



**Site Allocations Plan for Stratford-on-Avon District
to accompany the Core Strategy**

**Intention to Prepare a Local Plan
Regulation 18 Consultation**

August 2014

How to Comment

The period for comments is from **Thursday 21 August to 5pm on Thursday 2 October 2014**. Comments received after the deadline may not be considered.

This consultation includes 4 questions which you are invited to answer and a 'Call for Sites' request. You can respond in the following ways:



Online via the interactive consultation document at:

www.stratford.gov.uk/siteallocations



By completing the comment form and emailing it to:

policy.consultation@stratford-dc.gov.uk



By completing the comment form and posting it to:

FREEPOST RSLH – ZYKJ – TYAZ, Stratford on Avon DC, PO BOX 5341,
Stratford upon Avon, CV37 1LE

Copies of this consultation document and the accompanying Statement of Consultation, which gives full details of this consultation, are available on the District Council's website at www.stratford.gov.uk/siteallocations or from the District Council offices at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX.

If you have any queries regarding this consultation, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01789 260334 or email planning.policy@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

If you find the text in this document difficult to read we can supply it in a format better suited to your needs. Please telephone 01789 260334.

1. Background and Purpose

Why do we need a Plan?

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is obliged to prepare a plan that meets the housing, economic and community needs of Stratford-on-Avon District. This plan should include the planning policies and site allocations for new development that the District Council, as the local planning authority, will use to determine planning applications.

Rather than prepare a single plan, the District Council has chosen to prepare separate plans that should be read together, namely: the Core Strategy, Gypsy and Traveller Plan, and the Site Allocations Plan. The rationale for this approach reflects the need to have the Core Strategy in place as soon as possible. Along with Neighbourhood Plans prepared by town or parish councils, and the Minerals and Waste Local Plans prepared by Warwickshire County Council, these plans will form the statutory Development Plan for Stratford-on-Avon District.



How does the Site Allocations Plan relate to the Core Strategy?

The Core Strategy identifies the overall amount, distribution and strategic locations for development, setting the policy context for the Site Allocations Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. Including detailed site allocations in the Core Strategy would cause further delay so the District Council is preparing a separate Site Allocations Plan that will identify specific non-strategic sites for development. Preparing separate documents concurrently avoids the potential for delay but allows timely progress still to be made.

The District Council is progressing with the preparation of the Core Strategy. The proposed submission version of the Core Strategy was agreed by Council on 12 May 2014 and consultation on its 'soundness' ended on 17 July 2014. It is anticipated that in September it will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for examination by an independent Inspector to check that it is fit for purpose and has been prepared properly. Final adoption is anticipated in April 2015. A similar process will apply to the Site Allocations Plan.



To find out more about the Core Strategy please visit www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy

How does the Site Allocations Plan relate to Neighbourhood Plans?

Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by town and parish councils in collaboration with the local community. To date, over 20 Neighbourhood Plans are at various stages of preparation across the District, although there is no obligation for a community to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans have to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and can identify sites for new development. There is therefore, a potential overlap between Neighbourhood Plans and the Site Allocations Plan.

Whilst the District Council is keen to encourage parishes to prepare Neighbourhood Plans and offers support to communities in this respect, it is important that the District Council can demonstrate that a sufficient number of deliverable sites have been identified to meet the District's housing requirement, as set out in the Core Strategy.

As such, where the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is progressing and a Town or Parish Council has submitted an application for a Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation to the District Council, the District Council will be led by the Neighbourhood Plan. However, where a Neighbourhood Plan is not being prepared and no area designation has been submitted by **2 October 2014**, the District Council will identify suitable sites for development through the Site Allocations Plan. This work, will of course involve the parish council and the local community.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

This consultation is the first stage in the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan. In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the District Council is required to notify consultees of the subject of the plan which it is proposing to prepare, and then invite them to make representations about the contents of that plan.

This consultation comprises 4 questions and an invitation to suggest suitable sites for consideration through a 'call for sites' exercise. You can respond to any or all of these questions. Details of how to comment, including contact details for the Planning Policy Team, can be found in the inside front cover of this document. Please note: this consultation is not an opportunity to comment on the overall development strategy or the categorisation of settlements as these are matters that are dealt with in the Core Strategy.

