

Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 1 July 2021 at 6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Administration

CABINET - 1 JULY 2021

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of 10 June 2021 as published in Digest No 277 on 11 June 2021
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

Page Nos

(a) COMMUNITY AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO

- (i) Housing Assistance Policy 2021-2024 3 - 33

(b) ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

- (i) Revocation of a Stand for Hackney Carriages - 34 - 37
Clarke Street, Stafford

(c) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO

- (i) Future High Streets Fund: Authority to Spend 38 - 43
- (ii) Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan – Adoption 44 - 61
- (iii) Stafford Station Gateway Masterplan 62 - 73
- PART CONFIDENTIAL

This Report is part confidential due to the inclusion of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information). No representations have been received in respect of this matter.

Membership

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

- P M M Farrington - Leader
- R M Smith - Deputy Leader and Resources Portfolio
- J M Pert - Community and Health Portfolio
- J K Price - Environment Portfolio
- F Beatty - Economic Development and Planning Portfolio
- C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio

ITEM NO 4(a)(i)**ITEM NO 4(a)(i)**

Contact Officer:	Sam Taylor
Telephone No:	01785 619253
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet 01/07/2021 (Only)
Key Decision:	Yes

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR J M PERT
COMMUNITY AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

CABINET**1 JULY 2021****Housing Assistance Policy 2021 - 2024****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To request approval for the adoption of the Housing Assistance Policy 2021 – 2024.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To approve the Housing Assistance Policy 2021-2024 as set out in the attached **APPENDIX**;
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Head of Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Health to revise, prioritise or withdraw discretionary assistance as appropriate, considering the council's available resources and annual funding allocations.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The policy is updated to reflect changes in local strategic context since the previous version was published in January 2018. Those key strategies whose objectives align to ensure that all residents of the Borough have access to a safe, warm and healthy home that meets their needs include:
- Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024
 - Housing Strategy
 - Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-2025
 - Allocation Policy 2020
 - Enforcement Policy 2016
 - Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024

- 3.2 The housing assistance provision covered within the policy includes Disabled Facilities Grants; Home Improvement Assistance; Energy Efficiency Advice, Flexible Eligibility and Fuel Poverty Top-up Grants; Empty Homes Loans.
- 3.3 The policy is updated to reflect changes in service delivery. Stafford Borough Council no longer has a direct contractual arrangement with a Home Improvement Agency for all housing assistance. Regardless of service delivery, this policy seeks to make clear the Council's intentions to ensure that residents have information, guidance and support in making applications for housing assistance.
- 3.4 Disabled Facilities Grant funding from central government has increased significantly in the last five years with the annual grant allocation now being more than double the allocation received in 2015/16. There is a need to significantly increase the annual delivery of grants by implementing a policy in which we are able:
- to speed up administration and the processing of grant funded work;
 - to broaden the scope of works available; and
 - to provide financial assistance that is not covered by mandatory funding.
- 3.5 The policy in respect of Home Improvement Loans is updated for the following reasons:
- To be clear on eligibility criteria; reducing the requirement for repeated use of discretion and therefore ensuring that policy is applied fairly, transparently and consistently.
 - To extend eligibility for loans considering the needs of low income, working households.
 - To ensure that reasonable fee costs are included within the definition of eligible expenses.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 Objective 2: To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.

5 Report Detail

5.1 Local context: Population health demographics and housing access

Stafford Borough has a population of approximately 137,280 people, residing across approximately 62,143 dwellings in Stafford Borough¹. Most homes in the Borough are in the private sector (53,386 dwellings, 86% of all homes)¹.

Median house prices between 2011 and 2020 at the calendar year end, have increased from £157,000 to £215,000; a rise of 37% over the 9-year period.²

The median house price to median earnings ratio is a standard measure of affordability. Figures³ show that this ratio has also increased overall since 2011.

For many, moving to alternative accommodation to raise living standards or increase independence is impractical. Staying put and implementing adaptations or home repairs is a more likely solution and the primary responsibility to maintain private homes lies with the owner.

Around 24% (31,900) of the population in Stafford Borough are estimated to be financially stressed, i.e. find it difficult or very difficult to cope on their current income. This is lower than the national average (28%).⁴ For some homeowners and tenants with repairing responsibilities, financial and practical assistance with home repairs and alterations is required.

An example of this financial stress has been seen within our Energy Efficiency Advice Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Historically, people age 65 and over were most likely to access the Warmer Homes Stafford service due to needing financial assistance with repairs relating to the warmth of their home and most requests came during winter periods. Requests have gone up in volume by over 400%, from 2019/20 to 2020/21 and single, working-age unemployed individuals or those with long term health conditions are now the largest cohort requiring help, with a significant number of these having children in the home. The requests are being received year-round, which indicates the impact of financial stress on families as a result of the pandemic, as opposed to a seasonal response to colder temperatures.

Stafford Borough's population is increasing in size and age, by 2030 there will be 6,000 additional people aged 75 and over.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianhousepriceforanationalandsubnationalgeographiesquarterlyrollingyearhpssadataset09>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

⁴ <https://www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk/documents/District-Borough-Data-Packs/2018/Stafford-Data-Pack-2018.pdf> Page 4, point 2.2

Life expectancy is projected to increase for both men and women by around three years between now and 2030; healthy life expectancy for men and women is projected to increase by four and three years over this period respectively. This means that by 2030 men will spend 13 years in poor health whilst women will spend 15 years in poor health.

The number of people with complex conditions is expected to increase, for example there will be over 2,500 people with dementia by 2030 and 6,900 people aged 65 and over either at risk or with frailty by 2030.

There is a higher proportion of residents in the Borough with a limiting long-term illness compared to the national average. Disability claimants are also high which would suggest levels of long-term conditions are high. Stafford Borough has a higher proportion of lone pensioner households compared to the national average and more than one in ten Stafford Borough households are living in fuel poverty.

The impact of demographic changes means there will be a substantial reduction in the number of working age adults per older person across Stafford Borough (known as a 'dependency ratio'). At present, there are approximately three working age adults to one pension age adult in Stafford Borough which is predicted to reduce to two by 2030; the dependency of our older population on other adults, health and care services is increasing.

The Housing Assistance policy sets out Stafford Borough Council's approach to providing housing assistance for improving living conditions for residents. The policy aims to improve the quality of housing available and to support some of the most vulnerable people in the Borough, by providing the framework for financial assistance under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The policy seeks to make best use of resources and achieve added value and outcomes wherever possible that demonstrate improvements in housing standards and residents' health, safety and wellbeing at home.

5.2 Proposed changes, justification and impact

5.2.1 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG): mandatory assistance

There is no fundamental change to mandatory DFG; general principles of assistance are described which apply to all provisions within the policy. The description for mandatory DFG provision is in line with the legislation regarding financial support for adaptations, repairs and moving to a suitable home as prescribed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

5.2.2 Support for neurodiversity

In the original DFG legislation 1996 there was limited detail about the needs of children with autism spectrum disorder/social/behavioural conditions. More recently, regulation, orders and guidance have introduced more flexibility, particularly the Regulatory Reform Order 2002; Stafford Borough Council wishes to make its support for neurodiversity transparent through clarity of policy:

“Under mandatory grant provision, adaptations can be funded to assist non-neuro typical residents to have access to safe spaces which meet sensory needs.”

It is expected that this statement will support households where family members would normally be required to share bedrooms in line with the housing allocation policy but the neuro-diverse needs of one or more individuals requires separate living, bathing or sleeping space which can be made available using mandatory DFG funding.

5.2.3 DFG: Discretionary assistance

Local Council Tax Reduction
Current policy: The current DFG scheme passports recipients of most means tested benefits to a full grant. However, receipt of any form of financial help with Council Tax costs, in England, is NOT a "passporting" benefit for DFG means-test purposes.
Proposed changes: Local Council Tax Reduction is to be considered a DFG passporting benefit.
Justification: This change is anticipated to help people who have been identified through a localised scheme and are in exclusive receipt of this benefit, which is already means tested, to access necessary adaptations.
Impact: The main impact will be to speed up administration of the assessment and reduce the burden of information required from the applicant as a full test of resources is not required. It is estimated that around 6 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £27,000 increase in grant giving.
Top-up grants
Current policy: Adaptations Top-Up is available with the maximum amount of assistance being £10,000. The Health and Housing Group Manager (or equivalent) may at their discretion approve a grant above the maximum amount for an individual case or revise the maximum grant payable in order to ensure effective budget management.
Proposed changes: To increase the maximum amount of assistance to £20,000, to provide for cost of the adaptations where necessary works exceed the mandatory £30,000 limit.
Justification: Most works cost between £1,000 and £15,000 (87% 2018-2021) whilst the statutory mandatory upper limit is £30,000. This has not increased since 2008 and

has not kept up with inflation. The number of adaptations costing more than £30,000 is minimal, however when these do arise, they tend to be extensions for residents with multiple and complex needs and the existing top-up provision is insufficient. An increase in the amount of top-up available will reduce the requirement for discretionary decision making and improve clarity and consistency in the application of policy.

Impact: The main impact will be to speed up administration as discretionary decision making is not required. It is estimated that around 4 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £50,000 increased grant giving.

Major equipment grants

Current policy: None

Proposed changes: To provide fast-tracked grant funded provision of major items of equipment where other adaptations are not required and the cost exceeds £1,000. Stairlifts, through-floor lifts, modular ramps, specialist toilets. Available to residents with household savings below £10,000, no means test, no land charge.

Justification: Falls are the largest cause of emergency hospital admissions for older people and significantly impact on long-term outcomes, e.g. being a major precipitant of people moving from their own home to long-term nursing or residential care.⁵ The location of falls is often unrecorded, but where this information is collected it shows that the most serious injuries are caused by falls from stairs or steps, with more than half of deaths recorded in 2015⁶.

Separating adaptations which do not require detailed designs or specifications of work, where the client's assessed needs can be met with the straightforward installation of standalone items of equipment, removes the burden of traditional grant giving administrative processes for these. This proposal is intended to create a policy environment which permits faster and more streamlined grant giving for simple cases, particularly those with outcomes which contribute to falls prevention.

