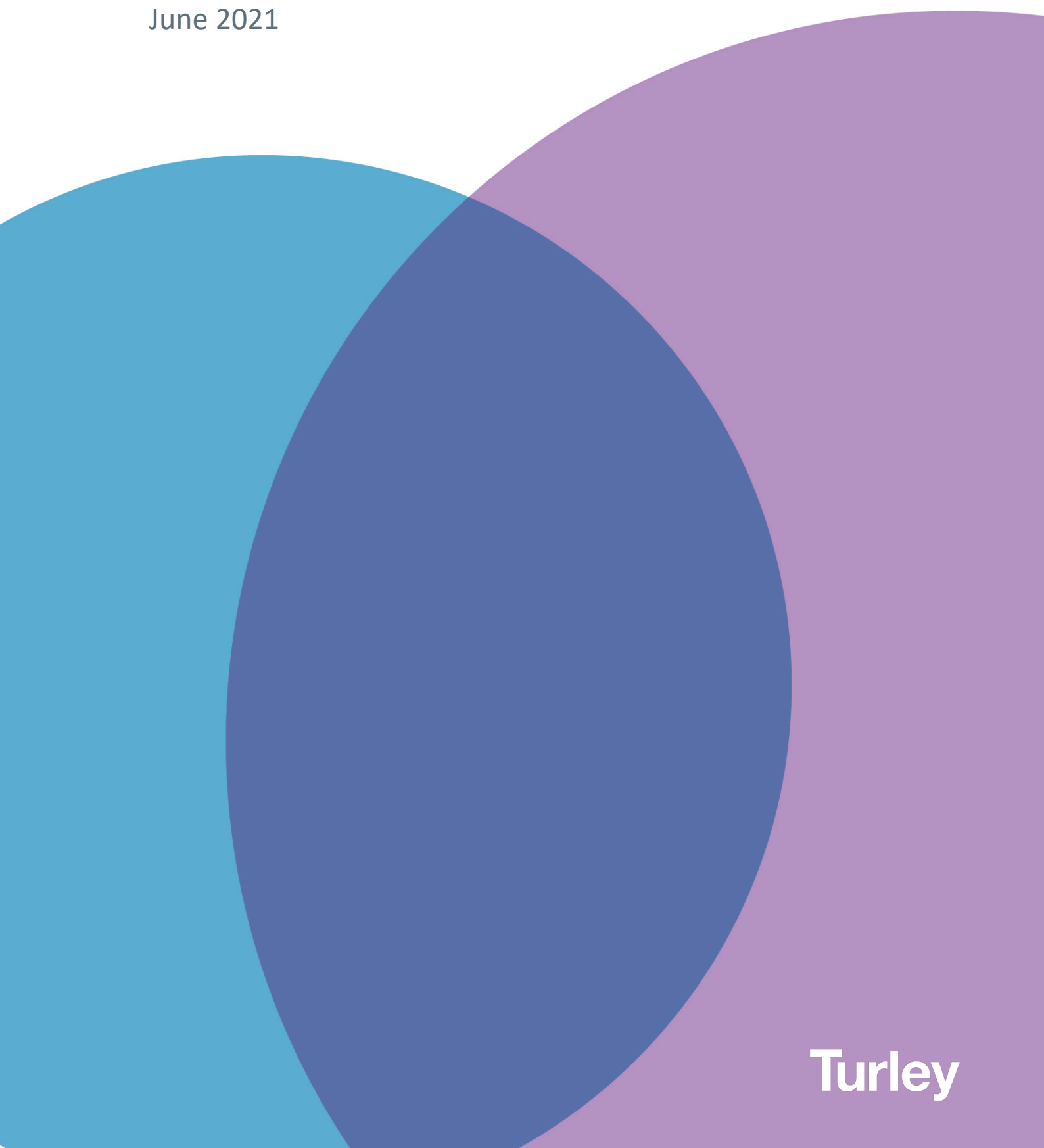


Planning Statement

Blythe Vale, Bridge Bridge: Phase 2

June 2021



Turley

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Client

St Modwen Homes

Our reference

STMQ3056

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for full planning permission for the residential development of Phase 2 at Blythe Vale, Blythe Bridge, in Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ('the Council'). The site is hereafter referred to as 'the Site' as shown at **Appendix 1**. The application has been submitted on behalf of St Modwen Homes, also hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant'.
- 1.2 The Site measures a gross area of approximately 10.86 hectares, comprising a series of arable fields accessed from Uttoxeter Road (A521) via the Phase 1 spine road to the west, and Woodlands Lane to the north. The Site is located approximately 1km south-east of Blythe Bridge and is allocated for mixed use development including residential development under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020).
- 1.3 The Site is not subject to any environmental designations, such as protected sites. The Site is not designated as Green Belt, though land designated as Green Belt under Policies SS 2 and SS 10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) neighbours the Site to the east. The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, where there is less than 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year.
- 1.4 The Site is not subject to any conservation designations or Tree Preservation Orders ('TPO'), and is not within close proximity of any listed buildings or features. The nearest listed building to the Site is the Grade II listed Stonehouse Cottage located approximately 900m north of the Site. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) Forsbrook CP 6 passes through the northern section of the Site.
- 1.5 The site and its surroundings have been subject to recent relevant planning history. Further details of the site context are set out at **Section 2** of this Statement.
- 1.6 The Proposed Development seeks full planning permission for residential development of 200 no. dwellings (Use Class C3). The proposed site layout is provided at **Appendix 2**, and the full description of development is:

"Full planning application for residential development of 200 dwellings (Use Class C3), access and internal roads for vehicles, footpaths and cycle linkages, parking, public open space and landscaping, ecological habitats, community orchard, sustainable drainage measures, and associated infrastructure and earthworks."

- 1.7 Further details of the Proposed Development are set out at **Section 3** of this Statement. The Proposed Development will deliver a number of key benefits to the local and wider area, including:
- A broad range and mix of high-quality housing to meet various housing needs and demands of local residents and support the delivery of sustainable communities;
 - Boosting the supply of housing to meet an identified need and allocation in the adopted Local Plan;

- The retention and provision of substantial Green Infrastructure, including an ecology area and trim trail, landscaping, hedgerows and tree planting, ponds and sustainable drainage, and buffer planting and bunds around the Site boundary;
- New public open space including two new Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP);
- Enhanced public accessibility and pedestrian and cycling connectivity, including the retention and enhancement of Public Right of Way (PRoW) Forsbrook CP 6, re-routed around the north and east of the Site alongside a LEAP and landscaping;
- Obligations which could provide financial contributions towards education, leisure, recreation and community facilities, and pedestrian, cycle, highways and public transport improvements;
- Potential to capture additional household retail and leisure expenditure, every year within Blythe Bridge, Staffordshire Moorlands and the wider Staffordshire economy from households living on the completed scheme. This will help to boost the vitality and viability of local shops and businesses, and sustain essential local leisure and support services; and
- The creation of direct jobs during construction which will support the supply chain, as well as additional expenditure for the local area once the proposed dwellings are occupied, of particular importance during current circumstances.

- 1.8 An assessment of the proposed development against material considerations, and further details of the associated benefits and potential obligations to be delivered, are provided at **Sections 5 and 6** of this Statement.

Engagement

- 1.9 The proposed development has been informed by a comprehensive consultation process and detailed pre-application engagement with the Council and key stakeholders including the local community.
- 1.10 This has encompassed a series of pre-application meetings since early March 2021, including with the Council's Planning, Housing, Design, Arboricultural and Recreation and Leisure Officers, Highways England, Staffordshire Highways, and the Wildlife Trusts. The emerging proposals have also been presented to Forsbrook and Draycott-in-the-Moors Parish Councils in April 2021, and subject to a public consultation webinar on 5th May 2021.
- 1.11 Full details of the consultation process are provided in the Statement of Community Engagement which is also submitted in support of the accompanying planning application.

Document Purpose

- 1.12 The purpose of this Statement is to describe the proposals, consider the degree to which they are compliant with national and local planning policies and, importantly, to

consider whether the potential benefits of the proposals outweigh any potential impacts which may occur.

- 1.13 In drawing these conclusions, reference is made to the findings of various technical surveys and assessments which also form part of the suite of application documents.

