

Dear Members

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside Stafford** on **Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 6.30pm** 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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2021

Chair - Councillor W J Kemp

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of 9 November 2021 as previously published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Public Question Time - Nil
- 4 Councillor Session - Nil
- 5 Members' Items - Nil
- 6 Called In Items - Nil

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HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT	

Membership

Chair - Councillor W J Kemp

C A Baron	W J Kemp
J A Barron	P A Leason
B M Cross	D McNaughton
A S Harp	M Phillips
E G R Jones	M J Winnington

Cabinet Members:-

Councillor F Beatty - Economic Development and Planning
Councillor J M Pert - Community and Health

ITEM NO 7(a)**ITEM NO 7(a)**

Report of:	Head of Development
Contact Officer:	Alex Yendole
Telephone No:	07800 619530
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	Econ Dev and Plg 14/12/2021 (Only)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**14 DECEMBER 2021****New Local Plan - Update****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the New Local Plan 2020-2040.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the content of this report at Committee be noted.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council has an adopted local plan to meet legislative requirements, which provides the framework for development until 2031 including housing and employment provision, alongside a number of 'made' Neighbourhood Plans. The main development strategy and supporting policies reflected the short to medium term needs of Stafford Borough but new development opportunities are now being created since the Plan was adopted in June 2014.
- 3.2 In July 2017 the Council agreed to progress with a New Local Plan 2020-2040 in order to reflect new investment opportunities beyond the scope of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031. Furthermore a strong market across the Borough has meant that housing and employment development sites are being delivered, with rates above the 500 new homes per year in the adopted Plan and more than a 5 year supply of housing land. Therefore a New Local Plan is required to provide more land for future growth, which will now also assist with delivering recovery due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.3 It is important for the Borough Council to make progress on the New Local Plan for Stafford Borough in order to provide for future development across the Borough through strategic planning policies and specific land allocations, to deliver the new strategy over the Plan period from 2020 to 2040. This includes working closely with other local authorities to deliver growth whilst ensuring our high quality environments are protected, such as through the

Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership. The most up-to-date timetable for the New Local Plan was agreed and published in November 2021.

- 3.4 Having progressed a number of detailed evidence based studies, based on the latest Government guidance, as well as a Scoping the Issues and Settlement Assessment consultation during 2018, the Borough Council concluded the Issues and Options consultation stage in April 2020, has published the responses received and officers are currently progressing evidence based work to support the Preferred Option stage of the New Local Plan including a focus on site assessments, viability, infrastructure and environmental factors. Furthermore the latest position as at 31 March 2021 has now been published across a range of monitoring reports and publications
- 3.5 It should be noted that the New Local Plan must be prepared in the national planning context with the Government publishing an updated National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021 together with the National Model Design Code following consultations on reforming the system, published in August 2020. Furthermore on 16 December 2020 an updated methodology for calculating Local Housing Needs was confirmed by the Government, which also need to be considered providing a minimum housing figure for Stafford Borough of 400 new homes per year. In addition the Government has introduced changes to the permitted development rights affecting town centres and commercial areas, following a consultation earlier this year. Further details on changes to the existing planning system are anticipated in the New Year, including a Planning Bill and the Levelling Up White Paper which will need to be considered moving forward.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 As a key strategic document for the Council the New Local Plan will deliver on the Corporate Business Plan's vision, in particular the key objectives:

"To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs."

"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."

"To continue work towards our Climate Change and Green Recovery objectives, integrating them into our activities and strategic plans"

"To be a well-run, financially sustainable and ambitious organisation, responsive to the needs of our customers and communities and focussed on delivering our objectives."

