, flood lit, synthetic sports pitch, using S106 contributions.*
- Extend the synthetic sports pitch at RLC to full size.*
- A need to invest in health and fitness equipment at the Chase Leisure Centre and improve ancillary*
- Ensuring the community has access to school sports facilities where there is no other provision in the local area.*

The Green Space Strategy, was completed in 2005. This was designed to set local standards of provision based on an assessment of need, demographics, strategic view and an audit of existing provision. It forms the basis for redressing qualitative, quantitative and accessibility deficiencies through the planning process. It acts as guidance for future provision in the planning process and establishes local standards of provision that may influence the development plan.

The main findings of this report are:-

- There are quantitative and access deficiencies in parts of Hednesford Green Heath, Cannock Wood and Norton Canes.*
- Qualitative deficiencies in Hageley(Rugeley), need to increase the rating.*
- All dwellings should be within 0.53 miles of a good quality local major or country park.*
- Hednesford Green Heath and Hednesford South lack any play facilities for children and young people.*
- Provision of play facilities for young people is lacking in a number of wards.*
- All dwellings should be within 0.40 miles of a good quality equipped play area.*
- All dwellings should be within 0.53 miles of a good quality natural/semi-natural greenspace.*

- **Urban Housing Capacity Study 2005, Cannock Chase Council.**

Updated in early 2007 to reflect significant revisions in urban capacity for

housing.

These specific studies supplement the Annual Monitoring Statements produced in relation to the Cannock Chase Local Plan 1997 and the annual land availability monitoring which the Council carries out.

- ***The State of Cannock Chase District Report***

The document is produced by the Council in two volumes. Volume 1 provides an overview of key statistical and factual data for the District including where possible trend analysis. The majority of the data analysed is from official sources, e.g. the Office for National Statistics; other statistical and factual data is secured from reliable sources, e.g. Staffordshire Local Education Authority, the Economic Development Unit and the Planning and Regeneration Service within the Council.

Volume 2 provides a summary of perception data secured from District residents via Citizen's Panel surveys and Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) surveys and where possible trend analysis. This data provides a picture of residents' views of the quality of life within the District.

Population

The District has an estimated population of 92,000 (largeley split by gender). The population has grown by 0.4% between Mid Year 2002 and 2003 Population Estimates which is similar to the population growth across England and Wales. The age profile of the District remains relatively youthful compared to other areas across the West Midlands Region. However, there has been a considerable growth in the older population: between 1993-2003, persons aged 75 years old increased by (+1,600) +37%. This is projected to further increase to 7,100 by 2013, representing an increase of +20%.

The Workforce

The mid 2003 population estimate indicates that:

- *63% (58,100 persons) of the District's population are of working age (females 16-59 years and males 16-64 years). This is the second highest proportion in Staffordshire; Tamworth has marginally higher proportion with 64%. This compares to Staffordshire and England and Wales with 62% and the West Midlands Region 61%.*
- *The labour force in Cannock Chase is predicted to grow to beyond 2016 and then start to decline but be approximately 2,400 greater in 2021 than 2001. This contrasts with the predicted declining labour force for this period in all other parts of Staffordshire, apart from East Staffordshire Borough.*

Deprivation Themes

The District continues to suffer significant levels of disadvantage compared to other Local Authorities (LAs) in Staffordshire, regionally and nationally:

- The District has an annual (April 2004 to March 2005) unemployed proportion of 1.9%. This ranks amongst the highest proportions in Staffordshire. The annual proportion for Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent) is 1.5% for Great Britain is 2.3%.*
- The proportion of youth unemployment in Cannock Chase remains high. Youth unemployment (as a percentage of total unemployment) in March 2005 is +4 percentage points higher in Cannock Chase (34%) than the average for Great Britain (30%). Moreover, pockets of youth unemployment are 40%+; examples include Hednesford South and North and Cannock North Wards.*

From scores contained within the Indices of Deprivation 2004.