Document Structure

- 1.14 This planning statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** Describes the location of the Site and its surrounds;
- **Section 3:** Describes the application proposals;
- **Section 4:** Provides an overview of relevant planning policy which the proposed development is to be based against;
- **Section 5:** Examines the degree to which the proposed development is consistent with the adopted Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations;
- **Section 6:** Sets out the obligations potentially to be provided as part of the proposed development.

Application Submission

- 1.15 This Statement is submitted alongside a comprehensive range of other application documents including plans and technical surveys and assessments, which together comprise the planning application submission. Whilst this Statement summarises the key elements and findings of those other application documents, it is important that the application submission be read as a whole. A full schedule of the supporting plans and documents is appended to the accompanying covering letter.

- 1.16 This application submission has also been subject to Environmental Impact Assessment Screening, the request and Screening Report for which were issued to the Council on 27 May 2021. The Council's Screening Opinion was subsequently issued on 18 June 2021 confirming that the proposed development is not EIA development. A copy of the Screening Opinion is provided at **Appendix 3**.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Site is within the administrative area of Staffordshire Moorlands District, located approximately 1km south-east of Blythe Bridge, and just over 9km south-east of Stoke-on-Trent city centre. The location of the Site is identified by the plan enclosed at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 The Site comprises approximately 10.86 hectares of green-field land formed by a series of agricultural fields, with ponds and hedgerow/tree lined field boundaries. The Site topography generally slopes by around 12m from its highest point on the northern boundary, to the lowest point on the south-eastern boundary. The existing site access is provided off Woodlands Lane to the north and the Phase 1 spine road to the north-west, which link to Uttoxeter Road and the A521 respectively.
- 2.3 The Site is bordered by agricultural land and farmhouses/buildings to the north and east; the A50 to the south; and Woodlands Lane, existing properties and the under construction Phase 1 residential development to the west. In the wider context, the surrounding area generally comprises agricultural land to the east and south, with the village of Draycott-in-the-Moors further east, and the residential suburbs of Blythe Bridge to the north and west.
- 2.4 The Site is allocated for mixed use development including residential development under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020).
- 2.5 The Site is not subject to any environmental designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites and is not in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Site is not designated as Green Belt, though land designated as Green Belt under Policies SS 2 and SS 10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) neighbours the Site to the east.
- 2.6 The Site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1, where there is less than 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year.
- 2.7 There are no statutory listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within or adjacent to the Site. The nearest statutory listed building is the Grade II listed Stonehouse Cottage located approximately 900m to the north of the Site. No trees within or adjacent to the Site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). A Public Right of Way (PRoW) Forsbrook CP 6 passes through the northern section of the Site.

Wider Site Context

- 2.8 The Site is situated alongside residential properties and transport networks, in a sustainable location for residential development within the established suburbs of Blythe Bridge. The settlement of Blythe Bridge is categorised as a Larger Village within the Local Plan (2020), and serves a local and wider rural community, offering a range of services and facilities. This includes shops, restaurants, doctors' surgery, primary and secondary schools, employment and leisure opportunities, a library and excellent road and rail linkages providing wider access to jobs and services.

- 2.9 Blythe Bridge Railway Station lies 1.5km away from the Site, within an acceptable cycling distance and is served by bus services which run along the Uttoxeter Road connecting the Site to the Railway Station. This availability of a railway station within the settlement affords excellent connectivity to the wider area, with the station being located on the Crewe to Derby rail line. Stoke-on-Trent can be accessed by train within 12 minutes, and Manchester is just over an hour away with a single interchange. Bus services are available on Uttoxeter Road to the north of the Site and provide a frequent (every 20 minutes) service to the railway station and Stoke. Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook are also connected to Hanley and Cheadle by bus.
- 2.10 Details of proximity to all nearby services and facilities are provided in the Transport Statement and Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.

Planning History

- 2.11 Historically the Site has been subject to an array of planning applications dating back to 1997, all of which were approved. Outline planning permission was first granted in July 1997 for the Site and the wider Blythe Vale allocation to become a Premium Employment Site (Ref. SM.97-0216). This permission separated the overall site into four phases: Phases 1 and 2 north of the A50; and Phases 3 and 4 south of the A50.
- 2.12 This outline permission was then subject to a number of Section 73 permissions which extended the time for associated reserved matters to be submitted and implemented. Most recently this included planning permission Ref. 11/00405/REM1_MJ (SMD/2011/0304), which was granted on 9 August 2011 and consequently became the new headline permission, extending the time limit for the submission of reserved matters to 15 July 2018 and the implementation of reserved matters to 15 July 2021.
- 2.13 Subsequently the Site was subject to a reserved matters application pursuant to the headline permission Ref. 11/00405/REM1_MJ (SMD/2011/0304), proposing an access road and associated infrastructure, drainage, tree removal, levels, landscaping and great crested newt mitigation (Ref. SMD/2018/0443). This reserved matters application was approved on 17 October 2018, and comprises the only reserved matters submission made pursuant to the headline permission.
- 2.14 The Phase 1 site to the west of the Site is currently under construction for residential development. This follows the approval of full planning permission Ref. SMD/2018/0790 in May 2020 for 146 dwellings and associated infrastructure, open space, landscaping, drainage, and enabling works. A further full planning application was also recently submitted on 1 June 2021 to re-plan the south-west corner of the Phase 1 site, which would result in the reduction of 12 no. dwellings within Phase 1, to a total of 134 dwellings. This application is currently awaiting validation and has yet to be assigned an SMDC reference.
- 2.15 Finally, a temporary haul road to provide construction access to Phase 1 was originally approved for twelve months on 4 February 2019 (Ref. SMD/2018/0696), within the northern area of the Site running between Woodlands Lane and the Phase 1 site. The haul road was most recently approved for a further twelve months on 13 March 2020 via Section 73 application Ref. SMD/2020/0038.

Summary

- 2.16 The Site is not subject to any notable environmental constraints, and the Site and its surroundings have been subject to an array of relevant planning history, including for the Phase 1 residential development to the west which is currently under construction.
- 2.17 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) allocates the Site for mixed-use development including residential, as set out and considered further at **Sections 4 and 5** of this Statement.
- 2.18 The Site is situated in a sustainable location for residential development, within the established suburbs of Blythe Bridge alongside residential properties and transport networks. The Site is within walking and cycling distance from a wide range of amenities and services provided within the surrounding area, including Blythe Bridge village centre. The nearest bus stops lie on Uttoxeter Road to the north-west of the Site, whilst Blythe Bridge railway station lies approx. 1.5km also to the north-west, providing wider access to jobs and services and transport connections in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding suburbs and settlements.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 The accompanying planning application seeks full planning permission for residential development of 200 dwellings (C3 Use) and associated infrastructure and landscaping, comprising Phase 2 at Blythe Vale.

- 3.2 The description of development for which planning permission is sought is as follows:

“Full planning application for residential development of 200 dwellings (Use Class C3), access and internal roads for vehicles, footpaths and cycle linkages, parking, public open space and landscaping, ecological habitats, community orchard, sustainable drainage measures, and associated infrastructure and earthworks.”

- 3.3 Key elements of the proposed development are set out below, though further details of the proposed development and its design principles are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Proposed Residential Development

- 3.4 The proposed development seeks to create a high-quality neighbourhood of 200 no. residential dwellings, responding accordingly to its surroundings through a landscape-led approach which seamlessly continues from the Phase 1 development to the west. Therefore the proposed residential development has been generally focused to the north and west of the Site as shown on the Site Layout Plan (Ref. 8722-2003 R9074-RLA-21-XX-DR-A-2003), across a net developable area of approx. 7.6 hectares. This approach has also sought to respond to accessibility to Blythe Bridge to the north-west, the A50 to the south, Green Belt to the east, and ecological areas covering the south-east of the Site.
- 3.5 The scale of the proposed residential development generally comprises two-storey dwellings across the Site, though scale has been varied to create interest and respond to on-site features and the wider built environment. Larger, detached dwellings are focused more informally around the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site, with some two and a half storey dwellings proposed at key road junctions and fronting onto Public Open Space (POS). Meanwhile semi-detached and terraced dwellings are positioned more to the south and west to create containment to the western edge and reduce noise from the A50.
- 3.6 Please refer to the Design and Access Statement, Site Layout Plan (Ref. 8722-2003 R9074-RLA-21-XX-DR-A-2003) and Proposed Heights Plan (Ref. 8722-2007 R9074-RLA-21-XX-DR-A-2007) submitted in support of this application for further context and details of the layout, scale and massing of the proposed dwellings.