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Since the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 was adopted (Part 1 in June 2014 and Part 2 in January 2017) significant changes have occurred both at a national and local planning context, including the following:
- An increased Corporate focus on delivering new economic growth, now with added significance to support recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Changes in Government policy including for housing development, permitted development rights, amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework and wider reforms of the planning system affecting Local Plans
 - A potential Garden Community in the Borough to be investigated and assessed through the New Local Plan process, which was considered through the recent Issues and Options stage supported by an evidence base
 - Significant emphasis on the climate agreement declarations to deliver change at the local level through effective strategies
- 5.2 Following the decision to progress with a new Local Plan was taken in July 2017 a number of key areas of work have been completed:
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report published and consulted upon
 - Settlement Assessment questionnaire to Parish Councils processed
 - On-going 'Call for Sites' exercise including new development, brownfield land and Local Green Space. Issues and Options stage reflects sites submitted up to mid September 2021
 - Authority Monitoring Report published and evidence gathering from key stakeholders, including confirmation of a 5 year housing land supply
 - Analysis of the revised National Planning Policy Framework to reflect local implications for the New Local Plan process
 - Scoping the Issues Report alongside the Settlement Assessment methodology and the associated settlement profiles
 - Issues and Options consultation stage supported by a detailed evidence base leading to over 180 individual responses being submitted and published
 - Evidence based reports prepared to support the Preferred Option stage including an assessment of site based ecological, heritage and landscape issues alongside transport, utilities and education provision. Furthermore in November 2020 the Borough Council published the Staffordshire County Climate Change and Mitigation study
 - The Borough Council responded to a range of Government consultations on planning reforms and changes to the existing planning system from August 2020 onwards and will continue to engage in this process
- 5.3 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework was published, and subsequently additional information through the Planning Practice Guidance, which sets out the national context for preparing policies in new Local Plans. The purpose of planning was defined as achieving sustainable development, with this approach amplified through core planning principles and a general

approach requiring that Local Plans should bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet objectively assessed needs.

- 5.4 In July 2021 the updated National Planning Policy Framework was published, alongside the National Model Design Code, with details of the methodology for future housing provision for Stafford Borough confirmed in December 2020. Furthermore during December 2020 and January 2021 the Government consulted on the ‘Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Sector Infrastructure’ document which sought views on changes to the existing system in order to increase housing delivery through expanding change of use classes (initially introduced in September 2020 for more limited uses) to be facilitated through the prior approval process rather than requiring planning consent. The consultation also proposed a fast-track process of certain new public sector developments including schools, hospitals and prisons which would also not require planning consent, dependant on scale and height level. The Government has subsequently implemented changes to the planning system. It is anticipated that further Government announcements will be made in the coming months concerning changes to the existing system and reforms to deliver a new planning system in order to support recovery and growth, including the Planning Bill expected early in the New Year. It is therefore important to reflect any updates through the next stage of the New Local Plan, supported by robust and sound evidence for any forthcoming independent Examination.
- 5.5 The table below sets out the latest programme for the New Local Plan 2020-2040, agreed in November 2021, following a review of the timetable, in light of Government announcements and implications arising from the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council’s ability to produce up-to-date evidence for next stages of the New Local Plan.

Process Stage	Proposed Completion Date
Commencement	July 2017 - completed
Issues and Options Report	July 2018 to April 2020 - completed
Preferred Options Report	June and July 2022
Formal publication of the proposed new plan	July to September 2023
Submission of the proposed new plan to the Planning Inspectorate	November 2023
Examination of the proposed new plan	February 2024
Adoption of the new local plan	October 2024

- 5.6 A key element of preparing the New Local Plan is community involvement and engagement to ensure all of those who live and work in the Borough, as well as businesses, landowners, key partners, and local and national organisations are made aware of future proposals and policies. Based on the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement, adopted in November 2018, the Borough Council used appropriate mechanisms through the recent Issues and Options consultation, alongside the key role from Members of involving local communities, not least through the Parish Councils. Nevertheless it should be noted that the Government is seeking to increase digital engagement and

community involvement going forward, which will need to be reflected in subsequent stages of the New Local Plan.

