

Dear Members

**Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee**

A meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside Stafford** on **Tuesday 10 June 2025 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 Governance

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2025

Chair - Councillor F Beatty

## AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 13 March 2025 as previously published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Public Question Time - Nil
- 4 Councillor Session - Nil
- 5 Members' Items - Nil
- 6 Called In Items - Nil

## Page Nos

- 7 Officers' Reports
- ITEM NO 7(a) **Planning External Review Feedback** -  
HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
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HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

## Membership

Chair - Councillor F Beatty

F Beatty	A M Loughran
B M Cross	B McKeown
P C Edgeller	D M McNaughton
F D J James	J S Powell
P W Jones	D P Rouxel

## **Agenda Item 7(b)**

# **New Local Plan 2025 - 2045**

<b>Committee:</b>	Economic Development and Planning
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 June 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Economic Development and Planning
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Economic Development and Planning

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## **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the new Local Plan 2025 - 2045 and associated documentation including new requirements and implications of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024, the latest evidence based information and the Local Development Scheme.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report is noted.

## **3 Key Issues and Reason for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is important for the Borough Council to make progress on the New Local Plan for Stafford Borough 2025-2045 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 continues to be 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 On 6 March 2025 Cabinet approved to stop work on the Local Plan 2020-2040 and begin the process of advanced work prior to the official start of a new plan covering a plan period 2025-2045, through the Government's proposed new plan-making process. The Government, both previous and existing, have announced significant changes through National planning policy. These changes have impacted on Local Plans and plan-making, most recently by introducing a new plan-making process, as well as amending some of the current requirements for Local Plans. Further details are anticipated in the Summer 2025.
- 3.4 Prior to March 2025 it should be noted that the Local Plan 2020-2040 had completed the Preferred Options stage in October to December 2022 with a review and assessment of responses received. This highlighted several factors that had implications for that Plan, in particular the requirement to source further work to create a sound evidence base for the plan, as well as concern regarding the provision of additional dwellings for unmet need from neighbouring authorities as part of the future Stafford Borough development strategy.

## **4 Relationship to Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Plan**

- 4.1 The New Local Plan will help deliver the Council's Corporate Plan 2025/26 to 2027/28 through the following vision and 4 interlinking priorities:

### Vision

*"To be an effective Council that promotes a growing economy, strong, healthy communities and a sustainable environment."*

### Priorities

*"Prosperous Economy"*

*"Communities and Wellbeing"*

*"Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment"*

*"Effective Council"*

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 The production of a Local Plan is a requirement of the Town and Country Planning Acts.

- 5.2 The New Local Plan 2025-2045 will provide clear guidance to developers, and members of the public, through planning policies and proposals across the Borough. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development.
- 5.3 The development of the Local Plan is identified as a corporate priority project.

### **New Local Plan process**

- 5.4 The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough (June 2014 and Part 2 in January 2017) covers the period 2011-2031. Councils must review their Local Plans at least once every five years from the adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Previously the Council had progressed work on a new Local Plan 2020-2040, which began in July 2017 and completed a number of public consultation stages. The Local Plan 2025-2045 will now be progressed, as highlighted by the Cabinet decision on 6 March 2025 and the Key Issues section above.
- 5.5 The plan-making process consists of several key stages. Councils must set out target dates for meeting them in a Local Development Scheme (LDS). Stafford Borough's LDS was most recently published on 19 March 2025, please see web-link below:

[Local Development Scheme | Stafford Borough Council](#)

- 5.6 Before a new Local Plan can be adopted, it must go through an examination process administered by the Planning Inspectorate National Service (PINS). The examination will assess whether the new Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and if the document is sound. As set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF, the new Local Plan must therefore be:
- Positively prepared - providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
  - Justified - an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence.
  - Effective - deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

- Consistent with national policy - enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.
- 5.7 The plan-making process for Stafford Borough will continue to progress but needs to take into account national planning system changes, as detailed in the following paragraphs, to ensure any future plan will be sound when it comes forward for examination.

