

**Newcastle-under-Lyme
Local Development Framework**

Knutton & Cross Heath Development Sites (Phase 1)

**Supplementary Planning Document
Adopted July 2008**



KNUTTON AND CROSS HEATH DEVELOPMENT SITES (PHASE 1)
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the SPD

This document forms part of the planning framework for Knutton and Cross Heath, which in 2003 was designated an Area of Major Intervention (AMI) under the Renew North Staffordshire (Renew) Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme.

The document outlines the broad issues facing the Knutton and Cross Heath area, and amplifies saved policies contained in the adopted Local Plan, Staffordshire Structure Plan and emerging Core Spatial Strategy. As such it provides a means of judging planning applications for selected key sites to be developed under the HMR programme. It has been subject to extensive public consultation in accordance with the Borough Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

In its draft form, the document was titled the 'Knutton and Cross Heath Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)', and was referred to in the Borough Council's adopted Local Development Scheme. Although the document does make reference to design issues, this is just one element of the SPD. It also includes guidance on matters such as: open space provision; links to adjoining areas; densities; and affordable housing provision. It relates to key sites to be brought forward for development as part of the HMR programme. For this reason and to provide a clearer picture of the purpose of the document the SPD has been renamed the 'Knutton and Cross Heath Development Sites Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)'. It does not represent a shift in priorities from the draft document that has been subject to public consultation.

The SPD is being produced in a phased manner in order to provide a robust planning framework for key development sites as they come forward under the HMR initiative. This first phase focuses on the area comprising the Lower Milehouse Estate and former industrial and associated land to the south east of Lower Milehouse Lane between the Wammy and the Morrisons store, (referred to in this SPD as the Collins and Aikman Site), see figure 1. Detailed guidance on further sites will be produced in due course and will be subject to separate public consultation.

Figure 1 shows the location of the sites to which detailed guidance relates, as well as providing the context for the wider area.

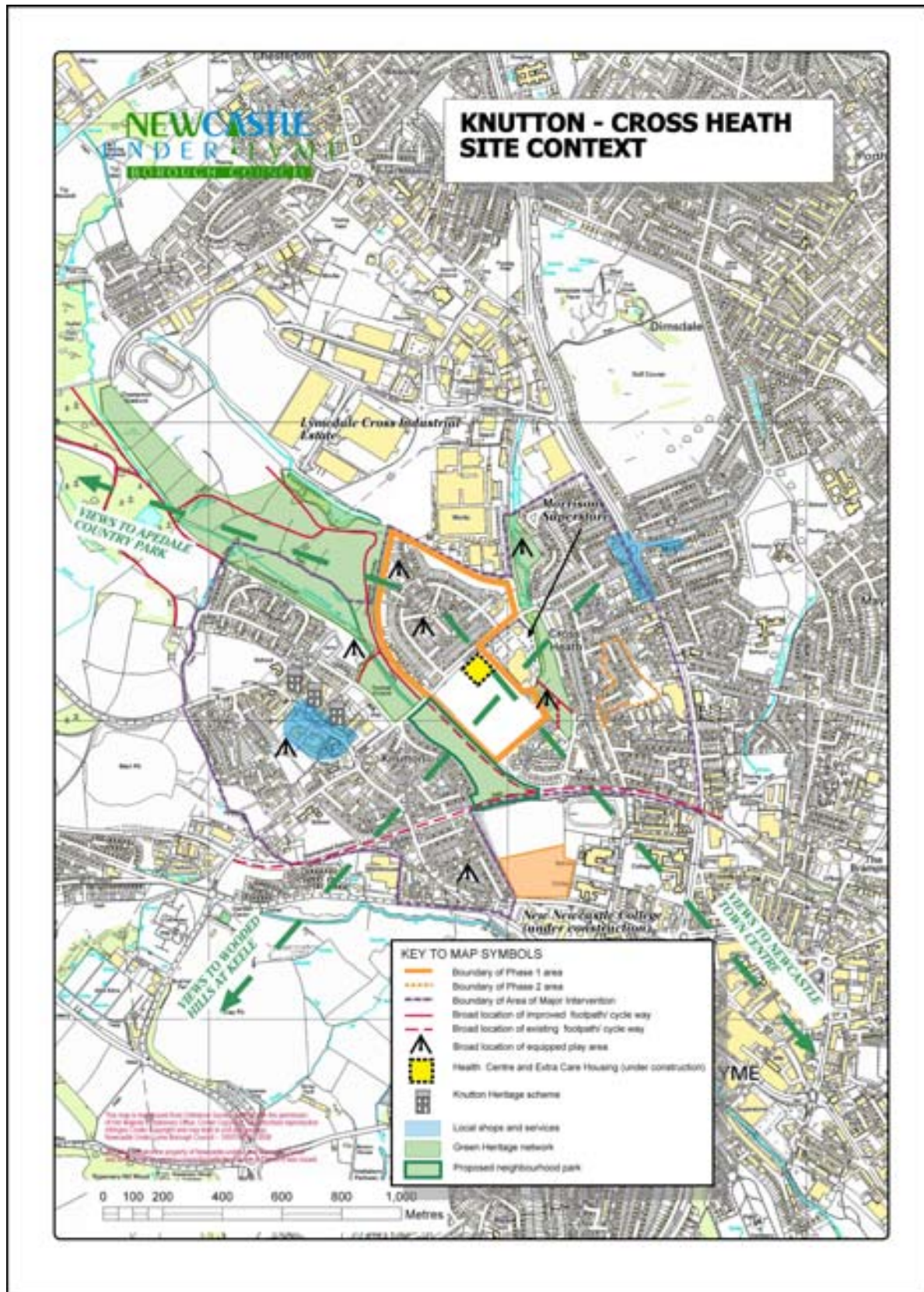
In order to ensure sites are not dealt with in isolation, this phase of the SPD also includes generic information for the wider Knutton and Cross Heath Area. This sets the context for redevelopment and will be relevant to future phases of the SPD.

1.2 Background

Knutton and Cross Heath has suffered from decline in recent years, particularly as traditional manufacturing jobs have been lost, and the community has experienced related socio-economic problems particularly in the housing market. Key issues facing the area can be summarised as:

- Poor quality physical environment;
- Isolation of the Lower Milehouse Estate from the rest of the area;
- Lack of choice in the range of housing types, sizes and tenures in the area;
- Lack of a central core to the area;

Figure 1: Knutton and Cross Heath Context Plan:



- Void properties and undeveloped land contributing to an air of neglect and anti-social behaviour;
- Poor connections within Knutton and Cross Heath and with some of its surroundings;
- Proximity of some parts of the community to industrial buildings and associated goods traffic;
- Poor image and lack of community pride in the area.

