STAFFORDSHIRE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN
EXAMINATION GUIDANCE NOTE

Inspector

1. The examination is being carried out by Mr Andrew Mead BSc(Hons) MRTPI MIQ (the Inspector). The Inspector has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He will look at whether the Plan complies with current legislation; also whether it is sound.

2. In assessing soundness, the Inspector will consider whether he feels that the Plan has been positively prepared; is justified (the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence); is effective (deliverable and based on effective joint working); and is consistent with national policy.

Programme Officer

3. In carrying out his tasks, the Inspector will be assisted by Miss Amanda Willis. Amanda has been appointed as the Programme Officer for the examination. She is impartial and independent, working under the direction of the Inspector. She is the first port of call for all matters concerning the examination. Her contact details are:

   Email: programme.officer@sstaffs.gov.uk
   Telephone: 01902 696318
   Post:
   Amanda Willis
   Programme Officer for Staffordshire County Council
   c/o South Staffordshire Council
   Council Offices
   Wolverhampton Road
   Codsall
   South Staffordshire
   WV8 1PX

Documents

4. The document being examined is the Staffordshire Minerals Local Plan (Final Draft June 2015). This is the document upon which public consultation took place in June and July 2015.

5. All documents relevant to the examination can be seen on the Council’s web-site. A copy of each document is also held by the
Programme Officer. Please contact the Programme Officer if you wish to have access to a copy of any particular document. A list of other documents that participants may find useful is set out in Annex A

Examination Process

6. In considering the soundness and legality of the Plan, the Inspector will take into account the representations made during the consultation period. He will also carry out hearings into different aspects of the Plan. Certain parties have indicated that they wish to give evidence at the hearing sessions. Where appropriate, these parties are now invited to attend the hearings. However, representations carry equal weight whether dealt with orally or by means of the written representations that have already been made.

7. On receipt of these notes, please contact the Programme Officer in order to accept or decline invitations of attendance, if you have not already done so. The Programme Officer should also be notified if any uninvited representor feels that they should participate in the hearings by **5:00pm Friday 04 March 2016**

Issues and questions

8. In preparation for the hearing sessions, the Inspector has prepared schedules of issues and questions that he wishes to discuss at the hearings. Some of the questions are the Inspector’s own questions. Others are based on the representations that have been made. If any representor feels that an important issue or question has been omitted, they should notify the Programme Officer by **5:00pm Friday 04 March 2016**

Additional written evidence

9. The Inspector will normally be adequately informed by the representations that have already been made. However, if contributors feel that an additional statement is required, they may submit further written evidence provided that they abide by the rules and timetable set down in Annex B to this note. **The content of any additional statements should not stray beyond the scope of the original representation (for example, by introducing new points).**

10. In order for all parties to be able to prepare for the hearings, any additional statements should be with the Programme Officer by **5.00pm on Tuesday 15 March 2016**.

11. The Council has considered all the representations that have been made. The responses are summarised in the document “Schedule of Representations to Final Draft June 2015” (SUB 5). In addition, the Council’s “Schedule of Proposed Changes” (SUB 4) is relevant. This schedule has not been publicised but has been on the Council’s web
site. Some respondents may find that the Council’s responses or the proposed modifications (changes) address their concerns and that no further action is needed. If so, please advise the Programme Officer of your changed course of action.

Statement of Common Ground

12. Where it would assist the examination process, participants should consider the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground to be agreed with the Council. Such a statement could highlight outstanding disputed points or matters that are not in dispute. They should be prepared to the same timetable as other statements.

Hearing sessions

13. The schedules of issues and questions will be used by the Inspector as his agendas for the hearings. The format of the hearings will be that of a discussion. The Inspector will go through the questions in turn. Where a representor has been linked with a particular question, they will be invited to join the discussion on that question.

14. There is no need to repeat material that is set out in the original representation or in any additional statement. There will be no cross-examination or formal presentation of cases. Participants should detail the changes that they are seeking and demonstrate why they consider the Plan to be unsound.

