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Dear Members

### **Cabinet**

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 6 October 2022** 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. Curran".

Head of Law and Administration

## CABINET - 6 OCTOBER 2022

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

### AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 8 September 2022 as circulated and published on 9 September 2022
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

	<b>Page Nos</b>
<b>(a) LEISURE PORTFOLIO</b>	
(i) Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2021/22	3 - 22
(ii) Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish - Re-Allocation of Monies to Support an Open Space Scheme	23 - 26
(iii) Meadow Road Play Area, Barlaston	27 - 31
(iv) St Mary's Road Play Area, Little Haywood - Land Transfer	32 - 36
(v) Yarnfield Land Transfer	37 - 41
<b>(b) ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</b>	
(i) Riverway Nursery Works: Permission to Spend	42 - 45
<b>(c) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO</b>	
(i) New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report	46 - 57

### Membership

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

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

## Agenda Item 4(a)(i)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Lee Booth
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01785 619896
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 Resources Scrutiny Committee 23/11/2022
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor C V Trowbridge, Leisure Portfolio

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## Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2021/22

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with the Freedom Leisure Annual Report (attached) to scrutinise. The Annual Report has been received by the Council and relates to the period from April 2021 to March 2022 in respect of the Leisure and Cultural Services contract that Freedom Leisure manage on behalf of the Council. Freedom Leisure has written the Annual Report.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the information.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Freedom Leisure has written The Annual Report. It highlights how the service has performed from April 2021 to March 2022.
- 3.2 The Annual Report highlights how the Service has performed against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This report is most closely associated with 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 resilient communities that promote health and wellbeing.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Since December 2017, the Council has outsourced a Leisure and Cultural Services contract to Freedom Leisure on a contract term of ten years (plus five years, plus five years).
- 5.2 On behalf of the Council, Freedom Leisure manage the sites of Stafford Leisure Centre, Stone Leisure Centre, Rowley Park, Stafford Castle, the Gatehouse Theatre, Izaak Walton Cottage and the Ancient High House as well as the Active Communities programme and an events programme.
- 5.3 The services provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services contract are the main way in which the Council seeks to achieve its corporate Business objective relating to residents' health and wellbeing. Active Lives Survey data consistently indicates that the most popular recreational physical activities (after walking) are swimming and fitness and therefore we are heavily reliant on leisure centres for their delivery.
- 5.4 Formal management of the contract includes monthly contract meetings and quarterly strategic meetings between the Council and Freedom Leisure.
- 5.5 As part of these meetings, Freedom Leisure report performance to the Council and the attached Annual Report highlights key performance information over the financial year 2021 to 2022.
- 5.6 Delivery of services were gradually reintroduced as Government-mandated Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed. On 12 April 2021, Stafford and Stone Leisure Centre's reopened with a reduced programme of activity, with swimming lessons and school swimming re-starting in May 2021. In July 2021, the Gatehouse Theatre reopened and had undergone a refurbishment programme funded by a £375,000 Arts Council grant. In August 2021, all heritage sites reopened and from September 2021, the events programme was reintroduced.
- 5.7 The Annual Report highlights how Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have largely recovered to pre-Covid levels. Most KPIs are just below pre-Covid-19 levels. For example, fitness membership in March 2022 is at 90% when compared with pre-Covid-19 performance and Rowley Park football participation is at 89% when compared against the same pre-Covid-19 time period. That said, some KPIs are above pre-Covid-19 levels. For example, Learn to Swim is at 131% participation when compared against the same time period and Christmas pantomime sales at the Gatehouse Theatre showed an increase of 1,994 tickets when compared to the last Christmas pantomime in 2019.

- 5.8 The above performance information, amplified further in the Annual Report, demonstrates the uncertainties faced by the Service against the unprecedented back drop of the Covid-19 pandemic. It should be noted that there has not been a full year of service delivery in 2021-22 and when services have been reintroduced, this has been gradual and with a high level of uncertainty on the behaviours of customers and service users.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

None directly arising from this report

### **6.2 Legal**

Nil

### **6.3 Human Resources**

Nil

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

Nil

### **6.5 Data Protection**

Nil

### **6.7 Risk Management**

Nil

### **6.8 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

**Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

**Wider Community Impact:**

## **7 Previous Consideration**

The reports and documents relating to the original award of contract.

## **8 Background Papers**

Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2021-22.

# Stafford Borough Council

## Leisure and Cultural Partnership Annual Report

April 2021- March 2022

“ Improving lives through leisure”



<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 Introduction	3
2 Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024	4
3 An introduction to Freedom Leisure the UK's second largest genuine charitable Leisure Trust	4
4 Timeline 2021-2022	5
5 Finance Summary	6
6 Our Year in Numbers	7
7 Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres	7
8 Rowley Park Sports Stadium	8
9 Stafford Gatehouse Theatre	9
10 Heritage Sites	11
11 Active Communities	13
12 Large Scale Events	14
13 Our Colleagues	15
14 Marketing	16
15 Energy Usage	17

## 1 Introduction

Freedom Leisure commenced a 10-year contract to manage Stafford Borough Council's leisure and cultural facilities on 1st December 2017. This report covers year 4 of the contract from April 2021 to March 2022. The facilities and services managed include:

Stafford Leisure Centre

Stone Leisure Centre

Rowley Park Sports Stadium

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

The Ancient High House

Stafford Castle

Izaak Walton's Cottage

Active Communities programme

Annual large-scale community events

“Since re-opening from the final Covid lockdown in April 2021 the team in Stafford has worked tirelessly to reactivate the highly valued community leisure, theatre, heritage sites and events that we operate on behalf of the Council. The following pages identify both the successes and challenges we have had in partnership with the Council. I remain immensely proud of what has been achieved during 2021/22. The current year will undoubtedly bring more challenges particularly in respect of the significant increases in energy and other costs. I have every confidence that collectively we will continue to re-build and improve the service to local residents and visitors alike.”

**Ivan Horsfall-Turner | Chief Executive Officer - Freedom Leisure**



## 2 Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024

### 'A prosperous and attractive borough with strong communities'

The council's priorities for the Stafford borough community are:

To develop innovative, sustainable economic 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 resilient communities and promote health and wellbeing

To tackle Climate Change by implementing the Climate Change and Green Recovery objectives

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

## 3 An introduction to Freedom Leisure the UK's second largest genuine charitable Leisure Trust

2021/22 has been another challenging year for the sport, leisure and cultural sector as a whole, but Freedom Leisure has worked closely with their local authority partners to provide the best service possible coming out of the pandemic. Nationally Freedom Leisure were selected as the preferred operator of 2 new leisure partnerships, increasing their portfolio to 109 leisure centres, 25 individual clients and over 3,500 employees.

### In summary:

**109** - Leisure Centres, including 2 theatres, managed on behalf of 25 individual clients across England and Wales

**Not for profit** - Freedom leisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK to realise our vision of "improving lives through leisure"

**Focus** - Committed to providing and developing inclusive leisure facilities for everyone. Delivering a service to exceed our customers' expectations

### Freedom Leisure ethos

- Provide affordable and accessible health, leisure and sport facilities for everyone, therefore having a positive impact on the local communities in which we operate and serve – we aim to inspire people to be more active more often
- Reinvest surplus into quality services

- Exceed our partners' desired outcomes for local communities
- Enhance our reputation and status
- Grow and develop as a company in a sustainable way
- Develop our people
- Renew existing contracts and win new ones

**4 Timeline 2021-2022**

**2021**

12 April	Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres reopened; football leagues and organised sport returned to Rowley Park
May	Gatehouse Theatre MET lighting rig installed Swimming lessons and school swimming restarted
16 July	The Stafford Gatehouse Theatre reopened after a refurbishment project
August	Heritage museums fully opened; Holiday Activities and Food programme at Doxey Primary School; Theatre Summer School returned
19 Sept	Stafford Half Marathon
20 Nov	Stafford's Big Christmas Switch on Show; indoor events returned to the Ancient High House
December	Snow White Pantomime at the Gatehouse Theatre

**2022**

January	Gatehouse Theatre MET Studio seating installed
February	All 27 windows replaced at Stone Leisure Centre
20 March	Stafford Half Marathon

## 5 Finance Summary

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Management Fee and Repayments</b>	<b>Net surplus/ (deficit)</b>
<b>Stafford LC</b>	1,710,513	1,502,503	(462,377)	(254,367)
<b>Stone LC</b>	1,075,743	1,042,134	(99,756)	(66,147)
<b>Gatehouse Theatre</b>	1,051,114	1,671,566	466,758	(153,694)
<b>Heritage Sites</b>	59,613	201,123	460,093	318,585
<b>Active Comms. and Events</b>	215,062	301,124	246,836	160,774
<b>Rowley Park</b>	151,749	215,400	60,938	(2,713)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,263,794</b>	<b>£4,933,850</b>	<b>£672,492</b>	<b>£2,436</b>

Throughout 2021-22 Stafford Borough Council and Freedom Leisure held regular financial review meetings to monitor the on-going impact of COVID-19 through the various re-opening phases.

