

CHAPTER 6: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

6.1 This chapter has been prepared by HOW Planning LLP and sets out the relevant planning policy context against which the development proposals should be considered. The chapter identifies all of the relevant policies which form the Development Plan for the area in addition to relevant National Planning Policy guidance. An analysis of how the scheme complies with planning policy is contained in the Supporting Planning Statement, which has been produced by HOW Planning LLP (June 2016), and is submitted in support of the planning application re-submission.

Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policies

6.2 National planning policies, as contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) promote sustainable development.

Development Plan Policies

6.3 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the application be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.4 The Development Plan Policies for the purposes of this application therefore comprises:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (adopted March 2014);
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010-2026 (adopted March 2013); and
- 'Saved' Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan (1994 to 2006).

Planning Guidance

6.5 In addition to the above documents, relevant material considerations should also be taken into account in determining planning applications. In this instance, this comprises the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.6 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published, consolidating previous national planning guidance. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

6.7 The NPPF does not alter the statutory status of the Development Plan and planning law still requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.8 The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government's key objectives of facilitating economic growth and securing sustainable development. These overarching policies seek to integrate the needs of planning and transport whilst focussing development in the most appropriate locations, thereby protecting and enhancing the environment.

6.9 The different roles and character of different areas should be taken into account, as well as supporting the thriving rural communities within it. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF highlights that the planning system should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. This should be done by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available, in the right places, and at the right time.

6.10 The above is further supported by Paragraph 10 which states:

"plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development, in different areas".¹

6.11 Central to the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the need for the planning system to support economic growth. Paragraph 14 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of the policy for decision making:

"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For plan-making this means that:

- *Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
 - *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; or*
 - *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

For decision-taking this means:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or where relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *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; or*

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, pp. 3 para 10 (March 2012)

- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*²

6.12 Paragraph 22 seeks to discourage the retention of sites in an employment allocation if there is no reasonable prospect of it coming forward for that use. As such any planning applications for alternative use should have regard to market signals and the overall need for different land uses within the area, stating:

*"Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities."*³

6.13 Paragraph 47 requires Local Authorities to boost significantly their supply of housing. In order to achieve this they should:

- *"use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;*
- *Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20%(moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;*
- *identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;*
- *for market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target; and*
- *set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.*⁴

6.14 Paragraph 17 identifies a set of 12 core land-use planning principles that should underpin plan-making and decision-taking. Principles of particular relevance to the proposed scheme include:

- *"be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should*

² Et seq. pp.4 para.14

³ Et seq. pp. 7 para 22

⁴ Et seq. page 12, paragraph. 47

provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;

- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of food risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy); and*
- *encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value."*

6.15 Paragraph 19 highlights the Government's commitment to ensuring that the planning system actively supports sustainable economic growth and that it does not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth.

6.16 The NPPF seeks to promote and support a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states (with HOW emphasis in bold):

"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and*

expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and

- *promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

6.17 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which included a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when the site was launched. The PPG provides planning guidance on a range of planning matters and supplements the policies contained in the NPPF.

Development Plan Policies

Local Planning Policy

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (March 2014)

6.18 The Core Strategy, adopted in March 2014, is the land use strategy for the District. It includes policies to guide development and proposals for the use of land to ensure the needs of the District’s population are met.

6.19 Table 6.1 below shows a summary of the Core Strategy policies which are considered to be of relevance.

Table 6.1: Relevant Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Policies

Core Strategy Policy	Summary
SS1 ‘Development Principles’	Core Strategy policy SS1 ‘Development Principles’ seeks to ensure that development contributes to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the District.
SS1a ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’	Core Strategy policy SS1a ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’ transposes the provisions of paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) into the Development Plan.
SS6c ‘Other Rural Areas Area Strategy’	Core Strategy policy SS6c ‘Other Rural Areas Area Strategy’ provides guidance on development within other rural areas. Of particular relevance to the proposed scheme is section 5 which seeks to enhance tourism opportunities in rural areas.
SS7 ‘Churnet Valley Area Strategy’	Core Strategy policy SS7 ‘Churnet Valley Area Strategy’ provides specific guidance on the land use strategy for the Churnet Valley
E3 ‘Tourism and Cultural’	Core Strategy policy E3 ‘Tourism and Cultural Development’ highlights the Council’s aspirations in terms of tourism and cultural development.
R1 ‘Rural Diversification’	Core Strategy policy R1 ‘Rural Diversification’ seeks to promote sustainable rural diversification of the rural economy
DC3 ‘Landscape and Settlement Setting’	Core Strategy policy DC3 ‘Landscape and Settlement Setting’ sets out provisions for protecting and, where possible, enhancing the local landscape and settlement setting

