

Stafford Borough is changing... help us shape it.

New Local Plan 2025 - 2045

Scoping and Participation
Consultation - 2026





Stafford Borough New Local Plan 2025 - 2045

Scoping the Issues and Early Participation

Stafford Borough is changing - help us shape it.

We are at the early stages of creating this new Local Plan, and it's very important to us that you're part of the process from the beginning. This is a great opportunity to help make sure we're going in the right direction from the start.

We're currently trying to understand the main issues facing our Borough and how we might be able to use the Local Plan to address them - you're the best people to help us understand this.

The new Stafford Borough Local Plan will replace the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 adopted in June 2014 and Part 2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough adopted in January 2017. The new Local Plan will guide where new development takes place across the Borough area over the Plan period 2025-2045 by describing what change will occur and identify how places will be shaped in the future.

Preparation of the New Local Plan must follow the statutory stages set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, including defined gateway stages, as reflected in the Council's Local Development Scheme. This document forms part of the early participation and engagement stage of plan preparation under the new plan making system. This is to ensure that local people and other stakeholders are fully engaged in the process, which is summarised below. Whilst the Council will aim to meet this timetable due to the complex nature of the work the programme will be kept under regular review.

How things are now

Addressing the Climate Emergency

The Council has a Net Zero Carbon goal by 2035, a Climate Change Strategy, and a Corporate Plan that identifies "Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment" as one of the four major priorities.

All Staffordshire District / Borough authorities have jointly committed to fully explore climate responsive policy development, subject to Member approval, feasibility and viability considerations

Our commitment remains that we will do all we can through the Local Plan to ensure we mitigate and adapt to Climate Change through reducing carbon emissions, increasing biodiversity and managing flood risks.

Protecting our unique places and landscapes

The Borough's rich heritage, spanning prehistoric origins through Roman, medieval, and industrial eras, forms a vital part of our identity and daily experience. The natural landscape of the borough is characterised by flat, low-lying land between the rivers Trent, Penk and Sow. Much of the area is intensively farmed agricultural land (including stock farming), interspersed with ancient and semi-natural woodland and grasslands. The upland landscape in the south-east of the borough is nationally recognised through its designation as part of the Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

The borough contains Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance designated under The Convention on Wetlands, known as the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental environmental treaty which came into force in 1975) at Aqualate Mere, Chartley Moss and Cop Mere, 15 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 4 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Cannock Chase, Motte Meadows, Chartley Moss and Pasturefields.

There are two areas of Green Belt in the borough. Extensive parts of the north of the borough lie within the North Staffordshire Green Belt while part of the south-eastern area of the borough is designated as part of the West Midlands Green Belt.

Quality of life and affordability

We're an area in demand for housing. Median house prices and affordability ratios in the borough are below national averages, but above those for the West Midlands. The median housing affordability ratio for workplace-based earnings in 2021 was 7.71, compared to 9.05 for England and 7.50 for the West Midlands.

Traffic and Transport

The borough has excellent transport links, including the M6, West Coast Mainline rail and in future including access to the strategic rail network, with proposed High Speed 2 (HS2). Although the borough is relatively self-contained, there are important economic linkages with both the West Midlands and North Staffordshire conurbations.

Many of our local roads are reaching or have reached their capacity to accommodate cars. This causes congestion and air quality issues on some of our main transport corridors and neighbourhoods. We have some great opportunities to improve our accessibility to public transport, cycling and walking but they need the right investment to be realised. We are also a rural place, so whilst its right to expand our reliance on more sustainable, low carbon methods of travel we must accept that it won't be an answer for all of us.

Securing Economic Prosperity

We are home to some really important sources of employment - Newcastle and Stafford Group College, Staffordshire University, Stafford Hospital, General Electrics. These are important sources of employment for local people and attract other forms of investment to the borough. They need to be supported so that they can continue to be successful in the future. We also need to make sure that we support businesses through challenging and volatile economic times to make sure that the borough is economically prosperous.