It is these issues that led to the Knutton and Cross Heath area being designated as an AMI under the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder in 2003. Renew, working in partnership with the Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Aspire Housing, have subsequently set about improving the quality of housing stock and the local environment to achieve sustainable neighbourhoods. This SPD sets out the framework to ensure these goals can be achieved through the planning process. It largely draws on the evidence collated in the Area Regeneration Framework (ARF) commissioned by Renew (completed November 2007) and the subsequent principles it proposed.

1.3 Policy Context

The SPD is consistent with the key objectives in the emerging Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy, with regard to Design Quality Policy CSP1, and Sustainability & Climate Change Policy CSP3. It also ties in with emerging policies for Affordable Housing. In particular this SPD expands upon the spatial principle of creating a balanced housing market catering for a mixed income community with diverse needs, within a sustainable environment, supporting a thriving, safe and well connected neighbourhood.

The Core Spatial Strategy is yet to be adopted, and as such at this stage is only an indication of emerging considerations. In the absence of any adopted Development Plan Documents, the SPD must supplement existing local and structure plan policies. Detailed guidance on development sites brought forward through this and future phases therefore amplifies guidance contained in the following policies.

Saved policies from the Newcastle-under Lyme Local Plan 2011:

- H1: Residential Development - Sustainable Location and Protection of the Countryside
- H3: Residential Development - Priority to Brownfield Sites
- T16: Development: General Parking Requirements
- C4: Open Space in New Housing Areas
- N3: Development and Nature Conservation – Protection and Enhancement Measures
- N4: Development and Nature Conservation – Use of Local Species
- N8: Protection of Key Habitats
- N12: Development and Protection of Trees
- N17: Landscape Character – General Conditions
- IM1: Provision of Essential Supporting Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Saved policies from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011:

- D1: Sustainable Forms of Development
- D2: The Design and Environmental Quality of Development

- D3: Urban Regeneration
- D7: Conserving Energy and Water
- D8: Providing Infrastructure Services, Facilities and/or Mitigating Measures Associated with Development
- T4: Walking
- T5: Cycling

1.4 Strategic Vision

The strategic vision described below provides a concise statement of the key drivers of the SPD. It reflects the priorities of partners and takes into consideration the main issues and challenges which the area faces as described in Section 2.

To bring about transformational change in the Knutton & Cross Heath area through market-led regeneration by introducing new high quality housing, the remodelling of the existing estates incorporating new development and the upgrading of the wider public spaces and environment.

1.5 SPD Objectives

This vision for Knutton and Cross Heath should be achieved through the following objectives:

- The creation of a mixed community with a better balance between supply and demand for housing through the introduction of new house types and tenure options;
- The provision of new affordable housing, particularly for first time buyers and low income groups;
- The provision of high quality housing in an attractive environment with strong links to Newcastle town centre and Knutton High Street;
- An improved sense of place and community pride;
- The safeguarding and enhancement of the historic character of the area;
- The creation of a safe infrastructure that minimises opportunities for criminal activity and reduces fear of crime;
- The provision of high quality, accessible, open spaces that offer opportunities for recreation and nature conservation.

Developers will be expected to demonstrate that any new housing development will work to bring about a transformational change in the Knutton and Cross Heath area through the provision of high quality homes set within secure and aesthetically pleasing environments and an attractive landscape setting. It will be important to facilitate movement by establishing new links to community facilities, enhanced areas of open space, new improved cycle routes and neighbouring residential estates, to create genuinely integrated communities.

Any development proposals in the SPD area should be comprehensive and address the need for the whole-scale regeneration of the area.

Section 2: Characterisation

2.1 Knutton and Cross Heath

Knutton and Cross Heath is a largely residential area with substantial areas of open space, lying just over a mile to the north-west of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. It comprises a number of distinct inter-war and post-war housing estates which include a larger than average proportion of social rented stock. The area is largely characterised by low density, separated housing estates. There is little of architectural merit in the area, with the exception of older Victorian houses and shops centred around Knutton High Street. The broad location of shops and services here, along with that of Victorian properties recently refurbished under the Knutton Heritage scheme, is shown on figure 1.

Lower Milehouse Lane is the major route through the area but has few noteworthy buildings which address this important frontage, although a large number of mature trees help soften the visual impact of this busy road. The Extra Care and Health Centre adjacent to the Morrisons store, once built will form a local landmark, which will begin to raise the environmental quality both in terms of design and of sustainable development, see figures 1 and 13.

Despite lying within a relatively flat, low-lying area, the SPD area includes some impressive views to the wooded hills at Keele to the south-west, Apedale Country Park to the north and towards Newcastle town centre to the south-east, from which the church spires in the town centre are visible. Figure 1 includes an indication of these views, which are an important asset to be exploited in any development.

Despite including large areas of public open space, the area lacks a central focal point of good quality public realm.

2.2 Cross Heath

Cross Heath is bounded to the east by Liverpool Road (A34), to the south a former mineral railway line, now used as a footpath/cycleway, and on the western side is an area of open space known as the "Wammy". These are shown in figures 2 – 4 respectively. To the north, separated from the remainder of Cross Heath by Lower Milehouse Lane, is situated the Meadows Estate.

Cross Heath is typified by inter-war semi detached properties on the periphery that are mainly owner-occupied, with social rented stock situated within the centre of the estate layout. The Meadows estate (see figure 5), is a thriving community, with a mix of privately owned and socially rented stock, generally in good repair. The majority of the Cross Heath estate was constructed in the 1940s and 1950s with little to differentiate between the various groups of dwellings that were constructed during this period, giving the area a monotonous feel. This is illustrated in figure 6. It is characterised by often narrow, straight estate roads with deep culs-de-sac. Many of the roads do not connect to Liverpool Road (A34) and accordingly form long dead-ends.

