

## **The Issues and Options Report**

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## 1 Introduction and work to date

1.1 The idea of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Denstone emerged early in 201e, as the Parish Council sought to have more influence on the location and form of new development. The Parish Council formally requested the Borough Council to make Denstone a Neighbourhood Plan Area in December 2013 and approval was given on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2014.

1.2 A Steering Group, made up of local people and member of the Parish Council, was established in June 2014 and it has met monthly since then. The Steering Group was keen to ensure that local residents and stakeholders are involved in the plan throughout its preparation. A first task was to ask people in the local community for opinions on the Parish and what might be included in the Plan through a first NP Newsletter in November 2014.

1.3. The momentum has built during 2015 and funding support has been obtained for the Borough Council, the Neighbourhood Planning grant and the Big Lottery (Awards for All). This has enabled professional planning advice to be commissioned and it will mean that there will be extensive consultation on the plan throughout, including local people, businesses schools, landowners, developer and outside organisations. On significant piece of work which is being undertaken by Steering Group members over the summer is a character survey of the landscape and built environment of the Parish

1.4 This report summarises the evidence and opinions that have been gathered to date and identifies the key issues the Plan should address and various policy options for addressing them. Complex issues may arise around housing choices which may require technical work and a sites selection process. If this is the case, it will be subject to a separate consultation.

1.5 The anticipated **future programme** for the Neighbourhood Plan is as follows;

- **Oct. to Dec. 2015** - Complete consultation (including the preferred locations for new housing) and evidence gathering. Prepare Draft Plan
- **Jan. & Feb. 2016** - 6 week consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan
- **Mar. & April 2016** - Consider comments. Prepare Submission Draft Plan.
- **May to July 2016** - Independent Examination of Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Aug. & Sept. 2016** - Consider examiner's report and agree Referendum version.
- **Late October/November 2016** - The Local Referendum.

1.6 After submission, the Borough Council will check that the NP meets the Basic Conditions and run a further 6 week consultation. In consultation with the Steering Group, an independent examiner will be appointed to report on the plan. If it is found to meet the Basic Conditions, it will be subject to a referendum for all registered voters in Denstone. If it is supported by more than 50% of voters, it will be "Made" and have legal weight as part of the "Development Plan" with the Local Plan. The Basic Conditions are that the NP should be;

**Positively prepared** - the plan should be prepared based on a strategy, which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements ..., and be consistent with achieving sustainable development;

**Justified** - the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;

**Effective** - the plan should be deliverable and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and

**Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

## 2 Consultation Outcomes

### November 2014

2.1 A newsletter and questionnaire was circulated across the Parish and 61 responses were received. Details and a copy of the newsletter will be set out in a future Consultation Statement (a document to be prepared and submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan). The issues arising from the responses to the initial newsletter are summarised below, the numbers in brackets are the number of responses for each category.

#### **Question 1 who should have access to new dwellings?**

The highest number of responses supported housing for young families and the elderly but within a wider mix of house types and several respondent wanted affordable housing.

#### **Question 2 what type of housing should be provided?**

The highest number of responses supported smaller houses with terraces/mews and semi-detacheds, but within a wider mix of house sizes. There was also reference to bungalows.

#### **Question 3 where should new housing be built?**

The highest number of responses supported a combination of small sites, infill and single dwellings, within or adjoining the existing built up areas. There was no real consensus.

#### **Question 4 which areas should be protected?**

The highest number of responses supported the protection of community areas, green spaces (including the former railway line) and recreation grounds.

#### **Other Issues**

Some respondent's identified the value that people place on the character of the Parish and the sense of community which exists. Reference was also made to the need to retain the separate identity of Denstone and maintain gaps between the village and JCB/Roicester.

**Age of respondents** (years, numbers & %): 18/24 (1 - 1%), 25/35 (5 - 9%), 36/50 (9 - 15%) 51/65 (16 - 25%) and 65+ (30 - 50%). This shows that there is a need to engage people under 50 and that the planned efforts to engage young people are both necessary and valuable.

