Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee held at the Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford on 6 October 2026

Chairman - Councillor F Beatty

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

B M Cross	A R McNaughton
F D J James	A Nixon
P W Jones	J S Powell
B McKeown	D P Rouxel

Also present:- A F Reid - Cabinet Member (Economic Development and Planning Portfolio)

Officers in attendance:-

D Piper	-	Head of Economic Development and Planning
M Smith	-	Economic Development and Regeneration Manager
J Allen	-	Democratic Services Officer

EDP9 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2026, as previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

EDP10 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor D M McNaughton (substituted by Councillor A R McNaughton).

EDP11 Public Question Time

Mr Stubbs was not in attendance but had sent the following question:

“Government guidance confirms that Section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives a local planning authority power to modify or revoke an existing Permission in Principle. What is Stafford Borough Council’s formal procedure for considering a Section 97 request, who has authority to determine it, what timetable applies, and will a reasoned written decision be provided?”

Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio, provided the following response:

"Section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the Council permission to revoke or modify planning permission if it is expedient to do so. It is a discretionary power so there is no obligation on the Council to do anything. The power rests only with the Council and it is the Council alone that can initiate Section 97. However, permission cannot be revoked without payment of compensation. The use of these powers is very rare and as such the Council does not have a formal procedure for the consideration of such a request. The Head of Economic Development and Planning would review the decision and take into account all relevant factors and implications. The decision is likely to rest with the Executive and a detailed report setting out the full background and justification for the recommendation would be set out. There is no time limit set out within the legislation to apply for a S97 revocation."

EDP12 Members' Item - Councillor D P Rouxel

Conclusion of the Task and Finish Working Group (Evening Economy)

Councillor D P Rouxel circulated his report with the agenda and commented that a lot of the findings from conversations were perception based. For example, carparking issues and anti-social behaviour.

The focus of the report was evening economy, not night-time economy.

It was suggested there could be a forum to keep the momentum going which would include thoughts on the regeneration and welcoming people to Stafford as well as changing perceptions.

It was suggested that the emerging Stafford Town Council consider bidding for Business Improvement District funding.

It was agreed to provide a copy of the finalised report to the people who had been interviewed by the Task and Finish Working Group.

Councillor Rouxel and Members who had contributed towards the report were thanked for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED:- that:

a) in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the contents of the report be noted;

b) following amendments made to the report from the discussion, the recommendations be referred to Cabinet for consideration

EDP13 Q1 Performance Report

Head of Economic Development and Planning presented the performance report appendices, noting that there are only two actions as it is so early in the year.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the contents of the appendices be noted.

EDP14 Stafford Town Centre Development Framework - Engagement Events Feedback and Next Steps

Economic Development and Regeneration Manager delivered a presentation detailing the engagement events which took place over several days and an evening in August and September. There had also been a breakfast session with members of the Chambers of Commerce at the Civic Centre.

The sessions were well attended and people were positive about the regeneration. There were recurring themes and a lot of examples of perceptions, for example, wanting to park outside the venue they were attending.

Hoardings will have information on to keep people engaged, which will include QR codes.

The Town Centre Masterplan will be going to Cabinet then to Scrutiny in December. There will be similar engagement events for the Masterplan.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the contents of the presentation be noted.

EDP15 Work Programme

Members were advised of an additional meeting to be held on 20 January regarding the National Scheme of Delegation which would be open to all Members.

It was agreed to have a Biodiversity Net Get briefing before May and a workshop after the elections have taken place. Head of Economic Development and Planning to liaise with the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Head of Economic Development and Planning to confirm a date for the Rural Economy item.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the work programme be noted, subject to the changes above and in the attached Schedule.

CHAIR

Work Programme

Thursday 17 December 2026 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Wednesday 2 December 2026

Officer Reports:

Development Management Progress Review (including pre-application service and National Scheme of Delegation
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Q2 Performance Report
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Conservation and Heritage Update
Conservation Officer

Masterplan
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Work Programme
Head of Law and Governance

Wednesday 20 January 2027 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Tuesday 5 January 2027

Officer Reports:

National Scheme of Delegation
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Tuesday 16 March 2027 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Monday 1 March 2027

Officer Reports:

Tourism Update
Charlotte Cain - Visitor Economy Partnership Development Manager

Q3 Performance Report
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Local Plan Update
Planning Policy Manager

Updates from Annual Business Reports (feedback from Water Authorities)
Head of Economic Development and Planning

Work Programme
Head of Law and Governance

Future Items:

Biodiversity Net Gain Workshop

Rural Economy