- 5.7 Furthermore it is important to note that a number of Parishes across Stafford Borough have ‘made’ (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans, which form part of the development plan for our area alongside the Plan for Stafford Borough. In August 2021 the Stone Neighbourhood Plan was made following the referendum which took place in May 2021 having been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Borough Council continues to support the preparation of a number of Neighbourhood Plans to deliver growth alongside the New Local Plan, with Hopton and Coton Parish and Doxey Parish designated as Neighbourhood Plan Areas during 2020, and Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish designated in August 2021.
- 5.8 Subject to the speed of implementation of the Government’s latest reforms of the planning system, in terms of next steps, the New Local Plan will be consulted upon through the Preferred Options stage prior to the Council progressing to the Publication formal statutory consultation stage for a six week period, as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 5.9 The New Local Plan will then be assessed through an independent Examination process to determine if the Plan is ‘appropriate’ based on the NPPF’s latest tests of soundness. Following the Examination process the Council will hope to adopt the New Local Plan, which will replace the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031.

6	Implications
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<p>6.1 Financial</p>	<p>The New Local Plan was allocated a total of £536,000 in July 2017. Following delays and the impact of covid, an additional £191,428 has been identified as being required to meet revised anticipated costs. Due to the two year proposed delay, £97,500 of this increase has been funded from additional annual contributions of £32,500 per annum, together with £30,000 as additional reserve from Covid delays, leaving a balance of £63,928 to be funded. This has been allocated in principal from the planning fee reserve. Delivery of the New Local Plan is envisaged within the revised resources available.</p> <p>The main costs incurred in preparing and finalising the New Local Plan includes the evidence base, community engagement and consultation, and the independent Examination process prior to adoption.</p>
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	<p>The financial implications of updating the New Local Plan programme through the Local Development Scheme are that funds will now be spent in subsequent financial years than previously planned. Please refer to the table below. The negative variance identified is currently under review.</p> <p><u>Local Plan Revised Budget</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="687 526 1398 1384"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Original Plan July 2019</th> <th>Revised Plan Oct 2021</th> <th>Variance</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017/18 (Actual Expenditure)</td> <td>0</td> <td>36,367</td> <td>36,367</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018/19 (Actual Expenditure)</td> <td>54,700</td> <td>54,734</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20 (Actual Expenditure)</td> <td>162,200</td> <td>170,000</td> <td>7,800</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21 (Actual Expenditure)</td> <td>118,100</td> <td>26,667</td> <td>-91,433</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>75,000</td> <td>130,726</td> <td>55,726</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>100,000</td> <td>189,055</td> <td>89,055</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>0</td> <td>29,879</td> <td>29,879</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>0</td> <td>90,000</td> <td>90,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>510,000</td> <td>727,428</td> <td>217,428</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>By way of background, in July 2017 the New Local Plan costs were agreed as being in the region of £536,000 requiring an additional £233,000 from Council reserves, which was agreed at Cabinet on 17 July 2017. However to deliver a robust and sound Plan these costs may increase depending upon the level of growth to be promoted in Borough and updated Government policy requirements. The Council will continue to work with partners across a range of work programmes to support the New Local Plan and its future development strategy.</p>		Original Plan July 2019	Revised Plan Oct 2021	Variance		£	£	£	2017/18 (Actual Expenditure)	0	36,367	36,367	2018/19 (Actual Expenditure)	54,700	54,734	34	2019/20 (Actual Expenditure)	162,200	170,000	7,800	2020/21 (Actual Expenditure)	118,100	26,667	-91,433	2021/22	75,000	130,726	55,726	2022/23	100,000	189,055	89,055	2023/24	0	29,879	29,879	2024/25	0	90,000	90,000					Total	510,000	727,428	217,428
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Legal	The New Local Plan to be subject to relevant Planning Acts and Regulations as well as subject to decision by Full Council prior to publication and adoption in line with the Constitution.																																																

