

# STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2011 - 2016



MARCH 2011

# Contents

	Page
Equality Impact Statement	3
Contacts	3
1. Purpose and Vision	4
2. Context	5
3. Borough Profile	9
4. Alignment to strategic priorities	29
5. Defining thematic priorities	33
6. Spatial Priorities	34
7. Governance and Delivery	50
8. Engagement and Consultation	52
Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment	53

## Equality Impact Statement

The Local Investment Plan has been subject to an equality impact assessment to ensure that the objectives and actions contained in the Plan fully consider positive outcomes on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief, sexuality and socio-economic circumstances.

The Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in January 2011 and is included in Appendix A.

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# 1. Purpose and Vision

*"Our vision is that Stafford Borough continues to be a highly attractive location whilst delivering growth in ways which benefit its residents, the region and the broader economy. The vision for Stafford is of a County town which is attractive, prosperous and embraces change where residents can fully access a wide range of quality local services including employment, retail, leisure, health and education."*

The Local Investment Plan provides an opportunity for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and other partners to support Stafford Borough Council's (SBC) aspirations for regeneration, place shaping and investment across the Borough and, in particular, to support the housing growth agenda for Borough.

The Local Investment Plan emphasises how housing investment can contribute to the growth of the local economy. The Plan has been prepared following the worst economic recession for thirty years and in the context of significant cuts in public spending and efficiency savings required by Government. There are also current and predicted future pressures on the housing market, especially in terms of affordability and an increasing need for Flexicare accommodation.

This Plan is therefore crucial to align available HCA investment cohesively with the wider public and voluntary sector investment programmes in the Borough through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The strategies contained in the Plan have been prepared through a structured consultation process with partners to ensure that the HCA's relationship with SBC is set in the context of wider support

and agreement to deliver housing led investment through the spatial and thematic priorities for the Borough.

The Plan has been prepared in a changing context for housing, economic development and regeneration through the new Local Growth agenda of the Coalition Government and the establishment of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The priorities in the Plan will help to shape the new actions of the Partnership and contribute to new sub-national goals.

In summary the Investment Plan sets out:-

- Priorities for housing growth to meet local need and opportunities
- How the available investment will deliver these priorities
- How the private sector and public sector partners will be engaged to deliver local investment planning for Stafford Borough
- The strategic context for the specific projects and actions
- The Governance arrangements

**Ian Thompson**

Chief Executive, Stafford Borough Council

**Paul Spooner**

Executive Director - Midlands, Homes & Communities Agency

## 2. Context

Stafford Borough is a large district covering 230 square miles and is situated in the centre of the county of Staffordshire. In 2008 the Borough had an estimated population of 125,200<sup>1</sup>. The Borough is characterised by a significant rural area particularly to the west of the M6 motorway, a number of small hamlets, villages and larger villages such as Eccleshall, Gnosall and Great and Little Haywood. There are two main towns in Stafford Borough, the County town of Stafford and the canal town of Stone (please refer to Figure 1). These two towns act as the main focus for development, with a number of the smaller settlements interspersing the rural area.

The town of Stafford has strong links with many of the surrounding areas such as Cannock, Rugeley and northwards towards Stone and the North Staffordshire conurbation. Stafford also has quite considerable linkages with the West Midlands conurbation to the south. Further north, Stone has stronger links with the North Staffordshire conurbation, and tends to look northwards to higher level services. There are also relationships to the west and east of the Borough, although these tend to be less strong than those to the north and south.

Several major communications routes cut through the Borough, and these have been important in shaping the local area. The M6 and A34, provide excellent road links to both the north and south meaning that the majority of the Borough is within a one hour drive of the major centres of Birmingham and Manchester. Links to the east and west are less well developed, although the nearby A50 offers improved links to the east at Uttoxeter and Blythe Bridge, in the very north of the Borough. Rail links are concentrated along the West Coast Main Line which cuts through the Borough with

services concentrated on Stafford station. Birmingham can be reached in around 30 minutes and Manchester within 1 hour. Improvements to the West Coast Main Line means that London Euston is a 1 hour 20 minute journey.



Figure 1      Stafford Borough Location Map

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2008 Registrar General's Mid Year Population Estimates

## Our recent journey ...

Stafford Borough is a very attractive place to live, work and invest with a high quality natural environment and excellent transport and communication links. It is also one of the most self contained communities in the West Midlands region with the West Midlands Regional Observatory Lifestyle Survey showing that 73% of the Borough's economically active population live and work within its boundary.

The economy of Stafford Borough was traditionally based around public administration, manufacturing and engineering. As the administrative centre of the County, the public sector has been vital to the Stafford economy and currently around 40% of employees are employed in the public sector.

However in recent years there has been a significant re-structuring of the local economy with the loss or contraction of major manufacturing companies. Indeed on one measure of economic performance (% loss of employment 1998-2003) Stafford had the third worst performance of all the English Local Authorities (Source: Local Futures Group). Despite these setbacks there has been a considerable fight back through the Single Regeneration Budget Round 6 Programme, the Stone Market Town Initiative, Growth Point and other programmes to provide a strong and prosperous local community for the future.

The economic turnaround has been evidenced by:-

- 2006-2009 Stafford Borough was the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> best performing English District in relation to the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI)
- Stafford Borough had the highest percentage of office space occupied in the County (September 2008 to September 2009) with the amount of vacant space having dropped by 10.6% from the previous year
- The Council was awarded Beacon Authority status in the category of "Raising Economic Prosperity through Partnership" (2009/10)
- Stafford being recognised as a "Settlement of Significant Development" and becoming a Round 2 Regional Growth Point and Impact Investment Location in 2009
- Low shop vacancy rates in Stafford (at around half the national average)
- The second lowest job seeker allowance claimant rate in the County at 2.4% which is significantly lower than the regional and national rates (October 2010)

## Our direction of travel ...

Stafford Borough continues to develop with an emphasis on increased economic and housing investment to provide for the future needs of our communities. The Borough has emerged from the recent recession with an ongoing multi-million pound investment programme in Stafford Town Centre, National Affordable Housing Programme projects, proposals for significant investment in MoD Stafford and related infrastructure through "Project Borona" (which will bring in an additional 1,200 service personnel) and delivery of Growth Point projects. Stafford Borough is also one of the highest performing districts in terms of Key Stage 4 skills attainment and recent research undertaken by Experian for the BBC lists the Borough in the top 10% of districts in England in terms of qualifications held.

In February 2011 there were 60,700 employees in the Borough, higher than any other Staffordshire district, and the Borough has a very self contained local economy (it is the only Staffordshire district to have greater average workplace based earnings than its resident based earnings in 2009).

In 2009 the Enterprise Rate for the Borough (the rate for new businesses registering for VAT and PAYE per 10,000 population) was slightly above the Regional average at around 41% and innovation related to the design of new products is particularly important for the Borough. In February 2011 the Borough had the highest rate in the County for employment in knowledge intensive services (52.3% of the workforce) and the Borough has developed as a cluster for environmental technologies (in 2008 employing nearly three times the national average in this sector at 3.8%).

The strengths outlined above should be considered against potential weaknesses and threats which are set out in the following SWOT analysis.

### Strengths

- Strong local skills base and wider education attainment
- Established employment base in the environmental technology cluster (such as Alstom and Shott)
- Accessible location – 3 junctions to M6 and on West Coast Mainline Rail
- Stafford town is very self contained and has its own travel to work area
- Businesses in the Borough have been shown to be adaptive during recent recession

### Weaknesses

- Dependence on several larger employers in vulnerable sectors (especially public sector)
- Decline in private sector employment over last decade including manufacturing
- Graduate retention is relatively weak
- A current lack of floor space for large footprint developments

### Opportunities

- Higher education presence from Staffordshire University (potential for spin outs)
- Growth Point status
- Potential for new transport infrastructure to open up employment opportunities
- Opportunities for high value added manufacturing and engineering
- Opportunities to develop new local employment sites
- Think Local for local business support, networking and procurement

### Threats

- Public sector spending cuts
- Growth needs to be balanced (between housing and employment)
- The recession has impacted on the delivery of some town centre projects
- Ongoing sustainability issues for surrounding rural communities
- Lack of Government funding for infrastructure

## Building economic resilience and sustainable communities...

The challenge for this Local Investment Plan will be to build resilience through positive actions to bring forward investment, housing, social and transport infrastructure and to provide support to enable long term private sector growth.

Despite having a strong basis on which to finance the local economy and a drive for growth, it is important to understand some underlying trends which could, without intervention, negatively impact on the regeneration of the Borough.

The Borough has an aging population which in the longer term will reduce the overall labour force and see a shift to a greater emphasis on part-time employment. The skew to older age groups is also likely to have implications on health and social care although there will be opportunities for growth in this sector.

There has also been a period of decline in the manufacturing sector which has resulted in the loss of 1,700 manufacturing jobs between 2003 and 2008. Long range forecasting provided by Staffordshire County Council using the Cambridge Econometrics model suggests that this decline in the manufacturing sector is set to continue to 2026 and overall employment is expected to decline by 9,800 jobs (a 14.4% decline). This partly reflects the contraction in the labour force mentioned above.

Forecasts also suggest that the financial and business sector of the economy is set to become more important and there is also likely to be a small rise in employment in the construction and electricity, gas and water sectors.

40% of jobs in the Borough (and over 50% in the Stafford Town urban area) are in the "Public Administration, Education and Health" Sector. The vast majority of these jobs are in the public sector and are potentially vulnerable to future spending cuts. Measures to address this issue are included in the Borough's Economic Strategy which is being refreshed in 2011.

This vulnerability impacts upon the resilience of the local economy as identified in research undertaken in 2010 by Experian for the BBC. Experian ranked the overall resilience of the Borough as 162 which is at the median of all local authorities and it is considered the second most resilient district in Staffordshire (behind Lichfield). However this overall score hides some areas of concern, notably the number of employees who are in vulnerable sectors and business insolvency.

Stafford's resilience score is also influenced by positive factors including adaptive capacity, a strong proportion of employment in resilient sectors and the propensity of sectors in the local economy to export. Stafford also scores highly in terms of the level of earnings, the availability of brownfield land ready for reuse, access to green space and, as previously mentioned, Borough people are generally well qualified (with the ranking for people with no qualifications being 31 out of 324 (in best performing 10% of districts in England)).



## 3. Borough Profile

This section sets out in more detail a profile of the Borough in terms of its economy, housing infrastructure, environment and demographics.

### Our local community and growth opportunities...

Table 1, set out below, identifies through recent household projection figures from the Government that the population of Stafford Borough will increase by 15%. Within the County only East Staffordshire (20%) has a higher rate of population growth.

Table 1 Population Projections 2006–2031 for Stafford Borough

	Population Projections 2006 – 2031 (Thousands)						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	% Change 2006-2031
<b>Stafford</b>	123	127	131	135	139	142	15%

Source: Office of National Statistics

A particular aspect of growth in Stafford is the presence of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) at Beacon Barracks. Following the run down of the DESA operating at the former RAF Stafford, the two Councils formed a Task Force to work with the military to ensure a continued presence in the town. An early success has been the decision to locate 22 Signals Regiment (800 personnel) to MOD Stafford. Through Project Borona it is proposed to relocate up to

1,200 service personnel and their dependents by 2016. This greater military presence in Stafford will also require more houses to provide Service Family Accommodation.

Stafford has a significant University campus, which forms part of Staffordshire University. The Borough Council has existing partnership arrangements with the University and has been in regular discussion with the University with regard to expanding the number of students at Stafford by up to 25%. The Borough Council has also supported the proposals by Stafford College to redevelop facilities on its town centre campus. Growth in the Further Education sector will complement the wider regeneration programmes set out in the Local Investment Plan.

### Housing profile – trends and opportunities...

New housing developments in the Borough will need to provide a mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes including a proportion of affordable housing to respond to the identified needs of the community. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified a preponderance of larger detached dwellings in the current stock and a high rate of owner occupation in the Borough.

This trend has been exacerbated by the completion of a significant number of four or more bedroom houses. However projected changes in the population structure shows that this type of housing may be less appropriate for the area in the future.

It is important to provide the appropriate mix of housing to meet the needs of the local community. The SHMA indicates that the demographic profile of the Borough is shifting towards increased levels of one person households, with commensurate decreases in

the levels of married couple households, a trend which is expected to continue over the Investment Plan period.

This reduction in household sizes will increase the need for more dwellings that are smaller in size. However, in order to facilitate the development of sustainable mixed communities the Council will seek that new developments provide a range of dwelling types and sizes for a mixture of different households but with a higher proportion of smaller bedroom properties. Where a development includes a proportion of affordable housing the Council will normally specify the required mix of dwelling sizes and types. New developments should provide a range of dwellings types and sizes for a mixture of different households, but with the proportion based on:

- Existing household and dwelling size in the development locality.
- Indicative waiting list data for the locality.
- Sustainability of occupancy in terms of turnover, future management and market forces.

The Stafford Borough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies potential housing sites in the area at this particular point in time and is a key element of the evidence base for the new Local Development Framework (LDF). The SHLAA Review 2010 has assessed information on sites submitted to Stafford Borough Council up to 31st March 2010. The Government requires every local planning authority to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to ensure that sufficient land is made available to deliver housing, to meet future needs. Therefore a top priority for the Government is to ensure that land availability is not a constraint on the delivery of new homes.