Figure 2: Liverpool Road:



Figure 3: Former Mineral Line:



Figure 4: The Wammy open space:



Figure 5: The Meadows Estate:



Figure 6: Typical 1940's/ 1950's Housing common throughout Cross Heath:



2.3 Knutton

The historic core of the area lies at Knutton, which has grown out of its location at a major road crossing. The mix of property type and style is representative of the mix of influences that have come together to make Knutton what it is today. Within its core it possesses a significant number of terraced properties dating back to the mid 19th century, inter-war social housing, and a scattering of more modern properties. The church, rectory and former primary school buildings all have some local historic and architectural character, and are shown in figures 7-8 respectively. Adjacent to the High Street to the east are pre-1919 terraced cottages that have recently undergone heritage refurbishment works (figure 9). To the west are privately developed housing estates built from the 1960s up to recent developments on Acacia Avenue that are less than five years old (figure 10). There are three inter-war ex-council estates to the south of the village centre (the tenure of the housing stock in these areas remains largely social-rented). The Moran Road, the Saints and Camillus Road estates are traditionally constructed semi-detached and terraced housing in varying states of repair. To the north east of the Village is a popular area of housing known as the Cotswold Estate (figure 11).

Figure 7: Knutton Church/ Rectory, The High Street, Knutton:



Figure 8: Former Meadows Primary School:



Figure 9: Knutton Heritage Scheme facelift works:



Figure 10: Modern properties off Acacia Avenue:



Figure 11: The Cotswold Estate:



Figure 12: Disjointed street scene along Knutton High Street:



Knutton's main focus is the High Street which is shown in figure 12. This presents a disjointed streetscene, detracting from the former village atmosphere. On the west side of the street, the Enterprise Centre and Recreation Centre are set back from the pavement and on the eastern side an old clearance site is in use as a car park. The consequential loss of spatial enclosure detracts from the otherwise urban village feel to the High Street. Indeed, the High Street plays an important role in providing a modest offer of shops and services to local residents

2.4 Development Site: Collins and Aikman Site

Between Cross Heath and Knutton, adjacent to the Wammy, is the site of substantial former industrial premises (most recently occupied by a company known as Collins & Aikman). This was acquired by the Government's national regeneration agency, English Partnerships, and cleared in order to offer the potential for major new residentially-led development in the area.

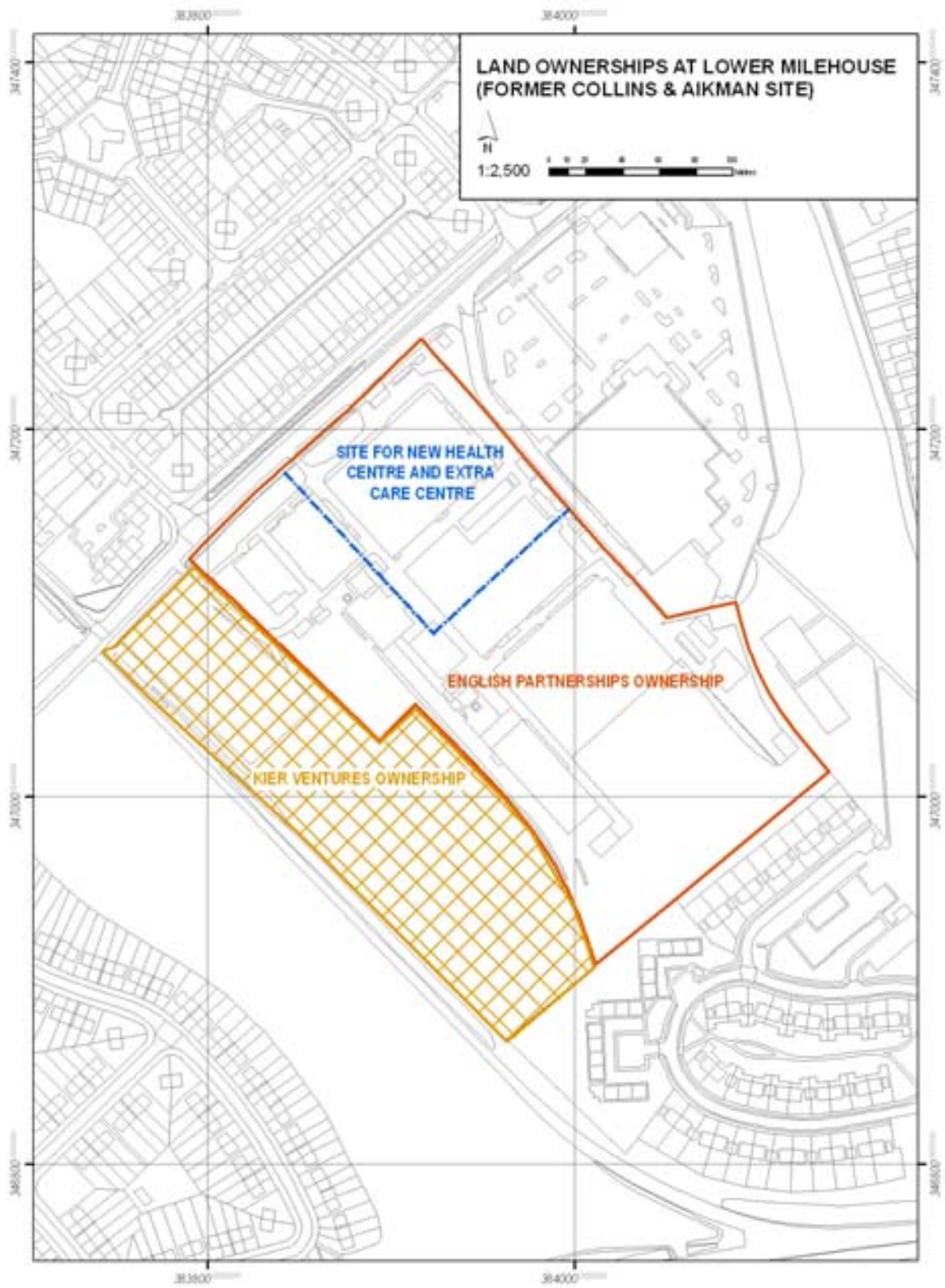
Part of the site includes a new Health Centre and Extra Care Centre. The location of this is shown in figure 13. The remaining land under English Partnership ownership has outline consent for residential development for up to 160 dwellings, with all matters other than access to be determined through reserved matters.

The former Collins and Aikman works, (4.93 hectares in size), is located at the brow of a hill on Lower Milehouse Lane. Between here and the Wammy lies a 2.97 hectare parcel of land previously owned by Ashtenne, and currently owned by Kier Ventures Ltd. Operation works were not carried out on the Kier land, which merely served as the car park and recreational land for the Collins and Aikman factory. The Kier land is part Brownfield, part Greenfield, but does offer some potential for redevelopment providing this is done in conjunction with the former Collins & Aikman site. Combining the sites has huge benefits in terms of enabling a comprehensive redevelopment of the area with improved pedestrian and cycle links to the Wammy and neighbouring residential areas. Both sites form an elevated area of relatively flat land in a mainly featureless area, apart from some areas of mature vegetation on their site boundaries. This vegetation is mostly located at the south eastern and eastern edges of the site.

