

Deputy Leader Statement 2017/18



INTRODUCTION

East Staffordshire Borough Council has three Corporate Priorities:

- **Value For Money Council Services:**
Protecting your money
- **Promoting Local Economic Growth:**
To benefit local people by turning aspiration into reality
- **Protecting and Strengthening Communities:**
Love where you live

The following statement sets out how the Deputy Leader for Planning and Neighbourhoods and officers of the Council will contribute to achieving these priorities.

However throughout the statement there may be examples of joint delivery with other Executive Members as well as managers from other sections. The activities outlined in the statement are often cross-cutting themes with overlaps into other areas.

The statement also highlights past successes by highlighting the Council's key achievements in 2016/17.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016/17

Over the past 12 months, the Council has been working hard to improve its services and is currently on track to achieve 100% of this portfolio's milestones set for 2016/17 by the end of the financial year.

Some of these achievements are highlighted in the following section.

Neighbourhood Working

During 2016/17 the Neighbourhood Working Fund (NWF) was reviewed and a new scheme was developed. Promotion of the new Neighbourhood Fund (NF) began in January 2017 with a launch event at the Brewhouse. An instructional film outlining the new process was shot and this will be available on the Council's website for all interested parties to view. Projects identified for delivery in 2016/17 under the terms of the existing Neighbourhood Working Fund proceeded through to completion as in previous years.

Following a review of Ward Action Service Plans (WASPs) by the Scrutiny (Value for Money Council Services) Committee, a number of amendments were made to the scheme in order to enhance its accessibility by elected members. In addition, the scheme was renamed and is now known as the Councillors Community Fund (CCF).

The Neighbourhood Working Team had a successful year in delivering NWF projects as well as three independent community led 'Open Space Improvement' projects.

Continuous Improvement in Planning Services

The Council continued with its multi-disciplinary development, ensuring that it has a productive and versatile team, and continued to maintain top quartile performance in the determination of planning applications. SMARTER Planning Champion Status was achieved through the maximisation of online working, building on initiatives such as E-consultations and use of the

Planning Portal as the preferred way of submitting a planning application. The Council is the first local authority in Staffordshire to be given this status and the first borough council in the wider West Midlands area. The Council developed and launched its Section 106 Dashboard which provides enhanced visibility and understanding of the timescale and progress of expenditure associated with completed agreements. Working to the priority of value for money services the Council also devised a commissioning approach to services and entered into a contract with Tamworth Borough Council for the provision of a specialist tree officer to help with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and professional advice to the Planning team. This will be built on in the future with a view to maximising opportunities when they arise.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Council continued to support the significant programme of plans across the Borough, building on the experience it has gained over the last couple of years and through working in partnership with those community organisations.

New and Revised Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Following formal consultation the Council adopted the Housing Choices SPD. A number of other SPDs were also investigated to identify a programme for future developments which includes revisions to existing SPDs such as Open Spaces, Housing Choices and Parking, as well as new SPDs for the future including Suitable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and Sustainability.

Local Land Charges

The Council has continued to work closely with the Land Registry and the Local Government Association regarding the future transfer of the Local Land Charges Register to the Land Registry. It has also been proactive in its approach to legislative changes to the Con29 searches and charging.

Monitoring the Local Plan

In addition to the annual Local Authorities Monitoring Report, a mid-year report was introduced to report on the progress of housing developments.

East Staffordshire Town Centres Regeneration Programme

Following a successful stakeholders' workshop in July a joint programme with Staffordshire County Council and the local Chamber of Commerce was initiated with the intention to introduce a number of projects and work-streams which will revitalise the borough's town centres.

In order to brighten up its Town Centres and bring a degree of attractiveness that our residents look for, the Council has considered the feasibility of improving the landscaping and art work on its roundabouts and 'high profile' town centre public open spaces. By undertaking these projects the Council is better placed to attract sponsorship for these spaces. The 'pilot project' development of a 'public art' installation on the Swan Bed in Stapenhill Gardens has helped the Council to build on both its internal and external partnership working.

OBJECTIVES FOR 2017/18

2016/17 has been another successful period for the Council, but it is determined to build on this platform as it moves forward into the new financial year. It will continue to further improve service delivery, performance and value for money. This will be achieved through delivery of the Council's three Corporate Priorities, which will be supported by the following objectives and targets led by the Planning and Neighbourhoods area.

The New Neighbourhood Fund (Targets PN01; PN02; PN03; PN04)

The new Neighbourhood Fund will come into operation from April 2017 and will seek to provide residents and interested groups with the opportunity to develop significant, 'high-impact' projects that will have a real and long lasting impact on our local communities. There will be an ongoing process of project promotion to ensure interested parties are aware of the scheme and are able to engage. As a new scheme, the Deputy Leader will lead on a review of progress after 12 months of operation.

As 2017/18 will mark one year of the new Councillors Community Fund (CCF), a briefing workshop will be provided by officers to ensure members are fully engaged with the scheme. In addition, the Council will seek to raise the public profile of the fund through various promotional means such as; an improved website presence, photo opportunities and press releases.

Continuous Improvement in Planning Services (Targets PN05; PN06; PN08; PN09; PN10)

The Council will continue with its multi-disciplinary team development, and through the combination of development and where appropriate through commissioning, it will be able to be flexible and resilient to market changes and challenges. It will continue to monitor determination of planning applications and ensure that performance is maintained and improved.