In total the SHLAA Review 2010 identified 476 separate sites that are not currently in the planning process. Sites within Residential Development Boundaries (RDBs) can provide a yield of 1,783

deliverable homes within the first five years of the Plan period. Sites within RDBs have a developable yield of 812 homes over the next 10 years whilst sites that directly abut and are outside current RDBs provide a yield of 35,667 developable homes in the next ten years of the Plan period. Furthermore 34,093 are considered not currently developable in accordance with the methodology specified by the SHLAA partnership.

In terms of 'Sites in the Planning Process' the total yield of deliverable sites is 3,831 houses. Table 2, below, identifies all sites with a planning commitment for housing development as of 31 March 2010. Further details in relation to these sites can be viewed in the annual Housing Monitor: Land for New Homes. Although some sites only have outline planning permission whilst others are pending Section 106 agreements, it is considered that these sites are deliverable within five years of the Plan being adopted.

**Table 2 Outstanding commitment sites with planning permission for housing development**

Location	Deliverable Sites		
	Yield	Area (Ha) <sup>1</sup>	No. of Sites
Stafford	1,927	117.26	140
Stone	348	15.66	51
Rural Area	892	108.26	387
Total	3,167	241.8	578

Source: Stafford Borough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

<sup>1</sup> The areas are taken as the sum of the total area given planning permission which may include a number of completed dwellings and/or other land uses

Table 3 sets out the outstanding housing allocations from the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 which have not been granted planning permission as at 31 March 2010. It is considered that two

housing allocations are developable, rather than deliverable, within the first five years of the Plan being adopted.

**Table 3 Outstanding housing allocations from the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001**

Location	Deliverable Sites			Developable Sites		
	Yield	Area (Ha)	No. of Sites	Yield	Area (Ha)	No. of Sites
Stafford	625	38.08	4 <sup>#</sup>	350	20.86	1
Stone	39	1.7	1	-	-	-
Total	664	39.78	5	350	20.86	1

Source: Stafford Borough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

<sup>#</sup>One site has been partially developed and this has been taken into account when calculating yields

In conclusion the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process shows evidence that there are sufficient potential housing sites to meet Stafford Borough's requirements for new houses.

### Housing Stock Profile

Stafford Borough's Housing Stock as of 1 April 2010 was 56,055 with the current breakdown of housing tenure shown in Table 4, below:-

**Table 4 Stafford Borough Housing Tenure Mix**

Tenure	Percentage
Owner Occupied	75.92
Private Rented	8.32
Registered Providers	12.97
Other	2.79

### House Building in Stafford Borough

Table 5 shows the number of new homes built in the Borough between 2005 and 2010.

**Table 5 Number of new homes built**

Year	Total number of homes built	Number of new affordable homes	% of homes built that are affordable
2005/06	442	77	17%
2006/07	449	54	12%
2007/08	581	42	7%
2008/09	516	100	19%
2009/10	193	46	24%

Source: SBC Land for New Homes/ SBC HSSA

Before the economic downturn there were approximately 500 new homes built per year in Stafford Borough. The number of new affordable homes has fluctuated averaging 63 between 2005 and 2010.

### Strategic Housing Market Assessment

In April 2008 Stafford Borough Council published its Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This was completed in partnership with East Staffordshire Borough Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The SHMA estimated that the net annual housing need in Stafford Borough was 293 units.

Stafford Town was considered to have a reasonable balance of owner occupation, social housing and private rented housing. There is also a well-balanced supply of different forms of stock with a slight oversupply of smaller terraces and apartments. There is, however, likely to be a growth in single person households that will increase demand for smaller properties.

The study found that in Stone and the rural areas of the Borough there is a significant requirement for more affordable housing to counteract the dominance of owner occupation. It also found that there is a significant oversupply of detached properties to the detriment of mid-sized units such as semi detached and terraced dwellings.

### House Prices

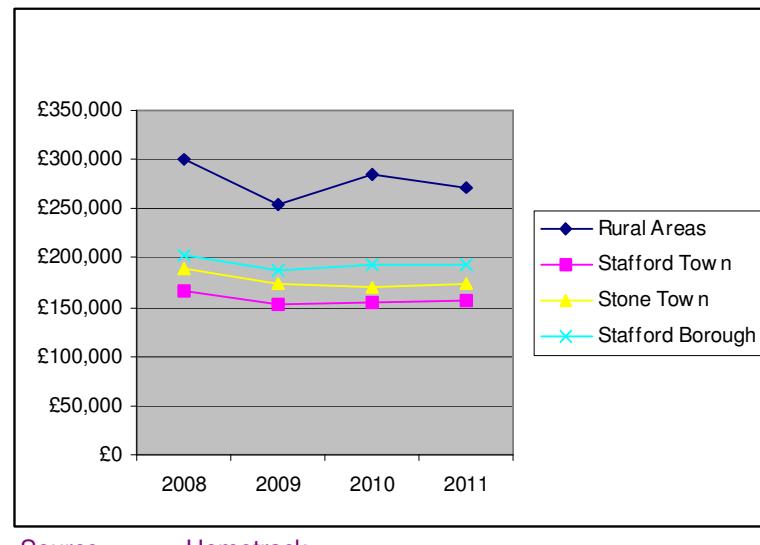
The average house price in Stafford Borough, as of February 2011, was £192,781. Since 2005 house prices in the Borough have increased by 9% (as shown in Figure 2). This increase is not at a similar rate across the Borough. In urban areas, the average increase has been just 5% compared with an increase of 18% in the rural areas.

Over the last three years average house prices have fallen by 5% with the rural areas of the Borough suffering a decrease of approximately 10%.

Over the last twelve months average house prices have stabilised, with an increase of 0.2 per cent between April 2010 and February

As at February 2011 the Land Registry data shows that the average price of a house in Stafford Borough in the lower quartile is £125,000, this is compared to £112,000 in the West Midlands area.

Figure 2 Average House Prices in Stafford Borough



Source Hometrack

### Affordability

Data sourced from the Office of National Statistics shows that Stafford Borough is the third most expensive area in Staffordshire to live; it has an affordability ratio of 5.44 for lower quartile house prices. The West Midlands has an affordability ratio of 5.43, making Stafford Borough less affordable than the rest of the region.

A household would need a deposit of £12,250 and an income of approximately £37,000 per annum to afford a house in the lower quartile house price range. This assumes the household does not have any other debts.

A single person household on an average income would only be able to borrow £82,000 from a high street mortgage lender. This is

not enough to afford a property in the lower quartile house price range in the Borough.

### Social Housing Need

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, there were 2,168 households listed on the Housing Register. This has increased to 3,212 as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 through a combination of factors including a fall in lettings, the introduction of choice based lettings and a higher demand for social housing due to the economic downturn.

Prior to the introduction of Choice Based Lettings in October 2009, 50.4% of households registered to be placed in urban areas and 49.6% in rural locations.

Although demand is comparable, supply is not. During the financial year 2008/09, 317 Registered Provider properties were let in urban areas. This is markedly higher than the 85 rural properties that were let during the same period. The lack of rural lets available may well have triggered a higher demand for urban areas.

The average waiting time for social housing in urban areas is 341 days, compared to 552 days in the rural areas of the Borough.

This shows that the demand for social housing in both urban and rural areas of the Borough is equally high. It should, however, be noted that, on average, people wanting to live in rural areas of the Borough are having to wait an extra 7 months for a property, compared to those wanting to live in urban areas, with the majority of housing supply being in the urban areas.

### Empty Homes

As at April 2009 Stafford Borough Council's Council Tax records shows that there were approximately 1,750 empty homes within the Borough. This represents 3.1% of housing stock.

Council Tax records show that of the 1,750 empty homes within the Borough 926 (52%) have no residents and have been empty for six months or longer. 406 (23%) homes have been empty for a period of less than six months. Other significant reasons for homes being empty are where the council tax payer is deceased and the home remains empty whilst probate is being granted (11%), or where the owner is in a care home (5%).

Between April 2009 and January 2011 the number of long-term empty homes (those that have been empty for six months or more) has fallen by 34% from 926 April 2009 to 612 in January 2011.

In January 2011 the Council published its Empty Homes Strategy that sets out the approach to bringing empty homes back into use.

### Decent Homes

The responsibility for maintaining homes lies with the homeowner, however the Council will, where resources permit; offer a variety of support to vulnerable and low income homeowners to assist them in maintaining their homes. This support will be offered through the Council's private sector housing assistance policy. Where appropriate the Council will use the range of enforcement powers available to them in order to secure statutory minimum housing standards.

The Council is committed to helping private sector vulnerable households into living in a decent home, however, following the winding-up of the Kickstart Programme, the Council are looking to develop a new private sector housing assistance policy in 2011.

The transferred social housing stock in the Borough achieved 100% decency standard in December 2010.

## **Stock Condition**

The House Condition and Energy Efficiency Report 2008 estimated that there are 5,889 vulnerable households living in private accommodation of which 32% live in non-decent homes.

The findings of the report show that 48% of vulnerable households in the rural areas live in non-decent homes. This is compared to 17% in urban areas (14% in Stafford and 49% in Stone) 91% of which live in owner occupied housing and 9% in social rented housing.

The total cost of repairing non-decent dwellings in the Borough is estimated at £88,368,267 broken down as £76,915,195 in rural areas and £11,453,432 in urban areas.

The cost for repair and renewal for housing in the rural areas between 2008 and 2018 is estimated at £135,975,577 at £22,397 per dwelling.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy is designed to improve and maintain healthy living conditions within the private housing sector and to work towards the long-term goal of decent homes for all residents in Stafford Borough. The Policy targets financial assistance to the most vulnerable households that are living in non-decent homes.

## **Lifetime Homes**

The Council will expect all new housing development to adopt lifetime homes standards, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not technically feasible or will render the development unviable. The principle is that new homes should be designed to meet the varied and often changing needs of occupiers over time.

The standard comprises 16 design features; the features apply to both the interior and exterior of the home.

## **Homelessness**

There has been a 73% reduction in the number of households found to be statutorily homeless from 253 in 2005/06 to just 68 in 2009/10 due primarily to increased prevention work undertaken by the Borough Council. The main reasons for homelessness are:

- Parents, friends and relatives no longer willing to accommodate
- Loss of assured short hold tenancy
- Violent breakdown of relationship

Approximately 90% of households that are found to be statutorily homeless are aged between 16 and 44. Those aged between 45 and 59 account for approximately 10% of statutorily homeless households.

In 2008/09 Stafford Borough Council prevented 98 households from becoming homeless, this increased to 195 households in 2009/10.

## **Mortgage Rescue**

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was launched by the Government in January 2009 and is aimed at homeowners who are under threat of repossession due to a loss of income.

Since its introduction the Borough Council has successfully prevented 14 households from becoming homeless through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The Scheme is a powerful homeless prevention tool that the Council will continue to use.

## Vulnerability

The Council aims to support the housing needs of vulnerable people through its Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Private Sector Assistance Policy.

The Housing Strategy supports vulnerable people through the following priorities:

- Preventing homelessness
- Promoting independent living
- Improving the physical condition of the housing stock  
(focusing on vulnerable people living in non-decent homes)

A key priority in the Council's Draft Homelessness Strategy 2011 - 2014 is to 'Provide the appropriate support for the vulnerable'.

There are 7 supported housing schemes in the Borough aimed at providing vulnerable people with the skills to live independently, the schemes are:

- Lichfield House – 12 units for single young people
- Scott's House – 12 one bed flats for single young people
- The Eagle Project – 32 individual flats for single homeless people
- Quantico Court – 7 self contained units for young families
- Domestic Violence Refuge – 8 units for female victims of domestic violence
- Re-Think – 11 units for people with mental health problems
- Staffordshire League of Friends – 37 units for people with mental health problems

## Specialist Housing

In 2010 Stafford Borough had an over 65 aged population of 24,800 people, the highest figure of all the Staffordshire districts. This figure is also predicted to increase by 57% over the twenty year period from 2010 to 2030.

Flexicare Housing is a type of specialised housing that provides independence and choice to adults with varying care needs, particularly the elderly and enables them to remain in their own home.

## Emerging policies...

### Affordable Rent & Tenure Reform

The Government is introducing a new affordable housing product called 'affordable rent'. This will see the introduction of tenancies with rents set at a maximum of 80 per cent of local market rents, in many cases this will be higher than social rent. Affordable rent tenancies will be offered on a fixed term of at least two years.

The Council will aim to produce a Tenancy Strategy, in consultation with partners, which will outline our approach to the delivery of affordable rent in the Borough. The Strategy will be provided from 2012/13 in line with the requirements of the Localism Bill.

### The New Homes Bonus

The New Homes Bonus scheme aims to address the imbalance in the existing local government finance system and provide incentives for Council's to build new homes. The Scheme will start in 2011/12 and will match fund the additional Council Tax for each new home and empty property brought back into use for each of the six years after the home is built. In addition to this, the Government

proposes to pay an additional amount of £350 for each new affordable home.

The Government have allocated £196 million in 2011/12 and £250 million per year between 2012/13 and 2014/15.

### **The Green Deal**

The Council has launched its Energy Efficiency Learning Forum to discuss with partners how we should prepare for the emerging Green Deal. The Government has an expectation that Councils will be expected to take strategic ownership of future national energy efficient programmes. The first steps in the Green Deal is to reduce carbon emissions by 34% by 2020, with a reduction of 80% by 2050. The social housing sector has been targeted to deliver greater carbon reductions earlier and at a lower cost delivering social, economic and environmental benefits for the local economy.

The Borough Council takes the strategic lead on this issue and has already demonstrated areas of good practice, for example through support to the Derrington low carbon community. Derrington is located on the edge of Stafford and is a focus for partnership working for renewable energy and carbon reduction initiatives such as the installation of solar pv panels on its village hall.

