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Monday, 28 September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet has been arranged to take place on **Tuesday, 6th October, 2020 at 6.00 pm** to consider the following business.

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and government advice on social distancing, the meeting will be held online and streamed live on the Council's [YouTube channel](#).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christie Tims'.

Christie Tims
Head of Governance and Performance

To: Members of Cabinet

Councillors Pullen (Chairman), Eadie (Vice-Chair), Cox, Lax, E Little, Smith, Strachan and A Yeates



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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Lichfield City Centre Masterplan 3 - 20
4. New Lichfield Leisure Centre Preferred Site 21 - 54
5. Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-2025 55 - 74
6. Events and Festivals Policy 75 - 88
7. Planning for the Future - Planning White Paper 89 - 100

8. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED: “That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972”

9. Deed of Variation & Deed of Release Relating to Three Spires Shopping Centre, Lichfield 101 - 112

This item is to be considered in private since it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information (as defined by Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the financial interests of the council and the financial and business affairs of another organisation.

10. Confidential Appendix to Agenda Item 4 113 - 140

This Appendix is to be considered in private since it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information (as defined by Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the financial and business affairs of the council.



Lichfield City Centre Masterplan

Report of the Cabinet Member for Major Projects & Economic Development



Date: 6th October 2020
 Agenda Item: 3
 Contact Officer: Helen Bielby
 Tel Number: 01543 308252
 Email: helen.bielby@lichfielddc.gov.uk
 Local Ward Members: All Members

CABINET

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As Members will recall consultants David Lock Associates were commissioned in 2019 to produce a Masterplan for Lichfield City Centre. Following preparation of a draft plan and public consultation, this was duly submitted to the District Council and considered by the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (O&S) Committee in June of this year and subsequently by Cabinet at its July meeting.
- 1.2 Work has now commenced to consider how the Masterplan and its component parts can be delivered. A Project Initiation Document (PID) has been prepared setting out the basis for how this will be achieved over a period of time and also a programme of projects/work and associated timescales that will be implemented in the short term. The PID also sets out details of governance arrangements and resource requirements.
- 1.3 A Delivery Plan, informed by the aims and objectives of the Masterplan, will be produced. This will define the approach to be taken to fulfilling the aims and objectives of the master plan and delivering the goals set out in that document.
- 1.4 Arrangements for managing delivery of the masterplan and ensuring proper accountability are proposed. Subject to approval, these will include a Member-led Project Board, reporting directly to Cabinet; an officer Project Team, reporting to Project Board and a Member Task & Finish Group, comprising Members from the EGED (O&S) Committee who will scrutinise the decision making and progress of the Project Board.
- 1.5 Proposed budgets for Phase 1 of the work are set out and it is requested that these budgets are included in the MTFs. Part of these budgets can be funded via the Birmingham Road earmarked reserve.
- 1.6 Given the need to move the masterplan delivery forward at a pace it is requested that delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development, in conjunction with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to implement decisions made by the Project Board. There will be many decisions that will be required within the first 12 months of the project including; strategic direction via confirmation of the PID, priority setting, confirmation and scrutiny of project control documents, procurement of advisors and consultants, resource requirement, external funding bids and financial aspects of the project. Agreeing delegated authority will help the process without removing the requirement to report to Cabinet or Council (in relation to the budget) on matters which can only be considered via these routes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet:
 - Notes the progress made in moving the masterplan-related work forward

- Approves the proposed approach to implementation of the Masterplan proposals in regards to the production of a Delivery Plan and its associated proposed outputs
- Approves the proposed Governance Structure and terms of reference for the Project Board and Member Task & Finish Group as set out a para 3.11 and **Appendix 1** to this report
- Gives delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to implement actions and activity agreed by the Project Board save for those matters which require Cabinet or Council consideration and approval.

2.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council to:

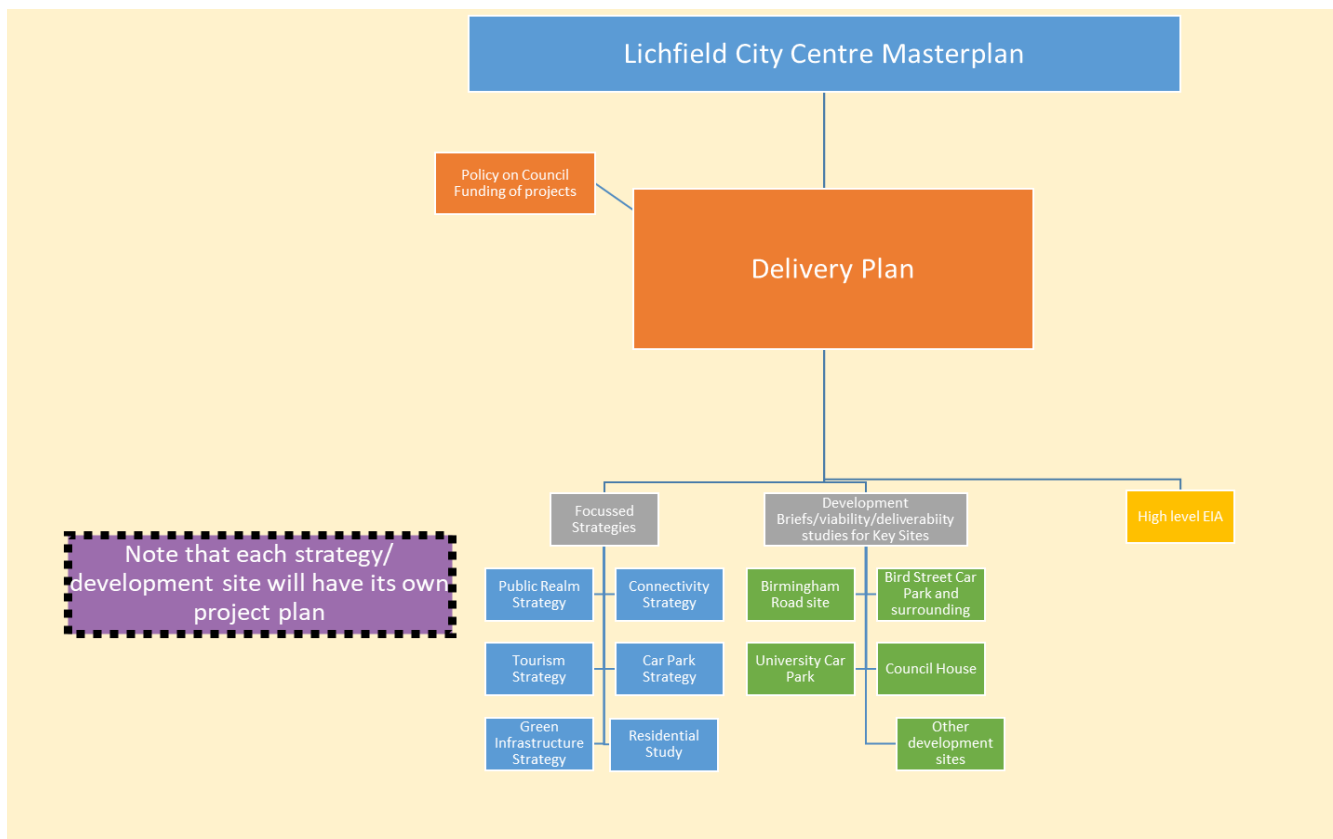
- Approve the proposed revenue budget of **£330,000** (£160,000 in 2020/21 and £170,000 in 2021/22) to take forward Phase 1 of the project.
- Subject to the approval or rejection of the report elsewhere on the agenda related to Deed of Release & Deed of Variation with Railway Pension Nominees Ltd in regards to Three Spires Shopping Centre, Lichfield:
 - Approval: Approve the proposed revenue budget being funded by **£100,000** from the BRS earmarked reserve and the balance of **£230,000** being funded from the Multi Storey Car Park Sinking Fund.
 - Rejection: Approved the proposed revenue budget being funded by **£100,000** from the BRS earmarked reserve and the balance of **£230,000** being funded from General Reserves.

3. Background

- 3.1 Consultants David Lock Associates (DLA) were commissioned in July 2019 to undertake work and formulate a Masterplan in respect of the future Lichfield City Centre. This document was subject to public consultation in early 2020 which resulted in some changes. The final document was submitted to the Council in March 2020 and considered by the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (O&S) Committee. Following comments made at EGED (O&S) Committee regarding the impact of CV19 on high streets and centres generally but also specifically on the masterplan and its proposals, advice was sought from (DLA). DLA provided an overview of the impacts of CV19 nationally on centres and a more detailed analysis of the masterplan. They concluded that the masterplan remained robust and credible and that Lichfield was well placed and indeed ‘ahead of the curve’ due to having a Masterplan framework in place which can be used to underpin any economic recovery plan. This advice was considered by Cabinet on 7th July and duly noted.
- 3.2 Since this date work has focussed on determining how the proposals within the Masterplan can be delivered including what key studies need to be carried out to inform detailed development proposals; to consider the resource implications; and, assess how best the various work streams will be managed, reported on and scrutinised.

Delivering the Masterplan

- 3.3 The diagram below sets out the separate elements of the approach being recommended to the Cabinet:



3.4 The first key action is to be the production of a Delivery Plan. This will be a succinct but comprehensive document which will set out actions needed to deliver the first 5 years of the Masterplan. This document is intended to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary. It will include an outline of the Council’s ambitions for the city centre as well as detailing the development projects which will achieve these ambitions.

3.5 It is important that the Delivery Plan reflects the overarching aims and objectives of the Masterplan and that any development proposals that duly come forward are in line with the ethos set out in the latter document. The outputs that will be envisaged by the Delivery Plan will be informed by the objectives contained within the Masterplan. The aim of the objectives is twofold: firstly to help capture and address identified issues relating to the city centre and secondly, to help underpin projects and proposals set out in the masterplan and how they contribute towards addressing those identified issues.

3.6 These objectives and the potential outputs are detailed in the table below:

Objective	Aim	Project/Strategy link	Potential output/outcomes
1) A Strong Historic Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To protect, value and enhance the historic fabric and environment of the city centre - To ensure development proposals conserve and enhance existing heritage assets and their wider setting - Protection of existing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Realm Strategy - Pedestrianisation project - Car Parking Strategy -Birmingham Road Gateway - District Council House - Bird Street Courtyard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of high quality public spaces - Positive townscapes created through new development - Protection of existing heritage assets - New mix of leisure, residential, community and commercial development

	views towards the cathedral		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased economic prosperity - Increased visitors and footfall - Increased dwell times
<u>2) Complementary & Supporting Uses</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To attract demand for new complementary uses to strengthen the existing mix of city centre uses - Housing diversity in new developments - Vibrant city centre which is populated at all times of the day and into the evening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential Study - Tourism Strategy -Birmingham Road Gateway - District Council House - Bird Street Courtyard - University West Car Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Longer visitor stays - Creation of key destinations within the city centre - Delivery of new housing of mixed tenure and type - New mix of leisure, community and commercial development -Increased economic prosperity
<u>3) Welcoming Gateways</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure that the transition from being a passenger to a pedestrian is efficient, safe and welcoming - To provide clear, legible signage and wayfinding across the city centre - To make the city centre easy to understand through public realm improvements - Enhancement to public transport facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Public Realm strategy - Pedestrianisation project - Connectivity strategy - Car parking strategy - Birmingham Road Gateway - Birmingham Road Corridor - Lichfield Transport Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased visitor numbers - Increased satisfaction by pedestrians moving around the city centre - Ease of use of public and private transport options into/out of the city centre
<u>4) Vibrant Streets and Spaces</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of important public spaces -Extension of provision of landscaping and civic spaces - Delivery of development parcels capable of delivering a strong pattern of land uses and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public realm strategy - Pedestrianisation project -Birmingham Road Gateway - Bird Street Courtyard - Birmingham Road Corridor - Lichfield Transport Hub - Bird Street Walk - Circular Minster Pool Walk - Pedestrian Priority Streets - Signage & Wayfinding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased dwell time - Visitor satisfaction - Increased economic prosperity - Transport improvements within and around the city centre - New mix of leisure, residential, community and commercial development

<p><u>5) Quality Accessible Environment</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes and wayfinding - Improve safety for pedestrians via pedestrian priority streets - Ensure safe and effective servicing arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public realm strategy - Pedestrianisation project - Car parking strategy - Connectivity Strategy - Green infrastructure strategy -Birmingham Road Gateway - Bird Street Courtyard - University West Car Park - Birmingham Road Corridor - Lichfield Transport Hub - Bird Street Walk - Circular Minster Pool Walk - Pedestrian Priority Streets -Pedestrian Walkways & Linkages - Signage & Wayfinding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people walking and cycling - Improvement of health and wellbeing - Increased dwell time - Less pedestrian/vehicle conflict - Improved air quality - Sustainable leisure, residential, community and commercial development
<p><u>6) The 'Green' & Sustainable City</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain, enhance and extend the network of open spaces and landscaping within the city centre - Use of sustainable forms of travel - New buildings to be environmentally friendly utilising innovative building construction methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green infrastructure strategy - Pedestrianisation project - Public realm strategy - Car parking strategy - Connectivity strategy - Residential studies - -Birmingham Road Gateway -District Council House - Bird Street Courtyard - University West Car Park - Birmingham Road Corridor - Lichfield Transport Hub - Circular Minster Pool Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in air pollution - Improvement to peoples physical and mental health - Protection against climate change - Providing comfort in urban environments - More people walking/cycling - Increased dwell time - Increase biodiversity net gain - Innovations in developments such as use of SUDs, design features and construction methods to reduce energy demand - More people walking/cycling/using public transport - Sustainable mix of leisure, residential, community and commercial development

3.7 As is set out in the table above, the objectives and aims link to specific projects that are included in the masterplan. In order to assess the success of each project, outputs and outcomes have been identified. These may be revised during the preparation of the Delivery Plan but give an indication as to the positive outcomes that the delivery of the projects could give.

3.8 Some of the projects will contribute to more than one of the stated outcomes. These are the projects that will be therefore be prioritised first (“Phase 1”) and are proposed to include:

- ***A Public Realm Strategy – in order to give guidance on creation of new high quality public spaces as part of any development scheme, to set out and inform projects to improve the existing public realm (including the 7 projects set out in the Masterplan) and therefore increase visitor numbers, dwell times and positive pedestrian experiences leading to greater economic prosperity***
- ***Pedestrianisation Strategy – to undertake a feasibility strategy for the pedestrianisation of the city centre, design proposals and public consultation.***
- ***A Car Parking Strategy – in order to inform development proposals in regards to numbers and locations for car parking, to identify potential development sites where the existing car parking use is no longer required and to update the Council’s approach to car park management and therefore increase customer satisfaction and experience of car parking***
- ***The Birmingham Road Gateway project – to undertake feasibility/viability, planning and design works to inform the development of a mixed use commercial/leisure/housing scheme to increase economic prosperity, increase visitor numbers and improve transport options within the city centre.***

However it will be for the Project Board to confirm the work programme moving forward and therefore additional priorities may be identified to be progressed sooner or in tandem with those stated above.

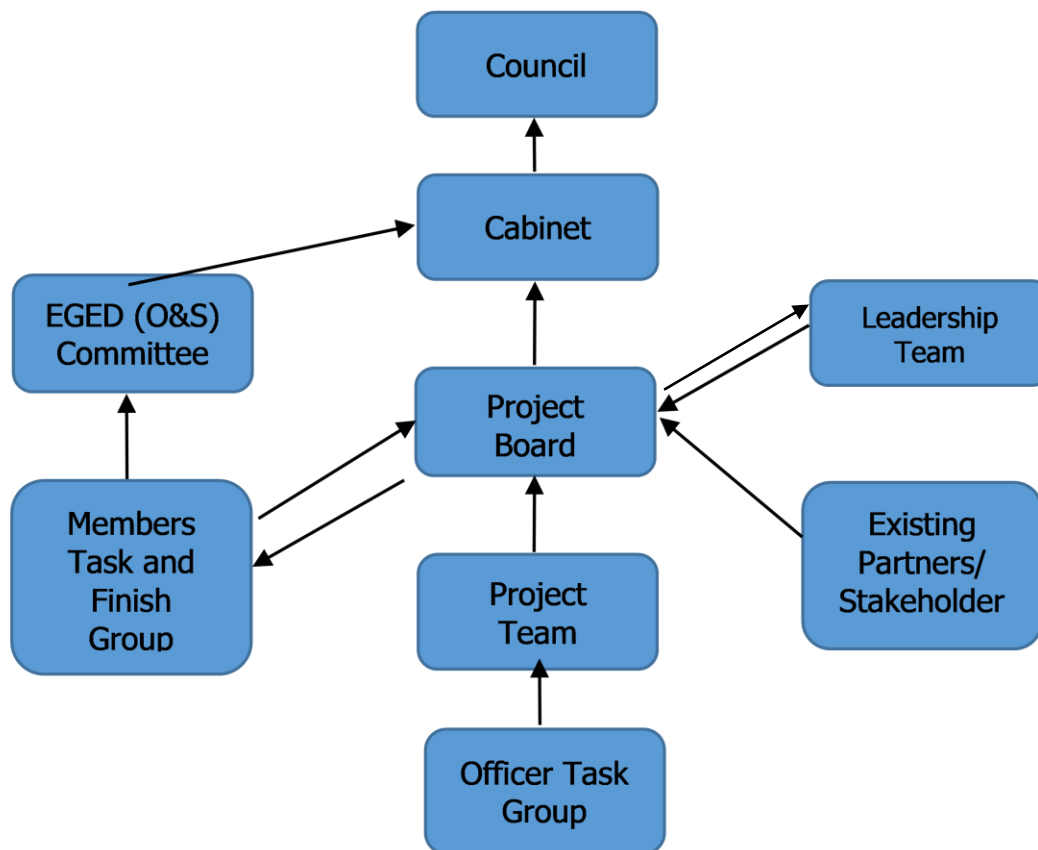
Resource requirements

3.9 Alongside the work programme and as part of developing the Delivery Plan consideration will need to be given to the resources required to implement agreed projects. As far as is possible the Council will seek to utilise in-house resources but given the specialist skills and knowledge that will be required for some of the work streams or tasks associated with these, the Council will need to look to buy-in advice and guidance. Examples of specialist skills and knowledge include commercial property advisors and legal advisors. These skills will be procured in line with Contract and Financial Procedure Rules to be used on an on-call basis. This arrangement would be for a 2 year period and would be reviewed prior to a renewal or re-tendering process.

3.10 There will also be a need to procure specialist advisors to progress the work associated with some of the strategies envisaged. These will also be procured in line with Contract and Financial Procedure Rules via a commission for which the tender brief and requirements of such a commission will be drawn up by the Project Team and submitted to the Project Board for approval.