2.5 Development Site: Lower Milehouse Estate

This inter-war estate is characterised by its crescent-shaped distributor road, from which a number of culs-de-sac are accessed. The housing is low-density with large rear gardens with some properties accessed to the rear from narrow vehicular accessways. Despite the estate benefiting from a number of regeneration initiatives in the past, including a "Homezone" treatment a few years ago, it remains highly stigmatised and unpopular because of social issues. Consequently Renew have begun clearance of approximately half the properties on the estate to pave the way for a comprehensive redevelopment scheme.

Figure 13: Land Ownership/ Existing Permissions:



2.6 The “Wammy” Open Space

The Wammy (shown in figure 4), is a major area of open space situated between St Bernard’s Road and the Collins and Aikman site. It provides a wide sweep of open, grassed land running north-south through the area, incorporating several football pitches. It is of some general amenity value, and includes extensive vegetation on its western boundary, alongside which an unimproved cycle/ pedestrian link runs. On its southern boundary it is separated from college playing fields by a former mineral railway line which provides an important pedestrian and cycle route to Silverdale and the town centre. The northern edge is bounded by Lower Milehouse Lane, which segregates the Wammy from a large belt of open space beyond, which extends as far as Apedale Country Park to the north.

The open space to the north of Lower Milehouse Lane includes more sports pitches and a neighbourhood play facility adjacent to the Cotswold Estate. Beyond this the character of the open space is generally more natural and secluded with informal grass areas, wetland areas and an overgrown stream course in a cutting. A recently improved cycleway provides good linkages to the nearby Lymedale Business Park, the boundary of which is framed by a structural belt of landscaping. Access is also afforded to Apedale Community Country Park, which provides fine views of open countryside from many parts of the plan area.

3.0 GENERIC DESIGN GUIDANCE

3.1 Urban Design

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) publication in the year 2000 “**By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System, Toward Better Practice**” sets out a number of key design principles that are seen as critical to creating successful places for people to live and work in. These principles are embodied in CABE’s “Building for Life Standards” (2003) and “Creating Successful Neighbourhoods – lessons and actions for Housing Market Renewal” (2005). The SPD should also be read in conjunction with “**A Better Place to Live by Design – A Companion Design Guide to PPG3**” which draws together the principles of good urban design as they relate to residential development as well as English Partnerships’ “Quality Standards” (November 2007) and “Design Codes” (September 2007).

Any development should aim to create an attractive, sustainable and inclusive place through a variety of contemporary homes within a framework of established urban design principles. All development proposals for Knutton and Cross Heath are expected to incorporate the following design principles in their development and design solutions:–

- **Character:** creating places that respond to locally distinctive and positive characteristics. A place where buildings clearly distinguish public and private places; currently the area lacks much positive character, although Knutton Village exhibits some character that can be built upon.
- **Continuity and enclosure:** creating continuous street frontages and enclosures of space ensuring a clear distinction between private and public space. All development should relate to the surrounding area in terms of density, height, scale and massing. A strong frontage should be formed around a proposed public square, and on the edges of the development sites.
- **Quality of the public domain:** creating safe, attractive and functional public spaces and routes for all users. The public realm environment needs to be of high quality. Developers will be expected to enter into agreements for the management of public space. Particular attention should be paid to the design of publicly accessible spaces to reduce the opportunity for crime and to reduce people’s fear of crime, for example, by ensuring properties front onto open space.
- **Ease of movement:** A place that is easy to understand and move through, creating well connected and accessible places which put people before traffic. Development and redevelopment should create a place that is easy to get to and move through safely with obvious pedestrian links and good lighting. All development in the area should be permeable for pedestrians, cyclists and provide appropriate levels of vehicular access. The Manual for Streets, prepared by the Department of Transport/DCLG (2007) sets out the key design principles.
- **Legibility:** creating places with a clear image, with recognisable routes, spaces and landmarks to help people find their way. Development and redevelopment should create a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.
- **Adaptability:** creating places that can change easily and respond to economic and social changes.
- **Diversity:** creating viable mixed use places that respond to local needs and provide easy access to a wide range of facilities. Development and

redevelopment should create a place with variety and choice. A true mix of uses is required that will ensure activity throughout the day and in the evening. This will encourage safety and vitality.

- **Sustainability:** the need for accommodating sustainable design principles flows through all the above principles.

Section 4 of this document sets out detailed principles for the development sites identified as Phase 1 of the SPD.

4.0 KEY DEVELOPMENT SITES

4.1 Collins and Aikman Site.

(a) Issues and Opportunities

At present, the SPD area suffers from isolated estates with poor links between them. The communities of Knutton and Cross Heath are not linked well enough to each other. The Collins and Aikman site as shown in figure 13, provides an opportunity to improve this and to enable wide reaching regeneration benefits. These include benefits to residents of Cross Heath in terms of improved access to the Wammy and existing cycle and pedestrian links to Lymedale Cross Industrial Estate and the town centre. Meanwhile, for residents of Knutton, greater accessibility by non car modes to the existing Morrison's superstore and recently approved Health Centre could be achieved.

To fully realise these opportunities, it is essential that development of the site proceeds in a comprehensive manner that enables good connectivity both within the neighbourhood and with adjoining areas, through all modes of movement. Ideally this should be through the development of both parcels of land that are currently under separate ownership. Where this is not feasible, development of individual sites should not preclude future opportunities for direct links to the Wammy.

The area currently lacks a coherent community space. To some extent this can be addressed through improvements to accessibility and the function of the Wammy. At present this is an underused facility that if incorporated correctly, can provide important recreation opportunities for the development and wider community.

In addition opportunities exist within a comprehensive redevelopment of the site for some public realm works in the form of a hard landscaped space that can form both a visual and movement link through the site to the Wammy. This will help give any development its own identity and sense of place, necessary to ensure a high quality design and environment.

