

STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

KEY STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

MEETINGS WITH PARISH COUNCILS (WESTERN AREA)
6th FEBRUARY 2008 – 6.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Attendees

Cllr W D Davies – Stafford Borough Council
Mr A Yendole – Forward Planning, Stafford Borough Council
Mr Geoff Unwin – Forward Planning, Stafford Borough Council
Mrs Naomi Perry – Forward Planning, Stafford Borough Council
Mr J Forrester – Ranton Parish Council
Mr A Bevington – Gnosall Parish Council
Mr R Greatrex – Gnosall Parish Council
Ms D M Fairbrother – High Offley Parish Council
Mr M Jones – High Offley Parish Council
Mr S Tomkinson – Forton Parish Council
Mrs J Hill – Haughton Parish Council
Mr M Allen – Haughton Parish Council
Ms Elaine Philpott – Barlaston Parish Council
Ms Lynne Hembrough – Barlaston parish Council
Cllr M Smith – High Offley and Stafford Borough Council
Mr T Houghton – Church Eaton Parish Council
Mr K Stubbs – Norbury Parish Council
Ms A Evans – Norbury Parish Council
Ms S Burgess – Gnosall Parish Council
Cllr K Williamson – Stafford Borough Council

1. Welcome & Introduction – Cllr W D Davies

SBC are now in the consultation period for the new development plan. Part of the consultation is asking where 10,100 new houses will go and what infrastructure is required to match the scale of new development. The housing figures given in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) may also go up and so the development plan needs to remain flexible.

SBC need as much information from parish councils, organisations etc as possible, in order to progress with the most appropriate strategy for the Borough.

2. Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 – Saved Policies

The majority of the policies set out in the Local Plan 2001 have been saved until a new development plan is in place – several, including completed housing allocations have been dropped.

Mr A Yendole stated that a note of the meeting would be taken and circulated to all attendees along with an agenda for a second meeting in June.

3. LDF – Progress to date

SBC are at the first stage, the high level options stage of the development plan. Planning applications take account of the development plan and also national policy. National policy has been updated and so there needs to be a new development plan for the Borough to be in line with national policy.

Cllr M Smith – (referring to the telecommunications policy that has been dropped from Local Plan) Has this policy been superseded by PPG8: Telecommunications?

Mr A Yendole – Yes, some policies are out of date compared with national planning policy guidance.

The Scoping Report was published in October for 6 weeks, this is the first document of the LDF and sets out the framework that will be used when appraising the Development Plan in terms of sustainable development.

The evidence base is a key area of the forward planning work and last year the *Land for New Homes: Housing Monitor* and the *Annual Monitoring Report* were published.

4. Implications of the Regional Plan - Submission

The consultation document 'The plan for Stafford Borough' needs to be in step with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which is currently being revised and sets out detailed figures for each authority in terms of housing, employment, retail and office space that needs to be development by 2026.

In terms of housing development, the figures suggested are the equivalent to a development the size of Stone.

Mr T Houghton - But the figures could go up?

Mr A Yendole - Yes the figures could rise to 400,000, and we will not know where the additional figures will go at the moment, we should know by April.

5. The Plan for Stafford Borough – approach & options

Mr A Bevington – Are there any guidelines regarding the split of different types of housing?

Mr A Yendole – No decisions regarding this have been made yet but will be discussed in the next few months as part of the development strategy. Work into population change carried out by Staffordshire County Council indicates there is increasing population of the 65+ and this will have implications in terms of what housing will be required. A housing mix could vary depending on the location.

Cllr W D Davies – Affordable housing in rural areas is also an housing issue along with the issue of those wishing to stay living in rural areas but to 'downsize'. We must consider various options such as retirement villages or an eco town.

Cllr M Smith – The mix of housing types is important and surely this should have been decided by the region when drawing up the plan for the Borough?

