



Local Development Scheme 2022

Stafford Borough Council

Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040
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1. Introduction

Stafford Borough Council is required to produce a Local Development Scheme which sets out the Council's commitment to the production of various planning policy documents and a timetable for their production.

This Local Development Scheme covers the period 2022 – 2026. It replaces all previous Local Development Schemes. The Stafford Borough Local Development Scheme will:

- Define the Development Plan for the area
- Set out a schedule and a profile for proposed planning policy documents
- Explain how progress in producing planning policy documents against the Local Development Scheme will be monitored, and how the LDS will be reviewed.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 and came into immediate effect. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Local Authorities must each produce a Local Plan that is in conformity with the NPPF and the NPPG.

Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. The adopted Statement of Community Involvement establishes the community engagement and involvement techniques for planning documents. Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For this reason, Local Planning Authorities should have an up to date Local Plan in place.

Under the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by a Parish Council, or an organisation or body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum to provide detailed guidance on specific issues. These will be subject to independent Examination and a local Referendum. If approved at the Referendum the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Development Plan used for decision making.

2. Stafford Borough Development Plan

The Development Plan for Stafford Borough currently consists of the Plan for Stafford Borough adopted on 19 June 2014 and the Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 adopted on 31 January 2017. These Plans replace and supersede all saved policies of the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001. In addition Stafford Borough is covered by the Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire 2015-2030, adopted on 16 February 2017, and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Waste Joint Waste Local Plan 2010-2026, adopted on 22 March 2013, both produced by Staffordshire County Council.

The Plan for Stafford Borough sets out the vision, key objectives and spatial strategy for the Borough. It is the over-arching policy document to which any other planning policy documents must comply. The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 sets out the approach to development in the sustainable settlement hierarchy by establishing settlement boundaries for Stafford, Stone and the Key Service Villages, and boundaries for the Recognised Industrial Estates. It also includes a policy on protecting social and community facilities.

As stated above Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by a Parish Council, or an organisation or body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum to provide detailed guidance on specific issues. The following Neighbourhood Plans have been made (adopted) and form part of the Development Plan for Stafford Borough in determining planning applications within the relevant Parishes alongside the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough and Part 2:

- Gnosall Neighbourhood Plan made on 24 November 2015
- Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan made on 26 July 2016
- Hixon Neighbourhood Plan made on 22 November 2016
- Colwich Neighbourhood Plan made on 22 November 2016
- Barlaston Neighbourhood Plan made on 23 July 2019
- Stone Neighbourhood Plan made on 20 July 2021

Further information on Neighbourhood Plans contained in section 3.

Monitoring the delivery of the Plan for Stafford Borough and Part 2 policies is undertaken annually, the results of which are reported in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

3. Planning Policy Documents

Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040

The Local Plan 2020-2040 will fully replace the Plan for Stafford Borough (PFSB) and the PFSB Part 2 with a new development strategy, site allocations and Development Management policies.

Process Stage	Date
Commencement	July 2017
Issues and Options	July 2018 to April 2020
Preferred Options	October to December 2022
Publication	July to September 2023
Submission	November 2023
Examination	February 2024
Adoption	October 2024

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

In April 2018 the Council adopted a Design SPD and a Shopfronts and Advertisements SPD to provide further guidance on specific matters linked to adopted policies within the Plan for Stafford Borough. SPDs do not form part of the statutory Development Plan are subject to consultation prior to adoption. The Design SPD replaced the previous Space About Dwellings & Extensions to Dwellings Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council is considering adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) alongside the new Local Plan. CIL is a levy that local authorities in England and Wales can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money raised from CIL can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods need, such as new or safer road schemes, footpaths and park improvements, or a new health centre.

Process Stage	Date
Commencement	Completed
Draft Charging Schedule	Spring 2023
Submission of Draft Charging Schedule	Summer 2023
Examination (subject to Inspector availability)	Spring 2024
Adoption	Autumn 2024

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted on 20 November 2018. It sets out how and when people can get involved in the planning process. It explains the different stages of the plan-making process, and the various methods the Council will use to gather views on emerging planning policy. It also sets out how planning applications will be publicised, and how to put forward views. It outlines who is involved in making planning decisions, their roles, and how people can get involved in the process.

Supporting Evidence

Sound Planning Policy documents rely upon a robust and up to date evidence base. The Council will maintain an up to date evidence base to support policy production.

All revised and updated evidence documents will be published on the Council's website.

Whilst a number of current evidence based documents are listed below, it should be noted that the Council will publish others in the course of preparing new planning policy documents to improve the evidence base for the Development Plan.