Governance Arrangements

3.11 In order to progress the work at a pace it is proposed to set up a dedicated governance structure to give focus and resource to delivery of the masterplan. The proposed structure of this is set out diagrammatically below and reflects arrangements that the Council has put in place for other projects.



3.12 The Project Board remit would be to provide the strategic control, direction and accountability for the way in which the masterplan delivery and its component parts is progressed. The Board would make the key/strategic decisions and oversee the actions of officers. It would be responsible for ensuring that the masterplan delivery and the projects emanating from it are viable and deliverable, providing strategic decision making in regards to how the funding of the projects will be delivered. Moreover it will ensure that project costs are identified, funded and resourced, that the Council’s Contract and Financial Procedure Rules are observed and that risks are properly identified, assigned and managed. The Project Board will closely manage the outputs of the Project Team (see below) and ensure satisfactory progress is made in preparing and implementing all necessary plans.

The composition of the Project Board is proposed as follows:

Project Board:

Cabinet Member for Major Projects & Economic Development	Project Champion
Cabinet Member for Innovation, Commercialisation and Corporate Services	Project Champion
Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits	Project Champion
Head of Economic Growth & Development	Project Director
Major Development Projects Manager	Project Manager
Chief Executive	Project Challenge
Head of Finance & Procurement (Section 151)	Project Advisor (Finance)

The Board would have the ability to change the composition at any given time if it is thought this would be in the interests of progressing a project(s).

- 3.13 The Project Board will be accountable to Cabinet to progress delivery and will also engage with Leadership Team via the Chief Executive, Section 151 and Head of Economic Growth and Development roles.
- 3.14 The Project Board will be supported by a Project Team who will ensure that the Project Board is informed on project progress including budget, timescales, issues and risks. The Project Team will be led by the Project Manager and will comprise of officers from relevant areas of the Council (Communications, Finance, Planning Policy, Development Management), as well as external officers representing key partners and advisors as needed. The Project Board will task the Project Team with the work programme and the Project Team will deliver the work packages from this programme on time and to quality. Regular reporting on the work programme will be provided by the Project Team to the Project Board for consideration/decision, identifying and reporting risks, issues, financial aspects of the project and any stakeholder issues. In addition to the Project Team, Officer Task Groups may be convened to take forward particular work streams.
- 3.15 In terms of scrutiny, a Member Task and Finish Group is proposed. This would comprise cross-party membership from the Economic Growth, Environment & Development (O&S) Committee. It would provide an opportunity for Members to review proposed plans and projects, challenge assumptions and provide feedback to the Project Board. Importantly, it will allow for members to be assured that work plans and individual projects are effective and deliverable.
- 3.16 Detailed terms of reference have been prepared for the Project Board and the Member Task & Finish Group. These can be found at **Appendix A** to this report. It is proposed that Cabinet approves the Terms of Reference for these groups.
- 3.17 To ensure that delivery of the project is efficiently carried out and can meet agreed timescales, as part of the governance arrangements it is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Cabinet Member for Major Projects & Economic Development in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to progress decisions taken by the Project Board unless these are decisions that cannot only be taken by the Cabinet or Council. Any decisions and actions taken will be reported to the Project Board and be open to scrutiny by the Member Task and Finish Group.

Timescales

- 3.18 The table below sets out the indicative Project Plan timescales up to March 2021 as set out in the PID. These will be reviewed and monitored by the Project Board at each meeting with further tasks added as required. A further project plan for projects post March 2021 will be formulated prior to January 2021 following completion of the initial tasks.

Indicative Project Plan and timescales

Description	Expected Timescales	Methodology / outline project plan
Project initiation	July-October 2020	Project initiation – Complete PID
Governance	July – October 2020	Confirm governance arrangements and reporting structures. Appoint personnel to relevant project boards/teams
Risk register	October-November 2020	Develop a high level risk register and ensure mitigation measures are in place.
Issues log	October-	Set up issues log and identify an owner for its continued use, sharing

Description	Expected Timescales	Methodology / outline project plan
	November 2020	and updating
Lessons learned log	October - November 2020	Develop a high level lessons learned log and ensure mistakes are not repeated and to identify any areas that might be useful in future projects.
Communications Plan	November 2020	Develop a communication plan that aligns to the project delivery requirements and puts in place the required protocols for information sharing and response to queries. Agree how documents/information will be controlled, updated and shared.
Budgets	October 2020	Confirm budgets for Phase 1
IT Requirements	October 2020	Establish a Shared T:Drive for the project and sub-projects
Phase 1 – up to March 2021		
Project support	October-December 2020	To tender for and appoint specialist advisors on an on-call basis to be used throughout Phase 1 and subsequent phases
Delivery Plan	October-December 2020	Development of the Delivery Plan to give basis, timescales, resource needs and budgets to Phase 1 projects and subsequent phases.
Public Realm Strategy	October 2020- March 2021	Formulation of PID and Project Plans. Drafting of brief for tender, procurement exercise and appointment of Landscape Architect/Professional Team to produce Public Realm Strategy. Production of Strategy and submission to Project Board for approval
Pedestrianisation Project – Feasibility Study	October 2020 – March 2021	LDC commission SCC to produce a feasibility study looking at options and costs for further pedestrianisation of the city centre. Design team undertake vehicle / pedestrian counts to inform report.
Car Parking Strategy	October 2020- March 2021	Formulation of PID and Project Plans. Drafting of brief for tender, procurement exercise and appointment of consultants as required. Note key interdependency of development mix on major sites will inform car parking requirements – any delays to decision making on this will impact on car parking strategy production
BRS site feasibility/viability study	October 2020 – March 2021 (ongoing monitoring and dependent on other projects)	To develop evidence, base viability plan and outline design that sets out the Council’s ambitions for the site. To consider delivery options for the development of the site. Note that this will need specialist input from commercial property advisors and also has interdependencies with other Council projects which will inform the direction in terms of phasing and components for development of the site
District Council House development	October 2020 – March 2021	To consider development options for the site as set out in Entrust reports and other options that are available e.g bringing site into BRS. Determine if Council relocation is required moving forward.
Funding Sources	September 2020- onwards	To identify and seek additional funding as a contribution project costs for the projects identified
Stakeholder Strategy	October 2020- January 2021	To identify key stakeholders and their roles in the delivery of the Masterplan. Formulate strategy. Strategy to be kept under review

Description	Expected Timescales	Methodology / outline project plan
Economic Impact Assessment	March 2021	To ascertain the economic impact of the implementation of the proposed strategies and developments

Finance

- 3.19 The implementation of the Masterplan proposals will require revenue funding. It is proposed that funding requirement for Phase 1 will be:

Requirement	Timescale required over	Amount	Notes
Project Support - Commercial property advice	Up to 2 years from contract award + possible extension	£65,000/annum = £130,000 Total	To advise on BRS feasibility/viability plus other development opportunities as required. To advise on funding routes and act for the council on negotiations with 3 rd party developers, advise on ownership structures and overall delivery of developments
Project Support - Legal	Up to 2 years from contract award + possible extension	£50,000/annum = £100,000 Total	To advise on all legal aspects of delivery of development, agreements with 3 rd parties, funding agreements, land ownership matters etc
Public Realm Strategy – tender and production costs	October 2020 - March 2021	£30,000	Tender for consultants and strategy production (note no costs for project implementation emanating from the strategy included at this stage)
Car Parking Strategy	October 2020-January 2021	£15,000	Tender for consultants and strategy production (note no costs for project implementation emanating from the strategy included at this stage)
BRS Feasibility/Viability work	October 2020 – March 2021 (ongoing monitoring and dependent on other projects)	As part of Commercial Property/Legal Advice budgets	To advise on BRS feasibility/viability

Pedestrianisation Project – Feasibility study	October 2020-March 2021 (Feasibility study) March 2021- onwards (Design and Consultation)	£30,000	Tender for feasibility study production, design work and consultation (note no costs for project implementation emanating from the strategy included at this stage)
Contingency		£25,000	To ensure sufficient funds are available as necessary
		<u>TOTAL £330,000</u>	

3.20 It is proposed to fund £100,000 of these works from the BRS earmarked reserve. The remaining £230,000 is subject to the approval of the report related to Deed of Release & Deed of Variation with Railway Pension Nominees Ltd in regards to Three Spires Shopping Centre, Lichfield. Approval of the report will enable the Multi Storey Car Park Sinking Fund to be utilised however rejection will necessitate the use of General Reserves.

Concluding remarks

3.21 Cabinet has previously noted and accepted the importance of the master plan in the context of providing a framework for growing and developing Lichfield City Centre ensuring that it remains a focal point for investment and a location which meets the varied needs of residents, business and visitors. It is vital now that arrangements are put in place to deliver on the ambitions of the masterplan and the aims and objectives within it. The report before members sets out what is considered to be a suitable mechanism for delivering the strategies and developments that will underpin the future of the city centre for the next 25-30 years. If Cabinet is accepting of the proposals contained in this report then more detailed work will follow to allow implementation to take place.

Alternative Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Members could request alternative proposals to the Delivery Plan and associated documents as set out above in order to bring forward the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan Members could request an alternative governance structure to that proposed
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The draft Masterplan has been subject to public consultation as outlined in the main body of this report. Ongoing consultation and engagement with key stakeholders including local residents will take place as the Delivery Plan is finalised. There will be public consultation on major projects that are part of the Delivery Plan.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the Delivery Plan and the projects emanating from it will require revenue funding and potentially capital funding from the District Council. More detailed work to be carried out will determine the scale and nature of funding required. It should also be noted that potential funding from external partners will also be explored be it from the private or public sectors.
Contribution to the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Masterplan, Delivery Plan and the associated delivery documents will

Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<p>particularly help to support and deliver the Council's strategic objectives of developing prosperity and shaping places to benefit residents and business.</p> <p>2. The implementation of projects will also assist in enabling residents and those who access services and facilities within Lichfield city centre to live healthy and active lives.</p>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. None
Crime & Safety Issues	1. None
Environmental Impact	1. None directly from this report, although the projects that will emanate from the Delivery Plan will be able to contribute to the Council's ambitions regarding sustainable development
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	1. Not applicable

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Some of the proposals contained within the Delivery Plan may not be welcomed by all stakeholders	The public consultation has demonstrated considerable support for the proposals included in the masterplan and the Delivery Plan takes these ideas forward to the implementation stage. Further public consultation may take place on specific development opportunities prior to statutory consultation via planning applications etc	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
B	To take the Delivery Plan forward capital and revenue funding will be needed and this has not yet been included in the MTFS (<i>although the Birmingham Road earmarked reserve will contribute to this budget</i>)	A budget will be drawn up and approved within the MTFS and reported on regularly. Options for funding from other public bodies is already being and will continue to be researched. Funding options for development projects will be further considered	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
C	Officer resource may not be available and delivery of the projects may be delayed	Recruitment is taking place for a further team member within the Major Development Projects team with the post to be appointed to in the Autumn. Further resource requirements will be identified in due course	Likelihood: Green Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
D	The changes to the planning system announced could impact on the implementation of the projects	Monitoring of the proposed changes will take place. Some of the proposed changes may positively impact on the development of the city centre, including quicker delivery timescales.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
E	The impact of Covid-19 on centres is not yet ascertained. Economic instability will have an impact on investment funding of major projects. Local government funding may also decrease and the ability to bring forward development projects may	Advice on the impact of Covid-19 on city centres, with focus on Lichfield, has been obtained and considered. Budgets and work programmes will be adjusted as necessary. Further work to consider the long term impact of the pandemic on city centres and the	Likelihood: Red Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red

	be severely hampered	interventions that may be required to ensure a successful city centre could also be undertaken.	
F	The car parking strategy doesn't/cannot identify the car parking requirements moving forward due to uncertainty of development mix on development sites	The Masterplan sets out the vision for development on each of the major development sites. However there may need to be some variance from this due to viability/deliverability issues. This will be acknowledged within the car parking strategy and carefully monitored as and when the proposed development mix is more clear.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow Severity of Risk: Yellow
G	Changes to local government organisation/structure as a result of the White Paper means that the proposals within the City Centre Masterplan will be delayed or abandoned	Analysis of the White Paper when published and quick consideration of implications moving forward	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red

Background documents

Appendix A – Terms of Reference

Relevant web links

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APPENDIX A

Lichfield City Centre Masterplan – Project Board

Terms of Reference

- 1) The Project Board will be constituted as a sub-group of the Cabinet and report into Cabinet as necessary.
- 2) The Project Board will update the Cabinet as to progress with its work and make recommendations for consideration and decisions that exceed the delegated authority thresholds by the Cabinet.
- 3) The Project Board will update the Member Task & Finish Group on the work programme and will receive any recommendations given by the Member Task & Finish Group for consideration by the Project Board
- 4) The Project Board will comprise of 3 elected Members drawn from the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development (Chair), the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Commercialisation and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits. The Project Board will be supported by relevant Council officers in its work.
- 5) All Members must be present at meetings for a quorum to be achieved. There is the ability to change the composition of the Group at any given time in agreement with the existing Project Board and for specialist advisors or replacement or additional officers to be brought onto the Project Board as necessary.
- 7) In carrying out its business, the Project Board will be supported by the Head of Economic Growth & Development, the Major Development Projects Manager, the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance & Procurement (Section 151) and other Council officers as and when required. The Project Board will also be able to call upon external advisors to provide advice and guidance supplementing that of officers.
- 8) The Project Board will determine the regularity of its meetings but be conscious of the need to coordinate these having regard to the Cabinet/Council cycle of meetings set down in the corporate calendar.
- 9) Meeting agendas and related papers will be prepared by Council officers, agreed by the Project Board Chairman and circulated to the Project Board members at least 5 working days prior to meetings
- 10) The Project Board will formulate and agree a work programme. The work programme will accord with the key purposes of the Group and other considerations as set out below:
 - The Project Board respects confidentiality when discussing the project, with an awareness that not all information could or should be shared within a public domain during the same timescales.
 - The Project Board's overarching purpose will be to consider key issues and progress relevant to the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan proposals and the Delivery Plan to implement these

proposals. A work programme will be the control document for the implementation of the Delivery Plan.

- The Project Board will provide strategic control, direction and accountability for the way in which the project is progressed
- The Project Board will take decisions in a timely manner and ensure that decisions are taken by the appropriate body or individual
- The Project Board will submit the work programme to the Member Task & Finish Group and will consider the views and recommendations of the Member Task & Finish Group in decision making.
- In assessing the work programme, the Project Board will have regard to the need to deliver the work programme to budget, time and quality.
- The Project Board will also have regard to all existing strategies, policies and plans which impact upon the delivery of the work programme.
- The Project Board will assess the proposed projects within the work programme in order to be reassured that they will be effective, required and deliverable.
- The Project Board will ensure that Leadership Team, Cabinet and Members of the Economic Growth, Environment & Development (O&S) Committee are properly informed and engaged.
- The Project Board will ensure that costs associated with the project are properly identified and funded and the Council's financial regulations are observed
- The Project Board will ensure that the project is properly resourced and that key individuals are properly supported
- The Project Board will ensure that there are adequate and effective communication channels between all involved and that an appropriate communications plan and stakeholder strategy is developed and implemented
- The Project Board will ensure that risks are properly identified, assigned and managed.

Lichfield City Centre Masterplan - Member Task & Finish Group

Terms of Reference

- 1) The Task Group will be constituted as a sub-group of the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee and report into the main EGED (O&S) Committee.
- 2) The Group will update the main EGED (O&S) Committee as to progress with its work and make recommendations for consideration by the EGED (O&S) Committee. Recommendations from the EGED (O&S) Committee will duly be made to the Council's Cabinet for consideration and decision.
- 3) The Group will comprise of 5 elected members drawn from the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee.
- 4) Membership will be cross-party though the chairmanship will lie with the Council's ruling group.
- 5) At its first meeting the Group will elect a chair and agree the length of chairmanship. A Vice-Chair will also be elected and will perform the role of the chair at any such time as the Chairman is absent for meetings.
- 6) In carrying out its business, the Group will be supported by the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development, the Council's Major Development Project Manager and other Council officers as and when required. The Group will also be able to call upon external advisors to provide advice and guidance supplementing that of officers.
- 7) The Group will determine the regularity of its meetings but be conscious of the need to coordinate these having regard to the EGED (O&S) Committee cycle of meetings set down in the corporate calendar.
- 8) Meeting agendas and related papers will be prepared by Council officers, agreed by the Task Group Chairman and circulated to the Task Group members at least 5 working days prior to meetings
- 9) The Group will agree a work programme as set out by the Project Board. The work programme will accord with the key purposes of the Group and other considerations as set out below:
 - The Group respects confidentiality when discussing the project, with an awareness that not all information could or would be shared within a public domain during the same timescales.
 - The Group's overarching purpose will be to consider key issues and progress relevant to the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan proposals and the Delivery Plan to implement these proposals.
 - The Group will consider the work programme set out by the Project Board and make recommendations to the Project Board as required
 - In assessing the work programme, the Group will have regard to the need to deliver the work programme to budget, time and quality.
 - The Group will also have regard to all existing strategies, policies and plans which impact upon the delivery of the work programme.
 - The Group will both provide member scrutiny into costs associated with the work programme and projects
 - The Group will assess the proposed projects in order to be reassured that they will be effective, required and deliverable.

10) The Group will make recommendations to the Project Board for its consideration prior to key decisions being taken.

New Leisure Centre Preferred Site

Report of the Cabinet Member for Major Projects & Economic Development, Cllr E Little

Date: 6 October 2020

Agenda Item: 4

Contact Officer: Ben Percival

Tel Number: 01543 308060

Email: ben.percival@lichfielddc.gov.uk

Key Decision? YES

Local Ward Members All Members

Lichfield
district council
www.lichfielddc.gov.uk

CABINET

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A review of suitably sized undeveloped sites in and around Lichfield City identified eight potential sites for the proposed new Lichfield Leisure Centre.
- 1.2 Of the eight sites, Stychbrook Park has been identified as the preferred site for the new leisure centre. Stychbrook Park has several merits as a site for a leisure centre, whereas the other seven each present issues that would make the development of a leisure centre problematic.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet

- 2.1 Approve the selection of Stychbrook Park as the preferred site for the new Lichfield Leisure Centre.
- 2.2 Gives delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Growth, in conjunction with the Head of Operational Services to commence site investigations and subject to a satisfactory outcome, prepare and submit an outline planning application for the development of the new Lichfield Leisure Centre.