Impact: The main impact will be to speed up administration as means testing is not required. It is estimated that around 18 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £46,600 increased grant giving.

Extended warranties

Current Policy: None, though some items do come with standard warranty periods.

Proposed Changes: The cost of securing extended guarantee or warranty periods covering the likely service life of equipment installed via DFG, met by a single payment on commissioning, is to be included in the calculation of any grant payable.

⁵ Department of Health (2012) Improving outcomes and supporting transparency. Part2: Summary technical specifications of public health indicators

⁶ <https://www.rospace.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/home-safety/falls-prevention-factsheet.pdf>

Justification: Some items installed as part of an adaptation, such as stair and through-floor lifts, automated toilets and ceiling hoists, will need regular servicing and provision made for repair in cases of failure. It is good practice for these arrangements to be secured at the time of installation and can reduce the instance of future applications for DFG to fund replacements.

The 1996 Services and Charges Order lists the services and charges which may be funded using the DFG⁷. An omission from the current list is the funding of extending warranties on items like lifts and hoists. It is cited as good practice within the current guidance⁸ and the DFG External Review 2018⁹ recommends that the regulations are amended accordingly.

Impact: It is estimated that around 25 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £10,900 increased grant giving.

Discounting of first £5,000 of applicants' contribution following means testing

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: Discounting of first £5000 of applicants' contribution following means testing.

Justification: Each year around 25% of enquiries do not progress to making an application for DFG because of the need for a contribution. We do not know how many people are deterred from enquiring entirely by the prospect of a means test. The statutory means test favours those with high savings over income and means that working age people on a low income, unless severely disabled, are unlikely to have a "nil contribution" (even those with minimal or low savings) but may still be unable to raise a high street loan to cover the cost of their contribution and therefore do without necessary adaptations.

Impact: This change is anticipated to help people who are obliged via mandatory grant process to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required. It is estimated that around 55 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £103,200 increased grant giving.

Dementia Friendly Dwelling grants

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: Adaptations to assist the person diagnosed with dementia to manage their surroundings and retain their independence. Maximum grant value £5,000, no means test, no land charge.

Justification: Stafford is a Dementia Friendly Borough, and a Local Member of the Dementia Action Alliance. Between 2017 and 2030 the number of people with dementia in Stafford Borough is projected to increase by 41% to 2,540 (740 additional people).

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/2889/made>

⁸ <http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/DFG-Good-Practice-Guide-30th-Sept-13.pdf>

⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762920/Independent_Review_of_the_Disabled_Facilities_Grant.pdf

The home plays an important role, nationally, two-thirds of people with dementia live in ordinary housing and 85% of them express a preference to remain there. Up to now there has been limited use of the DFG to improve homes for people with dementia, but there is scope for it to be used far more as a preventative measure.¹⁰ Early intervention can reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls which subsequently reduces the likelihood of hospital admission; other measures can preserve independence by making daily activities such as making drinks and meals possible for longer, delaying the need for formal care.

The help and support for people living with dementia and their families and carers must be made more widely available and more accessible. It must also be provided as early as possible.¹¹

Impact: It is estimated that around 40 households per year will benefit with a financial impact of around £40,000 increased grant giving.

Provision of home working space

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: Adaptations to assist residents with a disability to obtain, maintain or improve employment, by providing measures that facilitate access to safe space to work at home. Maximum assistance £10,000, means-tested, no land charge applied. Applicants need to have a paid job or be about to start or return to one. Grants are not available for voluntary work. Eligibility will be in line with [Access to Work](#).

Justification: There are 5,482 residents of Stafford Borough with a disability and who are also economically active. 4,515 residents with a disability possess level 4 and higher qualifications and report that their day to day activities are limited a little or a lot.

UNISON undertook a survey of disabled workers' experience at work in June 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. They found that 50% of disabled workers worked from home all of the time during the Covid-19 pandemic. 73% of disabled workers were more or as productive working from home.¹²

There is currently no provision within mandatory DFG legislation to facilitate access to a safe space to work for people with disabilities. It presents innovative use of funds to include this provision.

Impact: The proposal is innovative and support for people with disabilities to work at home through DFG has not previously been seen in Staffordshire; data to support projections of future impact is unreliable. The demand for and impact of this offer of assistance upon budget will be closely monitored. Advice will be taken from the Occupational Therapist to prevent abuse of the scheme.

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762920/Independent_Review_of_the_Disabled_Facilities_Grant.pdf Page 116

¹¹ https://booklets-foundations.uk.com/dementia_and_dfg

¹² <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2020/08/give-disabled-people-right-work-home-covid-19-says-unison/>

Second homes
Current Policy: None
Proposed Changes: Adaptations provided in a second home, which is not the primary residence of the disabled individual but facilitates access to respite care (including foster placements) or reasonable shared time for children with separated parents.
Justification: Disabled children are three to four times more likely than non-disabled children to be abused or neglected. They are more susceptible to bullying and to mental health disorders. Their families are more susceptible to higher levels of stress, lower levels of parental wellbeing and poverty. ¹³ It is therefore particularly important that assistance is available to these families.
<p>Impact: The adaptation will enable additional foster care placements, in particular to accommodate hard to place groups e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate the placement of disabled children • To enable siblings to be placed together • To enable extended respite foster care placements for disabled children (i.e. to facilitate increased length of respite stays from one night to multiple nights by provision of access to bathing). <p>The proposal is innovative and support for separated families through DFG has not previously been seen in Staffordshire; data to support projections of future impact is unreliable. The demand for and impact of this offer of assistance upon budget will be closely monitored. Advice will be taken from the Occupational Therapist and Children's Social Worker where relevant to prevent abuse of the scheme.</p>
Hospital discharge
Current Policy: None
Proposed Changes: A discretionary grant of up to £10,000 will be available for fast-tracked and non-means tested works to the home to enable hospital discharge where problems in the home are identified as a possible reason for delayed discharge. It is only for people who have been admitted to hospital and who don't live with related, non-vulnerable adults. No land charges will apply.
The type of works may include, but are not limited to: repairs to reduce hazards or risks that are likely to cause serious harm or injury, modifications to stairs, floors and steps, repairs to remove identified Category 1 hazards, (including heating repairs), house clearances and disinfestations.
Justification: People have the best outcomes when they are helped to return home from hospital safely and without delay, with support targeted on their needs. Once settled back into their homes, and after a period of reablement or rehabilitation if needed, ongoing needs can be assessed. The evidence ¹⁴ is clear that home is the most appropriate place for resolving crises and recovery for nearly all people being

¹³[Short breaks - how to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children.pdf](#)

¹⁴<https://www.local.gov.uk/shifting-centre-gravity-making-place-based-person-centred-health-and-care-reality>

discharged from hospital. This care and support must be personalised to enable people to live in dignity and in control.¹⁵

Impact: The demand for and impact of this offer of assistance upon budget will be closely monitored. Advice will be taken from hospital discharge facilitators, Occupational Therapists and Adult Social Workers where relevant to prevent abuse of the scheme.

Admission Prevention

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: A discretionary grant of up to £10,000 will be available only for disabled people who don't live with related, non-vulnerable adults. For use in circumstances where there is urgent need of adaptations to assist with living independently in their own home, to prevent the applicant from becoming an in-patient in a hospital, care home or nursing home.

Means-testing and land charges apply.

This discretion is directed at applicants with arthritis (requiring ongoing treatment and monitoring), respiratory and cardiovascular conditions.

The type of works may include, but are not limited to: repairs to reduce hazards or risks that are likely to cause serious harm or injury, modifications to stairs, floors and steps, repairs to remove identified Category 1 hazards, (including heating repairs), house clearances and disinfestations.

Justification: Supporting those with long-term conditions in appropriate accommodation could help reduce hospital admissions, combat the growing problem of readmissions and deliver a better quality of life.¹⁶

Impact: The demand for and impact of this offer of assistance upon budget will be closely monitored.

Relocation

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptation. The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000 and specific eligible relocation expenses are:

- Estate agent fees
- Solicitor costs
- Survey costs
- Stamp duty
- Removal expenses
- Disconnection/reconnection of appliances

Justification: The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Other Adaptations: External Review 2018 recommends supporting relocation via use of DFG: "The DFG is

¹⁵ [LGA ADASS Community Health and Care Discharge and crisis care model July 2020](#)

¹⁶ <https://www.smith-institute.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Housing-associations-and-the-NHS.pdf>

currently used to pay for adaptations to an existing home, often with little consideration about whether a move to a more suitable property would lead to a better outcome. Providing support with the expense of moving can be cost effective and should be included within the list of services and charges that the DFG can support.”¹⁷

Impact: The demand for and impact of this offer of assistance upon budget will be closely monitored.

New/newly adapted homes

Current Policy: None

Proposed Changes: To increase the proportion of adapted homes/lifetime homes in the housing stock by working in partnership with Registered Housing Providers to contribute discretionary funding to new build, lifetime standard and wheelchair accessible homes on specific housing development projects.

Additionally, support will be available for empty homeowners who are willing to adapt properties for disabled access which in turn increases access to private rented sector homes for people with disabilities.

Means testing will not apply as at the outset of projects such as these, the end user will not be known and the lifetime of the projects are likely to be too long from inception to completion to reasonably meet the needs of an individual resident in a responsive way.

Justification: There is a need for increased access to accommodation which is large enough to accommodate families where a member of the household lives with disability. Partnership working with registered providers has begun to address the need to extend the supply of accessible housing stock with more than 3 bedrooms. It is equally important to acknowledge the housing opportunities in the private rented sector, for those with means to afford market rent prices and who choose not to live in social housing accommodation and to ensure that assistance to develop adapted stock in this market is also available.

Impact: Commitment of funding to housing development and renewal projects will be subject to budget management and approval by the Head of Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Health.

