



Cabinet Meeting

23 April 2014

Report title	South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document – Issues and Options Consultation	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Tim Johnson, Education and Enterprise	
Originating service	Planning / Community and Recreation	
Accountable employee(s)	Michèle Ross	Senior Planning Officer
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Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the following as the basis of the Council's response to the South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document (SAD) – Issues and Options consultation:
 - South Staffordshire covers large areas of Green Belt land, but those parts which are of most strategic importance are located around the urban area, as they stop settlements from merging and also support urban regeneration. Therefore it is of key importance to maintain the gap between the Black Country urban area and South Staffordshire villages.

- In the case of Perton, only site 3(A) should be allocated for housing up to 2028 and any safeguarded land up to 2038, as this site makes the least contribution to Green Belt purposes and will not reduce the gap between Wolverhampton and Perton. If sites 1(D), 2(C) and 5(C), which would reduce this gap, are considered for housing allocations or safeguarding, this should be designed to: minimise any reduction of the gap; include appropriate landscaped buffers to reduce impact on Wolverhampton residents; have main road access from Perton; and maintain the existing no left turn / no right turn between Wrottesley Park Road and Pattingham Road.
- In the case of Bilbrook, only site 1 (C) should be allocated for housing up to 2028 and safeguarded land up to 2038, as this would place less pressure on the Wolverhampton road network than alternative sites.
- In the case of Codsall, only sites 1 (B) and 2 (B) should be allocated for housing up to 2028 and safeguarded land up to 2038, as these sites make a more limited contribution to Green Belt purposes and would place less pressure on the Wolverhampton road network than alternative sites.
- Any Perton and Codsall / Bilbrook housing allocations should be phased in the medium (5-10 years) or long (10-15 years) term, to minimise impacts on brownfield housing investment in Wolverhampton;
- Safeguarded land for housing up to 2038 should not be apportioned on the same basis as allocations up to 2028, as these reflect recent levels of development rather than the capacity of the settlement to absorb further development, suitability of available sites around each settlement or the ability of the road network to absorb residential traffic. The Green Belt review and effects on the road network should form the main basis for the apportionment, and therefore Perton, Codsall and Bilbrook should have a zero or low target up to 2038. In particular, in Perton this would reflect the fact that all available sites make a considerable contribution to Green Belt purposes.
- Support the allocation of sites E7 and E8 as a western extension to the i54 site, as and when required, as these sites will together provide a site with maximum accessibility and a strong long term boundary for i54 in the form of Pendeford Hall Lane.

The Council has committed funding for feasibility studies and has expended significant investment both in money and time with a view to building up a business case. This work is on-going and should be completed around summer 2014. This will give a more detailed understanding of the issues of developing the site and will allow a costed business plan to be developed. The proposal is also supported by Staffordshire County Council.

- The i54 western extension will help to meet Black Country high quality employment land needs, as only 10 ha of developable land remains at i54. The evidence for the extension will be provided by the South Staffordshire and Black Country Sub-regional High Quality Employment Land Study. The extension is projected to create 1000-1500 jobs in the priority sectors of aerospace, automotive, engineering, innovation and high

end manufacturing together with a further 3000 as a result of supply chain and 'spin – off' generated from the inward investment.

Economic growth and targeted growth within the sectors prioritised by the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan over the next 20 years will generate demand for new development based on the evidence and strength of the clusters and their importance to the sub-regional and national economy. To meet that demand, particularly for high end manufacturing, there needs to be a ready supply of well-located, serviced sites capable of accommodating a variety of large floor plates and attractive to those who fund such schemes, as money will remain in short supply well into the future and only the best sites will attract funding. It is the availability of the land which attracts demand from footloose operators and not vice versa.

- i54 has a strong international brand profile and major occupiers have approached the Council regarding the availability of additional land to support further expansion of the site. It is crucial to maximise the employment and regeneration opportunities created by the i54 brand, in particular to capture future investment associated with current occupiers, especially those linked to the JLR supply chain and which cannot be accommodated on other existing/potential sites within the Black Country.

Recent enquiries in the region show that there is activity within the market which would require a large site of over 10 ha. If the region hopes to land such an enquiry the availability of land in the short term is critical.

