



# Stafford Borough Council ANNUAL PLAN 2006/07



Stafford  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



2006-2007  
*Transforming the Delivery of  
Services Through Partnerships*



**Stafford Borough Council**

**ANNUAL**

**PLAN**

**2006/07**



**Stafford**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# FOREWORD

By Councillor Judith Dalgarno, Leader of the Council

It gives me great pleasure to present the Borough Council's third Annual Plan which covers the financial year 2006/07.

Within this Plan initiatives to further our four priorities, Prosperity, Community Safety, Management of Public Spaces and Waste Management are highlighted. We are now redirecting an additional £800,000 per year to these priorities.

The Borough Council faces a number of major challenges during the next 12 months.

- Following the successful transfer of the Council's housing stock to Stafford and Rural Homes we must ensure that our role in maintaining and enhancing all housing within the Borough is undertaken. In addition, we need to examine our organisation following such a fundamental change to ensure that it continues to provide efficient and effective services.
- We will accept our responsibilities under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act which will enable us to deal more effectively with such issues as abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, graffiti, stray dogs and noise.
- Contained within this Plan are not only initiatives aligned to the Borough Council's priorities and new legislation but also a range of improvements across all the authority's service areas. A significant improvement will be the extension to the hours of operation of our Customer Contact Centre so that during the week people will be able to contact the Council from 8.00 am – 8.00 pm.

Members, Officers and Partner organisations will work together throughout the year to ensure that the various initiatives contained within this Plan are delivered in a manner that represents value for money and meets the needs of people within our area.

If you have any comments about the contents of this Plan or about Council services you can contact me at Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, Tel 01785 619427 or e-mail [jdalgarno@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:jdalgarno@staffordbc.gov.uk)





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## Stafford Borough Council Annual Plan

This Annual Plan aims to provide the community with an overview of what the Borough Council will be doing to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of its community between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007.

This document sets out:

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### Vision and Aims

In September 2003, the Borough Council approved its new vision, which is **“To lead a Community and Borough which is prosperous, safe, healthy, clean and green”**.

To achieve this we have set four aims:

<b>PRIORITY one</b>	Prosperity
<b>PRIORITY two</b>	Community Safety
<b>PRIORITY three</b>	Management of Public Spaces
<b>PRIORITY four</b>	Waste Management

Actions to achieve these aims are detailed in the next section of the Plan.



## PRIORITY one

### PROSPERITY

“Working to ensure good employment opportunities and a flourishing economy, retail, leisure and tourism services”

#### **In the next twelve months we will:**

Target the business and professional services sector and high-tech industries as key economic growth sectors for the Borough.

Liaise with the army to seek the long term military future for the former RAF Stafford site.

Allocate £50,000 to the Stone Market Initiative to promote the development of new business start-ups in the Stone area.

A further £28,000 has been allocated to support and develop the current Inward Investment Activities bringing new jobs into the Borough.

Provide £20,000 for the Stafford Town Centre Partnership Fund to promote our retail and leisure facilities across the West Midlands Region. Use £10,000 to support and develop the Town Centre events programme, which provides events in the Market Square.

Improve public access to planning documentation with the introduction of electronic document record management and continue to improve the speed of processing planning applications in line with targets.

Continue to be a key partner in the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership, which aims to encourage more people to visit the Borough and the wider county area and to enhance the visitor experience for people once they are here.

Invest in Culturegen, the Borough’s arts and creative industries agency so that it continues to function when its current external funding ceases.

Promote a series of activities and events to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stafford’s first Royal Charter.

Formally re-open Alleyne’s Sports Centre in Stone following its refurbishment of sporting and recreational facilities and review the existing joint management agreement for the site.

Develop a new heritage trail for Stafford encouraging visitors to stay longer in the area.

Work with major developers in revitalising Stafford Town Centre.

Continue to arrange a programme of quality community events for all the family which are provided free of charge.

### **Longer term we will:**

Work with the business community to support the local economy and secure competitive advantage for the Borough.

Develop the Borough as a destination for inward investment. We will support this by providing and encouraging services, choice within the housing market, leisure opportunities and an environment that improves quality of life for all residents.

Ensure that the Local Development Framework identifies and brings forward new employment sites and attracts new businesses to the Borough.