¹⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762918/DFG_Review_2018_Summary.pdf Page 9

5.3 Home Improvement Assistance

Eligible Persons
<p>Current Policy: Owner-occupiers or tenants with a repairing obligation in receipt of a means tested benefit or with a “nil” contribution following a Test of Resources in accordance with the Housing Renewal Grant Regulations 1998 (as amended) or any subsequent act or amendment.</p> <p>Any other person with an interest in the property either as owner or lessee that the Head of Environment (or equivalent) or the Public Appeals Committee (or equivalent) upon appeal consider it appropriate to offer assistance.</p>
<p>Proposed Changes: Applicants must be an owner-occupier or tenant with a repairing obligation who have occupied the home continuously for at least 12 months. Applicants and any person with repairing obligation must meet the following financial condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in receipt of a means tested benefit of the type listed in the APPENDIX, or • Provide evidence of a household income of less than £21,000 or • Be in receipt of an income/expenditure form completed by an independent and competent third party that indicates a household income of less than £25,000 and an inability to raise a high street loan.
<p>Justification: Moving the requirement for 12-month occupation to this section makes eligibility clearer.</p> <p>Removal of second section as this is unclear and the overall discretion to deviate from policy can be captured elsewhere.</p> <p>The expansion of the financial eligibility reflects the inherent weakness with the DFG means test that forms the basis of the original eligibility criteria. This statutory means test favours those with high savings over income and means that working age people on a low income, unless severely disabled, are unlikely to have a “nil contribution” but may still be unable to raise a high street loan to cover the cost of repairs.</p>

Eligible Works
<p>Current Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to protect the health, safety and welfare of the occupier; for example (but not limited to) category 1 or high scoring category 2 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, particularly where the property is occupied by a member of the most vulnerable group for that hazard; • Works to achieve specific strategic outcomes for example tackling fuel poverty and Excess Winter Deaths; • Any other purpose agreed by the Head of Environment (or equivalent) or agreed upon appeal by the Public Appeals Committee (or equivalent).
<p>Proposed Changes: As above with the addition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property clearance and disposal works where accumulated possessions are identified as posing a significant risk to the safety and welfare of occupants or neighbours.
<p>Justification: Broadly the scope is sufficient to capture the types of work that this assistance policy is aimed at. The limited funding available should be directed towards works that directly reduce the risk of harm occurring. The additional element around hoarded properties is to ensure that there is potential assistance available where a homeowner wants help to improve their housing circumstance but where the property itself is in reasonable condition. Minor changes are necessary regarding oversight of discretionary decisions given the change in service from <i>Environmental Health and Housing</i> to <i>Development</i>.</p>

Fees and Charges
<p>Current Policy: The following fees or charges may qualify for assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of preparing a schedule of works; • Agents fees for submitting an application and supervising works on site; • Building Regulations and Planning Fees; • Legal costs in confirming ownership and registering any relevant charges
<p>Proposed changes: As above, with the addition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable agent fees for submitting an application and supervising works on site; • Any other relevant fee necessary for the completion of the eligible works and agreed by the Head of Development (or equivalent) or agreed upon appeal by the Public Appeals Committee (or equivalent).
<p>Justification: Additional broad discretion added to ensure that unforeseen but reasonable fee costs are eligible for assistance. Addition of “reasonable” into agent fees to reflect that SBC no longer has a home improvement agency with an agreed fee schedule and to mitigate abuse.</p>

Amount of Assistance
<p>Current Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum amount of assistance will be £3,000 for repayment loans and £5,000 for secured loans • Loans may be repayable by monthly instalment or upon disposal of the dwelling – the type of loan offered will be dependent on an assessment of the applicant's ability to meet repayments. • The maximum period for repayment loans will be 3 years. • The Head of Environment (or equivalent) may at their discretion approve assistance above the maximum amount for an individual case or revise the maximum payable in order to ensure effective budget management. • No interest charges will be applied to Home Improvement Assistance loans.
<p>Proposed changes: As above, with the addition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible fees, up to a maximum of £1,000 may be included on top of the maximum assistance for eligible works. • The Head of Development (or equivalent) may at his discretion approve assistance above the maximum amount for an individual case or revise the maximum payable in order to ensure effective budget management.
<p>Justification:</p> <p>By allowing eligible fees, up to a maximum of £1,000 it ensures that it is clear on the value that is available for property improvement. At present, the loan maximum may be £5,000, but in reality, once fees are included it will be significantly lower. The cap of £1,000 is to ensure that there are not applications for minor repair works that are subject to excessive fee requests.</p> <p>Minor changes are necessary regarding oversight of discretionary decisions given the change in service from Environmental Health and Housing to Development.</p>

Specific Conditions

Current Policy:

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate they are unable to raise a loan to cover the cost of the works from traditional high street lenders, specialist loan providers approved by the Council or its agents (e.g. Just Retirement Solutions) or a Home Improvement Loan from the Council. This includes a Green Deal Plan.
- The Council will determine prior to agreeing a loan whether an applicant has the ability to repay any loan requested with reference to an assessment of the client's income and expenditure. Alternatively loans may be recovered upon disposal of the property.
- Assistance may be provided at the discretion of the Head of Development where it is considered that requiring the applicant to exhaust all other sources of funding would cause unacceptable delays and/or hardship or would be counter to achieving specific strategic outcomes.
- Applicants must have occupied the home continuously for at least 12 months
- All general conditions set out below.
- The Head of Development (or equivalent) may at any time specify additional conditions for the provision of assistance.

Proposed Changes: All points as above with the following amendment:

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate they are unable to raise a loan to cover the cost of the works from traditional high street lenders or relevant specialist loan providers approved by the Council or its agents.

Justification:

Removed reference to 12-month occupation as this is included elsewhere.

Removed reference to "Green Deal" as no longer applicable.

Simplified position regarding need to demonstrate that applicant is unable to raise capital from alternative loan providers. It could be argued this is unnecessary given the change in eligibility requirements proposed, but this does give a principle that may be helpful if challenged by an application where it is reasonable to expect the applicant to use their own funds or apply for a high street loan, and reflects the concept that SBC is the lender of last resort.

5.4 Energy Efficiency advice, Fuel Poverty Top-Up and Flexible Eligibility

And:

5.5 Empty Homes

Existing policy terms on energy efficiency and empty homes have been included within this policy without amendment, to reflect the full landscape of housing assistance available from Stafford Borough Council.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial	<p>Disabled Facilities Grants and assistance to individuals as outlined in this report will be provided only up to the limit of the total allocation of grant funding received by the Council annually and accumulated underspends from previous financial years.</p> <p>Fuel Poverty Top-Up grants, Home Improvement Loans and Empty Homes Loans are already funded from the existing capital budget for Private Sector Housing</p> <p>As such, there will be no direct financial impact on the Council's other financial resources.</p>
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	Nil
6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>

Previous Consideration – Nil

Background Papers – Nil

Housing Assistance Policy

2021 - 2024

Introduction

This policy sets out Stafford Borough Council's approach to providing housing assistance for improving living conditions for residents. The policy aims to improve the quality of housing available and to support some of the most vulnerable people in the Borough, by providing the framework for financial assistance under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The policy seeks to make best use of resources and achieve added value and outcomes wherever possible that demonstrate improvements in housing standards and residents' health, safety and wellbeing at home.

Local Strategic Context

Stafford Borough Council Corporate Business Plan 2021 - 2024

This policy seeks to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Business Plan, in particular Objective 2: To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.

Housing Strategy

At the time of writing, the Council's Housing Strategy is under review. The revised strategy will include aims which contribute to the delivery of those objectives outlined in the Corporate Business Plan and is likely to reflect fundamental housing duties:

- Delivering a range of housing types and tenures to meet local needs;
- Encouraging owners of empty homes to bring properties back into use;
- Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households into permanent accommodation;
- Ensuring that homes across all tenures provide a healthy living environment, enabling residents to thrive;
- Tackling Fuel Poverty and Energy Inefficient Homes;
- Ensuring older and vulnerable households have access to assistance.

Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020 - 2025

The Housing Options Service extends beyond the provision of social housing. The Service has a wide range of interventions to enable households to remain in their current home and where this is not possible, to provide alternative housing. Housing options that are suitable and accessible are required to address all forms of homelessness.

This Housing Assistance Policy can support upstream prevention of homelessness by providing funded adaptations and help with essential home improvements to ensure that disabled, vulnerable and older people are not at risk of homelessness due to occupying unsuitable or unsafe homes. This Housing Assistance Policy seeks to support delivery of the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy aim to raise awareness of Disabled Facility Grants and how they can be used to prevent homelessness.

Allocation policy 2020

The aim of the Allocation Policy is to ensure that best use is made of all affordable housing in Stafford Borough by allocating housing in a fair and transparent way, to applicants with the greatest housing need, in accordance with legislative requirements. The Allocation Policy endeavours to provide vulnerable households with the opportunity for additional support in order to secure sustainable accommodation. The policy definition of Urgent Housing Needs includes housing conditions that pose a serious risk to health, safety or welfare and medical needs where the applicant's accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of their health. Where the home improvement/adaptation needs of a resident exceed the provisions available via this Housing Assistance Policy, the Allocation Policy will indicate reasonable preference criteria for housing in alternative accommodation.

Enforcement Policy 2016

The Council's Enforcement Policy aims to protect residents from unacceptable levels of risk. This includes identifying and dealing with any failure to comply with safeguards provided for in law to prevent such risks. In respect of Housing Standards, the Council has adopted the principles of The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Enforcement Guidance and will consider the impact of any identified hazard(s) on the health and wellbeing of the current or potential future occupiers or visitors of the home. Taking into account the extent of control occupiers have over their own living conditions and their ability to finance and carry out remedial action, there will be a general presumption towards provision of advice and information to owner-occupiers to tackle hazards. The Housing Assistance Policy sets out the financial assistance that is available to meet the cost of essential home repairs and improvements needed to protect the health, safety and welfare of a vulnerable occupier.

Empty Homes Strategy 2019 - 2024

Stafford Borough Council's Empty Homes Strategy sets out what the council will do, with partners, to bring homes back into use, to make best use of housing stock in the Borough and to reduce the negative impact empty homes can have on surrounding homes, neighbourhoods and communities. There are a number of actions and interventions to bring properties back into use which are outlined in the Empty Homes Strategy. These have several commonalities with the Housing Assistance Policy, including aims to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals;
- help meet housing need by providing additional housing options for the local community;
- ensure best use of assets; and
- improve housing conditions.