Freedom Leisure had Job Retention Scheme (JRS) grants of £82k, start-up grants of £36k and National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRFF) of £194,496 to support the reactivation of the leisure facilities from April 2021 and the theatre, museums and heritage sites plus our large-scale events from July 2021. Despite these grants the final accounts in March 2022 show that the partnership reached the break-even point with a surplus of £2,436. Some social distancing guidelines remained in place, with limits on capacities within our facilities, the demand for services has also been impacted due to a reduction in customer confidence until all restrictions were finally lifted in February 2022.

The Arts Council Grant of £375k secured for the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre enabled the full refurbishment of the ground floor areas before the building reopened its doors in July 2021.

## 6 Our Year in Numbers

As our centres and facilities were permitted to open we welcomed a large number of visitors back; we received fantastic feedback from our customers and heard stories of how our facilities and services had positively impacted on their personal recovery journeys to their 'new normal'

"Just after we opened in July, we had a visit from Dorothy Marshall, who had been waiting for a taxi outside and spotted our Steinman grand piano.

Soon the café was filled with glorious note-perfect music from our visitor, who was in her 90s.

It transpired that the piano in her nursing home had been locked away during Covid and this was the first time she had played for 18 months. Not a dry eye in the house!"

***Stafford Gatehouse Theatre Manager***

### **Numbers:**

847,634 - 2021-2022 total participation

1,023,200 -2019 total participation

## 7 Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres

The fitness membership numbers have been recovering following the pandemic but have not yet reached pre-covid levels at both centres. The Learn to Swim (LTS) participation has seen a significant uplift with opportunity for further growth.

2,717 -On Learn to Swim programme in March 22; 131% of pre-covid numbers

2,074 - On Learn to Swim programme in March 20

2,517 - Fitness Memberships in March 22; 90% of pre-covid

2,804 - Fitness Memberships in March 20

783 - On Gymnastics scheme March 22

757 on Gymnastics scheme March 20

"I highly recommend Stafford Leisure Centre – whether it's for classes, the gym, swimming or a treatment – you can't beat it! I've been going for years and it's so SO good to be back with the gym family! I honestly cannot fault the team!"

***Customer visiting Stafford Leisure Centre***

“Awesome swim teacher, we moved from another leisure centre's swim class 2 years ago and my daughters progressed with Jane brilliantly during that time. We've never looked back and couldn't be happier with her tuition she receives in Jane's lessons. A big thanks to Jane from us.”

***Parent of a Learn to Swim member***

“I swim at Stone Leisure Centre every day, I have made some fabulous friends in the pool and swimming with them is a joy! The staff at the centre are amazing and welcome you by your name and that's lovely, the centre has a positive community spirit!”

***Member visiting Stone Leisure Centre*****8 Rowley Park Sports Stadium**

In April 2021 Football Leagues and organised sports restarted outdoors at Rowley Park Sports Stadium and the bowlers returned to the greens. Participation continued to grow towards pre-covid numbers.

17,370 - Football League participants in March 22; 89% of pre-covid

19,440 - Football League participants in March 20

1,120 - Bowlers March 22; 71% of pre-covid

1,584 - Bowlers March 20

“The Green is, and has been all season, in the best condition in the last four years of my membership. Steph is a lovely person and excellent grounds person” **Rowley Park Crown Green Bowler**

“ Thank you to the Rowley Park team for everything you have done to support us during what have been some difficult times - cheers from all at Special Olympics Stafford” **Head Coach Special Olympics Stafford**



## 9 Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

The Gatehouse Theatre reopened its doors in July 21 following an extensive refurbishment project including new LED lighting throughout the building, a reconfiguration of the box office and café bar areas.

The new motorised MET lighting rig was installed in May 21 and the new seating unit early 22. These developments have reduced the time required to set up and break down events and shows.

The first youth theatre show since 2019 was produced in August 21 with the reintroduction of the annual Summer School *Take Me To The World* which explored the stories of local young people through the lockdown period of 2020-21.

The theatre has not fully recovered but has performed well in the sector where generally audiences have been slow to return with social distancing measures remaining. The Snow White Pantomime was an exception to what was seen across the country with numerous other theatres cancelling shows and, in some cases, the whole run due to the pandemic. Every performance of Snow White took place as scheduled.

17,443 - Snow White Pantomime customers, an increase of 1, 994 customers compared to Peter Pan in 2019

74,507 - Participants 8 months; 130,781 in 2019 over a full year



I just wanted to write and say how much I thoroughly enjoyed the musical performance about Covid which was put on, on Friday evening. Firstly, it was great to be back in the Gatehouse after such a long time away and to see such talent in our young local performers was so uplifting. It has been a difficult time for us all but particularly our younger generation who have behaved impeccably throughout the last couple of years and you could see

the release in the energy of their performances. I'm looking forward to more great shows in the future and shall definitely return to see these young talented people."

**Gatehouse Theatre audience member**



"Thank you SO very much for a really lovely gig in the MET Studio at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre – gorgeous venue and possibly the warmest welcome we've had at any theatre I've played in my 10-plus years of touring. Please pass on my thanks to your fantastic team of people they couldn't have been friendlier or more helpful" *Sarah McQuaid*

"Just a short note to express a massive THANK YOU to the lady member of staff who showed such kindness and understanding to my other half Betty, last evening. The performance was in its early stages when Betty suffered a severe anxiety attack, possibly due to feelings of claustrophobia that she sometimes has allied to the requirement to wear a mask continually. Some eight years ago Betty was performing her duties as a Prison Officer when she was violently attacked by a prisoner. The lady that assisted us was truly lovely and I hope that you will be able to pass on my sincerest and heart felt gratitude"

**Theatre Customer**

In January, the Gatehouse also set out to become a Theatre of Sanctuary. A meeting in the auditorium attracted a large number of staff and members of the public for a presentation by the Stafford Welcomes Refugees group, about the plight of refugees who come to Stafford.

This national project aims to welcome refugees and asylum seekers and introduce them to the arts and culture of the UK through a compassionate approach and our work to gain accreditation is ongoing.

We also received warm appreciation for our Classic Film afternoons, which were well attended by elderly people.



One man, who suffers from dementia, came to every single showing with his daughter (who was also his carer) who said it was the highlight of his week and really improved his mental health.



## **10 Heritage Sites**

Our Heritage Sites visitor centres and museums at Stafford Castle, The Ancient High House and Izaak Walton's Cottage reopened during the summer of 2021. The school tour programme restarted in September 21 with the first indoor events taking place in November during the Christmas Switch on Show event.

The Heritage team were successful in securing grants for the development of a dedicated website offering a wider range of resources and a seamless experience for visitors. Grants were also awarded for the woodland mental health walk project and wooden sculptures at the castle.

2,072 - School tour participants; 7 months to March 22

3,644 - full year to March 2020

20,605 - Total participants; 68% of full year pre-covid numbers - 30,123

The Stafford Castle School Tour programme was awarded The Sandford Award for educational excellence within Heritage. The Heritage Education Trust provides independent quality assurance for heritage education through these annual awards. The Sandford Award scheme started in 1978 with 200 heritage sites currently holding this award.