- Also support the allocation of Wobaston Road Playing Fields as an extension to the i54 site.
2. Receive further reports at the Preferred Options and Publication stages of the South Staffordshire SAD preparation process.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report summarises the issues arising from the South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document (SAD) Issues and Options consultation and sets out the basis for a proposed Wolverhampton City Council response for approval by Cabinet.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The South Staffordshire Core Strategy was adopted in early 2014, setting out the broad planning strategy and quantum of housing and employment development required in the District up to 2028. South Staffordshire Council are now progressing a Site Allocations Document (SAD) to provide detailed policies and allocate sites for development. The Core Strategy and the SAD, when adopted, will form the adopted Local Plan for South Staffordshire and will be used to determine planning applications in the District.
- 2.2 Cabinet of 25 July 2012 received an update on the South Staffordshire Local Plan and requested a report on the SAD consultation. The first period of consultation on the SAD – Issues and Options - ends on 19 May 2014. This consultation is a key opportunity to influence the allocation of sites for development up to 2028 and beyond which may have an impact on Wolverhampton. The main issues raised by the consultation are the potential release of Green Belt sites for housing around Perton and major employment allocations close to Wolverhampton.
- 2.3 Subsequent stages of the process where a response will also be important are: Preferred Options (end 2014), and Publication (spring 2015).

3.0 Summary of Main Issues and Proposed Consultation Response

- 3.1 A summary of the main issues raised by the consultation and the basis of the proposed Wolverhampton City Council consultation response is set out below.

Housing

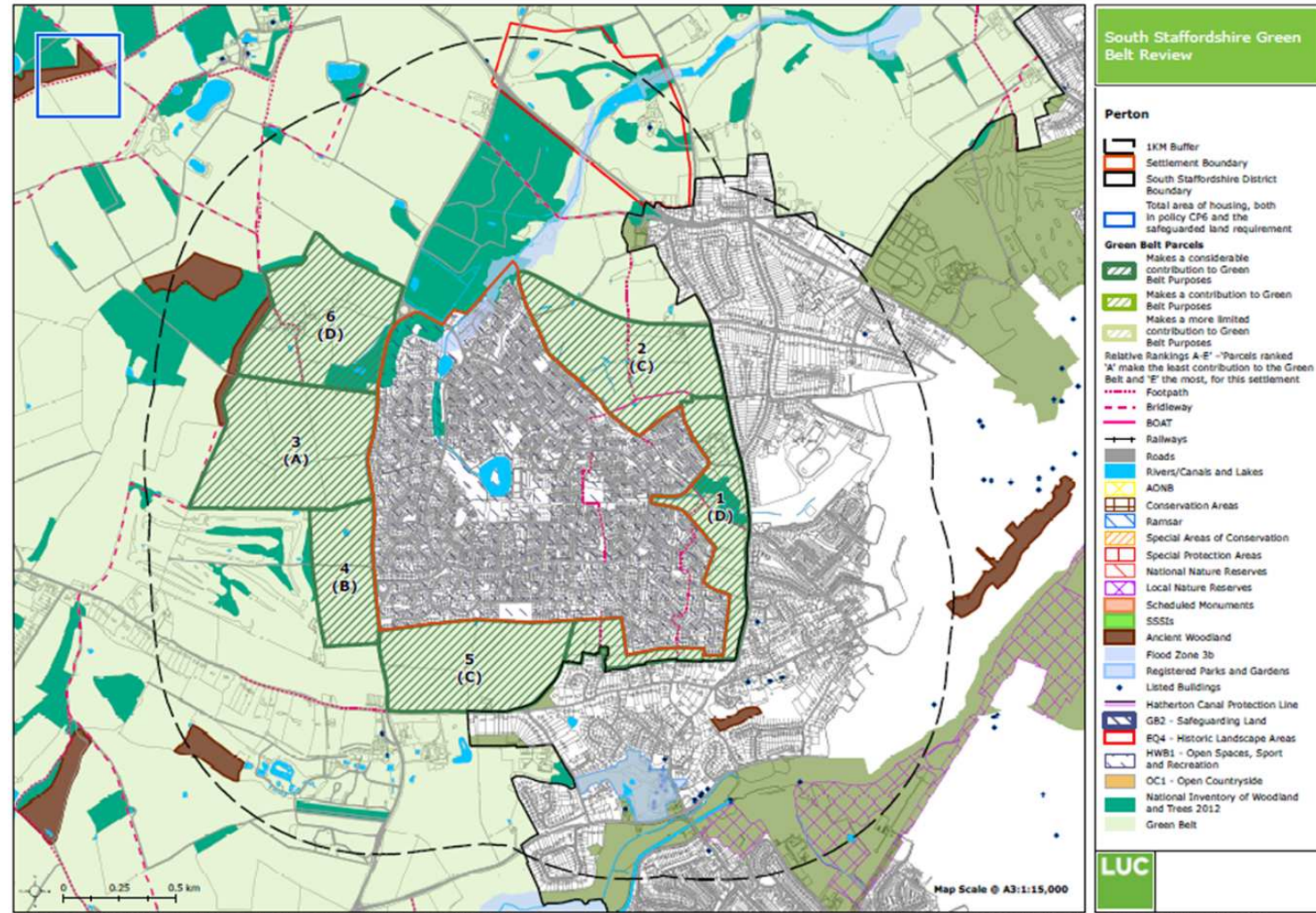
- 3.2 The adopted Core Strategy sets a District wide target of 1,081 new homes up to 2028 and directs the majority of this housing to 15 settlements, with a target for each settlement. The key issue for Wolverhampton is therefore the phasing and location of this housing rather than its scale, and how this could affect the delivery of regeneration priorities and the setting and amenity of residential areas in the City.
- 3.3 A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) completed in 2012 identified a large number of potential housing sites around South Staffordshire settlements that could contribute towards meeting Core Strategy housing targets. The Issues and Options consultation puts forward most of the SHLAA sites for consultation, although it is important to note that only 8% of the total capacity of these sites is required to meet South Staffordshire's target. The proposals for new development in Codsall / Bilbrook