General Principles of Assistance

All residents of the Borough should have access to a safe, warm and healthy home that meets their needs. The primary responsibility to maintain private homes lies with the owner. The Council will support owners in fulfilling this responsibility by providing advice, support and assistance to enable them to make use of their own resources to fund repairs and improvements and will only provide financial assistance where this is not possible or practical. In respect of residents with a disability/care needs, the Council will assist residents who are owners and tenants to remain living independently within their homes.

Applicants for assistance must:

- be aged 18 or over, although applications for grants can be made on behalf of children under the age of 18 by a parent or guardian, and
- be a UK citizen (have a UK National Insurance number), and resident in Stafford Borough.

Funding calculations are based on what the council considers to be a reasonable price for necessary work (known as the eligible expense). Grant/loan eligible expense will always exclude labour carried out by the applicant or a member of their family.

Where financial assistance is provided, the eligible expense will include necessary associated costs such as Building and Planning Fees, Architect, Occupational Therapist and other professional fees and agency advice service fees.

Ongoing maintenance and repair of home improvements, adaptations and equipment provided will become the responsibility of the applicant or landlord as relevant.

Payment will only be made if acceptable invoices are submitted upon completion.

Financial assistance cannot be given retrospectively. Applicants are strongly advised not to start any eligible work before their application for assistance is approved.

The Council may enter partnership or contractual arrangements with other organisations or agencies in order to deliver assistance in an effective and timely manner, such as a Home Improvement Agency or Energy Advice Service. Agencies engaged to provide support to applicants may help with sourcing suitable needs assessments, identification of solutions, specifications, documentation, engagement of contractors, works supervision and monitoring through to completion, sign off and managing payments.

Payment will normally be made direct to the main contractor(s) not their sub-contractors or grant applicant(s).

The council reserves the right not to assist the applicant in the same manner as it's appointed agent would, where the applicant chooses not to utilise the appointed agency and to apply directly to the council. Once approval has been given the applicant has 12 months from the date of the approval in which to complete the works, unless otherwise stated.

Disabled Facilities Grant: Mandatory

The maximum amount of mandatory (prescribed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) grant that the Authority can pay for any single grant application is currently £30,000. These grants are means tested according to detailed government regulations. The grant is the difference between the disabled person's means tested contribution and the eligible expense.

To be eligible, you or someone living in your property must be disabled. Either you or the person you're applying for must:

- own the property or be a tenant
- intend to live in the property during the grant period (which is currently 5 years).

You can also apply for a grant if you're a landlord and have a disabled tenant.

The council needs to be happy that the work is:

- necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs
- the most reasonable option and can be done – depending on the age and condition of the property.

On completion the dwelling must be free from serious (HHSRS category 1) hazards, except where insistence on remedying such problems would prevent completion of a DFG and therefore a disabled person's ability to remain at home.

A self-fund option is permitted whereby the grant applicant prepares a scheme of adaptations that is more elaborate than necessary, partly funding these works using the amount of grant that would have been paid towards a basic scheme, had that basic scheme been executed.

Disabled Facilities Grants are not normally repayable. Should the applicant own their own home, or have a qualifying owner's interest in the property, a land charge will be applied where a mandatory DFG is awarded. This enables the Council to require limited repayment of the grant in the event of sale or other disposal of the property within ten years of the certified completion date of the relevant works. The charge will be applied where:

- (a) The funding given is for a sum exceeding £5,000; and,
- (b) the applicant has a qualifying owner's interest in the property at which the relevant works are carried out.

Support for Neurodiversity

Under mandatory grant provision, adaptations can be funded to assist non-neuro typical residents to have access to safe spaces which meet sensory needs.

Disabled Facilities Grant: Discretionary Assistance

Further assistance is available with the following aims:

- To speed up administration and the processing of grant funded work
- To broaden the scope of works available
- To provide financial assistance that is not covered by mandatory funding

Grants labelled discretionary may be revised, prioritised or withdrawn, without prior notice as they are subject to the council having sufficient financial resources.

Description	Value	Means Test	Land charge	Objective	Terms
Local Council Tax Reduction is included as a passporting benefit	Not applicable	No	Not applicable	Anticipated to help people who have been identified through a localised scheme and are in exclusive receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations. To speed up administration.	The applicant must provide proof of entitlement to Local Council Tax Reduction support or authorisation for this information to be shared by the Council's Revenues and Benefits team.
Top-up grants	£20,000 maximum	Yes As applicable	Yes Full amount of grant	Provide for cost of the adaptations where necessary works exceed the mandatory £30,000 limit.	Eligibility for top up is identical to the mandatory disabled facility grant in every way. Should the applicant own their own home or have an owner's interest in the property, a land charge for the amount of top up awarded will be applied for a period of 10 years. This will be in addition to any land charge applied for the mandatory grant awarded.

Major equipment grants	£30,000 maximum	No Available to individuals with <10k savings (unless a child)	No	To fast track grant funded provision of major items of equipment where other adaptations are not required and the cost exceeds £1,000. Stairlifts, through-floor lifts, modular ramps, ceiling track hoists, specialist toilets.	Identical to the mandatory disabled facility grant in every way however these grants are NOT means tested.
Extended warranties	As appropriate	Included in grant	As per grant	For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.	The Council will include the reasonable costs of additional warranty years on specialised equipment beyond the standard warranty, to maximise the usable life of the equipment for as long as possible.
Discounting of first £5000 of applicants' contribution following means testing	£5,000	Yes	No	Anticipated to help people who are obliged via mandatory grant process to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required.	Identical to the mandatory disabled facility grant in every way other than the first £5000 of an applicant's means tested contribution towards the eligible expense is funded from the grant.
Dementia Friendly Dwelling grants	£5,000	No	No	This assistance will provide specialised living aids and adaptations in the home designed to enable people with a diagnosis of dementia to safely manage their surroundings	The types of works available may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provision of a safe space · Colour and contrast decorating · Carbon monoxide/cold/heat alarms · Lighting

				and retain their independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Safety flooring · Digital assistive technology <p>This list is not exhaustive and each case will be considered with advice from an Occupational Therapist or Dementia specialist.</p>
Provision of home working space	£10,000	Yes	No	Adaptations to assist residents with a disability to obtain, maintain or improve employment, by providing measures that facilitate access to safe space to work at home.	Applicants need to have a paid job or be about to start or return to one. Grants are not available for voluntary work. Priority will be given to new Access to Work claimants, key workers and those beginning new roles; eligibility will be in line with Access to Work .
Second homes	£30,000	No Applicable to children	Yes	<p>In cases where families separate, and a court order provides that residency of the subject disabled child is split between two households, the Authority may consider the award of discretionary DFG to one property.</p> <p>Mandatory DFG can only be provided to the 'sole or main residence' of the disabled applicant; main residence is determined by which party receives child benefit.</p> <p>Under this discretion, adaptations</p>	<p>The Authority will consider the details of any court order and specifically the allocation of time spent with separate parents/guardians in determining eligibility for assistance. No specific percentage split is proposed by this policy as each case will be reviewed on its own merits.</p> <p>Factors to be considered include the specific details of any order, likely time to be spent at each property, whether the child will stay overnight at the subject</p>

				may be provided in a second home, which is not the primary residence of the disabled individual but which facilitates access to necessary respite care (including foster placements).	property and for what period. Advice will be taken from the Occupational Therapist and Children's Social Worker where relevant. The principles of mandatory DFG funding apply.
Hospital discharge	£10,000	No	No	For fast-tracked and non-means tested works to the home to enable earlier hospital discharge where problems in the home are identified as a possible reason for delayed discharge.	Only for disabled people who have been admitted to hospital and don't live with related, non-vulnerable adults. The type of works may include, but are not limited to: repairs to reduce hazards or risks that are likely to cause serious harm or injury, modifications to stairs, floors and steps, repairs to remove identified Category 1 hazards, (including heating repairs), house clearances and disinfestations.
Admission Prevention	£10,000	Yes	Yes	Prevent admission to hospital, residential care or nursing by assisting with adaptations that reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls in and around the home.	Only for disabled people who don't live with related, non-vulnerable adults. This discretion is directed at applicants with arthritis (requiring ongoing treatment and monitoring), respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. The type of works may include, but are not limited to: repairs to

					reduce hazards or risks that are likely to cause serious harm or injury, modifications to stairs, floors and steps, repairs to remove identified Category 1 hazards, (including heating repairs), house clearances and disinfestations.
Relocation	£10,000	Yes	Yes	To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptation.	<p>The specific eligible relocation expenses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Estate agent fees · Solicitor costs · Survey costs · Stamp duty · Removal expenses · Disconnection/reconnection of appliances <p>Applicants must be moving within Stafford Borough to a property which will be their main residence.</p> <p>Assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of a property.</p> <p>Applications must be supported by an OT who can confirm that the new property will meet the needs of the disabled person or be suitable for adaptation at a reasonable cost.</p> <p>If the move is aborted at the fault or choice of the applicant,</p>

					costs will not be paid.
New/newly adapted homes	£30,000	No	Yes As appropriate	To increase the proportion of adapted homes/lifetime homes in the housing stock by working in partnership with Registered Housing Providers to contribute funding to the development of new build, lifetime standard and wheelchair accessible homes. Additionally, supporting empty homeowners who are willing to adapt properties for disabled access which in turn increases access to private rented sector homes for people with disabilities.	Where empty homeowners receive funding, a land charge for the full grant value will be placed in perpetuity/until transfer of ownership at which time repayment will be sought. Landlords will be required to agree to allocation by SBC nomination and rent levels not exceeding Local Housing Allowance rate. Not available to those housing developers who are building homes for market sale.

Home Improvement Assistance (Home Improvement Loans)

The key aims are to provide financial assistance to carry out home repairs and improvements to protect the health, safety and welfare of a vulnerable occupier.

The Council will seek to reduce the number of persons and particularly vulnerable persons living in homes that have category 1 and serious category 2 hazards (as set out within the Housing Act 2004).