“Learning about medieval period and castles is brought to life through a hands-on, immersive programme of school visits, delivered by a passionate and inspirational team of experienced guides. The team deliver a high-quality educational experience which makes maximum use of the site and its historical context. Using a mixture of genuine and replica artefacts and objects children are transported back in time – an experience which will stay with them for life and one which cannot be replicated without a visit to this venue”



## The Heritage Education Trust Report



“so happy to see your faces, we know it’s going to be a good day”

“We had a great time today, ollie was just amazing”

### Teachers accompanying children on school tours

“Thank you for making the party accessible for her and allowing us the extra time to explore the castle fully, Alan you made the party so special and she honestly loved it, all the guests have said what a fantastic party it was and we will be recommending Stafford Castle Parties to everyone. This will be a treasured childhood memory”

**Parent of a child who is blind but felt so included on her school tour that she asked her mum if she could come back for her birthday party, she bought other blind friends to celebrate with her**



“it was fascinating to learn about such a great person living in Stafford, I would like to see more about local people and what they did for our town”

“the items on display were fascinating and we loved guessing what they were for, what a great resource to have on our doorstep”

## Visitors to The Curious Mr Marson Exhibition at the Ancient High House



### 11 Active Communities

Following a successful funding application, the first Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme was delivered at Doxey Primary school over a four-week period in the summer holidays, August 21. HAF is funded by Staffordshire County Council and The Department for Education and aims to support children to eat healthily and be more active over school holidays. The scheme was replicated for the October 21 and February 22 school holidays, offering free places to children entitled to free school meals.

520 - Free HAF sessions; Including a hot freshly prepared lunch and healthy snacks

“I wanted to express my gratitude and appreciation for the October half term event at Doxey School. My sons attended yesterday and both really enjoyed their day with your team. They are not usually keen on school/end of day clubs and so were a little nervous going in, but the two staff members on the entrance were fantastic at making them feel involved and welcoming them in. They both came home happy, talking about all the sport they played and how much fun they had, praising your team – even asking to go again! I just wanted to send an email of thanks for providing such a fun filled day! Hopefully this will be on again during the next school holiday as they will definitely return”

### Parent of children attending Doxey School HAF





## 12 Large Scale Events

The annual community events programme restarted with the Stafford Half Marathon and Fun Run in September 2021; this was moved to the autumn from its usual March date due to the ongoing pandemic. The Christmas Switch on Show returned after a break of two years in November 2021 and the Stafford Pancake Race returned in March 22; with the 2022 Half Marathon and Fun Run event moving back to the spring.

2,054 - Half Marathon participants March 2022

2,028 – Half Marathon participants September 2021

1,839 – Half Marathon participants March 2020

2,830 – Half Marathon participants March 2019



“It was so well organised and your marshals/race stewards and the locals were really encouraging. Thank you!” **Stafford Half Marathon participant**

“such a great day and evening at the Stafford Christmas light switch on, I love the buzz, atmosphere and to see Stafford so busy and always have to play hook a duck – it’s a tradition!” **Local resident and visitor to event**



10,000 - Visitors attending Stafford's Big Christmas Switch on Show



### 13 Our Colleagues

With the first full year of operation in the post COVID times, colleagues have been at the forefront of Freedom's mindset. There has been a big focus on colleague engagement and greater awareness of colleague's health.

Despite ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention and increased wellbeing, mental health issues and post COVID stresses there has been some fantastic team colleague successes to celebrate:

- Colleague Promotions - Colleagues across the partnership have been recognised for their exceptional work; roles promoted into include general manager at Stafford Leisure Centre, Area Manager for the Stafford Partnership and Heritage Manager.
- Freedom Influencers - 3 colleagues locally have become Freedom Influencers. Providing a group of mentors to support new team colleagues, to increase retention and colleague happiness.
- Newly Recruited Positions - New colleagues have been welcomed to the Stafford Freedom team, including Theatre Manager, Operations Manager, Marketing Manager and Assistant, Digital content creator and social media coordinator. Permanent colleague numbers grew to 123 in March 22, having dropped to 96 in 2021 during the pandemic and being 120 pre-Covid. Training was delivered to both colleagues returning to work and those new to the team including National Pool Lifeguard Qualifications and Swim Teacher courses.
- Regional Colleagues - following a restructure across Freedom Leisure the Stafford Partnership is now part of the Midlands Regional team made up of six Partnerships lead by a Regional Manager, providing guidance, support and increased opportunities for sharing best practice.

- Colleague Engagement and Recognition - in March 22 the first Stafford Partnership 'Thank You and Awards' Evening was held. Colleagues nominated others for being exceptional team players, providing outstanding customer service and for going 'above and beyond'. Eighteen Colleagues were thanked for over 20 years of service and dedication to the delivery of leisure and cultural services to Stafford Borough.



## **14 Marketing**

### **Press coverage**

The Gatehouse Theatre re-opened in July 2021 generating significant TV, Radio, Press and online coverage. The Snow White Pantomime included national TV (ITV News at Ten) with all 39 planned performances going ahead despite the ongoing pandemic. The 2021 and 2022 Stafford Half Marathons, Christmas Switch on Show and Pancake Race also generated significant local media coverage.

### **Website and customer communication**

During the re-opening phase communication via the website was crucial to re-engaging our customers. Throughout the year the website has been used to inform customers of changes to operations and provide key information; customers were directed to the website through digital communication including email, social media and text messages.

### **Campaigns**

As facilities and services were reactivated 'countdown' and awareness campaigns were implemented across the partnership to promote re engagement using a variety of different channels. New digital marketing and Visitor Information screens were introduced at the theatre.

## Social Media

Social Media as always continues to be a key driver to support the engagement of local community. Content was managed by a combination of central and regional marketing and commercial teams and at a local level by our marketing manager, marketing assistant, social media coordinator, digital content creator – creating engaging video and photographic content on site locally. This included a successful ‘Sharing your Story’ campaign, which featured individuals that have had a positive return from the lockdowns

**41,000 following (or have liked) our social media pages**

**1.7 million people reached across the partnership on our social media platforms**

## 15 Energy Usage

With year on year comparison being a challenge due to the lockdowns in years 20-21 it is easier to compare 19-20 with current performance.

Through effective energy management and investment in energy saving projects, usage and carbon footprints have been reduced by 23 tonnes CO2 across Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres combined. A tonne of CO2 is equivalent to driving 23,000 miles once around the world. Approx. 9 acres of forest would be required to compensate for the 23 tonnes of CO2 saved in a year.

At the Gatehouse Theatre as part of the refurbishment works LED Lighting was installed reducing the number of fittings required by 21 with annual kWh reduced by 13,344 from 18,549 to 5,205. Reducing the annual CO2 Emissions by over 3 tonnes.



## Agenda Item 4(a)(ii)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jenny Boulton
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01785 619514
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Yarnfield & Cold Meece
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 (Only)
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor C V Trowbridge, Leisure Portfolio

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## Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish – Re-allocation of monies to support an open space scheme

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To release £10,000 from the Westbridge Park, Stone contingency project budget to go towards a S106 project at Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To agree to reallocate £10,000 from the £265,980 Westbridge Park, Stone contingency budget towards an active S106 project being undertaken at Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Under a Planning application (Application 09/12911/OUT) £172,000 of developer contributions has been secured for the delivery of open space provision. The application site from where the contribution has arisen from relates to land at Yarnfield Park Yarnfield Lane Yarnfield. Of this amount, members have previously agreed to allocate £157,620 towards the Westbridge Park scheme in Stone, on the proviso that these monies were required and if not any residual could be returned to Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish.

3.2 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council undertaken consultation on a proposed open space scheme based on a figure of £25,000 following correspondence with the Borough Council.

3.3 It is recommended that £10,000 from the £265,980 Westbridge Park contingency budget be re-allocated to Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council to enable the parish council to bring forward its open space proposals.

## 4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

4.1 The reallocation of £10,000 towards the Parish Council will enable the wider borough to achieve Objective 2 of the Corporate Business Plan. It will do this by allowing the Parish Council to improve the existing open space within Yarnfield and this will help improve the quality of life of local people by providing attractive and quality places to live.

## 5 Report Detail

5.1 The budget for Westbridge Park, Stone regeneration was agreed by Cabinet on 28/09/2021. As part of this budget £157,620 of S106 money from application 09/12911/OUT (Land At Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfield) was allocated towards the Westbridge scheme. This money formed the majority of the S106 sum totalling £172,000. It was agreed that the remaining £15,000 would remain within the control of the Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council.