## **The economy...**

As of January 2011<sup>2</sup>, Stafford Borough was home to some 60,700 employee jobs (the highest number of the eight district council areas in Staffordshire). Table 6 highlights the levels of employment by broad industrial group in the Borough, and how this compares to the situation in Staffordshire, the West Midlands region and Nationally.

Stafford has a proportionally very large concentration of its employee jobs in the public administration, education and health sector (39.6% or 24,100 jobs) than those comparison areas. This extremely high level of employment can be attributed to the fact that Stafford is the main location for central jobs of Staffordshire County Council, whilst also having significant employment provided by Stafford Borough Council and in the health sector through Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust.

Employment in the education sector is provided by the local schools and further boosted by the presence of the campus of Staffordshire University and Stafford College of Further Education. Therefore, while the Borough has a good concentration of quite stable service sector employment, it is potentially vulnerable to any major changes which could occur within these sectors, particularly in the light of the new coalition Government's budget deficit reduction programme.

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<sup>2</sup> Annual Business Inquiry January 2011. NOMIS

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

**Table 6 Employment by Broad Industry Group**

	Stafford Borough (Number)	Stafford Borough (%)	Stafford- shire County	West Midlands Region	Great Britain
Manufacturing	6,500	10.8	14.5	13.8	10.2
Construction	1,800	3.0	5.5	4.9	4.8
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	13,100	21.5	25.4	23.6	23.4
Transport and communications	3,200	5.2	7.5	5.8	5.8
Banking, finance and insurance etc.	8,100	13.4	15.8	18.6	22.0
Public administration, education and health	24,100	39.6	26.0	27.0	27.0
Other services	2,300	3.8	4.7	4.6	5.3
Total	60,700	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NOMIS, Annual Business Inquiry, January 2011, Crown Copyright

Notes: Information relating to Agriculture and Fishing, and Energy and Water Broad Industry Groups has been excluded from this table due to disclosure controls issues. The rounded figures may not sum to the table.

Although Stafford Borough currently has proportionally less jobs than comparison areas of Staffordshire County and the West Midlands Region in the manufacturing sector, (10.8% of all employment at January 2011 or 6,500 employee jobs) the sector is still more important proportionally than for Great Britain as a whole. Stafford Borough has seen one of the greatest levels of decrease in employment among the manufacturing sector of any district in the West Midlands Region. Between 2001 and 2006 some 3,900 manufacturing jobs were lost in the district (a -32.5% decrease in employment in the sector). It is important that the employment land

lost as a result of such cyclical changes in the local economy is used to its best potential, whether that use is for new employment land, housing or a mixture of uses.

After the public administration, education and health sector, the second most important sector locally for employee jobs is the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector which provides 13,100 employee jobs or 21.5% of the employment in Stafford Borough. Recent developments taking advantage of the Borough's good links to the M6 motorway in particular suggest that the market for further development in the distribution and warehousing sector could potentially expand further.

The banking, finance and insurance sector employs proportionally less people in Stafford Borough than for Staffordshire County, Nationally or the West Midlands Region. There is therefore potential for some growth in these sectors. In order to develop its economy further into the future, growth in the financial and business sector will be important.

Representing 3.0% of all employee jobs, Construction employs a proportionally lower level of people against the comparison areas. The Transport and Communication Sector is also under represented in Stafford Borough, accounting for 5.2% of employee jobs in the Borough compared with 7.5% in County as a whole.

## Migrant Employment

Stafford Borough has quite a varied and diverse migrant community. Levels of migration in the area are affected by a number of factors including the opportunities for employment here.

In 2002 the number of economic migrants registering for a National Insurance Number in Stafford stood at 190 people (shown in Table 7), since then this increased considerably and by 2007 the number of registrations reached 930. The number of National Insurance Registrations by overseas migrants has increased in every local authority area in Staffordshire between 2002 and 2007. Registrations in Stafford dropped to 860 for 2008 and again in 2009 to 790. This is most likely due to the economic downturn.

**Table 7 National Insurance Registrations for all adult overseas nationals entering the UK (Data extract June 2010)**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 (not comp- lete)	TOTAL
Stafford	190	360	540	550	560	930	860	790	220	5000
Total for Chase Division	280	520	730	800	820	1210	1060	950	290	6660

Figures rounded to the nearest ten so may not round to the total shown.

Source: 100% extracted from NI Recording System.

Stafford has four soft fruit farms, which employ workers from overseas on a seasonal basis. Most of these workers live on-site

and share accommodation which is usually in caravans supplied by the employers. These sites are licensed by the Borough Council which ensures maintenance to a minimum standard. These workers are usually from the new European Union member states and the workers mostly originate from Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria. Since the recession, the number of Polish nationals coming to the Borough to work has decreased.

The soft fruit farms each employ around 250-350 workers between the months of May - October. They are mainly young, healthy adults and they travel without dependants due to the nature of the work.

Stafford hospital draws workers from abroad, and the NHS is reliant on medical professionals from overseas. The Beacon Barracks also provides another employment opportunity for the Nepalese community, as it is home to 22 Signal Regiment (the Gurkhas).

Housing needs are considered in the Local Development Framework in the context of the 2008 household projections (which includes local need and in-migration).

## Household Income

Stafford Borough had the third highest level of household income in 2010 out of the Staffordshire districts at £41,510 which is above the County, sub-national and national averages. Table 8 also identifies that the Borough tends to have higher actual numbers of higher income households compared to the other districts in the County. For example the Borough has the highest overall number of households earning £50,000 and above at 15,181.

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

**Table 8 Household Income in Staffordshire**

Area	Total Income (£)	Average Income (£)	Total Number of Households	Total Number of Households by Income Band									
				Income Band 0 - 5k	Income Band 5 - 10k	Income Band 10 - 15k	Income Band 15 - 20k	Income Band 20 - 25k	Income Band 25 - 30k	Income Band 30 - 35k	Income Band 35 - 40k	Income Band 40 - 50k	Income Band 50k+
Cannock Chase	1,426,137,518	35,128	40,598	2,044	3,723	4,485	3,843	3,685	3,187	3,773	3,917	4,564	7,377
East Staffordshire	1,778,111,600	37,774	47,072	2,374	4,269	5,406	4,458	4,016	3,246	3,899	3,583	4,671	11,150
Lichfield	1,905,034,054	45,993	41,420	1,352	2,801	3,448	2,970	3,004	2,425	3,125	3,136	4,778	14,381
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,854,218,010	34,629	53,546	2,906	5,522	6,698	5,425	4,958	3,724	4,441	4,334	5,273	10,265
South Staffordshire	1,922,186,344	43,240	44,454	1,681	3,289	3,895	3,273	3,174	2,802	3,725	3,683	5,616	13,316
<b>Stafford</b>	<b>2,260,693,754</b>	<b>41,510</b>	<b>54,462</b>	<b>2,067</b>	<b>4,148</b>	<b>5,372</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>4,351</b>	<b>3,444</b>	<b>4,409</b>	<b>4,436</b>	<b>6,427</b>	<b>15,181</b>
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,537,798,040	36,348	42,308	1,690	3,925	4,991	4,184	4,010	3,252	3,740	3,343	4,363	8,810
Tamworth	1,151,188,734	36,786	31,294	1,331	2,518	3,095	2,947	2,819	2,429	3,042	3,233	3,729	6,151
Staffordshire	13,835,368,054	38,956	355,154	15,445	30,195	37,390	31,727	30,017	24,509	30,154	29,665	39,421	86,631
West Midlands	82,069,070,760	35,455	2,314,740	147,819	234,717	272,765	225,468	201,403	155,282	190,307	175,614	231,975	479,390
Great Britain	1,004,289,400,000	38,578	26,032,367	1,625,942	2,311,300	2,912,597	2,346,079	2,095,671	1,855,333	1,756,600	1,700,716	2,814,628	6,613,501

Source: Acxiom IncomeX 2010

### Unemployment, Economic Inactivity and Deprivation

In recent years the Borough Council has coordinated partnership activity to help reduce the number of working age people on out of work benefits under National Indicator 152. The measure of NI 152 includes claimant information for Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance, Lone Parents and other income related benefits.

Through the Employment Opportunities Action Group the Borough Council and partner organisations have sought to:-

- Identify target areas for locality working
- Produce profiles of target areas, including existing initiatives and resources
- Focus on hard-to-reach, identifying barriers to employment
- Develop an action plan that identifies routeways to delivery

Current data provided by Nomis (for May 2010) show that the percentage of people on key out of work benefits was 9.8%. This is higher than the pre-recession figure of 8.1% but the trend shows that this gap is closing.

Whilst the Borough is generally prosperous there remain pockets of deprivation and 6 areas in particular which remain a focus as they have out of work claimants rates exceed 20% of the working age population. These 6 Lower Super Output Areas are:-

- Highfields and Western Downs (E01029716)
- Highfields and Western Downs (E01029717)
- Holmcroft (E01029720)
- Manor (E01029727)
- Penkside (E01029734)
- Tillington (E01029752)

The Penkside area has in the last year become a focus in Staffordshire for multi-agency partnership working as it scores relatively highly on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation on a range of socio-economic issues including unemployment, anti-social behaviour, child well-being and teenage pregnancy. The locality work in this area involves the public and voluntary sectors and is ongoing through the time period of this Local Investment Plan.

In terms of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants – which has seen the most responsive fluctuations through the recent recession – is relatively low in Stafford Borough as can be seen on Table 9. The claimant rate of 2.4% (in December 2010) is the second lowest in Staffordshire and well below the regional and national rates.

Across Staffordshire there has been a decrease in the JSA claimant rate however the rate of decrease has slowed in Stafford Borough when compared to most other districts.



## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

**Table 9 Comparison of JSA Claimant Rates**

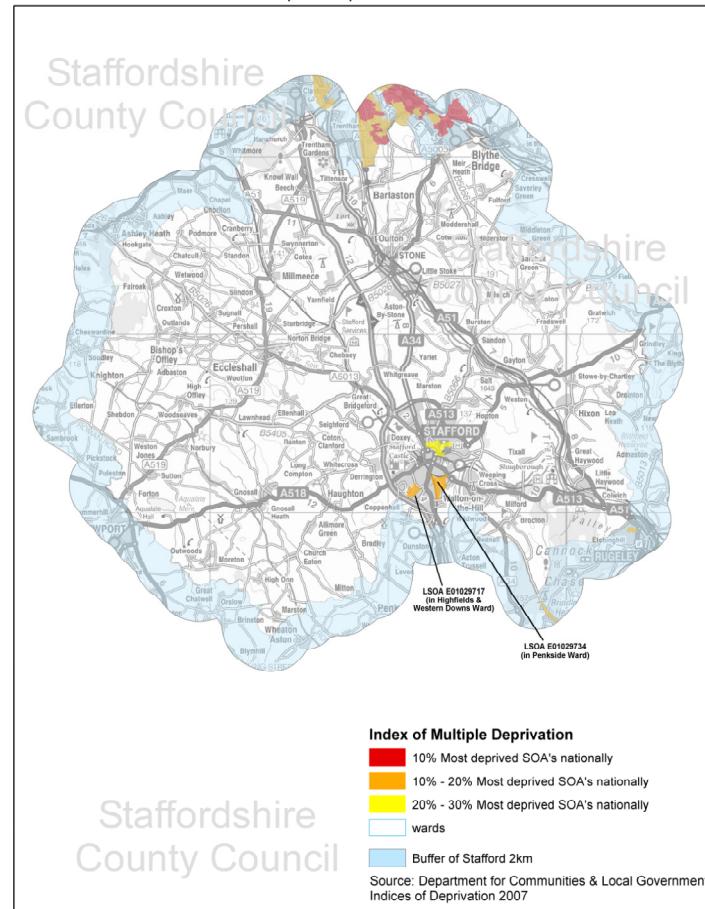
Area	December 2010		Annual Change (%) <sup>1</sup>	Quarterly Change (%)	Monthly Change (%)
	No. of claimants	Claimant Rate (%) <sup>1</sup>			
Great Britain	1,368,310	3.7	-9.6	-0.9	0.9
West Midlands	153,040	4.6	-13.0	-2.5	0.5
Staffordshire	14,095	2.8	-22.2	-3.9	1.3
Cannock Chase	2,313	3.9	-22.0	1.4	4.0
Tamworth	1,713	3.6	-24.8	-7.1	-0.8
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2,210	2.9	-20.7	-8.5	-0.4
East Staffordshire	1,699	2.6	-30.7	-10.1	0.7
South Staffordshire	1,710	2.7	-20.9	-4.4	-0.6
Lichfield	1,469	2.5	-19.6	-0.9	-0.4
<b>Stafford</b>	<b>1,789</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>-16.9</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,192	2.1	-19.8	5.8	4.1

Source: NOMIS

<sup>1</sup> The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance

In terms of the overall 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, the Borough had two Lower Super Output Areas within the 10 to 20% national quintile, these are in Penkside and Highfields and Western Downs (shown in Figure 3). In addition, part of the Littleworth Ward is within the 20-30% most deprived quintile.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 - The Most Deprived Lower Super Output Areas in Stafford**



**Figure 3 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, Stafford Profile**

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

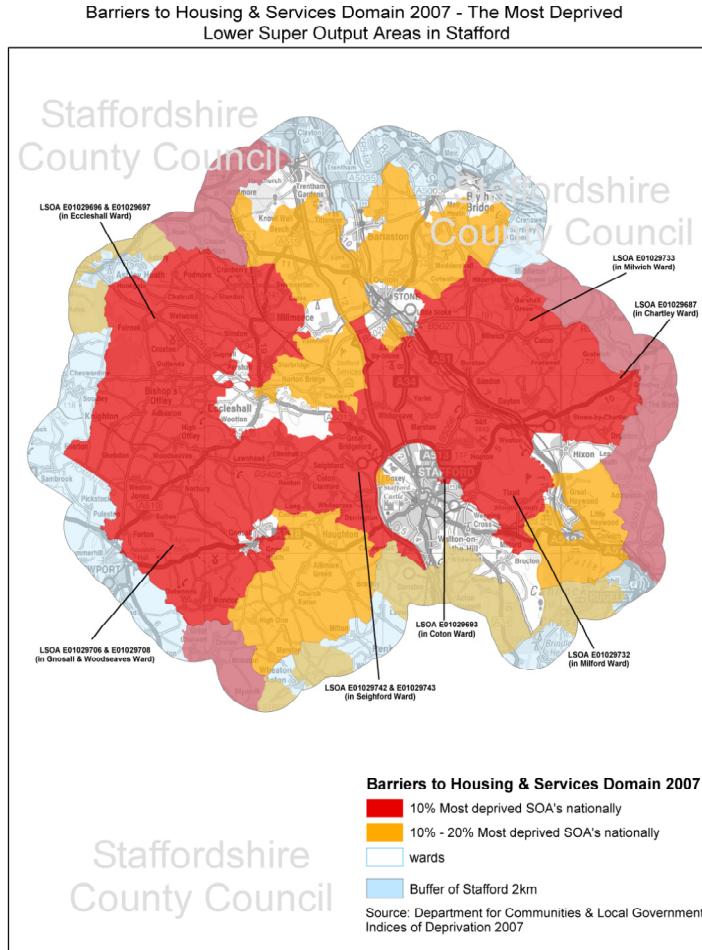


Figure 4 IMD 2007, Barriers to Housing and Services Domain

When assessed against just the “Barriers to Housing and Services” Domain within the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, the majority of the rural areas of the Borough are either within the top 10% or 10-20% most deprived areas nationally (as shown in Figure 4).