and Perton have the greatest significance for Wolverhampton, and the Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick wards in particular.

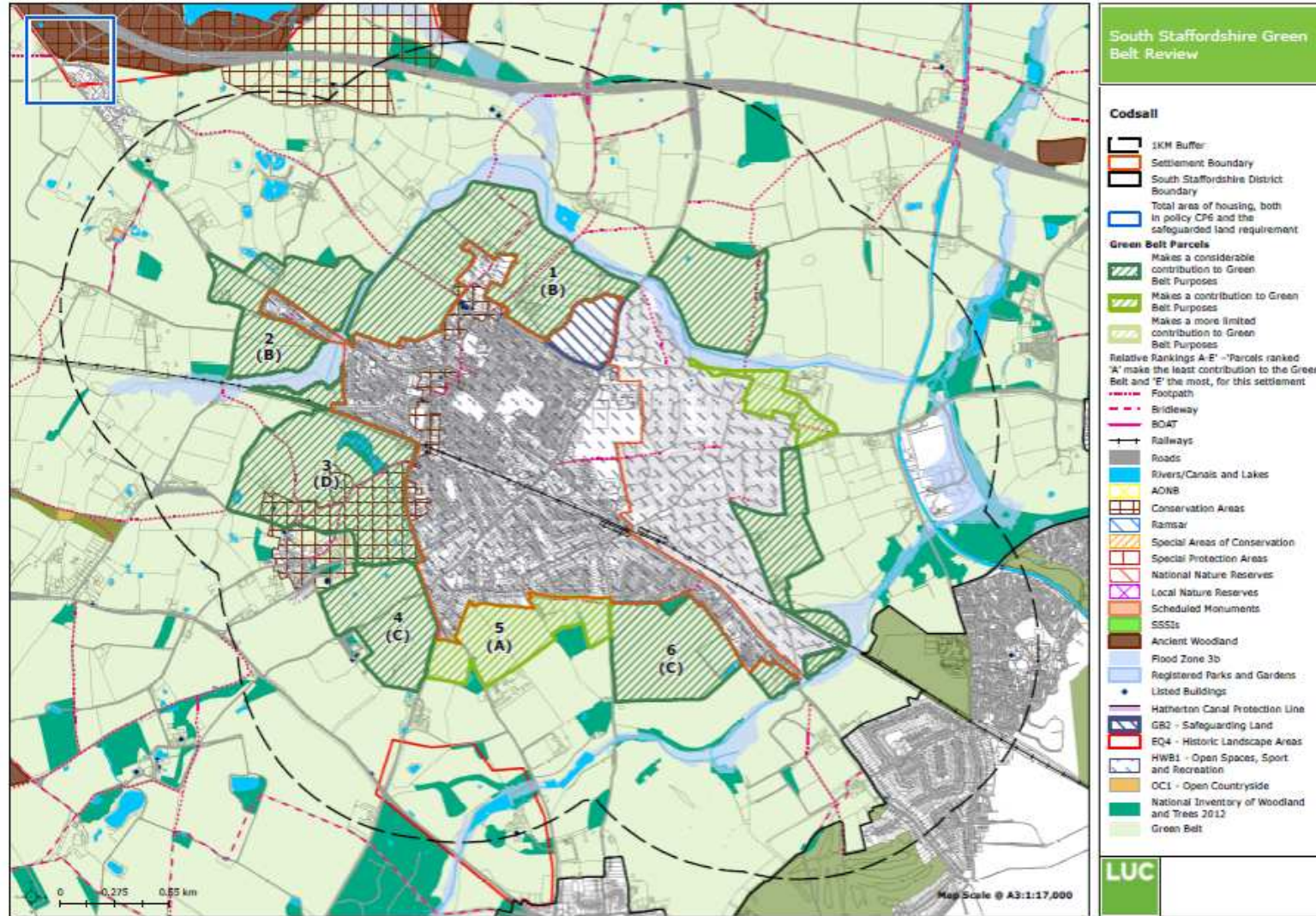
- 3.4 There are existing local road congestion issues in Tettenhall which may be exacerbated by new housing development and changes to road systems in South Staffordshire. Work carried out to investigate the potential impact of housing development at Perton, Codsall and Bilbrook on the road network concludes that there could be an 8-11% increase to traffic flows along the A41. The Tettenhall Neighbourhood Plan (Examination version) therefore expects South Staffordshire Council to ensure that this development does not have a detrimental effect on the Tettenhall road network and to work with the City Council to take remedial actions to avoid increased congestion on the A41 and other mitigation measures as appropriate (p.101).
- 3.5 The SAD must allocate land to deliver by 2028: 163 homes around Perton; 105 homes around Bilbrook; and 222 homes around Codsall. Views are sought on which of the identified sites are most suitable and when they should be released for development. Views are also sought on where land should be “safeguarded” for further housing development during 2028-38. One option is to carry forward the apportionment of housing used for the period up to 2028, which would represent an additional 175 homes for Perton, 122 for Bilbrook and 245 for Codsall.
- 3.6 There is very little land within the current built up areas of Perton and Codsall / Bilbrook which is suitable for housing development, therefore land needs to be taken out of the Green Belt around the edge of these settlements to meet the 2028 target, and any 2038 target. The proposed sites are shown on Maps 1-3, with the indicative area of land required to deliver the 2028 target shown as a blue square in the top left hand corner.
- 3.7 Regarding Perton, the Green Belt review published alongside the SAD states that all of these sites make a considerable contribution to Green Belt purposes, however they are ranked from least (A) to most (D) contribution. Using this criteria, site 3 (A) is the most suitable area within which to release a site for 163 homes adjoining the Perton boundary, and the sites closest to Wolverhampton – 1(D), 2(C) and 5(C) - are the least suitable.