### July 2015

2.2 In addition to public consultation, a number of organisations and other stakeholders have been contacted to inform them of the intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Denstone and to ask for any initial comments. These organisations and people will be engaged throughout the Plan process. The responses received are summarised below.

<b>Organisation &amp; contact</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Actions (all TBC)</b>
Staffs. County Council <a href="mailto:james.chadwick@staffordshire.gov.uk">james.chadwick@staffordshire.gov.uk</a>	<b>Policy;</b> Thank you for notifying the County Council that Denstone Parish Council is in the early stages of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. We would welcome the opportunity to engage with you throughout the preparation of the Plan. From experience elsewhere we have found that this approach has led to more efficient and effective outcomes for all	

[hannah.hogan@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.hogan@staffordshire.gov.uk)

parties. It is noted that you are currently gathering the views of local community and will look to consult on draft Issues and Options in September. It will be a more productive use of our resource to provide initial comments at that stage when we have an idea of the direction of travel of the Plan. However, as you are also currently gathering evidence to support your plan you should be aware that the County Council hold various sources of data e.g. Historic Environment Record that may assist you in your task. If you would like to contact me on the number below we can discuss the areas/topics/themes you are seeking to gather evidence around and I can put you in touch with the relevant department and technical officer/s so you can assess what data/information may be available to you.

James Chadwick; Spatial Planning Policy Officer

T:01785 276643 M:07807137097

**Flooding; Our Ref: FRM/2015/048**

Thank-you for consulting us for our thoughts upon a future DNP. Staffordshire County Council are now Lead Local Flood Authority for the area, and we hold flood risk data which the Denstone Parish may consider incorporating into the rationale for any future plan to help minimise flood risk and pick sequentially preferable sites to help inform sustainable development within the area.

There is a flood risk posed to the area from the Churnet, the River Dove and several ordinary watercourses within the Parish area. We would welcome the opportunity to help feed into any future Neighbourhood Plan in the future and look forward to further discussions.

**Hannah Hogan** Flood Risk Planning & SuDs Officer, Staffordshire County



	Take a look at our website, it might help a little. Then please get back to me with any specifics which you think I might be able to help with, but I need to point out that we are a partnership therefore when I represent that partnership we cannot talk for all parties.	
<a href="mailto:Kim.Miller1@nationaltrust.org.uk">Kim.Miller1@nationaltrust.org.uk</a>	Acknowledgment received and further involvement welcomed.	
<a href="mailto:laura.perry@environment-agency.gov.uk">laura.perry@environment-agency.gov.uk</a>	<p><b>Flood Risk</b> The River Churnet (main river) flows through the plan area and has large areas of floodplain associated with it (Flood Zones 2 and 3). Elsewhere in the parish there are smaller areas of floodplain associated with the smaller ordinary watercourses as well as areas at risk from surface water flooding. Any proposals or projects that may be considered during the Neighbourhood Plan process would need to take account of this by recognising the need to avoid inappropriate development in floodplain areas.</p> <p><b>Water Framework Directive</b> The plan area falls within the Humber River Basin Management. The river basin management plan contains environmental measures and objectives that are set out in the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Under the WFD Regulations public bodies including local planning authorities must have regard to the river basin management plan. This includes the WFD requirement for no deterioration in water body status, which is applied for the individual quality elements that make up water body status. It also includes facilitating measures in the river basin management plan to improve the water body and, where deterioration is unavoidable, a justification under the tests set out in Article 4.7 of the WFD is required. The River Churnet is part of the water body named Dove-Mercia. This water body is at good ecological status. Again, any proposals or projects should ensure</p>	