The council will consider in all cases a person's ability to repay or contribute towards the assistance given whether under a mandatory requirement or as a criteria set within any discretionary form of assistance. The council or its appointed agent will provide in writing the conditions and any obligations to which any form of assistance provided is subject. Assistance will be in the form of an interest free repayment or secured loan. Tenants with a repairing obligation who cannot afford a repayment loan will be offered a non-repayable grant.

Eligible Persons

- Applicants must be an owner-occupier or tenant with a repairing obligation who have occupied the home continuously for at least 12 months.
- Applicants and any person with repairing obligation must meet the following financial condition:
 - Be in receipt of a means tested benefit of the type listed in in appendix 1, or
 - Provide evidence of a household income of less than £21,000 or
 - Be in receipt of an income/expenditure form completed by an independent and competent third party that indicates a household income of less than £25,000 and an inability to raise a high street loan. (appendix 1)

Eligible Works

- Works to protect the health, safety and welfare of the occupier; for example (but not limited to) category 1 or high scoring category 2 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, particularly where the property is occupied by a member of the most vulnerable group for that hazard;
- Property clearance and disposal works where accumulated possessions are identified as posing a significant risk to the safety and welfare of occupants or neighbours.
- Works to achieve specific strategic outcomes for example tackling fuel poverty and Excess Winter Deaths;
- Any other purpose agreed by the Head of Development (or equivalent) or agreed upon appeal by the Public Appeals Committee (or equivalent).

Fees and Charges

The following fees or charges may qualify for assistance:

- Costs of preparing a schedule of works;
- Reasonable agent fees for submitting an application and supervising works on site;

- Building Regulations and Planning Fees;
- Legal costs in confirming ownership and registering any relevant charges;
- Any other relevant fee necessary for the completion of the eligible works and agreed by the Head of Development (or equivalent) or agreed upon appeal by the Public Appeals Committee (or equivalent).

Amount of assistance

- The maximum amount of assistance for eligible works will be £3,000 for repayment loans and £5,000 for secured loans.
- Eligible fees, up to a maximum of £1,000 may be included on top of the maximum assistance for eligible works.
- Loans may be repayable by monthly instalment or upon disposal of the dwelling – the type of loan offered will be dependent on an assessment of the applicant's ability to meet repayments.
- The maximum period for repayment loans will be 3 years.
- The Head of Development (or equivalent) may at their discretion approve assistance above the maximum amount for an individual case or revise the maximum payable in order to ensure effective budget management.
- No interest charges will be applied to Home Improvement Assistance loans.

Specific conditions

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate they are unable to raise a loan to cover the cost of the works from traditional high street lenders or relevant specialist loan providers approved by the Council or its agents.
- The Council will determine prior to agreeing a loan whether an applicant has the ability to repay any loan requested with reference to an assessment of the client's income and expenditure. Alternatively, loans may be recovered upon disposal of the property.
- Assistance may be provided at the discretion of the Head of Development where it is considered that requiring the applicant to exhaust all other sources of funding would cause unacceptable delays and/or hardship or would be counter to achieving specific strategic outcomes.
- All general conditions set out below.
- The Head of Development (or equivalent) may at any time specify additional conditions for the provision of assistance.

Energy Efficiency advice, Flexible Eligibility and Fuel Poverty Top-Up

The Council will work in partnership with an energy advice specialist to develop and deliver programmes to tackle fuel poverty and reduce the negative health impact of cold homes in the Borough in accordance with [guidance](#) issued from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence and from NHS England and [Public Health England](#).

The key aims of the [Warmer Homes Stafford](#) service are to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of residents by reducing the number of households in fuel poverty in the Borough;
- reduce the levels of CO2 emissions from homes in the Borough;
- support communities to understand and reduce their vulnerability to cold weather;
- improve planning for and response to cold weather in collaboration with the community and voluntary sector.

Flexible Eligibility

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation placed on energy suppliers by government to contribute to the installation of energy saving measures, where funding is aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions. The Affordable Warmth (AW) element of the ECO programme delivers heating and insulation measures to low income and vulnerable households in receipt of certain benefits. Warmer Homes Stafford will support residents with applications for ECO funded measures.

Flexible eligibility allows local authorities to make declarations determining that certain households meet the eligibility criteria for a measure under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO in their area. Stafford Borough Council proposes to use the Flexible Eligibility element of ECO to support and assist fuel poor households and those at risk from cold homes; this is detailed within our Statement of Intent which is published [online](#).

Fuel Poverty Top-Up Grants

Funding is available to provide grants to households in fuel poverty to meet their contributions towards the costs of heating and insulation measures.

- Top-up grants are available to homeowners and private tenants.
- Qualifying criteria are in line with Affordable Warmth criteria and ECO Flexible Eligibility Criteria, as published in the Statement of Intent.
- The grant limit is £2000 per household; or
- A maximum of 50% contribution to the total cost of works, whichever is the lesser; or
- in exceptional circumstances, where a client has minimal savings and accessing borrowed funds from relatives or a high street lender would lead to unmanageable debts, a greater contribution could be offered provided the overall Council contribution across the whole scheme does not exceed 50% of the total cost of works within one complete financial year.
- A target has been set to achieve a minimum 75% funding levered into the Borough from external sources within one complete financial year.

Empty Homes

The Council offers an interest free loan to help owners of empty homes bring their property back into use.

- The property must be empty for at least two years and owned by the current owner for at least 12 months.
- The property must be located within Stafford Borough.
- The loan is to help bring properties back into use, either by immediate sale or ready for renting out.
- There must be sufficient equity in the property to be considered for a loan.
- The loan is a maximum of £10,000 and is repayable once the property becomes re-occupied or sold.
- The loan must be repaid in full within two years.
- Loans will be registered as a local land charge until repaid in full.
- If the total cost of repair work is greater than the loan amount, the owner **MUST** provide evidence that they have the finances to complete the repairs and any unforeseen additional costs.
- The owner must source their own contractors.

DRAFT

ITEM NO 4(b)(i)

ITEM NO 4(b)(i)

Contact Officer:	Robert Simpson
Telephone No:	01785 619411
Ward Interest:	Forebridge
Report Track:	Cabinet 01/07/2021 (Only)
Key Decision:	No

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR J PRICE
ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

<p>CABINET</p> <p>1 JULY 2021</p> <p>Revocation of a stand for Hackney Carriages – Clarke Street, Stafford</p>

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 That Cabinet considers any objections or representations received in respect of the proposal to revoke the stand for hackney carriages in Clarke Street, Stafford.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To revoke the provision of a stand for hackney carriages in Clarke Street, Stafford following the provision of a new stand for hackney carriages in South Walls, Stafford;
- 2.2 Cabinet authorises the Head of Operations to bring such revocation into effect.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The provision and the revocation of stands for hackney carriages is outlined in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 63. There is a requirement for the provision of any new stands or variation of the times or number of spaces at existing stands, or the revocation of a stand to be advertised in a local paper for at least 28 days and be notified to the police. Consent to revoke stands on the highway must also be obtained from the Highway Authority and the Police.

- 3.2 Any objections or representations to the advertisement or consultation must be considered prior to making the appointment, any variations, or a revocation.
- 3.3 A notice was placed in a local newspaper and notice was given to the Chief Officer of Police, and the Highway Authority.
- 3.4 Additionally, consultation took place with the Chairman of the Stafford Taxi Association.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives
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4.1 Priority 2

To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing resilient communities that promote health and wellbeing.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The existing stand for hackney carriages in Clarke Street Stafford was provided as an additional stand in 2015 following the construction of the new cinema complex in Bridge Street, Stafford. The number of spaces provided was 5.
- 5.2 Unfortunately, the stand has not been popular with either the taxi trade or its customers due to its location. Although close to the Riverside Shopping Centre, any customers need to cross the busy South Walls to access the stand and the Shopping Centre.
- 5.3 Staffordshire County Council consulted the Council on the possibility of relocating the stand onto South Walls as part of a project to realign and reduce the width of the existing South Walls. The proposed new stand provides better and safer access for customers of the taxi trade between the stand and the Shopping Centre. The number of spaces provided is 5. The cost of the provision of the new stand, including the advertising of the Road Traffic Order has been met by Staffordshire County Council. Stafford Borough Council will meet the cost of the provision of signage for the new stand, and the advertising costs of the revocation of the existing order on Clarke Street, and the removal of existing signage. The costs can be met within the existing Growth point capital budget.
- 5.4 Once the order has been revoked on Clarke Street the County Council are proposing that the highway is used for on-street carparking.
- 5.5 Informal consultation took place with the Chairman of the Stafford Taxi Association on the proposed relocation, who was in favour of the proposal as it provided a far more attractive stand for its drivers and their customers.

- 5.6 A public notice was advertised in the Staffordshire Newsletter on 19 May 2021, requesting any objections by no later than 15 June 2021. The Council has received no objections by this date. A copy of the public notice is attached as an **APPENDIX**.
- 5.7 Consultation took place by letters dated 12 May 2021 with the Chief Officer of Police, the Highways Authority and the Chairman of the Stafford Taxi Association. The Council has received no objections to the proposals

6 Implications

6.1 Financial	The cost of advertising the revocation of the order and the removal of signage will be met from existing Stafford Borough Council budgets. The cost of provision of, the new stand in South Walls Stafford has been met by Staffordshire County Council as part of the recent highway realignment works, except for the provision of signage which will be met from existing Stafford Borough Council budgets.
Legal	Advertisement of a relevant order for the revocation of the stand for hackney carriages needs to be carried out in accordance with legislation.
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	Nil

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate: -</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>The provision of the new stand in South Walls is adjacent to the Riverside Shopping Centre and provides better and safer access for customers of the taxi trade between the stand and the Shopping Centre.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – File available in Operations

Public Notices

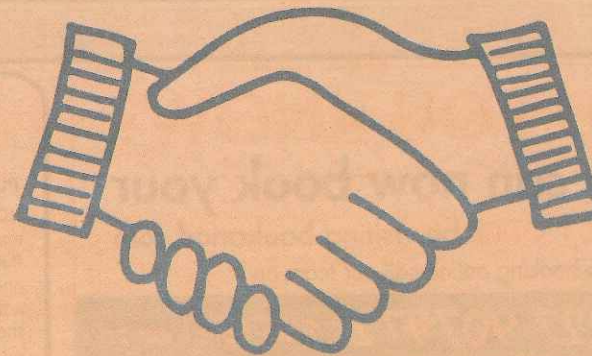
Public Notices

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Revocation of Hackney Carriage Stand in Stafford