3. Background

Background

- 3.1 Cabinet 7 October 2019 confirmed the Council's aspiration to invest in future leisure provision to address the limited lifespan of Friary Grange Leisure Centre. Feasibility work on a new leisure centre commenced shortly thereafter, assessing strategic and community need to inform the design development of the centre. In tandem with this, work was undertaken to assess potential sites for the new centre.

Potential Sites

- 3.2 The site search focused on Lichfield City for a number of reasons:
 - It is the district's strategic centre
 - Higher population density
 - Need to address the local loss of end-of-life facilities at Friary Grange
 - There is already established leisure centre provision in Burntwood

3.3 A high-level site review sought to identify undeveloped sites in Council ownership of suitable size; this was to ensure the site was developable within the limited timeframe presented by the anticipated usable life of the current Friary Grange Leisure Centre. This review identified eight potential sites:

- Stychbrook Park
- Stowe Fields
- Shortbutts Park
- Saddlers Wood
- Leamonsley Park
- Birmingham Road Site
- Darnford Park
- Beacon Park

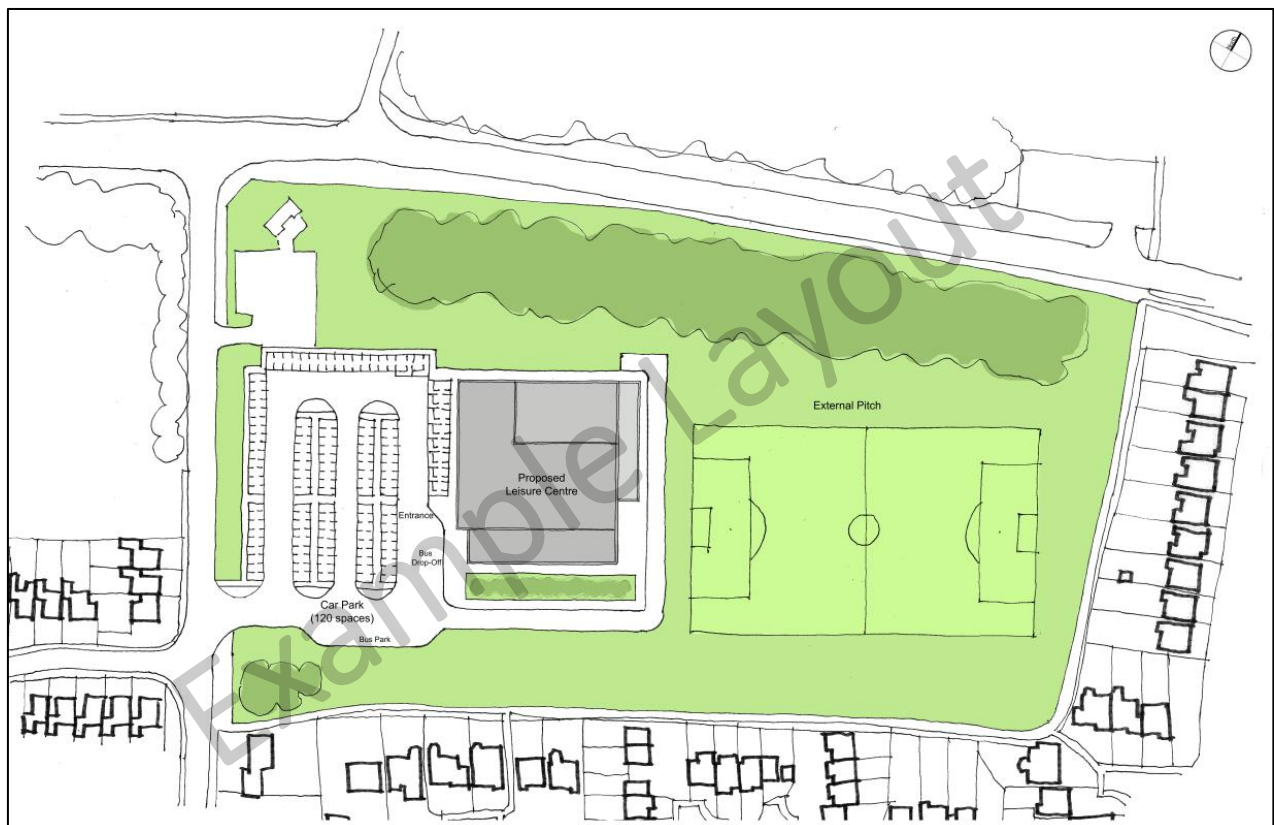
3.4 A desktop assessment of the sites was conducted, considering planning issues, physical site constraints and analysis of strategic fit. This identified **Stychbrook Park** as the clear preferred site.

3.5 The selection of Stychbrook Park as the preferred site was approved by the Leisure Centre Task Group at their meeting 14 September and by the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee at their meeting 23 September.

Stychbrook Park

3.6 An illustration of an example layout of the new leisure centre on Stychbrook Park is presented as figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Example Layout – Stychbrook Park



- 3.7 A number of factors make Stychbrook Park a suitable site for a leisure centre:
- 3.7.1 Close to the current Friary Grange Leisure Centre – will aid the transfer of usage from the old site to new and provide a continuity of provision for local neighbourhoods, some of the more deprived in the district – supporting work to reduce health inequalities.
 - 3.7.2 A history of use as a sports / recreational site.
 - 3.7.3 At 3.47 Hectares it is a large site – lessening the impact on surrounding housing. As can be seen from the above illustration, the majority of the public open space would remain.
 - 3.7.4 The site will likely be able to accommodate whatever scale of facility mix the needs analysis recommends / capital funding can deliver – site shape and size should not be a limiting factor.
 - 3.7.5 The new centre would have synergy with existing outdoor pitch provision gives the potential for a “sports campus” style offer.
 - 3.7.6 Location adjacent to A5129 aids access.
 - 3.7.7 Relatively good public transport links.
 - 3.7.8 Ecological impacts assessed as lower than for other open-space options.
 - 3.7.9 Public open space impact assessed as lower than for other open-space options.
 - 3.7.10 Low risk of current or future opportunity costs – as public open space incorporating playing pitches, planning constraints make it extremely unlikely the site could ever be redeveloped for non-sports / non-recreational purposes.
 - 3.7.11 The only site for which the analysis did not identify a significant strategic impediment or planning risk to the development of a leisure centre (please see section below).
- 3.8 The new leisure centre would take up an area of land currently used as a sports playing pitch, a protected land use. Sport England would be a statutory consultee to any planning application that included the development of a playing pitch and Sport England’s default policy is to oppose such development in all but exceptional circumstances. However the development of a leisure centre should be in accordance with the “net sporting gain” policy exemption (exemption E5). It may also be possible to reconfigure the site to allow the continued provision of the same number of pitches (exemption E4). Sport England have been involved in the development of the proposals to date and work has been undertaken in accordance with their recommended methodology.

Other sites

- 3.9 The desktop assessment and strategic analysis identified potential development issues for all sites; the issues for all but Stychbrook Park, presented serious impediments to development. The planning assessment of all sites is presented as Appendix 1. The key issues that presented particular planning risks and challenge for the development of a leisure centre are presented in the table below:

Table 1 – Key site issues

Site	Issue / concern
Stowe Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood risk zone 3 – unlikely to pass sequential flood risk test • Conservation area within the setting of Grade 1 listed building • leisure centre would take up most of open space
Shortbutts Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No vehicle access, • Restricted visibility • Tree loss

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of public open space
Saddlers Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale – would lose more than half the non-wooded site • Tree loss • Adjacent woodland would create operational challenges
Leamonsley Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Belt – not considered “very special circumstance”
Birmingham Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of deliverables from City Centre Masterplan – a leisure centre would likely take up the entire site • Conservation area • Adjacent heritage assets present design sensitivity • Constrained site will restrict facility – larger facilities (sports halls, pitches) would not fit • Car parking conflict with City Centre users (car parking is a concern at the current site)
Darnford Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No vehicle access • Significant trees loss, • Site layout (long & narrow) would push leisure centre development close to adjacent to housing.
Beacon Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Belt – not considered “very special circumstance” • Historic flagship park

3.10 It should be stressed that the above factors do not make the development of a leisure centre impossible in these locations. However they do present significant impediments and would be particularly difficult to justify in planning policy terms while an alternate largely unencumbered site (Stychbrook Park) is available.

3.11 An initial appraisal of the Birmingham Road redevelopment proposals has been commissioned. The draft report presented as Appendix 2 (confidential) indicates that at this stage the majority of developments will not return positive land values. The report considers current land values, reflecting particularly difficult market conditions post-Covid and recommends a further review to assess future demand profile.

Next Steps

3.12 Subject to agreement of Stychbrook Park as the preferred site for development, further site surveys and feasibility will need to be undertaken to confirm suitability. Assuming these surveys do not indicate problems, officers would bring forward an application for outline planning permission, which would test suitability in local, strategic and policy terms and engage with the local community.

Alternative Options

4.1 The other seven sites could be chosen in preference, however all have significant planning policy or feasibility problems.

	4.2 Further sites away from Lichfield City could be sought. Sites away from the City Centre would have operational disadvantages in terms of accessibility and commercial viability.
Consultation	Sport England, Max Associates, Leisure Centre Task Group agreed the preferred site 14.09.20 Leisure Parks & Waste Management O&S agreed the preferred site 23.09.20
Financial Implications	Project development and planning costs will be met from the existing capital allocation.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	Sustainable leisure centre provision in support of active lifestyles contributes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enabling people – to live healthy and active lives. b. Developing prosperity – to enhance the district for visitors c. A good council that – is financially sound, transparent and accountable.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	There are no equality, diversity and human right implications associated with the proposals.
Crime & Safety Issues	None at this time.
Environmental Impact	The proposed site is currently public open space. The environmental impact of any development will be explored in detail as part of subsequent site investigations and any planning application. Mitigation measures will be identified and agreed as appropriate.
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Geotechnical ground conditions make development unsuitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geotechnical surveys to assess suitability • Mitigation / stabilisation works may be possible 	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Red
B	Unable to secure planning consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with planning officers to develop most acceptable proposals. • Work with Sport England to understand and mitigate impact on playing pitches 	Likelihood: Green Impact: Red Severity of Risk: Yellow

<p>Background documents</p> <p>Appendix 1- Planning Report</p> <p>Appendix 2 – BRS Appraisal (CONFIDENTIAL)</p>
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Relevant web links

None



Planning Report on Potential Sites for New Leisure Centre for Lichfield City

Prepared for

Max Associates

June 2020

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cushman & Wakefield (CW) is instructed by Max Associates to advise on the approach to identifying a potential site to accommodate a new leisure centre for Lichfield City. This report specifically focusses on planning matters and should be read in conjunction with the main report to Lichfield District Council (LDC) produced by Max Associates.
- 1.2 The leisure centre is a replacement of the facility at The Friary High School. It is understood that the proposed facility will accommodate as a minimum a 25-metre teaching pool, changing village, café, 100 station gym, 2 studios, 4 court hall, soft play together with car parking and associated site infrastructure and landscaping. As a minimum the development requires a site of at least one hectare.
- 1.3 As the proposal is a direct replacement for the former leisure centre, the location for the new facility has been restricted to Lichfield City, as opposed to the wider District administrative area.
- 1.4 Section two identifies the relevant planning policy at national and local level (together with relevant evidence base documents) against which the sequential approach to identifying potential sites should be undertaken. Section three contains a planning assessment of each of the eight sites identified, which highlights the planning merits and risks for each site. Section four sets out our conclusions and recommendations.

2 Planning Policy Assessment

2.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Development Plan is the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (LPS), the Local Plan Allocations Document (LPAD) and the Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan (LCNP). Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

2.2 The LPS was adopted in 2015 and guides development within the District until 2029. It sets out strategic and development management policies for the district.

2.3 Relevant strategic policies include the following:

- Core Policy 8 relates to centres and focusses leisure uses within Lichfield City Centre. The scale of development should be proportionate to the centre.
- Core Policy 9 supports the growth of sustainable tourism focussed in Lichfield City.
- Core Policy 10 encourages healthy and safe lifestyles by facilitating access to a range of high quality and well-maintained open spaces, playing pitches, sport, recreation, play facilities which are relevant to, and meet the needs of local communities.

In relation to new leisure development it states:

“New facilities and assets will be designed to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, to maximise accessibility and to be integrated with surrounding communities and existing infrastructure, including green infrastructure.”

In relation to the loss of recreational space it states:

“The loss of existing recreational open spaces (both extent and quality) will be resisted where it can be shown there is an existing or future need unless it can be clearly demonstrated that alternative spaces of an equivalent or a higher standard are being provided in a location which is equivalent or better, improves access and results in no loss of amenity or environmental quality or quantity. Where such spaces, routes and/ or facilities are lost any replacement must be made available prior to the loss of the original facility.”

- Core Policy 11 relates to participation in sport and physical activity and encourages protection and enhancement of existing sport facilities, and other assets.

The policy explicitly supports the proposed development and states:

“The provision of a leisure facility to serve Lichfield City and its hinterland in an appropriate and sustainable location incorporating a new sports hall (of a size to accommodate 6 badminton courts), swimming pool and learner pool will be allocated through the Local Plan: Allocations document. Alternatively, improvements to existing leisure facilities in Lichfield City equivalent to 6 additional badminton courts and a minimum 25m 4 lane swimming pool and learner pool will be supported.”

- Core Policy 14 relates to built and historic environment and requires the protection and improvement of the built environment having special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

- 2.4 Relevant Development Management policies include the following:
- Policy HSC1 sets open space standards for the district and states that “*all open space, sport and recreation facilities identified in the Open Space Assessment.*”
 - Policy HSC2 sets playing pitch and sports facility standards and reiterates the requirements of Core Policy 10 in relation to loss and replacement.
- 2.5 The LPAD was adopted in 2019 and establishes land use allocations to meet the strategic policies set out within the LPS.
- 2.6 The LCNP was made in 2018. It is intended to guide development and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the designated Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.7 The Lichfield City Centre Masterplan was adopted in 2020 and sets out the development aspirations for the City Centre. A number of key opportunity sites are identified (including the Birmingham Road Gateway Site) and the aspirations for these sites are explained with a delivery strategy providing detail on how the development aspirations will be delivered.
- 2.8 The NPPF and NPPG set out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Chapter 2 sets establishes the principles of Sustainable Development; Chapter 7 sets out policies to ensure the vitality of town centres; Chapter 8 sets out policies to promote healthy and safe communities; Chapter 11 sets out policies for making effective use of land; Chapter 13 sets out policies for protecting Green Belt land; Chapter 14 sets out policies for meeting the challenges of flood risk; Chapter 15 sets out policies for conserving and enhancing the natural environment; Chapter 16 sets out policies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Identifying Appropriate Sites

- 2.9 The Local Plan strategy sets out how a new leisure centre for Lichfield City will be provided. Core Policy 11 states that this will either be through the Local Plan Site Allocation document, or through extensions to existing facilities. No site allocation was made for a new leisure centre. It is understood that the extension of existing facilities in the city is not possible. Accordingly, an alternative suitable location needs to be identified.
- 2.10 The urban area of Lichfield City is tightly constrained with by Green Belt to the north, west and south with opportunities for further growth being to the north east. The north and west of the city is the Forest of Mercia.
- 2.11 This assessment has discounted sites within the Green Belt, as the proposed development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Accordingly, permission would only be granted in Very Special Circumstances (VSC). If alternative sites exist outside of the Green Belt, it is not considered a VSC case could be justified and planning permission would not be granted.
- 2.12 Therefore, this assessment has considered sites allocated for development and sites that could potentially accommodate development. The latter comprise undeveloped sites within the City’s urban area.

- 2.13 The Plan allocates four Strategic Development Areas (SDA) sites in Lichfield (East of Lichfield, South of Lichfield, Dean Slade and Cricket Lane). These sites have planning permission and are not considered to be available. Accordingly, they have been discounted from this assessment.
- 2.14 The Plan allocates five mixed use sites within Lichfield City (L1, L22, L26, L27, L29). Four of the sites are privately owned. One site has been discounted because it is too small (Site L1). Two sites are currently under development and have been discounted because they are not available (Sites L22 & L27). It is understood that the fourth site has complex landowner challenges in the heart of the city centre shopping area forming part of the secondary retail frontage (L29). Accordingly, this site has been discounted. The fifth site, the Birmingham Road Site (L26), is in the majority ownership of Lichfield District Council and is considered as part of this assessment.
- 2.15 The City has four neighbourhood shopping centres (Boley Park, Darwin Park, Netherstowe and Dimbles Lane). None of the centres can accommodate a new leisure centre given their size and so have been discounted from this assessment.
- 2.16 The Plan allocates 23 sites for residential development. Only four of the allocated sites are large enough to be able to incorporate the proposed development into any housing proposal (L2, L5, L14 and L24). However, all three are already under construction or near completion and are therefore discounted from this assessment.
- 2.17 Existing employment sites have been discounted as they are not available. Employment allocations within SDA's (as referred to above) have been discounted.
- 2.18 Undeveloped sites within the City, which comprise Public Open Space (POS) have been considered as part of this assessment and include the following:
- Beacon Park
 - Darnford Park
 - Leamonsley Brook
 - Saddlers Wood
 - Shortbutts Park
 - Stowe Fields
 - Stychbrook Park

3 Site Planning Assessments

3.1 A planning assessment of each of the sites has been undertaken and these are attached at appendix 1. The table below highlights the key planning policy constraints affecting each site. Conclusions and recommendations are set out in the next section.

