

Dear Members

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford** on **Thursday 27 June 2024 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

27 JUNE 2024

Chair - Councillor F Beatty

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 5 March 2024 as previously published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Public Question Time - Nil
- 4 Councillor Session - Nil
- 5 Members' Items - Nil
- 6 Called In Items - Nil

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Membership





Chair - Councillor F Beatty

J A Barron	A M Loughran
F Beatty	D M McNaughton
B M Cross	A Nixon
P C Edgeller	J S Powell
E G R Jones	D P Rouxel

The Economy - Delivery Plan for 2023 - 2024

Business Objective 1: To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4

				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	
8		5			13


Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4



Significant reduction in the planning backlog and total number of applications on-hand.
 Good progress made in committing year 2 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) spend and delivery of outputs
 Stafford town centre transformation - contractors appointed for Station Approach and work set to start on-site in Q2 2024-25.



Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4


Delay to Local Plan with timetable currently being reviewed.

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
1.1	Assess the economic implications for the Borough over the medium and long term							
1.1.1	Review and assess all key programmes and major projects	Review of key projects and delivery plans	X				Key projects reviewed and delivery plans prepared for 2023/24. Details of key projects are referred to through the actions set out below	★
1.2	To facilitate the delivery of 500 new homes in the Borough per year including 210 affordable homes							
1.2.1	Complete five year land supply statement	Data extract Site visits complete Publication of statement	X				Statement completed and published - July 2023	★
1.2.2	Improve and maintain performance of development management	Develop Recovery Plan to tackle current backlogs of applications Produce quarterly updates setting out progress in reducing the backlog.	X			X	Backlog of applications has decreased significantly with total number of applications on-hand standing at 442. For comparison purposes the figure at the end of March 2023 was 946. Work is now being undertaken to develop an improvement plan to sustain performance going forward. Quarterly updates have been provided.	★

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
1.3	Deliver key projects and infrastructure proposals that will promote economic growth and investment for the Borough							
1.3.1	Delivery of the Stafford Town Centre Transformation Programme	<p>Completion of Market Square renovation</p> <p>Appointment of onsite contractors for Station Approach project</p> <p>Completion of Station Approach project</p> <p>Conclusion of discussions with third party landowners to progress commercial projects</p>		X	X		<p>Market Square renovation completed and re-opened on 28 October 2023.</p> <p>Contractor appointed and work set to start on site in Q2 2024.</p> <p>Contractor appointed and work set to start on site in Q2 2024 subject to regulatory approvals. Materials on order.</p> <p>The Council has acquired the Guildhall shopping centre and is in the process of acquiring the former Co-op department store.</p> <p>The Council is seeking to procure specialist professional advice to commence work on design, planning and procurement of demolition contractors for both sites and appointments will be made Q1 2024/25.</p>	

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
1.3.2	Delivery of the Stafford Station Gateway	<p>Completion of station access feasibility study</p> <p>Completion of delivery programme scoping exercise</p>		X	X		<p>Work continuing to be progressed with Network Rail and key operational partners to understand rail/access/and gateway development opportunities. Commitment to take Governance arrangements to Cabinet in Q1 2024.</p> <p>Delivery programme and scoping exercise completed. Exercise and outputs rigorously challenged and scrutinised as part of the DLUHC validation process.</p>	
1.3.3	Supporting the development of proposed Meecebrook Garden Community	<p>Completion of Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC)for the railway station</p> <p>Completion of remaining technical studies (excluding transport modelling)</p>		X		X	<p>SOBC completed, final account invoice received, commission closed.</p> <p>Ongoing, however significant progress in relation to the Health Impact Assessment which has been completed.</p>	

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
		Completion of detailed master planning and viability studies				X	Detailed masterplanning and viability studies have not yet completed.	
		Completion of collaboration agreement				X	Work on collaboration agreements has commenced.	
1.3.4	Stone Leisure	Delivery phase for Westbridge Park initiated			X		All works completed at Westbridge Park - Play facilities and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) opened to public in October 2023. Wheeled Sports opened 1 December 2023. Car parks works completed and building in place. Formal opening scheduled for April 2024	
		Planning consent granted.	X					
		Work on site commences	X					
1.4	Work in partnership to generate economic and sustainable growth for the long-term prosperity of our residents, visitors and businesses							
1.4.1	Develop Stafford as a hub of productivity to help businesses develop, grow and thrive	New and existing businesses supported to grow and build confidence in Stafford as a hub of productivity with a balanced economy.	X	X	X	X	Delivery of UKSPF financial support via grants to existing businesses in Stafford. Year 2 completed. Delivery of non-financial business support to existing Stafford businesses Year 2 completed.	