What will happen next?

The District Council will take any comments received into account in the preparation of the plan itself. It will then publish a draft plan setting out its preferred options. This draft plan will then be subject to further public consultation, enabling everyone to have their say on the proposed site allocations. It is anticipated that this public consultation will take place during Winter 2014/15.

2. Settlement Boundaries

Core Strategy Context

Taking account of the dispersed settlement pattern and rural nature of the District, the Core Strategy proposes to disperse the majority of new homes and employment to the existing settlements comprising the main town of Stratford-upon-Avon; the 8 Main Rural Centres of Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Henley-in-Arden, Kineton, Shipston-on-Stour, Southam, Studley and Wellesbourne; and 4 categories of Local Service Villages. Much of the remainder of development is proposed to be built at a new settlement near Gaydon and Lighthorne Heath and on small unallocated sites elsewhere across the rural area.



Policy CS.15 sets the distribution strategy and settlement hierarchy for the District for the period 2011 to 2031. The Proposed Submission Core Strategy can be viewed online at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy.

Purpose of Settlement Boundaries

The purpose of settlement boundaries is to distinguish land within the boundary where new development is acceptable 'in principle', from land outside the boundary where, subject to certain exemptions, development is not acceptable. Settlement boundaries therefore help prevent encroachment into the countryside and this is particularly important in the Green Belt. Boundaries would be drawn around the existing extent of the built-up area of the settlement but would also need to include any land allocated for development. The Core Strategy acknowledges the need to revise the settlement boundaries for Stratford-upon-Avon and the 8 Main Rural Centres to reflect recent developments and specific allocations. As well as making any further necessary amendments to these boundaries, it is proposed that the Site Allocations Plan will set settlement boundaries for the Local Service Villages.

Green Belt

The north-western part of the District is within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Green Belt is a strategic policy designation that seeks to prevent inappropriate development and urban sprawl. The fundamental purpose of Green Belt policy is to maintain land as permanently open, i.e. undeveloped. Currently, the Main Rural Centres of Alcester, Henley-in-Arden and Studley are 'inset' from, but largely surrounded by the Green Belt, whilst the Local Service Villages are 'washed over' by the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation of a Local Plan.

There are two approaches to identifying boundaries for settlements in the Green Belt depending on the scale of development:

- The settlement to be ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt with the boundary defining the extent of the built-up area. Green Belt policy, which supports the principle of limited infill and small-scale development to meet an identified local need, would continue to apply to the settlement.
- The settlement to be ‘inset’ from, but surrounded by, the Green Belt with the boundary defining the extent of the built-up area and the edge of the Green Belt. Green Belt policy would not apply within the settlement.

In deciding the most appropriate approach to settlement boundaries within the Green Belt, the District Council will take into account the size of the village and the scale of the housing requirement as well as the contribution the village makes to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt. However, it should be noted that it is not the District Council’s preference to alter Green Belt boundaries or to change its overall extent.

The Green Belt includes both undeveloped ‘greenfield’ and previously developed ‘brownfield’ land. The quality of the landscape is not a Green Belt consideration.



Building in the Green Belt is generally inappropriate, although there are exceptions, including for buildings for agricultural use, outdoor sport and recreation, redevelopment of brownfield land, and the limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs.

National Green Belt policy is set out in Paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF and can be viewed at www.communities.gov.uk/nppf. Policy CS.10 in the Proposed Submission Core Strategy sets the approach to Green Belt. The can be viewed online at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy.

Identifying Settlement Boundaries

It is proposed that the Site Allocations Plan will cover the following:

- Amendments to existing built-up area settlement boundaries for Stratford-upon-Avon and the eight Main Rural Centres
- Definition of built-up area settlement boundaries for each Local Service Village outside the Green Belt
- Definition of built-up area settlement boundaries or ‘inset’ Green Belt boundaries, as appropriate, for each Local Service Village within the Green Belt



Question 1:

Do you have any comments about the proposed inclusion of settlement boundaries within the Site Allocations Plan?