Housing Mix

- 3.7 The proposed residential development comprises 200 no. market dwellings, including a range of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings, in a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses to cater for different requirements and demands and create a diverse setting and community.

- 3.8 The proposed housing mix is set out within **Table 3.1** below, which has been shaped by pre-application engagement with the Council's Housing Officer.

Table 3.1: Proposed Housing Mix

Dwelling Type	Amount	Percentage
2 Bed Houses		
H2B-756 2B3P	23	11.5%
H2B-790 2B3P	29	14.5%
Sub-Total 2 Bed Houses:	52	26%
3 Bed Houses		
H3B-902-3B4P	11	5.5%
H3B-920-3B4P	16	8%
H3B-1002-T2 3B4P	16	8%
H3B-1036 3B5P	22	11%
H3B-1158 3B6P	10	5%
Sub-Total 3 Bed Houses:	75	37.5%
4 Bed Houses		
H4B-1208 4B6P	8	4%
H4B-1210 4B5P	16	8%
H4B-1318-T2 4B6P	18	9%
H4B-1336 4B7P	4	2%
H4B-1379 4B6P	11	5.5%
H4B-1418 4B6P	4	2%
H4B-1474 4B5P	12	6%
Sub-Total 4 Bed Houses:	73	36.5%

Affordable Housing Provision

- 3.9 The proposed development is subject to a Viability Appraisal, which is to be provided in full following submission of the accompanying planning application. The initial findings of the Appraisal demonstrate that it would be unviable and unable to support any affordable housing provision on-site. However, a provisional allowance has been made towards relevant Section 106 contributions, as set out at **Section 6** of this Statement.
- 3.10 This Appraisal has also been informed by the evidence base which supported the adoption of the Local Plan (2020), including the Local Plan and Site Allocations Viability Study (2018). In summary, this categorises Blythe Bridge as the lowest value area in the District (Zone 1) and sets out the associated viability implications, including for the implementation of a policy compliant level of affordable housing under Policy H3:

Affordable Housing of the Local Plan (2020) within such a low value area. This position has also been confirmed through the previous Phase 1 development and associated representations made previously to the now adopted Local Plan consultations.

- 3.11 In conclusion, the Viability Statement will demonstrate that the provision of any level of affordable housing on site would render the proposed development unviable, with further detail set out in **Section 5** of this Statement. As a result of these findings, no affordable dwellings are proposed as part of the development, with all 200 no. of the proposed dwellings intended for open market sale.
- 3.12 The proposed residential development has also been designed on the basis that it will not be subject to the Government requirement that 25% of major residential development proposals should provide discounted First Homes. This basis is made upon the fact that this application should be determined well in advance of 28 March 2022 when the First Homes requirement is set to be introduced (given the statutory determination timescale of 13 weeks).

Self/Custom-Build Housing

- 3.13 Based upon no registered local interest or demand on the self-build register and in recent Annual Monitoring Reports, no self-build or custom-build plots form part of the proposed housing mix. However, an ability exists for the proposed house types to be customizable to suit the preferences of homebuyers, known as 'Starting Block'. This enables all internal rooms of each proposed dwelling to be adjustable, within the parameters of the house types and their external dimensions and appearances.

Appearance

- 3.14 The architectural identity of the dwellings seeks to draw similarities with the existing residential dwellings in the local area and the Phase 1 development, incorporating a range of details appropriate to the area and best quality materials.
- 3.15 The proposed materials and palette includes the use of: bricks that match the surrounding area as closely as possible with both style and colouring; plain or clay style roof tiles that match the surrounding area as closely as possible with both style and colouring; sympathetic rendering in colour and finish to the surrounding dwellings whilst creating modern interpretations; and timber effect cement boarding to create features and harmonious facades.
- 3.16 Please refer to the Design and Access Statement and House Type Elevation plans submitted in support of this application for further details of the appearance of the proposed dwellings.

Access and Movement

- 3.17 Vehicular access to the Site is proposed from the new A521 junction into Phase 1, via a continuation of the Phase 1 spine road to the west of the Site. This will form the primary spine road route through the Site from west to east, structured by focal points at key nodal points and lined with appropriate avenue landscaping.
- 3.18 Direct vehicular access to the proposed dwellings will be provided directly from this central spine road, as well as from a clear hierarchy of more informal secondary streets

leading to cul-de-sacs and shared and private drives. The cul-de-sacs will incorporate turning heads suitable for refuse or emergency vehicles to safely undertake three point turns within the Site.

- 3.19 Pedestrian and cycle access will be provided via the central spine road west through Phase 1 and over the A521 via the pelican crossing junction. The PRow along the northern and eastern boundary of the Site will also be retained and incorporated into the proposed development, subject to a separate Section 257 application, providing pedestrian access to the north onto Woodlands Lane and to the wider surroundings at the other end of the PRow to the east. These pedestrian and cycle access points will provide a number of options for access to wider surrounding sustainable transport networks.

Parking

- 3.20 A sufficient level of car parking is proposed as part of the development, including 505 allocated resident spaces and a further 18 visitor spaces. The proposed car parking will be well-integrated and positioned as close to corresponding dwellings as possible, through a combination of on-plot and on-street parking, with large parking courtyards avoided.
- 3.21 Electric vehicle charging points are to be provided for each proposed dwelling with garages or parking directly adjacent. Secure cycle parking will be provided for each proposed dwelling in the form of lockable rear garden sheds and secure points with a concrete base.
- 3.22 Please refer to the Design and Access Statement and Proposed Car Parking Plan (Ref. 8722-2009 R9074-RLA-21-XX-DR-A-2009) submitted in support of this application for further details and locations of the proposed vehicle and cycle parking.

Landscaping and Open Space

- 3.23 The proposed development includes a substantial amount of structural landscaping, Public Open Space (POS) and Green and Blue Infrastructure particularly to the south and east of the Site. This is centred around existing hedgerows, grassland and pond habitats which are to be retained and enhanced. Specifically, the south-eastern area of the Site comprises an ecological area primarily for Great Crested Newts, which includes new woodland planting and a trim trail to enable public access.
- 3.24 The proposed POS will also comprise two Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) to the north and south of the Site measuring approx. 220sqm and 200sqm respectively, providing the minimum requirement of 400sqm of equipped space. A community orchard is proposed alongside the southern LEAP and trim trail. Incidental areas of POS and landscaping are also proposed across the Site particularly around further retained features and the proposed roads and paths.
- 3.25 All boundary hedgerows are to be supplemented with new landscaping and tree planting, including planted buffer zones to the north and east and a planted acoustic bund to the south of the Site.

- 3.26 Each dwelling will be provided with sufficient private garden spaces. Further on-plot landscaping is also proposed including front gardens to provide a defensible space, varying in depth to create diversity and soften the street scene. Some dwellings will have an extended planted space to accommodate tree planting where possible. Plot boundaries will include a mix of walls and fences as detailed in the accompanying Proposed Boundaries Plan (Ref. 8722-2004 R9074-RLA-21-XX-DR-A-2004).
- 3.27 External lighting will include tall stand lamp street lighting along the internal road network, and wall mounted lighting with shrouds within the POS.
- 3.28 Further details of the proposed landscaping are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Detailed Landscaping and Planting Plans (Refs. 1965 A3 001, 002, 003 and 004).

Drainage

- 3.29 The proposed development will control the surface water as close to the point of impact as practical, utilising both flow attenuation and SUDS techniques.
- 3.30 This includes sub-surface storage in the form of an underground attenuation tank to the south of the Site, and an accompanying pumping station to the south-west. The attenuation tank stores and releases surface water at a controlled rate into an ordinary watercourse to the south of the Site, which then flows south via a culvert under the A50 continuing eventually into the River Blithe. The top of the underground attenuation tank will be laid with grass, which will be publically accessible.
- 3.31 Foul drainage for the proposed development will be provided via new sewers across the Site, and link to the existing sewer system within Phase 1 to the west. Further details of the proposed site drainage are provided in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy and Schematic Drainage Plan (Ref. 13051_104).