### **National Changes**

#### **Levelling up and Regeneration Act**

- 5.8 Between December 2022 and March 2023 a consultation was held on the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy. It was within this consultation that the proposal of a new plan making system was put forward. The Bill became an Act in October 2023.
- 5.9 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 states that a new 30-month plan making process will be implemented. Precise detail on what the new plan system from the Government will involve is still awaited and anticipated in Summer 2025, but the new system will have:
- 30-month timeframe to complete a new plan from start to adoption
  - Upfront engagement with local communities and stakeholders
  - Gateway Assessments: first and second Gateway Assessments are advisory. third Gateway Assessment will have a binding role as to whether the planning authority can submit their draft plan.
- 5.10 Further detail on plan making is set out within Section 3 of the NPPF, published in December 2024, and ANNEX 1: Implementation. It states that for the purpose of plan-making, policies in this version of the NPPF will apply from 12 March 2025, although being a material consideration in dealing with planning applications from the day of its publication.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 5.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated on 12 December 2024. There have been several significant changes through the NPPF, which will have implications on how a local plan is developed, as well as the currently adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 through the planning application decision-making process. In particular the Government has now introduced new mandatory housing targets and evidence based requirements.

- 5.12 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 abolishes the principle of the Duty to Cooperate which requires Local Planning Authorities to co-operate with each other through the plan making system. However, the Duty remains a policy requirement under NPPF paragraph 24. This requirement is to be strengthened by the proposal of new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning as required to deliver growth.

### **English Devolution White Paper**

- 5.13 In addition, on 16 December 2024 the Government published the English Devolution White Paper which set out a new framework of strategic and unitary authorities, with the Government's ambition that all areas will ultimately have a Mayoral Strategic Authority. Councils in all 21 two-tier areas, including Staffordshire, will be expected to reorganise over this Parliament and the next. Reorganisation is not a requirement for devolution, but the Government has indicated it will prioritise areas where reorganisation can unlock devolution.
- 5.14 The Government has set a clear expectation that new strategic authorities should be based on a population size of at least 1,500,000 people, whilst unitary councils should contain at least 500,000 people, although it has indicated that there is scope for some flexibility based on area circumstances. Further details are expected in the Summer / Autumn 2025 when the English Devolution Bill begins its passage through Parliament prior to being enacted.
- 5.15 All areas, regardless of whether they have a Strategic Authority in place, will have to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). An SDS is a statutory land-use planning document. It will set out an investment framework for building and development across a Strategic Authority's area.
- 5.16 Further details on strategic planning bodies are available through section 3.5 of the 'Powers, functions and funding - Devolution Framework' of the [English Devolution White Paper](#), whilst the "[Planning Positively For the Future](#)" document provides the latest information on the new system of Strategic Planning, published on 16 May 2025 by a national Strategic Planning Group co-ordinated by the consultants Prior + Partners.

- 5.17 Strategic planning will play a vital role in delivering sustainable growth and addressing key spatial issues – including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure, growing the economy, and improving climate resilience. Strategic planning will also be important in the delivery of Local Growth Plans and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. It is the Government’s intention to move to a model of universal strategic planning covering functional economic areas within the next five years, with further details expected in the coming months as the Planning and Infrastructure Bill progresses through to being enacted, anticipated to be later this year. Nevertheless this will affect the local plan making system and therefore needs to be considered when further detail is available.

### **Planning and Infrastructure Bill**

- 5.18 The Government’s Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB) was laid before Parliament on 11 March 2025 and has begun its passage through the House of Commons before moving to the House of Lords ahead of the Final Stages and Royal Assent, which is expected later this year.
- 5.19 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the supporting Department for the Bill, with the following legislative summary:

*“A Bill to make provision about infrastructure; to make provision about town and country planning; to make provision for a scheme, administered by Natural England, for a nature restoration levy payable by developers; to make provision about development corporations; to make provision about the compulsory purchase of land; to make provision about environmental outcomes reports; and for connected purposes.”*

- 5.20 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill includes proposals that aim to provide for a faster consenting process for critical infrastructure, introduce a new scheme of delegation to modernise local planning committees and provide for the introduction of a strategic planning system for England.
- 5.21 It is important to note that the Planning and Infrastructure Act could have implications across a range of Council services including economic development and planning, health and wellbeing, leisure and operations. Once the Bill is enacted these implications will need to be considered in more detail. For further information about the Planning and Infrastructure Bill please refer to the Government’s web-pages below:

[Planning and Infrastructure Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

[The Planning and Infrastructure Bill - GOV.UK](#)