15. It is not necessary for parties to be professionally represented but a professional expert may act for you if you so wish. Normally, only one person would represent each participant at the hearings.

16. A programme for the hearings is now available. They will start at **10.00am on Wednesday 30 March 2016.** The venue will be Staffordshire Place 1, Stafford, ST16 2DH – Room to be confirmed.

17. In some circumstances, the Inspector may invite other parties to attend the hearing sessions. This may occur when a specialist input is required or to gain a balanced mix of participants. Attendance at the hearings is not compulsory.

18. If any participant has a disability that could affect their contribution to the examination, they should let the Programme Officer know as soon as possible. Appropriate assistance can then be given.

After the hearings

19. At the end of the final programmed hearing session, the Inspector will adjourn proceedings. The hearings will not be closed in case it is necessary to return at a future date. However, unless requested by the Inspector, no further submissions should be made.
20. The Inspector will discuss with the Council any modifications that are likely to be necessary to the Plan, particularly those that would be required to make the Plan sound (the “main modifications”). The Inspector can only recommend such modifications if invited to do so by the Council.

21. Any main modifications would have to be advertised and possibly subjected to revised Sustainability Appraisal and re-assessment under the Habitats Regulations. Taking any such matters into account, the Inspector will announce the date by which he envisages his report will be sent to the Council. In the first instance, a “fact check” report will be submitted. This will be followed by the Inspector’s final report. The report will deal with issues, not individual representations.
Annex A - List of relevant legislation and guidance

A. Legislation

These documents can be searched for and found on:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012

B. Government Policy and Guidance

These can be found by using the search facility on:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Policy Guidance

C. Guidance from the Planning Inspectorate

- Examining Local Plans: Procedure Practice [The Planning Inspectorate, December 2013 (3rd Edition v.1)]

See: http://www.planningportal.gov.uk

D. Examination and Evidence Base D

The Examination web site can be found at:
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/mlpexamination
Annex B - Format for statements

A. Please e-mail a version of all statements and appendices to the Programme Officer as well as sending the paper copies detailed below.

B. Submissions should be succinct with the avoidance of unnecessary detail or repetition of the original representation and should be within the scope of your original representation. Also, you must detail the changes that you are seeking to the Plan.

C. It is the quality of the reasoning that carries weight not the bulk of the documents. There is no need for verbatim quotations from the Plan or other sources of policy guidance. The fundamental elements should be set out clearly and succinctly. The hearings are not the place for surprise contributions.

D. None of the statements should be longer than 3,000 words. Any submissions longer than this will be returned for editing. Statements should be prepared on A4 paper and not bound but just stapled. Any photographs should be submitted in A4 format and should be annotated (back or front).

E. Supporting material in the form of appendices to statements should be limited to that which is essential and should not contain extracts from any publication that is already before the Examination, such as evidence base documents or nationally available Government guidance – a paragraph or page reference will suffice. Any appendix should have a contents page and be paginated throughout. Whilst the word limit does not include text in appendices, the aim of succinctness should be respected. Anyone submitting appendices should indicate in their statement the parts upon which they are relying.

F. Those submitting statements (or further written representations) should submit three paper copies to the Programme Officer (for the Inspector, Council and Programme Officer). This is in addition to a version via e-mail.

G. All statements should be clearly marked to indicate the hearing session to which the statement is directed and the question that is addressed. There should be a separate statement for each hearing session.

H. All participants should adhere to the timetable for submitting statements. Late submissions and material tabled at the hearings are unlikely to be accepted since this can cause disruption and result in unfairness and the adjournment of the hearing. If material is not received by the deadlines stated below, the Programme Officer will assume that you are relying on your original representation.

I. All additional statements and other material should be in the hands of the Programme Officer by 5:00pm Tuesday 15 March 2016. This is the deadline for both paper and electronic copies.