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
							<p>Signposting support to pre and post start-up businesses across Stafford.</p> <p>Financial support to Staffordshire County Council Green Solutions programme to deliver grants and energy efficiency reports.</p> <p>Inward investment activities to support organisations looking to relocate or expand.</p> <p>Skills support to assist organisations looking to recruit and retain employees.</p>	
1.4.2	Promote our visitor economy to demonstrate the offer in the Borough	Relaunch Our Beautiful Borough (OBB) visitor economy campaign	X	X	X	X	<p>The roll out of the campaign continues to gain traction with significant interactions over the past 12 months.</p> <p>There are 860 unique listings of things to see and do including food and drink in the Borough on the OBB website</p>	

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
		Development of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council				X	1400 hits to the 'Plan your Visit' page Business support (both financial and non financial) to tourism hospitality and leisure providers. LVEP Board Recruitment and Growth Plan presented in March. Ongoing progress.	
1.4.3	Unlock economic opportunities in our rural areas	<p>Launch of Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant programme</p> <p>Grant awards made under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund rural business to business grant programme</p> <p>Completion of UK Shared Prosperity Funded rural hub feasibility study</p>		X	X	X	<p>Year 2 REPF community grants delivered to approved applicants</p> <p>Expressions of interest received and 10 identified projects to go forward for REPF funding in 2024/25 allocation.</p> <p>Delivered and shared with SPF Board and stakeholders.</p> <p>Working within the SCC Rural Economy Steering group to look at interventions identified within the Rural Economic Strategy</p>	★

	Objective & Actions	Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
							including supporting market towns such as Stone.	
1.4.4	Support the facilitation of lifelong learning to create a local workforce with specialist skills that can respond to growth ambitions	Delivery of grants to support apprenticeships and training via UK Shared Prosperity Fund business to business rural grant scheme		X	X	X	Grants delivered to take on apprenticeships and upskill employees Referrals to Stafford College	★
1.5	Develop a new Local Plan that reflects our Corporate ambitions for growth							
1.5.1	Revise and refresh the Local Plan	Appropriate sites for future development for housing, employment and open space identified Updated evidence base completed that includes infrastructure, viability and economic recovery issues.		X	X		The approved Local Development Scheme sets out the key stages leading to the adoption of new Local Plan (2023/24), subject to review. New Local Plan Preferred Option completed and implications of Government planning reforms on subsequent stages of the Local Plan 2020-2040 progressing.	▲
1.5.2	Embed high quality design into Planning Policy to ensure that Stafford is an attractive place that people want to live in, promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting future investment.	Local design codes linked to New Local Plan progressed	X				Government's proposals through NPPF for local design codes confirmed and work progressing aligned to Local Plan during Spring 2024	▲

Agenda Item 7(b)

Business Planning Report

Committee:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2024
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the programme of business considered by the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee in 2023/24 with a view to the report being submitted to the Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee approve this report as its Annual Report to the Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To update the Council of items considered at the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee in the 2023/24 Municipal year.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 During the past Municipal Year, the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee considered a wide variety of issues that has helped to embrace its continuing role to ensure that the Council delivers sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.
- 3.2 The Committee controls its own Work Programme which is already populated with a range of issues for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

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 During the 2023/24 Municipal Year, the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee has considered a wide variety of issues that supported the Council's Business Objective of delivering sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.
- 5.2 In order to achieve this, the Committee have received regular updates concerning the Economic Growth and Regeneration Projects throughout the Borough.
- 5.3 A Task and Finish Review Group has commenced regarding Town centre Events.
- 5.4 Other items that the Committee considered included the following:-
- Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Development Management Performance
 - New Local Plan 2020-2040
 - Meecebrook Garden Community
 - Stafford Town Centre Transformation / Future High Street Fund
 - Economic Growth Development and Regeneration Projects
- 5.5 The Committee has received presentations on the following:
- Business and Leisure Tourism
 - Development Management
- 5.6 The Committee continues to control its own Work Programme and regularly makes appropriate adjustments.
- 5.7 Under its Terms of Reference, the Committee has received regular reports that monitored both operational and financial performance.
- 5.8 The Work Programme is populated with a variety of issues for the forthcoming Municipal Year.
- 5.9 It is intended that this report, with the addition of any appropriate information concerning the current meeting, be taken to the next available meeting of the Council as the report back from this Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Article 6, Paragraph 6.3 of the Constitution whereby the Committee is required to report annually to the Council on its workings and future Work Programme.