## Mandatory Housing Targets

- 5.22 A key change within the NPPF that has a more immediate effect on local plan making and development is the introduction of mandatory housing targets and the methodology used to calculate this.
- 5.23 The previous standard methodology calculated Local Housing Need at 358 per year for Stafford Borough (please note that this figure does change year on year). Whilst the current NPPF does not require a 10% buffer, the Council has historically applied this approach to ensure flexibility and delivery of homes, therefore the local housing need was 394 new homes per year.
- 5.24 In the period of 2020-2024 on average 544 new homes per year were completed.
- 5.25 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF directs that strategic policies should be informed by local housing need assessment conducted using the Government's standard method. The new methodology results in a mandatory housing target **of 751 dwellings per year** (15,020 over the plan period 2025-2045) for Stafford Borough. When 10% delivery buffer is applied this results in a target **of 826 dwellings per year** (16,520 over the plan period).
- 5.26 The considerable uplift of local housing need will have an obvious impact on how Stafford Borough develops in the future and, as such, needs to be reflected in the new Local Plan. Furthermore the mandatory housing target has had a more immediate impact on the decision-making process for planning applications.
- 5.27 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities (LPAs) have a 5-year land supply. It should also be noted that the target to be reached for housing supply will increase to six years supply from July 2026.
- 5.28 Until the NPPF was published in December 2024 Stafford Borough Council was in a strong position to resist planning applications for areas, or building increased housing numbers, that were not in line with the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough because the Council could demonstrate a five year land supply. However, when the new Local Housing Need figure is applied the Borough Council now has less than a five year supply of housing land. Based on the housing supply figures as at 31 March 2024 the Borough Council has a 3.65 year supply, with an updated position as at 31 March 2025 to be published imminently. As a result future planning decisions on planning applications must apply the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 as well as the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. Therefore the settlement boundaries identified in the adopted Plan carry less weight in terms of new housing development outside of Green Belt areas.

Nevertheless it is important to note that Stafford Borough's adopted Plan policies, including the Borough's development strategy, will continue to be used for decision-taking in order to deliver sustainable development aligned to the latest published NPPF.

5.29 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF sets out the situation where a Local Planning Authority's delivery falls below the housing requirement over the previous three years. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that this is the case, the following policy consequences should apply:

- (a) where delivery falls below 95% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years;
- (b) where delivery falls below 85% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should include a buffer of 20% to their identified supply of specific deliverable sites as set out in paragraph 78 of this framework, in addition to the requirement for an action plan.
- (c) where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, as set out in footnote 8 of this Framework, in addition to the requirements for an action plan and 20% buffer.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

5.30 The transitional arrangements set out within the NPPF (ANNEX 1: Implementation) states that the policies set out within the NPPF will apply, for the purpose of preparing local plans from 12 March 2025, whilst being material considerations in dealing with planning applications from the publication date (12 December 2024). The Council have not submitted the plan for examination or reached Regulation 19. Additionally, our Local Housing Need figure has had an increase of over 200 dwellings per year. Due to this increase in housing figure, the Borough Council will, in the future, need to introduce new policies to support the increased housing figure. As a result of the latest changes through the NPPF (December 2024) and the scale of new evidence required it would not have been possible to meet the deadlines set by Government to progress through the existing plan-making process. Furthermore, plans being submitted and examined currently will be required to start a new Local Plan based on the new legislation immediately following adoption, in any event.

- 5.31 As mentioned within paragraph 5.9 a new 30-month plan system is anticipated to be put in place and whilst precise details are not yet available the Borough Council have set out the following timeline (Table 1), through the Local Development Scheme published in March 2025, of how this will apply to our local context. Please note that the Local Development Scheme will need to be updated once further details about the new plan-making system is published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in Summer 2025.