	<p>that this water body status is not deteriorated and where possible improved.</p> <p>We hope you find the above information useful. If you have any queries, please contact us. Mrs Laura Perry Sustainable Places Team Leader 01543 404960</p>	
<a href="mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk">consultations@naturalengland.org.uk</a> Sharon Jenkins	See letter in Appendix 1	
<a href="mailto:Nationalgrid.Enquiries@nationalgrid.com">Nationalgrid.Enquiries@nationalgrid.com</a>	<p>Thank you for your email, will endeavour to contact you within the next 7 working days.</p> <p>To make a full assessment and prevent any delay in processing your enquiry we require the following information. Site based details.</p>	
<a href="mailto:david.mccann@highways.gsi.gov.uk">david.mccann@highways.gsi.gov.uk</a>	<p>If your email does relate to an issue on Highways England's network it will be passed to the relevant team within Highways England and they will respond to you within 15 working days.</p>	
<a href="mailto:james.ingestre@jcb.com">james.ingestre@jcb.com</a>		
<a href="mailto:hwhitney@nlppanning.com">hwhitney@nlppanning.com</a> <a href="mailto:Liz.Greenwood@alton-towers.com">Liz.Greenwood@alton-towers.com</a>	<p>Thank you for your email to Alton Towers in connection with the Initial Consultation on the Denstone Neighbourhood Plan. On behalf of Alton Towers and Merlin Attractions Operations Ltd we confirm that we would like to be kept informed and involved in the consultation on the emerging neighbourhood plan. Please advise if there are any public meetings prior to September otherwise we look forward to be able to comment on the emerging draft.</p>	
<a href="mailto:philip_a_harding@hotmail.com">philip_a_harding@hotmail.com</a>	<p>Wishes two site to be considered as potential new housing.</p>	

### 3 Parish Profile

3.1 This is a short summary of the Neighbourhood Plan related characteristics arising from the data contained in the (Denstone Parish) Rural community Profile, a full copy of which is available separately.

3.2 Denstone Parish Council was formed in 1894. The area currently covered by the parish includes the village of Denstone plus the four hamlets of Doveleys, Prestwood, Quixhill and Stubwood. There are records of Denstone going back to Norman times but it was not until the arrival of Sir Thomas Percival Heywood in 1840 that the village was really established. Prior to this time, Denstone was an agricultural area bounded by the River Churnet and consisting of sparsely populated, scattered hamlets. He was also instrumental in founding Denstone College which opened in 1873. The major housing developments in Denstone have taken place in the last fifty years, although some local authority houses were built in the 1930s. Denstone has been transformed from a small village of about fifty dwellings firmly based on agriculture, to a thriving community today with two hundred and fifty dwellings within the village and another hundred or so in the hamlets of Stubwood, Quixhill and Prestwood. Local people consider that Denstone is unique when compared with other rural villages of similar size in that there are two significant organisations within walking distance of the village centre – Denstone College and the main plant and Headquarters of JCB which started operating on this site in 1950. There has been substantial building within the village mainly in the sixties and seventies. Most of this expansion has taken place close to the village centre resulting in a compact development with well-defined boundaries.

3.3 Denstone forms part of the Churnet Ward with the neighbouring village of Rocester. The two villages lie within 2km of one another, but are distinctly separated by the River Churnet and the B5030, the main road that connects Uttoxeter and Ashbourne. Denstone is equally distant, about 10 km, from these two towns.

3.4 In terms of landscape the Parish is dominated by the Weaver Hills, the highest point of over 1200ft being about 5 km to the north and forming a particularly scenic landscape which is well served by over 23 km of rural footpaths within the Parish.

3.5 The population of Denstone is 1220 and the area of the Parish is 826 hectares. There are 635 males (52%) and 585 females (48%) The average male population for East staffs is 49.6, the higher figure in Denstone is interesting; it connected to the college or to engineering jobs at JCB, but this probably has no policy implications.

3.6 There are 275 people aged 65 and over which is 22.4% of the population. This is higher than the national average (16.3%) and the county average (18.5%). This could have implications for the policy on new housing in terms of a need for smaller units.

3.7 This point is confirmed by a higher than average level of pensioner households (27.2% compared with the national average of 20.7%). One person households represent 9.1% which is lower than average.

3.8 Denstone is amongst the least deprived communities nationally. Household earnings (£660 weekly) are higher than for Staffordshire (£638) but lower than those for England (£673). However, these figures do not necessarily remove the need for affordable housing for the small number of people identified as being in housing need in the Parish. Figures for poor health and disability are just below national and county averages.