Urban Design Response

(b) Development Capacity

Planning Consent 07/127/OUT has established that up to 160 new dwellings can be provided (in addition to the Extra Care units already under construction), on the English Partnerships land identified in figure 13. As detailed schemes are drawn up, it may be possible to incorporate additional units provided it does not result in overdevelopment of the site. Indeed it is the Council's aspiration that a comprehensive scheme covering land currently under separate ownerships is brought forward to ensure wider benefits. The total development capacity of the site will be dependent on a number of factors, namely:

- The need to be a neighbourly development; i.e. to sit comfortably within surrounding estates;
- The capacity of Lower Milehouse Lane as identified in any Transport Assessments;
- The need to retain any important landscape features, particularly those existing along the south-eastern and western edges of the site;
- The need to incorporate access across the site to the Wammy;

- The need to make provision for public realm works;
- The need to exploit views important views from within the estate;
- The need to make provision for secure car and cycle parking;
- The need to address access and storage requirements related to refuse collection and recycling;

These factors will need to be addressed in a Design and Access statement that accompanies any planning application.

Developers should be aware that the eventual development capacity of the site may have implications in terms of pressure on existing schools in the vicinity. As such developer contributions to education may be sought as established by the Borough Council's adopted Developer Contributions SPD.

(b) Housing Mix

One of the key aims of this SPD, in line with the aims of Renew, is to provide a greater mix of housing types and tenures in the area. A rich diversity of housing types including detached and semi detached housing, starter homes and apartments, is required. This will help provide a range of family and starter home accommodation and widen choice.

The provisions of the current planning permission for the English Partnerships owned land requires 25 Social Rented units and 22 Shared Ownership units to be provided as part of the development. Where there is a net increase in the number of dwellings proposed, 25% of additional dwellings provided should be affordable, in accordance with the Council's general practice.

All affordable units should be constructed to Housing Corporation development standards, and to an agreed specification no less favourable than the open market dwellings. They should be pepper potted to ensure the estate is tenure blind, and promote social inclusion.

(c) Layout and Design

In layout terms, the development should seek to conform to the principles of "Manual for Streets" (Dept. of Transport/ DCLG) by addressing Lower Milehouse Lane, the internal access road jointly serving the Health Centre/ Extra Care Scheme, and the open space at the Wammy.

A higher density built form should be sited closest to the recently permitted Health Centre/ Extra Care Scheme in order to respect heights of those buildings currently under construction. This is expected to include 3 storey apartments and town houses. The detailed design will need to respect and integrate with these buildings, which include an outside pedestrian public area made up of hard landscaping and formal planting, as well as, associated access, roadway, and car parking.

The development of the area should back onto the south-eastern boundary of the site to provide a secure boundary to existing housing in Tynwald Grange and Ronaldsway Drive. Any new development along this boundary with Tynwald Grange should be low-rise to avoid overlooking of adjacent residential properties. Wherever possible existing landscaping in this area should be retained. Due to its prominence, secure, attractive boundary treatment should be provided, and a reinforced

'landscaped strip' can make a positive contribution towards this. Close-boarded fencing to this boundary is unacceptable.

The interface between the dwellings and the multi use games area, off Douglas Road, should be carefully considered. The space needs to benefit from natural surveillance without being a nuisance to residents. Close-boarded fencing to this boundary is also unacceptable.

At its western boundary, the site adjoins the Wammy. The change in levels here makes the development site highly prominent. A strong development that gives this important boundary presence and definition is therefore required. Housing should present an attractive primary elevation to this boundary and include excellent opportunities for natural surveillance. Landscaping treatment here is important to assist the integration of the development and provide amenity benefit to any new housing and enhance views from St Bernard's Road. For these reasons it is important that there is an attractive and safe landscape belt which works to enhance the existing informal landscaping of naturalised trees and hedges.

At key corners within the development site, taller "feature units" should be provided to help "turn corners" and create focal points in the street. A "feature" building could be provided at the corner of the former industrial land adjoining Lower Milehouse Lane and the Wammy, to give the new development presence and provide a focal point in the area. This is particularly important at the junction with the new access road and Lower Milehouse Lane. Corner blocks should be treated with continuous active frontages and not present blank gables. Where dwellings adjoin the Wammy, or indeed any other public areas including footpaths / cycleways, their front elevations must face onto the public space. This will maximise opportunities for natural surveillance in the interests of designing out crime. Furthermore, for these purposes, all footpaths/ cycleways should be well lit, and where possible rear gardens should interlock.

Developers will need to provide justification for their design proposals as part of a Design and Access Statement, but it is envisaged that housing will largely be arranged around courtyards and shared surface mews lanes allowing for access and ample parking to the rear of properties. This will enable secure parking and prevent the street scene being dominated by the private car. Streets should be designed through the development to respect the building layouts and encourage low vehicular speeds through the careful use of materials, planting and appropriate street furniture. They will also need to provide appropriate access for waste collection vehicles. In this respect developers are urged to contact the Council's Operational Services Team at an early stage as possible in the planning stage.

The design of houses should be contemporary, of high quality and avoid the use of standard ("any place") product designs. Innovative designs that reflect the character of the local area in terms of design features and materials (including the new Health and Extra Care Scheme), and address current best practice in sustainable design will be welcomed. Furthermore, it is expected that proposals seek to optimise important views from within the estate, for example to Apedale Country Park.

In terms of the specification of properties, developers are encouraged to meet 'Lifetime Homes' standard, 'Code for Sustainable Homes' rating of at least 3 stars (equal to EcoHomes rating of Very Good), and CABE 'Building for Life' Silver standard at least. These are all in the interests of achieving an attractive and marketable development. Further details can be found on the websites referred to at the end of this document.

Where feasible, developers are also encouraged to make provision for renewable energy on site, in the interests of sustainable development.

The Borough Council is strongly committed to recycling, which has implications in terms of the layout of any scheme. Provision should be made for the convenient location of 2 wheelie bins (of up to 240 litre capacity each), and a 55 litre box plus 2/3 sacks per dwelling. Where apartments are proposed, communal storage is envisaged, but these should be attractively screened or sited in inconspicuous locations.

(d) Public Realm - New Community Square

High quality public realm will be an important element of the development in terms of achieving a distinctive sense of place. Developers should bring forward plans for a new 'community square' to act as an important focal point as part of their proposals. Public art is desirable and could be an important element of the scheme.

The community square should be well integrated into developer's proposals, and considered early in the design process. It should be safe, well overlooked, serve a clear purpose, and be well maintained. To offer flexibility, it is not considered suitable to prescribe a specific location for the square, but any proposals should improve access across the site to and from the Wammy, as well as facilitating pedestrian and cycle movement across the housing scheme.

Street furniture, including lighting, paving materials and soft landscape works should be of a high quality, appropriate to the character of the scheme and its surroundings, and designed to minimise visual clutter and obstructions for users.