Site / Key Planning Constraints	Green Belt	Heritage and Conservation	Environmental	Design
Beacon Park	Yes	No	Loss of Open Space/Playing Fields Ecological Impact	Local policies Plan
Birmingham Road	No	Conservation Area Adjacent listed buildings and views of the Cathedral	TPO	Local policies Plan City Centre Masterplan guidance
Darnford Park	No	No	Loss of Open Space (Amenity Green Space scores above 40%) Ecological Impact	Local policies Plan
Leamonsley Brook	Yes	No	Loss of Open Space/Playing Pitches Ecological Impact	Local policies Plan
Saddlers Wood	No	No	Loss of Open Space/Playing Pitches (Amenity Green Space scores above 40%) Ecological Impact	Local policies Plan
Shortbutts Park	No	No	Loss of Open Space/Playing	Local policies Plan

			Pitches (Amenity Green Space scores above 40%) Ecological Impact	
Stowe Fields	No	Conservation Area Setting of Grade I Listed Building	Flood Zone 3 Loss of Open Space Ecological Impacts	Local policies Plan
Stychbrook Park	No	No	Loss of Open Space/Playing Pitches (Amenity Green Space scores below 40%) Ecological Impacts	Local policies Plan

4 Conclusions and Recommendation

- 4.1 Eight sites have been identified in the urban area of Lichfield by the consultant team through analysis including consideration of planning and environmental constraints. Cushman & Wakefield has undertaken a planning review of each of the sites, which has identified the planning risks associated with each of the sites.
- 4.2 **Beacon Park** and **Leamonsley Brook** are both situated within the Green Belt. The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Planning permission would only be granted for the proposal if a 'Very Special Circumstances' case was accepted by the LPA. Such a case would need to demonstrate that there were no alternative sites capable of accommodating the proposed development. As this exercise has demonstrated that there are potential alternative sites, we do not consider a Very Special Circumstances case can be made and we do not consider planning permission would be granted for the proposed development on either of these sites. Accordingly, we recommend both sites are discounted.
- 4.3 **Stowe Fields** is located within a Conservation Area and within the setting of a Grade I Listed building (the highest level of significance). Any harm to the cathedral would require clear and convincing justification. The site lies within flood risk zone 3, which requires a sequential flood risk assessment. As this exercise has demonstrated that there are potential alternative sites in lower flood risk zones, we do not consider the site would pass the sequential flood risk test. We do not consider planning permission would be granted for the proposed development on this site by virtue of its heritage and flood risk constraints alone. Accordingly, we recommend the site is discounted.
- 4.4 The remaining four sites – **Darnford Park**, **Saddlers Wood**, **Shortbutts Park** and **Stychbrook Park** – are not constrained by Green Belt, Conservation Areas or Flood Risk. All four are public open space sites providing a range of facilities including amenity open space, playing fields and equipped play facilities. The impact of the proposed development on each site would be significant given the scale of the proposed development compared to the size of the sites. The impact will be greater when the value of the open space is greater. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2016 evaluates all open space in the district. Of the four sites only Stychbrook Park scores below 40% suggesting the impact of the proposed development is likely to be less
- 4.5 The four sites vary in size with Saddler's Wood and Shortbutts Park being the smallest. Neither Darnford Park nor Shortbutts Park have existing vehicular access. Darnford Park and Saddlers Wood have extensive tree cover and the proposed development would likely require the removal of a significant number of trees.
- 4.6 Overall, we consider that of the four open space sites, **Stychbrook Park** is the most site suitable in planning terms to accommodate the proposed development. The site is capable of providing an adequate vehicular access, the impact from loss of open space is lower and the Arboricultural constraints are also lower.
- 4.7 As a note of caution, the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy has yet to be published and, therefore, the value of the site is not yet known. The adopted Local Plan sets the requirements for development proposals resulting in the loss of open space and playing pitches. The value of the playing pitches needs to be understood in order to inform acceptable proposal. The 2016 Open Space Strategy identifies potential to significantly improve playing facilities at Stychbrook Park.
- 4.8 The Birmingham Road site is one of the key development opportunity sites within Lichfield City Centre. The adopted Local Plan allocates the site for a mix of uses comprising retail and residential

specifically. The Lichfield City Masterplan identifies the site as 'Birmingham Road Gateway' and sets development aspirations for the site including a new bus station and a replacement multi-storey car park. Uses suggested including commercial uses, a cinema, hotel, cafes and restaurants, residential and office uses. The Masterplan is supported by a Delivery Strategy to help ensure the masterplan proposals are viable and deliverable.

- 4.9 The adopted Local Plan identifies Lichfield City Centre as the location to focus leisure uses. Accordingly, the city centre is an appropriate location for the proposed development in principle.
- 4.10 The Birmingham Gateway site is large enough to accommodate the proposed development as part of a mixed-use development. However, the development of a new leisure centre is not wholly in accordance with the City Centre Masterplan and LCNP, which include the provision of key facilities for the City with the overall development establishing the main entry point to the City Centre from the Railway Station and the south. The location of heritage assets close to the site and views from the Railway Station to Lichfield Cathedral constrain the development capacity of the site. Therefore, introducing a new leisure centre into the site is likely to significantly change the overall development mix of the site and could have a significant negative impact on the scheme's overall viability.
- 4.11 The delivery of the Birmingham Road site is a priority for the Council established through the Local Plan and City Centre Masterplan. If the inclusion of the proposed leisure centre places the delivery of the site at risk, then we recommend the Birmingham Road site is discounted.

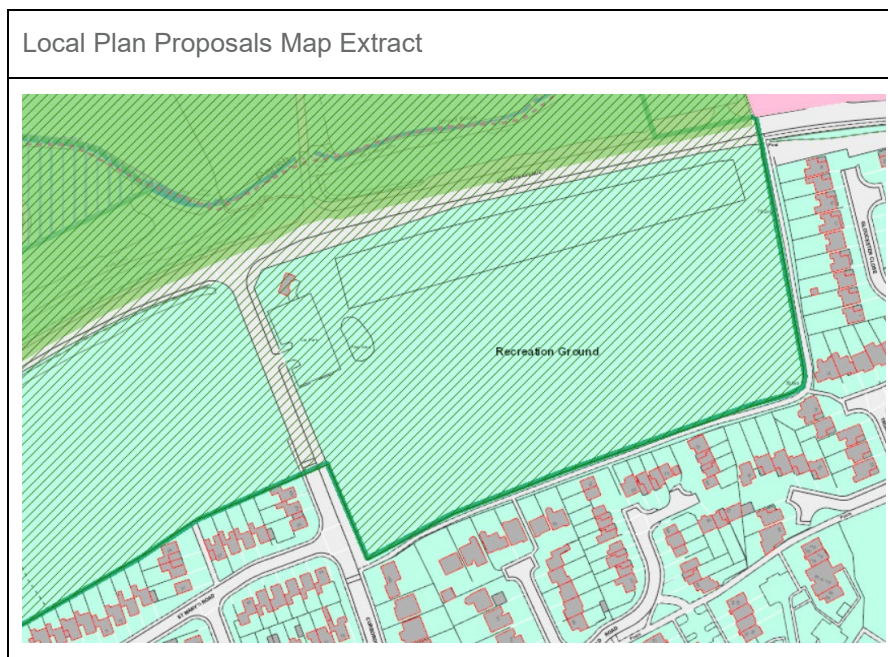
Recommended Site

- 4.12 We recommend Lichfield District Council seeks expert advice to understand if the Birmingham Road development proposals would be viable and deliverable if they included a new Leisure Centre.
- 4.13 If it is concluded that a Leisure Centre would undermine the delivery of the Birmingham Road site proposals, we consider Stychbrook Park to be the most appropriate in planning terms and Recommend that this site is taken forward as the preferred site.

Appendix 1 – Site Planning Assessments

Site Description:

Stychbrook Park is located on the northern edge of Lichfield City. The site extends to 8.58 acres (3.47 Ha).



Planning History

Planning Application Number	Date of Submission	Summary of Application	Decision
07/01040/FUL	10/10/07	Proposed storage container	Withdrawn

Development Plan Policy

Stychbrook Park is an area of open space, with two football pitches, a small gravel car park and a redundant changing block. The site is located away from the town centre and adjoins with the A5192 Eastern Avenue, one of the main roads around Lichfield.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Stychbrook Park was identified in the 2016 open space assessment as providing an important leisure resource for the local community.

Flood Zone: This site lies in flood zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding.

Analysis

Stychbrook Park is an area of public open space sites providing a range of facilities including amenity open space, playing fields and an equipped play facility. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2016 evaluates all open space in the district and Stychbrook Park scores below 40%, which is the lowest of all sites considered in this assessment.

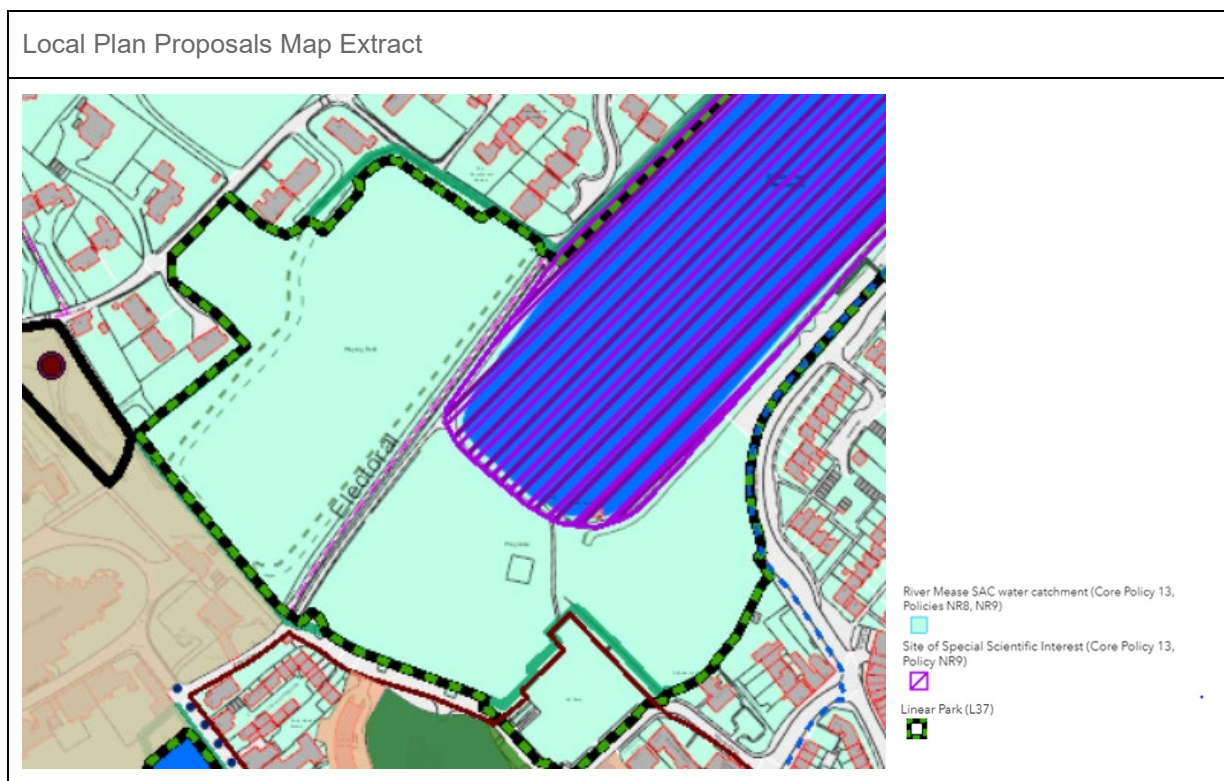
The impact of the proposed development on the site would be significant given the scale of the Stychbrook Park and appropriate mitigation would be necessary informed by qualitative and quantitative impacts and requirements. The open space strategy identifies an opportunity to significantly improve play space at Stychbrook Park. The proposed development would also create ecological and environmental impacts, such as noise, which would also need to be taken into consideration. However, there are comparatively few trees on the site compared to the alternative options and it is possible to locate a development away from sensitive receptors such as existing houses.

The park has an existing vehicle access and car parking and is capable of providing an adequate vehicular access for the proposed development. Furthermore, the park is the closest site to the existing leisure centre being replaced and has strong access routes to the site, as well as access to public transport.

Recommendation – Take site forward as potential option

Site Description:

Stowe Fields is located in the heart of Lichfield City Centre on Cross Keys, to the east of the Lichfield Cathedral and adjoining Stowe Pool. The site extends to approximately 2.93 acres (1.18 Ha).



Planning History

Planning Application Number	Date of Submission	Summary of Application	Decision
05/00161/COU	16 th February 2005	Proposed temporary car park (120 spaces)	Application Withdrawn

Development Plan Policy

Stowe Fields is an area of open space, with a small children’s play area to the east and Stowe Pool to the north. Stowe Pool is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the site is located within the Lichfield City Conservation Area and within the setting of Lichfield Cathedral, a Grade I Listed Building. In addition, the site is located within flood zone 3 – a high risk zone.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Core Policy 14 - relates to the built and historic environment and requires the protection and improvement of the built environment having special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Stowe Fields falls within the Lichfield City Conservation Area. The Character Area appraisal identifies the principle character of Stowe Fields is derived from its natural environment, openness and the views it provides. Spectacular views of the city can be seen from a variety of points within this character area. Stowe Pool is characterised by its openness and is one of the places in the city which provides views of most of the major landmarks including the Cathedral, St Mary's Church, St Michael's Church and St Chad's Church.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Policy NR5 – supports the retention and protection of geological, archaeological and historical locations.

Flood Risk – The site lies in Flood Risk Zone 3. National Planning Policy (NPPF) states that *“Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered”*.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Stowe Fields was identified as providing an important leisure resource within close proximity to the city centre. Overall Stowe Fields were ranked as the 4th highest scoring open space within Lichfield with a score of 72%.

Lichfield City Centre Masterplan 2020: Identifies Stowe Pool and Fields as an area of public realm and open space that should be maintained and enhanced.

Analysis

Stowe Fields is located within a Conservation Area and within the setting of a Grade I Listed building (the highest level of significance). Any harm to the cathedral would require clear and convincing justification.

Stowe Fields is identified as an important area of open space in the city. The development of a Leisure Centre on this site would result in the loss of almost all the open space. The loss of open space is a significant planning risk.

The site lies within flood risk zone 3, which requires a sequential flood risk assessment. As this exercise has demonstrated that there are potential alternative sites in lower flood risk zones, we do not consider the site would pass the sequential flood risk test.

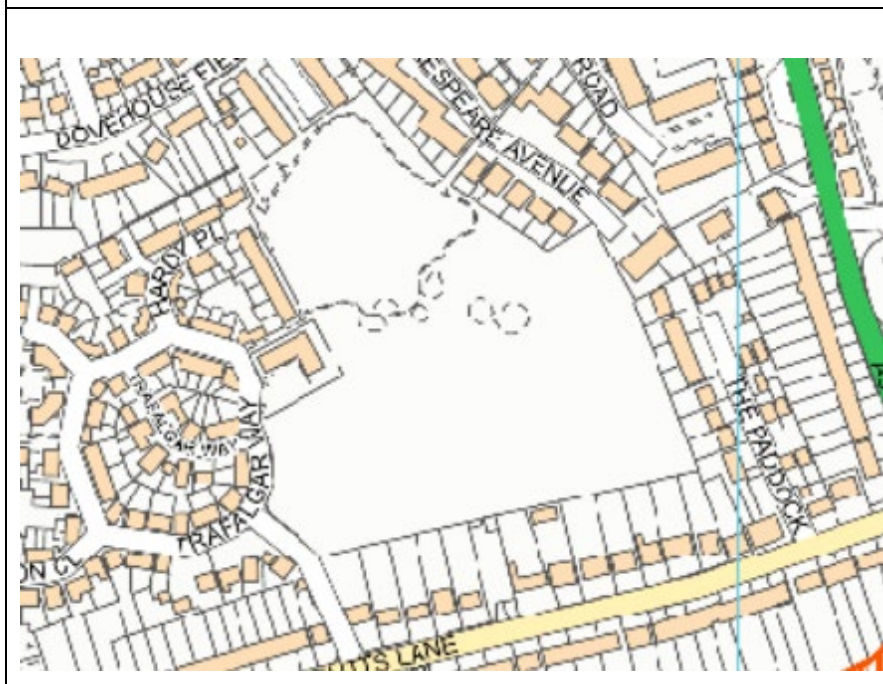
We do not consider planning permission would be granted for the proposed development on this site by virtue of its heritage and flood risk constraints alone. Accordingly, we recommend the site is discounted.

Recommendation – Discount option

Site Description:

Shortbutts Park is located off Shortbutts Lane in a residential area to the South of Lichfield City Centre. The park extends to 8.45 acres (3.41 Ha).

Local Plan Proposals Map Extract



Planning History

There are no previous planning applications or appeals on this site.

Development Plan Policy

Shortbutts Park is a public open space surrounded by residential development. It has one adult football pitch and one junior football pitch, a play area with play equipment and a new exercise station focussed on improving mobility and rehabilitation training. The site is located away from the town centre but adjoins with Birmingham Road.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Shortbutts Park was identified as a good quality open space.

Flood Zone: This site lies in flood zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding.

Analysis

Shortbutts Park is an area of public open space sites providing a range of facilities including amenity open space, playing fields and an equipped play facility. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2016 evaluates all open space in the district and Stychbrook Park scores above 40% recognising the good quality of the open space.

The impact of the proposed development on the site would be significant given the scale of the Shortbutts Park and appropriate mitigation would be necessary informed by qualitative and quantitative impacts and requirements.

The proposed development would also create ecological and environmental impacts, such as noise, which would also need to be taken into consideration. In particular, the loss of trees and the location of sensitive receptors (housing) surrounding the park.

The park does not have an existing vehicle access and car parking and it is not clear if it is possible to provide an adequate vehicular access for the proposed development.

Recommendation – Discount the site

Site Description:

Saddlers Wood is located off Roman Way in a residential area to the East of Lichfield City Centre.

Local Plan Proposals Map Extract



Planning History

There are no previous planning applications or appeals on this site.

Development Plan Policy

Saddlers Wood is a public open space located within a residential area providing informal open space for residents to play and walk. Saddlers Wood has a basketball court, a small play area with play equipment and a mini football pitch with goal posts. The site is located away from the city centre but adjoins with Roman Way, leading to Birmingham Road

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Saddlers Wood provides an important leisure resource for the local community. The assessment identified that the site was suitable in its current form but could be improved by making it more accessible to those less mobile and by incorporating a pedestrian crossing over Roman Way.

Flood Zone: This site lies in flood zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding.

Analysis

Saddlers Wood is an area of public open space sites providing a range of facilities including amenity open space, playing fields and an equipped play facility. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2016 evaluates all open space in the district and Stychbrook Park scores above 40%. Qualitative improvements are recommended to improve accessibility.

The impact of the proposed development on the site would be significant given the scale of the Saddlers Wood. Indeed, the scale of the proposed development would result in the loss of over half the site which is not wooded. The level of mitigation required from such an impact would be significant and would need to be informed by qualitative and quantitative impacts and requirements.