3.9 The age and household structure figures are reflected in a higher than average percentage of economically inactive residents (39.2% compared with 30.1% for England) with correspondingly lower figures for full and part time employment. 8.6% of people work for home which is over twice the national average (3.5%). The level of unemployment is low. Skill levels are average. The largest employment sectors are education and manufacturing, with 80 and 70 employees, reflecting the influence of Denstone College and JCB. A higher than average number of people work in managerial and professional positions.

3.10 There are 426 houses in the parish. Of these, 252 (59.2%) are detached which is over twice the English average of 22.3%. There are 150 (35.2%) semi-detached properties, is just over the national average of 30.7%. 294 (69%) of the houses are three or 4 beds and 49 (11.5%) are five bed or more. The implication of these figures, population structure and an analysis of recent completions is that there may be a need for smaller houses.

3.11 The rate of owner occupation is 79.6% compared with the national average of 64.1%. The social and private rented figures are correspondingly lower than national averages. House prices are lower than national average, reflecting those for Staffordshire. There is no evidence of overcrowding or poor housing conditions.

3.12 Rates of car ownership (one, two and three cars) are higher than average reflecting the combination of relative prosperity but also a lack of public of public transport options. Commuting figures show relative short journeys to work perhaps linked to the proximity of the College, JCB and Uttoxeter?

#### **Housing completions (1/4/11 to 31/3/15)**

3.13 Ten (net) new houses have been built and a further 3 remain committed. All are on sites smaller than 0.25 hectares (0.6 acres).

- The Rickyard, Alton Road **1** (PA/29943/005/JI) 4 bed house
- Aingarth, Oak Road **1** (P/2010/00100/JI) 3 bed house
- Mount Pleasant College Road **2** (P/2010/01293/JI) 3 bed & 4 bed houses. These are three storey houses. The third house which would have been behind these was not proceeded with as access would have been via Mount Pleasant's driveway.
- Land off Alton Road **2** (PA/27702/003/JR) 4 bed & 5 bed houses, This site became Poppyfields – see below.
- Land adjacent to 16 Marlpit Lane **1** (P/2012/00224/JI) 3 bed bungalow. This is plot 2 on a site that originally had two semidetached prefab bungalows 18 & 20 Marlpit Lane. Plot 1 is a bungalow completed prior to 2011. Plot 3 also has a bungalow assumed to be similar to plot 2 but completed later. I cannot find the planning application for this on the ESBC website.
- Land at Poppyfields **1** (P/2012/01120) 3 bed bungalow. This replaced the third dwelling in PA/27702/003/JR as a ready market had become evident for bungalows but not large houses as there was difficulty selling these.
- Land at Linden Close **1** (P/2013/00176) 3 bed bungalow.
- Springfields College Road **1** (P/2010/01345/JI) 3 bed house

All the above are detached. There is potentially space for another dwelling at Linden Close. The Mount Pleasant and Poppyfields developments are all on land that originally belonged to Mount Pleasant. There is potentially space here for another 1 or 2 properties subject to access being arranged.

## **Housing Needs Survey**

3.14 In 2010, a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken, the Executive Summary is reproduced (*in italics*) below. The conclusions are now 5 years old and indicative and further work will be needed if the survey is to be used to underpin any policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Midlands Rural Housing completed a Housing Needs Survey in Denstone parish during May/June 2010, to assess the housing need in the parish. As well as requesting specific housing information, the survey asks some general questions relating to the quality of life in the parish. Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people. Affordable housing may be provided through rental and shared ownership schemes and is for people with a strong connection to the parish.*

*Denstone is a sought after and desirable place to live. It is a popular and pleasant rural parish within easy reach of nearby towns and cities providing good employment, shopping and leisure opportunities. Levels of home ownership are high and availability of rental properties is relatively low. Housing stock is largely family sized 3 -5 bedroom properties. There is clear evidence of a shortage of small starter homes.*