(e) Transport and Accessibility

In general, the location and design of development proposals should deliver a "Sustainable Movement Network" that provides a seamless network of walking, cycling, pedestrian and public transport along major routes by:

- Enabling ease of access to, around and within, the scheme for all potential users;
- Making adequate provision for the site to be accessed via the existing road network, footpaths and cycleways, public transportation services;
- Incorporating appropriate and conveniently located facilities that address the needs of potential user groups;
- Incorporating satisfactory servicing arrangements for the storage and collection of recyclable waste and general waste;
- Minimising the extent to which users feel at risk from crime by:
 - enabling natural surveillance of public and car parking areas;
 - distinguishing clearly between public and private spaces,
 - maximising the extent to which spaces are controlled (or perceived to be controlled) by occupiers;
- Improving the quality of the long distance cycle routes and footpaths through the area.

Traffic management measures will be required to enhance the amenity of adjacent residential areas and the activities generated by the open spaces and associated community facilities. The detail of such measures will be informed by a Transport Assessment for the area.

The former industrial land will be accessed from Lower Milehouse Lane, with a new junction that serves the Health Centre/ Extra Care Centre. This will be in accordance with planning permission ref 07/127/OUT. To ensure a clearly legible highway system and the efficient use of land, and to facilitate the comprehensive development of the site, all vehicular access to the site should be gained from this junction.

The development should enable stronger pedestrian and cycle links through the site from Cross Heath to the Wammy. In line with the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets, where provided, such links should be direct, well overlooked, well lit, and at least 3 metres in width. The siting of any such routes will also need careful consideration in terms of minimising removal of important landscape and habitat features.

The former mineral railway line at the Wammy now forms an important pedestrian/ cycle link as highlighted in figure 1. To maximise its use and function this should be upgraded to a similar level to the recently improved pedestrian/ cycleway to the north (also shown on figure 1). In line with the Council's Developer Contributions SPD, developer contributions towards this improvement will be required.

Developers are also expected to make provision for a new pedestrian/ cycle link through the development site onto Douglas Road in the interests of improving access across the wider area. As with the link to the Wammy, this should be direct, well lit, and at least 3 metres in width. It should be sited to enable the retention of the existing Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP).

As set out in section (c) Layout and Design, car parking should be provided in rear courtyards or set back to the sides of dwellings to reduce the visual impact of frontage and on-street parking. Spaces should relate clearly to the properties they serve for security purposes. Some detached and semi-detached dwellings may incorporate off-street (front drive) parking where this harmonises with the general estate layout, but a dominance of hardstanding driveways should be avoided due to the implications this has on flood risk; i.e. lack of opportunities for surface water run off. Some limited on-street parking will be designed into the street layout to meet the needs of residents/ visitors but also to act as a traffic calming feature, particularly for news-type lanes. However, care will be needed to ensure this does not restrict access for refuse collection and emergency services.

The level of car parking should not exceed standards outlined in Local Plan policy T16: General Parking Requirements. This is set at:

- 1 space plus 1 visitor space per 3 dwellings for 1 bedroom dwellings.
- 2 spaces per 2/3 bedroom dwellings.
- 3 spaces per 4 bedroom dwellings.

It should be noted that these figures are a maximum, and given the site's sustainable location close to the town centre and community facilities, lower levels of provision may be acceptable where sufficient commitment has been made to encouraging more sustainable modes of travel.

In the interests of encouraging sustainable modes of travel, where apartments are proposed, secure covered cycle parking will be required at a rate of 1 space per unit.

It is likely that development proposals will require financial contributions towards public transport improvements and developers' attention is drawn to the forthcoming Newcastle-under-Lyme Transport and Development Strategy. Requirements will be

informed by a Transport Assessment, which will need to accompany any planning application.

(f) Landscape/Ecology

The site interior is largely cleared of existing planting. However some landscaping cover of merit including mature trees does exist on the perimeters of the site, and as such a Tree Survey will need to accompany any planning application. Wherever possible existing landscaping should be retained and supplemented, and seek to promote a rural parkland setting. A landscape belt providing a noise buffer to the Morrison's superstore service area is required.

A green environment should be sought throughout the site through the provision of new landscaping. This is particularly important in the context of a proposed pedestrian/ cycle links through the site, which have the potential to act as wildlife corridor linking to the Wammy and other areas beyond.

Where provided, new landscaping should seek to use native species characteristic of the locality. The advice of the Council's landscape team should be sought as part of pre-application discussions. Contact details are provided in section 5.

An ecology statement must accompany any development proposals and be prepared in accordance with Natural England's requirements. To ensure biodiversity is protected and that there is no net loss in the area of protected habitats, compensation habitat areas need to be provided and managed on nearby open spaces, where it is not possible to adequately mitigate as part of on-site ecological mitigation.

(g) Open Space

As identified in the Urban Green Space Strategy for North Staffordshire, open space is well provided for within the general area, although quality does need upgrading. This is particularly true of the Wammy, which is currently sub-standard and of little community value. Improvements to its accessibility and function are key to the wider regeneration of the Knutton and Cross Heath in terms of providing opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and improving residents' sense of well-being. A key element of this SPD is therefore improving links to the Wammy, and in addition developer contributions will be sought towards its creation as a neighbourhood park. For this reason the provision of a play area in the scheme is not required.

(h) Flood Risk

A Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough in 2007 has identified that there are surface drainage problems within the SPD area. Any planning application for the site should therefore be accompanied by a specific Flood Risk Assessment.

The Environment Agency has stated that basic infrastructure serving the redevelopment sites may be seriously compromised by the increasing impact of climate change. Developers should therefore contact Severn Trent Water Ltd for further information with regard to the capacity of the public mains storm sewer system, which should have at least a 1 in 30 year rainfall event capacity. New developments should incorporate a drainage system with a capacity to cater for a 1 in 100 year rainfall plus 30% rainfall event in accordance with current national planning guidance contained in PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk.

Given identified surface drainage problems in the area, developers should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into the development including the use of porous pavements, soakaways, swales, infiltration devices and storage basins/ ponds. Such proposals will enable the disposal of surface water as close to the surface as possible, before it enters a watercourse. As discussed earlier, wide scale provision of hardstanding driveways with no permeability should be avoided on flood risk grounds.

As a general principle, new developments should seek to create open watercourses instead of new culverts in order to minimise flood risk and improve biodiversity.

It should be noted that it is a requirement of the existing permission on the site that surface water is limited by means of an underground storage tank of 615m³ in order to limit surface water run-off to 100 litres per second before discharging to Ashfield Brook.

4.2 Lower Milehouse Estate

(a) Issues and Opportunities

The Lower Milehouse Estate is generally one of low density housing, characteristic of inter-war and post-war Local Authority estates, with traditionally semi-detached housing with generous front and rear gardens. The partial clearance of this estate provides a unique opportunity for remodelling to create a new family environment with a mix of residential property types and tenures and where the 'stigma' related to physical and visual aspects of the established estate will be totally removed. The vision is for a sustainable extension to the existing estate with strong urban design principles. Any layout must be carefully integrated with the existing properties to create a coherent whole.

The area presents good opportunities to establish new links with the surrounding open space and countryside beyond. A high quality public realm incorporating a new neighbourhood play facility together with environmental improvements, which raise the residential amenity for all neighbouring properties, should form an important element of the development strategy.

The site contains an extensive area of unmaintained grassland which currently functions as an informal amenity area and buffer between residential properties and the Lymedale Business Park. This space offers great opportunities for supporting nature conservation to both promote biodiversity and enrich the quality of life of all residents.

Developers should be aware that the final development may have implications in terms of pressure on existing schools in the vicinity. As such developer contributions to education may be sought. This requirement is set out in more detail in the Council's adopted Developer Contributions SPD, 2007.

Urban Design Response:

In order to address the issues and opportunities referred to above, a number of broad design principles should be followed. Figure 14 displays these. Greater detail of what is required, and justification of why, is provided below. All proposals will need to be clearly justified in a Design and Access statement.

(b) Development Capacity and Layout

Consistent with government requirements for efficient use of land, and respecting the suburban character of the site, a development density of 30-40 dwellings per hectare is required. It is felt that this allows flexibility to encourage the creation of a mixed family community with a unique sense of place.

The arrangement of the development should create an organic feel that will integrate well with the surrounding context and allow for greater permeability through the site, particularly for pedestrians. Culs-de-sac should be avoided. Corners should be well articulated and visual interest and variety provided throughout. The layout of the housing should ensure the vehicular and pedestrian routes are overlooked and the inclusion of blank gables within the estate should be avoided. Where possible back gardens should interlock and not back onto footpaths or areas of open space.

The urban form along the western boundary should relate and respond to the wider landscape beyond the site by opening up the urban form where density is less to ensure better connectivity to these areas of existing informal open space. However the interface between dwellings and this space will also need to be carefully considered to promote natural surveillance and to avoid compromising the security of residents. Close boarded fencing is not acceptable along this boundary.

The existing access to the site should be maintained as shown in figure 14. Consideration should be given to the provision of a work of public art in this area to act as a focal point and contribute to the character and interest at this key gateway.

In the interests of energy efficiency, any layout should pay special regard to the need to maximise potential solar gain.

Views out to rural areas and the town centre identified in figure 1 can help contribute to a sense of place. Where such views exist, exploiting these should form a key aspect of any design proposals.

The Borough Council is strongly committed to recycling. This will have implications on the development capacity, and eventual layout of any scheme. Provision should be made for the convenient location of 2 wheelie bins (of up to 240 litre capacity each), and a 55 litre box plus 2/3 sacks per dwelling. These must be well sited and not add to the visual clutter. Where apartments are proposed, well screened communal storage is envisaged. The layout should maintain good access to facilitate waste collection.

(c) Housing Mix and Design

In the interests of creating a mixed community, and consistent with Renew's aims, a range of house types is required. The buildings should largely be domestic in scale with the majority of properties consisting of 3-4 bedroom family houses, but an element of 2 bedroom bungalows and 1-2 bedroom apartments should also be provided.

Affordable Housing

Developers should include an element of affordable housing within their proposals. In line with the Borough Council's current practice (being enshrined in the Affordable Housing SPD) this should be set at a level of 25% of all dwellings proposed. Given the over dominance of social rented housing in the area, 10% should be provided as aspirational housing in the form of shared ownership schemes. To truly integrate into the development, affordable housing should be pepper potted to ensure the estate is tenure blind. The units are to be constructed to Housing Corporation development standards, and to an agreed specification no less favourable than the open market dwellings, in order to promote social inclusion.

Scale, Height and Massing

The buildings should largely be domestic in scale consisting of a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraces and apartments. Heights will be either two or three storey. Three story units should be located at key nodes and the Lower Milehouse Lane gateway. In this location it is important that the built form presents a strong frontage and respects the building heights of the Health Centre and Extra Care scheme on the southern side of Lower Milehouse lane. Bungalows should be provided in the centre of the site away from any apartments to avoid overlooking. Figure 14 illustrates these design principles visually.

Design Standards

Developers are encourage to meet 'Lifetime Homes' standard, through the incorporation of design features on issues such as access and internal specification etc to ensure dwellings are adaptable to changing living conditions.

In the interests of providing an attractive and marketable development, and to improve the choice and quality of housing in the area, housing should be designed to the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' rating of at least 3 stars [equal to an EcoHomes rating of Very Good]. The development should also aim to attain the CABI "Building for Life" Silver Standard at least, and should aspire to Gold Standard wherever possible.

The design of the houses should raise design standards and especially avoid the use of standard ("any place") product designs. Innovative designs that reflect the character/vernacular of the local area, both in terms of materials and design features, will be welcomed.

(d) Public Realm

High quality treatment of outdoor areas will be an important element of the development of the area. Street furniture, paving materials and soft landscape works will work to create a place with distinctive character but which has strong visual connections with the surroundings, and serve to reduce vehicular speed, minimise visual clutter and obstructions for pedestrians. Developers will be required to put forward appropriate measures for the maintenance of public areas.

The approach to landscaping should seek opportunities to enhance and create natural wildlife habitats and promote biodiversity.

(e) Transport and Accessibility

The development needs a clearly defined road hierarchy which promotes legibility and place making. There should be a clear delineation between primary, secondary and tertiary routes through the site. Main vehicular access to the site will be as existing. Each road should have development of an appropriate scale and form, and the hierarchy should be clearly legible. However the design of the built form and spaces should take precedence over the design of highways. Furthermore the street layout should naturally calm traffic speeds without requiring engineering features.

A comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes are provided within the vicinity of the site. The development must provide connections into these.

Consistent with guidance contained in the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets, any pedestrian/ cycle links should be direct, well lit, overlooked, and at least 3 metres in width.

In the interests of comprehensive redevelopment, it is important that good pedestrian access is provided to the Collins and Aikman site on the southern side of Lower Milehouse lane. This will ensure residents of the Lower Milehouse estate have easy access to community facilities such as the proposed Health Centre and existing Morrison's superstore.