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 of our community 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

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File in Law and Governance

Contact Officer: Jackie Allen

Telephone Number: 01785 619552

Ward Interest: Nil

Report Track: Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee - 27 June 2024 (Only)

Key Decision: N/A

Agenda Item 7(c)

Stafford Regeneration Projects Update

Committee:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2024
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Committee on progress across a number of key development and regeneration projects within Stafford town centre.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report is noted.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 This report sets out the main updates that have occurred since Committee was last updated. Work continues across the full programme of projects even where individual projects are not contained within this update.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The regeneration programme currently underway in Stafford town centre supports delivery of all four Business Objectives in the Council's Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024. It also delivers against the five Growth Priorities in the Economic Growth Strategy for Stafford Borough 2020-2025.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Members are aware that the £1m refurbishment of the Market Square in Stafford was completed and formally reopened in October 2023, the first of a number of projects in the Stafford Town Centre Transformation Programme that are supported by the Future High Streets Fund, Borough and County Council investment.

- 5.2 The Transformation Programme onsite works move next to the approach to Stafford railway station where contractors have been appointed to deliver improvement works to the concourse, new street furniture, increased disabled parking close to the station, road resurfacing and a new public short-stay car park. Officers have been working with stakeholders Network Rail, Avanti and Staffordshire County Council to complete all associated approvals whilst materials are on order.
- 5.3 The transformation of the high street in Stafford has been significantly progressed following the Council's decisions in October 2023 and December 2023 to acquire the former Co-operative Department Store and the Guildhall Shopping Centre and associated retail and commercial premises. Securing ownership of strategic sites is the key to moving regeneration projects forward.
- 5.4 Plans for redevelopment of the former Co-op include a mixture of retail and residential use along with improved facilities to accommodate a market inside. Whilst indicative plans were produced to secure the funding, a detailed design process is now underway ahead of public engagement and consultation and a subsequent planning application.
- 5.5 In respect of the Guildhall an initial programme has been drafted that would see public engagement starting early next year ahead of submission of a planning application for redevelopment. The funding currently available to the Council will enable preparation works such as demolition but private sector investment will need to be secured to deliver the redevelopment of the site.
- 5.6 Due to the scale and proximity of the two regeneration schemes the Council are procurement a single demolition contractor to carry out works at the former Co-op and Guildhall. Tender documents are being finalised and will be issued at the end of the month.
- 5.7 In addition to the Future High Streets Funded programme, the County Council are also leading on two further significant developments within the town centre at Eastgate and the Staffordshire History Centre. The Eastgate regeneration project is focused around the former Magistrates Court site and the Wedgwood Building.
- 5.8 In May 2024 the County Council announced that they have appointed ION Developments to take forward the Eastgate regeneration scheme. Initial proposals have been submitted by ION for residential and mixed-use developments on the sites including the potential reuse of a large part of the former county council offices which are currently vacant.

- 5.9 The Staffordshire History Centre project brings together collections from the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, the County Museum and the William Salt Library and will create a county wide programme of outreach activities for schools, families, community groups and the public. The project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 5.10 Work has been underway onsite since early 2023 and includes an extension to the existing Staffordshire Record Office on Eastgate Street which will incorporate the restored William Salt Library buildings. The modern glazed link between the Library and the record office creates a new entrance and permanent exhibition space to showcase the collections. Extra strong rooms will provide space for a further 55 years of collections and a new learning space for schools and courses for adult learners.

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

None

8 Previous Consideration

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee, September 2022 to date

Cabinet 5 October 2023, Cabinet 7 December 2023

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer:	Michelle Smith
Telephone Number:	01785 619 335
Ward Interest:	Forebridge
Report Track:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee - 27 June 2024 (Only)
Key Decision:	No

Agenda Item 7(e)

Work Programme - Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

Committee: Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 27 June 2024

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Portfolio: Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

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 Recommendations

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:	Ian Curran
Telephone Number:	01785 619220
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee - 27 June 2024 (Only)
Key Decision:	N/A

Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme

Monday 23 September 2024 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Friday 6 September 2024

Officer Reports: Q1 Performance Update
Head of Transformation and Assurance

Work Programme

Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Monday 4 November 2024

Officer Reports: Q2 Performance Report
Head of Transformation and Assurance

Work Programme

Thursday 13 March 2025 at 6:30pm

Report Deadline: Wednesday 26 February 2025

Officer Reports: Q3 Performance Report
Head of Transformation and Assurance

Work Programme

Future Items:

Task and Finish Group - Town Centre Events (ongoing)

Local Plan / Meecebrook

Stafford Station Gateway

UKSPF

Tourism (including Airbnb)

Town Centre Regeneration

Monitoring of S106

Development Management Update