- Cannock Chase District is ranked 134th for the average of the ward scores out of 354 local authorities in England. It is the most deprived local authority (LA) in Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent) and ranks within 38% of the most deprived local authorities in England.*
- Lower Super Output Area E01029358, Cannock North Ward, is the most deprived area in the District. Its overall score scores fall within 9% of the most deprived Lower SOAs in England. In addition, it scores particularly highly for Income Deprivation (ranking within the worst 4% in England) and Education, Skills and Training Deprivation ranking within the worst 3% and for Employment Deprivation within the worst decile (10%).*
- 12 Lower SOAs, located within 8 of the District's wards (Cannock North, Etching Hill and the Heath, Hednesford North, Norton Canes, Cannock East, Cannock South, Hagley and Brereton and Ravenhill) rank with the worst quartile in England for overall levels of deprivation. These 12 areas represent 19% of the District's population.*
- From analysing the District's Lower SOA data, in particular those areas ranking within the worst quartile in England the key issues are: Education Skills and Training Deprivation (27 Lower SOAs), Employment Deprivation (26 Lower SOAs), Employment Deprivation (26 Lower SOAs), Health Deprivation and Disability (17 Lower SOAs), Income Deprivation (12 Lower SOAs).*

The District has 3,458 children living in income deprived families; this represents 18% of the population aged under-16 years. Within the District there are 10 Lower SOAs which rank within the worst quartile in England.

Cannock Chase 2,761 older people suffering with income deprivation, this represents 16% of the population aged 60+ years. Within the District, 16% of the population aged 60+ years. Within the District, 16 Lower SOAs rank within the worst quartile

in England for older people with income deprivation.

Health

Improving health remains a priority for the District. The Cannock Chase Beacon Status for Healthy Communities award 2004/5, awarded by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises the good practices adopted through joint agency work between Cannock Chase Primary Care Trust, Cannock Chase Council and other partners and the positive impact this is having upon service delivery and health improvements.

However, life expectancy in general for Cannock Chase residents remains lower, culminating in higher SMRs for all causes. SMRs for 2001/3 (all ages) are +8% higher than the average for England and Wales and represent the third highest ratios across Staffordshire. The District has a history of respiratory disease and coronary heart disease, which are linked to smoking but also the mining activity in past years. The District exhibits the highest Standardised Mortality Ratios (SMRs) for cancer in Staffordshire; male SMRs for lung cancer are particularly high.

Preliminary Discussions with the Primary Care Trust

The Cannock Chase Primary Care Trust Strategic Services Development Plan 2004, takes account of the potential housing growth in the District between 2001-2026, of around 7,000 dwellings in Cannock, Hednesford, Heath Hayes, Rugeley and Brereton and Norton Canes.

The health centre provision now in place in Hednesford, under construction in Rugeley and Norton Canes, additional planned (with planning permission) in Rugeley and proposed (planning application shortly to be submitted in Cannock) is indicated as meeting the identified future needs with some reconstruction of existing space at Heath Hayes, Hednesford Valley and the future use of this 2nd Rugeley multi-practice facility.

If substantial residential development is proposed west of Pye Green Road or in Chadsmoor area, the PCT would wish consideration to be given to allocation of a site for a health centre to combine and add services to existing practices. A preferred site would be on a frequent services bus route.

Crime

The reduction of crime within the District continues to be a high priority. Recent crime statistics for the District indicate a reduction in crime incidents and an improvement in crime detections. Crime incidents per 1,000 population continue to be lower than Staffordshire, the West Midlands Region and England. Moreover, the District has the highest crime detection rates across Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent).

The increase in violent crime is of most concern; between 2001/2 and 2004/5 violent crimes in the District increased by +19%, this reflects the position for the

Staffordshire Force with an increase of +20%. Over this period, domestic violence increased by +70%. Moreover, domestic violence currently represents over a quarter of all violent crime. Increases in non-physical offences that are counted as violent crime have increased; harassment shows an increase of +21% and less serious assault such as common assault, an increase of +19%. Violent crime per 1,000 population for Cannock Chase is 23 compared to Staffordshire with 24, England and Wales is lower with 20 per 1,000 population.

Employment

Since the demise of the coal industry the District's economic base has undergone a significant transformation. Today, the District has a more diverse employment structure, half those employed in the District work in distribution, hotels and restaurants (27%) and public administration, education and health (23%). Cannock Chase remains heavily reliant on manufacturing which represents 20% of total jobs, compared to Great Britain 13%.

There were an estimated 34,900 jobs in the District and 58,100 persons of working age (females 16-59, males 16-64) in 2003. Substantial out commuting to other parts of Staffordshire and the West Midlands conurbation therefore occurs. 2001 Census statistics indicate that 50% of the workforce commutes outside the District for work.