This index takes into account such issues as difficulty of access to owner-occupation and road distances to primary schools, post offices and GP surgeries. This clearly demonstrates housing affordability in rural areas is an acute matter which requires attention through this Local Investment Plan.

## Infrastructure....

it will be necessary to ensure that new housing and employment development is supported with strategic improvements to our transport infrastructure. A key element of the strategic highway network is the proposal for the Western Access Improvement route around the north western edge of Stafford Town Centre. A recent bid the Government’s Major Scheme funding was unsuccessful and other sources of finance are now being investigated.

It will also be important that major development occurs near to existing services and facilities, supported by accessible, frequent and good quality public transport. There are areas across the Borough with poor levels of transport infrastructure such as walking and cycling routes which should be improved through new investment.

Although Stafford and Stone are well served by fast and frequent rail links, other settlements across the Borough have less reliable public transport services which forces a greater reliance on the use of private cars and increased isolation for those unable to use a car.

The Borough Council will seek to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on development to ensure that local neighbourhoods share the advantages of development by receiving a proportion of the funds raised from developers. These will be passed directly to the local neighbourhood so community groups can spend the money locally on the facilities they want. The CIL might contribute to larger improvement projects or equally may help to deliver smaller local projects depending upon the requirements of the community.

CIL investment alongside public and private sector funding sources will help to provide infrastructure and services associated with developments including highway improvements, open space provision, affordable housing supply, sustainable transport provisions and health and education facilities.



## Health and Well-being...

Most health indicators in the Borough are similar or better than the national average with relatively low levels of overall deprivation. However, the pockets of deprivation tend to experience poorer health outcomes, which can be worsened when associated with poor, cold and damp housing conditions. The key health and well-being issues for Stafford Borough are outlined below.

### Obesity

The Adult Lifestyle Survey for Stafford and Surrounds undertaken in June 2008 identified that within the Stafford public based commissioners area 17% of respondents were obese and 1% were very obese. The highest level of obesity was amongst those aged 55-64 years (20%). Almost two-thirds (62%) of respondents expressed a desire to eat more healthily and two time related issues emerged:-

- the lack of time to prepare food (40%), and
- fast food was perceived as more convenient (23%).

8% of respondents indicated that they did not know how to prepare and cook foods, a figure increasing to 15% among those aged 16 to 34. 66% of respondents ate fresh fruit and vegetables at least once a day, some differences were evident between age groups with those aged 16-34 showing the lowest frequency of consumption at 55% whilst those aged 55-64 showed the highest at 77%. 16% of respondents were smokers, in line with the levels recorded for the PCT area as a whole. Of particular concern must be the fact that some of the highest levels of smoking were amongst the youngest age groups, with 22% of 16-34 year olds being smokers.

### **Childhood Obesity**

In the UK 1/3 children are either overweight or obese, in Stafford 8.3% of reception children are overweight which compares to an English average of 9.6%. In year 6 the figure for Stafford is 16.4% compared to England's average of 18.3%

### **Mental Health**

Mental ill health is a common health problem, the burden of mental ill health will reflect socio economic factors and wider determinants of ill health. People with severe mental health problems have lower life expectancy and poorer physical health than the general population. Stafford and surrounds have 29,078-34,670 adults aged 16 and over suffering from mental health in the community. This is the second highest level in Staffordshire.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and premature mortality, it causes over 80% of deaths from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Smoking is also a key factor in health inequalities, for example, the difference in death rates between rich and poorer populations. Although Stafford had a lower smoking prevalence in adults, it is estimated that 400 11-15 year olds are regular smokers.

### **Alcohol Misuse**

The misuse of alcohol has been shown to contribute to a number of health problems and misuse is linked to social problems such as antisocial behaviour, crime and domestic violence. Across Staffordshire 25% of children aged 11-15 reported drinking alcohol in the last week compared to 18% nationally. Between 2006/07 and 2008/09 there were 365 admissions in Staffordshire related to

alcohol in children and young people aged under 18, the rates in Stafford are higher than the England average.

### **Stafford Health profile July 2010**

The profile identifies the following key indices which compare adversely to the national average:-

- Life expectancy for men living in the most deprived areas of Stafford is nearly 7 years less than for men living in the least deprived areas. For women the corresponding difference is over 7 years.
- The rate of mothers initiating breast feeding is lower than the average for England
- Binge drinking in adults is higher than the England average
- Physically active adults is worse than England's average

Measures to address the above issues are being taken forward through the Stafford and Surrounds Public Health Commissioning Plan 2010-2013.

## Crime...

Recorded crime in Stafford Borough has shown some considerable reductions over recent years. During 2009/10 there was a reduction of 6% when compared with the previous year and a reduction of 21% when compared with the number recorded five years ago.

During 2009/10, the largest volume of any crime or disorder was 'rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour', within the category of 'anti-social behaviour'. Despite the high number of incidents, there was actually a reduction of 10% when compared with the previous year. As with anti-social behaviour, criminal damage is a large volume offence, which has also enjoyed a reduction during 2009/10. The number of acquisitive crimes also reduced.

There are Initiatives in Stafford Town Centre and Stone Town Centre which were introduced to tackle violence and disorder within the night-time economy. These schemes have resulted in reductions in both violence and anti-social behaviour.

Priorities that the Community Safety Partnership currently tackle are 'Anti-social Behaviour and Criminal Damage', 'Alcohol and Substance Misuse' (including Alcohol-related Violence), 'Business Crime', 'Offending Behaviour', 'Road Safety', 'Stronger Communities' and 'Domestic and Sexual Violence'.



## Wider Issues/Challenges for Stafford

Stafford is in a strong position to deliver long term sustainable growth and in particular to deliver housing numbers to meet the local growth agenda.

Stafford's role as a strategic centre is recognised in the significant investment in the Town Centre, increased personnel and investment at MOD Stafford and there is an opportunity to enhance the existing degree of self containment and sustainability in the Borough such that the majority of local people can access local jobs and services.

This will mean that housing growth is complemented by local employment, retail and leisure growth together with new transport and social infrastructure.

The evidence base being developed for the Local Development Framework has identified further key issues, particularly with regard to environmental quality. These are:-

### Climate Change & Renewable Energy

There is scientific evidence that human activity has led to a dramatic increase in greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a dramatic shift in the Earth's climate with hotter, drier summers and wetter, milder winters and more extreme weather events. Both the Staffordshire and Stafford Borough Sustainable Community Strategies highlight the issue of climate change which is likely to have a direct impact on Stafford Borough through a greater risk of flooding and increased pressure on drainage systems, particularly in winter, and more challenging circumstances for agricultural production in summer due to increased temperatures.

In 2000 and 2007 both the Rivers Penk and Sow flooded causing extensive damage to Stafford town and extensive tracts of farmland. The Borough Council is a member of the Staffordshire Strategic Flood Forum which looks at the management of flood disaster measures. Working with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit and the Environment Agency, the Borough Council has a Flood Plan which identifies areas of risk and puts forward resources to provide a timely response to flooding incidents.

The Borough Council has also worked with the Environment Agency with regard to a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Watercycle Strategy and Surface Water Management Plan which will be used to guide future development.

A key challenge for Stafford Borough will be fulfilling its role in delivering the Government's targets for renewable energy by using biomass and wind energy infrastructure whilst considering the concerns of local communities.



### Environmental Quality

The Borough has a rich and varied natural environment composed of a diverse range of wildlife sites and habitats, including seventeen Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), three Ramsar sites, four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and three National Nature Reserves. In addition there are more than a hundred sites identified locally as Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs). The protection, enhancement, improvement and proper management of these sites is a key issue for the Stafford Borough area, highlighted through both Sustainable Community Strategies, in order to maintain a high quality of life leading to economic prosperity.

There is evidence that in recent years the natural environment has come under increased pressure leading to fragmentation and the loss of key habitats and species. Whilst the most important sites have national designations, there are many other sites that contribute to the Borough's environmental quality but do not enjoy the same level of protection, such as Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS) habitats. Nevertheless it is important that all sites with significant habitats and associated protected species are protected in the future.

### Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Landscape Character & Green Belt

Development pressures for adjacent areas to the Cannock Chase AONB, including Stafford, can lead to significant impacts on the character of this important landscape which should be protected.

The Cannock Chase AONB is surrounded by agricultural land acting as a landscape buffer to the area as well as protecting views to and from the AONB. Despite the development pressures nearby it is crucial that this landscape buffer is maintained to preserve the integrity of the AONB.

Furthermore the landscape character of other areas across Stafford Borough may also come under development pressure thus raising an issue of protection. There are two Green Belt areas in Stafford Borough linked to the Cannock Chase AONB and the North Staffordshire conurbation north of Stone which includes a number of Major Developed Sites where the type and scale of re-development will be crucial to maintaining the principles and objectives of the Green Belt.



### Protection of Internationally Protected Habitats

Stafford Borough has several areas where change will be carefully managed. Of particular significance to the spatial strategy are internationally protected habitats. These are Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation, Chartley Moss Special Area of Conservation, Pasturefields Salt Marsh Special Area of Conservation, Cop Mere Ramsar site, Aqualate Mere Ramsar site and Mottey Meadows Special Area of Conservation, all of which are

covered by the European Union Habitats Directive as having internationally rare and vulnerable habitats in a European context. A key issue will be delivering appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures to protect the integrity of these sites.

### Retail

Stafford Borough's town centres are the key focus for shopping, accessing key services and facilities as well as increasingly being seen as places to live. Stafford is the Borough's strategic town centre and a principal shopping destination serving a large and diverse economic hinterland with large scale retail developments within and adjacent to the town centre. However in recent years Stafford has begun to fall behind other competing centres across the region in terms of its retail offer which needs to be addressed in order to support the future communities. The Stafford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy identifies this as a key issue to be addressed. Stafford town centre therefore needs to be ready to accommodate major new developments to ensure provision of a wider range of goods and services.



Across the Borough area other centres including Stone, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Great and Little Haywood provide more localised services and facilities for their communities. In recent years a number of these centres have experienced a reduction in the range of services and facilities leading to greater car travel to other larger centres. In the future these local rural centres need to be protected and enhanced so that they can continue to meet the needs of the community and reduce the need to travel.

### Design

The Borough Council is keen to promote good quality design of new buildings and open spaces. The Council takes advice from design consultants with regard to major planning applications and also consults with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the regional architecture centre, MADE and will apply the "Quality Reviewer" methodology provide by the HCA. The Local Development Framework contains a core policy on design and there is a draft Supplementary Planning Document on urban design.

As well as enhancing the environment of the Borough, good design can also help to reduce opportunities for crime and thereby ensure that people feel safe. Good quality design will need to respect the local character and distinctiveness of our communities across the urban and rural areas.

### Historic Environment

The heritage of Stafford Borough is a key asset including internationally recognised Parks & Gardens such as the Shugborough Estate and the Trentham Estate, historic landscapes, archaeological sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas and listed buildings across the urban and rural environments.

it is important that the historic environment and its irreplaceable assets are provided with protection, enhancement and management, not least to support cultural and tourism interests.



### Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Evidence highlights that Stafford Borough has a number of areas with deficiencies in quality and quantity of open space, sport and recreation provision, particularly in Stafford town and certain rural areas. This type of provision can significantly improve the quality of life for local communities through associated health, well-being and productivity benefits as emphasised through both Sustainable Community Strategies. A key issue for the Borough will be to ensure new development overcomes existing deficiencies to enhance resources and accessibility to open space, sport and recreation for all users in the future.