*Denstone's sought after position and low levels of small properties and rental stock inevitably lead to house prices being high and out of reach for local people on low incomes. The housing needs survey has identified nine respondents claiming a need for affordable housing. All have close connections to the parish. The resulting breakdown is:-*

- 4 x 2 bed houses for Homebuy
- 3 x 1 or 2 bed houses for rent
- 1 x 3 bed house for rent
- 1 x 4 bed house for rent

*Our recommendation is that a mixed development of nine affordable dwellings should be considered to alleviate the current housing needs in Denstone. East Staffordshire Borough Council has not yet concluded its consideration of this report and how much new affordable housing is justified in Denstone Parish.*

## **Local community organisations, shops, pubs and schools**

3.15 There is a thriving community in the village and the Parish and the facilities and groups are listed in Appendix 1. However, as is the case with many rural communities, it is important to protect the buildings and land used by these groups. In addition to those listed, Denstone College has a wide range of high quality sporting facilities

## **Landscape character and the natural environment**

### **What is the Character of Denstone:**

3.15 SCC ran a workshop for the Steering Group in March on approaches to landscape character studies and on the heritage assets present in the plan area. As part of this, the following conclusion were drawn;

- Denstone originated as dispersed settlement pattern; no single settlement core. Historic maps suggest settlement at Denstone only loosely concentrated along College Road & Oak Road by late 19th century.
- There is a group of Listed institutional buildings on B5031 dating to 1860
- There is 20th century piecemeal development infill on former small orchards/paddocks (creating sense of greater nucleation)
- Built character – mix of historic and modern properties; varied architectural styles and red brick/stone are the main building materials

3.17 In terms of the character of the wider parish, the following features are present:

- Well preserved field pattern enclosed post medieval period (field boundaries and earthworks fossilise their origins as part of a medieval ‘open field’ system)
- Agriculture by 19th century ‘almost entirely devoted to grazing and dairy produce’
- Dispersed settlement pattern (comprising hamlets, scattered farms and cottages) survives across the parish – 84% of surviving historic farmsteads identified as having a ‘High Heritage Potential’ (retaining greater than 50% of their historic plan form).
- Historic farmsteads are present
- What came before this period related to open field agriculture – fossilised in the field pattern of the modern landscape which was probably enclosed piecemeal from the 16th-17th century and ridge and furrow earthworks. Following that paddocks and orchards were developed by late 19th century. In addition, a dairy industry and Uttoxeter as a cheese and butter market developed from 17th century

3.18 The workshop prompted the Steering group to undertake a full Characterisation Study. A further session was held in June 2015 and a survey was undertaken over the summer by Steering Group (SG) members and local residents. It is considered to be particularly relevant because, in accordance with the principles of Localism and Neighbourhood Planning, it represents a local, community based, input into what might otherwise be an entirely technical process. The work is seen as a critical part of the emerging Denstone Neighbourhood Plan. A full report will be published alongside the NP as part of the evidence base. The intention is that the study will:

- Provide a general context for the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Provide evidence for more detailed landscape, environment & heritage policies
- Provide a means to evaluate potential development sites/locations in Denstone village.

3.19 The approach to the study recognised that it does not need to replicate or duplicate other work and therefore, the focus was on the following

- A description of the wider landscape setting of the village and the wider Parish.
- The physical form of (all) the village and its relationship to the adjoining countryside.
- The “value” of open land within and surrounding the village in terms of; landscape, views, the setting of the village, longer views public benefits, bio-diversity and historic character.

3.20 The methodology adopted from Oxford and Planning Aid England Character Assessment Toolkits, based on a proven method of community based assessment which has been used successfully in other Neighbourhood Plans. This looks at;

#### PHYSICAL CHARACTER

STREETS/ROADS (type of street – narrow, wide, straight, winding, street furniture)

SPACE and BOUNDARIES (means of enclosure/boundaries, sense of space (open/ intimate –

can be affected by the position of buildings/boundaries and the roadway), presence and size of building plots/gardens, location of buildings within the plot (is their uniformity?) – does this change?

