

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND AT SUGAR STREET
RUSHTON SPENCER**

NOVEMBER 2021

Site Address:

Land off Sugar Street, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, SK11 0RN

Applicant:

Rider Enterprises

Proposal:

Erection of 4no. dwellings and associated works

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 29th November 2021

Job Reference: RDP/2021/102

Report Prepared By:

Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DL
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Rider Enterprises to seek full planning permission for the erection of 4no. dwellings on land east of Sugar Street, Rushton Spencer.
- 1.2 The proposal will comprise of two detached dwellings, along with a pair of semi-detached dwellings, served off a new vehicular access point located broadly midway along the site boundary with Sugar Street. The vehicular access will curve round into the site to serve the front elevations of the dwellings. To the north of the site access, it is proposed to create a communal gravelled parking area (6 spaces) for use by existing local residents, enclosed behind an existing dry stone wall.
- 1.3 House Type A (Plot A) is to be located to the immediate south of the proposed vehicular access and will comprise of a detached split-level dwelling standing to a maximum ridge height of 8 metres. Its accommodation will comprise of a kitchen / dining area, living room, utility, plant room, w.c. and storeroom at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) and bathroom at first floor level. An area of amenity space will extend to the rear of the dwelling, enclosed by the existing hedgerow fronting onto Sugar Street, and by a new hedgerow along its side site boundary. The dwelling is to be constructed from natural stone with a Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiled roof atop, and a standing seam zinc roof to its lean-to. The dwelling will benefit from two off-road parking spaces to its east, served off the new vehicular access.
- 1.4 House Type B (Plots B and C) are to be located to the south of Plot A and will comprise a pair of semi-detached split level dwellings standing to a maximum ridge height of 8.1 metres. The accommodation of each of this type of dwelling will comprise of a kitchen / dining area, living room, utility, plant room, w.c.

and storeroom at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) and bathroom at first floor level. Each dwelling will benefit from its own area of amenity space to the rear of the dwelling, enclosed by the existing hedgerow forming the boundary with Sugar Street and by new hedgerows along their respective side site boundaries. These dwellings are also to be constructed from natural stone with a Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiled roof atop, and a standing seam zinc roof to their lean-to projections. Both dwellings will benefit from two off-road parking spaces to their east, served off the new vehicular access.

1.5 House Type C (Plot D) will be located to the east of Plots B and C, and will comprise of a split-level two-and-a-half storey dwelling built into the hillside, and standing to a maximum ridge height of 9.4 metres. Its accommodation will comprise of an integral double garage, lobby, w.c. and plant room at ground floor, a kitchen / dining room, living room, utility, two bedrooms and bathroom at upper ground floor, and a Master suite and additional bedroom within the roof space at first floor level. The dwelling will be constructed from natural stone with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop. The dwelling will benefit from two off-street parking spaces within its integral garage, with additional parking in front. An area of amenity space will extend to the north and south of the dwelling enclosed by new hedgerows, a dry stone wall, and existing vegetation.

1.6 The application is accompanied by the following documentation which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement:

- Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Charnia Ecology)
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Tree Heritage)
- Design & Access Statement (CTD Architects)
- Energy and Sustainability Statement (CTD Architects)

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site lies within the village of Rushton Spencer and comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of land that extends to some 0.42 hectares. The site comprises an existing field located on the eastern side of Sugar Street and comprises semi-improved lowland meadow grassland. The majority of the western boundary of the site is enclosed along by a mature indigenous hedgerow, with a small section comprising of a dry stone wall. Beyond the hedgerow lies the carriageway of Sugar Street which runs in a broadly north / south direction at this point. The junction of Sugar Street with the Leek Old Road lies to the immediate southwest of the application site.
- 2.2 To the west of the site on the opposite side of Sugar Street lies the car park to the Royal Oak Public House which is enclosed by a high stone wall. A terrace of cottages lies to the northwest, and which overlook the northernmost end of the application site. To the north of the site runs a narrow country lane known as Alley Lane, beyond which lies Alley House and a telephone exchange building. Alley Lane rises up in an easterly direction towards the existing dwelling of White Lodge which encloses the eastern site boundary. A cluster of trees and an existing hedgerow enclose the southern site boundary, with an existing dwelling (Billy's Croft) located beyond that.
- 2.3 The site, along with the rest of the village, is located within the rural area, but was previously located within the defined settlement boundary under the 1998 Local Plan, and also within the village infill boundary within the Preferred Options version Local Plan. The site does not form part of a Conservation Area and there are no statutorily listed buildings located within close proximity of the site. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (Low-Probability of Flooding) and is classified as Poor Quality Agricultural Land by the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification Map.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*
- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*
- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*
- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*

