

Dear Members

Special Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

A special meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside Stafford** on **Tuesday 4 October 2022 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

SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 OCTOBER 2022

Chair - Councillor W J Kemp

AGENDA

1 Apologies

2 Called-In Item

Page Nos

ITEM NO 2(a) **Update of the Sport Facilities Strategy
and Playing Pitch Strategy Evidence Base** 3 - 13

INTERIM HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

3 Officers' Report

ITEM NO 3(a) **New Local Plan - Preferred Options Report** 14 - 25

INTERIM HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

Membership

Chair - Councillor W J Kemp

C A Baron	W J Kemp
J A Barron	R Kenney
B M Cross	D McNaughton
R A James	J A Nixon
E G R Jones	M Phillips

Agenda Item 2(a)

Committee:	Special Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	4 October 2022
Report of:	Interim Head of Development
Contact Officer:	John Martin
Telephone Number:	07970 237 905
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Special Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee 04/10/2022 Cabinet 08/09/2022

Update of the Sport Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy Evidence Base

The following matter was considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 8 September 2022 and has been **CALLED IN** to this Committee by Councillors A D Hobbs, D McNaughton and A M Loughran for the following reason:-

“To further discuss the issues raised by the Sports Facilities Strategy.”

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend the adoption of the interim update for the period 2019 - 2021 to the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy, alongside the supporting evidence base / assessments (please refer to the **BOOKLETS** - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-strategy-July-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/indoor-sports-facilities-strategy-april-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sports-facilities-strategy-assessment-report-March-2019 and www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-assessment-report)

2 Decision of the Cabinet

- 2.1 To approve and adopt the Interim Updates within the context of the recommendations contained in the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sport Facilities Strategy.
- 2.2 To use the information and recommendations within these Strategies to inform policies and allocations as part of the New Local Plan 2020-2040.

- 2.3 To note that a working group has been established with partners to oversee the development and monitoring of action plans to secure delivery of the strategies and their objectives.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The initial Playing Pitch Strategy report was completed in 2019 by Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) on behalf of Stafford Borough Council. To follow Sport England guidelines an annual review would then be undertaken by officers of the council in conjunction with the relevant National Governing Bodies. However due to the worldwide COVID Pandemic, it was not possible to update in 2020 and 2021. An update has now been undertaken.
- 3.2 Nearly all sports were affected by the lockdown restrictions put in place to stop the spread of COVID. Therefore, a large number of the 2019 recommendations are still relevant because the associated sports clubs and organisations were unable to progress any plans they may have had. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) sets out 'Key Issues' relating to each pitch-based sport across Stafford Borough, as follows:

Football

- 3.3 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same. When factoring in future demand there is a shortfall in:
- Youth 11v11 pitches.
 - Youth 9v9 pitches; and
 - Mini 5v5 pitches

Third Generation Turf (3G), Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPS)

- 3.4 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- Insufficient supply of full 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand for football in Stafford Borough/Town
 - Need for an additional 4 x 3G pitches

Cricket

- 3.5 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- Insufficient supply of provision to cater for current senior demand across Stafford Borough / Town.
 - When factoring in future demand there is a shortfall of provision for junior cricket and a continuing worsening for senior cricket.

Rugby

3.6 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- In the KKP report on PPS of 2019 it was reported that there was a shortfall of 7.75 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches.
- Stafford RUFC has completed its move to a new home venue at Blackberry Lane, Stafford.
- Following the completion of the World Rugby compliant 3G pitch at Stafford Rugby Club the shortfall has been negated.
- The Club as entered into a 999 year lease agreement for the site
- New site includes three senior pitches (one of which is floodlit), three mini pitches and one full size floodlit World Rugby compliant 3G pitch.
- St. Leonards Rugby Club still have an non-secure lease agreement. They are currently looking for a suitable site.

Hockey

3.7 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

Stone Hockey Club

- Stone Hockey Club and Stone Rugby Club is in the final stages of merging to form one club. Both England Rugby and England Hockey support the plan.
- The club has prepared a detailed plan to redevelop the site and is currently waiting on planning permission for the new club house and facilities.
- The plans will include new Rugby and Hockey pitches. It is hoped that work will begin in the late summer of 2022.