Stafford Borough has a relatively strong economy. Unemployment rates have been consistently lower than the national average. Stafford Borough has a relatively high skills level, with 40.9% of residents have Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications, 50.6% having an apprenticeship, and 35.1% having level 4 qualifications and above. The average earnings of borough residents are higher than the West Midlands and England averages. But the average earnings for jobs in the borough are below the averages for the West Midlands and England.

Development and Infrastructure

This plan needs to make sure there is a more diverse offering of development opportunities in the borough, both in terms of location, size, type and tenure. It will also be important that new infrastructure is delivered alongside new development, to reduce pressures on existing facilities. This must include public transport, education, sewerage treatment facilities, health care and open space.

Local Plan Vision

As part of the new Local Plan, we need to develop a land use planning (spatial) vision for the future of the borough. To help inform the spatial vision we would like to know your thoughts.

- (1) What would you like this borough to be like in the future?
- (2) What do you think we should change and how?
- (3) What would you change in your local neighbourhood or area to make it a better place to live?

What should we be considering?

We would also like to know what you think are the things we really need to be considering in developing our evidence base. We would like to know your thoughts on:

- (1) What matters or issues should be looked at by the new Local Plan?
- (2) Why are these matters or issues important?

Please feel free to refer to climate change, the economy, housing, heritage, the environment, infrastructure, transport, community facilities and health in your response.

Key Themes (proposed)

The Local Plan will cover lots of themes and we'd like to know your thoughts on the following questions.

Theme 1: Addressing Climate Emergency

What do we need to do in response to climate change and the climate emergency?

Theme 2: Design, Healthy Lifestyles and Safe Communities

How can we make our communities healthier, provide better facilities and support high quality design in new development?

Theme 3: Nature Recovery and Biodiversity

What is required to protect our high-quality environments and help to deliver nature recovery?

Theme 4: Protecting Landscapes, Townscapes and Heritage

How can we protect our unique heritage, natural and town landscapes?

What aspects of the borough's heritage matter most to you, how it can be protected, and how it should shape sustainable development into the future?

Theme 5: Transport and Connectivity

Do you find it easy to move around freely and get to where you want to go?

Theme 6: Right Infrastructure in the Right Places

What new infrastructure, services and facilities do we need to plan for and where?

Theme 7: Meeting our Housing Needs and Delivering the Right Types of Housing

What type of homes do need and where do we need them?

Do you think it is better to deliver housing in one go or phased, so that new facilities and infrastructure can be provided? Should we have smaller sites so the new housing can be accommodated within the existing community?

Theme 8: Securing Economic Prosperity

How do we attract more investment and jobs into the Borough?

Engagement

Are there any community groups or local groups you think we should be talking to? If so, please provide details.

How can I have my say on this consultation document?

This consultation is an early engagement exercise intended to inform the scope, evidence base and strategic direction of the Local Plan. It does not constitute publication of a draft plan for the purposes of submission, examination or adoption.

Consultation on the new Local Plan 2025-2045: Scoping the Issues and Early Participation will take place between 8 June and 28 July 2026. Please provide any responses by 12 noon on Tuesday 28 July 2026.

We strongly encourage responses to be made using the pro-forma available on the Council's website at www.staffordbc.gov.uk/Strategic-Planning-and-Placemaking-consultations and emailing completed forms to strategicplanningconsultations@staffordbc.gov.uk

Alternatively, if you choose to use e-mail please identify the question, section or page number to which your comments refer.

How will my comments be used?

We will acknowledge receipt of your comments and fully consider responses for the next stage of the plan-making process, although the Council will not engage through individual correspondence. All comments received will be published on the Council's website in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will be processed on the lawful basis that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and in the exercise of official authority.

Protecting Your Privacy

We believe you should always know what data we collect from you and how we use it, and that you should have meaningful control over both. As part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, and in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, we have updated our Privacy Policy.

We will only use your personal information to send you information on the Local Plan and associated planning policy matters. You can find information about how we handle your personal data by visiting www.staffordbc.gov.uk/privacynotices and if you have any queries or would like to unsubscribe from receiving information please contact the Strategic Planning and Placemaking team using the details above.