

# Deputy Leader Statement 2016/17



## Portfolio for Planning and Neighbourhoods

## **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 2015/16.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015/16**

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 2015/16 by the end of the financial year.

Some of these achievements are highlighted in the following section.

### ***Progressed the Local Plan to Adoption***

Following the successful completion of the Local Plan examination hearings in May 2015, further consultation on main modifications and the subsequent receipt of the Inspector Report, the East Staffordshire Borough Council Local Plan came into force on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, following adoption at Full Council. Since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, East Staffordshire is one of 104 Councils that has adopted a local plan<sup>1</sup>, providing a development strategy and planning policy framework that will meet the development needs of the Borough's residents over the period 2012–2031.

### ***Continuous Improvement in Planning Services***

The Council has continued to deliver good customer service during a particularly busy year, with a very high number of planning applications<sup>2</sup> with an increase of just under 14% on 2013 totals, which have included some significant applications for large sustainable urban extensions, solar farms and agricultural enterprise being determined. The Local Planning Enforcement Plan was finalised and published, and will form part of the wider corporate Enforcement Strategy which will be developed in the future. The progress is particularly pleasing as there has also been a significant upturn in the development control world, which has led to experienced Planners leaving the authority. Two substantial recruitment drives have led to some but not all the positions being filled due to the combination of the high level of demand for Planners plus a genuine national shortage.

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<sup>1</sup> In total 239 Councils have either a Local Plan or a Core Strategy

<sup>2</sup> 1747 apps in 2015, 1668 apps in 2014 and 1537 apps in 2013

Consideration of more effective and efficient ways of working has been achieved through the adoption of "Lean Thinking" principles which has led to an ongoing piece of work being subsequently programmed. This has identified opportunities for further procedural changes within the Planning Support and Development Control teams to improve on the management and delivery of these key functions.

### ***Partnership Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)***

Following the adoption of the Local Plan a protocol for updating the CCG was agreed, and the first full Local Plan presentation was delivered during January 2016.

### ***Neighbourhood Plans***

The Council has continued with our progressive programme of Neighbourhood Plans across the Borough and made five new plans covering Branston, Yoxall, Outwoods, Tatenhill & Rangemore and Stretton. These Neighbourhood Plans now form part of the development plan for the Borough. The Council has reviewed and improved its approach for making Neighbourhood Plans, by streamlining the process, therefore ensuring that there are no unnecessary hold-ups in getting to plans to the appropriate referendum, and finally in the making of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### ***Other Strategic Choices***

The outcome of the Local Plan examination required a revised Housing Choice Supplementary Planning Document to be developed, meeting the housing needs and aspirations of the Borough. The document was approved in draft and consultation began in January 2016 for a period of six weeks. Plans for the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) were put on hold due to changes that were being announced by Government. The Council provided evidence to a Government CIL review to assist with the process and a formal announcement by the Government on proposed changes to CIL is awaited. The Council also prepared a response to changes to the National Planning Policy Framework announced by the Government as part of its drive to change the planning system.

Other notable achievements include the approval of conservation area appraisal reports for Abbots Bromley, Marchington, Rocester, Tutbury, Yoxall, George Street and Station Street/Borough Road, Burton upon Trent Conservation Areas in July and the second part of the Council's Cycling Strategy was approved and signed off during December 2015.

### ***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.

### ***Neighbourhood Working Projects***

The Council has exceeded its target of a 90% success rate on Neighbourhood Working projects, delivering these across a diverse range of locations. Examples include;

- History Boards in Winshill to link to History walk
- Compost Toilet at Stretton Allotments
- Gate for porch at St Chad's, Burton to reduce damage being caused to the porch
- New play area equipment for Yoxall Parish Council Play Area
- Planting of an orchard on the old railway line at Denstone
- New Porta-cabin at the farm at Paget School, Branston
- Orchard Park, Wetmore, Pond clearance and fencing repairs
- Parish signs for Newborough
- Surfacing work at Mayfield Recreation Ground
- Village Hall repairs, Draycott in the Clay
- Play area improvements, Hanbury

## **OBJECTIVES FOR 2016/17**

2015/16 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.

### ***Continuous Improvement in Planning Services (Targets PN01; PN02; PN03; PN04; PN05; PN06; PN07)***

The Council will continue with its multi-disciplinary team development, ensuring that it has a multi-skilled versatile team, and through the combination of development and where appropriate through commissioning, it is 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. The Council will specifically evolve to achieve SMARTER Planning Authority Status, 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. This will enable us to save time, money, resources and reduce our carbon footprint

To support these aims the Council will also continue to improve Member engagement and Member knowledge with 'Planning' through a series of planning briefings.