- *a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;*
- *development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;*
- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.*
- *support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon*

3.3 Policy SS9 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Smaller Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. This will be achieved by a number of actions, including:

- *Enabling limited new housing development, including small infill schemes in accordance with Policy H1.*

3.4 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable

tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved via a number of actions, including:

- *Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with policy H1.*

3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Housing Provision’ and states that outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the spatial strategy will be supported provided that:

- *The development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development; and*
- *The development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.*

3.6 Policy H1 also requires that all housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport, and which have good access to services. All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis

subject to considerations such as viability and design. The policy also requires 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.

3.7 Policy SD1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Sustainable Use of Resources' and states that the Council will require all development to make sustainable use of resources and adapt to climate change. This will be achieved by (amongst other measures):

- *Having regard to the BMV agricultural classification of the land, with a preference for the use of lower quality over high quality agricultural land. Development should also aim to minimise soil disturbance and to retain ecological connectivity as far as possible.*
- *The Council will require applicants for all major-scale planning applications (10 or more residential units) to demonstrate that they have considered the energy efficiency, water conservation, sourcing of construction materials, and site orientation aspects of the scheme, and where possible the feasibility of integrating micro-renewables.*

3.8 Policy SD3 of the Local Plan relates to 'Sustainability Measures in Development' and states that the Council will support further carbon-saving or water-saving measures in both new and existing developments, in the following ways:

1. *Supporting developers who propose exceeding the thermal efficiency or water conservation standards required by law for new buildings or extensions, at the time of the application. In the case of larger*

developments such as housing estates the Council will support measures such as 'communal' renewables, or District Heating installations.

- 2. The Council will support measures by landowners/developers designed to contribute to existing or emerging District Heating networks (for example by connecting 'exporters', with receptors, of heat).*
- 3. The Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).*

3.9 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area*
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance*
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution.*

- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.*

3.10 Policy DC3 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Landscape and Settlement Setting’ and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. *Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence*
2. *Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character, and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence*
3. *Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds*
4. *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape*
5. *Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park.*

3.11 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Biodiversity and Geological Resources’ and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management

and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- *Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:*
 - a) *here is no appropriate alternative site available; and*
 - b) *all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and*
 - c) *appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible*
 - d) *the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.*
- *Expecting all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.*

3.12 Policy NE2 of the Local Plan relates to 'Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows' and states that the Council will protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration. This will be achieved by:

- *Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss*
- *Requiring new developments to provide tree cover that secures a good level of sustainability through tree retention, planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the on site replacement of any trees that are removed with sufficient tree planting to replace or increase the canopy cover on-site as appropriate. Landscaping schemes will also be required to mitigate against negative landscape impact and complement the design of new development and make provision for future maintenance. Where it is not possible to secure this new or replacement tree planting within the site, the Council will work with applicants to ascertain if a suitable site(s) can be found off-site for replacement planting in the locality*
- *Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows.*

3.13 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. *Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.*
2. *Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.*
3. *Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.*
4. *Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of significantly boosting the supply of housing, the delivery of rural housing, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and ensuring a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD provides advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Principles for Development SPG

- 4.3 The adopted Design Principles for Development SPG was the forerunner to the Design Guide SPD and is still applied as supplementary guidance by the Local Authority. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