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this application is to be considered against the provisions of the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 In this case the Development Plan comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020) and its accompanying Policies Map, which replaced the Core Strategy (2014), Biddulph Area Action Plan (2007) and saved Local Plan policies (1998) upon its adoption on 9 September 2020.
- 4.3 Other material planning policy considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2019), National Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'), associated Supplementary Planning Documents ('SPDs'), and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development Plan

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020)

- 4.4 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (hereafter also referred to as 'the Local Plan') was adopted on 9 September 2020 and provides the development strategy, strategic and development management policies and land designations for the District over the Plan period 2014 to 2033.
- 4.5 **Policy SS 1: Development Principles** states that development will be expected to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement to the District, considered in the context of the District-wide Spatial Strategy, including through the following principles:
- A mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities;
 - Quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure and community facilities and easy access jobs, shops and transport services;
 - A healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;
 - Development which maintains the locally distinctive character of District, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
 - The protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment and their surroundings; and
 - Development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.
- 4.6 The Local Plan identifies Blythe Bridge as a 2nd tier settlement 'Rural Area Larger Village' under **Policy SS 2: Settlement Hierarchy**, which sets the settlement boundaries

for new development to be directed. The Site is located within the settlement boundary for Blythe Bridge. Rural Area Larger Villages such as Blythe Bridge are considered the “*most sustainable settlements in the rural areas*”, important in serving and supporting their surroundings, and are to accommodate the bulk of rural development to ensure they are sustained and promoted as service centres.

- 4.7 **Policy SS 8: Larger Villages Areas Strategy** also identifies Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook as a 2nd tier Larger Village, where its role as a rural service centre is to be retained and enhanced to provide the bulk of the rural area housing requirement and employment needs of an appropriate type and scale. Policy SS 8 also specifically supports the mixed-use development of the whole Blythe Vale site in line with Policy DSR 1.

Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale

- 4.8 The entirety of the Site forms part of the mixed use allocation under **Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale**, which measures a total of approximately 48.5ha to the north and south of the A50, and is to include “*employment, residential development of approximately 300 houses and supporting infrastructure*”. Policy DSR 1 states that the allocated residential development should be located “*to the north of the site*”.
- 4.9 Policy DSR 1 continues that the development of the site should be subject to a comprehensive masterplan with indicative phasing programme to include: a Transport Assessment including potential mitigation measures and early engagement with Highways England; a landscaping scheme; details of surface water discharge; sustainable transport improvements; and the protection of the cycle path (PRoW) crossing the Site.
- 4.10 The full wording of Policy DSR 1 is provided in the extract below for completeness, and the proposed development is assessed in detail against the policy in **Section 5** of this Planning Statement.

Policy DSR 1

Blythe Vale

Land of approximately 48.5ha is allocated for mixed-use including employment, residential development of approximately 300 houses and supporting infrastructure. This residential development should be located to the north of the site. The employment development is intended to serve a regional need and will be considered separately from the employment land requirement for the District.

Development will be subject to compliance with other relevant Local Plan policies and a comprehensive masterplan with indicative phasing programme to include:

- A Transport Assessment to include an analysis of the site and its traffic impacts on the surrounding road network including the A50 and potential mitigation measures, and early engagement with Highways England;

- A landscaping scheme to provide appropriate landscape and visual mitigation measures including submission of landscape and visual impact assessments having regard to the recommendations set out in the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study. The landscaping scheme shall include measures to limit potential landscape impact and include additional planting on the edges of and within the development to create a vegetated edge and soften the appearance of the development from long distance views, limiting the sizes and scale of buildings. Development should be set back from Draycott with additional planting to limit potential coalescence issues;
- Details of surface water discharge;
- Developers should liaise with Network Rail at an early stage to identify any potential impact on the operation of the adjacent railway and agree mitigation measures as appropriate;
- Measures to improve sustainable transport routes and connectivity with Blythe Bridge and surrounding area, and to protect and extend green infrastructure within the Blythe Bridge Opportunity corridor which is identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to include the provision of suitable crossing facilities to enable access on foot and bicycle to the existing schools in Blythe Bridge, safe walking and cycle routes to and from the development to Blythe Bridge and investigation of opportunities for habitat creation/restoration including establishing wildlife corridors; and
- Cycle path crossing the site needs to be protected

- 4.11 **Policy H 1: New Housing Development** seeks the provision of a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure which meet identified housing needs and are sustainable and of high-quality. Higher housing densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport and which have good access to services.
- 4.12 Housing mixes will be negotiated based upon housing needs informed by the SHMA and other relevant factors such as available supply and market demand. Where a demand exists, residential developments of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more are also to make an appropriate contribution towards self-build / custom-build housing plots.
- 4.13 Policy H1 (d) adds that all new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space, determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design. Policy H1 (e) continues that all new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.
- 4.14 The site allocation under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale is also supported by **Policy H 2: Housing Allocations** as a rural housing allocation for a total indicative housing capacity of 300 dwellings. This indicative capacity figure is split into the remaining indicative

housing capacity of the site (182 dwellings) and the number of dwellings which had planning consent for housing at 31 March 2019 (118 dwellings).

- 4.15 **Policy H 3: Affordable Housing** seeks for residential developments of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more to provide 33% affordable housing, prioritised as on-site provision and subject to viability evidence, other contributions and demand. Policy H 3 seeks for 60% of all affordable dwellings to be social / affordable rented housing with the remaining 40% as intermediate / starter homes, which should be integral and 'tenure blind' to other properties on site.
- 4.16 Well-designed development which reinforces local distinctiveness is sought through **Policy DC 1: Design Considerations**, of relevance setting out that new development should:
- Demonstrate high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
 - Respect the site and its surroundings, promoting a positive sense of place and identity through scale, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;
 - Create attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate active public spaces, green infrastructure and landscaping which designs out crime;
 - Incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;
 - Protect residential amenity and create healthy active environments;
 - Promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;
 - Integrate car, pedestrian and cycle use and other sustainable transport links, provide safe and satisfactory access and meet parking requirements; and
 - Ensure drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity, which is enhanced where necessary.
- 4.17 **Policy DC 3: Landscape and Settlement Setting** also seeks to specifically protect local landscapes and settings, supporting development which respects local landscape character, reinforces the setting of settlements, and positively manages the landscape.
- 4.18 **Policy C 1: Creating Sustainable Communities** supports proposals which protect, retain and enhance existing community facilities and are served by necessary utility, transport and community infrastructure. Furthermore, **Policy T 1: Development and Sustainable Transport** supports development which is accessible, reducing reliance on the private car and the need to travel generally, and is close to sustainable travel modes and highway, walking and cycling networks.
- 4.19 **Policy SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources** seeks for development to use resources sustainably and adapt to climate change, prioritising sites which are sustainably located

and designed to minimise energy needs, and to consider renewable energy and efficiency, water conservation, construction materials and waste management. Specific support for sustainable development is also provided through **Policies SD 2: Renewable /Low-Carbon Energy** and **SD 3: Sustainability Measures in Development**.

- 4.20 **Policies SD 4 Pollution and Water Quality** aims to control and protect against unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments, including from air, noise and water pollution, by ensuring development proposals avoid potential adverse effects and provide adequate mitigation.
- 4.21 The provision of high quality recreational open space is supported under **Policy C 2: Sport, Recreation and Open Space** through schemes which protect, provide and improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreation facilities. **Policy C 3: Green Infrastructure** reinforces this support for the provision of suitable open space and recreational facilities, as well as links and enhancements to wildlife habitats, the mitigation of the negative effects of climate change, and the creation of appropriate access to formal and informal recreation opportunities.
- 4.22 **Policy NE 1: Biodiversity and Geological Resources** seeks for development to conserve, protect, restore, enhance and maintain the District's biodiversity, geological and conservation assets and interests, avoid direct and indirect significant harm, and support improved public access to wildlife sites resources. A net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the scale of the development is also expected where possible.

Local Plan Map

- 4.23 The Local Plan Map provides a visual representation of where each Local Plan policy specifically applies to in the District, where applicable.
- 4.24 The Map demonstrates that the Site is allocated for mixed-use development under Local Plan Policies DSR 1: Blythe Vale and H 2: Housing Allocations. The Site is also located within the settlement boundary of the Larger Village of Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook, the development strategy for which is set out under Policies SS 2: Settlement Hierarchy and SS 8: Larger Villages Areas Strategy. These Local Plan policies are set out in further detail in the previous sub-section and are assessed in respect of the proposed development in Section 5 of this Statement.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.25 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and prescribes policies for plan making and decision taking in England, including how these policies are expected to be applied. The following section examines key policies contained within the NPPF which have relevance to the proposed development.
- 4.26 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out the purpose of the planning system which is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development: *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* This is achieved by the three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental set out at Paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Paragraph 9 goes on to state that

these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the Framework; and not as criteria which every decision can or should be judged against.