BUILDINGS (Use (public/domestic etc.), materials, size, scale, form (detached, terraced), density, frontage onto street (orientation); windows, doors, condition, visible alterations)

GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES (presence and scale of greenery; public/private; rural/urban; mature; changing levels)

VIEWS within the space/street/area (long or short, intimate, channelled, wide), focal points, streetscape (how the buildings and streets work together), roofscape; sense of uniformity)

VIEWS beyond the space/street/area

EMOTIONAL, PERSONAL & TRANSITORY PERCEPTIONS:

ASSOCIATIONS (Buildings of particular historical or other association)

LIGHT/DARK: (Shading, time of day/night, weather conditions)

NOISE & SMELL: Man made/natural

3.21 In addition to survey work, the study has included related pieces of work which have helped to inform and provide data for this assessment, these are;

- Denstone Historic Environment Assessment (SCC 2013 – updated 2015)
- Natural England - National Character Areas Profiles (NCA 64 Potteries & Churnet Valley).
- The Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP)

3.22 The Character report has been completed in a (first) draft form and it sets out the following general conclusions.

The study identified the following key characteristics which need to be taken into account in the formulation of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan, including locations for sites for new housing, general design criteria, protecting local open spaces, criteria for considering other development and renewable energy.

- The way in which the countryside reaches into the heart of Denstone village is important.
- Longer views from Denstone to the Weaver Hills and up the Churnet Valley are valued.
- It is important to keep Denstone and Rocester/JCB physically separate.
- There are local design and layout features which should be reflected in new development.

The surveys have provided a sound basis for the development of policies for the NP but it also show the needs for more technical work on one key aspect. This concerns longer views and it is considered that it would be valuable to undertake further filed surveys, mapping and topographic study to define key views and relate these to specific locations where great care will be need with the design of new development or where any larger scale built development is unlikely to be acceptable.

In addition to this continuing work on mapping and assessing views it is suggested that a list of those buildings and structures which are not designated but are of local interest and important, should be compiled. This may underpin a policy in the NP aimed at protecting and enhancing non designated local heritage assets. The list should be compiled through a review of the surveys completed so far and if necessary, new site visits and work with local people and organisations.

## **4 The National and Strategic (East Staffordshire Local Plan) Policy Context**

### **National**

4.1 The Denstone Neighbourhood Plan must be developed with regard to national policy, especially the National Planning Policy Framework. The Framework set out the Government's planning policies for England and came into effect in March 2012. It contains core planning principles which must underpin all plan-making. It provides the basis for local planning authorities to prepare their Local Plans and for communities producing Neighbourhood Plans.

4.2 The Framework states that neighbourhood plans should support the strategic development needs of the wider area set out in the Local Plan. They should not promote less development or undermine its strategic policies. It adds that neighbourhood plans should plan positively to shape and direct development that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

4.3 The Denstone Neighbourhood Plan must also be mindful of Planning Practice Guidance, which was published by the Government in 2014. The Guidance explains how national policy should be applied.

### **The Development Plan (Strategic & Local)**

4.4 The Denstone Neighbourhood Plan must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.

4.5 The current Development Plan comprises:

The Adopted Local Plan (2006) and Proposals and Inset Maps (saved policies edition);  
The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Minerals Local Plan 1994-2006 (saved policies) Staffordshire County Council); and  
The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Waste Local Plan 2010-2026 (Staffordshire County Council).

4.6 However the East Staffordshire Borough Council is currently updating the Local Plan. This was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 9 April 2014. This commenced in October 2014 on essentially strategic matters but more information was required and the hearing sessions were postponed until May 2015. These sought additional work by the Borough Council regarding the Sustainability Appraisal, housing need and site selection before further hearings are held. Accordingly the remaining hearings were postponed and resumed in May 2015. Following consultation on a set of Main Modifications, it is expected that the Inspector will publish a final report in September and that the Local Plan will be adopted by the end of 2015. In the meantime, ESBC has published a new policy on the role of Neighbourhood Plans and a list of the Strategic Policies of the emerging Local Plan and these are listed below.