- 4.4 This document assessed the different landscape character types throughout Staffordshire and identifies the site as lying within the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Character Area. The document identifies the key characteristics of this landscape type along with a number of incongruous landscape features. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application site is located within the rural area and forms part of the village of the village of Rushton Spencer, wherein policies SS9, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan make provision for new residential development provided that the development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development, and that the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 5.2 The application site lies within the main core of the village, which is defined as a 'smaller village' within policy SS9 of the Local Plan. The site previously formed part of its defined settlement under the 1998 Local Plan and was also identified as falling within the proposed settlement infill boundary under the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan before the aforementioned criteria based policy (Policy H1) was adopted.
- 5.3 The development of this parcel of land will relate well to the existing pattern of development of the village, with residential development noted to enclose the northern, eastern, southern, and northwestern boundaries of the site, with the public house car park enclosing the remainder. Consequently, the development will not create or extend ribbon development and amounts to a form of infill development that is in keeping with the existing pattern of development within the village.
- 5.4 The dwellings will have a clustered layout which reflects the wider settlement pattern of this part of Rushton Spencer, and in views along Sugar Street in each direction, the development will be read against the backdrop of existing built

development to the north and the south, and also against the backdrop of the rising landscape that it forms part of, with White Lodge located at the top. The 3D Visuals submitted to accompany the application show how the site will integrate with its surroundings and demonstrate that the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

- 5.5 The site is furthermore noted to constitute ‘poor quality’ agricultural land within the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification. Policy SD1 of the Local Plan seeks to target new residential development on lower quality agricultural land and the proposed development accords with that objective. The proposed dwellings will furthermore not be isolated in the countryside; they will be well related to the existing residential development that surrounds the site, and consequently the proposal will derive no conflict with paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.6 Having regard to the considerations set out above, the principle of residential development on this site is considered to be acceptable, and accords with the provisions of policies SS9, SS10, H1 and SD1 of the Local Plan and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Landscape Impact

- 5.7 The Planning For Landscape Change SPG identifies the application site as forming part of the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Character Area. The characteristic landscape features of this area include a strong ridge and valley landform, small dissected stream valleys, small sunken lanes, low intensity pasture farming, intact hedgerow pattern, drystone walls and stone buildings, hedgerow trees, broadleaved valley woodlands, conifer plantations and many isolated properties. A number of incongruous landscape features are also identified including an expanding urban edge, fencing, present and past

quarrying and mining activities, busy roads, power lines and localised industrial and residential expansion.

- 5.8 The application proposals respect the characteristic landscape features of the area by retaining the existing hedgerows, trees, and dry stone walls, with the dwellings to be constructed from stone. The proposal furthermore does not amount to the expansion of the urban edge or residential expansion within the countryside, since it amounts to an infill site that is surrounded by existing built development within the main core of the village.
- 5.9 The SPG goes on to identify that new tree planting of a small to medium scale is generally appropriate in this landscape, tying into the existing woodlands and hedgerows. The submitted Strategic Landscape Plan accompanying the application demonstrates the extent of new tree planting that is to be undertaken on the site, and which includes broadleaved specimens, and links to the existing hedgerows and trees that enclose the NW and SE boundaries of the site. The proposed development will therefore not give rise to harm to the character of the landscape and meets the requirements of policy DC3 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.10 The adopted Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for Development SPG identify a number of key design parameters that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of delivering high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The guidance includes, inter-alia, the following requirements:
- ***Buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape – best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground-hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines:*** The proposed dwellings accord

with this objective and seek to work with the levels across the site to ensure that the dwellings sit comfortably within the landscape. The dwellings will also have strongly defined eaves and ridge lines.