- 4.27 At Paragraph 11, the NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development which, for the purposes of decision making, is explained as meaning:
- *‘Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*
 - *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.’*
- 4.28 The policy direction within the NPPF follows a number of broad themes which help to ensure sustainable development. The key theme relevant to this application is ‘Delivering a sufficient supply of homes’ within Paragraphs 59 to 79.
- 4.29 Paragraph 59 specifically seeks for a sufficient amount and variety of land to come forward to meet identified housing needs and support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 67 adds that a sufficient supply and mix of sites should be identified, particularly specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period.
- 4.30 Paragraph 67 states that policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area, identifying a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account availability, suitability and likely viability. Paragraph 122 also supports development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account identified needs for different types of housing, availability of land suitable for accommodating it, and local market conditions and viability.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.31 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (“DCLG”) launched the National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) web-based resource. The PPG replaces previous planning practice guidance documents and covers a number of topic areas which are relevant to the determination of the accompanying planning application. The PPG supplements and explains policies in the NPPF and assists in their application, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The PPG has been regularly updated by DCLG (now known as MHCLG) since 2014.
- 4.32 The ‘Housing Needs of Different Groups’ section of the PPG supports and encourages residential development which provides a variety of housing types to meet different

demands and needs. Demand for housing should be met to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, as set out in the 'Housing Supply and Delivery' section of the PPG.

4.33 Consideration should also be given to the importance of good design to achieve positive built form, identity, and movement throughout the lifespan of development which complements local character, as set out in the 'Design: process and tools' section (ref: Para 001) of the PPG.

4.34 Other sections of the PPG of relevance to the Proposed Scheme include:

- climate change;
- healthy and safe communities;
- housing for older and disabled people;
- housing: optional technical standards;
- natural environment;
- open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space; and
- travel plans, transport assessments and statements; and
- viability.

Other Material Considerations

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance (SPD/SPG)

4.35 The Site is not subject to any site-specific Supplementary Planning Documents or Guidance, and a limited number of SPD and SPG have been adopted in recent years.

4.36 Most notably, the **Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD** was adopted in February 2018, providing specific design principles for development in the District including in respect of architectural design, materials, landscaping and associated details. Though this pre-dates the Local Plan (2020), which is considered to provide the most recent and relevant planning guidance for new development in the District.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

4.37 The majority of the north of the Site is located within the Forsbrook Neighbourhood Plan area designated in July 2018, whilst the very southern area of the Site is located within the Draycott-in-the-Moors Neighbourhood Plan area designated in July 2016. However, neither Forsbrook nor Draycott Parish Councils have progressed their respective Neighbourhood Plans beyond the area designation stage.

4.38 Despite this, the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Requirements set out at Appendix 5 of the Local Plan state that the strategic mixed use site of Blythe Vale includes residential development of approximately 300 dwellings, which will satisfy Forsbrook Parish's housing requirement of 190 dwellings over the Plan period 2019-2033. Part of the Blythe Vale site also falls within the western edge of Draycott-in-the Moors Parish, which is considered would deliver approximately 30 dwellings of Draycott Parish's housing requirement of 35 dwellings over the Plan period.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

4.39 The Staffordshire Moorlands SHMA Update (2017) provides the most recent assessment of the future housing mix requirements for the District. This advises that

60% of new housing should comprise 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and 40% of new housing should comprise 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings.

- 4.40 However, the SHMA continues that Staffordshire Moorlands should take a flexible approach to applying this advice when dealing with housing applications in the District, as relatively lower levels of housing viability in certain urbanised parts of the District could be compromised by unsuitable housing mixes. The SHMA adds that further detailed viability work should also be undertaken to inform the overall housing mix.

Summary

- 4.41 The principle of residential development at the Site has been established through its mixed use allocation (Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale) within the recently adopted Local Plan (2020). The proposed development aligns with the specific requirements of Policy DSR 1, in addition to the other relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan and other material considerations set out above.
- 4.42 The following section considers the relationship between these relevant planning policies and the proposed development in further detail.

5. Planning Assessment

- 5.1 From the review of relevant planning policy and guidance above, the key considerations for the application proposals are considered to be:
- Compliance with the Development Plan; and
 - Whether the proposed development would represent sustainable development.

Compliance with the Development Plan (Principle of Development)

- 5.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires Local Planning Authorities to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development in decision making by approving development proposals that are in accordance with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay (Paragraph 11c).
- 5.3 The Development Plan for Staffordshire Moorlands, the Local Plan (2020), identifies Blythe Bridge as a 2nd tier settlement 'Rural Area Larger Village'. These larger villages are considered to be the most sustainable settlements in the rural areas, important in accommodating the bulk of rural development to serve and support their surroundings and ultimately assist in meeting the District's housing and other development needs over the Plan period. Development of an appropriate type and scale within these settlements is supported by Local Plan Policies SS 2: Settlement Hierarchy and SS 8: Larger Villages Areas Strategy.
- 5.4 The Site is located within the settlement boundaries of Blythe Bridge, and forms part of the mixed use allocation under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale, including for residential development of approximately 300 dwellings and supporting infrastructure. The proposed development is further supported by Policy H 2: Housing Allocations, allocating a total indicative housing capacity of 300 dwellings at Blythe Vale. The proposed development is assessed against the specific requirements of Policy DSR 1 further in this section.
- 5.5 The proposed development provides a mix of house types to meet identified needs in a sustainable location. The proposed housing mix has been informed by market demands, including from the neighbouring Phase 1 development, pre-application engagement with relevant SMDC Officers and the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (2017), in line with Policy H1: New Housing Development.
- 5.6 As detailed in Section 4 of this Statement, the SHMA Update (2017) advises that 60% of new housing should comprise 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, and 40% of new housing should comprise 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings. This contrasts with the proposed development, which comprises 26% 2-bed dwellings, and 74% 3 and 4-bed dwellings. However, the SHMA continues that a flexible approach should be taken in applying this advice when dealing with housing applications in the District. This is particularly the case where relatively lower levels of housing viability in certain urbanised parts of the District could be compromised by unsuitable housing mixes, given that the target

housing mix set out in the SHMA reflects District-wide needs and is not specific to Blythe Bridge. The SHMA adds that further detailed viability work should also be undertaken to inform this.

- 5.7 This flexible approach in considering the viability of residential development proposals is also to be taken in respect of associated affordable housing provision. Whilst Policy H 3: Affordable Housing seeks for the proposed development to provide 33% of all proposed dwellings as affordable housing, Policy H 3 recognises that such provision is subject to viability evidence, as well as in the context of other contributions (made via Section 106) and demand.
- 5.8 A Viability Appraisal has therefore been undertaken and is set to accompany this planning application submission. This Viability Appraisal concludes that the Site is deemed to be unviable and unable to support any level of affordable housing provision on-site. These findings are supported by the Local Plan and Site Allocations Viability Study (2018) which supported the relatively recent adoption of the Local Plan (2020). This demonstrates that the Site is located within the lowest value area in the District (Blythe Bridge, Zone 1) and specifies that this has substantial viability implications on development in the area, including for the implementation of a policy compliant level of affordable housing.
- 5.9 This viability position also follows the previous Viability Appraisal undertaken and scrutinised as part of the neighbouring Phase 1 development, as well as associated representations made previously on behalf of the Applicant to the now adopted Local Plan.
- 5.10 As a result of these viability issues, which are ultimately unique to the locality of the Site, no affordable dwellings are proposed as part of the development, and thus all 200 of the proposed dwellings are intended for open market sale. These unique viability issues have also influenced the proposed housing mix, which seeks to accommodate a higher percentage of larger dwellings.
- 5.11 However, in light of this viability evidence, it is considered that the proposed development meets the criterion sought for such circumstances under Policies H 1 and H 3. A provisional allowance has also been made towards relevant Section 106 contributions, as set out in **Section 6** of this Statement.
- 5.12 Furthermore, self and/or custom build plots have not been incorporated into the proposed development. This follows the review of Policy H1 of the Local Plan (2020), which states that the provision of such plots will be encouraged where a demand exists on the self-build register. Whilst the Annual Monitoring Report (2019-2020) shows a total of 29 entries on the register, this relates to the total number of entries, and only 8 registrations of interest were recorded during the latest AMR period, none of which refer to Blythe Bridge as the preferred area. Furthermore, only 2 entries have historically referenced Blythe Bridge as a preferred area, both in the 2016-2017 AMR period. It is therefore considered that this information provides little recent evidence of demand for self/custom build plots in Blythe Bridge, and therefore on the Site.
- 5.13 All proposed dwellings are compliant with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) in terms of both internal and external space, respecting the privacy and

amenity of inhabitants and neighbours, and are flexible and adaptable including through St Modwen Homes' 'Starting Block' initiative detailed in Section 3 of this Statement. It is therefore considered that the proposed development also aligns with these specific elements of Policy H1.