Stafford Hockey Club

- Stafford Hockey had been using the 2G pitch at Beaconside. However, they have been served notice that the 2G pitch over the summer months will be replaced with a 3G pitch. The 3G pitch will be unsuitable for hockey use. Therefore, they are currently looking for an alternative venue to play their club matches.
- They are working with England Hockey to develop plans to build a 2G pitch at their headquarters they share with Stafford Cricket Club.
- The club have advised that they are working closely with both Football and Cricket to ensure the other sports are not affected by their proposals.

Golf

3.8 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Current supply of facilities in Stafford Borough / Town can meet current and future demand.

Bowls

- 3.9 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- There is enough capacity to cater for current needs and future demand.

Tennis

- 3.10 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- There is sufficient supply of courts to accommodate club-based demand.
 - Furthermore, spare capacity exists on non-club courts. The future focus should be on improving quality and encouraging further use.

Athletics

- 3.11 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- There is a need to protect the track located at Rowley Park Stadium for future participation.

Sports Facilities

- 3.12 An initial report was completed in 2019, and to follow Sports England guidelines it was intended that it would be updated annually. However due to the worldwide COVID Pandemic, it was not possible to update in 2020 and 2021. Nearly all sports were affected by the lockdown restrictions. Therefore, a large number of the 2019 recommendations are still relevant as the associated sports were unable to progress any plans they may have.

Sports Halls

- 3.13 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:
- The number of sports halls remains good. Most remain in good condition though are ageing and will need refurbishment at some point
 - Alleyne's Sports Hall continues to be hired out to the public. However, there is no agreement between the school and Stafford Borough Council to continue to do so following the opening of Stone Leisure Centre
 - Currently there are no 6-court sports hall within the Stafford area. The development of a sports hall would serve both the current needs of the population and any future needs.

Badminton

3.14 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Badminton 2017-2025 presents a vision for the sport to become one of the nation's most popular and to consistently win medals at world, Olympic and Paralympic levels. Following the pandemic, Badminton England is still committed to that goal. In Stafford there are currently 5 clubs. Two are affiliated to Badminton England and three are unaffiliated
- The report states that although many clubs nationally were affected by the measures put into place during the COVID Pandemic, the affiliated clubs within Stafford have maintained their membership at 46 compared to 47 pre- COVID

Basketball

3.15 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Stafford Spartans Basketball team who play at Beaconside, are currently the only registered basketball team in Stafford
- They continue to play at Beaconside

Netball

3.16 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Stafford has one main netball club. In Stafford Netball currently has 192 members. The club consists of both juniors and senior teams who play in the Stafford League and Staffordshire Junior league
- They train at Stafford Manor High School
- There is also a walking netball club in Stafford, who at Beaconside. The Club currently has over 50 members
- The main league in Stafford is the Stafford and District league. The league comprises of 17 teams playing in 2 divisions. Matches take place on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening

Table Tennis

3.17 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Table Tennis is an indoor sport and was greatly affected by the COVID pandemic. Players were unable to play the game for long periods while the lockdown and isolation was in force. However, all clubs have reported no adverse effects on membership numbers
- There are two leagues within the Stafford area. The Stafford League and the Stone League. In Stafford there are sixteen clubs with 83 members and in Stone there are eight clubs with 44 members

Stone Table Tennis League

- The Stone Table Tennis League is affiliated with Table Tennis England and consists of 12 teams from eight clubs. Each team has 4-5 players on average. The League also operates University of the 3rd Age (U3A) sessions which attract an additional 30-40 players. Its key sites are Walton Community Centre, Clayton Hall Academy (Newcastle-under-Lyme) and Stone Tennis Club. The League reports an increasing demand and a rise in participation. Consultation reports its main challenge to be the ageing demographic

Stafford Table Tennis League

- The Stafford Table Tennis League is made up of 20 teams from 16 clubs. Stone Table Tennis Club is a key club with 10 registered players and two competitive teams in the League. The Club plays at TT HQ – Walton Community Centre.

Gymnastics

3.18 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Gymnastics continues to be well catered for in Stafford Borough, with a large number of clubs. They have reported no lasting affects from the closures due to the COVID Pandemic
- Stafford Gymnastic Club and Back to Back Gym Clubs continue to do well with their dedicated facilities

Swimming Pools

3.19 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- There are currently 3 pools in the Borough, one pool at the new Stone Leisure Centre and 2 (main pool and learner pool) at Stafford Leisure Centre. The number of pools has remained the same when compared to that reported by the KKP 2019 report. With the opening of the new Stone Leisure Centre in 2019 it increased the available pool time available to the public. This was due to the fact that Alleyne's was a dual use facility, and the pool was closed to the public during school hours
- Currently there remains a shortfall of an 8 Lane by 25m pool space. When the projected population increase for the Borough by 2040 is taken into account, there will be a shortfall of a 10 Lane by 25m amount of pool space in the Borough without additional facilities being provided to meet needs.