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT Stafford Borough Council, in pursuance of the powers contained in section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, proposes to revoke a hackney carriage stand in Stafford as follows:- To revoke the stand situated in Clarke Street, Stafford on the west side, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is located 14 metres from its junction with Eastgate Street and provides 5 spaces. A copy of this notice together with plans illustrating the proposal may be inspected free of charge at the Council Offices, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ, from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm. Alternatively the documents may be viewed online at www.staffordbc.gov.uk/hackneycarriagestand. Any objections to the proposals should be made in writing and received by no later than 15 June 2021 and addressed to Mr R J Simpson, Head of Operations, Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ.
Dated: 19 May 2021



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ITEM NO 4(c)(i)

ITEM NO 4(c)(i)

Report of:	Head of Development
Contact Officer:	Michelle Smith
Telephone No:	01785 619335
Ward Interest:	Forebridge
Report Track:	Council 23/02/2021 Cabinet 01/07/2021

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR F BEATTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO**

CABINET

1 JULY 2021

Future High Street Fund: Authority to Spend

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek authority to spend the £19,748,000 allocated within the capital programme for the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) programme as outlined in the FHSF bid and financial case submitted to Council in February 2021.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That authority be delegated to the Head of Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning to spend the sum of £19,748,000¹ included in the Capital Programme as outlined in the Future High Street Funds approved schemes.
- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Head of Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning to spend the supplementary estimated revenue sum of £150,000 to enable further technical work to be undertaken to enable the schemes to progress through detailed planning / scheme design stage.

¹ £14,377,723 + £5,370,000 = £19,747,723, rounded to £19,748,000

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation
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- 3.1 On 17 September 2019 the Council was awarded £150,000 by the Government to help to develop a full business case for proposals for transformational change within Stafford Town Centre. The funding was based on an Expression of Interest that set out ambitious plans for the town centre for the next five years.
- 3.2 The £150,000 grant funding was paid to Stafford Borough Council under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 for the purposes of progressing the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Full Business Case with the opportunity to receive up to £25 million capital grant.
- 3.3 Working with the consultants, the Council submitted a draft proposal on 15 January 2020 for consideration by the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG). Feedback on the draft bid was anticipated within 8 weeks of submission before the final business case was due to be submitted.
- 3.4 Feedback from MHCLG was received in September 2020 as part of a clarifications exercise before final decisions were made. On 12 October 2020 Stafford Borough Council submitted the items of clarification, which included reducing the number of projects within the final bid from five to four. The final FHSF bid outlined four projects to achieve the aim of a fundamental and transformational change to Stafford Town Centre that will also provide future revenue income for the Council.
- 3.5 On 26 December 2020 it was announced that Stafford Borough Council had been successful in receiving a provisional funding award of £14,377,723.
- 3.6 MHCLG actively supported Stafford Borough Council to provide the additional information required for the final award to be confirmed.
- 3.7 As part of the FHSF bid, and in line with its gateway eligibility requirements, capital co-funding from Stafford Borough Council was outlined as a contribution to the projects to be delivered. This was set out in a paper to Cabinet on 2 April 2020 (minute CAB97).
- 3.8 The purpose of the Borough Council's investment is to intervene to prevent further market failure in the town centre. This risk of an ongoing decline in the town's core retail area results from a combination of a worldwide recession 2008, changing patterns of shopper behaviour, the increase of retail internet spending and the results of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a consequence, there is a need to reduce retail floorspace, increase the number of people living in the town centre, enhance the connectivity of key retail areas and transport hubs.

The proposal will also create attractive meeting spaces to bring people into the town for cultural and other reasons that will support the remaining shopping area and potentially relocate the indoor market. The significant FHSF monies and the anticipated private sector investment are levered in by the commitment of public sector funding by Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council, without our investment and intervention the town centre is likely to continue to decline.

- 3.9 Council approved the capital co-funding from Stafford Borough Council and included the total scheme cost of £19.748 million along with the revenue budget for the capital financing costs of £174,800 in the capital programme on 23 February 2021. The schemes are funded from the FHSF grant allocation of £14,377,723 and the Council's Future High Streets Fund co-funding of £5,370,000 (of which £1,000,000 is an Affordable Housing commuted sum) subject to the full financial business case submitted to Council in February 2021.
- 3.10 The revised bid was submitted on 26 February 2021 with confirmation of the final award received on 14 April 2021. All Future High Streets Fund capital must be spent by 31 March 2024.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 Securing funding for the proposals within the Future High Streets Fund business case supports the delivery of all three business objectives in the Corporate Business Plan and Growth Priorities 1, 2 and 5 of the Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The £675 million Future High Streets Fund was launched on Boxing Day 2018 and aims to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.
- 5.2 Following an announcement in July 2019 that Stafford Borough was one of only 50 local authorities successfully through to the second round of the bidding process, a further 50 councils were added in August 2019 and the overall funding pot increased to £1 billion.
- 5.3 To enable the Council to prepare a more detailed business case £150,000 revenue funding was awarded in September 2019. Following that allocation, the Council appointed consultants White Young Green (WYG) to support the delivery of the business case. The maximum potential award was £25 million although likely awards were suggested to be between £5 and £10 million.

- 5.4 FHSF capital will not fund short-term, surface-level projects that only make a difference to the appearance, rather than the use of the area – there is a focus on transformational change and proposals should be linked to emerging Local Industrial Strategies.
- 5.5 Projects should be co-funded – including local authority as well as private match funding – and given the backing of local stakeholders.
- 5.6 The fund prospectus encourages projects that will involve:
- Investment in physical infrastructure
 - Acquisition and assembly of land – including public realm improvements
 - Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation
 - Supporting appropriate change of use including housing delivery and densification
 - Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology
- 5.7 The final business case submitted in June 2020 requested £23.8 million from the Fund. A pre-requisite of any award is that co-funding is secured, although it is recognised that this can't follow a prescribed percentage requirement due to varying local market conditions.
- 5.8 In September 2020 a clarification exercise was undertaken by MHCLG as part of the Future High Streets Fund, which included clarification from Stafford Borough Council.
- 5.9 In the original bid, five projects were proposed which included a scheme at Shire Hall, but as part of the clarification exercise this had to be removed as it reduced the benefits to costs ratio of the overall scheme to below 2 which meant that one of the gateway criteria for the FHSF would not be met.
- 5.10 On 12 October 2020 a revised bid of £20.8m was submitted.
- 5.11 On 26 December 2020 MHCLG announced that, along with 56 other successful areas, Stafford Borough had been provisionally awarded 69% of our final bid amount, which for Stafford meant a provisional award of £14,377,723.
- 5.12 Officers worked with a dedicated Delivery Manager from MHCLG to adjust the bid submission to reflect the reduction in overall budget from the requested £20.8m to the provisionally awarded £14.3m.
- 5.13 As part of the revision of the bid, approval was sought from Council for a capital contribution of £5,370,000 (inclusive of £1,000,000 Affordable Housing Commuted Sum) and for both the Council's capital contribution plus the Future High Streets Fund capital award of £14,377,723 to be included in the capital programme. £150,000 revenue funding was also requested to enable further technical work to support delivery of the programme.

- 5.14 Council approved the capital contribution on 23 February 2021 and the inclusion of the funding within the Capital programme.
- 5.15 The revised bid was submitted to MHCLG on 26 February 2021 and the final confirmation of capital award was received on 14 April 2021. Funds for the financial year 2021/2 were due to be received on 8 June 2021.

6 Implications

<p>6.1 Financial</p>	<p>The financial business case (included as a confidential appendix to the 23 February 2021 Council report) sets out the full financial implications for Stafford Borough Council as follows:</p> <p>The FHSF scheme was approved for inclusion within the Capital Programme on 23 February 2021 for the total scheme cost of £19.748 million along with the revenue budget for the capital financing costs of £174,800.</p> <p>The capital contribution from the Council amounts to £5.37 million inclusive of £1m Affordable Housing Commuted Sum. Provision exists within the Treasury Management Operational Boundary Limit for the associated borrowing if so required.</p> <p>Future revenue streams to the Council will arise from local taxation and fees and charges however these will be not be fully determined until the scheme proceeds to detailed developer business case stage.</p> <p>Provision of £5.2 million exists within Earmarked Capital Resources to offset the borrowing requirement of the Council in relation to Economic Growth initiatives including the Station Gateway and FHSF and will be supplemented by a further £1 million allocation from the Business Rates Pool.</p> <p>Allocations from the Earmarked Resources are subject to the approval of the relevant Business Case by Cabinet/Council as appropriate. A supplementary revenue estimate of £150,000 is approved to enable further technical work to be undertaken to enable the schemes to progress through detailed planning / scheme design stage</p>
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Legal	On confirmation of the award the Council will enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Each scheme that is delivered through the Future High Streets Fund must adhere to a set of terms and conditions. This ensures the grant is spent correctly, that any legal requirements are met and that the grant is properly publicised and closely monitored.
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	The appended business case includes a financial risk analysis, and this will further be provided as part of any subsequent Cabinet and/or Council report.