- ***A new dwelling should respect the scale of those surrounding it.*** The surrounding area exhibits a wide variety of development types including a mixture of single storey and two storey dwellings. The proposed dwellings adopt a split level design, with the dwellings closest to Sugar Street having a two storey scale to the rear, and a single storey scale to their front. The detached plot to the east likewise constitutes a split level design that works with the existing slope of the site and is of a scale that is in keeping with surrounding development. The section drawings and 3D visuals accompanying the application demonstrate how the scheme works with the existing levels of the site.
- ***Using a similar size and proportion of opening throughout.*** The proposed window size and proportions are generally consistent throughout the scheme and in keeping with traditional vernacular.
- ***Limiting the number of openings to achieve a high solid to void ratio.*** The proposed dwellings each exhibit a high solid to void ratio
- ***Arranging the openings harmoniously, often in a formal, symmetrical manner:*** The proposed development encompasses a simple arrangement of openings, aligned in a broadly symmetrical manner within the elevations, in particular the plots located towards Sugar Street.
- ***Sited to maximise solar gain and increasing proportion of glazing on south facing elevations;*** The proposed dwellings, with the exception of

Plot 4, are generally orientated east / west so as to respect the character and appearance of the area. Plot 4 nevertheless has a south facing aspect in the interests of optimising solar gain.

- ***The roof form should be simple with a dominant roof line and, where appropriate to the locality or the building, emphasised by gables:*** The proposed dwellings each encompass a dominant roof line, emphasised by gables. Each dwelling also benefits from a single chimney stack to further reinforce Moorlands vernacular.
- ***The roof should span the shorter side where practicable:*** The proposed roof of the dwellings spans the shorter side of the roof on all plots.
- ***Flat roofs should be avoided:*** No flat roofs are proposed on any of the dwellings.
- ***The roof pitch and materials should match those of the locality:*** The proposed roof pitch is consistent with the vernacular of the Moorlands and will facilitate the use of Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiles. The proposed dwellings are also to be constructed from natural stone which is a characteristic of the local area and the wider landscape within which it sits.
- ***Window patterns should be aligned in columns and storeys rather than randomly placed:*** The proposed development accords with this objective.
- ***Window frames should be recessed by a minimum of 50mm to avoid a flat appearance to the elevation and to emphasise the solidity of the walls:*** The proposed windows are to be recessed within the elevations by 50mm to accord with this requirement. Such detailing can be secured by way of an appropriately worded condition

- ***Traditional surround to doors and windows should be incorporated, for example stone cills and lintels;*** The proposed development encompasses the provision of stone cills and lintels, as well as utilised corbelled eaves and verges.

5.11 The above assessment demonstrates that the proposed development responds positively to the Local Authority's adopted design guidance and encompasses a form of development that will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5.12 The proposed layout of the site has also been designed so that the existing indigenous hedgerow running along the western site boundary with Sugar Street can be retained, thereby preserving this feature within the streetscene. The existing dry stone wall at the NW end of the site is also to be retained, behind which it is proposed to create a communal parking area for use by local residents. Further supplementary landscaping is also to undertaken to enhance the biodiversity of the site and to anchor the development into its surroundings. The accompany Energy and Sustainability Statement furthermore demonstrates how the proposed development will respond to the challenges of climate change.

5.13 The resultant design and layout of the development will deliver a high quality form of development that is in keeping with its surroundings, and which accords with the provisions of policies DC1, SD3, H1 and SS1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework adopted supplementary planning guidance.

Residential Amenity

5.14 The layout of the proposed dwellings and their interrelationship to one another and to surrounding built development have been carefully considered

so as to ensure that a satisfactory level of residential amenity will be achieved. There are no neighbouring properties located directly to the west of Plots A, B and C, and so no conflict with space about dwellings standards will ensue from their respective rear elevations. The dwellings are also sited to the southeast of the existing cottages that front onto Sugar Street (22m away at their closest point) and consequently will not derive any conflict with the space about dwellings standards in relation to the windows of those properties.