5.2 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council have started working towards a project for improving the open space in their area and following correspondence with the Borough Council have budgeted on the basis of £25,000 scheme. The project is intended to:

- Transform part of Yarnfield Village Green into a managed wildlife area;
- Create a wildlife corridor with habitats that support native species through sensitive planting of trees and flowers, the creation of a pond and enhancement of the existing stream;
- Have the wildlife accessible to all sections of our community including those with mobility difficulties, but particularly to children under 12; and
- Build a nature trail and provide an area that can be used for outdoor play and learning.

5.3 The additional £10,000 will have a significant impact on what the Parish Council's project could deliver.

5.4 In order to achieve this it is recommended that £10,000 be taken from the Westbridge contingency budget to fulfill our commitment to Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council. The council will still be able to deliver a high quality



scheme at Westbridge Park and the reallocation of this money will also ensure Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council will be able to produce a much improved existing open space area within Yarnfield.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

None other than the proposed transfer of monies as set out in the report.

### **6.2 Legal**

N/A

### **6.3 Human Resources**

N/A

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

N/A

### **6.5 Data Protection**

N/A

### **6.7 Risk Management**

N/A

### **6.8 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

#### **Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

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:-

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

#### **Wider Community Impact:**

N/A

## **7 Previous Consideration**

N/A

## 8 **Background Papers**

N/A

## Agenda Item 4(a)(iii)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Martin
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	07970 237905
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Barlaston
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 (Only)
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor C V Trowbridge, Leisure Portfolio

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## Meadow Road Play Area, Barlaston

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider leasing a play area located off Meadow Road, Barlaston to Barlaston Parish Council as shown in the plan attached as an **APPENDIX**.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To lease a play area off Meadow Road, Barlaston to Barlaston Parish Council to enable the Parish Council to invest in and maintain the facility for the benefit of local residents.
- 2.2 To advertise the 'disposal' of this open space in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Barlaston Parish Council has expressed an interest in owning and maintaining a play area off Meadow Road, Barlaston.
- 3.2 The Parish Council propose to upgrade the current play area and also investigate external funding opportunities from a variety of awarding bodies. They have confirmed their wish to take over the maintenance and upkeep of the existing play area and any subsequent improvements to the play area.
- 3.3 It is recommended that a lease of a minimum of 30 years be offered to Barlaston Parish Council to maintain the facility.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives**

- 4.1 Transferring maintenance responsibility for the site to the Parish Council would support Corporate Business Plan 2021 – 2024 Objective 2 of providing an attractive, safe and healthy place to live, work and enjoy and Objective 3 which is to be a self-sustaining organisation, that is financially sustainable.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 An area of open space exists off Meadow Road in Barlaston. Developing the site to meet local play requirements was first raised with the Borough Council in 2016 by the Barlaston Community Group. The Parish Council sought to progress this idea in 2020. The Parish Council would like to take responsibility for the site in question to fully realise the community benefits.
- 5.2 By taking control of the site, the Parish Council would be able to draw down funding that the Borough Council could not.
- 5.3 Stafford Borough Council currently maintains the site at a cost of c£400.00 per annum. The grass is cut 10 - 14 times a year. Transferring the land subject to a lease would mean that the Borough Council would no longer undertake this maintenance and hence there would be a saving.
- 5.4 The proposal to transfer the land is supported by the Borough Council's Streetscene service and the local Councillor.
- 5.5 The Borough Council's preference with assets of this kind is to offer a lease rather than transfer ownership. If agreed, the lease would be of sufficient length to provide the Parish Council with the ability to invest and attract external funding. In other examples where the Borough Council has leased open space the term has been for approximately 25- 30 years.
- 5.6 Conditions would be attached to any lease preventing the construction of buildings or other erections or carry out any development of any description unrelated to the use of the site as public open space.
- 5.7 The land is held as open space and Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973 requires the Council to advertise its intention to dispose of the land and consider any objections received. This is the case even though the land would remain as open space after transfer. If any objections to the transfer were received following advertisement the matter would need to return to Cabinet to consider these before proceeding.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

There would be some nominal costs involved in arranging a lease with the Parish Council. These however would be off-set by the removal of maintenance responsibilities and costs to the Borough Council.

### **6.2 Legal**

The land is held as public open space and the intention to lease it to the Parish Council for a period of over 7 years would mean the proposal would need to be advertised in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 and any objections considered before the transfer takes place.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

Nil

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

Nil

### **6.5 Data Protection**

Nil

### **6.7 Risk Management**

No specific risks of continuing to own, maintain and inspect this area of land beyond those already accommodated by the Council in its duties. There may be some risk in terms of the Parish being able to sustain the inspection and maintenance costs on an on-going basis. If this was the case the Council may need to consider appropriate action, where necessary.

### **6.8 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

#### **Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

The Borough Council has considered the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all and believes there to be no impact on any of the Equality Strands in the production of this report.

#### **Wider Community Impact:**

In following the recommendations of this report there will be no impact on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation within the community.

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**7 Previous Consideration**

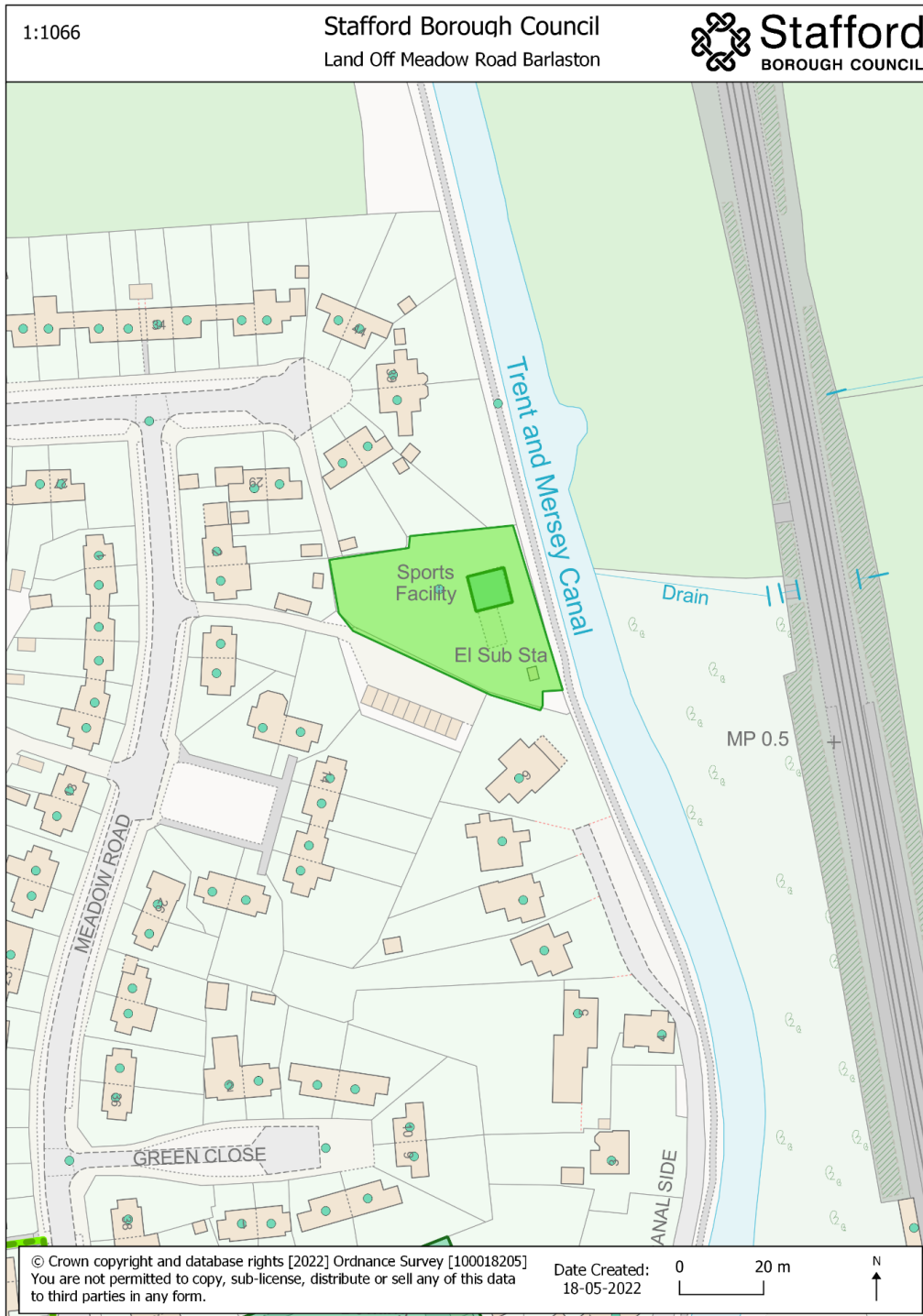
Nil

**8 Background Papers**

Nil

Cabinet Date: 6 October 2022

## Meadow Road Play Area, Barlaston



## Agenda Item 4(a)(iv)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Martin
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	07970 237905
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Haywood and Hixon
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 (Only)
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor C V Trowbridge, Leisure Portfolio