From July 2017 local authorities will be able to increase fees by 20% if they commit to invest the additional fee income in their planning department,

therefore a review of the current pre-application charging mechanism, along with an investigation into charging for invalid applications, will be undertaken. The Council will also carry out a review into its partnership arrangements to ensure that it is receiving value for money with the various groups and organisations in which it participates.

To support these aims the Council will also continue to improve Member engagement and Member knowledge with 'Planning' through a series of planning briefings as well as ensuring that there is Member engagement on key sites and Reserve Matters applications.

Commissioning Services (PN07)

The Council will build on its established commissioning approach and identify operational areas where this could prove useful and thus maximising opportunities as and when they arise. One specific example is looking at how the provision of conservation services and expertise could be provided, by working in collaboration with a neighbouring authority.

Neighbourhood Plans (Target PN11)

The Council will continue to build on the experience it has gained over the past few years, supporting the significant programme of plans across the Borough, and will take at least two new plans through to referenda during the year.

Progressing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) (Targets PN12; PN13)

Picking up on the work carried out in 2016, we will introduce a new Parking Standards SPD during the year and start extensive work on the Open Spaces SPD.

Local Land Charges (Target PN14)

Access to the Local Land Charges register is to be provided by the national Land Registry in the future, and the transfer of the duties requires significant

work for the team over the next two to three years. The Council will still remain responsible for dealing with other related enquiries.

Government Legislative Changes (Target PN15)

There are a number of Government legislative changes that are emerging which will require changes to the way the Planning Service operates in the future. This includes the recently published white paper "Fixing Our Broken Housing Market" and will also include up and coming changes to the Brownfield Sites Register, Permission in Principle, revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and possible changes to the way Five Year Land Supply is calculated. The Council will be required to understand how these will impact on the service and then be required to perform and deliver against them.

Monitoring the Local Plan (Target PN16)

Progress against the Local Plan still requires regular monitoring so that any potential delivery risks and issues are identified swiftly and actioned accordingly. Biannual reports will be formally provided and briefings will be provided to Members as and when necessary.

Delivering the East Staffordshire Town Centres Regeneration Programme (Targets PN17; PN18)

Collaboration between the Council, Staffordshire County Council and a wide range of external partners and stakeholders will ensure that project plans turn into tangible regeneration improvements that will benefit residents, businesses and visitors to East Staffordshire. The Council will hold another Stakeholder event to update on progress as well as consult on further areas of work. Officers will work with the Deputy Leader for Regulatory Services on the specific work packages identified in the Street Scene Project, and other Deputy Leaders to ensure the appropriate Highways activities are coordinated through the Programme Board.

Continue to Work Proactively with the Delivery of Strategic Sites (Target PN19)

The Council will continue to work proactively and engage with the applicants and the agents on all aspects of strategic planning, the determination of applications and the discharge of conditions on Branston Locks, Land South of Branston and Uttoxeter West.

MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR 2017/18

The Planning and Neighbourhoods portfolio has identified a number of measures and targets for 2017/18 which will contribute to the delivery of the objectives detailed above. These are set out in the following tables.

Value For Money Council Services

Ref	Measures	Target 2017/18
PN01	Implement the new Neighbourhood Fund	Establish the Neighbourhood Fund and support up to 4 projects and report on progress by quarter <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN02	Implement the new Neighbourhood Fund	Undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Fund after 12 months of operation <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN03	Delivering the Councillors Community Fund (CCF)	Brief elected members on the CCF scheme and its operation <i>(May 2017)</i>
PN04	Delivering the Councillors Community Fund (CCF)	Raise the public profile of CCF/NF projects through a variety of promotional initiatives <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN05	Continuing to improve the value for money of Council services	Review pre-planning and other related charges <i>(December 2017)</i>
PN06	Continuing to improve the value for money of Council services	Review of Partnership Arrangements <i>(December 2017)</i>
PN07	Commissioning Services	Consider conservation services with South Derbyshire District Council <i>(September 2017)</i>

Promoting Local Economic Growth

Ref	Measures	Target 2017/18
PN08	Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN09	Minor Planning Applications determined within 8 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN10	Other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN11	Support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans	Minimum of 2 new Neighbourhood Plans “made” <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN12	Deliver Supplementary Planning Documents	New Parking Standards SPD approved <i>(September 2017)</i>
PN13	Deliver Supplementary Planning Documents	Work carried out on Open Spaces SPD in order to meet adoption in 2018/19 <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN14	To Carry Out Necessary Work With Reference to the Transfer of the Local Land Charges Register to the Land Registry	Completed in accordance with any legislative requirements <i>(March 2018)</i>

Protecting and Strengthening Communities

Ref	Measures	Target 2017/18
PN15	To carry out necessary work with reference to Planning legislative changes	Completed in accordance with any legislative changes and requirements <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN16	Monitor Local Plan Performance	Two Progress Reports during the year
PN17	Regenerating East Staffordshire Town Centres	Hold Stakeholder Workshop <i>(June 2017)</i>
PN18	Regenerating East Staffordshire Town Centres	Deliver the ESTCR Programme and report against progress on a quarterly basis <i>(March 2018)</i>
PN19	Delivery of Strategic Sites	Two Progress Reports during the year