

**STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
MEETING WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

DATE OF MEETING - 11 DECEMBER 2007

Name of Attendees

Tony Lovett - Staffordshire County Council, Development Services
Chris Smailes - Staffordshire County Council, Development Services
Ian Baldwin - Staffordshire County Council, Development Advice
Kevin Danks - Staffordshire County Council, Head of Estates
Alex Yendole - Principal Planning Officer, Stafford Borough Council
Naomi Perry - Planning Officer, Stafford Borough Council

Matters Arising

- AY to circulate notes of meeting with Paula Furnival concerning health and social care discussion.
- The Minutes state that the property review is being progressed but as yet there is no programme in place or initiated because of a delay caused by the appointment of the new Head of Service due to take up post at the end of February 2008. The Strategic Property Unit will undertake this work and further discussions will be required in due course.
- For clarification Richard Higgs is Corporate Director for Development Services (SCC), Keith Cackett is Deputy Corporate Director for Children and Lifelong Learning (SCC) and Paula Furnival is District Director for Social Care and Health (SCC).
- The Strategic Property Board is chaired by County Councillor Robert Simpson and is informed by the Strategic Property Group, chaired by Richard Higgs. The Strategic Property Unit will deliver the work required by the Strategic Property Group.
- At the next meeting of the Strategic Property Group, scheduled for 13th December 2007, progress in working with colleagues in Stafford Borough Council to identify sites for development will be reported.

Details

- CS asked whether the Core Strategy would be reviewed every five years? AY confirmed that this would not be the case, with the document having to be flexible and capable of responding to change, as required by the new planning system. However if major changes arose in the Stafford Borough area then it may be necessary to consider a revision and adjust the Local

Development Scheme. IB raised that point that the Government could fundamentally change its policy approach to delivery of any service in the near future which could have a significant effect on planning. Therefore producing a flexible document may not be very easy to meet such changes.

- The first 'Changing Lives' report is over 400 pages and has a 48 page summary, considered by Cabinet on 15th November 2007. Further work is required to consider the future alternative uses of 15 adult care residential establishments and no decisions will be made at this stage until further investigations are complete.
- The Changing Lives Project has yet to consider day services and support services. This will begin in 2008 and a work programme will be drawn up taking into account available resources.
- The Laurels residential care establishment at Rowley Park has closed and is being developed as general needs housing with provision through a Section 106 Agreement for affordable housing as part of the scheme, based on the 30% level. Further information regarding the Changing Lives Project is available on the Staffordshire County Council website > Your Council > Committee and Members > Cabinet 15 November 2007 for the summary 48 page report.
- A draft strategy relating to non-central Staffordshire County Council office accommodation has been prepared by the Strategic Property Unit for discussion. This strategy suggests that there are three categories of office:
 - Accommodation for front line services which are accessed by the general public and could, for example, be delivered at District Council civic offices
 - Accommodation which is not accessible by the general public, for back office staff to support the front line staff and this need not be at the same location as the front line service delivery point
 - Accommodation for staff who work in a mobile or remote manner, which is not accessible by the general public
- National planning policy in PPS6 focuses offices on town centres and while it is based on the assumption that town centre locations by virtue of their generally greater accessibility by public transport, does not appear to appreciate the sustainability related benefits of locating accommodation for back office, mobile and remote working staff near to residential areas in order to minimise travelling needs. CS suggested that the new development plans should consider the implications of improving work life balance and the introduction of flexible working more appropriately, to enable office developments to be located more remotely from town centres for such schemes. Planning Inspectors are bound by national planning policy. Drop-in centres could be facilitated by an enabling policy through the development plan to locate such facilities in the future close to homes.

- The Government's property agenda and associated advice states the importance of using cheap sites for schemes such as drop-in centres but this is completely different to the Government's planning policy advice driven by the service economy focusing on town centres. A degree of flexibility in future plans for the area is required.
- A draft strategy for County Council HQ central office accommodation has been produced for discussion. Expressions of interest from developers in relation to a new office and retail building on land at Tipping Street have been invited and early results are encouraging.
- The County Farms Review is considering farms to be disposed of and those with potential future development value. The largest area in SCC ownership lies north of Stafford, between Stafford and Stone but adjoining neither settlement. There are proposals being considered for a new rail bypass north of Stafford that would most probably bisect Staffordshire County Council farmland. Such a new rail route could have a major influence on the future of the Borough were a new station to be involved. Development associated with / enabling provision of a station should be considered in the LDF process.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy is adamant that there will be no Green Belt development as well as no new settlement provision. However the eco-town initiative is being promoted by central Government, potentially challenging these views. Two eco town proposals have been submitted by would be developers for sites in or near Staffordshire at Fradley and close to Drakelow Power Station near Burton. National Government policy in terms of housing is currently to build as much as possible. Stafford town has been identified as a settlement for significant growth by the Regional Spatial Strategy. Stafford Borough Council has made a submission for the Borough to be considered a Growth Point by CLG with additional funding potentially available.
- CS confirmed that development opportunities are being evaluated for County Council properties identified by the Strategic Property Group across Staffordshire. The latest version has identified actual land and properties across the Stafford Borough Council area which will be provided on a database to AY following approval by the Strategic Property Group after its meeting on Thursday 13 December 2007. Decisions are taking place regarding the retention or disposal of properties and must not be confused with changes to the provision of any SCC services. This is highly confidential and sensitive information.
- Stafford Borough Council agreed to continue close dialogue with Staffordshire County Council regarding new sites. The Fire Service contact is Paul Maxfield at Pirehill's Headquarters Property Division. The Police Service contact is Debbie Tallent at the Baswich Headquarters in Stafford. There is no service contact at the Ambulance Service.

- There are transport pressures at the A51 junction with Stone Business Park which are likely if the area is subject to increased employment provision. The Ambulance Service is being consolidated regionally but at the moment the Stafford Headquarters are being retained. The Fire Service is changing its operations with smaller 4 person vehicles being used rather than 8 person larger vehicles to deal with fires in wheelie bins and smaller incidents. Further revamping of the Fire Services estate is being considered. The bio-mass scheme at Eccleshall wish to sell off the heat created to new development on adjoining Greenfield land at Raleigh Hall.
- CS to provide the lists of sites to AY and the associated database. The District property review to be progressed from February 2008 with involvement from Stafford Borough Council.
- Ian Baldwin was thanked for his invaluable support and information provided to this series of meetings. IB will be replaced by Mike Winks at the next meeting in the New Year.
- Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 19 February 2008 (please confirm attendance at this meeting)

Notes prepared by Alex Yendole
Forward Planning Section
Date last revised: 08/01/2009