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## St Marys Road Play Area, Little Haywood - Land Transfer

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider transferring responsibility for the St Marys Road play area in Little Haywood to Colwich Parish Council as shown in the attached plan as an **APPENDIX**.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To transfer responsibility including maintenance for a play area located off St Marys Road, Little Haywood to Colwich Parish Council.
- 2.2 To advertise the 'disposal' of this open space in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Colwich Parish Council has been investigating options for taking over the ownership of the current play facility located off St Marys Road, Little Haywood since 2016.
- 3.2 The Parish Council proposes to upgrade the current play area and to facilitate this investigate external funding opportunities from a variety of awarding bodies. They have confirmed their wish to take over the maintenance and upkeep of the existing play area and be responsible for any subsequent improvements to it.



- 3.3 It is recommended that a lease of a minimum of 30 years be offered to Colwich Parish Council to maintain the facility.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives**

- 4.1 Transferring responsibility for this site would support Objective 2 of providing an attractive, safe and healthy place to live, work and enjoy and Objective 3 which is to be a self-sustaining organisation, that is financially sustainable.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Discussions with Colwich Parish Council have been ongoing since 2016 in regards to improving a play area situated on St Mary's Road, Little Haywood.
- 5.2 The land was originally conveyed to Stafford Borough Council in 1979 by Bryant Homes Limited being part of a larger residential development. There is a covenant on the land not to construct any buildings or other erections or carry out any development of any description but to maintain the site as public open space in perpetuity.
- 5.3 Whilst the Parish Council has some funding to refurbish the play area, they are investigating external funding opportunities. By having responsibility for the site this would make it easier to draw down funding that as a Borough Council we cannot.
- 5.4 The play area is inspected weekly and the grass is cut 10-14 times per year by the Borough Council depending on the weather. The Borough Council's costs for this site are approximately £770.00 per annum
- 5.5 The latest annual inspection report found that there were some areas that needed attention, and these were categorised as low to medium risk.
- 5.6 Allowing the Parish Council to take over responsibility for the land in question would enable the Parish Council to invest and secure the full benefits for the local residents.
- 5.7 The Borough Council's preference with assets of this kind is to offer a lease rather than transfer ownership. If agreed, the lease would be of sufficient length to provide the Parish Council with the ability to invest and attract external funding. In other examples where the Borough Council has leased open space the term has been for approximately 25- 30 years.

- 5.8 Conditions would be attached to any lease preventing the construction of buildings or other erections or carry out any development of any description unrelated to the use of the site as public open space.
- 5.9 The land is held as open space and Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973 requires the Council to advertise its intention to dispose of the land and consider any objections received. This is the case even though the land would remain as open space after transfer. If any objections to the sale were received following advertisement the matter would need to return to Cabinet to consider these before proceeding.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

There would be some nominal costs involved in arranging a lease with the Parish Council. These however would be off-set by the removal of maintenance responsibilities and costs to the Borough Council.

### **6.2 Legal**

The land is held as public open space and the intention to lease this to the Parish Council would mean the proposals would need to be advertised in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 and any objections considered before any transfer takes place.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

Nil

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

Nil

### **6.5 Data Protection**

Nil

### **6.6 Risk Management**

No specific risks of continuing to own, maintain and inspect this area of land beyond those already accommodated by the Council in its duties. There may be some risk in terms of the Parish being able to sustain the inspection and maintenance costs on an on-going basis. If this was the case the Council may need to consider appropriate action, where necessary.

## **6.7 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

### **Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

The Borough Council has considered the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all and believes there to be no impact on any of the Equality Strands in the production of this report.

### **Wider Community Impact:**

In following the recommendations of this report there will be no impact on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation within the community.

## **7 Previous Consideration**

Nil

## **8 Background Papers**

Nil

# APPENDIX

Cabinet Date: 6 October 2022

## St Marys Road Play Area, Little Haywood - Land Transfer



## Agenda Item 4(a)(v)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Martin
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01785 619514
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Swynnerton and Oulton
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 (Only)
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor C V Trowbridge, Leisure Portfolio

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## Yarnfield Land Transfer

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To transfer management responsibility for two parcels of land in Yarnfield owned by Stafford Borough Council (SBC) to Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To transfer the management and maintenance responsibilities of the specified land at Yarnfield to Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council via an appropriate lease.
- 2.2 To advertise the 'disposal' of this open space in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council has been working to develop an open space project which will utilise Section 106 monies secured via applications 10/13226/EXT and 13/19226/OUT totalling £20,066.
- 3.2 The Parish Council has already undertaken public consultation and developed a project which proposes to:
  - Transform part of Yarnfield Village Green into a managed wildlife area;
  - Create a wildlife corridor with habitats that support native species, through sensitive planting of trees and flowers, the creation of a pond and enhancement of the existing stream;

- Make the wildlife accessible to all sections of the community including those with mobility difficulties, but particularly to children under 12; and,
- Aim to build a nature trail and provide an area that can be used for outdoor play and learning.

3.3 The Parish Council (formerly Swynnerton Parish Council) has been investigating options for taking over the ownership of the land since 2017.

3.4 The land that the Parish Council wish to take control over is shown in the **APPENDIX**. The land identified with polka dot shading is land already controlled and maintained by the Parish Council. The land identified as common land is the land the Parish Council now wish to take over responsibility for. The designation of land as Common Land places restrictions on what can and cannot be done with it. Under the 1899 Commons Act, it is stated that;

Any management or improvement a local authority carries out must be:

- in the public interest
- to conserve nature, the landscape or archaeology
- to protect access rights

3.5 The Borough Council currently maintains the land at a cost of circa £2,000 per annum. Transferring responsibility would mean that the Borough Council would no longer undertake this maintenance. The proposed transfer is supported by the Brough Council's Streetscene service and the local ward councillor.

3.6 It is recommended that a lease of a minimum of 30 years be offered to Yarnfield & Cold Meece Parish Council to maintain the facility.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives**

4.1 Transferring responsibility for the land would support Objective 2 of providing an attractive, safe and healthy place to live, work and enjoy and Objective 3 which is to be a self-sustaining organisation, that is financially sustainable.

## **5 Report Detail**

5.1 Discussions with Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council (formerly Swynnerton Parish Council) have been ongoing since 2017 regarding the transfer of open space at Yarnfield.

5.2 The Parish Council is keen to develop the area in question to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. The Parish Council conducted a survey in October 2020, concluding that the residents were in favour of a proposed plan to enhance the open space in a number of ways.

- 5.3 Transferring responsibility for the land to the Parish Council would enable the Parish Council to full realise the community benefits of the open space including be able to access external funding which the Borough Council could not.
- 5.4 The area is inspected weekly and the grass is cut 3 times per year by the Borough Council depending on the weather. The cost to the Borough Council is approximately £2,000 per annum. These costs would be removed if the land was to be transferred.
- 5.5 The Borough Council's preference with assets of this kind is to offer a lease rather than transfer ownership. If agreed, the lease would be of sufficient length to provide the Parish Council with the ability to invest and attract external funding. In other examples where the Borough Council has leased open space the term has been for approximately 25- 30 years.
- 5.6 Conditions would be attached to any lease preventing the construction of buildings or other erections or carry out any development of any description unrelated to the use of the site as public open space.
- 5.7 The land is held as open space and Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1973 requires the Council to advertise its intention to dispose of the land and consider any objections received. This is the case even though the land would remain as open space after transfer. If any objections to the sale were received following advertisement the matter would need to return to Cabinet to consider the objections before proceeding.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

There would be some nominal costs involved in arranging a lease with the Parish Council. These however would be off-set by the removal of maintenance responsibilities and costs to the Borough Council.