<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>In the first instance the New Local Plan will be delivered by existing staff from within Development Department and the wider organisation. These internal resources are supported by specialist expert consultants to complete key aspects of the evidence base.</p>
<p>Human Rights Act</p>	<p>None identified.</p>
<p>Data Protection</p>	<p>All consultation responses through the New Local Plan process to be subject to the latest General Data Protection Regulations brought into effect from May 2018 onwards.</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>Adopted Plan for Stafford Borough in place. However without progressing with a New Local Plan there is a risk of not having an up-to-date Plan which would lead to Government planning policies overriding local policies. Whilst the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough is currently more than 5 years old, due to the Council having a 5 year housing land supply it continues to be used for making planning decisions. A delay and / or uncertainty at the local level without a New Local Plan could lead to Legal Challenges and / or Appeals with significant costs for the Council.</p> <p>Whilst the Council will seek to ensure that the New Local Plan is progressed in accordance with the latest timetable and minimise any risks of delay it should be noted that the following factors may have an impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in Government legislation, regulations and policy • Unanticipated scale and nature of consultation responses received including new evidence submitted unexpectedly • Failure of key partners and other agencies to deliver evidence on time and make responses to key elements of the process • Staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and sickness absences leading to inadequate skill base • Programme amendments and procedural slippage due to poor project management or inadequate resources identified to secure delivery • Political changes, procedural delays or failure to meet Council dates • Unanticipated delays in external events such as resource capacity of the Planning

	<p>Inspectorate (PINS) for the Examination process or failure to deliver robust arrangements for this process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-conformity and failure in the tests of soundness for new planning policy documents
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<p>6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations</p>	<p>Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty: The New Local Plan 2020-2040 will provide clear guidance to developers and also members of the public through planning policies and proposals in across the Borough. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development. There are no direct impacts identified for Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation at this stage.</p> <p>Wider Community Impact: Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners, ensures that Community Impact Assessment recommendations made in relation to the New Local Plan 2020-2040 with policy-specific areas are consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision and health outcomes. Specific reference will be made when details of the New Local Plan 2020-2040 are made available.</p> <p>The New Local Plan will deliver a statutory development plan which is designed to be inclusive to all residents and those interested in planning the future for the Borough.</p> <p>Throughout the process of preparing the New Local Plan a thorough consultation and engagement process will enable residents and interested parties to be involved in its preparation, including 24/7 access to key documents through the Borough Council’s web-site.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers - File available in Development

ITEM NO 7(b)

ITEM NO 7(b)

Report of:	Head of Law and Administration
Contact Officer:	Andrew Bailey
Telephone No:	01785 619212
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Economic Development and Planning 14/12/2021 (only)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 DECEMBER 2021
Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee considers and comments upon their Work Programme.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The first stage in achieving a Member-led Overview and Scrutiny process is to develop a Work Programme for the Members of the Committee to own.
- 3.2 Accordingly, an up-to-date copy of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme is provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This report is most closely associated with the following Corporate Business Objective 1:-

To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Members will recall that one of the fundamental philosophies behind the creation of Overview and Scrutiny is that the process should be Member-led and the first stage in achieving this is to develop a Work Programme that is:-
- Owned by all Members of the Scrutiny Committee;
 - Flexible to allow the Committee to react to urgent items;
 - Contain aspects of both Overview and Scrutiny.
- 5.2 Therefore, at each scheduled meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee, an up-to-date copy of the Work Programme will be provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.
- 5.3 The Work Programme includes provision for the Committee to scrutinise appropriate items delivered through the Council's Service Delivery Plan up to twelve months in advance, whilst maintaining the flexibility to respond to any issues that may arise.
- 5.4 Accordingly, attached at **APPENDIX** is the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee's current Work Programme to consider or amend as appropriate.

6 Implications

6.1	Financial	Nil
	Legal	Nil
	Human Resources	Nil
	Human Rights Act	Nil
	Data Protection	Nil
	Risk Management	Nil

6.2	Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:</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>Recommendations Wider Community Impact:</p> <p>Detailed above.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers - File available in Law and Administration

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2021

Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022 at 6:30 PM

Minutes of Last Meeting:	14 December 2021
Officer Items by:	Monday 24 January 2022
Call-in Deadline:	Tuesday 25 January 2022
Member/Public Items by:	Thursday 27 January 2022
Agenda Despatch on:	Monday 31 January 2022
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Strategy Head of Development • High Street and Markets Update Head of Development • Performance Update/Budget Monitoring Report Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager /Head of Finance • Work Programme Scrutiny Officer

FUTURE ITEMS

- **Stafford Station Gateway**
Head of Development
- **Garden Communities Project**
Head of Development
- **Section 106 Agreements Update**
Head of Development