3. Site Allocations

Housing

The Proposed Submission Core Strategy seeks to deliver around 10,800 homes across the District by 2031. To do this, it identifies a number of strategic housing allocations, including at the Canal Quarter in Stratford-upon-Avon, a new settlement at Gaydon and Lighthorne Heath, and sites at Alcester and Southam. The Core Strategy also includes a further allowance for some 660 homes to be built on (larger) sites in the Main Rural Centres and approximately 1,950 homes for the Local Service Villages, to be distributed across the 4 categories as follows. The Core Strategy does not identify on which sites these homes will be built. This is the main purpose of the Site Allocations Plan: to allocate sites for housing development.

- Category 1 Villages – approximately 76 – 100 homes in each
- Category 2 Villages – approximately 51 – 75 homes in each
- Category 3 Villages – approximately 26 – 50 homes in each
- Category 4 Villages – approximately 10 – 25 homes in each



Policy CS.16 of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy sets out the approach to Housing Development. It can be viewed online at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy.

Employment

The Core Strategy also deals with economic development and identifies a need for an additional 35 hectares (ha) of land for employment uses. Of this requirement, 16 ha are being provided on the edge of Stratford-upon-Avon, 11 ha at Alcester, and 3 ha at Southam. Since 2011 there has been a loss of 10.1 ha of employment land across the District, although new employment sites have also been built providing 7.3 ha. An additional 9.3 ha of land has been granted planning permission for employment development that has not yet been built. If all of this land was to be developed, then the requirement for 35ha of additional employment land would have been met (and slightly exceeded). As such, the District Council does not consider there to be a need to allocate further land for employment purposes. However, if suitable and deliverable employment sites were proposed through the 'call for sites' exercise, and further work demonstrated that the sites currently with planning permission were unlikely to be built, then the District Council will consider allocating land for employment purposes through the Site Allocations Plan. This may involve small sites to provide employment opportunities in villages or specific locations to meet the needs of particular businesses.



Policy CS.21 of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy sets the approach to economic development. It can be viewed online at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy.

Retail

The Core Strategy also sets out the role of the main commercial centres in the District and identifies a need for the provision of further ‘comparison’ floorspace in the District. This includes goods such as clothing, electrical, furniture, carpets and DIY, as opposed to ‘convenience’ goods or food shopping. Whilst the Core Strategy does not identify specific sites for this type of development, it is intended that the Site Allocations Plan could be used to identify specific opportunities. Suggestions for retail development can be made through the ‘call for sites’ exercise.



Policy CS.22 of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy sets the approach to retail development. It can be viewed online at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy.

Benefits of Allocating Land

Allocating land for development has a number of benefits. Firstly, it ensures that the development needs of the community are met, including the provision of much needed affordable housing. Secondly, it gives greater certainty to the community and businesses about where new homes will be built and employment land provided. Thirdly, it therefore protects communities from inappropriate development. Finally, it enables communities to have a greater say in influencing how their communities evolve rather than through speculative developments.

Proposed Allocations

It is proposed that the Site Allocations Plan will include the following:

- Background information including the number of homes already built since 2011 and the residual ‘to-find’ figure during the plan period to 2031.
- Identified site allocations for housing development to meet the ‘to-find’ figure in the Local Service Villages and Main Rural Centres.
- The identification of contingency sites that would be developed if monitoring showed they were required, e.g. if other identified sites and/or Neighbourhood Plan allocations were not built.
- Identified site allocations to meet the residual need for employment land and retail, if required.
- Phasing policy to ensure sites are built throughout the plan period, taking account of the delivery of any Neighbourhood Plan allocations.



Question 2:

Do you have any comments about the proposed inclusion of housing, employment and retail allocations within the Site Allocations Plan or the other matters intended to be covered in the plan?