Provide a fast track approach to key planning applications and to sustain the recent level of improvement.

Continue the work commenced by the Single Regeneration Budget Board including providing specialist business support for key sectors.

Support the rural economy through the Market Towns Initiative and other measures.

Maintain an active role in the Southern Staffordshire Partnership to ensure that the Borough benefits from sub regional strategies and encourages investment from Advantage West Midlands.

Continue to participate in the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership, which aims to encourage more people to visit the Borough and the wider County and to enhance the visitor experience for people once they are here.

Build the new leisure centre in Stafford, ensuring the facilities within it are the best we can provide.

Use the planning process to maximise leisure, housing and recreational benefits from new developments in the Borough.

Achieve e-government targets – all services on line by 2010 with priority on a common gateway to all public services.

### **Links to the Community Plan:**

Support the voluntary community and develop better access to public services using e-government.

Promote and encourage the re-development of “brownfield” land.

Through the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership promote the Borough and the wider county for tourism and business.



## PRIORITY two

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

“Working to ensure that people are safe in their homes and in their neighbourhood”

#### **In the next twelve months we will:**

Take into consideration the targets set within the Borough’s Community Safety Strategy.

Achieve a year on year 5% reduction in overall crime levels with the Stafford Crime and Disorder Partnership.

Develop a multi-agency community safety team with Staffordshire Police and other key agencies and use £30,000 to continue our project support role within the Stafford Crime and Disorder Partnership.

Increase the coverage of the CCTV system in Stafford and Stone. Invest a further £20,000 to increase the hours during which the CCTV system in Stafford and Stone is operated. Specifically, this fund ensures that the system is staffed to coincide with the evening economy.

Promote community cohesion initiatives to reduce anti-social behaviour in the Borough and thereby reduce the need for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Consider community safety issues within our parks and open spaces by using landscaping designs which minimise opportunities for crime.

Continue to provide the Chillout programme in Stafford and Stone and the summer playscheme throughout the Borough. A further £15,000 has been allocated to continue the “Chillout” sessions in Stafford and Stone. This initiative offers a range of activities and events aimed at young people, with specific events planned in Stafford and Stone.

Work with landlords of rented property to maximise standards of safety in rented property in the Borough and work to reduce the number of vulnerable people living in non-decent housing.

Work with other public agencies, in particular the Police, ensuring a high standard of maintenance and appearance of the streets and public spaces in the Highfields area as part of the Reassurance Policing Initiative.

**Longer term we will:**

Continue to play our role within the Safer Communities Partnership and fully support the Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services together with other appropriate agencies in reducing crime and the fear of crime.

Use the Environmental Maintenance Service to support a quality environment which encourages pride and respect.

Use our planning responsibilities to guide and support physical development, which discourages unlawful activity.

Encourage older people to access a range of activities that will increase their confidence, independence and sense of well being.

Engage with young people by providing exciting, creative, physical, energetic and engaging sports and arts development activities.

**Links to the Community Plan:**

Continue to reduce crime and the fear of crime throughout the Borough.

Improvement of the leisure and recreational facilities within the Borough.



## PRIORITY three

### MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES

“Working to ensure clean, tidy and attractive public spaces”

#### **In the next twelve months we will:**

Implement the Waterscape project which will improve the environment alongside the River Sow through Stafford by enhancements to the riverside walkway.

Use £110,000 to purchase additional machinery, materials and other resources for the maintenance of public spaces and streets.

Provide £56,000 to enhance the Streetscene Scheme to maintain the cleaning of streets and public open spaces, to maintain the regular washing of pedestrianised areas in Stafford and Stone and the operation of the steam cleaner for gum clearance, fly posting and graffiti removal.

Allocate £20,000 to the rolling programme for implementation of the Town Centre Vision eg gateway treatments, signage, public art etc.

Support the public space improvement partnership fund for community groups and Parish Councils wishing to improve their local open spaces which are derelict or subject to littering and vandalism. The Council will match £1 for £1 monies raised or obtained in grants by these groups who take responsibility for maintenance.

Commence a programme of works on the Riverway site in Stafford to restore it to sporting use, with the provision of enhanced recreational and environmental facilities.