### **6.2 Legal**

The land is held as public open space and the intention to lease it for the period suggested mean the proposal would need to be advertised in accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 and any objections would need to be considered before any transfer could take place.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

Nil

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

Nil

## **6.5 Data Protection**

Nil

## **6.7 Risk Management**

No specific risks of continuing to own, maintain and inspect this area of land beyond those already accommodated by the Council in its duties. There may be some risk in terms of the Parish being able to sustain the inspection and maintenance costs on an on-going basis. If this was the case the Council may need to consider appropriate action, where necessary.

## **6.8 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

### **Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

The Borough Council has considered the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all and believes there to be no impact on any of the Equality Strands in the production of this report.

### **Wider Community Impact:**

In following the recommendations of this report there will be no impact on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation within the community.

## **7 Previous Consideration**

Nil

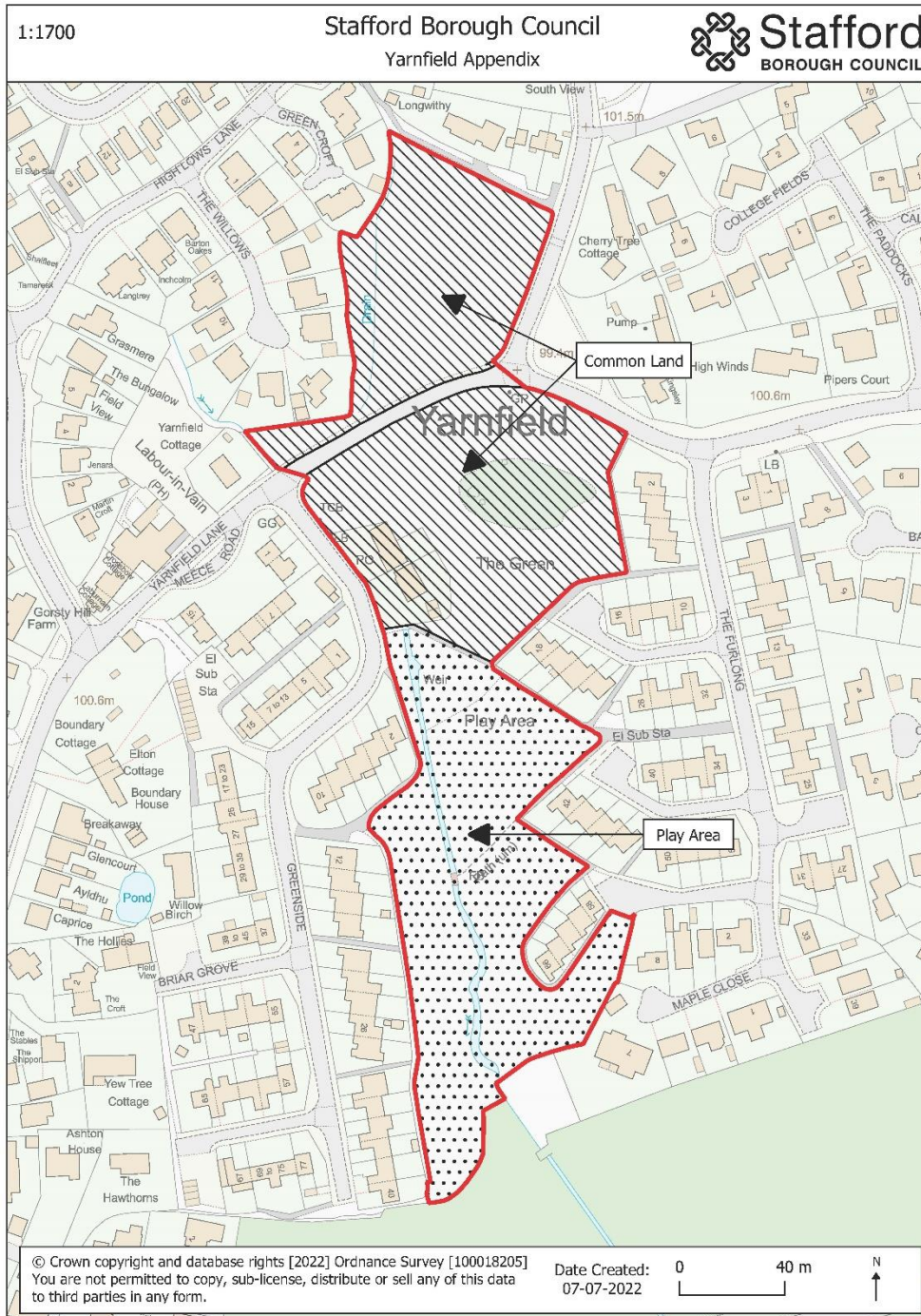
## **8 Background Papers**

Nil



Cabinet Date: 6 October 2022

## Yarnfield Land Transfer



## Agenda Item 4(b)(i)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Lee Booth
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01785 619896
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 (Only)
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor M J Winnington, Environment Portfolio

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## Riverway Nursery Works: Permission to Spend

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with details of proposed capital improvement works to the Council's Riverway Nursery site.
- 1.2 To seek approval of funding from the Capital Programme to undertake the project.

### 2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 That Cabinet support the project;
- 2.2 That Cabinet authorise the expenditure of up to £101,000 (including 15% contingency) from the Capital programme to enable a section of the site's made-up roadway to be resurfaced and for a shower unit to be installed. There is a sum of £101,000 included in the Capital programme for these works and this proposal is to formally allocate the necessary funds to complete the scheme of works.

### 3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The surface of the internal road at the rear and the right-hand side of the Riverway Nursery is not fit for purpose due to the weight and frequency of vehicles travelling over it. The surface is made up of hardcore and loose rubble and is uneven in many places.
- 3.2 Resurfacing the identified section of the site with porous tarmac would mean that the whole roadway at the site would be brought up to a suitable standard. The entrance roadway to the site is already a tarmac surface.

- 3.3 There is no welfare shower unit at the Riverway Nursery. The installation of such a unit would provide Streetscene colleagues with an area to shower in the event of a health and safety concern such as a chemical spillage or exposure to pests.
- 3.4 The Council has a duty of care to staff to provide a safe workplace. The proposed works would minimise the risk of injury to staff and would minimise risk of damage to Council vehicles.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives**

- 4.1 This report is most closely associated with 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 resilient communities that promote health and wellbeing.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 There is currently £101,000 programmed but not allocated in the Capital Programme for Riverway Nursery works.
- 5.2 The Council's Health and Safety Advisor has identified that the internal road surface, made up of hardcore and loose rubble, poses a risk of injury to staff and risk of vehicle damage due to the uneven surfaces.
- 5.3 The Council's Health and Safety Advisor has identified a risk to staff when exposed to chemical spillages or pests. The installation of a welfare shower unit would minimise this risk.
- 5.4 Resurfacing the identified section of the site with porous tarmac and the installation of a welfare shower unit would demonstrate the Council's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff.
- 5.5 The Council's Development Manager has confirmed that planning permission is not required for any of the proposed works.
- 5.6 An organisation that the Council have used for similar projects in the past, have provided us with a quotation of £65,000 to complete the resurfacing work. The value of the work means that the Council would need to procure the work through the standard procedures.
- 5.7 Three quotes have been provided for the installation of the welfare shower unit:
- Company A: £28,130
  - Company B: £23,500
  - Company C: £17,295

The proposal is to order the welfare shower unit from Company C at a cost of £17,295. There will be an additional cost of about £5,000 to install electrical and water connections. A suitable location for the unit has been identified by the Assets Team, next to the current portable office accommodation. The unit consists of one male shower cubicle and one female shower cubicle. The existing washing machines and tumble dryer currently located next to the mess room and used to clean staff uniforms would be relocated to the new unit.