### ***STRATEGIC POLICY X - Role of Neighbourhood Plans***

*Neighbourhood Planning legislation requires Neighbourhood Development Plans to meet the following basic conditions:*

- *has regard to national policies and advice*
- *contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- *be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan*
- *be compatible with EU & European Convention on Human Rights obligations.*

*For the purposes of meeting the basic condition, East Staffordshire Borough Council consider the following Local Plan policies to be strategic:*

- SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy*
- SP3 – Provision of Homes and Jobs 2012-2031*
- SP4 – Distribution of Housing Growth 2012 - 2031*
- SP5 – Distribution of Employment Growth 2012 – 2031*
- SP8 – Development outside Settlement Boundaries*
- SP13 – Burton and Uttoxeter Existing Employment Land Policy*
- SP14 – Rural Economy*
- SP16 – Meeting Housing Needs*
- SP17 – Affordable Housing*
- SP18 – Residential Development on Exception Sites*
- SP20 – Town and Local Centres Hierarchy*
- SP32 – Outdoor Sports and Open Space*

*Neighbourhood Plans will be in general conformity with the relevant requirements set out in the strategic policies. Of particular importance is SP2 which seeks to locate new development within existing settlements. Neighbourhood Plans have the ability to:*

- add settlement boundaries to existing settlements (those listed in SP2), or*
- extend existing settlement boundaries*

*In addition, Neighbourhood Plans can plan for more growth than set out in the East Staffordshire Local Plan strategic policies. Where Neighbourhood Plans identify a strategy for growth the Borough Council will expect the plan to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate deliverability of the strategy.*

*For all other policies in the Local Plan there is an opportunity for Neighbourhood Plans to identify a specific local approach, which will only be supported by the Local Authority where there is evidence of a specific local circumstance.*

*The Borough Council expects all Neighbourhood Plans to include proposals for monitoring the policies in the plan. Should monitoring indicate that the development is not coming forward as envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan action will be taken by the Borough Council to bring forward sites through a Development Plan Document in accordance with SP6.*

## **Sustainable Development**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development which essentially is about enabling development to cater for the needs of current generations, but ensuring that development doesn't mean worse lives for future generations. The Denstone Neighbourhood Plan must thereby be aware of the economic, social and environmental consequences of its policies and proposals.

## **EU Obligations**

A number of EU obligations may be relevant to the Denstone Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the Borough Council will 'screen' the plan and ascertain whether the policies and proposals give rise to significant environmental effects and trigger the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

## 5 Draft Issues, Options and Vision

### Issues

5.1 Based the above summary and the background documents eight issues have been identified;

**Housing** Too many dwellings built over recent years are large detached houses. There is a need to influence the location, scale, type & design of new housing to get a better mix.

**Business** Local employment is important but there is a need for the local community to have more influence on the location, scale and appearance of new business development.

**Local Facilities** There is a need to protect the community buildings, local shops and other facilities which local people have said that they value.

**Open Space & Recreation** There is a need to protect the open spaces and recreation areas, which local people have said that they value.

**Countryside & Landscape** There is a need to protect and enhance the countryside and landscape of the Parish which local people have said that they value.

**Local Character** Denstone does not have a Conservation Area, but there are important buildings, structures, spaces and views which need to be identified and protected.

**Separation** There is a need, to protect the local character which local people have said that they value and keeping Denstone village physically separate from Rocester and JCB.

**Outside influences** The impact on Denstone of developments in nearby areas (e.g. JCB, Alton Towers & the Churnet Valley Living Landscapes) needs greater consideration.

### Options

5.2 The following options were drawn up to address the issues described above

**Housing** (there is a need to plan for **at least 16** new houses to be built by 2031)

**A** Define a new settlement boundary in Denstone and a single large development site.

**B** Define a new settlement boundary for Denstone and several smaller development sites.

**C** Leave the settlement boundary as it is and set criteria for development within or adjoining it, without identifying specific sites (NB provision for new houses somewhere).

**D** Identify local housing needs/demand and use policies to achieve a mix of development in new housing in terms of house size and/or tenure and/or affordability.