- 5.15 Plot D is set at a lower land level to White Lodge to the northeast whose principal windows face in a westerly / northwesterly direction looking out over the undeveloped part of the site. The site sections accompanying the application demonstrate that Plot D will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of White Lodge. The site sections also demonstrate that the dwellings on Plots B and C will sit at a lower level to the adjacent cottage to the south (Billy's Croft) and consequently will not give rise to any loss of amenity to the occupiers of that property.
- 5.16 The dwellings are also set sufficient far enough apart from one another so as not to derive any conflict with the space about dwellings standards, with Plot D located 16m east of Plots B and C (minimum distance of 13m required). Each of the dwellings will also benefit from its own area of amenity space which exceeds the recommended minimum standard of 65 square metres, with Plots A, B and C benefitting from a good degree of natural enclosure by the existing hedgerow that fronts onto Sugar Street.
- 5.17 The internal accommodation of each dwelling is also sufficient to meet the requirements of the DCLG Technical Housing Standards (Policy H1 refers). The proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residential amenity and in terms of the level of residential

amenity it will afford the future occupiers of the dwellings, and meets the requirements of policies DC1, H1 and SS1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety & Parking

- 5.18 The application site is to be accessed via a new vehicular access off Sugar Street, positioned approximately mid-way along the western boundary of the site. The access will serve the proposed dwellings, as well as a communal parking area which is to be made available to local residents. The access will benefit from good visibility on egress onto Sugar Street and will be wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another. The site furthermore occupies a central village location within easy reach of the services and facilities available within the village, and within easy reach of public transport connections on the Macclesfield Road.
- 5.19 The development will also provide two off-street parking spaces for each of the dwellings on Plots A, B and C, and a minimum of 3 off-street parking spaces to serve Plot 4. Such levels of parking provision accord with the adopted car parking standards set out within the Local Plan. In addition, the proposal also incorporates the provision of a communal parking area on the north side of the proposed access, with pedestrian connectivity onto Sugar Street, which is to be made available to local residents to park. There are a number of cottages to the northwest of the site which do not benefit from any form of off-street parking, and this facility will enable those vehicles to be parked off the highway, thereby improving highway safety along this part of Sugar Street.
- 5.20 Having regard to the above considerations it is conclude that the proposal will not give rise to any severe residual impacts to highway within the locality and accords with the provisions of policy T1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology / Trees

- 5.21 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Charnia Ecology which has assessed the habitat potential of the site. The report concludes that there will be a negligible impact on Great Crested Newts, Badgers, Bats, Otters, and Water Voles. Some short term impacts are highlighted in respect of birds and invertebrates with the report recommending the provision of new bird nesting opportunities around the site, with the remainder of the grassland utilised for enhancements for invertebrates, including the provision of strips of wildflowers, the provision of deadwood piles and the provision of exposures of bare ground. A survey for reptiles prior to the commencement of the development was also identified.
- 5.22 The recommendations set out within the Preliminary Ecological Assessment can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition, and along with the numerous additional trees and hedgerows that are proposed to be planted within the Strategic Landscaping Scheme, will secure a net gain to biodiversity. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.23 The application is also accompanied by an Arboricultural Report prepared by Tree Heritage which has assessed the impact of the development on seven existing trees, three hedgerows, and one group of trees on the site (the majority of which are located off site). The Arboricultural Report demonstrates that the development will not have an adverse impact on any of these surrounding trees and sets out recommendations in respect of tree protection measures during the construction phase. These measures can be secured by way of an appropriately worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NE2 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The proposed development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development.
- The proposed development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.
- The application site comprises poor quality agricultural land.
- The proposal will not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside.
- The proposal will not give rise to harm to the character and appearance of the landscape, and will retain / introduce features that will reinforce and enhance the key characteristics of the landscape.
- The proposed scale, appearance and layout of the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and wider Moorlands vernacular.
- The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity and will provide a satisfactory level of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings.

- The proposed development will not result in any severe residual impacts to highway safety in the locality and will provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of future occupiers.
- The proposal will derive a betterment to highway safety by providing a communal parking area for use by local residents who do not currently have any off-street parking.
- The proposed development will secure a net gain to biodiversity, and will safeguard existing trees within and around the site.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS9, SS10, H1, SD1, SD3, DC1, DC3, NE1, NE2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, the SMDC Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for New Development SPG and the Planning For Landscape Change SPG.