Requirements of Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale

- 5.14 The following sub-section considers the proposed development against the specific policy requirements set out under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale of the Local Plan (2020).
- 5.15 Policy DSR 1 specifies that the allocated residential development of approximately 300 dwellings should be situated to the north of the allocation. The proposed development is located accordingly to the north, alongside the existing Phase 1 residential development.
- 5.16 Taking into account that less than 150 dwellings are being delivered at Phase 1, the proposed development of 200 dwellings at Phase 2 equates to a total of less than 350 dwellings to be delivered at Blythe Vale. This is considered to remain within the indicative allocated range of "*approximately 300*" dwellings across Blythe Vale. The Council have also expressed support for further dwellings above the indicative and approximate allocation as windfall development during pre-application engagement, given the contribution these will make towards meeting housing need across the District.
- 5.17 The proposed development also ensures compliance with other relevant Local Plan policies, assessed further into this section, and the site specific requirements set out under Policy DSR 1 which are addressed below:

A Transport Assessment to include an analysis of the site and its traffic impacts on the surrounding road network including the A50 and potential mitigation measures, and early engagement with Highways England.

- 5.18 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared and submitted alongside this planning application. The TA explains the transport modelling work undertaken to assess the impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding road network, including junction capacity modelling.
- 5.19 The TA concludes that the proposed development will not give rise to material impacts on the safety or operation of the local road network. This has also been advised by pre-application engagement with both Highways England and Staffordshire Highways Authority. No concerns in respect of highways have been raised regarding the proposed development and these discussions are set to continue post-submission.
- 5.20 Furthermore, a sufficient level of car parking is proposed in line with Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2020), as detailed in Section 3 of this Statement.
- 5.21 A Travel Plan has also been submitted in support of the accompanying planning application, which sets out the following proposed measures and information:
- To promote and encourage walking and cycling;

- To promote and encourage public transport use;
- To promote and encourage car sharing;
- To reduce the need to travel;
- Marketing and promotional measures including welcome packs; and
- Smartphone applications.

5.22 The proposed development is therefore considered to be fully compliant with this specific requirement of Policy DSR 1 as well as Policy T1: Development and Sustainable Transport, through the provision of accessible development, which reduces reliance on the car and travel generally, and is close to sustainable travel modes and highway, walking and cycling networks.

5.23 The proposed development is also considered to be compliant with the sustainable transport policies in the NPPF (Paragraphs 108-111), as it promotes and accommodates sustainable transport, particularly pedestrian and cycle movements, achieves a safe and suitable site access, creates a safe, secure and attractive place, and does not result in any significant highways impacts.

A landscaping scheme to provide appropriate landscape and visual mitigation measures including submission of landscape and visual impact assessments having regard to the recommendations set out in the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study. The landscaping scheme shall include measures to limit potential landscape impact and include additional planting on the edges of and within the development to create a vegetated edge and soften the appearance of the development from long distance views, limiting the sizes and scale of buildings. Development should be set back from Draycott with additional planting to limit coalescence issues.

5.24 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Detailed Landscaping Plans are submitted in support of the planning application to demonstrate how a high quality landscaped setting is provided across the Site. This is further supported by the Council's EIA screening opinion provided at Appendix 3, which concludes that the proposed development will not give rise to any adverse landscape and visual impacts.

5.25 The LVIA and accompanying plans explain how the proposed development visually assimilates into the surrounding landscape, particularly towards Draycott to the north-east and wider views beyond the A50 to the south. This has been achieved through the appropriate positioning of proposed dwellings, including the size and scale of proposed buildings, set back from the northern, eastern and southern boundaries and responding to ground levels. This is supplemented by the retention and enhancement of existing ecological features, particularly boundary trees and hedgerows, along with extensive buffer planting to the north, east and south.

5.26 The proposed development will provide an attractive landscape setting, which will mature to assimilate with the Site's surroundings and avoid prominent intrusion into the countryside. The proposed development respects and reinforces the local landscape character and settlement settings, and conserves and enhances biodiversity

qualities. It is therefore considered that the proposed development satisfies this specific requirement of Policy DSR 1, and the aims of Policy DC 3: Landscape and Settlement Setting. Further details of the proposed residential development and landscaping are set out within Section 3 of this Planning Statement.

Details of surface water discharge.

- 5.27 A Drainage Strategy and associated drainage plans accompany this planning application submission, providing all necessary details of the proposed surface water discharge, as set out in Section 3 of this Statement. It is therefore considered that the proposed development satisfies this specific requirement under Policy DSR 1.

Developers should liaise with Network Rail at an early stage to identify any potential impact on the operation of the adjacent railway and agree mitigation measures as appropriate.

- 5.28 It is considered that this part of Policy DSR 1 relates more specifically to the land allocated to the south of the A50, directly neighbouring the Stoke to Derby railway line. Consequently, liaison with Network Rail is not intended to take place in respect of this proposed development, given its location north of the A50 at the furthest point from the railway line.

Measures to improve sustainable transport routes and connectivity with Blythe Bridge and surrounding area, and to protect and extend green infrastructure within the Blythe Bridge Opportunity Corridor which is identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to include the provision of suitable crossing facilities to enable access on foot and bicycle to the existing schools in Blythe Bridge, safe walking and cycle routes to and from the development to Blythe Bridge and investigation of opportunities for habitat creation/restoration including establishing wildlife corridors.

- 5.29 It is considered that this part of Policy DSR 1 relates mainly to the land allocated to the south of the A50, given its location on the opposite side of the A50 to Blythe Bridge, and its closer proximity to the Blythe Bridge Opportunity Corridor.
- 5.30 However, the proposed development ensures sustainable transport routes and connectivity with Blythe Bridge via the existing crossing points over Uttoxeter Road (A521) constructed as part of and accessed via the Phase 1 development to the west. Furthermore, the Site is accessed from the north and east via the existing PROW running through the north of the Site, which will continue to be accommodated through the Site as part of the proposed development, subject to a separate Section 257 application.
- 5.31 These enhanced existing walking and cycling routes will thus ensure safe and sustainable public access to and from the Site, connecting to local bus and rail services in Blythe Bridge and the surrounding area.
- 5.32 The proposed development also seeks to protect and extend Green Infrastructure on site, including the creation and enhancement of habitats and wildlife corridors. Open space and recreational facilities are provided on site, including two separate Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP), an expansive wildlife area including trim trails and a community orchard, and other areas of incidental open and green space.