**Table 1: Local Development Scheme (March 2025)**

Scoping and early participation	September 2025
Notice period intention to start plan	May 2026
Gateway 1	September 2026
Plan visioning and strategy development	September 2026
Mandatory public consultation	October - November 2026
Evidence gathering and drafting the plan	October - December 2026
Gateway 2	December 2026
Mandatory public consultation	January - February 2027
Engagement, proposing changes, submission	April 2027
Gateway 3	May 2027
Examination	June - November 2027
Finalisation and adoption of digital plan	November / December 2027

## **Evidence base**

- 5.32 For any plan to be considered justified and sound it must be supported by a robust and up to date evidence base. Stafford Borough has a strong track record of preparing and adopting effective Local Plan that deliver for the local communities.
- 5.33 Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners ensures that recommendations made in relation to the New Local Plan 2025-2045 policy-specific areas are consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision, climate change and health outcomes.
- 5.34 It should also be noted that the New Local Plan process sits alongside, and is used to support through its evidence base, a range of strategies that are being progressed by the Council to inform decisions, hence the added value of the Local Plan process.
- 5.35 An evidence base was established for the Local Plan 2020-2040. However due to the changes in the local housing requirement, key pieces of work i.e. Economic Housing and Delivery Needs Assessment, Whole Plan Viability Assessment, will have to be redone in their entirety for the new Local Plan 2025-2045 due to the national changes alongside additional studies also required, for example the Climate Change study. Whilst this work has begun, some of these studies will take at least twelve months to completed.
- 5.36 Appendix 1 lists the required documents to ensure a robust evidence base for the new Local Plan process is created.
- 5.37 In conclusion, it is the combination of the uplift in Local Housing Need with the required evidence base, and the imposed deadline for plans under the current system to be submitted that results in the need to begin early pre-scoping work on the new plan system, prior to officially starting a new plan.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

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 additional budget requirement of £508,310 over the budget period of 2024/25 to 2027/28 has been built into the proposed budgets approved by Cabinet on 30 January 2025 and Full Council on 11 February 2025.

The budget amounts per year for forecast spend are set out in the table below:

	<b>Budget £'000</b>
2024/25 (Actual Expenditure)	3
Budget 2025/26	478
Budget 2026/27	286
Budget 2027/28	119
<b>Total</b>	<b>886</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.

## 6.3 Human Resources

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

## 6.4 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

The Council will continue to closely monitor Government legislation, regulations and policy as part of updating the Local Plan whilst deploying robust programme management techniques to deliver evidence as required through the process, including regularly engaging with the Planning Inspectorate. All internal risks will be reviewed when required and proposed actions delivered efficiently.

## **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

The New Local Plan 2025-2045 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.

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 website.

## 6.6 Health

Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners, ensures that recommendations made in relation to the New Local Plan 2025-2045 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 2025-2045 are made available.

## 6.7 Climate Change

Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners, ensures that recommendations made in relation to the New Local Plan 2025-2045 with policy-specific areas are consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision and climate change outcomes. Specific reference will be made when details of the New Local Plan 2025-2045 are made available.

## 7 Appendices

Appendix 1: New Local Plan evidence base

## 8 Previous Consideration

11 January 2024 Economic Development and Planning Agenda and Minutes via link below:

[23/24 Committee Meetings | Stafford Borough Council](#)

## 9 Background Papers

File available in Economic Development and Planning together with the following information available via the Stafford Borough Council website link:

[Local Development Scheme | Stafford Borough Council](#)