4. Site Allocation Principles

Policy Context

Part 7 of Policy CS.15 in the Proposed Submission Core Strategy sets a number of principles for determining the suitability of planning applications. These are:

- (a) *in relation to residential development, the number of homes proposed is consistent with the overall scale of development identified for the settlement in Policy CS.16;*
- (b) *the scale of the development is appropriate to its immediate surroundings and to the overall size and character of the settlement;*
- (c) *the design of the development is well-related to, and can be readily integrated with, the existing form of the settlement;*
- (d) *the location and extent of the development does not have an unreasonably harmful impact on the surrounding landscape and setting of the settlement;*
- (e) *the location and extent of the development would not result in the identity and/or integrity of the settlement being undermined as a result of the reduction in the gap with an adjacent settlement; and*
- (f) *the scheme incorporates or provides for appropriate improvements to the infrastructure and services of the community.*

These principles will apply to the identification of sites in the Site Allocations Plan.

Equally, the design of any site is an important planning consideration and the District Council will seek to ensure that any scheme on an allocated site complies with Policy CS.9 Design and Distinctiveness. One tried and tested approach is through the use of design ‘concept statements’ which could be produced for each site through collaboration between the District Council, community and landowner. They provide greater certainty as to what sort of design the District Council considers appropriate on an individual site based on its characteristics, scale location and surroundings.

A concept statement is a simple, clear expression of the development ambitions of a site. It is less detailed than a masterplan or development brief but more informative than simple policy text.



Concept statements evaluate the site context and set out the development principles for the scheme, such as the design and layout and the types, sizes and mix of homes. Most concept statements can be fitted onto 2 sides of A4 paper.

Further information about concept statements can be found on the Natural England website at http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/concept-statements_tcm6-19854.pdf

Guiding Principles

In terms of identifying sites for proposed allocation, in addition to assessing their suitability against the usual range of planning criteria, the Site Allocations Plan provides an opportunity to set further principles to help guide which sites should be allocated. To assist in this, the District Council would value your comments on the issues set out below:

- Should a presumption in favour of development of previously developed land be applied, i.e. brownfield sites are allocated in preference to greenfield sites? If so, should this apply within each village or across all villages? For example, if a village has no brownfield sites should its housing requirement be met on brownfield sites in other villages rather than greenfield sites in that village?
- Should a maximum site size threshold be applied? If so, should this be based on a maximum number of homes or should it be calculated as a percentage of the size of the host village?
- Should a minimum site size threshold, e.g. 5 homes, be applied reflecting site thresholds used for affordable housing provision and the definition of small windfall sites?
- Whether concept statements should be prepared for each allocation or whether this should only apply to the larger allocations?
- Most allocations will provide both market homes to buy and affordable homes to rent. Should the District Council allocate some sites as 100% affordable housing schemes to meet locally identified needs? It should be noted that there is scope within the Core Strategy for 'local needs' schemes to come forward for development on non-allocated sites.
- Should 'self-build' or 'custom-build' schemes be encouraged, so as to provide opportunities for those wishing to build their own homes? If so, how might the District Council ensure such schemes are delivered?



Question 3:

Do you have any comments about whether the Site Allocations Plan should include guiding principles for the identification of sites or about those principles identified above?



Question 4:

Do you have any other comments about what the Site Allocations Plan should include?

5. Identifying Potential Allocations

Updating the SHLAA

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a piece of technical work that informs the preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. It provides information on the suitability, availability and achievability of sites for development.

It is proposed to update and review the SHLAA as part of the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan to help inform the choices about which sites should be allocated. It is anticipated that the update will look at sites in and around Stratford-upon-Avon, the Main Rural Centres, and the Local Service Villages.

Relationship to Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environment Assessment (SA/SEA)

The District Council is legally obliged to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Site Allocations Plan against a number of sustainability objectives. The objective of the sustainability appraisal is to maximise the positive impacts and minimise and/or mitigate if appropriate, the negative impacts of development. The sustainability appraisal will also be used to inform decisions about potential allocations by providing a further assessment of deliverable sites identified in the SHLAA Update. The SA/SEA is being prepared concurrently with the Site Allocations Plan.

Call for Sites

To assist the District Council in identifying land, this consultation also includes a ‘call for sites’ invitation. The ‘call for sites’ is an opportunity for anyone to put forward their land for consideration. It is a useful exercise in that it provides the District Council with an indication of where landowners have a desire to release their land for development.

If you would like to suggest land for development please complete the ‘Call for Sites’ form, a copy of which is included at Appendix A. Please note the minimum site size threshold. Additional forms can be downloaded from the District Council’s website at www.stratford.gov.uk/siteallocations. If you have already submitted sites for consideration, you do not need to re-submit them. Notwithstanding this, the District Council may contact you to seek additional information.