- 5.33 Habitats to be retained, enhanced and created include existing hedgerows and trees, grassland and ponds, with extensive woodland and boundary buffer planting proposed around all boundaries of the Site, ensuring wildlife corridors continue to be provided particularly to the wider landscapes to the north and east.
- 5.34 An Ecological Appraisal, including details of the associated Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Habitat Condition Assessment undertaken in April 2021, and a Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy have all been submitted in support of the planning application. This includes assessment of the habitats present on site and their suitability for supporting any protected or priority species.
- 5.35 In summary, the findings from these assessments were that no statutory designated sites of international or national nature conservation value were identified within 5km or 2km of the Site, and no non-statutory sites were highlighted within 1km of the Site. The Site mainly comprises grassland alongside trees, hedgerows and ponds. Populations of nesting birds and a small population of Great Crested Newts were recorded on site. No other notable protected species or indications of their presence were recorded on site, including Badgers, bats and reptiles.
- 5.36 The assessments conclude that the proposed development will not give rise to any detrimental ecological impacts to habitats and protected species or sites on and off-site. Suitable mitigation measures and enhancements are proposed as part of the development, and the proposed development will lead to a Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 5.37 Sufficient high quality open space and recreational facilities, links and protection and enhancements to wildlife habitats, public access to wildlife site resources, and a net gain in biodiversity are therefore all to be delivered as part of the proposed development. This has also been informed and refined accordingly by pre-application engagement with relevant SMDC Officers and the Wildlife Trusts in respect of ecology and open space and recreation.
- 5.38 On the basis of incorporating the mitigation measures and recommendations set out in the Ecology Appraisal, the proposed development is deemed to align with current biodiversity planning policy requirements for the conservation of the natural environment at both Local and National level, and those relating to open space, recreation and Green Infrastructure. This includes Policies C 2: Sport, Recreation and Open Space, C 3: Green Infrastructure and NE 1: Biodiversity and Geological Resources of the Local Plan (2020), as well as this specific requirement of Policy DSR 1.

Cycle path crossing the site needs to be protected.

- 5.39 It is considered that this part of Policy DSR 1 relates to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) Forsbrook CP 6 which crosses the north of the Site. As stated previously in this Statement, the proposed development seeks to protect and accommodate this existing PRoW through the north of the Site to ensure its continued use as a vital pedestrian and cycle route. The proposed development is therefore considered to align with this specific part of Policy DSR 1.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 5.40 The proposed development seeks to reinforce local distinctiveness through the design and appearance of the proposed dwellings. It incorporates creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area, and respects the site and its surroundings, promoting a positive sense of place and identity through scale, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.
- 5.41 Sustainable travel and highways networks and links are accommodated successfully as part of the proposed development, whilst residential amenity and Green and Blue Infrastructure are protected and enhanced across the Site to create a safe, healthy and welcoming community environment. These design elements are detailed further in the supporting submission documents and plans, particularly the Design and Access Statement.
- 5.42 It is therefore considered that the design of the proposed development aligns with Local Plan (2020) Policy DC 1: Design Considerations, as well as the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD (2018).

Sustainable Development

- 5.43 As set out at Paragraph 7 of the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development: *“at a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”* This is achieved by the three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental set out at Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- 5.44 As identified above, the Site is situated within the settlement boundary of Blythe Bridge: a sustainable, large village settlement where growth within the District is to be focused.
- 5.45 A summary of the key economic, social and environmental benefits to be provided either directly or indirectly by the proposed development is set out in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Summary of key economic, social and environmental benefits

Sustainable Development	Benefits of the Proposals
Economic benefits	• The creation of direct and indirect jobs associated with construction of the proposed development and expenditure of residents once complete; • The economic benefits in the local area through the delivery of the Government’s New Homes Bonus and additional Council Tax revenue; • Potential to capture additional household retail (convenience and comparison) and leisure (goods and services) expenditure, every year within Blythe Bridge, Staffordshire Moorlands, and the wider Staffordshire economy.

Social benefits	• The application could include financial contributions towards increasing local school capacity and community facilities, pedestrian, cycle, highways and public transport improvements; • The provision of a variety of dwellings types, including family homes; • The provision of and/or financial contributions to new and enhanced public open space and recreational facilities. • The provision of green space, circular walking routes/trim trails and a community orchard on site. • The retention and enhancement of the Public Right of Way through the Site.
Environmental benefits	• Development of the Site represents a natural extension to the existing Phase 1 development to the west, within the existing settlement boundary, thus avoiding the need for any release of Green Belt land; • The Site is sustainably located within walking and cycling distance of a range of services and facilities; • The retention and enhancement of existing habitats including trees, ponds, hedgerows and other wildlife corridors; • The creation of new habitats and ecological features, including a dedicated ecology area to the south-east, and robust landscaping areas and buffers around the Site boundary; • The creation of further informal areas of green space; and • The inclusion of sustainable initiatives, including Sustainable Urban Drainage and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.

5.46 In terms of the economic dimension to sustainable development, house building is recognised as an important driver of economic growth and there will be economic benefits to the construction industry from the proposed development. The proposed development will create jobs during its construction phase, as well as the use of local tradesmen, services and materials which will help to sustain the local economy through supply chain multipliers.

5.47 Once completed, the proposals will provide dwellings likely accommodating economically active persons, thereby providing opportunities for employers to expand or grow their businesses. Similarly, the addition of new residents to Blythe Bridge will result in additional expenditure for local shops and services, providing a boost to expenditure in the local economy, helping to sustain existing businesses. Therefore all stages of the proposed development will assist economic recovery in some form, which is of particular importance under the current circumstances.

- 5.48 Furthermore, as a consequence of the proposed development, the Council will qualify for a New Homes Bonus payment. Local Councils can decide how to spend the New Homes Bonus; however the Government expects local Councils to consult communities about how they will spend the money, especially communities where housing stock has increased. Considerable weight should be attached to these economic benefits.
- 5.49 The proposals will secure much needed housing in the District, supporting identified needs in the District in line with adopted policy, which should be attributed considerable weight. Public open space and recreational areas and routes including trim trails and LEAPs proposed as part of the development will also create new areas for social activity, leisure and exercise.
- 5.50 With regards to the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the location of the Site represents a logical and allocated extension for built form to the east of Phase 1 at Blythe Vale, whilst remaining within walking and cycling distance of all key facilities and services to enable reduced car use.
- 5.51 The proposed development will deliver a net gain in biodiversity across the Site through the retention and enhancement of existing habitats, including the creation and improvement of a substantial ecological area of ponds, grassland, hedgerows and trees to the south-east of the Site. Other wildlife habitats and informal green spaces are also proposed, as well as Sustainable Urban Drainage infrastructure.
- 5.52 A Sustainability Statement has been submitted in support of the application, outlining the socio-economic and environmental benefits and measures and initiatives proposed and satisfied as part of the development to create a sustainable community. This includes the sustainable location of the proposed development served by necessary utility, transport and community infrastructure, its sustainable design and use and management of resources to assist in adapting to climate change. Consequently it is considered that the proposed development satisfies Policies C 1, SD 1 and SD 2 of the Local Plan (2020).
- 5.53 Moreover, further technical assessments have been undertaken and accompany the planning application, demonstrating that the proposed development does not give rise to any notable environment impacts, including in relation to flood risk, air quality, noise, archaeology, ground conditions and arboriculture. Furthermore, the Council's Screening Opinion provided at **Appendix 3** confirms that the proposed development will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. The proposed development thus controls, mitigates and protects against unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments, in line with Local Plan Policy SD 4: Pollution and Water Quality.
- 5.54 In conclusion, all of the elements outlined above highlight how the proposed development will make positive contributions to the economic, social and environmental dimensions, thus demonstrating the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

6. Planning Obligations

- 6.1 The proposed development will be subject to a series of planning obligations to ensure it is acceptable in planning terms, delivered through appropriate legal agreements including a Section 106 Agreement.
- 6.2 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:
- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - (b) directly related to the development; and
 - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 6.3 Planning obligations are also covered by Policy SS 12: Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy of the Local Plan (2020), and the Developer Contributions SPD (2004). It is understood that the Council have not yet adopted a CIL charging schedule, though that this is being explored.
- 6.4 This section therefore provides an overview of potential draft Heads of Terms proposed as the basis for the Section 106 Agreement, which have been informed by pre-application engagement with SMDC. This Section 106 Agreement is to be discussed further and agreed with SMDC and other stakeholders during the determination of the planning application.
- 6.5 Any such obligations are also to be subject to the findings of the Viability Appraisal to be submitted in support of this application. As discussed previously in this Statement, this relates particularly to affordable housing, which is not provided as part of the obligations for the proposed development.
- 6.6 A provisional allowance of £8,111.19 per plot, pro rata, has been made towards relevant Section 106 contributions, based upon the obligations sought in respect of the previous Phase 1 development approved under Ref. SMD/2018/0790. It is therefore anticipated that the following potential planning obligations will be required, as set out in the Viability Appraisal:
- Off and on-site **recreation, play and open space**, with an allowance of £1,932.00 per dwelling (£1,440 per dwelling for provision and £492 per dwelling towards future maintenance);
 - Financial contributions towards the **Local Education Authority**, with an allowance of £5,679.19 per dwelling;
 - Implementation of the submitted **Travel Plan and other measures** deemed necessary to support sustainable transport to and from the Site in discussion with the relevant highway authorities; and

- Any off-site **highways mitigation** deemed necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, through ongoing dialogue with the relevant highway authorities, with an allowance of £500 per dwelling.
- 6.7 St Modwen Homes would welcome further early discussions with the Council regarding agreeing the obligations to be applied to the grant of a planning permission to ensure that the delivery of development is not delayed as recommended by Paragraph 55 of the NPPF, which recommends early agreement.