This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

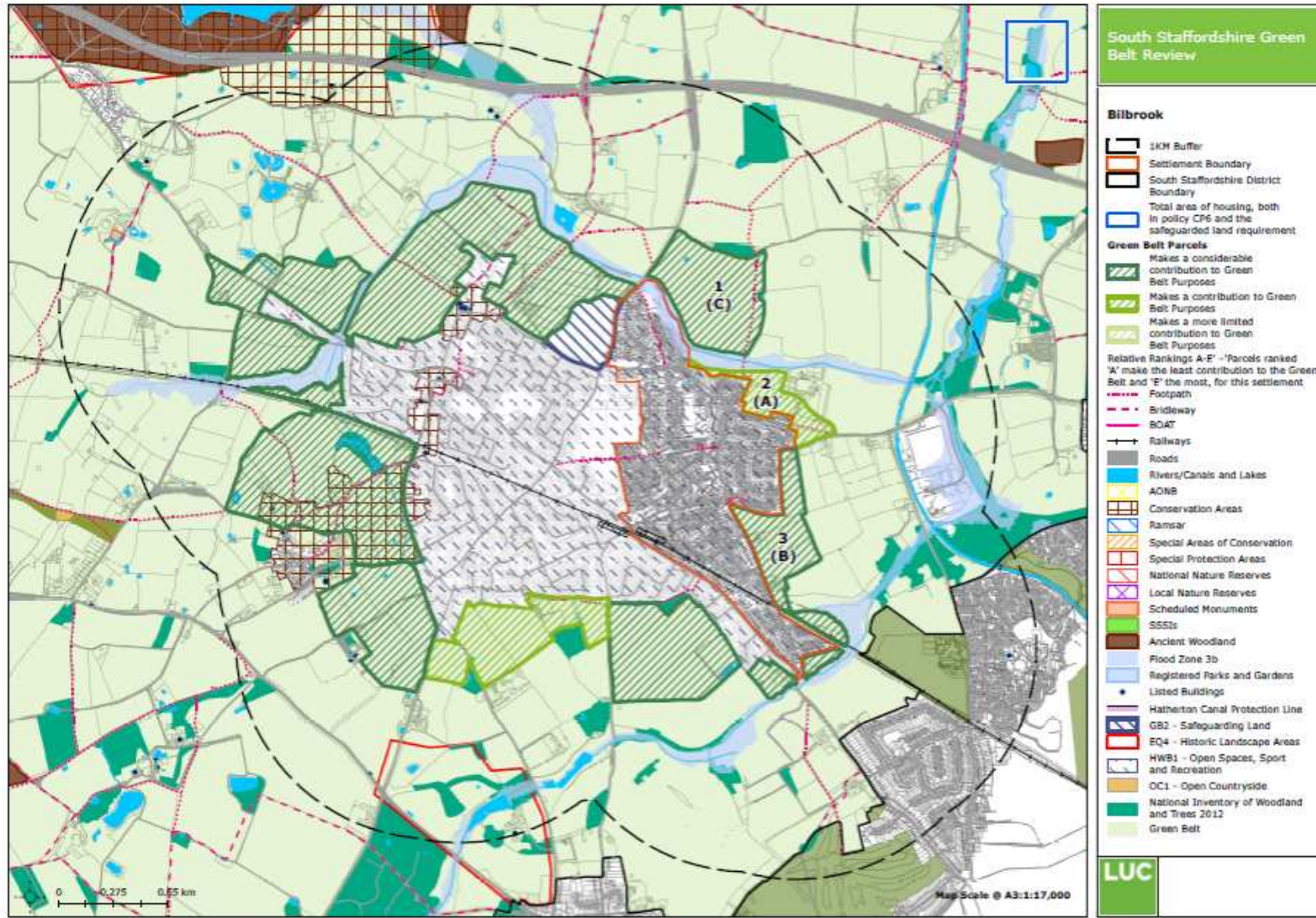
Map 1 – Perton Green Belt Review Sites



Map 2 – Codsall Green Belt Review Sites



Map 3 – Bilbrook Green Belt Review Sites



- 3.8 Regarding Codsall and Bilbrook, there are sites close to Wolverhampton which make a lower contribution to the Green Belt purposes (sites 2 (A) and 3 (B) in Bilbrook and 5 (A) in Codsall). However, these sites, individually and together, could put pressure on the Wolverhampton road network.
- 3.9 When the SHLAA was published Tettenhall Ward Councillors and local residents were concerned about the implications of sites identified between Perton and Wolverhampton, in terms of encroachment towards Tettenhall and road access. Tettenhall Members have been briefed on the SAD and their views have fed into the consultation response. A consultation event has also been arranged with Tettenhall Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) to ensure that the views of the local community in Wolverhampton are fully taken into account by South Staffordshire Council.
- 3.10 It is recommended that the Council's detailed response to the SAD Issues and Options consultation is based on the following principles:
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Employment