**Contact Officer:** Alex Yendole

**Telephone Number:** 07800 619530

**Ward Interest:**

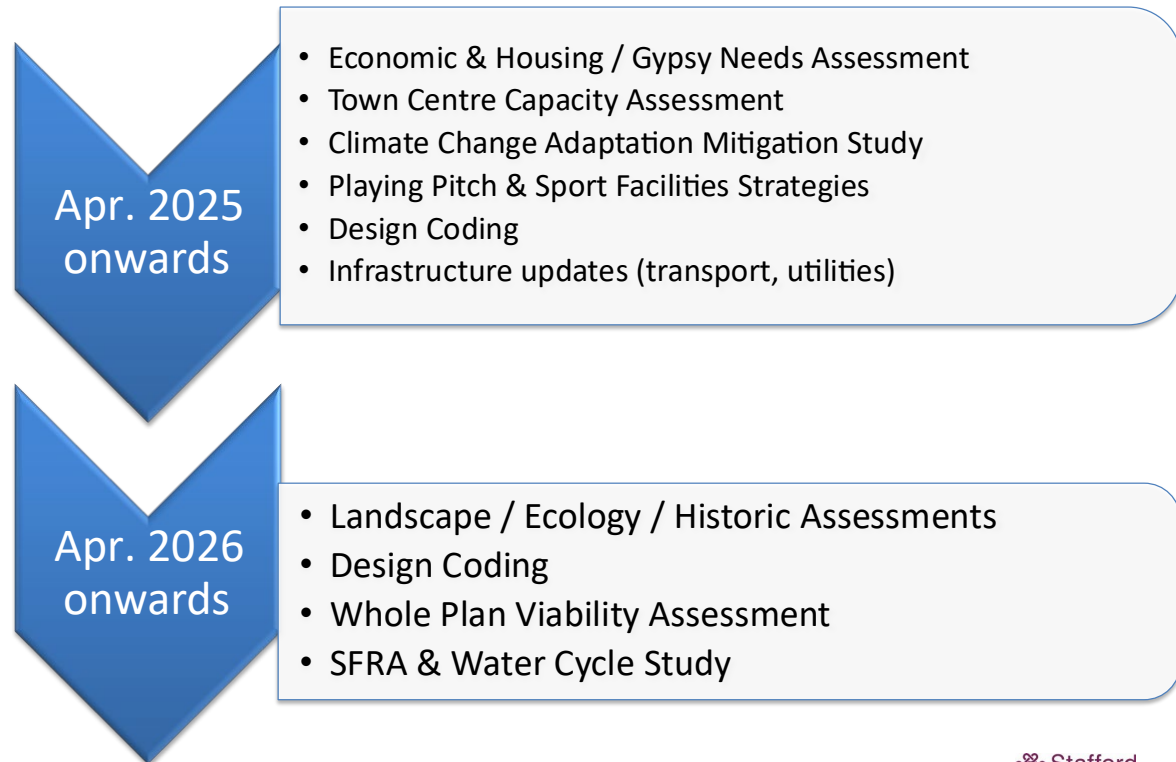
**Report Track:** Economic Development and Planning - 10 June 2025 (Only)

**Key Decision:**

## Appendix 1

### Local Plan Evidence Base

#### Delivering the Evidence Base





## **Agenda Item 7(c)**

# **UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme 2022-25**

<b>Committee:</b>	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 June 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Economic Development and Planning
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Economic Development and Planning

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## **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on the completed delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme for 2022-2025.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members note the report.

## **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 The UKSPF programme ran until 31 March 2025, however a further 12 month allocation has been launched for the financial year 2025/6.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The UKSPF programme supports delivery of Priorities 1, 2 and 3 of the Council's Corporate Plan 2025/6 to 2027/8 by developing the local economy, supporting local communities and supporting climate change action.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 In December 2022 the Council was allocated £4,673,295 to deliver the projects contained within the Stafford Borough UKSPF Investment Plan. Due to the geography of the Borough the Council was also allocated a further £487,936 under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) in recognition of the additional challenges faced by rural communities.

5.2 The UKSPF programme required that investment in local priorities and needs be focussed across three key themes. For Stafford the applicable themes were Community and Place and Supporting Local Businesses. For each investment made the Council were required to monitor outputs and outcomes to ensure eligibility for UKSPF.

5.3 Under the Community and Place theme nine projects were delivered as follows:

- i) Eccleshall Tennis Club a not-for-profit amateur sports club, run by a committee of member volunteers, gained support to install an artificial grass court.
- ii) Stone Leisure Centre Solar Panels investment enabled the installation of 500 square metres of low carbon infrastructure.
- iii) The Crown Wharf Theatre in Stone benefited from investment that enabled the fit-out for the new theatre including a heating & ventilation system, lighting, and other equipment.
- iv) Stafford Regeneration Project supported the acquisition of the former Co-Op building as part of the wider Stafford Town Centre Transformation Programme.
- v) Stafford Town Lighting saw the installation of new festive lighting to make the town more appealing to the public during the Christmas period.
- vi) Staffordshire History Centre contributed to the County Council's new visitor space and storage for important historic collections based in Eastgate Street, Stafford.
- vii) Stone Scout Hut received support to undertake renovations to make the facility useable.
- viii) Westbridge Park Car Park Project saw the laying out of car parks specifically for the Canoe Club and Scouts. As a result, 2800 square metres of public space was improved and formed part of a wider project enabling visitors to access the local amenities and wildlife.
- ix) Visitor Promotion Campaign Our Beautiful Borough raised the profile of the borough to residents, businesses and visitors reaching over 1,801,000 people in a 12-month period.