7. Summary and Conclusions

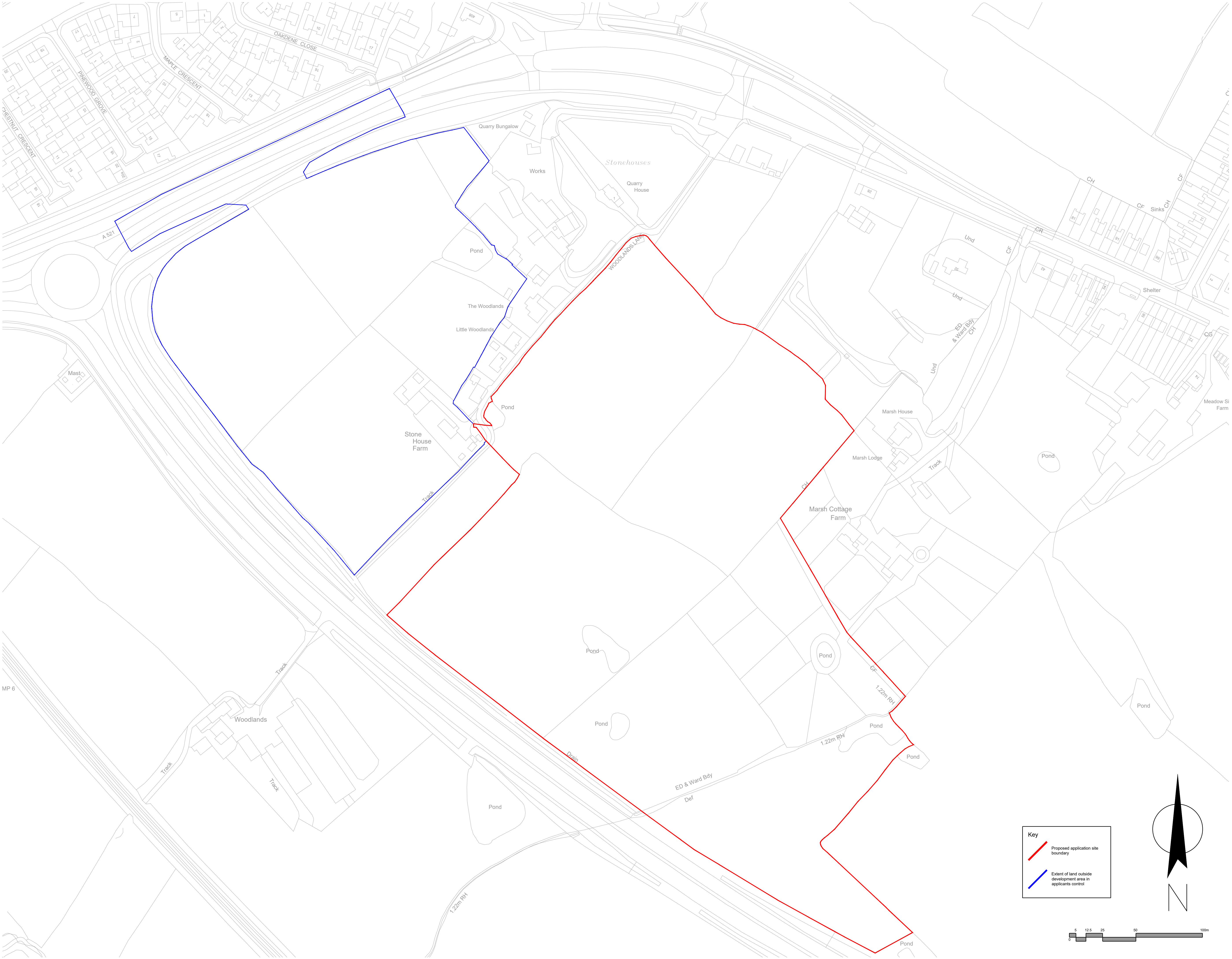
- 7.1 This Planning Statement is provided in support of a planning application seeking full planning permission for a high quality residential development of 200 dwellings at Phase 2 of Blythe Vale, Blythe Bridge.
- 7.2 The description of development for this full planning application is set out below:
- “Full planning application for residential development of 200 dwellings (Use Class C3), access and internal roads for vehicles, footpaths and cycle linkages, parking, public open space and landscaping, ecological habitats, community orchard, sustainable drainage measures, and associated infrastructure and earthworks.”*
- 7.3 The Site is located within the settlement boundary of Blythe Bridge, identified in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) as a sustainable ‘Larger Village’ settlement and suitable location for the proposed development. Adding to this, the Site is allocated for mixed use development including residential development under Policy DSR 1: Blythe Vale of the Local Plan (2020). It has been demonstrated that the proposed development accords with the Development Plan as a whole, as well as other relevant material considerations, including national policy and guidance.
- 7.4 The proposed development has been informed by pre-application engagement, including with relevant Council Officers, Highways England, Staffordshire Highways, the Wildlife Trusts, Forsbrook and Draycott-in-the-Moors Parish Councils, and the local community. St Modwen Homes are committed to delivering the highest possible standards for residential development, which has been demonstrated through the design evolution of the proposed development.
- 7.5 The proposed development will deliver a high quality, comprehensively designed residential development complemented by associated social and environmental improvements, as required by Policy DSR 1 and other relevant policies within the Local Plan (2020).
- 7.6 No notable negative impacts have been assessed as arising from the proposed development, which will deliver extensive socio-economic and environmental benefits, including:
- The provision of a variety of dwellings types, including family homes;
 - The creation of direct and indirect jobs and expenditure, including the capture of additional household retail and leisure expenditure of residents once complete;
 - The economic benefits in the local area through the delivery of the Government’s New Homes Bonus and additional Council Tax revenue;
 - Potential financial contributions towards local schools and community facilities, pedestrian, cycle, highways and public transport improvements;

- The provision of and/or financial contributions to new and enhanced public open space and recreational facilities, including two separate LEAPs on site;
- The provision, retention and enhancement of green space, wildlife habitats, and walking and cycling routes including the Public Right of Way through the Site.
- Accessibility and support to a range of local services and facilities; and
- The inclusion of sustainable initiatives, including Sustainable Urban Drainage and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.

7.7 In conclusion, the Proposed Scheme is in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole and is supported by other material considerations and delivers the economic, social, and environment objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. The proposals will deliver much needed housing on a site allocated for residential development.

7.8 On this basis, it is considered that the Proposed Scheme constitutes sustainable development in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. The planning application should therefore be approved without delay, subject to appropriate planning conditions and obligations.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



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rev.	date	description
A	22-06-21	Application red line boundary revised

Roberts Limbrick
ARCHITECTS

project
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
PHASE 2
BLYTHE VALE
-

client
ST. MODWEN HOMES

drawing
SITE LOCATION PLAN
-
-

status
PLANNING

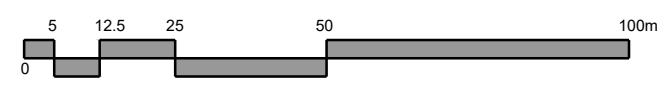
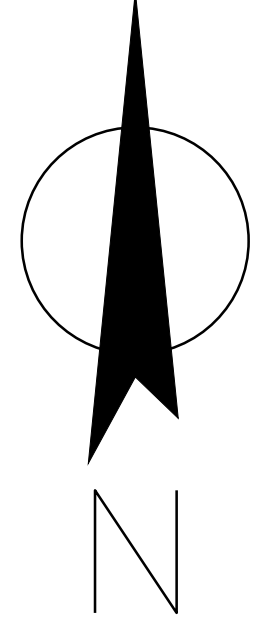
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region originator year level type code number	

Key
Proposed application site boundary
Extent of land outside development area in applicants control



Appendix 2: Proposed Site Layout Plan