3.20 **Squash Courts**

- In 2019 KKP reported that there were 10 squash courts available at 5 venues. In the preceding years the number of squash courts has decreased to 5. Two courts were lost to public use when the new Stone Leisure Centre opened and Alleyne's Academy no longer hire the courts out to the public

- The other 3 courts were lost when Yarnfield Sports Centre re-developed that area of sports provision to create conference facilities
- This now leaves just 2 courts at Stafford Leisure Centre which are available to the public on a turn up and play basis
- The other two sites Burton Manor and Stone Tennis and Squash Club are member-only facilities

3.21 It is recommended that this update, following on from the evidence base assessments together with the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sports Facilities Strategy (please refer to the **BOOKLETS** - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-strategy-July-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/indoor-sports-facilities-strategy-april-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sports-facilities-strategy-assessment-report-March-2019 and www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-assessment-report) be adopted for use by the Council.

3.22 It is further recommended that the key issues highlighted in this report are acknowledged and that these are addressed, where possible, through policies and allocations as part of the New Local Plan 2020-2040.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 From the Corporate Business Plan 2018-2021 the following Corporate Business Objective 2 is relevant:

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

5 Report Detail

5.1 In 2019 consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP) were commissioned to provide an up-to-date evidence base for the New Local Plan 2020-2040, to assess all formal sport and leisure facilities across the Borough in order to assist the Council in strategically planning for future provision. Separately, a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) would be prepared and reviewed and updated annually.. Unfortunately, due to the worldwide COVID pandemic the intended updates were not able to be undertaken until late in 2021. The contents of this report before members is therefore is an interim report for 2021. A full more detailed report will be completed later in 2022 with the co-operation of the National Governing Bodies (NGB’s) for the relevant sports.

5.2 The PPS is intended to be a living document which is maintained on a regular basis

5.3 Both the Playing Pitch and Sports Facility strategies set out the position in terms of current provision and the impact of future growth on facilities and provision.

5.4 The **Playing Pitch Strategy** (PPS) in 2019 set out the following 'Strategic Aims and Recommendations'. They remain unchanged from the 2019 Strategy as set out below and provide the context for the information contained in this report:-

Aim 1: To protect the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs:

Recommendations:

- Ensure that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy
- Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements
- Maximise community use of education facilities where needed

Aim 2: To enhance outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Recommendations:

- Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary
- Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites
- Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding
- Secure developer contributions

Aim 3: To provide new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so:

Recommendations:

- Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock;
- Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

5.5 The PPS identifies the following major issues:

5.6 **Football:** in terms of grass pitches, when future demand is taken into account, there will be a shortage of youth 11 v 11, youth 9 v 9 and mini 5 v 5 pitches and therefore new provision will be required in the coming years to accommodate this demand.

5.7 There is already a shortage of available 3G pitches and this will be exacerbated by future population growth and related demand. There is a requirement to provide 2 additional 3G pitches across the Borough. Potential locations are Walton High School, the North Stafford Strategic Development Location (SDL), Alleynes Sport Centre and Wellbeing Park at Yarnfield.

- 5.8 **Cricket:** there is currently an insufficient provision of senior cricket facilities within the Borough. This will increase when future growth is taken into account. England Cricket report that the Borough requires an additional 2 grass wicket pitches. They are continuing to look for suitable locations. We will continue to assess the potential for delivering additional pitches where opportunities arise. Additionally, when future growth is considered there becomes a shortage of supply for junior cricket. These shortages result in the need to provide additional facilities. Creation of new non-turf pitches (NTP's) would go some way to help alleviate the current over use of pitches and also the increase in future demand.
- 5.9 **Hockey:** Plans are currently being drawn up by Stafford Hockey Club and Stone Hockey Clubs to create a 2G pitch at both clubs.

Stone Hockey Club

- Stone Hockey Club and Stone Rugby Club are in final stages of merging to form one club. Both England Rugby and England Hockey support the plan.
- The club is preparing a detailed plan to redevelop the site.
- The plans will include new Rugby and Hockey pitches.