‘Call for Sites’

Invitation to suggest suitable sites for consideration within the Site Allocations Plan.

Appendix A: Call for Sites Form

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Call for Sites Pro-forma



- Please complete this form if you would like to suggest land for future development in Stratford-on-Avon District. The sites will be assessed as part of the SHLAA and used in the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan which can be viewed at www.stratford.gov.uk/siteallocations.
- Please only submit sites capable of **delivering 5 or more homes** or **more than 0.25ha (500sqm floorspace)** for commercial uses.
- Please complete a **separate form for each site**. Complete each section clearly and legibly to the best of your knowledge.
- You must attach a **1:1250 scale Ordnance Survey map** clearly showing the precise boundaries of the site and details of site ownership.
- You must **sign and date the declaration** at the end of the form.
- In submitting a site you consent for your **name and postal address to be made publicly available**.

1. Your Details (please provide details)			
Title		Name	
Organisation (if relevant)		Representing (if relevant)	
Address			
Post Code		Telephone	
Email			

2. Site Location (please provide details)			
Site Name			
Site Address (Inc. postcode if known)			
OS Grid Ref: Easting		OS Grid Ref: Northing	
Total Site Area (Hectares)		Area of Site Suitable for Development	
<p>Please attach a 1:1250 scale Ordnance Survey map clearly showing the precise boundaries of the site with a red line. If appropriate, show other land in your ownership in blue. If relevant, also provide details of land parcels where the site is under multiple land ownership (see Section 3).</p>			

3. Site Ownership (please tick as appropriate and/or provide details)

Ownership (please tick)	Yes – sole owner <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – part owner <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you are a part owner or are not the owner, please provide name(s) and address(s) of the other landowners			
Have you notified the other landowners that you have submitted this site?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

4. Site Constraints (on site or on the boundary) (please tick as appropriate and/or provide details)

Current / Previous Use					
Adjacent Land Uses					
Relevant Planning History					
Existing Infrastructure	Electricity <input type="checkbox"/>	Gas <input type="checkbox"/>	Mains Sewerage <input type="checkbox"/>	Mains Water <input type="checkbox"/>	Telecoms <input type="checkbox"/>
Access from the Highway	Yes (classified road) <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (unclassified road) <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Highway Works					
Ransom Strips					
Legal Issues					
Existing Occupiers					
Public Access / Rights of Way					

Wildlife Designations (wildlife site, protected species)	
Heritage Designations (e.g. listed buildings)	
Agricultural Land Classification (If appropriate)	
Environment Constraints (e.g. mature trees, TPOs, ponds, watercourses)	
Physical Constraints (e.g. flooding, potential land contamination)	
Infrastructure Constraints (e.g. pylons, gas mains)	
Other Known Issues / Constraints	
Interventions to Overcome Constraints?	

5. Proposal Details (please tick as appropriate and/or provide details)

Proposed Development					
Proposed Land Use	Residential <input type="checkbox"/>	Employment <input type="checkbox"/>	Retail <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Site Capacity / Density (i.e. no. of homes / floor space)					
Potential for Development	Marketed for Development <input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiations with a Developer <input type="checkbox"/>	In control of a Developer <input type="checkbox"/>		
Availability for Development	Short-term (within 5 yrs) <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium-term (6-10 yrs) <input type="checkbox"/>	Long-term (11+ yrs) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Development Timescale / Phasing (Inc. build rates)					

6. Continuation Section

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Signature

In submitting a site you consent for your name and postal address to be made publicly available and for a representative of the Council to access the site (if necessary) to undertake a site assessment with or without prior notification.

Your details will also be added to the Council’s Planning Policy database and you may receive notifications of forthcoming public consultations and stages of plan preparation. You can request that your details are removed from the database at any time.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Please return completed forms to the Planning Policy Team by email to planning.policy@stratford-dc.gov.uk or by post to Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6HX.

If you find the text in this document difficult to read,
we may be able to supply it in a format better suited to your needs.

Telephone 01789 260334



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