Cllr W D Davies - The figures given in the RSS take account of migration and out migration and the strategy aims to concentrate development in larger settlements, in particular the MUA's (Major Urban Areas)

6. Key Issues for the new Development Plan

Mr M Jones: There is also the issue of the closure of services and facilities. If these go then the ageing population will have to travel even further for basic services.

Cllr W D Davies - Yes existing services and facilities must be considered in line with deciding where development should go and this is why a comprehensive review of services and facilities in the main settlements in the Borough has been carried out.

Mr A Bevington - Gnosall is predominant in terms of employment; future development needs to be matched by infrastructure improvements.

Cllr W D Davies – Agree, employment must also be considered, in particular the existing employment areas. Stafford is quite well sustaining in terms of the number of people who live and work within the town.

Mr J Forrester – In terms of the employment land requirement, how will this translate into employment figures?

Cllr W D Davies – SBC must consider a mix of employment types such as business start ups, live/work units, work at home and service industries to ensure that the employment figures meet the level of employment land. Stafford University and Stafford College are beginning to meet the skills shortage in the Borough and so SBC must have a strategy that helps people stay in the Borough with business start ups etc.

Cllr K Williamson – Need to attract big stores to attract people to Stafford and so all the development should go to Stafford. If more development

goes to rural areas then they will lose their character and no one will want to live there.

Mr R Greatrex - Some departments, such as engineering at Stafford College are downsizing.

Cllr W D Davies - This may have something to do with the loss of the large manufacturing companies in the town, but we must address skills for Stafford to grow and become the principal county town. Stafford has 3 major developments coming forward (Riverside, St Georges and Castle Wharf)

Cllr K Williamson – The document refers to the figures ‘being subject to change’, does this mean that the 70/30 ratio is not fixed?

Cllr W D Davies - No that figure is fixed the subject to change refers to other possible changes such as an increase in housing figures from the RSS.

Mr M Jones– Must also consider environmental implications of this new development.

Cllr Mike Smith – Argument for villages being a particular size to support facilities.

Cllr W D Davies – Depends what the ‘critical mass’ is, the delivery of services through S106 agreements are not applicable to all developments due to size etc. There may be penalties for not meeting housing levels – but it is developers who decide when housing will be developed (when the market is right for profit).

7 & 8 Evidence Gathering

Mr A Yendole introduced work currently being carried out, the traffic model for Stafford. The results of this will provide 3 solutions; new roads, public transport infrastructure or a hybrid of the two. The study also takes into consideration possible future development scenarios.

Mr M Jones – Need Western route to stop traffic going through villages

Cllr W D Davies – Yes must consider the implications of development on the rural area, but development needs to be of a considerable size to warrant major infrastructure development, 7,000 houses in Stafford would be considerable.

There are transport issues in the Borough, in particular the high level of people who travel by car. This is unlikely to change due to the rural nature of the Borough and lack of public transport services in some parts of the Borough. Subsidised public transport and car sharing schemes need to be considered as an incentive to reduce car use. There is the possibility of a park and ride in Stafford along with redevelopment of Stafford train station, in particular increasing the car parking space.

Mr A Bevington: Have the council worked out the implications of each development option put forward?

Cllr W D Davies - No not yet. The implications will be considered when selecting the appropriate strategies.

Mr M Jones – Need to look at transport implications.

Cllr W D Davies - The County council are also being consulted on the development plan and will comment in terms of highway implications.

Cllr K Williamson – What about the policing of the rural area, this will need to be increased in these areas are going to get more development.

Mr A Yendole stated he is having meetings with the police and will raise this point.

The development plan will also consider affordable housing. The definition of affordable housing is complicated but Mr A Yendole can provide a definition to those interested. Cllr W D Davies stated the housing strategy as been approved and elements of it will be considered in the LDF.

9. LDF – Next Steps & Future Engagement

Mrs Naomi Perry the introduced the Limehouse consultation software, in particular how to register, make comments and view what comments have already been made. All comments made on the document will be publicly available.

The meeting finished at 8.45

Date of next meeting: 7th May