5.8 The total estimated costs for the works are:

Porous tarmacadam resurfacing	£65,000
Welfare shower unit	£17,295
Electrical and water connections	£5,000
Contingency at 15% (reflecting market conditions)	£13,094.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>£100,389.25</b>

5.9 Subject to permission to spend being granted, the welfare shower unit order and the procurement instruction would be actioned immediately. The estimated timescales for the delivery and installation of the welfare shower unit would be about two months and it would take about five to six months for the procurement and completion of the resurfacing work.

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial

There is currently £101k within the capital programme for Riverway site improvements. Should the works included within this report be approved, there will be no further funding available within the programme for any additional works required to the site moving forward.

There is currently no provision within the budget for the ongoing revenue costs related to these capital works. As such, all ongoing costs will need to be managed from within existing revenue budgets.

### 6.2 Legal

Seeking at ensure compliance with Health and Safety at Work legislation and guidance.

### 6.3 Human Resources

The importance of the project to the health and safety of staff is detailed in the report.

### 6.4 Human Rights Act

N/A

**6.5 Data Protection**

N/A

**6.7 Risk Management**

These proposals seek to minimise the risk of harm to staff welfare and damage to vehicles.

**6.8 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

**Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:**

N/A

**Wider Community Impact:**

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: -

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

**7 Previous Consideration**

Nil

**8 Background Papers**

Nil

## Agenda Item 4(c)(i)

<b>Cabinet Date:</b>	6 October 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alex Yendole
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	07800 619530
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Report Track:</b>	Cabinet 06/10/2022 Special Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee 04/10/2022
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Submission by:</b>	Councillor F Beatty, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

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## New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To approve the 'New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report' and associated documentation for consultation (attached as **BOOKLETS** to this report) seeking views on key elements of the emerging new Development Plan reflecting changes in national policy and updated evidence base.

Links to **BOOKLETS** to this report:

- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-preferred-options-booklet](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-preferred-options-booklet)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-Borough-Policy-Map](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-Borough-Policy-Map)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-Stafford-Map](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-Stafford-Map)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-stone-map](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-stone-map)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-meecebrook-and-stafford-station-gateway](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-meecebrook-and-stafford-station-gateway)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-large-settlements-inset-maps](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-large-settlements-inset-maps)

- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-small-settlements-inset-maps](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-small-settlements-inset-maps)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-recognised-industrial-estates-inset-map](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-recognised-industrial-estates-inset-map)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-major-developed-sites-inset-maps](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-major-developed-sites-inset-maps)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-non-technical-summary](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-non-technical-summary)
- [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-communications-plan](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-communications-plan)

- 1.2 To recommend that the New Local Plan programme be updated, with the latest revision of the Local Development Scheme brought into effect from 19 October 2022, replacing the existing Scheme published in November 2021.

## **2 Proposal of Cabinet Member**

- 2.1 That the New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report' be approved for public consultation, together with the supporting evidence based documentation referenced in the **APPENDIX** to this item;
- 2.2 That the revised Local Development Scheme be brought into effect from 19 October 2022;
- 2.3 That the Head of Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning, be authorised to make appropriate typographical and minor presentational amendments to the Preferred Options Document as may be required.

## **3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is important for the Borough Council to make progress on the New Local Plan for Stafford Borough 2020-2040 in order to provide for future development across the Borough through establishing strategic planning policies and specific land allocations.
- 3.2 Since the current Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 was adopted (Part 1 in June 2014 and Part 2 in January 2017) significant changes have occurred locally and nationally impacting upon planning policy. Corporately there is now more of a focus on delivering economic growth, and national policy seeks to ensure that development proposals take into account the effects of change on the built and natural environment.

3.3 The following key areas of work have been completed or are on-going since the New Local Plan process commenced, in order to support the preparation of the Preferred Options Report:

- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report published and consulted upon
- Settlement Assessment questionnaire to Parish Councils processed
- On-going ‘Call for Sites’ exercise launched including in respect of new development, brownfield land and Local Green Space
- 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 (July 2021) 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 being prepared to support the Preferred Option stage including an assessment of site based ecological, heritage and landscapes issues alongside transport, utilities and education provision. Furthermore, in November 2020 the Borough Council published the Staffordshire County Climate Change and Mitigation study
- Borough Council response to a range of Government consultations on planning reforms and changes to the existing planning system from August 2020 onwards

3.4 In November 2021 the new Local Plan timetable was established through the updated Local Development Scheme. This took into account and reflected revised National Planning Policy Framework requirements, progress on the evidence base including the standardised methodology for housing need applied to Stafford Borough, and the detailed assessment of a potential new Garden Community called Meecebrook to be considered through the statutory planning process. In order to provide the most up-to-date evidence-based information and ensure comprehensive community engagement and consultation, the Preferred Option Report stage is now proposed to occur between October and December 2022. This change in the timetable, if agreed, will be reflected in the updated Local Development Scheme. All other dates will remain unchanged, as set out below:

<b>Process Stage</b>	<b>Proposed Completion Date</b>
Commencement	July 2017 - completed
Issues and Options Report	July 2018 to April 2020 - completed
Preferred Options Report	October to December 2022
Formal publication of the proposed new plan	July to September 2023
Submission of the proposed new plan to the Planning Inspectorate	November 2023



Process Stage	Proposed Completion Date
Examination of the proposed new plan, subject to PINS	February 2024
Adoption of the new local plan	October 2024

- 3.5 If the Preferred Options document is approved, the subsequent public consultation exercise will seek responses from the local community and other key stakeholders. Responses will be sought on the consultation documents between 24 October 2022 and 12 noon on Monday 12 December 2022. Please refer to the **BOOKLETS** which contains the Preferred Options report and associated documentation. The **APPENDIX** to this item sets out the latest evidence base to be published alongside the Preferred Options report including a Non-Technical Summary and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- 3.6 The Preferred Options report comprises of:
- A Vision and set of Objectives
  - Spatial portrait of Stafford Borough
  - Development Strategy and Climate Change
  - Meecebrook Garden Community
  - Site Allocations including Stafford Station Gateway
  - Economy policies and proposals
  - Housing policies and proposals
  - Design and Infrastructure policies
  - Environment policies
  - Connections policies
  - Appendices including Monitoring Framework, open space and car parking standards, Housing Trajectory, and Glossary
- 3.7 Within the Development Strategy section is a settlement hierarchy, which ensures that sustainable locations for new development are identified in respect of the Borough's towns and villages, including the location of new development. The categorisation within the settlement hierarchy and the selection of proposed allocations for development is based on a range of factors including population, recent development activity, highway network, ecological / heritage / landscape considerations, education capacity, key facilities and services as well as accessibility and technology.
- 3.8 A New Local Plan proposed settlement hierarchy will replace the existing adopted Plan for Stafford Borough (June 2014) Settlement Hierarchy of Stafford, Stone and the Key Service Villages, and introduces 5 new categories (tabled below). For each category the proposed levels of new housing development expressed as a percentage of overall new housing numbers are shown. Please note that the % figures identify the proportion of housing delivered through the New Local Plan including existing and proposed allocations, completions since 1 April 2020 and current commitments as at 31 March 2022.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Settlement Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Stafford (59%)	The largest urban area in the Borough with a regionally significant service centre role providing employment, retail and other facilities, and a key role in driving growth. This also includes Baswich, Berkswich, Doxey and Walton-on-the-Hill
2	Stone (7%)	The second largest town in the Borough providing employment, retail and other facilities for a wider area
3	Meecebrook Garden Community (24%)	New settlement location north-east of Eccleshall and south west of Yarnfield and Cold Meece.
4	Larger Settlements (4%)	Large villages of 250 or more dwellings which act as key service centres for the surrounding rural area by virtue of the range of services and facilities they possess. This includes Barlaston, Blythe Bridge, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Great Haywood, Haughton, Hixon, Little Haywood and Colwich, Meir Heath / Rough Close, Weston, Woodseaves and Yarnfield
5	Smaller Settlements (Less than 1%)	Villages of between 50 and 249 dwellings which tend to have a lesser provision of services than larger villages with a definable village nucleus (ie not dispersed or ribbon development). This includes Adbaston, Aston-By-Stone, Bradley, Brocton, Brocton A34, Church Eaton, Clayton, Cold Meece, Cotes Heath, Creswell, Croxton, Derrington, Fulford, Great Bridgeford, Hilderstone, Hopton, Hyde Lea, Milford, Milwich, Moreton, Norbury, Norton Bridge, Ranton, Salt, Seighford, Swynnerton and Tittensor.