### ***Section 106 Performance (Target PN08)***

The Council will improve its monitoring of Section 106 arrangements by creating a dashboard enabling enhanced visibility and understanding of the timescale and progress of the spend associated with completed agreements.

### ***Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (Target PN09)***

The Council will carry out an appraisal on whether or not it is beneficial for it to introduce a CIL. The conclusion from this assessment will determine what subsequent work activity is developed and whether a CIL should be prepared and introduced.

### ***Neighbourhood Plans (Target PN10)***

The Council will continue 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 (SPD) (Targets PN11; PN12)***

Following the round of formal consultation the Council will see the Housing Choices SPD come forward for adoption. A number of other SPDs will also be investigated to identify what types of supplementary documents are required and then will identify a programme for the development of these.

### ***Local Land Charges (Target PN13)***

Access to the Local Land Charges register is to be provided by the national Land Registry in the future, and whilst a lot of the tasks are yet to be determined, the transfer of the duties will require significant work for the team over the next three years or so. The Council will still remain responsible for dealing with other related enquiries.

### ***Implications from the Housing and Planning Bill (Target PN14)***

There are proposals in the Housing and Planning Bill that could have implications for the Council. The Bill is currently working its way through Parliament, and depending on the detail of what is eventually assented, there will be a requirement to reconsider how the Planning Service operates.

### ***Monitoring the Local Plan (Target PN15)***

Now that the Local Plan has been adopted there is the need to ensure that progress against it is regularly monitored and that any potential delivery risks

and issues are identified swiftly and actioned accordingly. It is proposed in addition to the annual Local Authorities Monitoring Report, to report on the progress of housing developments bi-annually and to also present regular updates to Members.

***Neighbourhood Working (Targets PN16; PN17)***

Whilst the Neighbourhood working team have successfully delivered a wide range of projects over the years, 2016/17 will be a year when a full 'overhaul' of the scheme is undertaken. From 2017/18, the Council will look to invest the Neighbourhood Fund in line with the Council's corporate priorities and objectives. Ideally, the money allocated should be for bigger potential projects and thus wrapped up in the capital programme for bidding for larger ideas, where greater impacts can be made. Projects identified for delivery in 2016/17 will proceed as in previous years.

## **MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR 2016/17**

The Planning and Neighbourhoods portfolio has identified a number of measures and targets for 2016/17 which will contribute to the delivery of the objectives detailed above. These are set out in the following tables.

### **Value For Money Council Services**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Target 2016/17</b>
<b>PN01</b>	<b>Working to become a SMARTER Planning Authority</b>	<b>Introduce E-Consultations (September 2016)</b>
<b>PN02</b>	<b>Working to become a SMARTER Planning Authority</b>	<b>Planning Portal is the approved entry point for all Planning Applications (December 2016)</b>
<b>PN03</b>	<b>Working to become a SMARTER Planning Authority</b>	<b>SMARTER Planning Authority Status achieved (March 2017)</b>
<b>PN04</b>	<b>Keeping Members informed about relevant Planning matters</b>	<b>At least four All-Member Briefing Sessions within the financial year (Quarterly)</b>

## Promoting Local Economic Growth

Ref	Measures	Target 2016/17
PN05	Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN06	Minor Planning Applications determined within 8 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN07	Other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant DCLG figures
PN08	Monitor Section 106 Performance	Dashboard created and quarterly reporting mechanism established (September 2016)
PN09	Decision to proceed on the development of Community Infrastructure Levy	Decision by September 2016
PN10	Support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans	Minimum of 5 new Neighbourhood Plans "made" (March 2017)
PN11	Review Supplementary Planning Documents	New Housing Choice SPD approved (April 2016)

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Target 2016/17</b>
PN12	Review Supplementary Planning Documents	Agree areas for development, with programme and timescale (June 2016)
PN13	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 (March 2017)

### **Protecting and Strengthening Communities**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Target 2016/17</b>
PN14	To carry out necessary work with reference to the Housing and Planning Bill	Completed in accordance with any legislative changes and requirements (March 2017)
PN15	Monitor Local Plan Performance	2 Progress Reports during the year
PN16	Neighbourhood Working	Complete 85% of the agreed Neighbourhood Working Programme for 2016/17 (March 2017)
PN17	Neighbourhood Working	Review the current Neighbourhood Working Programme scheme with a view to implementing a new and improved scheme in 2017/18 (November 2016)