

STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

MEETING WITH NATURAL ENGLAND, STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST & STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008

Name of Attendees:

Robert Duff	- Natural England
Sue Lawley	- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Ruth Metcalfe	- Natural England
Alex Yendole	- Stafford Borough Council, Principal Planning Officer
Naomi Perry	- Stafford Borough Council, Planning Officer
William Waller	- Stafford Borough Council, Biodiversity Officer
Karen Davies	- Stafford Borough Council, Sustainable & Healthy Community Team Principal Officer

- AY gave a brief update on the Local Development Framework process, in particular the scale of future development for Stafford Borough arising through the Regional Spatial Strategy process, which is currently being revised. The Ecological Desk Top Study being prepared by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for key settlements across Stafford Borough has been completed. This is an important part of the evidence base but will remain confidential until Stafford Borough Council Members have agreed the broad locations for consultation in early 2009.
- SL stated that the work carried out by SWT should be referred to as an Ecological Desk Top Study rather than a Phase 1 assessment, as this implies a more detailed assessment. AY thanked Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, on behalf of Stafford Borough Council, for producing the study and highlighted a few amendments. SL agreed to amend and finalise the report. Once this has been done the document can be circulated for agreement and 'signed off'.
- WW questioned how the report will be used and who will be interpreting the data. AY replied that Members will be considering locations for development around key settlements for inclusion in the new Development Plan. The report will inform decision making and flag up site-specific biodiversity issues early in the process.
- SL stated that out of the locations / sites included in the study, very few have no habitat / species issues and there is a need to consider how these issues will be dealt with from the outset.
- It was suggested that a brief for landowners / developers should be drawn up to accompany the report as a way of highlighting further ecological studies and work required prior to a site being considered for allocation in the new Development Plan.

- AY introduced the mapping system which is currently being established by Forward Planning. It is envisaged that the information in the ecological study will be mapped onto this system, including access to the text and background information. SL recommended it would be beneficial to also create a link to the Staffordshire Ecological Record's Office Report as this is the most up-to-date information and more recent than information in the Ecological Study.
- Recent plans and projects were discussed, including:
 - An update to the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP), in particular linking this work with the landscape and historic landscape assessments currently being undertaken by Staffordshire County Council.
 - West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge, Stafford Borough Council have recently signed up.
 - Sustainable Community Strategy will be finalised in October 2008 and will include biodiversity objectives
 - The 'Enhancing Biodiversity in the West Midlands' document is now available
 - Regional biodiversity group are looking at Biodiversity Action Plan targets through the Regional Spatial Strategy process and these will be updated to provide a spatial expression
 - Natural England are currently reviewing maps used for the agri-environmental scheme funds and there will be a concentration on farmland birds areas, Staffordshire washlands and Cannock Heaths. Some of these monies will assist the delivery of green infrastructure.
 - Amendment to Flood Plain maps, used in the Stafford Borough Council, through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Green infrastructure, in particular the project relating to concept statements was discussed. The project brief, membership of the project team and timetable was discussed. Stafford Borough Council are planning to carry out a Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will draw on the concept statements, policies in the Core Strategy and other Green Infrastructure studies relating to other parts of the Borough.
- It was agreed that this group would be superseded by the Green Infrastructure Project Group for the Stafford Master Planning Exemplar project.

Note prepared by Alex Yendole

Date last revised: 08/01/2009

Forward Planning Section, Stafford Borough Council