Education and Skills

Whilst the District now has a much more diverse employment base, there are still inherent weaknesses with regard to educational attainment and skill levels which will hinder continued economic growth. In particular the workforce residing within the District are more likely to have lower level qualifications and skills which need to be improved to enable them to compete more effectively for jobs which are being created by expansion within existing businesses or inward investment. When the continued decline in manufacturing is considered, the need to rectify this trend is brought into sharp focus.

There are encouraging signs that positive progress is being achieved in certain areas. For example, GCSE results at grades A-C or equivalent show an improvement via the 2006 results compared to those for previous years. Provisional data for 2006 shows that 50.2% of the District's pupils achieved five or more A*-C passes, compared to 42% in 2004. This compares to a Staffordshire figure of 55.9% in 2006. Whilst these figures indicate that the gap between District and County is being narrowed, this positive trend must be sustained.*

Progress is also being made with regard to increasing the proportion of 17 year olds in full-time education (Year 11's), the proportion locally increased from 65% in 2003/04 to 65.5% in 2004/05.

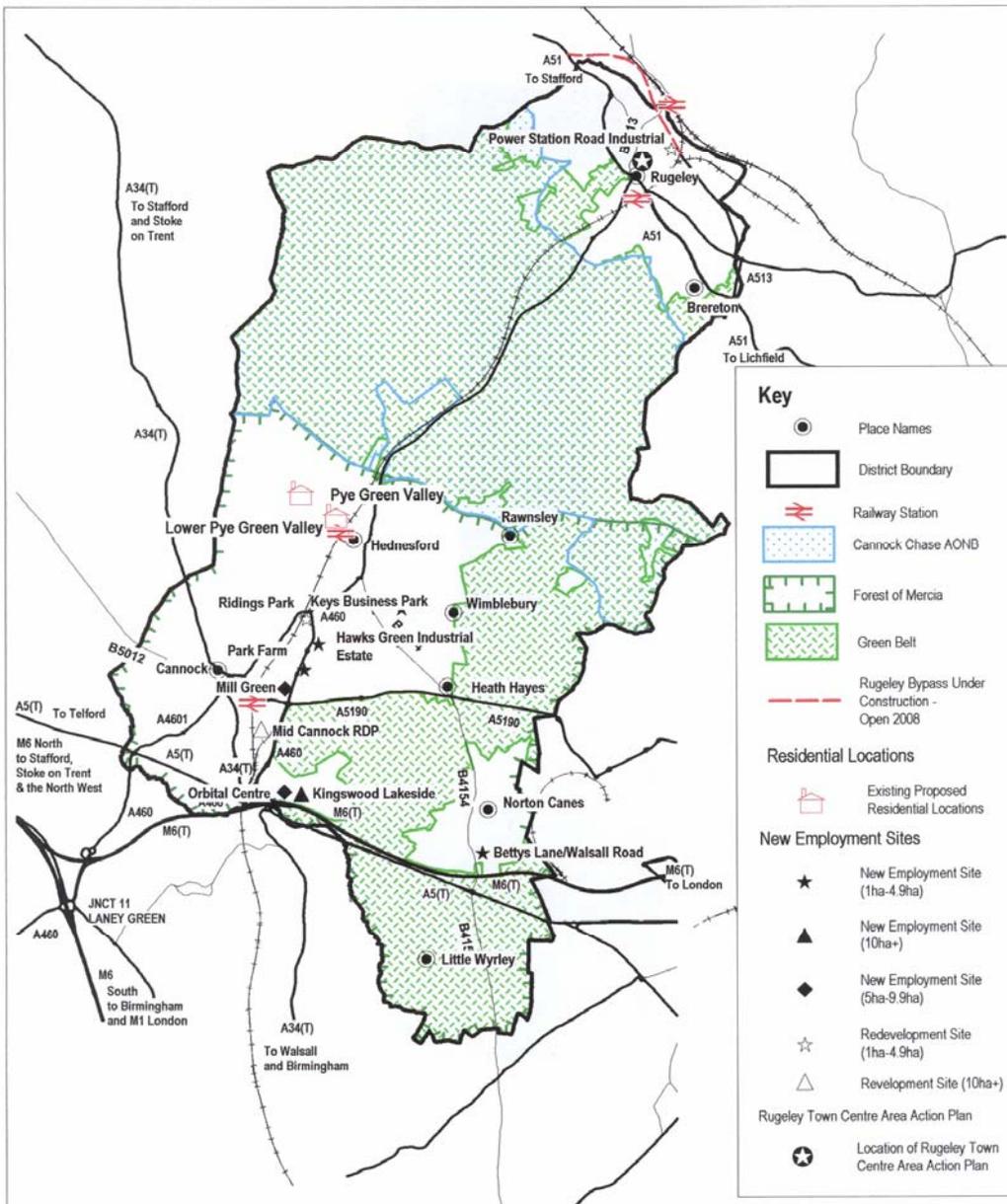
Preliminary Discussion with Education Authority

The County Council as education authority has identified a need for a 4 ha site in Rugeley for a Vocational Centre which is likely to be associated with one of the two secondary schools.