## 4. Alignment to strategic policies

### Local objectives ...

Local partners' ambitions for Stafford Borough include:

- Providing new homes to create new communities supported by district centres, health and education facilities. The majority would be delivered in the County Town of Stafford .
- Maintaining our existing housing stock by improving poor stick and stemming the decline of older housing to future proof against further decline.
- Maintaining Stafford Borough's self sufficiency by supporting existing businesses and employers as well as delivering high quality premium employment land for new research and development facilities with growth opportunities to provide new businesses for graduates.
- Provision of significant new green infrastructure for the Stafford Borough area including green links from the surrounding open countryside into the heart of communities to encourage healthy living for sport, recreation and leisure time activities.
- Delivering new mixed use town centre proposals to make Stafford a regionally significant centre for retailing, leisure and cultural attractions with an emphasis on non-car modes of transport provision.
- Supporting and enhancing the role of public sector agencies who have their headquarters or a significant presence in Stafford including Staffordshire University, Stafford College,

Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Ministry of Defence, the Prison Service, the Primary Care Trust and two Foundation Trusts. Work with local partners will be crucial through the Local Strategic Partnership and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Local partners:-

- Staffordshire County Council
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Central Government - CLG, BIS, DFT
- Registered Providers
- Staffordshire Police
- South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust
- CABE and English Heritage
- Staffordshire University and Stafford College
- Highways Agency
- Environment Agency and Natural England
- Private sector:-
  - landowners
  - landlords
  - letting agents
  - developers
  - employers

## Delivering the Big Society...

The Government White Paper: "Local Growth realising every places potential" which was first presented to Parliament in October 2010, identified that there should not be uniformity in economic growth across the Country and that there should be shift in power to local communities and businesses to deliver local growth and prosperity. Achieving the local ambitions set out above will depend on a range of public, voluntary and private funding programmes, which embrace the intentions of the "Big Society" approach and private developer contributions, which will be incorporated in the Investment Plan.

The Coalition Government is committed through the Big Society initiative and the Localism agenda to providing greater control to local communities including decisions on housing and planning matters. The Borough Council will continue to have a strategic development plan, however local communities will be encouraged to deliver neighbourhood plans and decide on investment priorities in their local area.

# Contributing to the Local Enterprise Partnership objectives ...

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent was approved as one of 24 Round 1 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in England by the Government in October 2010.

The LEP Shadow Board (which is due to be constituted as a Full Board during 2011) comprises equal membership from the public and private sectors and is chaired by the private sector.

The LEP covers the traditional boundaries of the County of Staffordshire (shown in Figure 5) and the Stafford Borough Local

Investment Plan is ideally placed to contribute to and direct LEP priorities in the context of the Borough.

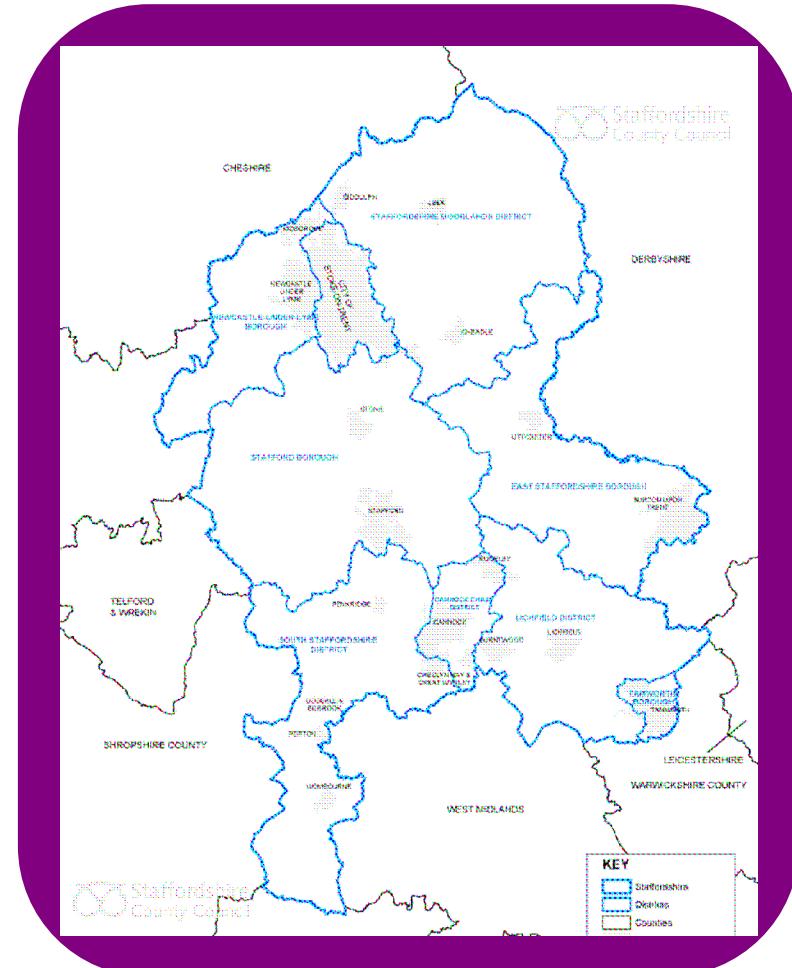


Figure 5 The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

The LEP priorities are:-

- Drive enterprise and innovation
- Generate fast returns at low unit cost
- Engage with and gain leverage from the private sector
- Create growth which is economically and environmentally sustainable.

Stafford has an important opportunity to act as a central growth area at the heart of the Staffordshire economy and, with LEP endorsement, to seek and secure investment through the Regional Growth Fund and other funding streams which will contribute to the wider regeneration of the LEP area.

In particular the key objectives which will be met include:-

- Support and assistance to business and enterprise
- ESD2 Further opportunities for new business space to meet the needs of future employment
- ESD3 Developing a workforce for the future
- ESD4 To respond to the opportunities that current proposals for Stafford Town Centre present
- PE1 Developing a sustainable environment
- HWB3 Developing an inclusive community
- HWB4 Develop affordable and social housing in the Borough

## Local Strategic Policies...

The Stafford Borough Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020 sets the Strategic vision as well as key actions for all partner organisations including the Borough and County Councils. The Strategy has 4 key aims: to achieve a vibrant and prosperous economy: to have a Borough which is safe and feels safe: to protect and enhance the environment: to support a cohesive and inclusive society where residents live longer, healthier and more contented lives.

The spatial actions in this Investment Plan deliver against the multiple aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The partnership priorities identified above are closely mirrored by the Borough Council priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Ensuring an adequate supply of housing which meets identified housing needs and the decent homes standard is a key objective (HW03) of the Corporate Plan which would be met by allocating land for major urban extensions (HW0308), by providing timely and effective interventions to enable disabled people to live independently in their homes (HW0303) and investing in the private sector housing block with grant and other assistance (HW0302).

A further identified Corporate priority is to ensure the provision of affordable housing (HW04) which is linked to the Growth Point programme and meets the needs of both urban and rural areas.

Additional housing related Corporate priorities include the adoption of 4 star sustainability rating for new homes (CGS0501) and working in partnership to deal with unoccupied dwellings (CGS0504) is a key objective of the Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan also emphasises the importance of partnership working, particularly with the Board of the Stafford Partnership to ensure that local community needs are being met.

The Stafford Borough Housing Strategy 2008-13 identified five strategic aims, as follows:

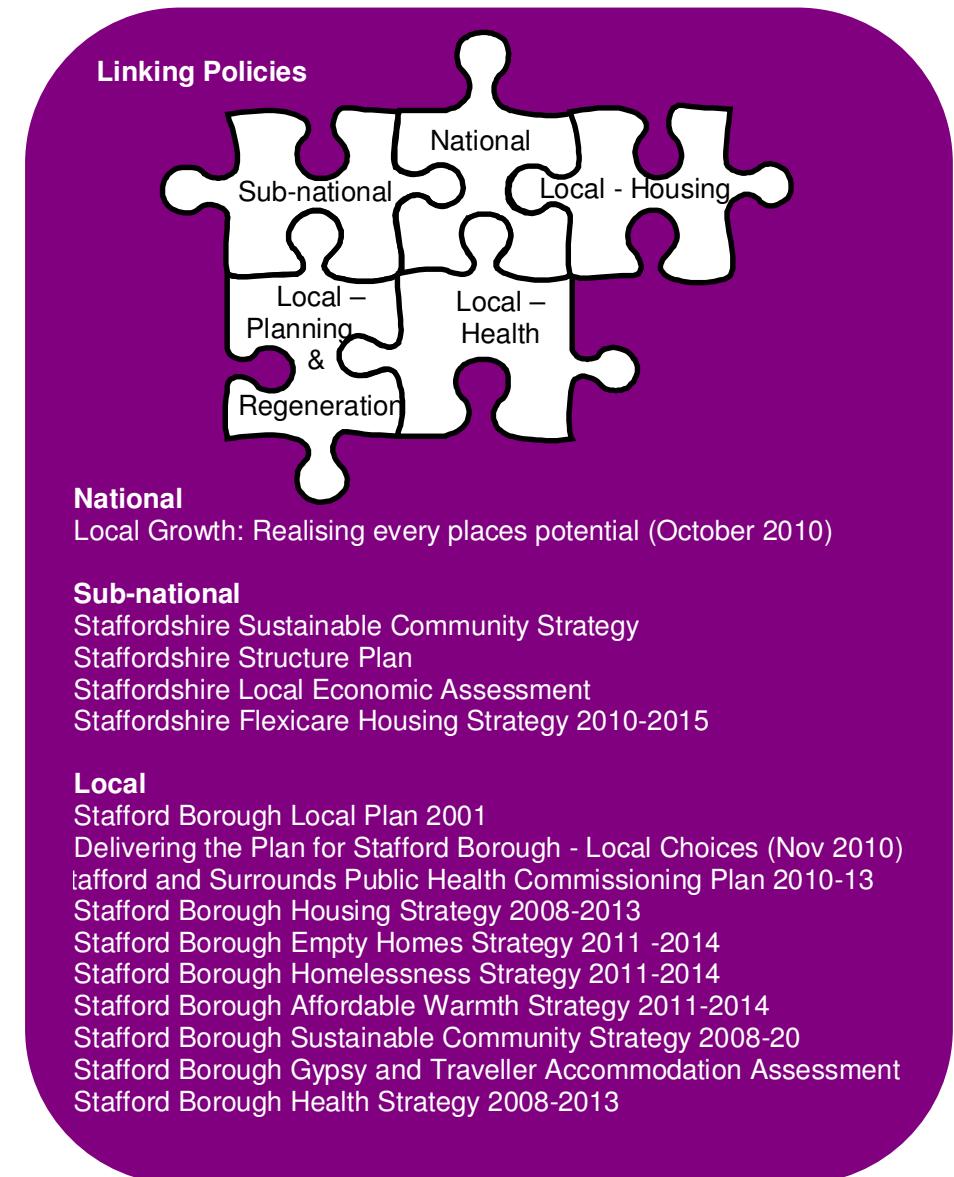
- Improve the physical condition of the housing stock across all tenures
- Preventing homelessness
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Promoting independent living
- Partnership working

The Strategy is due to be refreshed during the course of 2011 and amended priorities will be reflected in the subsequent update of this Local Investment Plan.

## Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough – Local Choices...

Stafford Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Development Plan which will guide future development across the Borough. It is important that new development meets local needs whilst protecting and enhancing the existing high quality of life in the Borough and initial consultation on these “local choices” for development has been undertaken during the Winter of 2011.

The actions contained in this Local Investment Plan have been developed to complement and take forward the emerging policies of the new development plan, particularly with regard to meeting future housing needs of our communities.



## 5. Defining thematic priorities

The key thematic priorities for the Local Investment Plan are built upon the economic and demographic context of the Borough and take into account the shared strategic priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The following thematic priorities guide the spatial actions and projects contained in this investment plan.

Priority 1 – Local Growth

Priority 2 – Addressing Pockets of Deprivation & Vulnerability

Priority 3 – Lessening the Impact of Public Sector Job Losses

Priority 4 – Supporting the Needs of an Aging Population

Priority 5 – Creating Sustainable Rural Communities

**Priority 1 Local Growth** focuses on the continuing role of the County Town of Stafford as a settlement of significant growth in terms of housing, the economy, education facilities and related infrastructure. Emphasis will be placed on measures to enable growth, including the availability of public sector land holdings for new affordable housing and employment sites. There will be a need to ensure that investment increases access to housing markets, provides new transport infrastructure, creates high quality natural and built environments, supports the leisure offer and tourist attractions and sustains and builds our town centre economies.

### **Priority 2 Addressing Pockets of Deprivation and Vulnerability**

Measures will be implemented through this Local Investment Plan which will seek to support vulnerable members of our local communities including the homeless, vulnerable people living in no-decent homes, women who have been subject to domestic abuse and people with mental health issues. Measures will also focus on

hard to reach local communities where out of work claimant rates remain high and where access to services is limited.

### **Priority 3 Lessening the Impact of Public Sector Job Losses**

The Borough Council and partner organisations have a crucial role to play in encouraging retraining for public sector workers who are made redundant, to build support for self employment opportunities, encourage growth and investment by the private sector, and support for volunteering opportunities and social enterprise creation. Emphasis will be placed on aligning skills with the growth sectors in the economy and focusing on higher value added investment opportunities within context of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

**Priority 4 Supporting the Needs of an Aging Population** An aging population in the long term contributes to the contraction of the local labour market and will require additional provision for supported housing as well as assisting people to live independently in their own homes. The change in this demographic will also result in opportunities for the health and social care sectors.

**Priority 5 Creating Sustainable Rural Communities** Stafford is the largest Borough by area in the West Midlands and the main settlements of Stafford and Stone serve the wider rural communities. Many of these settlements are isolated with limited access to services and a dependence on private transport. Rural areas also have acute problems of housing affordability, which limits the opportunity for local young people to grow up and remain in the village of their birth.



## 6. Spatial priorities

Stafford Borough has a mix of important urban and rural communities. The County Town of Stafford is the most important location for sustainable growth in the future, however the rural hinterlands have particular economic and housing needs which must be addressed to provide affordable housing and a sustainable local economy.

The spatial priorities contained in the Local Investment Plan have been identified following consultation with registered providers and members of the Local Strategic Partnership. As identified above a prioritisation exercise has been undertaken to focus available resources on the areas of greatest need which have been identified from the background research included at the start of this Local Investment Plan. The prioritisation process has:-

- Responded to needs identified in the evidence base
- Taken into account the views of stakeholders through a public consultation exercise
- Been endorsed by the Cabinet of Stafford Borough Council in March 2011

The spatial priorities therefore respond to local need and make the greatest contribution to the thematic priorities for the Borough's future.

The spatial priorities reflect a balance between the need for investment in housing and other land uses (notably infrastructure and employment land). The Council will enable the spatial priorities through a mixture of funding sources which will include significant private sector delivery, Borough Council assets as well as, in

appropriate circumstances a contribution from the Homes and Communities Agency.

### **The spatial priorities with delivery timeline are:-**

Rural Exception Sites	2011-2016
Urban Homes – Stafford and Stone	2011-2014
Flexicare Housing	2012 onwards
Empty Homes	2011-2016
Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-People	2013 onwards
Women's Refuge Provision	2014
Investment in MOD Stafford	2016 onwards
Stafford Growth – Private Sector Housing Development	2011 onwards
Western Access Improvements	2016 onwards
Alstom Engineering Centre of Excellence	2011-2015
Stafford Renewed	2011-2016
Strategic Sites for Inward Investment	2012 onwards

## Rural Exception Sites

The Borough is a combination of both urban centres (Stafford and Stone) and largely rural parishes (31 in total). Whilst development in the urban area has been successful in the past, delivery of affordable housing in the rural areas has not been as significant. This fact was highlighted in the recent audit of the Strategic Housing function in 2010. An immediate response by the Borough Council has been to increase the visibility of work with key partners including Stafford and Rural Homes and Housing Plus (SARH/HP).

A presentation evening was arranged in April 2010 to discuss rural exception sites and all rural parishes were invited to attend. There was a very positive response and many parishes sent either their Clerk or Chairperson. As a result the Council are working with 10 Parish Councils. It is worth noting that SARH/HP have taken the approach of employing their own Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) to help assist rural parishes and to effectively deliver the much needed new homes for local people.

Stafford Borough Council is a key contributor to the RHE and indeed in 2008 and 2009 allocated £6,000 to help support this initiative. A further £6,000 was allocated in 2010.

The current opportunities for rural affordable housing being developed are shown in Table 10.

Over the next 12 months, the Council expect that Brocton, Gnosall and Burston and Sandon will reach start on site stage. In total this creates 49 new homes. After this, expectation is that there will be a healthy pipeline to consistently deliver at least 50 new rural homes per annum.

Table 10      Rural Exception Sites – Current Programme

Parish	Housing Needs Survey Agreed	Housing Needs Survey Results	Site Identification Studies	Site(s) Identified	Land – owner Contacted
Brocton	√	√ 9 (7 rent, 2 shared ownership)	√	√	√
Gnosall	√	√ 36 (22 rent, 14 shared ownership)	√	√	√
Sandon & Burston	√	√ 4 (2 rent, 2 shared ownership)	√		
Ranton	√				
Fulford	√				
Hixon	√				
High Offley	√				
Haughton					
Colwich					
Seighford					
		Total Homes 49			

Wherever possible the Council will support the delivery of rural exception sites and will look to dispose of land at nil value to enable the grant funding requirement to be minimised.

The Borough Council commissioned in 2010 an assessment of affordable housing sites and the two most suitable for early delivery were at Adbaston (4) and Barlaston (4).

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

Both sites at Adbaston and Barlaston have been included in the programme and it is assumed 80% rented, 20% shared ownership.

It is understood that SARH/HP are investigating Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) with a national house builder and this may lead to substantial cost savings on some sites (not all would be suitable). Table 11, below, identifies the expected number of units to be delivered in each Parish using either the traditional or MMC methods of construction.

The broad spread of potential locations for rural exception sites is shown in Figure 6.

(N.B. Grant is an average, based on rent and shared-ownership)

**Table 11 Potential housing units in rural exception sites**

Parish	No of Units
Gnosall	36
Brocton	9
Burston & Sandon	4
Adbaston	4
Barlaston	4
Total	57

Modern methods of construction will be encouraged to reduce the cost of development.

## Urban Homes – Stafford and Stone

Focus remains upon the short-term deliverable schemes and a report assessing potential sites for affordable housing within the Borough has been used to identify schemes which can be delivered quickly.. Fourteen sites were investigated, both urban and rural. The two most deliverable rural sites have been discussed above, but there are a further three sites which are capable of 'quick wins' in Stafford and Stone (shown in Figure 6). These three projects would deliver approximately 19 new homes. Over the next 2-3 years, the Borough Council will continue to progress the other identified sites, and in total there is the capacity to create over 100 new homes.

As with the rural sites, the Council will look to support urban schemes by disposing of land at nil value wherever possible. Again, the Borough Council will look to work in partnership with the County Council and Registered Providers including SARH. Borough.

Land has already been identified through the recent assessment report, and all three sites identified in Table 12 are in Borough Council ownership. Modern methods of construction would be encouraged to keep development costs to a minimum.

Table 12 Potential housing units delivering urban homes

Town	No of Units
Silkmore Lane, Stafford	6
West Way/ Shakespeare Road, Stafford	10
Kent Grove, Stone	3
Total Homes	19

Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

## **STAFFORD BOROUGH**



Figure 6 Rural Exception Sites and Urban Homes proposals

## Flexicare Housing

Figure 7 identifies that provision for Flexicare accommodation is required generally across both the rural and urban areas of the Borough (in the areas shown as red and pink on the map). The Council will, through the allocation of sites and/or granting planning permission, meet the anticipated need to provide 1,458 net additional units in Stafford Borough by 2030 over and above the current provision as at 2008 by:

- Resisting development that would reduce the number of flexicare premises unless it can be demonstrated that a replacement facility is being provided or that such a use is economically unviable.
- Ensuring that any new developments are of high quality and situated in a sustainable location, are self contained, and are accessible by both public and private transport. New development should make adequate provision for off-street car parking within any development scheme.
- Allowing for the extension of existing nursing homes and conversion of existing buildings providing that:
  - The development is compatible with the character of the local area.
  - There is adequate and well located car parking and the site is accessible by both public and private transport.
  - The development does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining properties through excessive noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and excessive traffic increases.

- Seeking to secure the provision of new Flexicare facilities through liaising with its partners, Staffordshire County Council and the South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) on new major development.

In particular, the County Council has a number of potential sites which may be suitable for Flexicare housing including Cooperative Street and Riverway, both in Stafford. Such provision would complement proposals being developed by Registered Providers such as the Abbeyfield Society to develop further facilities at Anson House in Great Haywood.

Analysis has identified a need for 269 rental units by 2015. There are 107 units existing or in development which leaves a shortfall of 162 (or approximately 40 units per year. To bring forward this requirement (on the basis of a £25,000 grant per unit) would require investment of around £1 million per year which would be sought through the HCA and match funding.



## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

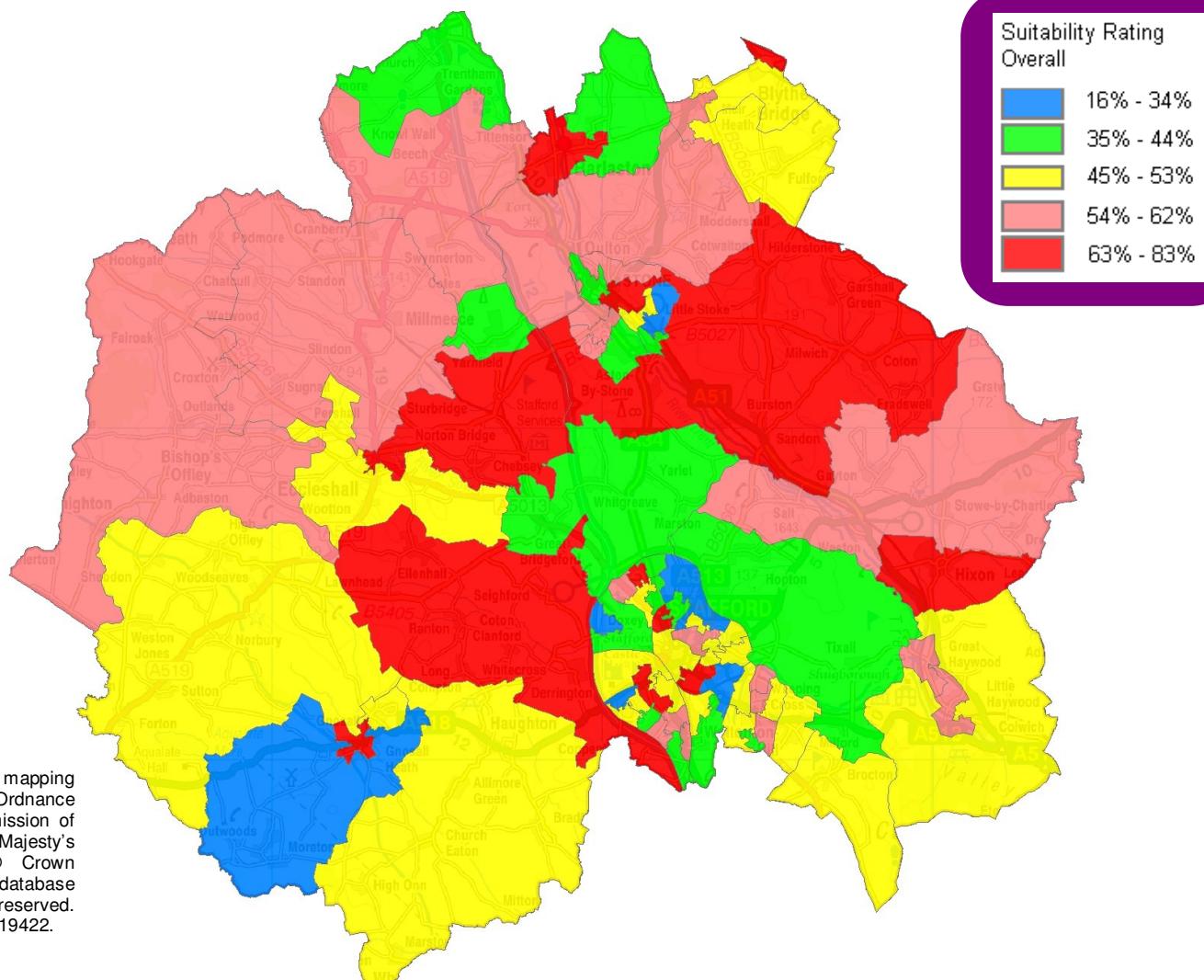


Figure 7      Suitability Rating for Flexicare Housing Provision

## Empty Homes

Empty Homes are a significant issue both nationally and locally, the Empty Homes Agency estimates that there were approximately 324,733 privately owned homes that had been left empty for a period of 6 months or more.

As at April 2009 it was estimated that there were approximately 1750 empty homes within Stafford Borough of which 926 had been empty for a period of 6 months or more. This figure has fallen to 612 by January 2011 with the focus being Stafford and Stone.

In January 2011 the Borough Council published the Empty Homes Strategy 2011 – 2014. The Strategy takes a risk-based approach to tackling empty homes, bringing a positive impact on the community supporting both strong neighbourhoods and home ownership. The aim is to implement a range of measures that will, directly or indirectly, help return long-term private sector empty homes back into use. The Strategy has the following five priorities:

- Work with partners to reduce the number of empty homes
- Minimise the number of homes becoming empty long term
- Raise awareness of how to bring empty homes back into use
- Take appropriate enforcement action
- Help develop sustainable communities by bringing homes back into use

Stafford Borough Council will look to safeguard both homeowners and members of the local community by raising awareness of empty homes and help owners to bring them back into use.

Funding for empty homes will be sought from a number of sources including Local Authority Empty Home Grants, partner agencies and the HCA.

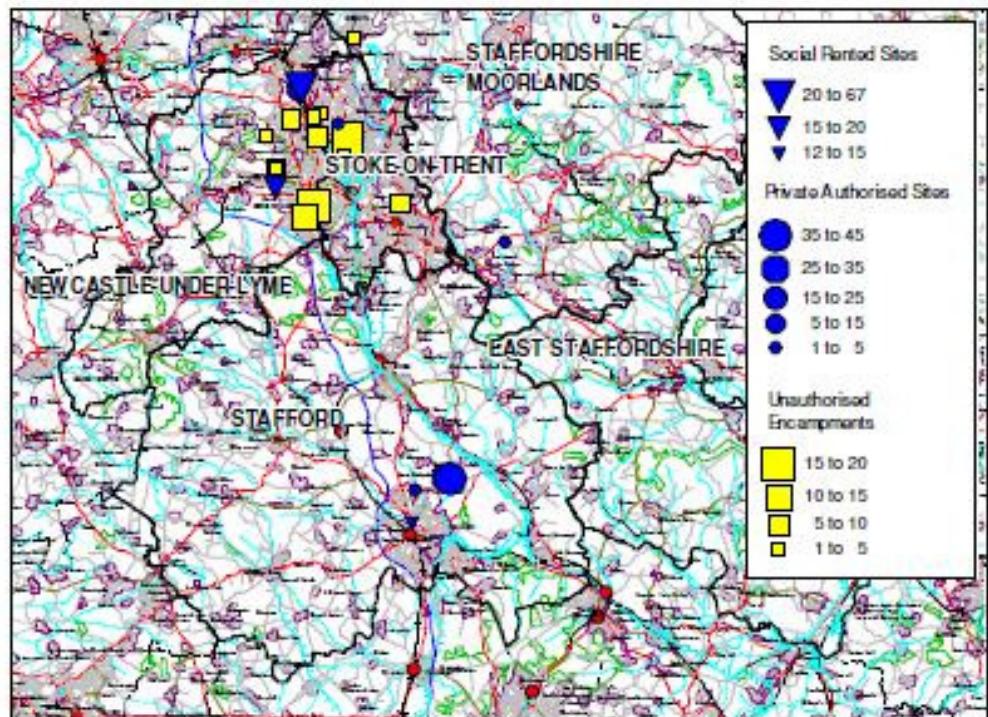
## Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-People

The Council will consider the delivery of sufficient good quality, appropriately located residential pitches to satisfy the unmet need specified in the Stafford Borough Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA); 22 pitches between 2007 and 2012, 12 pitches between 2012 and 2016, 17 pitches between 2016 and 2021 and 19 pitches between 2021 and 2026. Existing provision (as of December 2007) is shown in Figure 8.

The Council will ensure that the preferences and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers are commensurate with the recommendations stated in the GTAA and are taken into consideration when deciding the planning, design and development of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The primary considerations for such accommodation are:

Location to local services and transport networks, pitch size, amenities, sheds, management, mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer, etc.), utility of outside space (driveways, gardens), homes for life principles, health and related support issues such as tenure mix and space for short-term visitors.

The Council currently owns and manages a site and is considering future long-term needs in terms of facilitating improved provision.



\*Numbers shown indicate caravans

Figure 8 Current provision of gypsy and traveller sites (December 2007)

## Womens Refuge Provision

Stafford Borough Council is committed to improving the facilities available for Women who have been subject to domestic violence/abuse.

In Stafford Borough during 2007/08 there were 1,948 reported incidents of domestic violence. Of these, 565 incidents (29%) were violent crimes. National research indicates that in reality this figure is likely to be much higher as many offences go unreported; on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police.

Research by Sylvia Walby, a sociology professor at the University of Leeds, estimated that the total cost of domestic violence to national public services amounts to £3.1billion per year, while the loss to the economy through time off work due to domestic violence is approximately £5.7 billion per year.

Research by Staffordshire County Council shows that providing supported housing has cost benefits to the wider public purse. It has been calculated that for every £1 of Supporting People grant Staffordshire spends on domestic abuse services, there is a saving to the wider public purse of £3.58.

The existing refuge in Stafford Borough is a large, older building conversion with 8 bedrooms; however, it only offers one room/unit per family. This means that women occupy a single bedroom with their children throughout the duration of their stay. The nature of the accommodation means that a number of families may have to be excluded from accessing the service. It is almost impossible to accommodate a large family because of space limitations in the existing bedroom units.

Stafford Borough Council is working in partnership with South Staffordshire Council, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Women's Aid to provide new facilities for female victims of domestic violence.

A new refuge in Stafford would provide 12 units of communal and self-contained facilities, enabling residents to interact with each other, but also the ability to spend time in privacy. The provision of refuge accommodation that includes 1,2 and 3 bedroom units would better meet the needs of service users and accessibility will be improved for large families.

This project would seek funding from a range of partners including the HCA, Staffordshire County Council and through the Growth Point fund administered by the Borough Council.

## Investment in MoD Stafford

Major proposals are being brought forward by the Ministry of Defence to create part of a Midlands Super Garrison at the Beacon Barracks in Stafford. This would involve the relocation of 1,200 service personnel and their dependents with a requirement to create operational facilities as well as new family housing of 400 units which are expected to be located "outside the wire" within Stafford.

The investment has wider implications for infrastructure and services in the area, particularly with regard to education and healthcare facilities which are being developed in partnership with the County Council.

The MoD investment which is being made through "Project Borona" has been subject to the national Defence spending review by Government, but is still expected to come forward by 2016 during the lifetime of this Local Investment Plan.

Total investment proposed by the MoD is of the order of £151 million, making this one of the key projects in the growth agenda for the County Town.



## Stafford Growth – Private Sector Housing Development

The growth agenda for Stafford will be led by the private sector and it is expected that the rate of house building will return to pre-recession levels as the market becomes more buoyant post 2014/15.

New developments are being taken forward in 2011 which include 245 units at St George's Park on the edge of Stafford Town Centre by Bovis Homes. Other schemes which have the benefit of planning permission include Baswich House, the site of the former Staffordshire Police Headquarters in Stafford (191 units).

Sites to meet the future housing needs for the Borough are to be consulted on as part of the Local Development Framework in 2011. This is likely to identify that Stafford would accommodate a greater proportion of new housing units compared to Stone and the rural parts of the Borough. This growth is likely to be directed mainly to the north and west of Stafford as indicatively shown in Figure 9.

Current development proposals for 50 or more housing units which either have outline or full planning permission or subject to the signing of Section 106 agreements are:-

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| ○ Brunswick Terrace, Stafford          | 59 units  |
| ○ UCM, Doxey Road, Stafford            | 145 units |
| ○ Alstom, Fairway, Stafford            | 270 units |
| ○ Baswich House, Stafford              | 191 units |
| ○ Stonefield Works, Oulton Road, Stone | 120 units |
| ○ Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield            | 300 units |

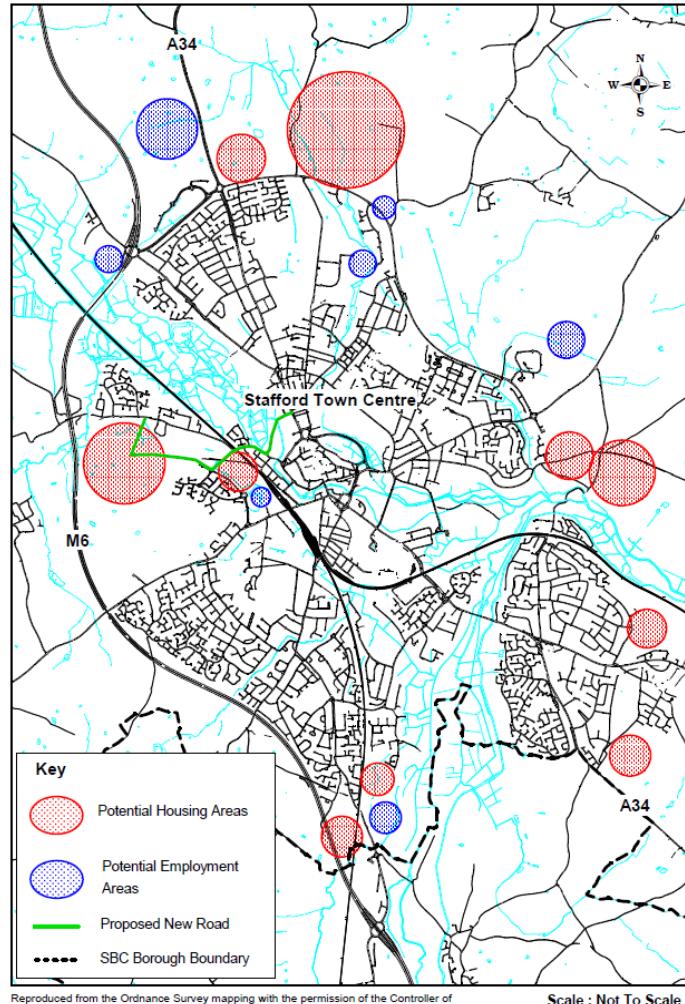


Figure 9 Map of Broad Location Options for Housing and Employment Land (public consultation Feb/March 2009)

## Western Access Improvements

The Stafford Western Access Improvements consists of a new 1.2 km section of highway and complementary sustainable transport measures and will form part of a wider sustainable integrated transport strategy for Stafford for the period up to 2026.

The Western Access Route (shown in Figure 10) will provide relief to a number of roads on the west of the town centre which are a focus for local buses and significant pedestrian movements, but

which are also heavily used by through traffic. The route also serves potential new housing areas in the western growth of Stafford.

Although a bid for the Government's Major Scheme funding was unsuccessful in February 2011, the Borough and County Councils will be exploring other opportunities for financing this project. This is likely to involve the phased delivery of the route linked to development.

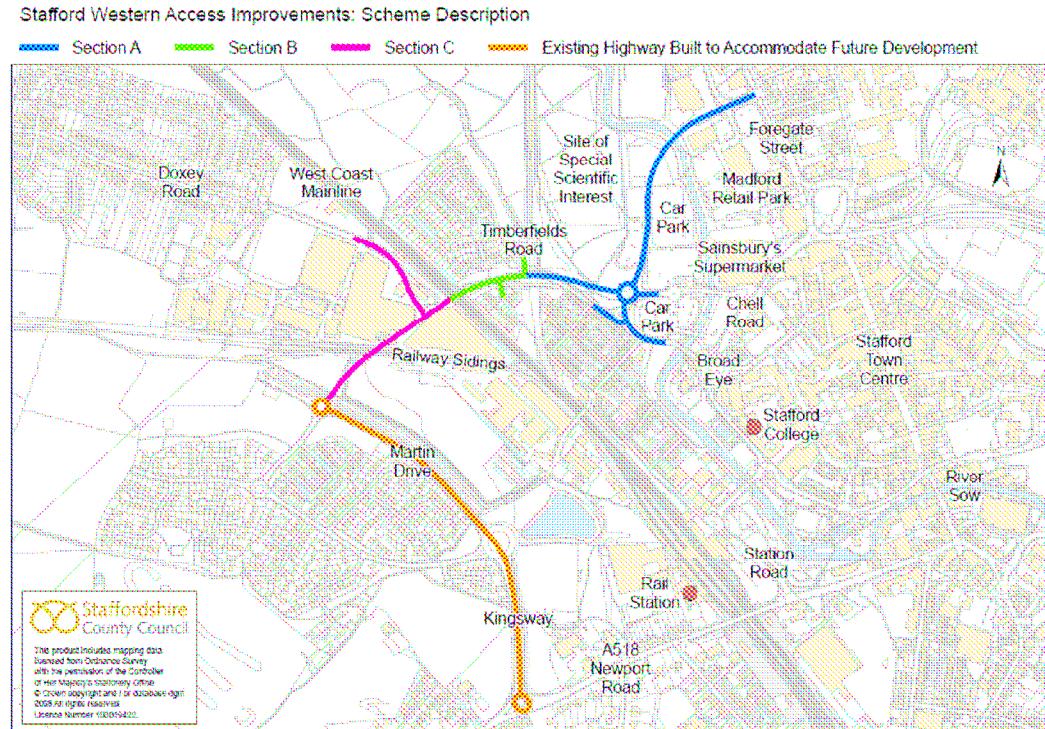


Figure 10   Stafford Western Access Improvement Route

## Alstom Engineering Centre of Excellence

Alstom Grid is the largest private employer in the Borough with over 1,400 people and the company specialises in turnkey projects for power transmission and power electronics based utility applications with extensive expertise with renewable energy as well as integrated SmartGrid systems.

The UK business is the global competence centre for High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) business and specialises in the design, manufacture and erection of large, complex and non-standard power transformers up to 800 kV and 2750 MVA.

The Alstom Engineering Centre of Excellence at St Leonards Avenue, Stafford, is being developed to meet the anticipated growth in the global HVDC market and will consist of the provision of three bespoke research and development and test facilities providing a combined area of 10,188 sq m.

The project has been submitted for Round 1 Regional Growth funding through a package of proposals supported by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.



## Stafford Renewed

Stafford Town Centre is undergoing a multi million pound investment programme which involves improvements to highway infrastructure and new development on key sites across the centre.

Recent research has identified that there is a requirement for the Town Centre to accommodate an additional 39,000 sq m (net) floorspace in comparison (non food) retail uses by 2026. This will be accommodated by new private sector-led investment which will complement significant current investment from Staffordshire County Council in a new headquarter office complex in Tipping Street.

New investment will provide a range of uses including retail, leisure and housing which will provide a Town Centre infrastructure to match the aspirations of a growing County Town.

### Recent investments:-

- Stafford Town Centre Traffic Management £1.1m
- Stafford Station Car Park £8m
- The Mills housing development – 21 units created

### Current projects:-

- Tipping Street – 17,000 m<sup>2</sup> offices, with retail £28m
- Chetwynd House – conversion to retail and restaurants
- St Georges Park – 245 new housing units

### Further proposals include:-

- Riverside – close to the Tipping Street development and suitable for a range of uses.
- Kingsmead – 3ha site close to retail core of the centre
- Stafford College – new campus buildings £13m



## Strategic Sites for Inward Investment

During the last 10 years approximately 8 hectares of employment land has been delivered each year across the Borough and the Borough Council would wish to continue providing a similar level of new employment sites up to 2031.

Currently there is planning permission for 86 hectares of new employment land across the Borough.

To complement the housing growth agenda, the County Town of Stafford is seen as a main focus for new employment land (shown in Figure 9) with two preferred locations being identified at:-

- A34 Redhill, north of Primepoint 14 (up to 36 hectares)
- Land east of Beacon Business Park (up to 16 hectares)

In addition, the 34 hectare site of the former Meaford Power Station near Stone already has planning permission for employment uses.

The central location of the Borough and its ease of access to three motorway junctions on the M6 has resulted in new employment sites being popular with logistics and distribution companies. It is hoped that future sites will be equally attractive to higher value added businesses, particular in the ICT, environmental technologies and specialist electrical engineering sectors.

The new employment sites offer the potential for growth of indigenous companies as well as inward investment and will provide employment opportunities for local graduates and the target communities where benefit claimant rates are highest.



## 7. Governance and Delivery

The Local Investment Plan will be aligned to the strategic governance of the Borough's Growth Point programme which brings together the housing, regeneration, transportation and adult and social care functions of the Borough and County Councils. The Growth Point governance arrangements also include representation from the HCA and other relevant organisations.

Strategic decisions are made at the Growth Point Governance Board which comprises senior membership of both Borough and County Councils (including both Council Leaders) and has an established track record on making investment decisions.

Below this a Strategic Programme Group of Council officers and representatives from other agencies draws together and develops actions and monitors investment in a number of regeneration programmes including Growth Point and HCA investment through the Local Investment Plan as well as investment made by project partners and local authority assets.

It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Operational Group would be established to report to the Strategic Programme Group. A governance structure is shown in Figure 11.

A key principle for the Strategic Housing Operational Group will be to ensure that 'Housing Investment' will be agreed on the basis that it adds value to and links to the wider economic regeneration and community investment activity of the local authority and partner organisations.

The purpose of the Strategic Housing Operational Group will be to develop delivery priorities, align resources, evaluate impacts and undertake regular reviews of the Investment Plan as well as to

explore new delivery and investment models including:

- RP commissioning approach, whereby the HCA will commission Registered Providers to deliver a range of affordable housing products within agreed spatial and thematic priority areas.
- Where necessary to utilise the HCA Delivery Partner Panel to procure and deliver strategic sites through the Local Land Initiative.
- Equity Funding to deliver infrastructure where the HCA provides upfront funding investment in return for an equity stake or future return through overage.
- Tackle long term unemployment by ensuring that opportunities for local people are integrated within HCA investment and procurement.
- Total Place Approach to achieve maximum impact and return by aligning public sector investments including those concerning health, education and transport initiatives.

The work of the Group will be underpinned by information from and consultation with key strategic partners operating across the local authority, including Registered Providers and developers.

### Risk Management

The monitoring and management of risks associated with the delivery of actions in the Local Investment Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the Stafford Borough Council Risk Management Strategy 2010.

This will include the preparation of risk matrices which identify the severity and likelihood of a risk occurring as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities of key personnel involved in the delivery of the Plan.

Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

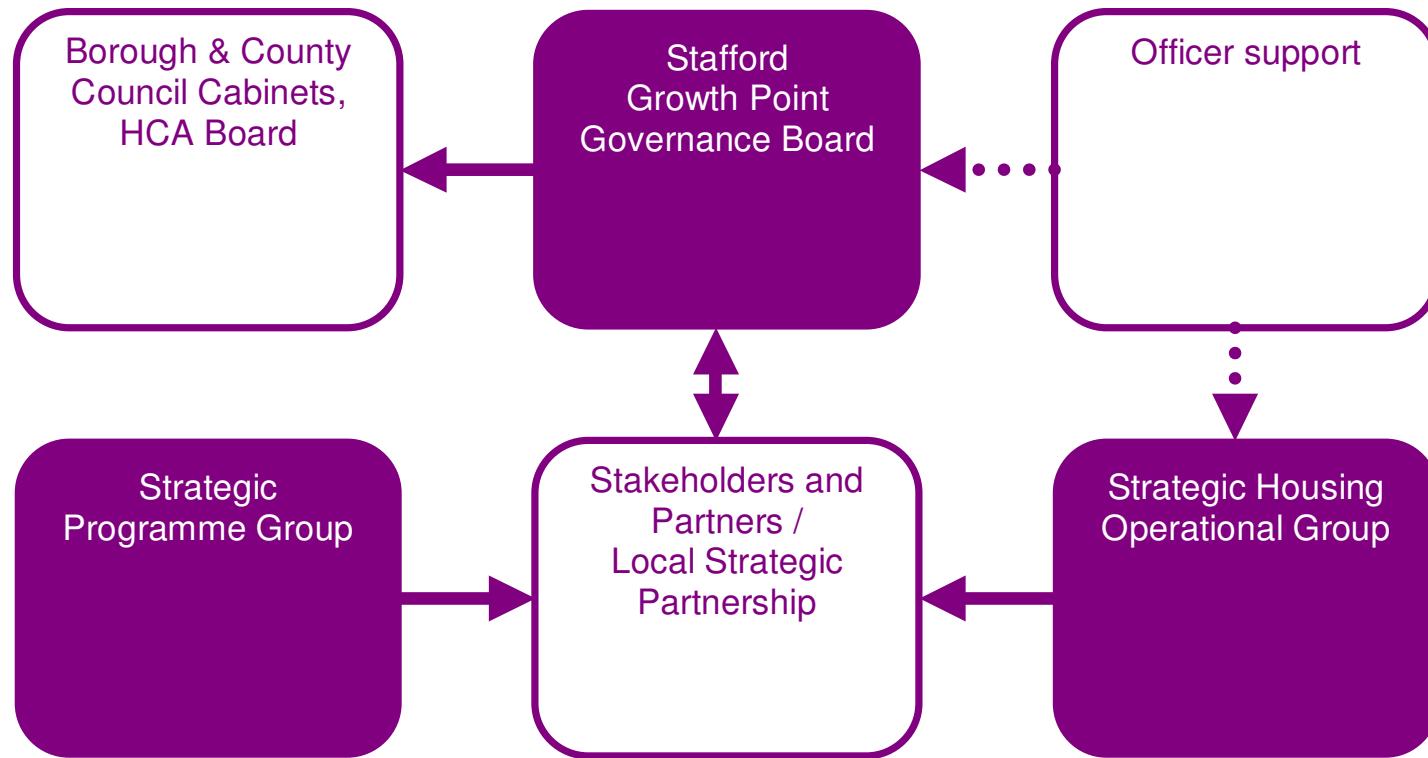


Figure 11 Local Investment Plan Governance Structure

## 8. Engagement and Consultation

The Borough Council has undertaken a consultation programme with Registered Providers during December 2010 and January 2011. Wider consultation has also been undertaken during February and March 2011.

The Borough Council has a Statement of Community Involvement which forms part of the Local Development Framework process and guides community engagement. Community consultation on the issues featured in the Plan has been undertaken as part of other strategies shown in Section 4 (notably the Housing Strategy) and most recently (January 2011) as part of the Local Development Framework Local Choices consultation. Comments have also been sought through the "Have Your Say" section of the Borough Council's website during February/March 2011.

The overall timetable for the development of the Local Investment Plan is set out as follows:-

Task	Start	Complete	Owner
LIP scoping report	09.08.10	22.10.10	LA & HCA
LIP project planning and work group meetings	25.10.10	17.12.10	LA & HCA
Preparation of draft LIP	25.10.10	04.02.11	LA & HCA
Management group approval process	20.12.10	04.02.11	LA & HCA
Consultation	07.02.11	25.02.11	LA
Approved LIP	20.03.11	20.03.11	LA & HCA

Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

**APPENDIX A**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

**Stafford Borough Council**

**Equality Impact Assessment Form (EIA)**

See Guidelines on completing Equality Impact Assessment Forms

<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Title of Function or Policy to be assessed:</b> Draft Local Investment Plan 2011-201
<b>2</b>	<b>Date:</b> January 2011
<b>3</b>	<b>Name of Lead Officer:</b> Robert Gatensbury
<b>4</b>	<b>EIA Team:</b> Michelle Smith Robert Gatensbury
<b>5</b>	<b>Head of Service:</b> Ted Manders
<b>6</b>	<b>Existing, new or review:</b> This is a new document.

7	<p>Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided:</p> <p><b>The Priorities of the Strategy are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local growth</li><li>• Addressing pockets of deprivation and vulnerability</li><li>• Lessening the impact of public sector job losses</li><li>• Supporting the needs of an aging population</li><li>• Creating sustainable rural communities</li></ul> <p><b>The Objectives of the Strategy are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making public sector land holdings available for new affordable housing and employment sites</li><li>• Increasing investment to increase access to housing markets</li><li>• To support vulnerable members of the local community</li><li>• To engage with hard to reach local communities</li><li>• To encourage retraining for public sector workers who are made redundant</li><li>• To build support for self employment opportunities</li><li>• To encourage growth and investment in the private sector, and support for volunteering opportunities and social enterprise creation</li><li>• Seek to provide additional supported housing to respond to the aging population</li><li>• Expand opportunities for local young people to grow up and remain in the village of their birth</li></ul>
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Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

8	<b>Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services, which might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise?</b>								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2008 – 2013</li> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Draft Homelessness Strategy 2011 – 2014</li> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy</li> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2010 – 2016</li> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020</li> <li>• Planning and Regeneration Service Delivery Plan 2010-2013</li> <li>• Stafford Borough Council's Local Plan 2001</li> </ul>								
9	<b>Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population):</b>								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens seeking supported or specialist housing</li> <li>• Customers (Registered Providers, housing developers, inward investors)</li> <li>• Potential customers</li> <li>• Elected members</li> <li>• Partners organisations and other key organisations (Stafford and Rural Homes, Staffordshire County Council, Homes and Communities Agency, Ministry of Defence)</li> <li>• Voluntary groups</li> </ul>								
10	<b>Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide any comments.</b> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Positive Impact</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Negative Impact</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Comments				
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Comments						

Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

	Age	<b>X</b>		
	Disability	<b>X</b>		The Plan links to the Housing Strategy 2008-13 which promotes independent living, encourages the development of lifetime homes and brings forward developments for specialist housing and related healthcare.
	Gender		<b>X</b>	Reference made to increasing support for women who experience domestic violence; no equivalent for males in the same situation
	Race	<b>X</b>		
	Religion/belief	<b>Neutral</b>		There is not enough data to assess if there is a positive or negative feedback on religion or belief. To be monitored on an ongoing basis
	Sexuality	<b>Neutral</b>		There is not enough data to assess if there is a positive or negative feedback on religion or belief. To be monitored on an ongoing basis
	Socio Economic	<b>X</b>		The spatial actions in the Plan deliver against the multiple aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy
	<b>11</b>	<b>What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above?</b>		
<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority 4 (page 21) Supporting the Needs of an Aging Population</li> <li>• Priority 5 (page 21) Creating Sustainable Rural Communities</li> <li>• Flexicare Housing (page 25) Resisting development that would reduce the number of Flexicare premises</li> </ul>				

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

	<p><b>Disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lifetime Homes (page 12)</li><li>• Housing Strategy aim (page 19) Promoting independent living</li><li>• Priority 2 (page 21) Addressing Pockets of Deprivation and Vulnerability</li><li>• Flexicare Housing (page 25) Resisting development that would reduce the number of Flexicare premises</li></ul> <p><b>Gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priority 2 (page 21) Addressing Pockets of Deprivation and Vulnerability only references women who have been subject to domestic violence, not men</li></ul> <p><b>Race</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People (page 26) Consideration of the delivery of good quality, appropriately located residential pitches to satisfy unmet need</li></ul> <p><b>Socio-Economic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alignment to Strategic Priorities (page 19) The Sustainable Community Strategy</li><li>• Priority 1 (page 21) Local Growth: availability of affordable housing</li><li>• Priority 3 (page 21) Support for vulnerable employment sector</li></ul>
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**12. From evidence given at Q.11 what actions, if any, will you need to take against each of the following equality strands:**

**Disability:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**Race:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**Gender:** Establish whether there is a need for domestic violence provision for males; if there isn't, reference this in the Plan.

**Age:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**Religion/belief:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**Sexuality:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**Socio Economic:** Continue to monitor the Plan to ensure that there are no negative outcomes

**13. Briefly explain how the policy or function contributes to Community Cohesion by answering the following questions:**

The Local Investment Plan aims to contribute to community cohesion by facilitating the development of sustainable mixed communities.

The Plan aims to deliver against the multiple aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy which supports a cohesive and inclusive society.

**14. Consultation:**

## Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

Consultation is planned via an internet based process which will engage partner organisations and internal contacts. This is scheduled to take place during February 2011.

**Head of Service:**

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA

\*The findings will be referred to within Service Plans and targets built around these.

I agree to review the Action Plan after 12 Months

**Signature of Head of Service:**

**Completion of the Toolkit:**

Stafford Borough Local Investment Plan

<b>Action Plan</b>				
Please list on this sheet the nature of any issues and any recommendation for actions that you plan to implement as a result of undertaking this Impact Assessment				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Name Lead</b>	<b>Date to be Achieved</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
The Economic Development Team need to monitor the impact of the Plan in terms of age, disability and socio-economic	Refresh this EIA to acknowledge any changes made to the Plan	Robert Gatensbury	Ongoing	
The Plan does not show a positive or negative outcome for religion/belief	Refresh this EIA to acknowledge any changes made to the Plan	Robert Gatensbury	Ongoing	
The Plan only shows a positive outcome for women who have experienced domestic violence; there is no reference to males in the same situation	Establish whether there is a need for domestic violence refuge provision for males	Stephen Ward	28 February 2011	It has been established that even on a national basis there is not the demand for such provision. It is understood that men would find alternative routes to access housing.