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OUR REF	Eccleshall PC letter
YOUR REF	
DATE	24 July 2025

Dear Stacey

Reference: Strategic Assessment Request for Eccleshall Development Proposals - Cumulative Impacts and Community Concerns

Thank you for your letter dated 17 July 2025 and received via email on 18 July to Mr Dean Piper which I am responding to, which expresses the deep concern of the Parish Council and Eccleshall residents about the number of potential new housing developments being initially proposed by landowners / developers recently. I also understand the request for a comprehensive strategic assessment for Eccleshall being sought ahead of any planning applications or decisions that may be required.

At this stage it is important to set out the current planning context for Stafford Borough and Eccleshall Parish in terms of making planning decisions in the future. All planning applications will continue to be assessed on a case by case basis in the context of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (June 2014) and the 'made' Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan (July 2016). However as a result of the latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being published on 12 December 2024 and mandatory housing targets being applied for Stafford Borough our area no longer has a 5 year housing land supply so the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, known as the 'tilted balance' must also be considered in planning decisions.

By way of background information, as at 31 March 2025, the latest 5 year housing land supply statement which can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/5-year-housing-land-supply-statement-31-march-2025>

The implications of not having a 5 year housing land supply, together with the fact that the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough and the Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan are more than 5 years old, is that the policies relating to housing provision and settlement boundaries carry less weight through the planning application process when considering new housing developments. Nevertheless the adopted Plan's development strategy, the proportions for different settlements identified through the sustainable settlement hierarchy and the majority of the local and neighbourhood planning policies continue to be relevant and will be applied appropriately through the decision-making process alongside all relevant information including community representations on planning application and evidence.

As you may be aware, based on major changes in national planning policy through the NPPF, the Council's Cabinet made a decision on 6 March 2025 to start a new plan-making process with the latest timetable and work programme set out in the [Local Development Scheme](#). By way of progress we are currently preparing our evidence base for the new Local Plan 2025 to 2045 which will complement relevant studies and assessments published to date, including a Borough-wide Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment at the appropriate time together with public consultation and engagement to adhere to the statutory requirements of the new plan-making system.

Turning to the recent community consultation that has been arranged by developers and landowners relating to the list of potential new housing developments in your letter, at this stage I can confirm that no planning applications have been received for these sites. Nevertheless the Council is aware of these sites being potentially available for future development because of developers and landowners having put them forward through the Call for Sites process and the published Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) within the context of the New Local Plan's evidence base. However it is important to emphasise that the inclusion of sites within the SHELAA should not be taken as an indication that the site will be allocated or developed, or that the Council would view planning applications on the site favourably.

At the point that future planning applications are received for new housing developments in Eccleshall, and elsewhere across Stafford Borough, planning policy officers will provide all of the relevant information and evidence alongside a consultation response for the Development Management case officers based on the adopted Plan and its policies, to consider as part of the decision-making process. It should be noted that the same approach will be used for other stakeholders in order to assess the full range of considerations including flooding, sewage capacity, impacts on the best & most versatile agricultural land, health, education and transport together with cumulative effects where demonstrated by evidence.

On that basis it is not considered appropriate to progress with a bespoke comprehensive assessment for Eccleshall ahead of planning applications being considered due to the potential that such a 'snapshot in time' Supplementary Planning Document may not provide the latest information for a particular case. Nevertheless the Council will continue to require applicants to respond to relevant concerns raised as part of the decision-making process, including the submission of additional infrastructure information where relevant.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Yendole
Planning Policy Manager