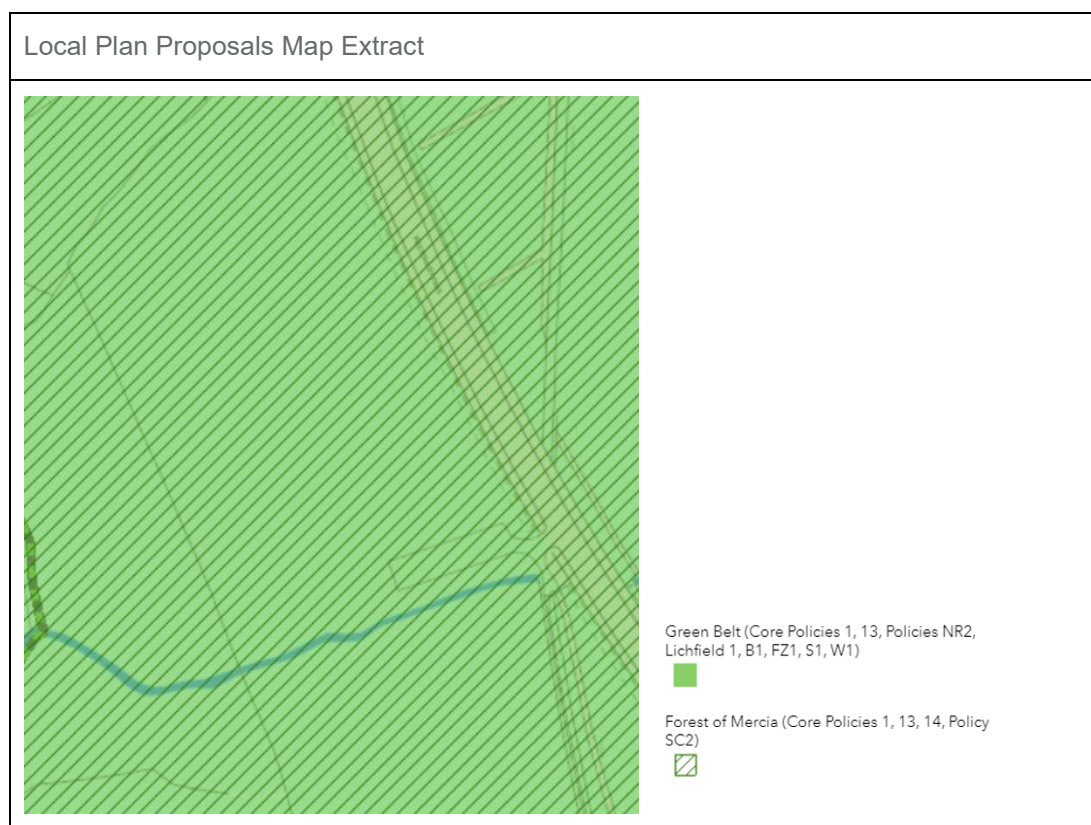
The proposed development would create ecological and environmental impacts, such as noise, which would need to be taken into consideration. Given the size of the open space it is likely the development would be, in part, close to sensitive receptors such as existing houses.

The park has an existing vehicle access and is potentially capable of providing an adequate vehicular access for the proposed development.

Recommendation – Discount Site

Site Description:

The site is located to the west of Lichfield City Centre and is accessed directly off the A51 Western Bypass. The site extends to approximately 5.30 acres (2.14 Ha).



Planning History

There are no relevant planning applications or appeals on the park.

Development Plan Policy

Leamonsley Brook is an area of open space situated within the Green Belt, which consists of two football pitches and a small gravel car park. The site is located off the A51 Western Bypass. The site has pedestrian and cycle paths leading to the site, and is in very close proximity to Beacon Park, the main open space area in Lichfield.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Core Policy 13 – establishes the importance of development proposals maintaining natural resources.

Core Policy 14 - relates to built and historic environment and requires the protection and improvement of the built environment having special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

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Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR2 - requires the Green Belt to retain its character and openness in line with national guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The construction of new buildings constitutes inappropriate is considered as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. A leisure centre does not qualify as an exception and, therefore, Very Special Circumstances will need to be demonstrated.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Policy NR5 – supports the retention and protection of geological, archaeological and historical locations.

Flood Risk: This park is located within flood zone 1 – the lowest zone of risk.

Analysis

Leamonsley Brook is situated within the Green Belt. The development of a new leisure centre in the park constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Planning permission would only be granted for the proposal if a 'Very Special Circumstances' case was accepted by the LPA. Such a case would need to demonstrate that there were no alternative sites capable of accommodating the proposed development.

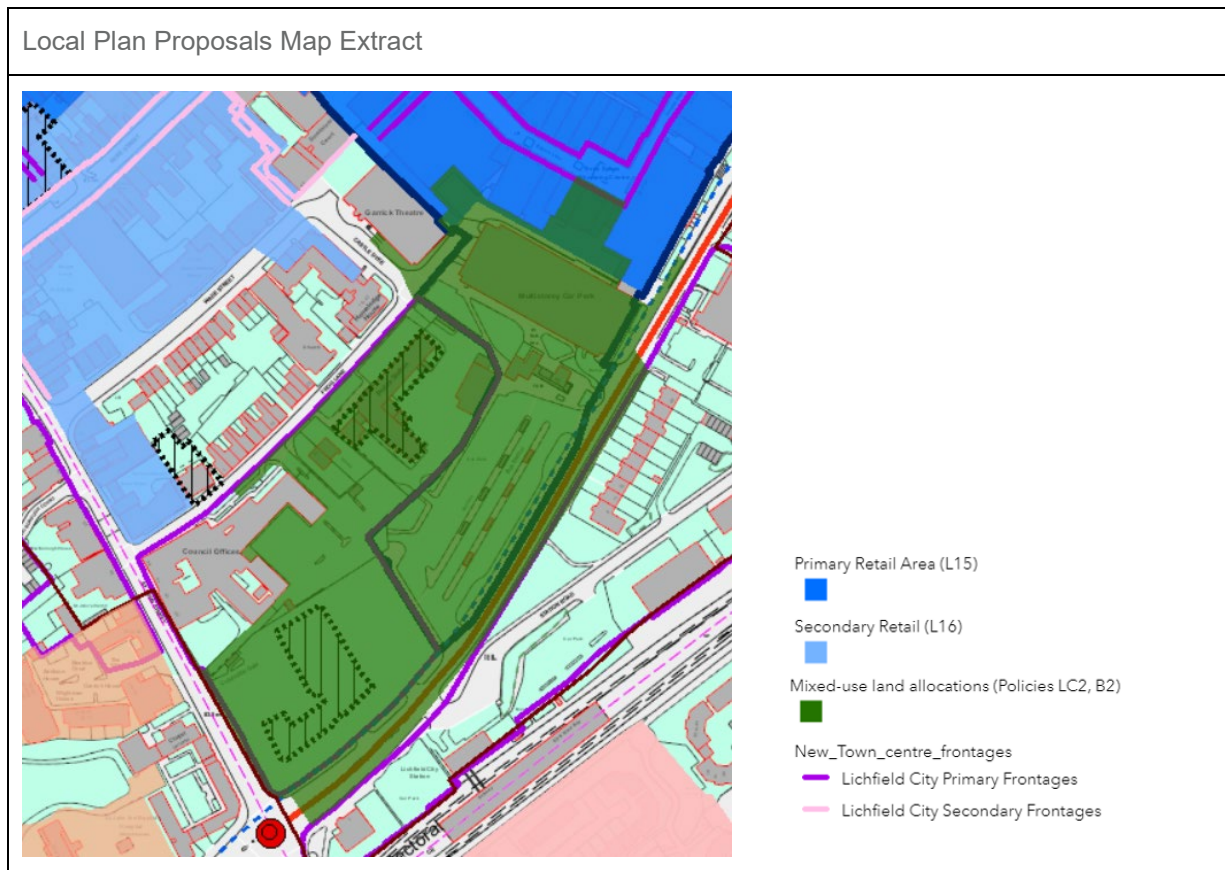
As there are potential alternative sites, we do not consider a Very Special Circumstances case can be made and we do not consider planning permission would be granted for the proposed development on either of these sites. Accordingly, on this matter alone, we recommend the park is discounted.

In addition, the loss of playing pitches resulting from the development of a leisure centre is a significant planning risk.

Recommendation – Discount option

Site Description:

The Birmingham Road site is located at the junction of the A5127 Birmingham Road and St John Street in Lichfield City centre. The site consists approximately 5.68 acres (2.30 Ha).



Planning History

The site has a detailed planning history, which is summarised in the schedule attached.

Development Plan Policy

The Birmingham Road site is a key development opportunity site located within the city centre. The site is allocated for mixed-use development within the adopted Local Plan.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

The Birmingham Road site is located within the Lichfield City Conservation Area. The Character Appraisal of the area (13) identifies the principle character of the area to be commercial. It notes that “In between the larger buildings views of Lichfield Cathedral and St Mary’s Church spires can be glimpsed. These glimpsed views are an important part of the character as they provide a visual link to the historic core of the city.”

Core Policy 14 - relates to the built and historic environment and requires the protection and improvement of the built environment having special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Core Policy 8 - encourages significant development to be focused within Lichfield City Centre. It prioritises leisure uses to central sites to boost the local economy.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Policy NR5 – supports the retention and protection of geological, archaeological and historical locations.

Policy Lichfield 1 - Identifies Lichfield as a strategic centre that offers a variety of services enabling all to live, work and visit.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield City Centre Masterplan 2020: Identifies the Birmingham Road Site as the main development site within the city centre proposing a scheme which incorporates a mix of leisure, residential and commercial uses.

Analysis

The Birmingham Road site is one of the key development opportunity sites within Lichfield City Centre. The adopted Local Plan allocates the site for a mix of uses comprising retail and residential specifically. The Lichfield City Masterplan identifies the site as 'Birmingham Road Gateway' and sets development aspirations for the site including a new bus station and a replacement multi-storey car park. Uses suggested including commercial uses, a cinema, hotel, cafes and restaurants, residential and office uses. The Masterplan is supported by a Delivery Strategy to help ensure the masterplan proposals are viable and deliverable.

The adopted Local Plan identifies Lichfield City Centre as the location to focus leisure uses. Accordingly, the city centre is an appropriate location for the proposed development in principle.

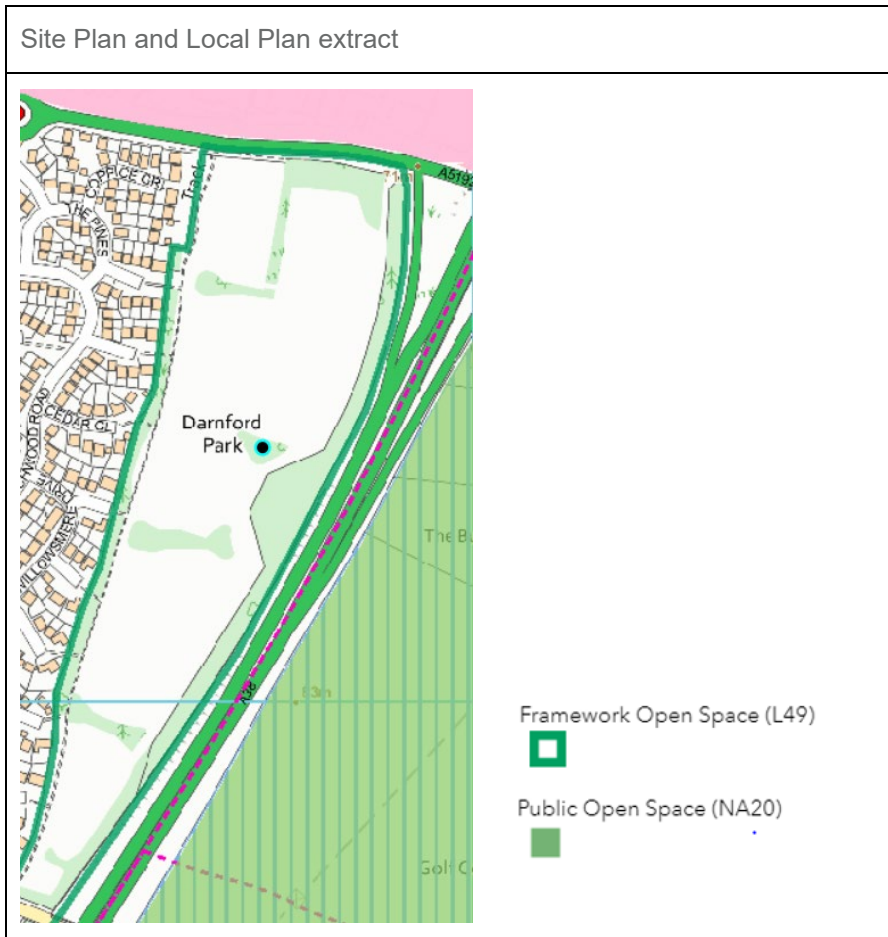
The Birmingham Gateway site is large enough to accommodate the proposed development as part of a mixed-use development. However, the development of a new leisure centre is not wholly in accordance with the City Centre Masterplan and LCNP, which include the provision of key facilities for the City with the overall development establishing the main entry point to the City Centre from the Railway Station and the south. The location of heritage assets close to the site and views from the Railway Station to Lichfield Cathedral constrain the development capacity of the site. Therefore, introducing a new leisure centre into the site is likely to significantly change the overall development mix of the site and could have a significant negative impact on the scheme's overall viability.

The delivery of the Birmingham Road site is a priority for the Council established through the Local Plan and City Centre Masterplan. If the inclusion of the proposed leisure centre places the delivery of the site at risk, then we recommend the Birmingham Road site is discounted

Recommendation – Take site forward as potential option

Site Description:

Darnford Park is located on the eastern edge of Lichfield, adjacent to the A38 Link Road. Darnford Park extends to approximately 46.95 acres (18.99 Ha).



Planning History

Planning Application Number	Date of Submission	Summary of Application	Decision
17/00041/FULM	23/12/16	Creation of canal, locks, basin, tunnel under A51, environmental mounds, viewing areas, and all associated engineering operations and earthworks.	Approved

This planning application was for a small area at the South of the site, for the restoration of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canal.

Development Plan Policy

Darnford Park is an area of public open space, split into five smaller sections by swathes of trees. The site is located on the edge of the urban area and backs on to the A38. The site is located within a residential area and has no vehicular access.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Darnford Park was identified in the 2016 open space assessment as providing an important leisure resource for the local community.

Flood Zone: This site lies in flood zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding.

Analysis

Darnford Park is an area of public open space providing a range of facilities including amenity open space and an equipped play facility. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2016 evaluates all open space in the district and Darnford Park scores above 40%.

The impact of the proposed development on the site would be significant given the shape of the Stychbrook Park and appropriate mitigation would be necessary informed by qualitative and quantitative impacts and requirements.

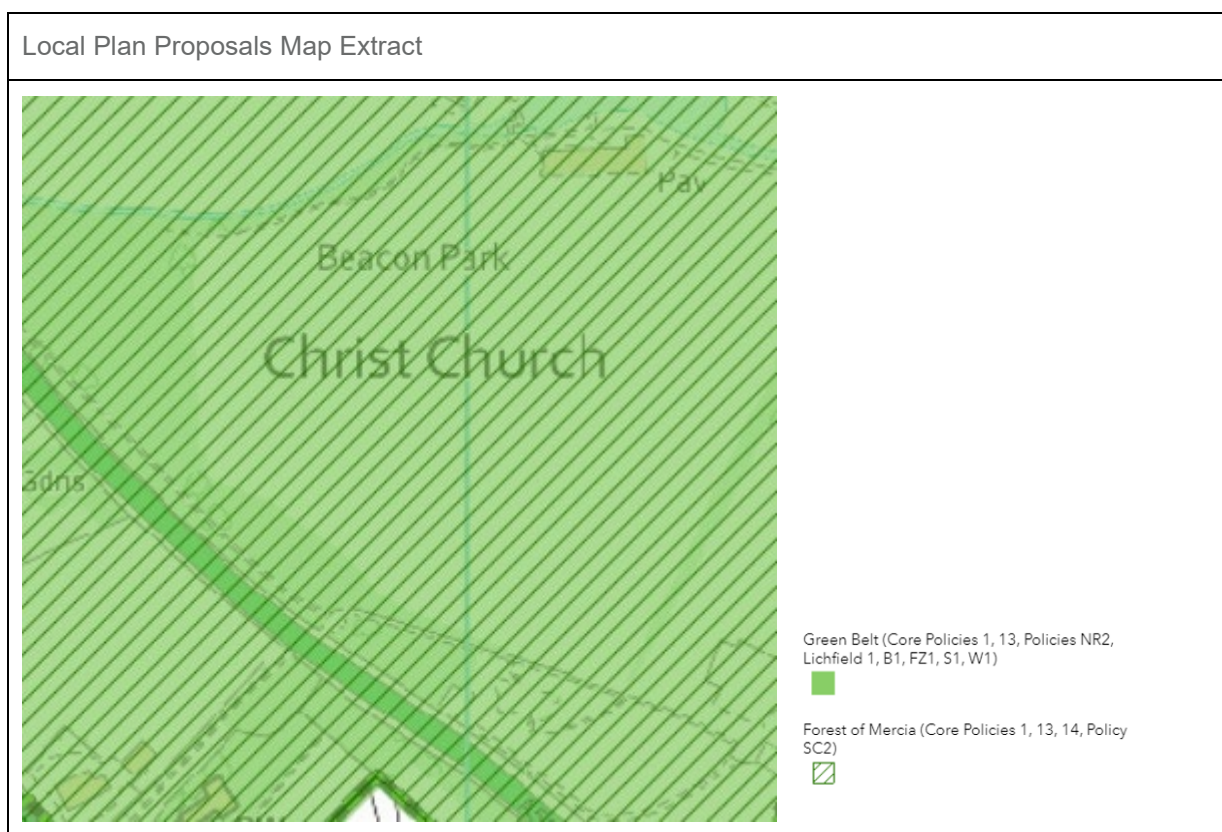
The proposed development would create ecological and environmental impacts, such as noise, which would also need to be taken into consideration. There are a significant number of trees on the site and the proposed development would require the removal of a substantial number given how the park is divided by swathes of woodland. The shape of the park also means that the development would, in part, be located close to sensitive receptors such as existing houses.

The park does not have an existing vehicle access and it is not clear whether an adequate vehicular access for the proposed development could be provided.

Recommendation – Discount Site

Site Description:

Beacon Park is located to the North West of Lichfield City Centre and is the main park in the city. Beacon Park extends to over 70 acres of land.



Planning History

There are no relevant planning applications or appeals on the park.

Development Plan Policy

Beacon Park is an area of open space situated within the Green Belt. Throughout the park there are several play facilities available including tennis courts, a children's play area, a golf course and football pitches. It is a historic park and was opened in 1859 in conjunction with the former museum building. The park is also situated within close proximity to Lichfield Cathedral.

Key policies are summarised below:

Core Policy 1 – establishes the requirement for sustainable development with a prioritisation of land that has previously been developed. It requires all new development to mitigate or minimise the pressure on the natural, built and historic environment.

Core Policy 14 - relates to built and historic environment and requires the protection and improvement of the built environment having special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Policy BE1 (High Quality Development) - requires all development to consider the surrounding natural and built environment.