- 3.11 The Core Strategy supports modest extensions to the four freestanding strategic employment sites in the District where robust evidence and reasoned justification is provided to support the expansion. The i54 site is one of these four sites and the SAD consultation proposes safeguarding 40 ha of expansion land to the west of the site (sites E7 and E8) of which two thirds (24 ha) is owned by Wolverhampton City Council. However, it does not propose releasing this land for development before 2028.
- 3.12 The i54 site is currently one of the most significant development opportunities in the UK, attracting internationally significant investment with huge benefits to the local and regional economy. However, there are now only a limited number of development plots available and it is critical that the City does not lose out on further investment due to a lack of available quality employment land. The Council has supported the bringing forward of additional land at the site through the South Staffordshire Core Strategy and so the proposed western extension should be warmly welcomed. The Council is commissioning a joint study with sub-regional partners to provide evidence to support the need for expansion of i54, and feasibility work is underway to understand any constraints on development of the western extension. Subject to this work, it is important that the western extension is available for development in the short term should the need arise and this need cannot be accommodated on sites within the urban area.
- 3.13 There is an acknowledged need for the availability of readily developable employment sites in Wolverhampton and the Black Country. There is currently a lack of sites close to the motorway network, and many sites, even where currently on the market, require extensive remediation or access improvements before being capable of development. This issue has been highlighted following the success of attracting JLR to i54, which is leading to strong enquiries from potential occupiers. At present i54 has only approximately 10 hectares (ha) available which is capable of accommodating c. 56,000 sqm of floor space and it is anticipated that this will be taken up in the next 3 to 5 years.
- 3.14 There is also 6 ha of Council-owned land to the south of i54 on Wobaston Road which is available for employment development and not located in the Green Belt, but which is not shown as a proposed allocation in the SAD consultation. This land is former playing fields but Sport England have agreed that new playing fields to be constructed at Barnhurst Lane will mitigate for any loss. The land has always been included in the joint

venture arrangements for i54 with a view to being brought in to the i54 estate in the future.

3.15 It is recommended that the Council's detailed response to the SAD Issues and Options consultation is based on the following principles:

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Economic growth and targeted growth within the sectors prioritised by the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan over the next 20 years will generate demand for new development based on the evidence and strength of the clusters and their importance to the sub-regional and national economy. To meet that demand, particularly for high end manufacturing, there needs to be a ready supply of well-located, serviced sites capable of accommodating a variety of large floor plates and attractive to those who fund such schemes, as money will remain in short supply well into the future and only the best sites will attract funding. It is the availability of the land which attracts demand from footloose operators and not vice versa.

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Recent enquiries in the region show that there is activity within the market which would require a large site of over 10 ha. If the region hopes to land such an enquiry the availability of land in the short term is critical.

- Also support the allocation of Wobaston Road Playing Fields as an extension to the i54 site.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. Any staffing costs will be met from the approved Planning budget. Cabinet (Resources) Panel of 23 July 2013 allocated £195,000 from the Regeneration Reserve revenue budget 2013/14 to fund i54 Western Extension Feasibility Studies (£175,000) regarding highway capacity, ground conditions and land assembly in addition to legal costs (£20,000) associated with the i54 scheme. This feasibility work is now underway. [ES/03042014/V]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 As a neighbouring authority, South Staffordshire Council are required to work with the Council on the preparation of their Local Plan documents, under the “duty to cooperate”. The “duty to cooperate” in relation to planning of sustainable development was enacted by S110 of the Localism Act 2011 inserting a new S33A into Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guide states that the duty co-operate places a legal duty on local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. The duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plans. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination. Local planning authorities will need to satisfy themselves about whether they have complied with the duty. As part of their consideration, local planning authorities will need to bear in mind that the cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters. [KR/08042014/N]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 A screening has been carried out for equalities implications and this concluded that a full Equality Analysis was not required for the recommendations of this report, as they do not involve a change to Council services, functions, policies or procedures.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 8.1 The Council owns 23 ha of land forming part of the i54 western extension site and 6 ha of land at Wobaston Road. The allocation or safeguarding of this land for future

employment development has implications for the value of and disposal programme for this land.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

South Staffordshire Core Strategy – December 2012

South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document (SAD) Issues and Options Consultation – March 2014

Report to 25 July 2012 Cabinet: South Staffordshire Local Plan Update

Report to 23 July 2013 Cabinet (Resources) Panel: Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14

Tettenhall Neighbourhood Plan Examination Version - January 2014