### Employment & Business

**A** Have specific policies on employment sites, farm diversification and rural buildings. These policies would also cover Denstone College, as the largest employer in the Parish.

**B** Rely on Borough Council policies & national guidance to plan business development.

**C** Include polices to encourage home working and self-employment.

### Local Facilities

**A** Protect existing community buildings, shops and facilities, trying to manage market forces

**B** Allow market forces to decide the future of community buildings, shops and facilities.

### **Open Space & Recreation**

**A** Identify and protect specific open spaces and playing fields.

**B** Rely on Borough Council policies & national guidance to protect open spaces & playing fields.

### **Countryside & Landscape**

**A** Complete the character study to identify the countryside and landscape elements which are important to the character of Denstone and develop specific policies to protect it.

**B** Rely on Borough Council policies & national guidance to protect countryside & landscape.

### **Local Character**

**A** Complete the character study by identifying important local heritage features and building styles and develop policies to protect the character of Denstone.

**B** Rely on Borough Council policies & national guidance to protect local heritage features.

### **Outside influences**

**A** Include a policy on large developments nearby which would have an impact on Denstone.

**B** Rely on Borough Council policies & national guidance to assess nearby development.

5.3 The Vision which has been created to embrace the options and subsequent objective is that: *“By 2031 we would like Denstone still to be a good place to live in, with a strong sense of community and viable local services. The Parish will have adapted to change and seen some new development and have a healthy rural economy, but the character of the village and the surrounding countryside will have been protected and enhanced.”*

## **Appendix – Local community organisations, shops, pubs and schools**

### **Clubs, Classes and Groups**

- Bowls Club
- Denstone Art Group
- Denstone Players
- Denstone Spinners (Spinners knitters and weavers).
- Garden Guild
- Denstone and District Garden Guild.
- Mothers Union
- Pat Miller School of Dance.
- Tennis Club
- The Tuesday Club
- Womens Institute

### **Other organisations**

- Denstone Youth Fund (raised the money for and set up the children's play areas).
- The Tom Boden Memorial Sports Trust which owns and looks after the area in the centre of the village comprising the bowls green, the tennis courts and the childrens play area. It also looks after the playing field area known as "Robert's Green".
- Denstone Branch of the British Legion. The Branch normally meets twice a year in the Bowls Pavilion.
- Community Transport Launched in April 2006, provides a door to door service for those who are without access to a private car, when suitable public transport is not available.
- Denstone Village Hall. The Village Hall is a registered charity. It is run by a Management Committee composed of representatives nominated by village organisations.

### **Shops and pubs**

Denstone has a local Post Office, open week-day mornings until 1pm. Next door is Denstone Village Stores, which is small but very useful for newspapers and for groceries and other odds and ends. In addition, Denstone Hall Farm Shop sells a wide range of food and has a popular café/restaurant. There is one pub, The Tavern, in Denstone village.

### **Schools**

- All Saints First School (children aged 4 - 9). There are currently 73 pupils.
- Ryecroft Middle School in Rocester close to JCB). This is a relatively small Middle School which is shortly to be relocated onto a new site.
- Denstone College (within the Parish) is a coeducational boarding and day school taking pupils from 11 – 18 years of age.
- Children from Denstone Parish attend senior schools at XX & YY

### **Play areas and recreation**

There is a play area for small children in the centre of the village not far from the Post Office and another area for older children a little way down the old railway track.

There is a green way, for walking cycling and horse-riding, running along the former railway line from Denstone to Oakamoor which runs alongside the bank of the River Churnet. This links to an extensive network of footpaths, including Saltersford lane and the line of the former Uttoxeter canal.

In the centre of the village there is bowling green, tennis courts and the playing field area known as "Robert's Green" (this is privately owned but is leased to the Tom Boden Memorial Sports Trust for an affordable rent).

### **Churches**

All Saints Church is the centre for Christian worship in Denstone and is also an historically important building in the development of the village.

Stubwood Methodist Chapel - Stubwood's small Methodist Chapel dates from 1841 and is only a short walk from Denstone. It holds regular Sunday services and a monthly family service. Up to date information can be found on its noticeboard.