Background and technical studies forming part of the evidence base include:

- Playing Pitch and Sport Facilities Assessments
- The Housing Monitor: Land for New Homes
- Economic and Housing Development Needs Assessment
- Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments
- Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHLEAA)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Study
- Assessment of Reasonable Alternative Location Options for a New Settlement / Major Urban Extensions

- Town Centre Capacity Assessment
- Stafford Town Transport Assessment – Growth Options
- Integrated Transport Strategy and associated Transport reports
- Historic Environment Site Assessments
- Ecological Site Assessments
- Landscape Character Site Assessments
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Staffordshire County Council Education update
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment – Stage 1
- Developer Site Information – proposed allocations

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

The production and consultation on planning policy documents is assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process, incorporating the requirements detailed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The requirements for the Habitats Regulations Assessment Directive are dealt with separately.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by a Parish Council, or an organisation or body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum to provide detailed guidance on specific issues. The initial stage in production of a Neighbourhood Plan is the designation of a Neighbourhood Area. In Stafford Borough twelve Neighbourhood Areas have been designated, all of which are Parishes. The dates of designation are set out below together with relevant web-site links for the Parish Councils.

The individual Parish Council's are responsible for producing the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore for information regarding production timescales please contact the relevant Parish Council, details can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Parish Council name and web address, the designation date for a Neighbourhood Area and the made / adopted date for their Neighbourhood Plan.

Parish Council	Web Address	Designation date	Made / adopted date
Barlaston	www.barlaston.org.uk	4 Jul 2013	23 Jul 2019
Colwich	www.colwich.info	7 Feb 2013	22 Nov 2016
Doxey	www.doxeyparishcouncil.gov.uk	2 Jul 2020	N/A
Eccleshall	www.eccleshallparishcouncil.org	4 Jul 2013	26 Jul 2016
Gnosall	www.gnosallparishcouncil.org.uk	4 Jul 2013	24 Nov 2015
High Offley	www.highoffleyparishcouncil.org.uk	3 Mar 2016	20 Mar 2020
Hixon	www.hixon.gov.uk	4 July 2013	22 Nov 2016
Hopton and Coton	www.hoptonandcotonparishcouncil.org.uk	5 Mar 2020	N/A
Sandon and Burston	-	7 Feb 2013	5 Jan 2017
Stone Town	www.stonetowncouncil.gov.uk	8 Dec 2015	20 Jul 2021
Swynnerton	www.swynnertonparishcouncil.org.uk	3 Jul 2014	N/A
Yarnfield and Cold Meece	www.ycm-pc.org.uk	5 Aug 2021	N/A

4. Council Procedures and Risk Assessment

Council Procedures

Stafford Borough Council has a Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Full Council structure. The Cabinet will agree proposals for all draft policy documents, will review evidence, lead the consultation process, and assess results from the community involvement and consultation stages.

Full Council will approve the submission and adoption of the finalised policy documents, based on recommendations from Cabinet

Risk Assessment

In preparing the Local Development Scheme it is important to acknowledge that the work programme has been established on the existing maximum resource capacity contained within the Strategic Planning and Placemaking Team. This resource capacity is 4 Full Time Employees.

The principle 'risk' for the process would be a delay occurring in any preparation stage through to adoption of an individual planning policy document. The main areas of risk, which may lead to a delay in the implementation of the work programme, are set out below.

Whilst the Council will seek to ensure that the Local Plan is progressed in accordance with the latest timetable and minimise any risks of delay it should be noted that the following external factors are beyond the Council's control and may have an impact:

- Changes in Government legislation, regulations and policy
- Unanticipated scale and nature of consultation responses received including new evidence submitted unexpectedly
- Failure of key partners and other agencies to deliver evidence on time and make responses to key elements of the process
- Unanticipated delays in external events such as resource capacity of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for the Examination process or failure to deliver robust arrangements for this process

It should be noted that the following risks can be considered and effectively managed by the Council:

- Staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and sickness absences leading to inadequate skills base
- Political changes, procedural delays or failure to meet Council deadlines
- Non-conformity and failure in the tests of soundness for new planning policy documents

5. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and Review

The Government requires that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) is reviewed when necessary and kept up to date by taking account of progress on the programme and monitoring of the evidence base and adopted policies. However there may be the need to review the LDS more frequently if unforeseen changes occur to the Local Plan programme.

The LDS will be reviewed through the annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which monitors policies from the beginning of April to the end of March. The AMR will be published before 31 December each year.

The AMR will review actual plan progress over the year compared to the targets and milestones set out in the LDS. It will assess:

- whether Stafford Borough Council is meeting, or is on track to meet, the targets and consultation milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme;
- if the Council is falling behind schedule or has failed to meet a target or milestone, the reasons for this;
- the need to update the LDS in light of the above, and if so, the necessary steps and timetable;
- whether any policies need to be replaced to meet sustainable development objectives; and
- what action needs to be taken if policies need to be replaced.