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Cabinet Report 02/04/2020 Future High Streets Fund (CAB97); Council Report 23/02/2021 Capital Programme: Future High Street Fund (C100)

Background Papers - File available in Development

ITEM NO 4(c)(ii)**ITEM NO 4(c)(ii)**

Contact Officer:	Alex Yendole
Telephone No:	07800 619530
Ward Interest:	Walton, St Michael's and Stonefield
Report Track:	Cabinet 01/07/2021 Council 20/07/2021
Key Decision:	No

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR F BEATTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO**

CABINET**1 JULY 2021****Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan - Adoption****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To recommend that Full Council approve that the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan is formally adopted as part of the statutory development plan for Stafford Borough following a referendum held on 6 May 2021.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 It is recommended to Full Council that:
- (a) the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan (please see attached [BOOKLET](#)) is formally adopted by Full Council and consequently 'made' to form part of statutory Development Plan for Stafford Borough and to be used when determining planning applications in Stone Town. The **APPENDIX 1** to this report sets out the Decision Notice to accompany the Full Council item.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by a robust community consultation. It has undergone successful Examination to ensure it satisfies the basic conditions set out below:-
- (a) The plan must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - (b) Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

- (c) Be in general conformity with strategic policies of the development plan for the area
 - (d) Be compatible with European Rights (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (EUCR) obligations
 - (e) not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (d).
- 3.2 Following a successful Examination, the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan received a yes vote in favour of the plan at a referendum held on 6 May 2019. Local people endorsed the plan with 3,811 yes votes, to 636 people who voted no. It is the sixth Neighbourhood Plan in Stafford Borough to pass a referendum.
- 3.3 To comply with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local planning authorities are required to 'make' a Neighbourhood Development Plan as soon as reasonably practicable following a referendum.
- 3.4 As with any planning decision, there is a risk of a legal challenge to the Neighbourhood Plan, and / or judicial review of the Council's decision to agree or refuse to make the Neighbourhood Plan. At all stages of preparing the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan the Council has ensured that the process meets the statutory requirements and follows Regulations, so that the decision making process is clear and transparent.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives
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- 4.1 From the Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024 the following Corporate Business Objectives are relevant:

Corporate Business Objective 1 'To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.'

Corporate Business Objective 2 'To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.'

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 In August 2015 Stone Town Council applied to designate the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area. This was approved by Stafford Borough Council in December 2015. Following approval a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group consisting of local volunteers was established to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.2 The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to extensive community consultation, and supported by an evidence base. The Town Council published a pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan and invited the public to comment between 19 June 2018 and 31 July 2018. Following the consultation, Stone Town Council made subsequent amendments in order to produce the submission version of the plan.
- 5.3 In September 2018 Stone Town Council submitted their Neighbourhood Plan, with supporting documents (Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement and a Screening Assessment), to the Council for a six week publication period of consultation between 6 November and 19 December. The independent Examination took place between February and August 2019 when the appointed Examiner considered the representations received and all of the relevant documents.
- 5.4 On 16 August 2019, the Council received the Examiner's Report on the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan, which recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the Examiner's recommended modifications, should proceed to Referendum.
- 5.5 Stone Town Council considered the Examiner's Report and its recommendations, and were satisfied with the proposed amendments to the Plan, which were agreed through Stafford Borough Council.
- 5.6 After reviewing the Examiner's Report, it is considered that the modifications made to the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan satisfy the basic conditions and subsequently published a decision statement to take forward the Neighbourhood Plan and proceed to referendum.
- 5.7 Following a delay caused by the Covid pandemic a referendum was held on 6 May 2021 to enable local people within the Parish to vote on making (adopting) the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan (please refer to the attached **BOOKLET**).

6	Implications
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6.1 Financial	The costs incurred in arranging an independent Examination and Referendum are supported by grant aid from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). £20,000 has now been claimed to cover the costs incurred by the Council.
Legal	Pursuant to Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council as the Local Planning Authority must make a neighbourhood development plan to which the proposal relates if in each applicable referendum more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan, In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Council's Policy documents ¹ and must be approved or adopted by Full Council. The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan meets the legal requirements and Basic Conditions of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. As stated above, there is a risk of a legal challenge to the Neighbourhood Plan, and / or judicial review of the Council's decision to proceed or not proceed to 'make' (adopt).
Human Resources	The Council supports Parish Councils through the Forward Planning section in the Neighbourhood Planning process and administer the legislative requirements. The Elections and Corporate Support Team have provided support throughout the referendum.
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	The risk issues contained in this report are not strategic and therefore should not be included in the Strategic Risk Register.

¹ (see Part 3, Section 5 of the Constitution).

<p>6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations</p>	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation</p> <p>The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals in the Parish. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development.</p> <p>Working from a consistent evidence base through the Town Council and with partners, ensures that Community Impact Assessment APPENDIX 2 recommendations made in relation to the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan with policy-specific areas are also consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision and health outcomes.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Cabinet – 5 March 2020 - Minute No CAB93

Background Papers - File available in Development Department (Forward Planning)



Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan

Decision Statement published pursuant to Regulations 19 and 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

At the Cabinet meeting on 1 July 2021, Stafford Borough Council formally decided to make (adopt) the Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan under Section 38A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This means the Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan has now been brought into legal force, forming part of the statutory development plan for Stafford Borough. Consequently the plan will be used to determine planning applications in Stone Town Parish.

Reasons for decision:

The Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions and is compliant with legal and procedural requirements. Paragraph 38A (4) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum upon the plan have voted in favour of the plan being used to inform planning applications in the area. The Plan was endorsed by more than the required threshold in the referendum held on 6 May 2021.

This statement and the Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan (made / adopted version) can be viewed on the Stafford Borough Council website:

<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/stone-town-neighbourhood-plan-area>

Hard copies can be viewed at:

Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre,
Riverside
Stafford
ST16 3AQ

Please telephone 01785 619000 for up to date opening times.

Title Of Community impact Assessment	Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan
Date Conducted	11/5/2021
Lead Officer and Service Area	Alex Yendole Development Service
CIA Team (To include a range of people with the appropriate knowledge and expertise in the subject area)	Alex Yendole
Head of Service Sign off and Date	

Please ensure that you have read the following before completing the CIA

- A CIA will help you to identify the potential impacts, risks and benefits of your proposed policy, service or project. Doing this at an early stage enables engagement and research to be undertaken to identify actions that will either lessen the risk or maximise the benefits. The assessment will also help you to identify mitigating factors whereby risks may be balanced out to an extent by the benefits.
- This template should be used to support the development of a proposal during the planning stage, therefore should identify how it contributes to the Council's MTFS and Corporate Business Plan.
- A CIA Team should be identified with different, but relevant expertise to ensure that a full range of views are considered.
- Engagement and/or consultation should take place with appropriate and representative groups of people that are most likely to be affected. This must then be used to help shape the design / outcomes of the project. Please note that due to the publication of CIAs, it is advisable not to record personal details of members of the public, such as names or addresses.
- Once completed, the main findings from your CIA should be incorporated into your Cabinet report before submission and then included as an appendix. Please ensure that this is signed off by your Head of Service.

Community Impact Assessment

The table below describes what is required when completing the key sections of your assessment.

Which groups will be affected	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Which groups of people will be impacted by the proposed policy, service or project? This could be people in a particular area, a street, or a group of people with similar characteristics e.g. older people, young people or people with care needs. Also consider staff, residents and other external stakeholders.	Think about the impact the proposal may have on each of the different category areas, and identify the benefits of each decision.	Think about the impact the proposal may have on each of the different category areas, and identify the risks associated with the proposal.	Set out any recommendations as to how the benefits will be maximised and the risks minimised. Also highlight any trade-offs that may occur.
	Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Potential impacts should not be included if it is considered highly unlikely that they would occur.Where no major impacts have been identified, please state N/A.Due to the publication of CIAs, it is advisable not to record personal details of members of the public, such as names or addresses.		
Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact) How certain are you about the assessment of each potential impact, and what evidence have you used to arrive at the decision? E.g. Data – population trends data, census data, service data. Research – national, regional, local research. Engagement/ Consultation – with partners, the public, the voluntary sector.			

Use the following template to highlight the impacts of your proposal on each of the following categories: the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Health and Care, the Economy, the Environment, and Localities/ Communities.

Community Impact Assessment

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – Use this section to identify if the proposal will impact on our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 for both residents and staff. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. Consider the following questions:			
1. Who is currently using the service, across the protected characteristics? 2. What relevant information is available from the Census and population trends data? 3. What were the findings of the engagement/consultation? 4. What do we know about their experiences and outcomes?		5. Is there any relevant national, regional and/or local sources of research/evidence available? 6. Is there any relevant information from partners or voluntary, community, social enterprise organisations? 7. What is the analysis of the impact on those with relevant protected characteristics?	
General Comments regarding protected characteristics		The nature of the Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan does not impact on any specific group of people but all those who live and work in the Parish.	
Protected Characteristics:	Who may be affected? ✓	Please indicate what the potential impact and or risks will be?	Mitigations / Recommendations
• Race		Not applicable	
• Disability		Not applicable	
• Sex		Not applicable	
• Age		Not applicable	
• Religion or Belief		Not applicable	
• Gender Reassignment		Not applicable	
• Sexual Orientation		Not applicable	
• Pregnancy and Maternity		Not applicable	
• Marriage and Civil Partnership		Not applicable	
Evidence Base: (Evidence used / likelihood / size of impact): Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan including the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement.			

Community Impact Assessment

Health and Care – Use this section to determine how the proposal will impact on resident's health and wellbeing, and whether the proposal will impact on the demands for, or access to health and care services.

Category Area	Who will be affected? ✓	Please indicate what the potential impact and or risks will be?	Mitigations / Recommendations
Mental Health and Wellbeing Will the proposal impact on the mental health / wellbeing of residents or services that support those with Mental Health issues?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals in the Parish. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development.	
Healthy Lifestyles Will the proposal promote independence and personal responsibility, helping people to make positive choices around physical activity, healthy food and nutrition, smoking, problematic alcohol and substance use, and sexual health?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals including access the services and facilities.	
Accidents and Falls Prevention Does the proposal reduce or increase the risk of: falls in older people, childhood accidents, road accidents, or workplace accidents?	Not applicable		

Community Impact Assessment

Access to Social Care Will the proposal enable people to access appropriate interventions at the right time?	Not applicable		
Independent Living Will the proposal impact on people's ability to live independently in their own home, with care and support from family, friends, and the community?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals including access the services and facilities.	
Safeguarding Will the proposal ensure effective safeguarding for the most vulnerable in our communities?	Not applicable		
Evidence Base: (Evidence used / likelihood / size of impact) Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan including the Basic Conditions Statement, Screening Assessment and Consultation Statement			

Community Impact Assessment

Economy – Use this section to determine how the proposal will impact on the economy of Stafford Borough and the income of residents.

