

## **STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **MEETING BETWEEN STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE & STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY 2008**

#### **Officers in Attendance**

Jeremy Fryer - Staffordshire Police, Estates Advisor  
Alex Yendole - Stafford Borough Council, Principal Planning Officer  
Debbie Tallent included further comments following the meeting.

#### **Details**

- Operational requirements for Staffordshire Police will change as a result of significant new development in Stafford Borough. AY explained the context and principal issues through until 2026 being addressed by the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy. Significant housing developments in a particular area will impact on Police operations. A small policing unit / post should be provided in large scale housing developments, known as a Neighbourhood Policing Unit with Police Officers working out of an office or a retail unit within a District Centre for example. Neighbourhood Police Officers have close links to the community, therefore requiring this sort of facility. DT stated that larger developments may have a requirement to include additional officers and the necessary support.
- Section 106 contributions are being sought for new police facilities as part of new development but limited delivery has been achieved to date through the local planning authority process. The Police wish to gain a greater level of resource through the new Local Development Framework process. Furthermore some development takes place on a piecemeal basis, therefore it is important to also consider cumulative effects of new housing development rather than just large individual sites. Fewer than 1,000 homes in any one location within Stafford or Stone may not require a new Neighbourhood Policing Unit but this largely depends on the location. However the actual number of houses may well vary depending on operational issues. In due course maps showing proposed development areas will be circulated to officers at the Divisional level within Staffordshire Police to discuss and establish the impacts and implications of proposed development areas. DT queried whether it would be possible to incorporate a contribution to revenue as well as capital costs through Section 106 agreements, in the same way that this takes place for open space provision.
- There are no proposals to close any police stations within Stafford Borough. However alternative accommodation is being considered for back office resources to be combined but this change will not have a significant impact on Police operations. A proposal is being considered at Stone in an industrial location for this back office function. In general terms there is support from the Police to improve road access and communications within the Stafford Borough.

- There are two sites owned by Staffordshire Police which the Force wishes to bring forward for development; at the skid pad in Hixon and the former sports ground off Silkmore Lane, Stafford.
- The former sports ground off Silkmore Lane, Stafford amounts to approximately 8 acres and is currently used by Brocton Football Club and the County Staff Club for recreational use. However existing users may have no objection for reusing this land if suitable alternative accommodation / sites could be secured. The area of land is not within the flood plain and can be accessed from Windsor Road. The Police wish to dispose of this land and bring it forward for housing development. It is currently a greenfield site on the edge of Stafford. Access improvement may be required through the surrounding residential areas.
- The skid pad at Hixon could be used for either housing or employment development and has had some initial interest from developers. This site would need to be assessed for flooding issues.
- Consideration may be given to moving Stone Police Station from the town centre to a near town centre location. The current building is not fit for purpose due to the age and internal layout of the property. A proposal may be considered nearer to the Westbridge Park area if this option was available, thus releasing the existing site for alternative uses. DT stated that there were no firm plans currently being considered for the Police Authority for such a proposal.
- With the scenario of 1,000 new houses at Eccleshall this may not require a new police station although a Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) may be needed. Similarly in Gnosall the existing NPU may have to increase in size should new housing development take place on this scale in the village. Great Haywood has a small police office but a scenario of more than 500 houses may require a new larger facility to be provided for the community. A similar situation would arise in Hixon. A new NPU could be developed at the skid pan although without Section 106 contributions the Police Authority would not be able to fund the provision of any accommodation, so any new premises may need to be provided as part of the housing development scheme. The majority of Stafford Borough is covered adequately by NPUs through internal Divisional support and links into other Divisional areas.
- Neighbourhood Policing Units are not generally open to the public but act as a base for Police Officers to share information and operations. The design and type of housing will be a key issue, especially the location of affordable housing as part of the development. In certain locations there is more likelihood of a NPU being required because of the demographic make-up of residents. For example a Neighbourhood Policing Unit may be required at Walton, Stone but not at Aston Lodge Park. It is important to ensure an appropriate housing mix in order to avoid the ghettos in terms of affordable housing. Undoubtedly the expansion of Stafford will have an impact on operational needs as more houses means more crime regardless of the demographic structure. Earlier involvement with the Police through the Architectural Liaison Officer would assist in development briefs.

- It is proposed that the following text is added into the new Local Development Framework document subject to consultation:

*“Due to the scale of new development at Stafford and Stone a housing development of more than 1,000 houses would require a new Neighbourhood Policing Unit and in other locations of more than 500 houses would also require such a facility”.*

- Extra resources will be required to cover 70 new pitches being proposed for travelling families / gypsies which may have an impact on the area. The Police will probably consider it is better to have these new sites located in a single area rather than spread across the Borough area, but will give a more informed view when proposals are known.
- No significant policing issues are evident on the rail network through Stafford Borough although further contact with British Transport Police may say otherwise. DT stated that operational guidance will be required from BT Police.
- In summary the key issues for Stafford Borough are to bring forward development sites in the Police's ownership, investigate the potential for the relocation of Stone Police Station and the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing Units through new developments in key locations.
- Date of Next Meeting - May 2008 following availability of maps showing proposed locations for new developments.

Note prepared by Alex Yendole  
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Forward Planning Section, Stafford Borough Council