Policy NR2 - requires the Green Belt to retain its character and openness in line with national guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The construction of new buildings constitutes inappropriate is considered as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. A leisure centre does not qualify as an exception and, therefore, Very Special Circumstances will need to be demonstrated.

Policy NR3 - confirms development will only be permitted where it protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value.

Policy NR5 – supports the retention and protection of geological, archaeological and historical locations.

Policy Lichfield 1 – Identifies Beacon Park as a key heritage asset, which should be maintained in order to enhance and protect Lichfield's heritage.

Other Relevant Documents

Lichfield Open Space Assessment 2016: Beacon Park is identified as being a flagship park providing high quality open space within the community. Throughout the study, Beacon Park scored as the one of the highest quality parks within the local area, scoring 96%, with a significant supply of play equipment sports pitches and open space. Furthermore, the park had been awarded the Green Flag award for six years in a row at the time of the open space assessment.

Lichfield City Centre Masterplan 2020: Identifies Beacon Park as a key site for open space within Lichfield. The masterplan recommends the park should be protected and where necessary enhanced to provide further landscaping and civic space.

Flood Risk: This park is located within flood zone 1 – the lowest zone of risk.

Analysis

Beacon Park is situated within the Green Belt. The development of a new leisure centre in the park constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Planning permission would only be granted for the proposal if a 'Very Special Circumstances' case was accepted by the LPA. Such a case would need to demonstrate that there were no alternative sites capable of accommodating the proposed development.

As there are potential alternative sites, we do not consider a Very Special Circumstances case can be made and we do not consider planning permission would be granted for the proposed development on either of these sites. Accordingly, on this matter alone, we recommend the park is discounted.

In addition, the loss of open space and playing pitches resulting from the development of a leisure centre is a significant planning risk. Beacon Park is an historic park and recognised as a flagship park for the city. Policy encourages the protection and enhancement of the park and the City Masterplan also reflects this objective.

Recommendation – Discount option

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Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25

Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services and Revenues & Benefits



Date: 6 October 2020
Agenda Item: 5
Contact Officer: Anthony Thomas
Tel Number: 01543 308012
Email: Anthony.thomas@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision? YES
Local Ward Members Full Council

Cabinet

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The ability to deliver the outcomes set out in the **Lichfield District Council Strategic Plan**, and beyond, is dependent on the resources available in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.2 This year, in addition to the inherent uncertainty related to the Local Government Financing Regime, there is the added uncertainty related to COVID-19 and changes to the Planning system.
- 1.3 The MTFS for the period 2019-24 was approved by Council on 18 February 2020 and this is refreshed to:
 - Remove the previous financial year and in this MTFS this is 2019/20
 - Formally add the new financial year and in this MTFS this is 2024/25 and;
 - Refresh and update assumptions to reflect the latest information available.
- 1.4 The MTFS is the overall budget framework and consists of the Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme and General Reserves.
- 1.5 There have been a series of reports to Cabinet and Council that have updated the MTFS 2019-2024 since its initial approval by Council.
- 1.6 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy are also important components of the MTFS. These components under the Constitution are the responsibility of the Audit and Member Standards Committee and therefore will be considered by that Committee as part of the development of the Draft MTFS for 2020-2025.
- 1.7 The timetable for consideration of the various elements of the MTFS is detailed in the table below:

Date	Meeting	Topics
Budget Consultation Takes Place	01/09/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	06/10/2020	Cabinet
	19/11/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	01/12/2020	Council Taxbase
	27/01/2021	Strategic (OS) Committee
03/02/2021	Audit and Member Standards Committee	To review the Treasury Management Strategy Statement
09/02/2021	Cabinet	To recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Tax increase to Council
16/02/2021	Council	Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy and set the Council Tax

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Cabinet recommends to Council:
 - The removal of all budgets related to Investment in Property.
 - The removal of all budgets related to the ICT Cloud project.
- 2.2. That Cabinet notes the projected additional cost of funding the 2020/21 pay award.
- 2.3. That Cabinet delegates to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services and Revenues & Benefits responsibility to agree the form and timetable for the Budget Consultation covering the 2021/22 financial year.

3. Background

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 3.1. Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 on 18 February 2020 which covered the financial years 2019/20 to 2023/24 (plus a forward projection for 2024/25).
- 3.2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy includes:
 - **The Revenue Budget** related to the day to day delivery of the Council's services such as waste collection.
 - **The Capital Programme** and its financing for longer term expenditure in relation to the Council's assets, such as property.
 - **General Reserves** related to the amount of money available to balance the budget in the short term or fund short term initiatives.
- 3.3. The Revenue Budget and Capital Programme are connected by:
 - Any financing of the Capital Programme from the Revenue Budget
 - The repayment of borrowing and the receipt of income from investments
 - Expenditure, income and savings resulting from capital investment.
- 3.4. The Council updates its Budget forecasts at 3, 6 and 8 month (forming the basis of the Revised Budget) intervals.
- 3.5. In terms of uncertainty or risk, in addition to the inherent uncertainty related to the Local Government Financing Regime, there is the added uncertainty related to COVID-19 and changes to the Planning system.
- 3.6. To assist in understanding the level of uncertainty or risk present we allocate a MTFS risk rating to each financial year:
 - **Low** – all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime are known and understood. The impact of COVID-19 is generally understood and mainly mitigated by Government Support.
 - **Medium** – all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime are known. However there is some uncertainty around how specific elements will operate. The impact of COVID-19 is partially understood and partially mitigated by Government Support.
 - **High** – there is uncertainty around all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime. The impact of COVID-19 is not fully understood and mitigation through Government Support is uncertain.

MTFS Budget Principles

- 3.7. To assist in preparing the MTFS, in common with a number of Councils, a set of principles were established to guide the preparation and management.
- 3.8. Cabinet, at its meeting on 8 October 2019, and Council, on 15 October 2019, approved the budget principles identified below:
- Council will consider the medium term outlook when setting the level of Council Tax to ensure that a sustainable budget position is maintained;
 - Council will prioritise funding for statutory and regulatory responsibilities to ensure these are delivered in a way that meets our legal requirements and customer needs;
 - Council will continue to seek continuous improvement to enable further savings, efficiencies and income gains and provide budgets that are appropriate to service needs;
 - Council will ensure that all growth in the staffing establishment will be fully understood through robust business cases in order to ensure our resources match service and customer needs. Growth will usually be allowed where costs are offset by external funding, savings or additional income;
 - Council will not add to other ongoing revenue budgets unless these are unavoidable costs or corresponding savings are identified elsewhere;
 - Council will use robust business cases to prioritise capital funding so that we have a sustainable Capital Programme that meets statutory responsibilities, benefits the Council's overall revenue budget position, and ensures that existing assets are properly maintained;
 - Council will maintain an overall level of revenue reserves that are appropriate for the overall level of risks that the organisation faces, in order to overcome any foreseeable financial impact.
- 3.9. It is important to note that the Government has delayed all of the proposed changes to the Local Government Finance Regime related to New Homes Bonus, further Business Rates retention and the Fair Funding Review by a further year until 2022/23.
- 3.10. However, at this stage, it is unclear whether the Business Rates reset element of the reviews where business rate growth is redistributed within the sector based on need (as reflected in the MTFS), will still be implemented in 2021/22.
- 3.11. The inherently high level of uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Finance regime has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and proposed changes to the Planning system.**
- 3.12. This unprecedented level of uncertainty means that to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council, these principles must be rigorously applied in controlling any proposed budgetary growth.**

The Approved Revenue Budget

3.13. The MTFS containing the Original Revenue Budget was approved by Council on 18 February 2020. There has been a number of approved updates to the Original Revenue Budget and these are shown below:

	Cabinet or Decision Date	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Original Budget Council 18/02/2020		(462)	613	959	1,507	1,899
Revenues and Benefits Software	24/03/2020	(8)	(11)	(14)	(18)	(18)
Cash Payment Facilities	02/06/2020	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
Climate Change (green energy)	02/06/2020	0	14	14	14	14
Joint Waste (additional contributions)	02/06/2020	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Business Rates Savings on our Properties	10/06/2020	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)
Pension Lump Sum Payment Profile Change	23/07/2020	42	2	(44)	0	0
Money Matters 3 Months Performance	08/09/2020	(8)	19	19	19	19
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)		(554)	520	817	1,405	1,795

3.14. The approved Revenue Budget (including a forward projection for 2024/25) is shown in detail at **APPENDIX A** and in summary by Strategic Priority below:

	2020/21		2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Enabling people	1,580	1,578	1,474	1,465	1,492	1,517
Shaping place	3,470	3,337	3,473	4,117	4,397	4,520
Developing prosperity	(1,184)	(1,159)	(1,945)	(2,715)	(3,352)	(3,360)
A good council	6,330	6,347	6,433	6,567	6,847	7,154
Corporate Expenditure	1,627	1,627	1,212	1,730	2,322	2,486
Revenue Expenditure	11,822	11,730	10,647	11,163	11,705	12,317
Revenue Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(10,127)	(10,347)	(10,300)	(10,522)
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)	(462)	(554)	520	817	1,405	1,795

3.15. The approved Revenue Budget is also presented by type of spend at **APPENDIX A** and in summary below:

	2020/21		2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Employees	13,435	13,436	13,803	14,127	14,594	15,010
Premises	1,135	1,144	1,185	1,225	1,269	1,315
Transport	1,647	1,645	1,662	1,678	1,695	1,712
Supplies and Services	6,115	6,169	5,833	6,520	6,422	6,469
Third Party Payments	555	655	627	608	619	634
Transfer Payments	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492
Grants and Contributions	(17,001)	(17,170)	(17,013)	(17,224)	(17,292)	(17,349)
Fees and Charges	(9,183)	(9,269)	(10,154)	(10,993)	(11,416)	(11,453)
Corporate Expenditure	1,627	1,627	1,212	1,730	2,322	2,486
Revenue Expenditure	11,822	11,730	10,647	11,163	11,705	12,317
Revenue Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(10,127)	(10,347)	(10,300)	(10,522)
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)	(462)	(554)	520	817	1,405	1,795

3.16. At present, the approved Revenue Budget includes contributions from Investment in Property (£87,000 in 2020/21 increasing to £658,000 in 2023/24) and the ICT Cloud Project (£30,000 in 2020/21 increasing to £150,000 in 2023/24) and these are both now considered to be high risk in terms of delivery.

The Approved Capital Programme

3.17. There have been a number of changes to the Capital Programme, approved by Cabinet and Council, which have updated the Original Budget approved by Council on 18 February 2020.

3.18. The impact of these changes on the Capital Programme is shown below:

	Cabinet or Decision Date	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Original Budget Council 18/02/2020		17,751	13,636	18,821	4,051	0
S106 Public Open Space monies	26/02/2020	34				
Slippage from 2019/20	02/06/2020	13,454				
Money Matters 3 Months - changes	08/09/2020	29				
Money Matters 3 Months - slippage	08/09/2020	(23,232)	23,232			
Approved Capital Programme		8,036	36,868	18,821	4,051	0

3.19. The Approved Capital Programme is shown at **APPENDIX B** and is summarised in the table below:

	2020/21		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000	£000	£000	£000	£000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Enabling People	3,424	3,688	2,171	3,324	3,235	0
Shaping Place	1,045	1,343	502	3,482	427	0
Developing Prosperity	625	2,047	0	0	0	0
A good Council	12,657	958	34,195	12,015	389	0
Capital Expenditure	17,751	8,036	36,868	18,821	4,051	0
Capital Funding	(6,087)	(7,841)	(3,179)	(4,972)	(1,791)	0
Borrowing Need	11,664	195	33,689	13,849	2,260	0

Usable Capital Receipts	(1,394)	(1,612)	(1,146)	(597)	(256)	(940)
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3.20. The revenue implications (including a forward projection for 2024/25) are shown below:

Revenue Implications	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Investment in Property	(56)	(180)	(303)	(427)	(427)
Investment in Property - Internal Borrowing Element	(31)	(98)	(164)	(231)	(231)
Interest on Loan to the LA Company	(4)	(18)	(22)	(22)	(22)
Digital Strategy – ICT Cloud Project	(30)	(100)	(150)	(150)	(150)
Coach Park Operating Costs	50	50	50	50	50
IT Hardware	9	9	4	(38)	9
Revenue Budget	182	0	0	213	144
New Financial Information System	19	9	25	25	25
Friary Grange - Refurbishment	135	135	135	135	135
Replacement Leisure Centre Debt Costs	0	0	0	0	294
Approved Budget	274	(193)	(425)	(445)	(173)

3.21. At present, the approved Capital Programme includes a budget of £45m funded by external borrowing related to Investment in Property.

Recommended Changes to the MTFS

Investment in Property

- 3.22. The MTFS included Capital Programme budgets to enable the implementation of the Property Investment Strategy resulting in a contribution towards closing the Revenue Budget Funding Gap.
- 3.23. The Budget on 11 March 2020 included a consultation on changes to the PWLB lending terms to stop the use of PWLB loans for “debt for yield activity”. The consultation closed on 4 June 2020 and the Council submitted a response with the outcome from HM Treasury still awaited.
- 3.24. CIPFA also issued a statement on 11 March 2020 that included reference to the transition period with the PWLB and the use of alternative forms of borrowing and advised “all CFOs to operate these new arrangements with immediate effect. When regulations follow consultation, we believe that they will apply to both financing and refinancing, and so councils should avoid the risks that could result if they borrowed from the PWLB for commercial purposes during the transition”.
- 3.25. Moving forward, the Council can consider alternative options that could include Investment in Property and the MTFS can be updated to reflect the preferred approach.

ICT Cloud

- 3.26. The MTFS included an Invest to Save project for the implementation of a cloud based IT environment. However further analysis was undertaken and this identified an alternative option of procuring server hosting and support services from Staffordshire and Shropshire health Informatics Service (SSHIS).
- 3.27. The option to utilise the alternative was approved by a Cabinet Member decision on 31 January 2020.

The Pay Award in 2020/21

- 3.28. The MTFS assumed a pay award for 2020/21 (and later years) of **2.00%**. In August 2020 Local Government agreed a pay award for 2020/21 of **2.75%**. This will result in an additional cost for 2020/21 and later years of **0.75%** plus related employer costs.
- 3.29. Additionally under the agreement, staff with less than five years’ service will also see their holiday rise from **21 days a year to 22** and this could also result in a further (unquantified) additional cost.
- 3.30. At this stage, the **2%** assumption for 2021/22 and later years will continue to be used in the MTFS.
- 3.31. The impact of these recommended changes on the Approved Capital Programme is shown below:

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Approved Capital Programme	8,036	36,868	18,821	4,051	0	67,776
Removal of Investment in Property	0	(33,500)	(11,500)	0	0	(45,000)
Removal of ICT Cloud	(91)	0	0	0	0	(91)
Recommended Capital Programme	7,945	3,368	7,321	4,051	0	22,685

- 3.32. The impact of these recommended changes on the Approved Revenue Budget is shown below:

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Approved Revenue Budget	£11,730	£10,647	£11,163	£11,705	£12,317
Removal of Investment in Property	87	278	467	658	658
Removal of ICT Cloud	30	100	150	150	150
Earmarked Reserve for ICT Cloud	(30)				
Additional impact of the 2020/21 Pay Award	82	84	85	87	89
Recommended Revenue Budget	£11,899	£11,108	£11,866	£12,600	£13,213

Updated Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)	(385)	982	1,519	2,300	2,692
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The projected impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Impact on Lichfield District and Support Provided

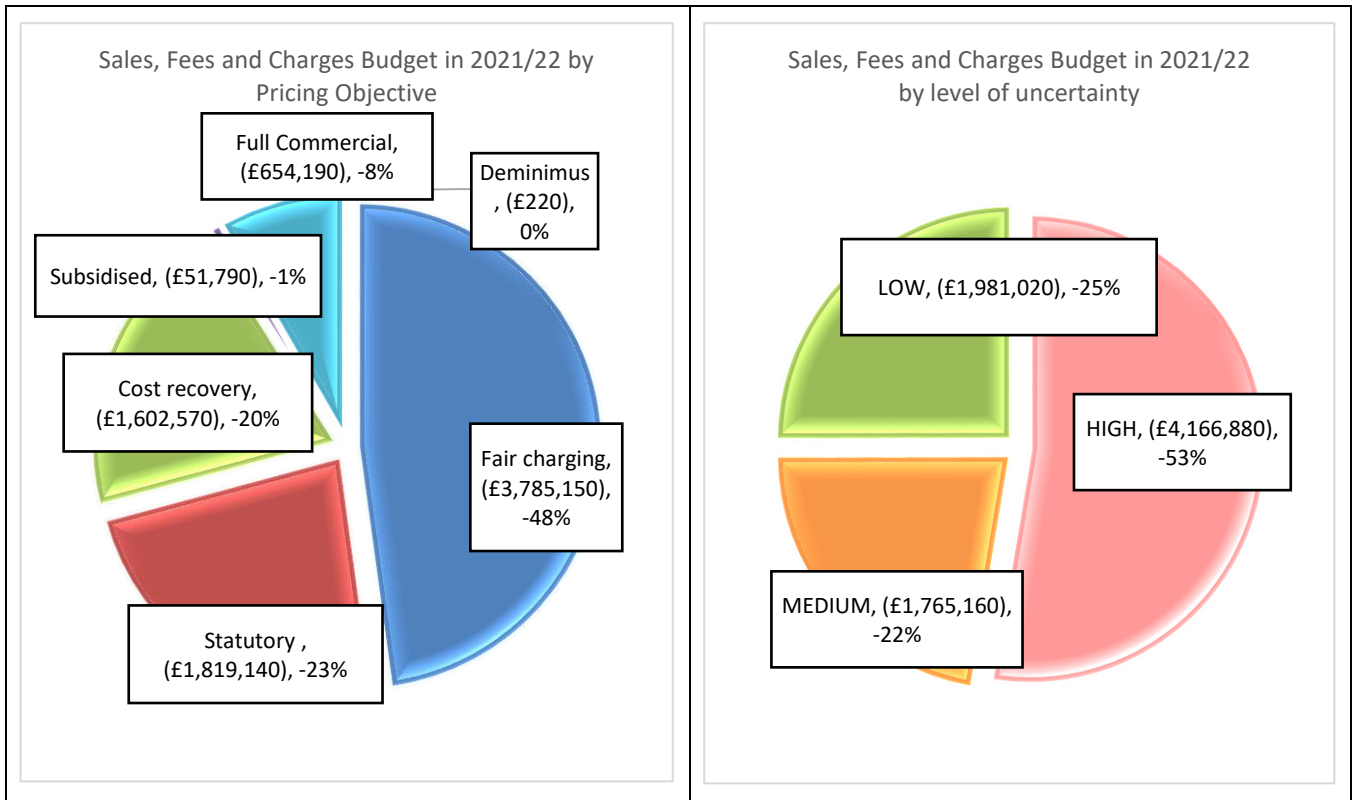
- 3.33. At this stage, we can only estimate the impact and there are very few ways we can really understand what the long term impact on our economy will be, which parts will be most affected and how they will recover.
- 3.34. The Government has provided financial support to the Council to support businesses and individuals with a full list of policy announcements shown at **APPENDIX C**.
- 3.35. The key policy announcements announced to support Lichfield District are highlighted below:
- **Hardship Fund** – the Council as a billing authority received an allocation of **£562,910**. This allocation covers all precepting bodies and it is to be used to support economically vulnerable people and households through existing local council tax support schemes. As at 31 August 2020, the Council had awarded **£435,580** (77%). The financial projections provided below include an allowance for awards in excess of the allocation provided by the Government.
 - **Business Improvement Districts (BID)** – the Council received an allocation of **£9,650** and this has been forwarded to the Lichfield BID Limited to support their activities.
 - **Business Rates Relief for Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Nurseries** – the Government provided specific Business Rate reliefs for these sectors of the economy. As at 31 August 2020, the Council had awarded **£14,070,667** (37% of Net Rates Payable).
 - **Small Business Grant Funding and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund** – the Government provided further grant support to these sectors of the economy and the Council was allocated **£19,396,000**. As at 31 August 2020, the Council had awarded **£18,590,000** (96% of grant awarded or 97% by number of businesses) and the Government has set a ‘cut off’ date of 28 August 2020. The Council is making further attempts to contact business that have still not yet claimed grants.
 - **Discretionary Grant Fund** – the Government has allocated the Council **£951,000** to support businesses not covered by the other funding awards. As at 31 August 2020, the Council had awarded **£410,000** (43%) and the ‘cut off’ date of 28 August 2020 is also applicable.
 - **Reopening High Street Safely funding** – the Council was allocated **£92,501** and this is being utilised to support the reopening of businesses throughout Lichfield District.