5.4 Under the theme of Supporting Local Businesses a further six initiatives were completed as follows:

- i) **The Business Support Programme** provided a series of business workshops and events as well as a dedicated Growth Hub Adviser. Workshops were delivered through the Ignite and Thrive Programme, Going for Growth, in addition to High Street Boost which in total supported 125 businesses.
- ii) **Green Solutions** offered businesses an energy efficiency review, access to carbon literacy training and a grant scheme. As a result of the green solutions grant, nine businesses have adopted recent technologies.
- iii) **High Street Boost Grants** developed for High Street businesses based in Stafford, Stone, and Eccleshall town centres. Twenty businesses were supported with the grant. This grant scheme was developed to address a need identified through the High Street Boost project that was delivered by Good 2 Great.
- iv) **Rural Business to Business (B2B) and Business Innovation Grants.** saw 52 businesses adopting a range of new or improved products or services.
- v) **Rural Workspace feasibility** saw a study undertaken to ascertain the feasibility for a rural workspace hub.
- vi) **Institute of Technology (IoT)** The Council supported Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group with investment in the development of the IoT due to open in the Autumn.

5.5 Under the REPF Community strand of funding the Council provided investment to four community organisations which in turn provided support as follows:

- i) **Forton Cricket Club** redeveloped their club house to make it more family friendly.
- ii) **The Stone Heritage Centre** used the funds to fit out the new facility which occupies the town's former fire station. The investment funded a number of items including display cases and furniture as well as IT and CCTV equipment.
- iii) **Ranton Village Hall** used investment to replace the entire floor which was no longer fit for purpose.
- iv) **Broughton Parish Rooms** replaced some of their wooden windows with new double-glazed windows to conserve energy, reduce costs and keep users of the rooms warm and comfortable.

- 5.6 The communities in receipt of this funding provided match funding totalling just under £51,000.
- 5.7 Finally, under the REPF Business strand of funding the Council supported eight rural businesses with projects ranging from EV charging points to solar panels to kitchen equipment. Again, those businesses provided a total match funding amount just over £71,000.
- 5.8 The UKSPF programme has enabled the Council to work with partners and communities to target investment to priority projects and needs. Members can see from the investments set out above that the scale and range of support provided has been significant. As such officers are preparing a review of the programme, including case studies to capture the longer term impacts that the investments have made.
- 5.9 Whilst the 2022-25 programme ended with effect from 31 March 2025 a further 12 month UKSPF allocation was awarded for the financial year 2025/6. As such an initial proposal for investment was required by government by 8 May 2025. Officers have therefore been focussed on working with partners to identify projects for delivery by 31 March 2026 and will provide an update to Members at a future meeting.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

N/A

### **6.2 Legal**

N/A

### **6.3 Human Resources**

N/A

### **6.4 Risk Management**

N/A

### **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

N/A

### **6.6 Health**

N/A

## **6.7 Climate Change**

N/A

## **7 Appendices**

None

## **8 Previous Consideration**

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee 19 November 2024

## **9 Background Papers**

None

**Contact Officer:** Michelle Smith

**Telephone Number:** 01785 619 335

**Ward Interest:** All

**Report Track:** Economic Development and Planning 10 June 2025  
(Only)

**Key Decision:** No

**Agenda Item 7(d)**

## **Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Committee:</b>	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 June 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Law and Governance
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

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### **1 Purpose of Report**

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

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

### **3 Key Issues**

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

### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

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

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

## 5 Report Detail

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

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial

None

### 6.2 Legal

None

### 6.3 Human Resources

None

### 6.4 Risk Management

None

### 6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections 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.

**6.6 Health**

None

**6.7 Climate Change**

None

**7 Appendices**

Appendix: Work Programme

**8 Previous Consideration**

None

**9 Background Papers**

File available in Law and Governance

**Contact Officer:** Jackie Allen

**Telephone Number:** 01785 619552

**Ward Interest:** Nil

**Report Track:** Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny  
Committee - 10 June 2025 (Only)

**Key Decision:** N/A



## Appendix

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# Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

## Future Items:

Tourism / Visitor Economy - Charlotte Cain - July

Protecting Our Rivers and Oceans Motion (Local Plan) - July

Business Planning Report - July

Masterplan, including Parking Strategy - joint with Community Wellbeing

Historic Buildings in Town Centres - Policy regarding Historic Importance

Cumulative Impact Assessment Report (Chief Inspector Giles Parsons)