Category Area	Who will be affected? ✓	Please indicate what the potential impact and or risks will be?	Mitigations / Recommendations
Economic Growth Will the proposal promote the Borough and make it easy for businesses to start up, innovate and expand?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals including the local economy and town centre.	
Poverty and Income Will the proposal have an impact on income? Will it reduce the gap between high and low earners?	Not applicable		
Workplace Health and Environments Will the proposal impact on working conditions and the health of the Borough's workforce?	Not applicable		
Access to jobs / Good quality jobs Will the proposal create the right conditions for increased employment in more and better jobs?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals including the local economy.	
Evidence Base: (Evidence used / likelihood / size of impact) Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan including the Basic Conditions Statement			

Community Impact Assessment

Environment – Use this section to identify the impact of the proposal on the physical environment. How does the proposal support the utilisation and maintenance of Staffordshire’s built and natural environments, thereby improving health and wellbeing and strengthening community assets?			
Category Area	Who will be affected? ✓	Please indicate what the potential impact and or risks will be?	Mitigations / Recommendations
Built Environment/ Land Use Will the proposal impact on the built environment and land use?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals in the Parish. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development as well as policies to protect the environment, including Local Green Space and Local Green Infrastructure areas.	
Rural Environment Will the proposal impact on the rural natural environment or on access to open spaces?		The Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan provides clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals in the Parish. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development as well as policies to protect the environment.	
Air, Water and Land Quality Will the proposal affect air quality (e.g. vehicle, industrial or domestic emissions), drinking water quality or land quality?	Not applicable		
Waste and Recycling Will the proposal affect waste (e.g. disposal) and recycling?	Not applicable		

Community Impact Assessment

Agriculture and Food Production Will the proposal affect the production of healthy, affordable, culturally acceptable food?	Not applicable		
Transport Will the proposal affect the ability of people/ communities/ business to travel? Will the proposal impact on walking/ cycling opportunities?	Not applicable		
Noise Will the proposal cause disruptive noise?	Not applicable		
Evidence Base: (Evidence used / likelihood / size of impact) Stone Town Neighbourhood Plan including the Basic Conditions Statement, Screening Assessment and Consultation Statement			

Community Impact Assessment

Localities / Communities – Use this section to identify the impact of the proposal on communities. How will the proposal strengthen community capacity to create safer and stronger communities? It is important to recognise the different communities your proposal may impact upon, and identify any communities that could be more adversely impacted than others.			
Category Area	Who will be affected? ✓	Please indicate what the potential impact and or risks will be?	Mitigations / Recommendations
Community Development/ Capacity Will the proposal affect opportunities to work with communities and strengthen or reduce community capacity?	Not applicable		
Crime/ Community Safety Will the proposal support a joint approach to responding to crime and addressing the causes of crime?	Not applicable		
Educational Attainment and Training Will the proposal support school improvement and help to provide access to a good education? Will the proposal support the improved supply of skills to employers and the employability of residents?	Not applicable		
Leisure and Culture Will the proposal encourage people to participate in social and leisure activities that they enjoy?	Not applicable		
Volunteering Will the proposal impact on opportunities for volunteering?	Not applicable		

Best Start Will the proposal impact on parental support (pre or postnatally), which helps to ensure that children are school-ready and have high aspirations, utilising a positive parenting approach?	Not applicable		
Rural Communities Will the proposal specifically impact on rural communities?	Not applicable		
Evidence Base: (Evidence used / likelihood / size of impact)			

Community Impact Assessment

Checklist	Action Completed ✓	Comments/Actions
Does the project support the Corporate Business Plan, business objectives and MTFS.	✓	
It is clear what the decision is or what decision is being requested.	✓	
For decisions going to Cabinet, the CIA findings are reflected in the Cabinet Report and potential impacts are clearly identified and mitigated for (where possible).	✓	
The aims, objectives and outcomes of the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	✓	
The groups who will be affected by the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	Not applicable	
The communities that are likely to be more adversely impacted than others have been clearly identified.	✓	
Engagement / consultation has been undertaken, and is representative of the residents most likely to be affected.	✓	
Appropriate evidence has been provided and used to inform the development and design of the policy, service or project. This includes data, research, engagement/consultation, case studies and local knowledge.	✓	
The CIA evidences how the Council has considered its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and how it has considered the impacts of any change on people with protected characteristics.	✓	
The next steps to deliver the project have been identified.	✓	
Findings have been incorporated into the Cabinet report for consideration.	✓	

Please return this completed CIA to Ella Smith: esmith@staffordbc.gov.uk

ITEM NO 4(c)(iii)

ITEM NO 4(c)(iii)

Contact Officer:	Tara Hollingsworth
Telephone No:	01785 619797
Ward Interest:	Doxey and Castletown and Forebridge
Report Track:	Cabinet 01/07/2021 (Only)
Key Decision:	Yes

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR F BEATTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO**

CABINET 1 JULY 2021 Stafford Station Gateway Masterplan
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1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the approval of Cabinet to support and progress delivery of the proposals identified in the Stafford Station Gateway masterplan.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To authorise the Head of Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning to progress with the delivery of the Stafford Station Gateway Masterplan, including public consultation;
- 2.2 To authorise a supplementary estimated revenue budget of £77,150 to enable the identified projects to be progressed in line with the steps outlined within this report, in accordance with the workstreams set out in the Task Agreement Addendum in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX 2**;
- 2.3 To agree to the content of the Task Agreement Addendum.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Stafford Station Gateway is embedded within the Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024, the Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025 and would look to deliver housing and employment land in accordance with the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031.
- 3.2 In collaboration with Staffordshire County Council and London and Continental Railways (LCR), a Masterplan has been developed for the Stafford Station Gateway site.
- 3.3 The masterplan has identified a range of investment proposals to deliver an economically active gateway to Stafford that supports the transformation of Stafford town centre and builds on the growth opportunities created by HS2.
- 3.4 The programme partners have identified the next stages of technical work that needs to be undertaken to progress the Stafford Station Gateway to onsite delivery.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 The proposal supports the delivery of sustainable economic and housing growth is are therefore actively supporting all three of the Business Objectives within the Corporate Business Plan as follows:
 - Objective 1: Delivering sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs
 - Objective 2: Developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing
 - Objective 4: To be a financially sustainable and ambitious organisation
- 4.2 Stafford Station Gateway is embedded within Growth Priorities set out in the Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 In 2017, an initial Stafford Gateway Spatial Masterplan was produced for Stafford Borough Council. The Masterplan outlines the proposal to regenerate 28 hectares of land adjacent to the town's railway station into a new commercial, residential and leisure development. The Stafford Station Gateway developed from work with the Constellation Partnership, and includes three distinct areas, Gateway North, Gateway Central and Gateway South or the Station Plaza. The masterplan will deliver a public realm with a business district, new homes, retail and leisure units, a hotel and new pedestrian access to Stafford railway station.

- 5.2 Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Network Rail are collaborating with regeneration specialist LCR on the scheme, which aims to help the local area capitalise on the town's railway station's prime position on the HS2 line. A plan of the Stafford Gateway area is attached as **APPENDIX 1**.
- 5.3 After analysis of the 2017 Masterplan, all partners agreed further research was required to reflect the changing market and the proposals within the 2017 masterplan.
- 5.4 On 3 October 2019 Cabinet approved a collaboration agreement to allow Stafford Borough Council to formally collaborate with Staffordshire County Council and London and Continental Railway (LCR) to produce a detailed spatial Masterplan for the Stafford Station Gateway site.
- 5.5 The collaboration partnership engaged specialist consultants Hawkins\Brown and WSP to produce the more detailed masterplan.
- 5.6 Following the production of the masterplan, the partners have planned a programme of next steps and workstreams that are required to progress the proposals within the Masterplan. Those steps include due diligence and Approvals as outlined below:
- Due Diligence to ensure some of the key public sector interventions are viable solutions
 - Approvals in obtaining a level of planning control and certainty across the masterplan
 - Approvals on how the masterplan is delivered and how that delivery is structured, including the working arrangements between Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and LCR
 - Approvals for the working relationship with a future incoming developer of the site, how that developer will be procured and the requirements that will need to be imposed on that developer

- 5.7 The next stage also includes the requirements to retain and engage specialist consultancy services to progress the masterplan. In order to engage those specialist services, a budget has been proposed. The budget is to be split equally between the three collaboration partners, with the cost to each partner being £117,150. The budget areas are outlined on the table below:

Service Required	Budget
Design Review	£1,500
Architect	£40,000
Planning Consultant	£48,000
Parking Consultant	£15,000
Structural Engineer – Footbridge	£25,000
Flood Risk Due Diligence	£25,000
Geotechnical & Remediation Strategy	£12,500
Preliminary Cut & Fill Assessment	£12,500
Royal Mail Relocation Due Diligence	£60,000
Cost Consultancy	£10,000
Delivery Strategy & Structure - Legal	£35,000
Delivery Strategy & Structure – Commercial	£35,000
Contingency @ 10%	£31,950
Total	£351,450
Total Cost to each Partner	£117,150

- 5.8 £40,000 is already within existing budgets for Stafford Borough Council's element of project costs therefore the balance of £77,150 is requested to progress the scheme to delivery.

6	Implications
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6.1	Financial	Nil
	Legal	<p>Cabinet Report of 3.10.19; Stafford Station Gateway formalised the working arrangements with the main partners prior to commencing the delivery phase of the Stafford Station Gateway Project.</p> <p>Cabinet Report of 05.03.20; Stafford Station Gateway updated on the progress made with the Stafford Station Gateway and agreed next steps to ensure delivery of the Gateway Masterplan Vision. As part of Cabinet agreed to undertake to sign the Task Agreement for business case development with Staffordshire County Council and London and Continental Railways.</p> <p>This next phase of work proposes an addendum to that Task Agreement as set out in the CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX 2.</p> <p>Commissions set out in 5.7 will be in accordance with the Council's Procurement Regulations</p>
	Human Resources	Nil
	Human Rights Act	Nil
	Data Protection	Nil
	Risk Management	Nil

6.2	Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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Previous Consideration – Cabinet 3 October 2019 and 5 March 2020

Background Papers – File with Development
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CABINET
1 JULY 2021
Stafford Station Gateway Masterplan Delivery

Stafford Station Gateway Location