Core Strategy Policy	Summary
NE1 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources'	Core Strategy NE1 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' seeks to ensure that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas are conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010-2026 (adopted March 2013)

6.20 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010-2026 was adopted in March 2013. The aim of the Plan is to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the provision of waste management facilities to manage the waste produced in the area, and also to manage the change in the type of facilities that are required to re-use, recycle and recover more from the waste produced.

Table 6.2: Relevant Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy Policies

Waste Core Strategy Policy	Summary
Policy 1.2 'Make better use of waste associated with non-waste related development'	<p>Policy 1.2 'Make better use of waste associated with non-waste related development' seeks to ensure that as far as practicable all major developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. "Use /Address waste as a resource; ii. Minimise waste as far as possible; iii. Demonstrate the use of sustainable design and construction techniques i.e: resource-efficiency in terms of sourcing of materials, construction methods, and demolition; iv. Enable the building to be easily decommissioned or reused for a new purpose; and enable the future recycling of the building fabric to be used for its constituent material; v. Maximise on-site management of construction, demolition and excavation waste arising during construction; vi. Make provision for waste collection to facilitate, where practicable, separated waste collection systems; and, vii. Be supported by a site waste management plan."

'Saved' Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan (1994 to 2006) (adopted December 1999)

6.21 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan (1994 to 2006) was adopted in December 1999. In September 2007 a "Direction letter" issued on behalf of the Secretary of State, confirmed those policies in the Minerals Local Plan that are saved and could continue to be used in determining planning applications. 26 of the 58 policies of the Plan were saved as well as 5 of the 7 proposals, including the Minerals proposals at Moneystone Quarry.

Table 6.3: Relevant 'Saved' Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan Policies

'Saved' Minerals Local Plan Policy	Summary
Proposal 7	Proposal 7 of the Minerals Local Plan is a saved allocation which identifies Moneystone Quarry as an area of search for the winning and working of silica sand for use as a raw material at Moneystone processing plant only. Consideration needs to be had to the impact of any proposal to remove the Moneystone processing plant on any opportunity to implement this allocation.
'Saved' Policy 5	Saved policy 5 of the Minerals Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments do not sterilise or seriously hinder the extraction of mineral deposits of economic value which are capable of being worked.

Other Relevant Material Considerations

6.22 In addition to the planning policy set out above, other relevant planning guidance should also be taken into account in determining planning applications. In this instance, this comprises the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (March 2014)

6.23 The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (CVM) was adopted by the Council in March 2014 and has a major influence on future planning decisions and strategies affecting the area. It is a material consideration in the determination of this application which should be afforded considerable weight.

6.24 The CVM, which was subject to extensive community consultation over a period of 3 years, identifies key opportunity sites, including Moneystone Quarry. It provides an overview of the site, the constraints and opportunities associated with creating a high quality leisure development and a development strategy.

6.25 The Development Strategy for the former Moneystone Quarry is as follows:

"Development Strategy

- *New leisure development based around restoration of the quarry*
- *May be the potential for a complementary renewable energy scheme on the site.*
- *Appropriate uses:*
 - *Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total.*
 - *Outdoor recreation facilities – including walking, cycling, horse riding and climbing*
 - *Hub within Zone 1. Recreational lake to include non-motorised water based activities in Zone 3*

The Concept Plan identifies a number of Zones for potential development. These are indicative and are as follows:

Zone 1 - Quarry 1

Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.

Zone 2 - Quarry 2

Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.

Zone 3 - part of Quarry 3

Recreational lake.

Zone 4 - part of Quarry 3

Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Consideration should be given to the impact on the SSSI of development. Any development should conserve and enhance the SSSI.

Zone 5 - part of Quarry 2

Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment."

Conclusions

- 6.26 In summary, this chapter has set out the relevant planning policy context relevant to the development proposals for Moneystone Park. Further analysis of the application proposals re-submission, in respect of their compliance with planning policy, is provided within the accompanying Supporting Planning Statement (HOW Planning, June 2016).