The new Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire 2015 to 2030
Further Proposed Changes to:
Policy 5: Planning for Hydrocarbon Extraction

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15 April 2016
Introduction
When the Final Draft – June 2015 version of our new Plan was submitted for Examination in January 2016, ‘proposed changes’ were also submitted for consideration by the Inspector.

In response to discussions at the Examination hearings, which started on 30 March 2016 and end on 13 April 2016, we now wish to make ‘further proposed changes’. The ‘proposed changes’ already submitted, together with the ‘further proposed changes’ taken together will represent the ‘main modifications’ and ‘additional modifications’ to the new Plan.

Main modifications are being made to address soundness issues, i.e. to ensure that the new Plan is ‘positively prepared’, ‘justified’, ‘effective’ and ‘consistent with national policy’ (ref. National Planning Policy Framework – paragraph 182).

Additional modifications are being made to improve the new Plan e.g. to provide further clarification or to update the new Plan.

A schedule of main and additional modifications will be prepared and made available for public comment before the Examination closes and the Inspector completes his report, albeit that the Inspector will only consider representations on the main modifications at this stage (ref. Planning Practice Guidance – Local Plans – paragraph 024).

The further proposed changes
As a result of the discussions on Day 2 of the Examination, we wish to make ‘further proposed changes’ to Policy 5: Planning for Hydrocarbon Extraction for the reasons set out below:

1. To be consistent with the further proposed change to Policy 4.3, made to clarify the policy by removing unnecessary words so that it is clear to all that planning is a balancing exercise and that there may be situations when ‘material planning benefits of the proposals outweigh the material planning objections’ (ref. the NPPF paragraph 14), we wish to make a further proposed change to the policy at 5.4 ('Overall assessment').

Explanatory note: Extracts from the Final Draft – June 2015 (with tracked proposed changes) version of the new Plan are provided below. The ‘proposed changes’ are shown tracked in red and the ‘further proposed changes’ are shown tracked in blue.
Policy 5: Planning for Hydrocarbon Extraction

**Overall assessment**

5.4 Having assessed the impacts of the proposals for the exploration, appraisal and production of hydrocarbons, permission will only be granted where it has been demonstrated that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on human health, general amenity and the natural and historic environment, except where or the material planning benefits of the proposals outweigh the material planning objections. All proposals should include restoration and aftercare measures for each of the stages of development.