Create park development plans for Rowley Park, Westbridge Park and Victoria Park, with a view to developing further plans for other parks and open spaces in due course.

Develop our bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to complete the restoration of Victoria Park.

Allocate £30,000 for improvements to parks and open spaces, to provide facilities for older people and families which will include additional bins and benches and improvements to paths and fences.

Develop environmentally friendly methods of planting to support the annual ‘In Bloom’ competition.

**Longer term we will:**

Work with Staffordshire County Council to encourage them to invest in transportation, public spaces and highways, which will be of advantage to our local communities.

Develop our role in street cleaning, graffiti removal, litter collection and fly tipping from public spaces.

Use planning policies contained within the Local Development Framework to protect and enhance our green spaces.

Introduce a medium term programme of repair and maintenance to enhance the appearance and safety of play areas.

Invest in a rolling programme of investment in play refurbishment on a bi-annual basis.

**Links to the Community Plan:**

Use the Green Awards Scheme to reward organisations for good environmental practice.

Increase the use of enforcement powers to improve the public spaces and reduce the amount of littering, graffiti, fly posting and fly tipping.



## PRIORITY four

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

“Working to ensure recycling targets for household waste are met.”

**In the next twelve months we will:**

Provide £35,000 to enhance the household waste collection trials in Eccleshall and Parkside, Stafford, to allow for the collection of cardboard and of plastics.

Extend the Garden Waste Collection Service to an additional 11,000 households and use £50,000 to support the on-going costs of the green waste schemes.

Allocate £120,000 to be used to extend the Kerbside Collection Service for dry recyclable materials to all areas within the Borough, and investigate alternative collection methods for dry recycling and consider the suitability of any new containers that may become available.

Expand the mini recycling villages for flats and sheltered schemes that are not currently on the dry recycling service.

Invest £90,000 in a Refuse Amnesty, enabling every household to benefit from one special collection during the year.

Prepare the Waste Collection Service for re-tendering in 2008.

**Longer term we will:**

Provide all Stafford Borough residents with high quality waste and recycling services.

Continue with the waste minimisation and recycling promotion programme to raise awareness and participation, which will lead to improved recycling rates.

Remain committed to environmental protection and the pursuit of sustainability where practical.

Work with other Staffordshire Local Authorities to seek ways of securing additional funding whilst developing cost effective methods to develop waste management.

**Links to the Community Plan:**

Develop initiatives that will encourage the minimisation of waste, to include enhanced recycling and composting facilities for Borough residents and other users from outside the Borough.



## IMPROVEMENTS

### Further Improvements to our Services

We are also planning improvements across all our services to the public and our internal services during 2006/07. The major developments are detailed below:

#### **Our Public Services**

- Further improvements to the access of public buildings under the Disability Discrimination Act will be undertaken.
- Re model the Civic Centre reception to provide customers with a Customer Contact Centre that will improve the service to our customers.
- Continue to implement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) by bringing more services on line during 2006 to enable 80% of all service requirements to be dealt with at the first point of contact.
- Extend the range of services that the Contact Centre will be able to deal with over the extended operating hours of 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday
- Continue to develop Stafford Gatehouse Theatre's artistic programme and catering function in order to deliver a quality product.
- Conservation work will be undertaken to the keep of Stafford Castle and new interpretation panels will be provided at Izaak Walton's Cottage.
- Review our organisation following the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Stafford and Rural Homes, in particular the occupation of the Civic Centre.
- Develop the Strategic Housing Role of the Council to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of all housing stock within the Borough is undertaken.

#### **Investment in Technology**

The implementation of new IT systems such as Financial Management, Human Resources, Revenues and Benefits, Electronic Document and Record Management will mean changes in the way services are provided resulting in enhanced service provision to the public, and an anticipated saving of £100,000 per year.

## **To Improve our Operational Efficiency**

Continue to develop the Council's scrutiny role with specific work plans for each scrutiny committee.

We will implement a corporate Business Continuity Management system which will include the: -

- implementation of the new Business Continuity Strategy
- compilation / implementation of a Crisis Management Plan
- compilation of individual business continuity plans for key services
- compilation of a Business Continuity Policy with structures and processes for the maintenance and rehearsal of plans.