- 3.9 In terms of the rest of the Borough (ie settlements and areas not identified in the Settlement Hierarchy) this area / these locations will contribute limited housing to the overall housing requirement such as through the re-use of rural buildings (less than 1%) alongside predicted windfall planning consents at 50 dwellings per year (6%). Please note that percentages have been rounded.

## 4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 The New Local Plan will help deliver the Council's Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024 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 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published, and subsequently updated in February 2019 and July 2021. Alongside updates to the NPPF was additional information provided via Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which sets out the national context for preparing policies in new Local Plans. The purpose of planning was re-stated being to 'achieve 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.
- 5.2 The Borough Council previously consulted on a New Local Plan Issues and Options report between February and April 2020, extended due to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 181 responses were received through this consultation stage and which are available to view on our website [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-stafford-borough-local-plan-2020-2040-issues-and-options-responses](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-stafford-borough-local-plan-2020-2040-issues-and-options-responses), with a detailed summary to be published alongside the Preferred Options Report as part of the New Local Plan evidence.
- 5.3 If the Preferred Options document is agreed, the consultation stage will last for approximately 7 weeks, to take account of the October half term holiday break. It will run from Monday 24 October until 12 noon on Monday 12 December 2022 and involve the following actions to reflect the Council's agreed Statement of Community Involvement:
- Notification to Parish Councils, Members and key stakeholders of publication of the documents and an opportunity to submit responses.

- Copies of the documents provided for viewing at all libraries in the Borough and at the Civic Centre.
- Availability to view the documents and the related evidence base via the Council's website.
- Public exhibitions / drop in events to be held across the Borough area
- A Parish Councils engagement event
- The opportunity to make representations via the website, by email or on paper.
- Publication of a Press notice / release

5.4 In terms of subsequent steps, the Local Plan evidence base will be updated and alongside consideration of comments made on the Preferred Options report, a draft version of the new Local Plan produced in due course (known as the Publication version). This publication version of the Plan will, subject to member approval, represent the Council's intended Local Plan. On approval it will then be subject to a statutory six week period when interested parties can support or object to its contents.

5.5 Post Publication and the receipt of representations, the New Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State along with all the comments received. The Secretary of State will then, via the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), set up an independent Examination process before an Inspector to determine if the Plan is 'appropriate' based on the NPPF's latest tests of soundness. Following the Examination process and receipt of the Inspectors' Report the Council will hope to adopt the New Local Plan, which will replace the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

The exercise of formulating a new Local Plan was allocated a total budget of £536,000 in July 2017. Following delays and the impact of the pandemic, an additional £191,430 has been identified as being required to meet revised anticipated costs. Due to the three year proposed delay, £97,500 of this increase has been funded from the Council's annual contributions of £32,500 per annum, together with £30,000 to cover additional costs relating to the pandemic. This leaves a balance of £63,930 to be funded. This outstanding balance has been allocated monies in principle from the planning fee reserve. Delivery of the New Local Plan is envisaged to come within the revised resources available as outlined above and in the table below.

The main costs incurred in preparing and finalising the New Local Plan include the evidence base, community engagement and consultation, and the independent Examination process prior to adoption.

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.

### Local Plan Revised Budget

	<b>Original Plan July 2019 £</b>	<b>Revised Plan Oct 2021 £</b>	<b>Variance £</b>
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
Contingency	26,000	0	-26,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>536,000</b>	<b>727,428</b>	<b>191,428</b>

## 6.2 Legal

The New Local Plan has to be prepared in accordance with the relevant Planning Acts and regulations, and be aligned with related national planning policy and guidance. The Plan will need in accordance with the Council's constitution to be formally endorsed by Full Council prior to publication and on adoption. The Preferred Options stage is not a statutory requirement but follows good practice guidance and will help inform the development of the statutory Publication version of the Local Plan in due course.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

The New Local Plan will be delivered by existing staff from within the Development Service and the wider organisation, together with support from specialist consultants.

### **6.4 Human Rights Act**

None identified

### **6.5 Data Protection**

Consultation responses to be subject to the latest General Data Protection Regulations brought into effect from May 2018.

### **6.6 Risk Management**

An adopted local plan for Stafford Borough is in place. However, there is a requirement on Local Planning Authorities to review Local Plans and ensure policies are up to date. for plans to be reviewed and kept up to date. A delay and / or uncertainty at the local level without a new Local Plan being produced could lead to legal challenges and / or planning appeals with potential significant costs for the Council.

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 external factors are beyond the Council's control and may have an impact:

- 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
- Unanticipated delays in external events such as resource capacity of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for the Examination process or failure to deliver robust arrangements for this process

It should be noted that the following risks can be considered and effectively managed by the Council:

- Staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and sickness absences leading to inadequate skills base
- Political changes, procedural delays or failure to meet Council deadlines
- Non-conformity and failure in the tests of soundness for new planning policy documents

## **6.7 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations**

### **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.

### **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.

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.

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

## **7 Previous Consideration**

Cabinet - 4 November 2021 - Minute No CAB31/21

Cabinet - 16 January 2020 - Minute No CAB71/20

## **8 Background Papers**

File available in Development Services

**Cabinet Date:** 6 October 2022

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## New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report

### Evidence Base and Non Technical Summary

#### Introduction

The purpose of this Appendix note is to set out the evidence base and supporting information being made available for publication alongside the New Local Plan 2020-2040 Preferred Options Report consultation including the following:

- Non Technical Summary: Please see attached **BOOKLET**.  
[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-non-technical-summary](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-non-technical-summary)
- Communications Plan. Please see attached **BOOKLET**.  
[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-communications-plan](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-6-october-2022-NLP-communications-plan)

In addition, the following evidence base / supporting information will also be published as part of the engagement / consultation stage for the New Local Plan preferred option via the web-page link below:

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-lp-2020-2040-evidence-base](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-lp-2020-2040-evidence-base)

- Ecological Sites Assessment
- Heritage Sites Assessment
- Landscape Character Sites Assessment
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment - Stage 1
- Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Habitat Regulations Assessment: Stage 2
- Summary of responses to the New Local Plan Issues and Options consultation
- Site Assessment Profiles
- Topic Paper on Housing and Employment Land
- Topic Paper on Site Selection process
- Topic Paper on Revised Settlement Assessment and Profiles
- Topic Paper on Lead in and Build Rate Assumptions
- Topic Paper on Local Green Space Designations
- Topic Paper on Climate Change
- Topic Paper on Biodiversity
- Topic Paper on Green Infrastructure and Open Space
- Topic Paper on Renewable Energy
- Topic Paper on Connections



It should be noted that the following evidence base has previously been published to support the New Local Plan process available via the following web-page link:

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-lp-2020-2040-evidence-base](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-lp-2020-2040-evidence-base)

- Economic and Housing Development Needs Assessment
- Town Centre Capacity Assessment
- Reasonable Alternatives / Strategic Development Options
- Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Habitat Regulations Assessment: Stage 1
- Nature Recovery Network
- Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment
- Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2022 update
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy
- Settlement Hierarchy

The following links are available to other elements of the New Local Plan evidence base and supporting information through the Stafford Borough Council website:

**Local Plans and Policies webpages:**

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/local-plan-and-policies](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/local-plan-and-policies)

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp)

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-)

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Level 1 - November 2019**

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/water-management-and-flooding](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/water-management-and-flooding)

Please note that further work on the Water Cycle Study will be progressed following the Preferred Options stage to assess sites identified for allocation

**Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sport Facilities - July 2019**

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/open-space-sport-and-recreation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/open-space-sport-and-recreation)

**Statement of Community Involvement - November 2018**

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/statement-of-community-involvement](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/statement-of-community-involvement)

**Local Development Scheme - October 2022**

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/local-development-scheme](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/local-development-scheme)