The Impact on Lichfield District Council

- 3.36. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant impact on local council finances, the effects of which will continue through the current period of lockdown and beyond. The financial impact will be due to both unforeseen, but necessary, expenditure and reduced income from fees and charges, Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 3.37. Councils still have a legal duty to deliver best value and so will need to ensure that public money is spent wisely in its response to the pandemic. However, the scale of the crisis means that budget deficits are likely to be impossible to avoid.
- 3.38. The overall impact is very difficult to predict especially identifying which financial impacts are cash flow (temporary) and which are budgetary (permanent) in nature. Therefore at this early stage, the financial impacts related to income are assumed to be those of a budgetary nature.
- 3.39. The impact will also vary by area, dependent on factors such as geography, demographics, services delivered and the nature of the local economy. However to a large extent, it will depend on how quickly the national and local economies return to normal levels of activity.

- 3.40. If the Government does not fully reimburse councils for their full losses, councils will find that their reserves will be depleted, or even exhausted, and ongoing savings will be required to refresh them to desired levels. Should the council be unable to balance its budget at the year end, any overspend will need to be met by reserves.
- 3.41. To assist in determining the financial impact of COVID-19 on Local Government and therefore the level of budgetary support required to maintain essential services, the Council is submitting monthly financial returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). However, it should be noted, that to date, no specific support has been provided to support leisure partners.
- 3.42. The Government has provided the following budgetary support to Local Government (**APPENDIX C**):
- **Grant support** – three tranches have been provided to Local Government totalling £3.7bn using three different methodologies. As at 31 July 2020 the Council’s share was **(£1,213,710)**.
 - **Council Tax and Business Rate Collection Fund deficits** – any deficit in 2020/21 will be able to be spread over three years rather than one to aid in managing the budgetary impacts.
 - **Income losses scheme** – this scheme is for 2020/21 only and is related to income from sales, fees and charges from delivering services and therefore excludes commercial income and investment income. The Council is responsible for the **first 5%** of losses based on the overall budget and then losses in excess of this level are shared **25% Council and 75% reimbursed by the government**.
- 3.43. The grant received is **(£1,213,710)** with **£12,550** used in 2019/20 and therefore **(£1,201,160)** is available.
- 3.44. We have used projections from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to inform our estimates and the Cabinet Report on 7 July 2020 projected an impact from **£1,281,260** to **£4,541,260**.
- 3.45. The current projections for 2020/21 only are **£2,357,900** based on the information submitted in the MHCLG return for July shown at **APPENDIX D**.
- 3.46. In terms of the current projections:
- In 2020/21 there will be an impact of **£1,267,900**, and in the absence of further government support this will result in a reduction to the level of general reserves
 - The Council Tax element is projected to be **£544,000**. There is the additional surplus generated in 2019/20 however this is insufficient to manage the impact and therefore the remaining deficit would impact on general reserves over three years.
 - The Business Rates element is projected to be **£546,000**. There is the additional surplus generated in 2019/20 plus the volatility earmarked reserve available to manage reductions over three years.
 - The Government has indicated that as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement these income streams could also receive support for losses.
- 3.47. As projections indicate, sales, fees and charges are an important element of funding for the Revenue Budget and they will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the short to medium term.

3.48. Sales, fees and charges Approved Budgets by pricing objective and assessed level of uncertainty presented by the pandemic, are shown in detail at **APPENDIX E** and in summary for 2021/22 below:



The Projected level of General Reserves (including the 2020/21 COVID-19 impact)

3.49. The Projected level of General Reserves (including a forward projection for 2024/25) is shown below:

	2020/21		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Available General Reserves Year Start	4,792	4,792	5,080	4,341	2,934	467
(Funding Gap) / transfer to General Reserves	462	385	(982)	(1,519)	(2,300)	(2,692)
COVID-19 Revenue Budget Impact		(1,268)				
COVID-19 Council Tax Collection Fund ¹			(168)	(168)	(167)	
COVID-19 Business Rates Collection Fund ²			(1,629)	(1,629)	(1,629)	
Business Rates Volatility Reserve ³			1,629	1,629	1,629	
New Homes Bonus in excess of the 'Cap'	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Available General Reserves Year End	6,425	5,080	4,341	2,934	467	(2,225)
Minimum Level	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Total Projected General Reserves	8,025	6,680	5,941	4,534	2,067	(625)

3.50. Any COVID-19 financial impact in excess of Government funding will need to be funded by general reserves in 2020/21 and possibly beyond.

¹ The Council's share of the Council Tax Collection Fund deficit is projected to be £502,630 and includes £544,000 specifically related to COVID-19.

² The Council's share of the Business Rates Collection Fund deficit is projected to be £4,887,000 and includes £546,000 specifically related to COVID-19.

³ The Business Rates Volatility Reserve is projected to be £7,040,816. This consists of £1,428,816 available at 1 April 2020 plus £5,612,000 of additional Section 31 grant and changes to levy payments that will be transferred in 2020/21.

The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) updated Forecasts

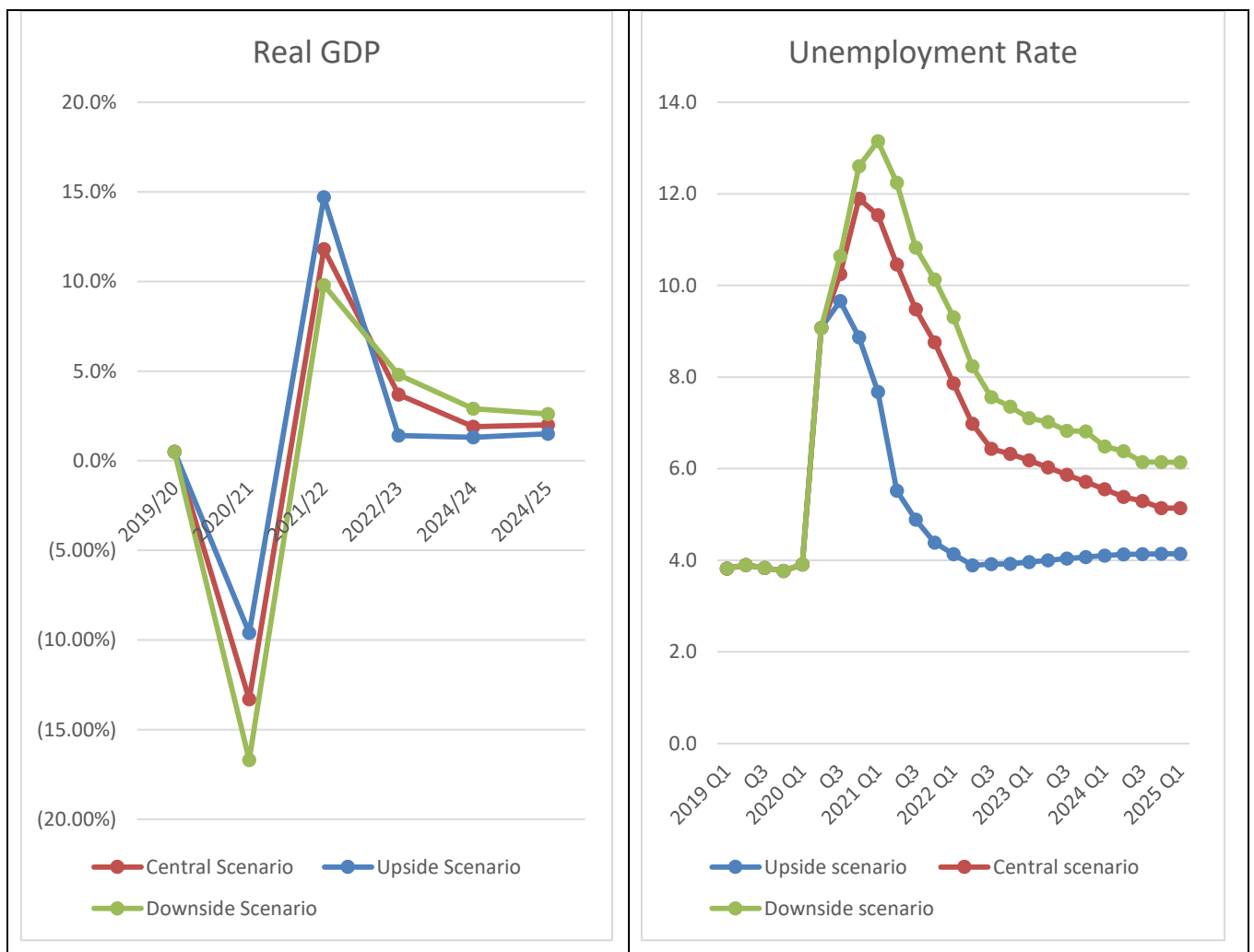
3.51. The OBR recently updated its forecasts related to the economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on 14 July 2020 within its Fiscal Sustainability Report.

3.52. This report includes three scenarios that are explained below:

- In the **upside scenario** (the March reference scenario forecast provided on 14 April 2020), activity rebounds relatively quickly, recovering its pre-virus peak by the first quarter of 2021, and there is no enduring economic scarring.
- In the **central scenario**, output recovers more slowly, regaining its pre-virus peak by the end of 2022. Cumulative business investment is 6 per cent lower than in the March forecast over five years, while unemployment and business failures remain elevated. Real GDP is 3 per cent lower in the first quarter of 2025 than in the March forecast.
- In the **downside scenario**, output recovers even more slowly, returning to its pre-virus peak only in the third quarter of 2024. This results in a more significant loss of business investment, more firm failures and persistently high unemployment as the economy undergoes significant restructuring. Real GDP is 6 per cent lower in the first quarter of 2025 than in our March forecast.

3.53. These projections include national forecasts for Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment, Council Tax and Business Rates that can be used to inform the development of the MTFs.

3.54. The OBR forecasts for the three scenarios for Real GDP and unemployment and these could impact on a number of areas of the MTFs. These forecasts are shown below:



3.55. The OBR also provided estimates of the impact on Business Rates and Council Tax (all three scenarios are the same) compared to 2019/20 and the projections that will be included in the budget.

3.56. The OBR estimates project lower levels of income from Business Rates and Council Tax from 2020/21 through to 2024/25 and this will need to be a consideration in the development of the MTFS:



The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy

3.57. The process for updating the MTFs has commenced earlier than in previous years with an enhanced service and financial planning process that builds on the approach taken last year.

3.58. The enhanced process is service based focusing on the following:

- Assessing the contribution services make in achieving outcomes in the Strategic Plan.
- Looking forward and assessing the impact on services of the cost and demand drivers (including the additional pay pressure of **0.75%** in 2020/21 that will also impact on later years) initially identified below:

Cost Drivers						
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Full Time Equivalents	302	318	318	318	318	318
Pay Award	2.00%	2.75%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Employers National Insurance	9.26%	9.34%	9.44%	9.53%	9.64%	9.73%
Employers Pension (%)	16.20%	16.20%	16.20%	16.20%	16.20%	16.20%
Employers Pension (Past)	£777,270	£1,000,420	£1,102,060	£1,206,520	£1,351,520	£1,496,520
Employers Pension (Other)	£103,820	£105,890	£108,810	£109,180	£109,260	£112,540
Non Contractual Inflation (CPI)	1.80%	1.24%	2.32%	2.42%	2.27%	2.16%
Non Contractual Inflation (RPI)	2.60%	1.76%	2.86%	3.40%	3.19%	2.99%
Applicable Fees and Charges	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Base Rate	0.75%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
Demand Drivers (pre COVID-19)						
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Population Projections	103,500	104,858	105,293	105,709	106,073	106,432
Residential Properties	45,182	45,967	46,938	48,227	49,447	50,172
Business Properties	3,076	3,084	3,084	3,084	3,084	3,084
Number of visitors	2,675,100	2,675,100	2,675,100	2,675,100	2,675,100	2,675,100
						% Increase
Population Projections						2.83%
Residential Properties						11.04%
Business Properties						0.26%
Number of visitors						0.00%

- Identifying the plans for fees and charges over the next four years.
- Assessing the impact of an indicative reduction in funding or income of **c10%** related to the potential impact of changes to the Local Government Finance regime, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and changes to the Planning system.
- Identifying mitigating options to manage the indicative reduction in funding or income.

3.59. The outcomes are being considered by Leadership Team for consideration by Cabinet and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee in developing the MTFs in line with the timetable at para 1.7.

Alternative Options	Where alternative options exist, they are identified within the background section.
Consultation	Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee received this report on 1 September 2020 and made no recommendations to Cabinet. A Budget Consultation exercise will take place in 2020 in line with the recently approved engagement strategy to inform the MTFs. The results of the consultation will form part of the report to Cabinet on 9 February 2021.
Financial Implications	These are included within the report.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The report directly links to overall performance and especially the delivery of Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan and beyond.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
Crime & Safety Issues	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
Environmental Impact	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk
Strategic Risk SR1 - Non achievement of the Council's key priorities contained in the Strategic Plan due to the availability of finance.			
A	Implementation of the Check, Challenge and Appeal Business Rates Appeals and more frequent revaluations	To closely monitor the level of appeals. An allowance of 4.7% (in line with the MHCLG Allowance) for appeals has been included in the Business Rate Estimates.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
B	The review of the New Homes Bonus regime	Not all of the projected New Homes Bonus is included as core funding in the Base Budget. In 2021/22 £500,000 is included and this is then being reduced by £100,000 per annum.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
C	The increased Localisation of Business Rates and the Fair Funding Review in 2022/2023	To assess the implications of proposed changes and respond to consultations to attempt to influence the policy direction in the Council's favour.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Red
D	The affordability and risk associated with the Capital Strategy	An estates management team has been recruited to provide professional expertise and advice in relation to investment in property and to continue to take a prudent approach to budgeting.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
Strategic Risk SR3: Capacity and capability to deliver / adapt the new strategic plan to emerging landscape.			
E	The financial impact of COVID-19 is not fully reimbursed by Government and exceeds the reserves available resulting in a Section 114 notice	The use of general and earmarked reserves to fund any shortfall	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Yellow
F	The Council cannot achieve its approved Delivery Plan for 2020/21	There will need to be consideration of additional resourcing and/or reprioritisation to reflect the impact of the pandemic.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
G	The resources available in the medium to longer term to deliver the Strategic Plan are diminished	The MTFS will be updated through the normal review and approval process	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
H	Government and Regulatory Bodies introduce significant changes to the operating environment	To review all proposed policy changes and respond to all consultations to influence outcomes in the Council's favour	Likelihood : Green Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow

Background documents

- CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Cabinet 11 February 2020.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Council 18 February 2020.
- Money Matters: 2019/20 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 2 June 2020.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the projected financial impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic – Cabinet 7 July 2020.
- Money Matters: 2020/21 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 8 September 2020.

Relevant web links

Approved Revenue Budget

By Strategic Priority

	2020/21 Original Budget £000	2020/21 Approved Budget £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Developing prosperity	(1,184)	(1,159)	(1,945)	(2,715)	(3,352)	(3,360)
A good council	6,330	6,347	6,433	6,567	6,847	7,154
Enabling people	1,580	1,578	1,474	1,465	1,492	1,517
Shaping place	3,470	3,337	3,473	4,117	4,397	4,520
Corporate expenditure	456	456	801	1,450	2,322	2,486
COVID-19	0	1,268	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure⁴	10,651	11,827	10,235	10,884	11,705	12,316
Retained Business Rates Baseline Funding	(2,117)	(2,117)	(1,691)	(1,720)	(1,749)	(1,784)
Retained Business Rates Growth Allowance	(903)	(903)	(89)	(116)	(123)	(100)
Business Rates Cap	(85)	(85)	0	0	0	0
Returned New Homes Bonus	0	0	(51)	(74)	0	0
New Homes Bonus - Base Budget	(600)	(600)	(500)	(400)	(300)	(200)
New Homes Bonus - to General Reserve	(1,171)	(1,171)	(411)	(280)	0	0
Business Rates Levy	(49)	(49)	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(330)	(330)	(35)	(35)	(35)	(35)
Council Tax	(7,029)	(7,029)	(7,350)	(7,722)	(8,093)	(8,403)
Total Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(10,127)	(10,347)	(10,300)	(10,522)
Transfer (from) / to general reserves - COVID-19	0	(1,268)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus to general reserves	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Approved Funding Gap (transfer to general reserves)	(462)	(554)	520	817	1,405	1,795
Council Tax Base	39,032	39,032	39,717	40,627	41,487	41,999
Band D Council Tax (Assumes £5 until 2024/25, then 1.99%)	£180.07	£180.07	£185.07	£190.07	£195.07	£198.95

⁴ Revenue Expenditure is total expenditure plus transfers (from) / to general reserves.