## **PERFORMANCE ISSUES**

### **(i) The Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan**

At the end of 2003, Stafford Borough Council underwent a Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out by the Audit Commission. As part of the assessment a three year Improvement Plan was developed and agreed with the Audit Commission.

#### **In the final year of Implementing this Improvement Plan we will:**

- Introduce our partnership protocol in the organisation involving raising awareness of availability and content and the partnership that it will relate to
- Apply the protocol to these partnerships which are fundamental to this organisation's achievements, priorities and statutory responsibilities
- Roll out project management training to Prince 2 standards throughout the organisation in particular to those involved in the implementation of significant projects and initiatives

### **(ii) Performance Management**

#### **In the next twelve months we will:**

- Continue to integrate Performance Management into the culture and processes of the organisation at Officer and Member level
- Implement a Performance Management IT system
- Continue to review and align performance indicators and targets with Council priorities
- Strengthen the links between resources and performance both in the area of budget allocation and in the monitoring and reporting of performance and expenditure
- Develop a training programme for Performance Management for Officers and Members
- Undertake the statutory Best Value Satisfaction Survey

- Continue to undertake consultation in line with Council priorities to improve service delivery to stakeholders

### **(iii) Inspections**

The major external inspection being undertaken 2006/07 will be on the environment function of the Council. In particular this inspection will cover the following areas:

Street cleansing and street care  
 Street care education and enforcement measures  
 Waste collection  
 Management of transport related assets as they relate to the streetscene, including car parks, bus shelters, street signs  
 Partnership and joint working with Staffordshire County Council relating to waste and streetscene issues

## **GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

### **(i) Corporate Governance**

**In the next twelve months we will:**

- Establish an Audit & Accounts Committee
- Examine our financial procedures in respect of use of resources in the light of recommendations from the Audit Commission
- Establish a procurement officer group and realise the efficiencies of corporate and joint procurement with other authorities/bodies.

### **(ii) Managing Diversity**

Over the next twelve months we aim to achieve Level 1 of the Equality Standard.

In order to do this we will:

- Complete training on "Respecting Our Customers and Colleagues"
- Include information on our website in the four community languages
- Revise our Equality Policy following the setting up of Stafford & Rural Homes
- Start work on our Disability Equality Scheme
- Report on racist incidents

**(iii) Risk Management**

During the next twelve months we aim to strengthen risk management within the Council by:

- providing risk management training to members
- using the operational risk register / service plans to introduce risk management targets into managers' performance management & appraisal processes
- continue to work with the Corporate Management Group to identify, prioritise and manage risks at the strategic and operational levels.



# RESOURCES

## Resources for Meeting our Aims

### Long Term Financial Strategy

The Council's financial strategy was approved in June 2003 and is updated annually on a four year rolling forecast. It forms the basis for the setting of the budget and links available resources to the priorities, objectives and service requirements of the Council. It includes a projection of known service changes over the four year period and also takes into account expected cost pressures.

The Financial Plan projects a gap over the next three financial years between the projected levels of spending and the total available resources. The Council will review the Plan each year and put in place financial strategies to bridge the gap.

The Council has committed to hold Council Tax increases to the headline rate of inflation up to the 2007/08 budget.

### Annual Budget 2006/07

The approved budget for 2006/07 has set a Council Tax increase of 2.4% which is in line with the current headline rate of inflation and the Council's policies included in its Financial Strategy. The Budget includes £800,000 to support the four aims of Prosperity, Community Safety, Management of Public Spaces and Waste Management. In addition, efficiency savings totalling £437,000 have been identified. Stafford Borough Council's spending relies on central government support known as Formula Grant which is made up of Revenue Support Grant and a share of National Non Domestic rates. The Government has changed the basis of grant distribution for 2006/07 and Stafford has received an increase of £242,000 which is equivalent to a 3% increase and is the lowest that any District Council can receive.