Car Parking

The level of car parking should reflect both government guidance and the SPD's aspirations for sustainability. Spaces should be provided in a variety of ways and avoid the dominance of private cars on the street scene. Access and parking to the rear of properties can be an effective in minimising the dominance of cars on the street scene, whilst the provision of private garages is beneficial in security terms. Where cars cannot be stored within the curtilage of a dwelling, they should be located close to the properties they serve and well overlooked. The principles of English Partnerships toolkit for "Car Parking: *What Works Where*" should be taken into account in the design and layout of parking areas. The siting of car parking will need to take account of access requirements to the estate for refuse collection and the emergency services.

Car parking provision should not exceed standards outlined in Local Plan policy T16: General Parking Requirements. This is set at:

- 1 space plus 1 visitor space per 3 dwellings for 1 bedroom dwellings.
- 2 spaces per 2/3 bedroom dwellings.
- 3 spaces per 4 bedroom dwellings.

It should be noted that these figures are a maximum, and given the sites sustainable location close to the town centre and community facilities, lower levels of provision may be acceptable where sufficient commitment has been made to encouraging more sustainable modes of travel. In the interests of encouraging sustainable modes of travel, where apartments are proposed, secure covered cycle parking will be requested at a rate of 1 space per unit.

Developer Contributions

It is likely that development proposals will require financial contributions towards public transport improvements and developers' attention is drawn to the forthcoming Newcastle-under-Lyme Transport and Development Strategy. Requirements will

need to be informed by a Transport Assessment, which should accompany any planning application.

(f) Landscape/Ecology

The Green Space Strategy for Urban North Staffordshire (Scott Wilson September 2007) identifies the green spaces within Newcastle and in particular Knutton and Cross Heath as a major defining feature of the area. They serve a range of functions and it is important that new residential developments not only preserve existing green spaces but maximise their benefit through the provision of good links. The creation of such links should involve the minimal removal of mature trees and to demonstrate accordance with this, a tree survey should accompany any planning application.

An important strip of informal open space exists to the north east of the estate. This helps form a noise buffer from the Lymedale Cross Industrial Estate as shown in figure 14, and must be retained and improved as meadowland. Additional tree and shrub planting should be provided to strengthen the noise buffer and support the creation of a new wildlife habitat. Developers should also upgrade the existing informal footpath highlighted in figure 14, in order to preserve desired routes and form new links to Lower Milehouse Lane. Structural landscaping to the rear of any property boundaries will be required to create a secure environment. Where provided this should be of native species.

Landscaping proposals will need to be considered carefully to avoid providing opportunities for concealment in the interests of designing out crime. The Borough Council's landscape team should be contacted at the pre-applications stage to advise on appropriate species. Contact details are provided in section 5.

Any planning application for the site will need to be accompanied by an Ecology Mitigation Strategy in accordance with Natural England's requirements to protect and extend biodiversity in the area. This should ensure there is no net loss of habitat. It is expected that the retention and enhancement of this area of natural vegetation, as highlighted in figure 14, form a key aspect of any Ecology Mitigation Strategy.

(g) Open Space and Play Areas

Existing play equipment on the Lower Milehouse Estate is currently in an isolated location towards the northern boundary, with little clear relationship to surrounding properties. Its location can be seen on figure 1. As part of redevelopment proposals this should be removed and upgraded to form a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play in the centre of the site. The space should be safe, overlooked, secure, and well linked to the whole estate. The broad location of where it should be sited is shown in figure 14. In deciding upon the exact location, attention must be given to how the play area integrates with properties aimed at families and elderly people in order to minimise nuisance to local residents.

The Urban Green Space Strategy for North Staffordshire identified a high level of open space provision in the area, but deficit in quality. To this end, developer contributions will be required to upgrade the Wammy to supports its role as a new neighbourhood park.

(h) Flood Risk

A Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough in 2007 has identified that there are surface drainage problems within the Knutton and Cross Heath area. Any planning application for the site should therefore be accompanied by a specific Flood Risk Assessment.

The Environment Agency has stated that basic infrastructure serving the redevelopment sites may be seriously compromised as a result of the increasing impact of climate change. Developers should therefore contact Severn Trent Water Ltd for further information with regard to the capacity of the public mains storm sewer system, which should have at least a 1 in 30 year rainfall event capacity. Provision will need to be made for a drainage system with a capacity to cater for a 1 in 100 year rainfall plus 30% rainfall event, in accordance with current national planning guidance contained in PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk.

Given the identified surface drainage problems in the area, developers should as far as ground conditions allow incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into the development including the use of porous pavements, soakaways, swales, infiltration devices and storage basins/ ponds. Such proposals will facilitate the disposal of surface water as close to the surface as possible, before it enters a watercourse. As discussed earlier, wide scale provision of hardstanding driveways with no permeability should be avoided on flood risk grounds. As a general principle, the aim should be to create open watercourses instead of new culverts in order to minimise flood risk and create opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

5 Other Information

The SPD has been prepared in partnership with a range of stakeholders and has been through extensive formal consultation in line with statutory requirements. It has also been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal to ensure the implementation of the SPD will have positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes for the area.

The SPD phase 1 now forms part of the Borough Councils Local Development Framework, and will be a material consideration for planning applications for the 2 development sites outlined within. Further guidance will be produced for future phases of the SPD area and these will be subject to the same rigours of community consultation.

Further information can be obtained from the Council's website (www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk), including the accompanying Sustainability Report to the SPD.

Further information about Housing Market Renewal can be obtained from RENEW North Staffordshire's website: www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk

Other useful links for information are:

www.cabe.org.uk

www.buildingforlife.org

www.breeam.org

www.lifetimehomes.gov.uk

Contacts

- **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council: Planning Policy – Sean Walsh 01782 742467**
- **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council: Development Control – Peter Rowley 01782 742408**
- **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council: Landscape Team – Roger Tait 01782 742634**
- **RENEW North Staffordshire: Programme Manager - Debbie Hope 01782 237822**
- **Aspire Housing: Darren Green 01782 635200**
- **Knutton & Cross Heath Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder: Laurence Reardon 01782 611033**
- **Staffordshire County Council: Newcastle-under-Lyme Partnership Officer : Tim Leese 07814 372627**

Liability

The Council can accept no liability for any information supplied in this document and developers are strongly advised to satisfy themselves as to the prevailing circumstances in respect of any potential development site.