Stafford Hockey Club

- Stafford Hockey is working with England Hockey to develop a new pitch which is now a matter of urgency due to the Beaconside facility converting its 2G pitch to 3G. The club was informed in April 2022 that Beaconside would be converting the current 2G pitch to a 3G pitch to accommodate football.
- The club is working closely with both Football and Cricket to ensure the other sports are not affected by their proposals.

Squash

- 5.10 The number of available courts has reduced from 10 to 5 from as reported in 2019 by KKP. This will have an impact on the ability of the general public to go and play a game of squash on an ad hoc basis. The only facility to have the option of just turning up and playing is Stafford Leisure Centre. The other facilities require you to be a member first which is a barrier to casual use and people who want to try the game for the first time.
- 5.11 The 'Key Issues' identified within the **Sports Facilities Strategy** are set out in para 3.12. However of these Key Issues there are two matters that are major issues, these being the current shortage of water space and the development of a new 6 court sport hall.
- 5.12 Current shortage of water space, which currently equates to an 8-lane x 25m pool, when population projections are factored in this shortfall increases to a 10-lane x 25m pool.

- 5.13 The development of a new swimming pool is a major investment requirement for the Council and the key issue is where the best location is to locate additional water space, based on current demand, new build housing and ownership of land.
- 5.14 Following on from the adoption of the evidence base, the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy, further work will need to be undertaken in terms of acting on the strategic recommendations.
- 5.15 A working group has been established with relevant Stakeholders, including Sports England, to maintain and develop an ongoing action plan. Whilst the expectation is that national organisations will work with local sports groups to facilitate the delivery of new and improved facilities including playing pitches, the Borough Council will also have a leading role to play in identifying potential opportunities to meet needs. This will involve bringing representative bodies and groups together but also working with local communities to see how needs can be built into delivery plans.
- 5.16 The delivery of all these facilities is very much reliant on financial developer contributions obtained via planning obligations and other sources of external funding. The Council will need to agree the priorities to identify the need and also the delivery mechanisms working jointly with partners..

6 Implications	
6.1 Financial	Staff resources required to manage and co-ordinate the finances associated with the projects. There will be a need to use external resources through consultancy studies in order to complete projects.
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	The requirements of the projects will be delivered by existing staff from within the Development Department and the wider organisation.
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	The Council will need to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to deliver the projects. Therefore the commitment for other organisations will be necessary to achieve the vision and corporate business objectives. If insufficient funding is provided there is a risk that the strategy and evidence based approach will be undermined or lead to the inefficient use of resources.

<p>6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations</p>	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>The Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport Facilities Strategy partnership of projects, evidence base and strategies will improve sport and recreation across Stafford Borough. It will reconnect people and communities with sport and recreation to enjoy as part of a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>As this report covers a number of independent strategies an individual CIA considering any impact will be undertaken when the Strategies have been developed. If appropriate management and maintenance plans etc. will be developed as part of the Strategies. Investigation as to whether these plans can have specific Health and Wellbeing targets will be investigated as part of the individual strategies.</p> <p>As part of the development of the Strategies consultation with Stakeholders and members of the public where appropriate will be undertaken. It is envisioned that this work will help identify any targets or measures to meet specific needs.</p>
---	---

Previous Consideration - Cabinet - 8 September 2022 - Minute No CAB18/22

Background Papers - Development Department (Strategic Planning and Placemaking)

Agenda Item 3(a)

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

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/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-booklet
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-borough-policy-map
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-stafford-map
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-stone-map
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-meecebrook-and-stafford-station-gateway

- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-large-settlements-inset-maps
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-small-settlements-inset-map
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-recognised-industrial-estates-maps
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-major-developed-sites-inset-maps
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-non-technical-summary
- www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-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:

Process Stage	Proposed Completion Date
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.

Tier	Settlement Category	Description
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, 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

	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
Contingency	26,000	0	-26,000
Total	536,000	727,428	191,428

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

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/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-non-technical-summary
- Communications Plan. Please see attached **BOOKLET**.
www.staffordbc.gov.uk/special-EDP-4-october-2022-new-local-plan-preferred-options-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

- 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

- 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

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Level 1 - November 2019

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

Statement of Community Involvement - November 2018

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/statement-of-community-involvement

Local Development Scheme - October 2022

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/local-development-scheme