

New Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-40
“Issues & Options” Stage 1 Consultation – closing date 12 noon Tuesday 31
March 2020
Frequently Asked Questions

Key facts

- “Issues and Options” is a stage of in the preparation of the new Stafford Borough Local Plan which will be effective between 2020 and 2040.
- There were initial consultations to “Scope” the Local Plan Issues and consider the Settlement Assessment between July and September 2018. Reports on those consultations can be found here (<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-scoping-issues-consultation>, <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-settlement-assessment-and-settlement-profiles-consultation>).
- This “Issues and Options” consultation brings forward a wide range of possible options relating to how Stafford Borough might address the issues identified which affect it. These options include the overall amount of new homes and extra employment land and how these might be distributed around the Borough as well as issues related to the Borough’s economy and its environment.
- All responses to this consultation must be received no later than **12 noon on Tuesday 31 March 2020**.
- Once the responses to the “Issues and Options” consultation have been assessed a report will be published on the website. The findings of the Issues and Options Consultation Report will contribute to the preparation of the Borough’s “Preferred Option” document.

What is a Local Plan?

Every local planning authority has to produce a Local Plan which sets out the planning framework for its area. It determines the amount of housing and employment growth being planned for in the next 20 years and where that growth will be located. It also contains policies which will be used to decide planning applications. The policies cover many topics from Green Belt, housing, employment, and open space to design, historic buildings and environmental issues. The policies will reflect and respect those of national government but will be tailored to meet the requirements of Stafford Borough.

All councils have to review their Local Plans at least every 5 years to take on board updated information, particularly about the amount of homes needed. The Borough is committed to having the new Plan in place in 2022.

What are Issues and Options?

We are looking at all the planning issues facing us and setting out possible options how the Borough might address these. The options are based on a number of things including what we know about the need for new homes and employment land, concerns about climate change and infrastructure, protection of the Green Belt, our landscape and environmental assets and what we need to do to meet our legal duties to help other councils with housing and employment land shortfalls. At this stage we need to explore a range of options so that we can get feedback from our

residents, businesses statutory bodies and other organisations before we decide on a preferred approach.

Is 'no development' an option?

The simple answer is no. National government is clear that housing growth is fundamental to revitalising the economy and the thrust of national planning policy (NPPF) is 'significantly boosting the supply of housing'. If we don't plan to deliver this growth ourselves, we will lose significant control over where it might go.

Why do we have to help other councils out?

All councils have to meet a legal test known as the "Duty to Cooperate". This means we have to engage 'constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' with our neighbouring authorities over matters which cut across administrative boundaries. The matters include meeting unmet housing and employment needs and Gypsy and Traveller pitches, matters which do not always adhere to local authority boundaries.

What do I do now - why is my view important?

We want your views on the levels and options for growth in Stafford Borough up to 2040 and on the planning issues we face. We are also consulting with all the necessary statutory bodies and you can find a list of the people we will consult with in our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) see <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/statement-of-community-involvement>. The list includes the education and highway authorities, public health bodies, electricity, water and sewerage providers, the Environment Agency, and your parish council. Your local Borough Councillor will also be aware of the proposals.

What is a material planning consideration?

For any planning-related consultation (whether this be about wider strategy, large scale strategic allocations or small sites) only certain issues (Material Planning Considerations) can be considered. These include (amongst other things relevant to land use planning):

- National and local planning policies
- Government and Planning Inspectorate requirements
- loss of light
- landscaping
- capacity of physical infrastructure
- highway issues
- loss or effect on trees
- other environmental issues such as flooding, architecture, historic conservation
- adverse impact on nature conservation

There are however a range of other issues that cannot be taken account of. These include factors such as:

- loss of property value
- loss of views
- problems arising from the construction period of any works
- boundary disputes
- issues relating to the identity of a landowner or other individuals

How can I make my views known?

Please take time to look at the Local Plan “Issues and Options” document and let us have your views. We have also prepared a shortened version, concentrating on the key issues and written in more readable style. You can also comment on the accompanying documents such as our interim Sustainability Appraisal. There are response forms on the website or available from your local library or parish council office. We will acknowledge receipt of your comments, but you will not receive an individual reply to the issues you raise. This is not because your views aren’t important, but because we will summarise all the responses received and this summary will be published at the next stage of consultation later in 2020. Please note that this means that your views are not confidential and will be made publicly available.

The consultation runs for 8 weeks until 12 noon on Tuesday 31 March 2020.

What happens next?

We will consider all the comments received to the consultation along with the evidence gathered and will then prepare the “Preferred Option” version of the Local Plan. This will contain the options we have selected and the reasons why we have done so. At this point there will be a further period of public consultation.

Contact us

All the information on the New Local Plan 2020—2040 along with, the supporting documents is available on line at <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan->. You can make comments by completing our online response form, emailing us, or sending a letter. We would be grateful if you would use our response form to make your comments. The response form can be found at <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan->.

The Issues and Options document and response form are also available at the Council Offices in Stafford and local libraries. Additionally, there will be a number of “drop in sessions” for you to discuss the Issues and Options with the Council. These

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 24 February 2020	4-8pm	Jubilee Room, Eccleshall Community Centre
Wednesday 26 February 2020	4-7pm	Hixon Memorial Hall
Saturday 29 February 2020	12noon to 4pm	Stafford Library
Tuesday 3 March 2020	4-8pm	Westbridge Room, Christchurch, Stone

will take place as follows

If you need help in completing a form, would like to be added to our database for automatic updates, or have any questions please email forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk.