

Dear Members

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside Stafford** on **Thursday 19 March 2026 at 6.30pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2026

Chair - Councillor F Beatty

AGENDA

1 Minutes of 18 December 2025 as previously published on the Council's website.

2 Apologies

3 Public Question Time - Nil

4 Councillor Session - Nil

5 Members' Items

ITEM No 5(a) **Update from Task and Finish Working Group (Evening Economy)**

Councillor D P Rouxel

6 Called In Items - Nil

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7 Officers' Reports

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DEVELOPMENT & POLICY MANAGER

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HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Membership

Chair - Councillor F Beatty

F Beatty

A M Loughran

B M Cross

B McKeown

P C Edgeller

D M McNaughton

F D J James

J S Powell

P W Jones

D P Rouxel

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
5	0	5	0	9	19

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
Stafford town centre transformation – completion of main demolition works.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
<p>Stafford town centre transformation - delay to finalising development delivery option due to change to site boundary and project scope. It is proposed to present the Development Framework to Cabinet in quarter 4.</p> <p>Stafford Station Gateway - delay to concluding land acquisition. Officers are reviewing the Council's position and will advise Cabinet in Q4 of next steps.</p> <p>Development Management Improvement Plan - reprofiling due to increase in caseloads. This will extend the Improvement Plan implementation to Q1 in 26/27.</p> <p>Publication on 16 December 2025 of National Planning Policy Framework and associated SBC officer assessment linked to new Local Plan implications deferred to next quarter</p>

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of regeneration schemes	Stafford Town Centre Transformation						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete work on Station Approach project 	X				Work on site completed in May 2025. Initial feedback on the improvements has been positive.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete demolition works to Guildhall shopping centre and former Co-operative department store 			X		Main demolition works completed Q3 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree preferred development delivery option for cleared development sites 			X		Programme amended to reflect the additional land acquisitions during the summer - now to be reported to Cabinet in Q4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop wider masterplan/development framework for Stafford town centre 				X		
	Stafford Station Gateway						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence stakeholder engagement on delivery of the strategic vision for the site 		X			Initial Officer Board meeting held in November 2025 to agree priorities following the funding updates announced in September 2025. Full Board meeting delayed as SBC role is determined by land ownership which is to be confirmed	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete land acquisition 		X			Legal process initiated following Cabinet approval, timescales of acquisition are not wholly in SBC control	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Levelling Up Funded activities 				X		
Economic Growth Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and re-draft Economic Growth Strategy for consultation 				X		
Promotion of the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Stafford town centre development prospectus at UKREiiF 2025 	X				Investment Prospectus produced and launched at UKREiiF development event in Leeds, May 2025 with significant interest generated in the regeneration of Stafford town centre.	
Pipeline of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop pipeline of future economic development and regeneration projects 				X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree programme of projects for UKSPF for 2025/26 	X				The programme was agreed with the Leader in advance of submitting to Government in May 2025. Full details are being reported to Cabinet in July 2025.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete delivery of UKSPF programme for 2025/6 				X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete review of section 106 policy and allocations 				X		

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme and Project Allocations for section 106 funding through evidence for Cannock Chase SAC and Leisure 				X		
Delivery of planning services to enable economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish revised Local Development Scheme 				X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) assessment and New Local Plan implications 			X		NPPF consultation published 16 December 2025 which was later than expected by MHCLG, this has delayed completion of this action. Officers currently reviewing proposed changes for NPPF deadline in March 2026 and assessing implications on the New Local Plan process in terms of resourcing, evidence base and timetable related to Regulations expected in early 2026.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare New Local Plan and updated evidence base, 				X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement improvement plan for Development Management 			X		The Improvement Plan is currently being implemented but the improvements are taking a longer time frame to achieve. The service continues to address a large backlog of applications and is	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
						<p>under further pressure from speculative applications.</p> <p>In December 2025, Leadership Team agreed to reprofile delivery of the improvement plan to June 2026. LT also agreed to additional short term agency cover being brought in to deal with the current caseloads and release capacity to support implementation of the improvement plan.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full introduction of a chargeable pre-application service 		X			Pre-application service introduced.	★

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 3 - extract re Climate Change for Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
1				1	2

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
No actions due in Q3

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
None

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Local Plan with positive climate change policies	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation study				X		
Biodiversity in new developments	Implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with statutory requirements	X				A BNG guidance note has been produced and has been published on the Council's website.	

Summary of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - Quarter 3 2025/26

KPIs for Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
	Performance exceeds target	1	2	3		
	Performance on target	1				
	Performance < 5% below target		1			
	Performance > 5% below target		1	1		
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	5	3	3		
	TOTAL	7	7	7		

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Regeneration									
Employment rate	79.8%	80%						N/A	Annual figure released by ONS. % relates to working age population (16-64) economically active i.e. in work or training.
Town centre vacancy rate	N/A	N/A						N/A	Data not available; indicator to be reviewed.
Number of housing completions	612	749						N/A	Annual figure at year end (1 April 25 to 31 March 26)
Planning Services									
Major Planning Applications determined within time	93.3%	60%	60%	50%	80%			★	
Non-major Planning Applications determined within time	85.3%	70%	78.6%	67.9%	46.7%			✘	As part of Improvement Plan, operational decision to prioritise the issuing of decisions to reduce backlog over securing an extension of time.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.4%	2.3%	1.49			★	
Non-major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.5%	1.1%	1.68			★	

Agenda Item 7b

Stafford Borough Conservation and Heritage

Committee:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	19 March 2026
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the conservation and heritage matters.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the responses to the Members questions.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The historic environment of Stafford Borough is recognised as a unique and irreplaceable resource. We have:

- 29 Conservation Areas
- 836 Listed Buildings of which 8 are on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register.
- 43 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 5 Registered Parks and Gardens
- 1 Registered Battlefield

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

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

Vision

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

Priorities

“Communities and Wellbeing”

“Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment”

5 Report Detail

Historic environment

- 5.1 Members have asked several questions regarding the historic environment within the borough which are answered within **APPENDIX 1**.

Conservation Areas

- 5.2 There are currently 29 conservation areas within Stafford borough as detailed in the table below (please note Norbury Canal Junction Conservation Area was merged with the Shropshire Union Canal Conservation Area as of 4 February 2016 and no longer exists):

Table 1: List of Conservation Areas

Conservation Area	Date of first designation	Date Appraisal Last Reviewed	Date of Revised Boundary Designation	Comment
Bradley	22 November 1969	2 August 2012	2 August 2012	
Burton Manor Village	2 October 2008	3 April 2014	N/A	Area appraisal and CAA and Article 4 review and cabinet drafted November 2022
Chebsey	3 July 1979	11 June 2015	11 June 2015	
Church Eaton	24 November 1973	6 March 2017	6 March 2017	
Corporation Street Flats	21 June 1996	3 July 2014	3 July 2014	
Colwich and Little Haywood	23 February 1974	7 August 2014	7 August 2014	
Eccleshall	22 November 1969	3 April 2014	3 April 2014	Has Article 4(2) Direction - the 2014 Appraisal recommended review of the Article 4(2) Direction

Conservation Area	Date of first designation	Date Appraisal Last Reviewed	Date of Revised Boundary Designation	Comment
				(dated 1999) due to change to the GDPO (now Article 4(1) Directions) but it does not appear this was ever carried out.
Forebridge	20 April 1999	10 December 2013	10 December 2013	
Foregate and St Georges	21 June 1996	3 July 2014	3 July 2014	
Forton and Meretown	9 October 1978	3 March 2016	3 March 2016	
Fulford	31 January 1978	5 November 2015	5 November 2015	
Gnosall	24 February 1971	25 November 2013	25 November 2013	
Great Haywood and Shugborough	22 November 1969	7 August 2014	7 August 2014	

Conservation Area	Date of first designation	Date Appraisal Last Reviewed	Date of Revised Boundary Designation	Comment
Hanchurch	11 February 1980	5 September 2013	5 September 2013	
Hilderstone	3 October 1977	8 December 2015	8 December 2015	
Ingestre	22 November 1970	20 July 2015	20 July 2015	
Meaford	6 October 1978	N/A	N/A	Review and cabinet report drafted November 2022.
Moddershall Valley	6 April 1979	4 May 2016	4 May 2016	
Norbury Canal Junction	3 March 1970	N/A	4 February 2016	Part of the Shropshire Union Canal Conservation Area as of 4 February 2016
Offley Brook	10 June 1993	2 July 2015	2 July 2015	

Conservation Area	Date of first designation	Date Appraisal Last Reviewed	Date of Revised Boundary Designation	Comment
Shropshire Union Canal	18 September 1984	4 February 2016	4 February 2016	
Stafford (Town Centre)	27 November 1971	8 December 2011	8 December 2011	
Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal	17 April 1978	3 March 2016	3 March 2016	
Stone	22 November 1969	2 October 2008	2 October 2008	Has Article 4(2) Direction - due to change to the GDPO (now Article 4(1) Directions) - will need to be reviewed.
Swynnerton	3 March 1970	6 January 2014	6 January 2014	
Tixall	22 November 1984	5 November 2015	5 November 2015	
Trent and Mersey Canal	6 May 1988	7 August 2014	7 August 2014	

Conservation Area	Date of first designation	Date Appraisal Last Reviewed	Date of Revised Boundary Designation	Comment
Trentham	31 October 1995	22 January 2013	22 January 2013	
Walk Mill	10 June 1993	2 July 2015	2 July 2015	
Walton on the Hill	3 March 1977	6 March 2017	6 March 2017	

5.3 Guidance recommends that conservation area appraisals and management plans should be reviewed and if required updated every 5 years. As is demonstrated in the table above all our appraisals and management plans need to be updated.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Members Questions

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Jenny Boulton
Telephone Number: 01785 619514
Ward Interest: Nil
Report Track: Economic Development and Planning - 1 October 2025
(Only)
Key Decision: N/A

Appendix 1

Members Questions

Does SBC have an up-to-date register of identified historic assets?

Historic England are responsible for management of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) which includes all listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battle fields and scheduled ancient monuments - these are designated heritage assets as well as conservation areas. The NHLE can be viewed on Historic England's website here <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> and the list of Stafford Borough's Conservation Area's can be found on our website here <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/conservation-areas-list> Stafford Borough does not currently have a local heritage list of non-designated heritage assets.

Are there any emerging or yet to be identified historic assets?

Anyone, including members of the public can apply to Historic England to request a structure/building be added to the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), and it is Historic England's responsibility to assess the application and evidence and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who ultimately makes the final decision on whether a building/structure should be listed. As and when the conservation officer comes across buildings/structures that may meet the criteria for listing they submit an application for listing, together with any evidence and supporting information to Historic England to assess. In terms of non-designated heritage assets, the Borough has many and they are emerging all the time, primarily on receipt of a planning application as the Council does not have a Local Heritage List.

Which (if any) historic assets (listed or not listed) that are most at risk through neglect, decay or other threat?

Historic England maintains a Heritage at Risk Register which includes grade II* and grade I listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, and conservation areas, however it does not include grade II listed buildings unless they are ecclesiastical buildings. This register is updated annually. At present there are 8 entries in Stafford Borough on the Historic England HAR Register:

- Stafford Town Centre Conservation Area
- Walk Mill Conservation Area
- Moated Site in Reynolds Orchard, Eccleshall (Scheduled Monument)
- Multivallate Hillfort at Bury Bank, Stafford (Scheduled Monument)
- Remains of Trentham Hall, the Grand Entrance and Orangery at Trentham Gardens (Grade II* Listed)
- Engine House & Boiler House at Mill Meece Pumping Station (Grade II* Listed)
- Bishton Hall, Wolseley Bridge (Grade II* Listed)

- Crompton Tomb in grounds of St Michaels Church, Stone (Grade II* Listed)

SAVE Britain's Heritage also maintains a Buildings at Risk Register which includes all types of heritage assets including grade II listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. This is updated annually; they currently have 9 entries for Stafford Borough:

- Stallington Hall Hospital, Blythe Bridge (Grade II Listed)
- 1-4 Park Drive, Trentham (Grade II Listed)
- Remains of Trentham Hall, the Grand Entrance and Orangery at Trentham Gardens (Grade II* Listed)
- Crossing House (also known as Whitebridge Cottage), Uttoxeter Road, Stone (Grade II Listed)
- The Wheatsheaf Inn, Coton, Milwich (de-listed as a result of collapsed front wall)
- Seighford Hall (Grade II Listed)
- Ranton Abbey (ruins of Georgian mansion - curtilage listed to Grade II* tower)
- The Sandonia (non-designated heritage asset)
- Shenley Cottage, Little Haywood (non-designated heritage asset)

Additionally, the Conservation Officer also keeps an internal Heritage at Risk Register, which is not published due to personal and confidential information being included. There are currently 26 entries on this, some do cross over with Historic England's and SAVE Britain's Heritage Registers:

- Sutton Monument (also known as Forton Monument) (Grade II listed)
- Outbuildings at Bromley Hall (Grade II* listed)
- Barn at Lower Cooksland Farm (Grade II Listed)
- Bishton Hall (Grade II* Listed)
- Barn at Whittington Farm, Croxton (Grade II Listed)
- 39-40 Greengate Street, Stafford (Grade II Listed)
- Broadeye Windmill (Grade II Listed)
- Old Borough Library, Stafford (Grade II Listed)
- Remains of Sugnall Old Hall (Grade II Listed)
- River Sow Mills, Walk Mill (Grade II Listed)
- Grain Store, Walk Mill (Grade II Listed)
- Fulford Hall (Grade II Listed)
- Garden House at Fulford Hall (Grade II listed)
- Meir Heath Windmill, Hilderstone Road (Grade II Listed)
- Stallington Hall Hospital and Stables (Grade II Listed)
- Coton Mill, Mill Lane, Coton (Grade II Listed)
- Gravel Pit Lodge, Drayton Road, Hanchurch (Grade II Listed)
- 1-4 Park Drive, Trentham (Grade II Listed)
- Former Stable Wing, Trentham Hall (Grade II)
- Former Service Wing, Trentham Hall (Grade II)

- Bridge South of Clubhouse, Trentham Park (Grade II)
- Wall and Gate piers at St Michaels Church, Stone (Grade II Listed)
- Crompton Tomb in grounds of St Michaels Church, Stone (Grade II* Listed)
- The Maltings, Crown Street, Stone (Grade II Listed)
- Crossing House (also known as Whitebridge Cottage), Uttoxeter Road, Stone (Grade II Listed)
- Portico at Batchacre Hall, Shebdon (Grade II Listed)

Are there are any current ‘undesigned’ Heritage Asset that can be upgraded to a Heritage Asset?

When these are identified the Conservation Officer takes the necessary steps to apply for listing with Historic England if they believe the structure/building would meet criteria for listing.

How can local members be involved in promoting such protection of sites in their Ward?

Elected members play a crucial role in shaping public awareness, policy support, and community engagement around the historic environment. While heritage protection is underpinned by national legislation and specialist advice, members are uniquely placed to act as advocates, facilitators, and champions of local distinctiveness. The following outlines several practical ways in which members can support and promote heritage within their wards:

- **Appointing a ‘Heritage Champion’:** The reintroduction of a Member Heritage Champion role would align the borough with national best practice (as endorsed by Historic England) and provide a clear point of advocacy within the Council. This role can help maintain heritage as a priority in policymaking, represent heritage concerns in cabinet or planning discussions, and act as a link between officers, members, and the wider community.
- **Supporting the creation of a Local Heritage List and Identification of Non-Designated Heritage Assets:** Members can assist in identifying buildings and sites of local heritage interest, particularly those with communal or cultural significance. Their local knowledge would be instrumental in the formation of a Local Heritage List by ensuring that assets valued by the community are appropriately recognised and considered in the planning process. At present Stafford Borough does not have a Local Heritage List, the formation of such a list would provide more clarity and transparency to homeowners, developers and planning officers when considering the balance of preserving our heritage with new works/developments. It will also provide the Council with a more robust argument at appeal where a development involves the complete loss of a non-designated heritage asset.
- **Promoting Heritage in Community Engagement:** Through newsletters, ward meetings, and local forums, members can help raise awareness of conservation

area character, appropriate maintenance practices, and the importance of preserving architectural and historic features. This soft engagement helps foster a wider sense of stewardship and discourages unsympathetic alterations at a grassroots level.

- **Advocating for Policy Support and Resources:** Members can provide political support for the inclusion of heritage policies within local and neighbourhood plans, endorse funding bids for conservation projects, and support the allocation of resources for enforcement or specialist input. In doing so, they help ensure that heritage is effectively resourced and protected in line with statutory duties.
- **Acting as a Liaison between Officers and the Community:** Members can assist in relaying concerns from residents, such as early reports of unauthorised works or buildings at risk, to the Conservation Officer and the enforcement team. In doing so, they serve as an early-warning mechanism and help ensure timely intervention where harm may be occurring.

Taken together, these actions can strengthen the Council's collective approach to heritage protection and ensure that elected members are fully engaged in safeguarding the borough's historic environment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), The Plan for Stafford Borough, and statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Particularly concerned about the ownership of historic buildings within the Town Centre Area - i.e., which buildings are Historic Buildings, what is the state of these buildings, who is responsible for the upkeep of these buildings and how can we, SBC, ensure that the buildings are kept up to an 'acceptable' standard?

- **What we mean by 'historic building':** There is no single legal or statutory definition for the term 'historic building.' In general heritage terms, it may refer to any building of age or significance, but a more practical working definition often includes buildings constructed prior to 1919 using traditional methods and materials, such as solid brick or stone walls, timber framing, timber floors, and lime mortars. These are often referred to as 'traditional buildings'. However, it is important to note that not all historic buildings are pre-1919, and some listed buildings, those formally recognised for their special architectural interest, historic interest or archaeological interest, can be of a more modern construction. Therefore, the term encompasses a range of buildings with varying materials, ages, and designations. The National Planning Policy Framework states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- 1) **Historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities

derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 2) **Architectural and Artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
 - 3) **Archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **The current state of the buildings in Stafford Town Centre:** The condition of historic buildings within the town centre varies widely. Some are well-maintained and in active use, while others may show signs of deterioration or neglect. The condition often reflects factors such as ownership, occupancy, use, investment, and the complexity of maintenance requirements. A building-by-building assessment would be required to provide an accurate picture of condition across the town centre.
 - **Who is responsible for the upkeep of these buildings:** Responsibility for the upkeep of a historic building rests with its owner. This may be a private individual, company, landlord, or a public body. If a building is in private ownership, the local authority does not have the power to require proactive maintenance unless the condition of the building deteriorates to a level that poses a risk to the building's integrity or the public.
 - **How can the Council ensure these buildings are maintained:** There is no statutory duty on owners to keep listed buildings in a state of good repair. Local authorities do not have the power to enforce routine maintenance. However, if a listed building is allowed to fall into serious disrepair, the Council may consider serving an Urgent Works Notice (UWN) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This can only be used where a listed building is vacant (or if the building is occupied, the works may be carried out only to those parts not in use), and works are urgently necessary for the building's preservation and are restricted to emergency repairs to keep a building wind and weatherproof and safe from collapse, or action to prevent vandalism or theft. The steps taken should be the minimum consistent with achieving this objective and should not involve an owner in great expense. The works specified should be those urgently necessary at the time and should not include precautionary or preventive work that may become necessary in the future (*Robbins v Secretary of State for the Environment* 1989).

- For non-listed buildings, the Council may, in specific circumstances, consider using a Section 215 Notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if the condition of land or buildings is adversely affecting the amenity of the area; a S215 Notice would require steps for remedying the condition of the land within a specified timescale. Section 215 is a relatively straightforward power that can achieve imaginative and effective improvements to the quality of the historic environment as an alternative or complementary action to Urgent Works Notices. It has a number of potential advantages, which are reflected in its increasing use:
 - (1) early consideration of a section 215 Notice could prevent the need for an Urgent Works Notice
 - (2) action can be taken against land and buildings and thus it is a useful tool for enabling improvements to both listed and unlisted buildings in conservation areas without any recourse to the Secretary of State.
 - (3) section 215 can apply to 'any land' which includes buildings or open space, whether vacant or occupied, and so can be used on those buildings where Urgent Works Notices could not be served in part or in full.
 - (4) a section 215 Notice can sometimes address problems outside the scope of Urgent Works Notices; these may include poor external maintenance, broken walls and fences, accumulated rubbish and overgrown gardens.
 - (5) section 215 can be applied, unlike Urgent Works Notices, to ecclesiastical buildings in use for ecclesiastical purpose, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens.
 - (6) The threat of a section 215 Notice can be enough to persuade the owner to carry out work. Section 215 Notices generally have a high rate of compliance.
 - (7) Subject to the owner's right of appeal, the local planning authority is entitled to carry out the works if the owner fails to comply with the Notice, and to reclaim the costs, which are registerable as a local land charge. If the owner appeals, the Notice is effectively suspended until the appeal is determined. For this reason, this legislation may not always be the most effective way of securing works which are needed urgently.

Agenda Item 7c

Planning Enforcement Policy

Committee:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	19 March 2026
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Committee on the Planning Enforcement Policy for Stafford Borough Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the Planning Enforcement Policy and arrangements for implementation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The Planning Enforcement service is under significant pressure to deal with a large number of enforcement complaints. The turnover of Enforcement Officers has contributed to the issue as each new officer needs time to build up their knowledge and understanding of each case in order to attempt to resolve them. The Enforcement Policy has been introduced to promote a more efficient approach to planning enforcement within the Borough.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Enforcement Team carries a large workload that places a significant demand on resources. The team's capacity is hindered by the volume of cases requiring investigation and leaves little time to allow prioritisation that would allow efficient caseload management.
- 3.2 The Council receives a high number of complaints relating to alleged breaches of planning control. The lack of an up-to-date and clear policy is contributing to the handling of the volume of complaints received. Clear guidance would be helpful to set out the type and nature of complaints that would be taken forward for investigation and those that would not require further investigation. This would allow the prioritisation of limited staff resources to those cases where the greatest harm is experienced.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Development Management and Planning Policy services are key statutory services and contribute to the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities:

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy. Creating the right conditions for economic growth and prosperity.

Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing. A safe and secure place to live for local people. A safe and cohesive borough and reduction in health inequalities.

Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment. Promote nature recovery, climate change resilience, public areas that are clean and tidy as well as improved public open spaces, play areas, parks and landscapes.

Priority 4 - Effective Council. Good customer experience and value for money for taxpayers.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 As reported to Cabinet in November 2024, Planning Enforcement is a discretionary service. It is not compulsory for an LPA to act against a breach of planning control or to take further action due to the wide nature of complaints. However, the service has a high profile and there is an expectation that the Council will investigate potential breaches of planning action and act where it is expedient and deemed to be in the public interest.
- 5.2 The planning system operates to regulate development and the use of land in the public interest. The effective and proper enforcement of planning controls is essential to protect the local environment and interests of the residents, visitors and businesses from the harmful effects of unauthorised development. The Council has a duty to investigate alleged breaches of planning control. A breach of planning control broadly means the carrying out of development or change of use of a building or dwelling without the grant of planning permission from the Council or deemed permission by government order.
- 5.3 The main objectives of planning enforcement are:
- (a) To remedy undesirable effects of unauthorised development
 - (b) To bring unauthorised activity under control to ensure that the credibility of the planning system is not undermined.

5.4 The Council's enforcement powers are discretionary and will only be exercised when it is considered expedient to do so. In considering the issue of expediency, the Council will have regard to:

- whether the breach of planning control unacceptably harms public amenity, or the existing use of land and buildings merit protection in the public interest.
- ensuring any enforcement action is commensurate with the breach of planning control to which it relates. Enforcement action will not normally be taken to remedy trivial or technical breaches of control which are considered to cause no harm to amenity. For example, work that is slightly larger than Permitted Development Rights allow for.
- ensuring that, if initial attempts to persuade an owner or occupier of a site to voluntarily remedy the harmful effects of unauthorised development fail, negotiations should not be allowed to hamper or delay whatever formal enforcement action may be required to make the development acceptable on planning grounds, or to compel it to stop.
- statutory time limits for taking enforcement action.
- relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

5.5 Reporting an alleged breach will need to accord with a set standard requiring

- Name and contact details of complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
- The exact location of the site.
- A description of the activity or development .
- The date it began (if known).
- The date work has completed (if known).
- Details of harm (such as noise, visual impact or safety issues)
- Photographs or supporting evidence

5.6 The identity of complainants is confidential. Where complainants are not willing to provide details, they can be requested to speak to their ward member.

- 5.7 The Enforcement Policy proposes a two-stage assessment process where the initial assessment considers the nature of the breach as well as harm experienced and a score assigned during the two-step assessment. These two tables are used in conjunction, for example, untidy land (1) that has been causing an issue for more than 6 months (1) and causes a highway safety issue (2) would score 4 overall. If a case scores 3 or more, an investigation will take place, and the case will progress to Tier 2. There may be negotiations as part of the initial investigation, to remedy the breach.
- 5.8 At the second stage the impact will be scored against an Expediency Assessment identifying whether the impact is low, medium or significant harm. A cumulative score will indicate whether the case proceeds to an investigation, or no further action and the complainant will be advised that the Council will close the case. Cases that go forward to investigation will be prioritised as high, medium, lower and low priority which will dictate the timescale for investigation.
- 5.9 If a breach is confirmed and negotiation does not resolve the issue, officers assess whether formal enforcement is expedient. This involves considering the level of planning harm caused and the likelihood of success if enforcement action is taken. A breach that scores 3 (significant harm) in any area will usually proceed directly to enforcement. If no individual issue scores 3, but the total score is 4 or more, enforcement is likely to be considered. If the cumulative score is 3 or below, no further action will be taken.
- 5.10 It is proposed to formally apply the new Enforcement Policy when workloads have reduced, however case prioritisation will be carried out immediately once the policy is approved. It is envisaged the new policy will formally be introduced at some stage in 2026, although this is dependent on retaining the current team of enforcement officers to reduce the backlog of cases. Each time an officer leaves, it results in a rise in the backlog of cases and delays while replacements are recruited.
- 5.11 There will be occasions where cases will bypass the enforcement policy whereby immediate action is necessary such as when a temporary stop notice or temporary injunction is required to deal with a serious breach.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications for the Council as a result of this Policy report.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The main risks associated with not having a Local Enforcement Policy in place are:

- Backlog of cases continue to grow.
- Lack of transparency in managing enforcement caseload and prioritisation.
- Lack of effective case management.
- Failure to make best use of planning enforcement resources.

The Enforcement Policy will ensure that breaches of planning control are investigated in accordance with good practice and legislation.

Case prioritisation will be carried out within the framework of the new policy and those cases causing greatest harm will be prioritised.

The policy will provide a transparent process to decision making and case prioritisation. This will also provide an audit trail of decisions linked to the policy.

Case management will be more efficient allowing cases to be triaged and not immediately added to the caseload (or backlog) for investigation. Only those cases that pass through the initial assessment will be taken forward to investigation.

Through the introduction of the Enforcement Policy, the residual risks are seen as low.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Planning Enforcement Policy

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet 7 November 2024 - Development Management Action Plan and Resources Request 2024/25

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Sushil Birdi

Telephone Number: 01543 464326

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Committee 19 March 2026

Key Decision: Yes

Planning Enforcement Policy

For Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council

Draft – September 2025

1. Introduction

This Planning Enforcement Policy sets out how Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council will investigate and respond to suspected breaches of planning control. It supports the councils' shared enforcement team in delivering a consistent, proportionate and transparent service for residents, businesses and communities. Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Although enforcement action is discretionary, this policy explains how both councils will decide what action to take, based on the level of harm and what is in the public interest.

Stafford and Cannock now operate a shared planning enforcement team. However, each council still has its own planning committees, decision-making structures and delegation arrangements. Where these differ, the policy clearly indicates which council a particular procedure applies to. This document is based on national guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relevant legislation, and examples of good enforcement practice from across the country.

2. What Is Planning Enforcement?

Planning enforcement is about making sure that development happens in line with national legislation, local planning policies and any conditions attached to planning permissions. It plays a key role in protecting the local environment and ensuring a fair and lawful planning system.

Most breaches of planning control are not criminal offences. However, enforcement action can be taken where development has occurred without the correct permission, or where planning conditions have not been followed.

Some types of unauthorised development are considered criminal offences from the outset. These include:

- Carrying out unauthorised works to a listed building
- Carrying out works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), or to trees within a Conservation Area
- Displaying advertisements without the required consent

All other breaches are treated as civil matters unless a formal Enforcement Notice is served and not complied with, which then becomes a criminal offence.

3. What Is a Breach of Planning Control?

A breach of planning control can include:

- Building or engineering works that do not have planning permission
- A material change of use of land or buildings without permission
- Not following the approved plans or conditions attached to a planning permission
- Failing to comply with planning obligations
- Unauthorised works to listed buildings or protected trees
- Displaying advertisements without consent
- Land or buildings left in an untidy condition where this harms local amenity

Planning enforcement time limits vary: a 10-year period applies to most development and use changes on or after April 25, 2024, while a 4-year period applies only to such breaches completed before that date. There is no time limit for breaches of listed building legislation, and some situations, like deliberate concealment, can extend these periods.

In rare cases where development has been deliberately concealed, the council may apply for a Planning Enforcement Order to allow late action.

4. What We Can and Cannot Investigate

We will investigate alleged breaches of planning control that fall within our legal powers and planning responsibilities. These include:

- Unauthorised building works or extensions
- A change of use of land or buildings
- Works to protected trees
- Works to listed buildings
- Untidy land that significantly affects the amenity of the area
- Development not in line with approved plans or planning conditions
- Unauthorised signs or advertisements
- Demolition in a Conservation Area without consent

There are some matters we cannot investigate through planning enforcement, such as:

- Neighbour disputes about land ownership or boundaries
- Breaches of private covenants or deeds
- Parking of vehicles on the highway or verges (this is a County Council or Police matter)
- Party wall issues or building control concerns
- Business activity from home where there is no clear harm or material change of use
- Issues of noise, smell, anti-social behaviour or pollution (these are investigated by Environmental Health or other agencies)
- Works that have planning permission or fall under permitted development rights

Where a concern falls outside the scope of planning enforcement, we will try to redirect it to the appropriate team or agency.

5. How to Report a Breach of Planning Control

You can report a suspected breach of planning control using the councils' online forms. If you cannot use the online form, please call the contact centre who will complete it with you over the phone. Providing clear and detailed information helps us to investigate the matter more efficiently.

When you report a breach, we require:

- Your name and contact details. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
- The exact location of the site
- A description of the activity or development you are concerned about
- The date it began (if known)
- Any harm you believe it is causing (such as noise, visual impact or safety issues)
- Any photographs or supporting evidence you may have

Both councils treat the identity of complainants in confidence. However, if a case proceeds to appeal or prosecution, you may be asked to provide a witness statement or attend a hearing. We will always discuss this with you first.

6. Confidentiality

All enforcement enquiries are treated confidentially. Your name and contact details will not be shared with the person or organisation under investigation. If your evidence is essential to the case and a formal appeal or legal action is required, we will contact you to discuss whether you are willing to be involved.

To assist in our investigation, you may be asked to complete a diary sheet of times and dates when you notice the alleged breach occurring, as part of your normal day to day activities. This is to assist the Council in planning effective visits and help demonstrate the intensity and impact of a suspected breach of planning control.

7. Assessing Harm and Deciding Whether to Act

The shared enforcement team uses a two-stage assessment to decide whether a breach should be formally investigated and, if necessary, whether enforcement action is justified. This includes a harm scoring system to ensure consistency and fairness.

Tier 1 – Initial Assessment

Each case is first assessed against a set of questions to understand the type and level of harm involved. Points are allocated based on the nature and location of the breach.

These two tables are to be used in combination. For example, untidy land (1) that has been causing an issue for more than 6 months (1) and causes a highway safety issue (2) would score 4 overall.

If a case scores 3 or more, an investigation will take place, and the case will progress to Tier 2. There may be negotiations as part of the initial investigation, to remedy the breach.

Low Harm – 1 point	Medium harm – 2 points	Significant harm – 3 points
Unauthorised signage and advertisements	Unauthorised development that would adversely affect the character and appearance of a conservation area or the setting of a listed building	Unauthorised works to a listed building or ancient monument
Unauthorised telecommunications equipment or satellite dishes on residential dwellings	Development of poor-quality housing, including large houses of multiple occupancy, flat conversions and residential use of outbuildings	Development/changes of use with serious implications upon the continued health and wellbeing of the public in Stafford or Cannock.
Unauthorised fences, walls and gates	Unauthorised telecommunications equipment not on a dwelling	Large scale development where a serious impact is felt over a wide area
Any breach of planning control which is temporary in nature	Breaches of planning conditions that result in harm to general amenity	Unauthorised works in progress to a tree protected by a tree preservation order or tree within a conservation area
Untidy land	Residential extensions that do not benefit from permitted development rights	

Descriptor	0	1	2
Is the breach in a conservation area?	No	Yes	
Is the breach in the greenbelt?	No	Yes	
Has the untidy land been causing an issue for more than 6 months?	No	Yes	
Does this require a site visit to determine the extent, prominence, scope or scale of the breach?	No		Yes
Is there a highway safety issue?	No		Yes
Is there a tree preservation order breach?	No	Yes	
Is this a statutory listed building?	No	Yes	

Tier 2 – Expediency Assessment

If a breach is confirmed and negotiation does not resolve the issue, officers assess whether formal enforcement is expedient. This involves considering the level of planning harm caused and the likelihood of success if enforcement action is taken.

A breach that scores 3 (significant harm) in any area will usually proceed directly to enforcement. If no individual issue scores 3, but the total score is 4 or more, enforcement is likely to be considered. If the cumulative score is 3 or below, no further action will normally be taken.

<p>Significant harm = 3 points</p>	<p>There is a serious harmful impact on the built environment or a serious impact on public health or amenity. It is not considered that planning consent would be granted.</p>
<p>Medium harm = 2 points</p>	<p>There is some impact on the built environment or some impact on public health or amenity. In cases where there is medium harm in some instances planning consent may not be granted. However, insufficient harm is caused by the development to warrant formal action. This will be based on experience and the likelihood of success at appeal of any enforcement proceedings.</p>
<p>Low harm = 1 point</p>	<p>There is a small impact on the built environment or a small impact on public health or amenity. In these cases, planning permission would likely be granted.</p>
<p>No harm = 0 points</p>	<p>There is no harm.</p>

8. Prioritisation and Timescales

To make the best use of available resources, enforcement cases are prioritised based on the potential harm caused. Each case is assigned a priority rating, which determines how quickly an investigation, which may include a site visit, will be carried out.

Priority	Type of breach	Timescale for investigation
Priority 1 – High	Serious harm or potential for irreversible damage, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works to listed buildings (demolition/alteration/disrepair) ▪ Demolition or significant development in a conservation area ▪ Works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area ▪ Development causing serious and immediate/irreparable harm, particularly to protected ecology or causing serious danger to the public 	1-2 working days
Priority 2 - Medium	Development in progress that may cause harm or become immune from enforcement, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational development already in progress causing medium level of harm impacting upon the wider area ▪ Development where potentially immune from enforcement within 6 months ▪ Development causing serious harm to amenity ▪ Breaches of condition/non compliance with approved plans causing serious harm to amenity 	10 working days
Priority 3 – Lower	Development complete, but causing some harm or minor breaches of conditions, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational development already in progress causing a lower level of harm than priority 2 and only to the immediate area ▪ Changes of use resulting in some harm to amenity ▪ Advertisements (other than flyposting) ▪ Breaches of condition/non-compliance with approved ▪ Plans causing non-serious harm to amenity 	15 working days
Priority 4 – Low	Minor breaches or untidy land issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes of use resulting in no harm to amenity ▪ Untidy land (other than where comes under Environment & Health legislation) 	20 working days

After the investigation, we aim to provide a response or update within 10 working days.

9. How Breaches Are Resolved

When a breach of planning control is confirmed, the enforcement team will consider a range of actions depending on the nature of the breach and the level of harm caused. These options include:

- No further action: Where the breach is minor, technical, or not causing harm.
- Further investigation: Where more evidence or site visits are needed to assess the breach.
- Negotiation: Informal contact with the owner to resolve the breach voluntarily.
- Invite a retrospective planning application: Where permission might be granted to regularise the development.
- Formal enforcement action: Where harm is significant or where negotiation has failed.

10. Enforcement Tools and Powers

The following is a list of some of the enforcement tools that may be used where it is considered proportionate and in the public interest:

Type of Enforcement Action	When we may use it	What it does
Section 330 Notice	Where it appears to the Council that a breach of planning control has occurred	Enables the Council to obtain information such as the name and address of any person with an interest in land and the start and end date of any use and the name and address of any person who has used the land for that purpose.
Planning Contravention Notice	Where it appears to the Council that a breach of planning control has occurred	Enables the Council to require information about ownership and interest in land and ask specific bespoke questions relevant to the investigation of the suspected breach of planning control. A failure to complete or return a notice within 21 days is an offence, as is providing false or misleading information on the notice
Temporary Stop Notice	Where it appears to the Council that a breach of planning control has occurred	A temporary stop notice can require an activity to cease or reduce or minimise the level of activity for a period of up to 56 days. The “immediate” cessation of activities should allow for the shutting down and making safe of an activity A temporary stop notice may not prohibit the use of a building as a dwelling house.

		Temporary Stop Notice can now be issued in respect of suspected breaches of Listed building control.
Enforcement Warning Notice	Where it appears to the Council that a breach of planning control has occurred	Where a local planning authority considers that unauthorised development has a reasonable prospect of being acceptable in planning terms, it can issue an enforcement warning notice. The notice will set out the matters that appear to be a breach of planning control and state that, unless an application is made by a specified date, further enforcement action may be taken. The issue of an enforcement warning notice constitutes taking enforcement action for the purposes of section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Enforcement Notice and Listed Building Enforcement Notices	An Enforcement Notice should only be issued where the local planning authority is satisfied that it appears to them that there has been a breach of planning control and it is expedient to issue a notice, taking into account the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations.	Specifies the reason(s) for it's service, the steps required to remedy the breach, the date it takes effect and the timeframe for compliance. There is a right of appeal against an Enforcement Notice. Non-compliance with the requirements of an extant Enforcement Notice is an offence. The requirements of an Enforcement Notice run in perpetuity with the land upon which it is served.
Stop Notice	Where a breach of planning control is causing very serious harm to public amenity and the environment and this harm could not be removed or alleviated by the imposition of conditions on a planning permission, the Council will consider a Stop Notice (after the service of an Enforcement Notice) in cases where urgent	The Stop Notice will refer to the Enforcement Notice to which it relates, specify the activity or activities that are required to cease, and the date that it takes effect.

	<p>action is necessary to bring about a cessation of a relevant activity before the expiry of the period of compliance of the related Enforcement Notice.</p>	
Breach of Condition Notice	<p>Where the breach of planning control relates to non-compliance with a condition on a planning permission or a limitation on a deemed planning permission has been exceeded, the Council will consider the expediency of serving a Breach of Condition Notice.</p>	<p>The Breach of Condition Notice will specify the steps required to comply with the condition(s) or limitation(s), the date that it takes effect and the time period for compliance.</p> <p>There is no right of appeal against a Breach of Condition Notice</p>
Section 215 Notice (Untidy Land Notice)	<p>In cases where the amenity of an area is adversely affected by the condition of land or buildings, the Council will consider the expediency of serving a Notice under s.215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</p>	<p>The Notice will specify the steps required to be taken to remedy the condition of the land or buildings, the time period within which the steps must be taken and the date that it takes effect.</p> <p>There is a right of appeal against a Section 215 Notice to the Magistrates Court</p>
Prosecution	<p>The Council will consider commencing a prosecution in the Courts against any person who has failed to comply with the requirement(s) of any of the following Notices where the date for compliance has passed and the requirements have not been complied with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Enforcement Notice (ii) Listed Building Enforcement Notice Conservation Area Enforcement Notice Breach of Condition Notice (iii) Section 215 Notice (iv) Stop Notice <p>The Council will also consider commencing a prosecution in the Courts where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) unauthorised works have been carried out to trees subject to a Tree 	<p>Before commencing any legal proceedings the Council will be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to offer a realistic prospect of conviction and that the legal proceedings are in the public interest.</p>

	<p>Preservation Order, or in a designated Conservation Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) an advertisement is being displayed without the necessary consent and the Council's request to remove it within a specified timescale has been declined or ignored c) unauthorised works have been carried out to a Listed Building d) unauthorised demolition has taken place in a Conservation Area e) the recipient of a Planning Contravention Notice has failed to provide a response within the prescribed time period or has supplied false or misleading information 	
Injunction	<p>Where an Enforcement Notice has not been complied with and a prosecution is not considered expedient or previous prosecution(s) have failed to remedy the breach of planning control, the Council will consider applying to the Courts for an injunction. Such action will only normally be considered if the breach is particularly serious and is causing, or likely to cause, exceptional harm.</p>	<p>Stop unauthorised works from being carried out.</p>
Direct Action	<p>Where any steps required by an Enforcement Notice have not been taken within the compliance period (other than the discontinuance of the use of land), the Council will consider whether it is expedient to exercise its power under s.178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)</p>	<p>The Council can enter the land and take the steps to remedy the breach; and recover from the person who is then the owner of the land any expenses reasonably incurred by them in doing so.</p>

Each case is assessed on its own merits. Any action must be proportionate to the harm caused. In all cases, the councils will follow the relevant legal processes and offer the right to appeal where applicable.

11. Unauthorised Encampment

The travelling community can experience difficulties finding an approved place to stay. This means that sometimes they stop on land without permission, including highway verges and lay-bys. This Council's approach is based on preventing unlawful occupation of land.

Encampments on Council land will result in legal proceedings to evict the travellers. In the case of highway land, such as verges and lay-bys, the matter will be taken up with Staffordshire County Council, which is the local highway authority.

Trespassing on land is a civil matter, with prevention of trespass being the responsibility of the landowner. Landowners will need to seek appropriate legal advice in these circumstances.

12. Proactive Monitoring

In addition to responding to complaints, the enforcement team will proactively monitor a sample of developments to check compliance with approved plans and conditions. This helps to ensure that development is taking place as expected and supports early intervention where needed.

Monitoring will be informed by building control data and site visits, with a random sample of permissions reviewed regularly.

13. Customer Service and Complaints

We aim to deliver a fair and responsive enforcement service. If you feel that we have handled a case well, we welcome your feedback.

If you are unhappy with how a case has been dealt with, please contact the officer handling the matter in the first instance. If your concerns are not resolved, you may use the council's formal complaints process. Complaints about the outcome of a planning decision will not normally be revisited unless new evidence has come to light.

14. Equality and Human Rights

Planning enforcement decisions must be taken with regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. We will consider the effect of any proposed action on the rights and circumstances of those affected. This includes ensuring that decisions do not discriminate and take account of protected characteristics such as age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, and gender reassignment.

Where appropriate, we will also consider how action may affect family life, home, and the peaceful enjoyment of property.

15. Reviewing This Policy

This joint policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains up to date and reflects any changes in law, guidance or operational arrangements. Future updates may include changes to timescales, decision-making processes or how resources are shared between the two councils.

Agenda Item 7(d)

Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee

Committee: Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 19 March 2026

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Portfolio: Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

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

2 Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Key Issues

3.1 The first stage in achieving a Member-led Overview and Scrutiny process is to develop a Work Programme for the Members of the Committee to own.

3.2 Accordingly, an up-to-date copy of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme is provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

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

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

5 Report Detail

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

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix: Work Programme

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File available in Law and Governance

Contact Officer: Jackie Allen

Telephone Number: 01785 619552

Ward Interest: Nil

Report Track: Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Committee - 19 March 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: N/A

Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

Additional Meeting (joint with Resources Scrutiny Committee):

Tuesday 31 March 2026 at 6:30pm - S106 Update

Future Items:

New Local Plan Update (July)
Development Strategy / Investment Prospectus
Biodiversity Net Gain
Rural Economy
Development Management Progress Review