<b>A snapshot of our budget</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
General Fund Services	26,922
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	16,087
<b>Total Turnover</b>	<b>43,009</b>
Met from:-	£'000
Income	28,567
Central Government Grant	8,361
To be met from Council Taxpayers	6,081
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>43,009</b>

<b>General Fund Services</b>	<b>GROSS £'000s</b>	<b>INCOME £'000s</b>	<b>NET £'000s</b>
Street Cleansing	1,023	-	1,023
Waste Collection	3,231	826	2,405
Environmental Services	1,773	603	1,170
Culture and Heritage	2,350	695	1,655
Recreation and Sport	5,489	2,497	2,992
Planning Policy & Development Control	1,830	764	1,066
Other Planning and Development Services	2,556	1,313	1,243
Highways Roads & Transport Services	2,836	1,506	1,330
Local Tax Collection & Benefits	18,796	16,854	1,942
Other Services	3,125	3,109	16
			14,842
Use of Reserves		400	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43,009</b>	<b>28,567</b>	<b>14,442</b>

**Following the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Stafford and Rural Homes there is no requirement to account for public sector housing expenditure in 2006/07**



## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

### Stafford Borough Council Annual Plan 2006/07

Partnerships are increasingly important in terms of service delivery, especially for crosscutting issues.

#### Principal Partnerships

**The Local Strategic Partnership:** made up of 360 organisations/individuals from the public, private, voluntary, community and environmental sectors. The work and targets set for this partnership can be found in the Community Plan for 2006-2009.

**Stafford Governance** is a partnership of all public sector agencies responsible for delivering services to the community together with the voluntary sector, Staffordshire University and Stafford College.

**Stafford Borough Community Safety Partnership** includes the Borough Council, County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Services and representatives from other public services, voluntary and community organisations. The work and targets of this body can be found in the Community Safety Strategy.

**The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Partnership** comprise a number of public and private organisations, which are involved in economic and social regeneration within the Borough. The financial period 2007/2008 is the final year of external funding support for this arrangement.

The Borough Council is also a member of the **Southern Staffordshire Partnership**, which is involved in economic regeneration. In addition, the authority issues grants to a number of voluntary and community organisations throughout the Borough.

This year we will be refocusing and launching our **Town Centre Partnership** to protect and enhance the principal retail bases of the Borough.

#### Review of Partnership

Following our major review of partnerships and joint working arrangements, during the next twelve months we will:

- Strengthen links to partnerships, which contribute towards our four priorities.
- Continue to examine ways of engaging the private sector and young people in the Borough's key partnership.
- With our partners optimise the use of external funding for the benefit of the community.
- Introduce a Partnership Protocol.
- Review of Key Partnerships to ensure that there is a joined up approach to service delivery across the Borough with particular reference to the proposed Local Area Agreement.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Stafford Borough Council Annual Plan 2006/07

#### About the Council in General

Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ  
 Telephone - 01785 619000 (Main Switchboard)  
 Website - [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)

General enquiries about Council services should be referred to the Council Service concerned via the Main Switchboard if you are unaware of the direct line number.

The Council operates a comments, complaints and compliments procedure. Forms can be obtained from Council's public reception areas. In addition, the form is available for completion electronically on our web site [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk).

#### Information on, or further copies of this Plan can be obtained from

- the Council's public reception areas
- Public Libraries
- Head of Policy and Improvement - Mr Norman Jones  
 Telephone 01785 619199  
 Email [npjones@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:npjones@staffordbc.gov.uk)  
 Post Norman Jones, Head of Policy and Improvement,  
 Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ
- Website [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)

This Booklet can be made available on request in large print, for details please contact 01785 619199. E-mail [npjones@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:npjones@staffordbc.gov.uk).

[Arabic]

ولو كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات بخصوص هذا المنشور فيرجى الاتصال بمجلس بلدة ستافورد [Stafford Borough Council] على الرقم 01785 619 000 .

[Hindi]

यदि आपको इस प्रकाशन के बारे में अधिक जानकारी की आवश्यकता हो तो कृपया स्टैफोर्ड बरो परिषद [Stafford Borough Council] से 01785 619 000 पर संपर्क करें।

[Punjabi]

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਟੈਫੋਰਡ ਬਾਰੋ ਪਰਿਸ਼ਦ [Stafford Borough Council] ਨੂੰ 01785 619 000 ਉੱਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

[Urdu]

اگر آپ کو اس اشاعت کے بارے میں مزید معلومات کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ کرم اسٹیفورڈ بروکونسل [Stafford Borough Council] سے 01785 619 000 پر رابطہ کریں۔