Other education requirements at primary and secondary level are likely to be capable of being met

on existing sites unless the distribution of new housing was heavily concentrated in one new location in the Cannock/Hednesford/Heath Hayes area which may generate a need for an additional primary school.

 <p>CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL Caring for the Community</p>	DISTRICT KEY DIAGRAM		
	DEVELOPMENT PLANS & POLICY UNIT		
	SCALE: 1:80,000	DATE: 21/10/2005	



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A programme of consultation with stakeholders was carried out over a six week period from Monday 27th March to Monday 8th May 2006, in accordance with PPS12, Annex E. In total over 500 letters were sent to stakeholders on the LDF data base inviting comments within this period. 99 copies of the document were sent to key stakeholders identified in PPS12 and a further 38 copies to agents, usually acting on behalf of developers, who had requested a copy. Free copies of the Core Strategy – Issues and Options, were made available to anybody who had requested a copy.

A notice was placed in the Chase Post on Thursday 23rd March 2006, inviting comments during the consultation period. This is circulated as a free newspaper to all households throughout the District as well as being available for sale. A Press Release was also issued to the local newspapers.

The Core Strategy- Issues and options was made available on the Council's web site, including a lead feature on the home page, during the consultation period.

A series of exhibitions was arranged at various public venues as follows.

<i>Rugeley Library</i>	<i>Monday 3rd April – Monday 10th April</i>
<i>Cannock Leisure Centre</i>	<i>Wednesday 12th April – Monday 17th April</i>
<i>Heath Hayes Library</i>	<i>Tuesday 18th April – Monday 24th April</i>
<i>Sainsbury's – Orbital Centre Cannock</i>	<i>Monday 24th April – Monday 1st May</i>
<i>Hednesford Co-op foodstore</i>	<i>Tuesday 2nd May – Monday 8th May</i>

Two evening forums were organised for the benefit of local stakeholders, in which a presentation and exhibitions were given. These were as follows:-

*Monday 10th April 2006 for parish councils;
Tuesday 11th April 2006 for local organisations and community groups.*

A exhibition was also held in the Planning Reception, Civic Centre, Cannock, throughout the consultation period.

Inspection copies of the Core Strategy – Issues and Options were made available at the Civic Centre, Cannock, the Council's Area Offices at Rugeley and Hednesford, and at Cannock, Heath Hayes, Hednesford, Norton Canes, Rugeley and Brereton libraries.

The Next Stages

The Council is required to carry out pre-submission public participation on the Preferred Issues and Options prior to submitting the Development Plan Document to the Secretary of State. The Council considers it important that as many interested parties become involved in the preparation process as possible.

The Council may engage in further discussion with some individuals or organisations where further points of clarification or information are sought.

What happens now?

After the close of the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation period, the Council will prepare the Preferred Options Report for public participation. Following consideration of the representations received, the Council will consider appropriate amendments for the submission Core Strategy DPD. Comments made to the Preferred Options Report will not be carried forward as formal representations on the submitted DPD, but will be subject to a separate consultation process.

Further Information

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. The responses received will be considered in preparing the Preferred Options Report and the subsequent Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Any responses received will be available to the public.

Response Deadline

Please return the completed questionnaire using the enclosed Freepost envelope or return to the Development Plans & Policy Unit, Planning & Regeneration, Civic Centre, P.O Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.

Anyone needing further assistance or information on the Core Strategy and the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework, is advised to contact the Development Plans & Policy Section at the above address or by

Telephone: 01543 462621

Fax: 01543 464512

E-mail: planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Copies of the Core Strategy and all Local Development Framework documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's web site under Planning; Publications at:-

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Further information on the new development plan system is included in the guidance document, 'Creating better places to live – A guide to the planning system in England,' December 2004. This and other relevant guidance can be viewed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's web site:

www.odpm.gov.uk

(select Planning from 'what we do' menu).