APPENDIX A

By Type of Spend or Income

	2020/21 Original Budget £000	2020/21 Approved Budget £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Employees	£13,435	£13,436	£13,803	£14,127	£14,594	£15,010
Premises	£1,135	£1,144	£1,185	£1,225	£1,269	£1,315
Transport	£1,647	£1,645	£1,662	£1,678	£1,695	£1,712
Supplies and Services	£6,115	£6,169	£5,833	£6,520	£6,422	£6,469
Third Party Payments	£555	£655	£627	£608	£619	£634
Transfer Payments	£13,492	£13,492	£13,492	£13,492	£13,492	£13,492
COVID-19	£0	£1,268	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Direct Expenditure	36,379	37,809	36,602	37,650	38,091	38,632
Grants and Contributions	(£17,001)	(£17,170)	(£17,013)	(£17,224)	(£17,292)	(£17,349)
Fees and Charges by Pricing Objective						
Cost recovery	(£1,560)	(£1,558)	(£1,603)	(£1,631)	(£1,661)	(£1,681)
Deminimus	(£5)	(£5)	£0	(£2)	(£1)	(£1)
Fair charging	(£5,136)	(£5,216)	(£6,026)	(£6,806)	(£7,196)	(£7,196)
Full Commercial	(£619)	(£619)	(£654)	(£683)	(£687)	(£704)
Statutory	(£1,811)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)
Subsidised	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)
Sub Total Fees and Charges	(9,183)	(9,269)	(10,154)	(10,993)	(11,416)	(11,453)
Total Direct Income	(26,184)	(26,439)	(27,167)	(28,217)	(28,708)	(28,802)
Net Cost of Services	10,195	11,371	9,435	9,433	9,383	9,831
Treasury Management	£152	£152	£801	£1,450	£2,109	£2,342
Capital Funded from Revenue	£182	£182	£0	£0	£213	£144
Transfer (from) / to general reserves - COVID-19	£0	(£1,268)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Transfer to General Reserves	£1,171	£1,171	£411	£280	£0	£0
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	£122	£122	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Expenditure	11,822	11,730	10,647	11,163	11,705	12,317

Retained Business Rates Baseline Funding	(2,117)	(2,117)	(1,691)	(1,720)	(1,749)	(1,784)
Retained Business Rates Growth Allowance	(903)	(903)	(89)	(116)	(123)	(100)
Business Rates Cap	(85)	(85)	0	0	0	0
Returned New Homes Bonus	0	0	(51)	(74)	0	0
New Homes Bonus - Base Budget	(600)	(600)	(500)	(400)	(300)	(200)
New Homes Bonus - to General Reserve	(1,171)	(1,171)	(411)	(280)	0	0
Business Rates Levy	(49)	(49)	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(330)	(330)	(35)	(35)	(35)	(35)
Council Tax	(7,029)	(7,029)	(7,350)	(7,722)	(8,093)	(8,403)
Total Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(10,127)	(10,347)	(10,300)	(10,522)

Approved Funding Gap (transfer to general reserves)	(462)	(554)	520	817	1,405	1,795
Council Tax Base	39,032	39,032	39,717	40,627	41,487	41,999
Band D Council Tax (Assumes £5 until 2024/25, then 1.99%)	£180.07	£180.07	£185.07	£190.07	£195.07	£198.95

Approved Capital Programme

Project	Approved Capital Programme (R=>500k, A=250k to 500k and G=<250k)						
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000	Corporate
Gym Equipment at Burntwood Parks	34	0	0	0	0	34	0
New Build Parish Office/Community Hub	92	0	0	0	0	92	0
Armitage/Handsacre Hall storage container	6	0	0	0	0	6	0
Armitage War Memorial	120	0	0	0	0	120	0
Artificial grass at Armitage	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Burntwood LC CHP Unit	223	0	0	0	0	223	0
King Edwards VI School (CIL)	101	0	0	0	0	101	0
Friary Grange - Short Term Refurbishment	640	0	0	0	0	640	0
Replacement Leisure Centre	195	189	2,349	2,260	0	4,993	0
St. Stephen's School, Fradley (S106)	22	0	0	0	0	22	0
Accessible Homes (Disabled Facilities Grants)	1,100	1,957	950	950	0	4,957	396
Home Repair Assistance Grants	36	15	15	15	0	81	0
Decent Homes Standard	172	0	0	0	0	172	0
Energy Insulation Programme	48	10	10	10	0	78	0
DCLG Monies	212	0	0	0	0	212	0
Unallocated S106 Affordable Housing Monies	684	0	0	0	0	684	0
Enabling People Total	3,688	2,171	3,324	3,235	0	12,418	396
Darnford Park (S106)	13	0	0	0	0	13	0
Canal Towpath Improvements	36	0	0	0	0	36	0
Loan to Council Dev Co.	675	0	0	0	0	675	116
Lichfield St Johns Community Link (CIL)	35	0	0	0	0	35	0
Staffordshire Countryside Explorer (CIL)	44	0	0	0	0	44	0
Equity in Council Dev Co.	225	0	0	0	0	225	0
Vehicle Replacement Programme (Waste)	0	0	3,190	75	0	3,265	75
Vehicle Replacement Programme (Other)	54	327	142	202	0	725	57
Bin Purchase	150	150	150	150	0	600	0
Env. Improvements - Upper St John St	7	0	0	0	0	7	0
Stowe Pool Improvements (S106) (Jul 2012)	50	0	0	0	0	50	5
The Leomansley Area Improvement Project	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Cannock Chase SAC	51	25	0	0	0	76	0
Shaping Place Total	1,343	502	3,482	427	0	5,754	253
Multi Storey Car Park Refurbishment Project	300	0	0	0	0	300	0
Coach Park	1,475	0	0	0	0	1,475	418
Birmingham Road Site - Redevelopment	222	0	0	0	0	222	0
Car Parks Variable Message Signing (S106)	32	0	0	0	0	32	0
Old Mining College - Refurbish access and signs	13	0	0	0	0	13	0
St. Chads Sculpture	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Developing Prosperity	2,047	0	0	0	0	2,047	423
Property Investment Strategy	0	33,500	11,500	0	0	45,000	0
Property Planned Maintenance	229	150	180	215	0	774	774
Depot Sinking Fund	0	11	0	0	0	11	11
New Financial Information System	150	100	0	0	0	250	250
IT Infrastructure	154	35	15	0	0	204	204
IT Cloud	91	0	0	0	0	91	91
IT Innovation	280	50	50	0	0	380	275
ICT Hardware	4	161	160	174	0	499	499
District Council House Repair Programme	50	188	110	0	0	348	310
Good Council	958	34,195	12,015	389	0	47,557	2,414
Approved Capital Programme	8,036	36,868	18,821	4,051	0	67,776	3,486

APPENDIX B

Funding Source	Approved Capital Programme					
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Capital Receipts	1,172	1,003	559	352	0	3,086
Capital Receipts - Statue	5	0	0	0	0	5
Revenue - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0	395
Corporate Council Funding	1,359	1,003	559	565	0	3,486
Grant	2,084	1,674	931	931	0	5,620
Section 106	1,243	25	0	0	0	1,268
CIL	180	0	0	0	0	180
Reserves	2,602	327	72	145	0	3,146
Revenue (Joint Waste Service)	150	150	150	150	0	600
Sinking Fund	223	0	0	0	0	223
Leases	0	0	3,260	0	0	3,260
Total	7,841	3,179	4,972	1,791	0	17,783
Borrowing Need	195	33,689	13,849	2,260	0	49,993
Funding Total	8,036	36,868	18,821	4,051	0	67,776

Capital Receipts	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Opening Balance	(2,673)	(1,612)	(1,146)	(597)	(256)	(2,673)
Repayment of Loan from Development Company					(675)	(675)
Sale of land at Netherstowe and Leyfields		(527)				(527)
Right to Buy Receipts	(106)					(106)
Other Receipts	(10)	(10)	(10)	(11)	(9)	(50)
Utilised in Year	1,177	1,003	559	352	0	3,091
Closing Balance	(1,612)	(1,146)	(597)	(256)	(940)	(940)
Element earmarked to Housing Strategy	(106)	(106)	(106)	(106)	(106)	(106)

Policy Announcements

Funding	When Announced	Allocation	Notes
Additional Funding 1 st Tranche £1.6bn	19 March	£37,280	Relative Needs Based Grant.
Additional Funding 2 nd Tranche £1.6bn	18 April	£1,036,009	Per Capita based Grant 35% Districts and 65% Counties in two tier areas
Hardship Fund - £0.5bn	24 March	£562,910	Based on working age claimant numbers
Business Improvement Districts - £6.1m	1 May	TBD	
Homelessness Funding - £3.2m	17 March	£1,650	
Additional Business Rates Relief	Various Dates	£13,429,306	Council 40% share £5,372,000
Small Business Grant Funding and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund	11 March, 17 March and 2 May	£19,396,000	Councils used to passport to eligible businesses in their area
Cashflow measures	16 April	N/a	Early payment of grants and deferral of Government share of Business Rates for three months
Discretionary Grant Fund	4 May	£951,000	The grant calculation is based on 5% of the funding that was paid to businesses under the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund, as at 4 th May 2020
Reopening High Street Safely Funding	24 May	£92,501	
Additional Funding 3 rd Tranche £0.5bn	16 July	£140,417	A grant based on actual expenditure taking into account population, deprivation, the cost of delivering the same services in different areas and split 21% Districts and 79% Counties in two tier areas.
3 year phasing of Collection Fund Deficits for Council Tax and Business Rates rather than the current one year.	16 July	TBD	This will only provide time to deal with the impact of lower income by spreading any deficit over a longer period
Income loss scheme for sales, fees and charges	16 July	TBD	<p>The is based on sales, fees and charges income incurred in delivering services and therefore excludes other types of income such as commercial income.</p> <p>Further details are still awaited, however it will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total budget rather than individual income budgets with any over performance used to offset under performance • The first 5% of income loss will be the Council's responsibility • Income losses in excess of 5% will be shared 25% Council and 75% Government

The current COVID-19 projections for 2020/21 only

Details	July	Comments
Support for Leisure Partner	£240,000	Current Projection
Housing and Homelessness Support	£94,380	
Additional Hardship / Discretionary Housing Payments	£103,000	Rent protection now extended therefore shown in What If scenarios
Additional costs of Waste Collection	£124,110	
ICT Support Costs for Remote Working	£66,120	Support extended
Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Building Cleaning and Other Costs	£25,730	
Bank Charges for Grant Processing	£3,440	
Transport for food deliveries	£9,580	
Project costs	£80,520	Delays in some projects result in additional costs.
Other costs	£95,520	Potential costs for agency/casual/overtime for essential workers, savings and other
Total additional Costs	£842,400	
Reduced commercial rents, Investment Income & Other Income	£86,000	Assumes there will be an adverse impact on property rental and other income.
Reduced Sales, Fees and Charges	£997,410	Car Parking income is the highest risk.
Total excluding What if Scenarios	£1,925,810	

What if scenarios:	July
Projected reductions in Council Tax (LDC & Parishes 13%) are included (will impact in later years)	£544,000
Projected reductions in Business Rates (LDC 40%) are included (will impact in later years)	£546,000
Hardship / Housing Payments extend for 12 months	£186,000
Support for the Leisure Partner extends for 12 months	£811,250
Total of all What if scenarios	£2,087,250
Total including What if Scenarios	£4,013,060
Government Support in 2020/21 + Earmarked Reserve	(£1,201,160)
Income Guarantee Estimate	(£454,000)

Total potential financial impact	£2,357,900
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Impact in 2020/21	£1,267,900
Impact in later years	£1,090,000

Fees and Charges information

Fees and Charges	Pricing Objective	Uncertainty	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Planning pre application advice	Cost recovery	HIGH	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)
Building Regulations	Cost recovery	MEDIUM	(915)	(933)	(951)	(969)	(988)
Local Land Charges - LDC	Cost recovery	MEDIUM	(294)	(299)	(305)	(310)	(310)
Bulky Waste Collection	Cost recovery	LOW	(67)	(67)	(67)	(67)	(67)
LOPS - Invest to Save	Cost recovery	HIGH	(55)	(57)	(59)	(60)	(61)
Housing Options & Homelessness	Cost recovery	LOW	(42)	(44)	(45)	(47)	(49)
Other	Cost recovery		(145)	(162)	(164)	(167)	(166)
Sub Total			(1,558)	(1,603)	(1,631)	(1,661)	(1,681)
Other	Deminimus		(5)	(0)	(2)	(1)	(1)
Sub Total			(5)	(0)	(2)	(1)	(1)
Lichfield Car Parks	Fair charging	HIGH	(2,056)	(2,056)	(2,056)	(2,056)	(2,056)
Garden Waste Service (Both Councils)	Fair charging	LOW	(1,403)	(1,403)	(1,403)	(1,403)	(1,403)
Grounds Maintenance	Fair charging	LOW	(202)	(202)	(202)	(202)	(202)
Street Cleansing	Fair charging	LOW	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)
Other	Fair charging		(39)	(39)	(39)	(39)	(39)
Sub Total			(3,785)	(3,785)	(3,785)	(3,785)	(3,785)
Trade Waste Collection - Charges	Full commercial	HIGH	(320)	(320)	(320)	(320)	(320)
Trade Waste Collection - Recycling	Full commercial	HIGH	(78)	(79)	(80)	(80)	(81)
Beacon Park	Full commercial	MEDIUM	(96)	(96)	(96)	(96)	(96)
Freedom Leisure Commercial Bid	Full commercial	HIGH	(89)	(124)	(151)	(155)	(171)
Other	Full commercial		(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)
Sub Total			(619)	(654)	(683)	(687)	(704)
Planning Applications	Statutory	HIGH	(903)	(903)	(903)	(903)	(903)
Civil Parking Enforcement	Statutory	HIGH	(84)	(84)	(84)	(84)	(84)
Waste Shared Service - 4 Ashes	Statutory	MEDIUM	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)
Waste Shared Service - Recycling	Statutory	MEDIUM	(331)	(331)	(331)	(331)	(331)
Corporate Debt Recovery	Statutory	HIGH	(206)	(206)	(206)	(206)	(206)
Licensing	Statutory	HIGH	(177)	(177)	(177)	(177)	(177)
Environmental Protection	Statutory	LOW	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)
Other			(38)	(38)	(38)	(38)	(38)
Sub Total			(1,819)	(1,819)	(1,819)	(1,819)	(1,819)
Other			(52)	(52)	(52)	(52)	(52)
Total Sales, Fees and Charges			(7,838)	(7,913)	(7,971)	(8,005)	(8,042)
Investment Properties - Rents	Fair charging	HIGH	(265)	(265)	(265)	(265)	(265)
Other Land & Buildings - Rents	Fair charging	HIGH	(416)	(445)	(445)	(445)	(445)
Investment in Property	Fair charging	HIGH	(750)	(1,530)	(2,310)	(2,700)	(2,700)
Total Commercial Rents			(1,431)	(2,241)	(3,021)	(3,411)	(3,411)
Total			(£9,269)	(£10,154)	(£10,992)	(£11,416)	(£11,453)

Full commercial	Service is promoted to maximise revenue within an overall objective of generating a surplus from the service
Fair charging	Service is promoted to maximise income but subject to defined policy constraints including commitments made to potential customers on an appropriate fee structure
Cost recovery	Service generally available to all but without a subsidy
Subsidised	Service is widely accessible, but users of the service should make some contribution from their own resources
Nominal	Service to be fully available and a charge is made to discourage frivolous usage
Free	Service fully available at no cost
Statutory	Charges are set in line with legal obligations

Events and Festivals Policy

Cllr Iain Eadie, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the Visitor Economy and Local Plan

Date:	6 th October 2020
Agenda Item:	6
Contact Officer:	Craig Jordan/Lisa Clemson
Tel Number:	01543 308202/01543 308708
Email:	Craig.Jordan@lichfielddc.gov.uk/ Lisa.Clemson@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	NO
Local Ward Members	All



CABINET

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on a draft Events and Festivals Policy. The policy follows reports to EGED and work commissioned to recognise the value of events to Lichfield District.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to facilitate the continued delivery of high quality, well run events and festivals in Lichfield District, to ensure that they are well managed, consider the impacts on existing businesses and residents and add to the economic growth of the district.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves for the purposes of consultation the draft Events and Festivals Policy attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to approve and adopt the policy following consultation unless there are material changes which need further consideration by Cabinet.
- 2.3 That subject to the policy being endorsed following consultation, Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the Council’s constitution be amended to formally acknowledge the formation of a cross-service officer panel for determining an annual events programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan.
- 2.4 That Cabinet recommends to Council an update the Medium Term Financial Strategy to include a supplementary budget of £20,000 per annum to help meet the costs of new events intended to support local communities across the district.
- 2.5 Cabinet delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to determine requests where these are submitted.

3. Background

Context

- 3.1 A key theme of Lichfield District Council’s Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024 is that “we will work collaboratively to shape our place and develop prosperity” by encouraging increased visitors, increased spend in our local economy and more overnight stays.
- 3.2 Events and festivals are recognised as a key part of this, as an engaging and varied events programme helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the city for future repeat visits.

- 3.3 The District Council commissioned in 2019 Bournemouth University (BU) to undertake an Economic Impact Assessment of the key events and festivals held within Lichfield City. This research provided the council with information about how these events contributed to the local economy, what effects they were having on local businesses, what visitors' perceptions were and to provide information about if and how they deliver economic, social and cultural benefits to the city.
- 3.4 As part of its work the University carried out a number of surveys with different stakeholders examining economic impacts, social and cultural impacts, perceptions of the key events and motivations for visiting.
- 3.5 The findings of this research were presented to the Council's Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee earlier this year and members discussed various areas where improvements could be made in our approach to hosting events and where further work was needed. This included in respect of:
- Consideration of the relationship between events and existing businesses located in the city centre
 - Developing a more diverse events programme
 - Health and safety at events, including road closures
 - Marketing of events
 - Potential resource for co-ordinating events
 - Application process for event organisers
- 3.6 It was resolved at the meeting that the BU report should be noted and the views of the committee and recommendations of the BU Study on improving events and festivals be reflected in the development of an events and festivals policy.

Proposed Policy

- 3.7 Lichfield District Council as a landowner hosts events for example in its parks, it also has a major role in facilitating events via its various roles and responsibilities. Through its regulatory service it provides the necessary licences and consents to allow activities to take place; it considers the health and safety of events through chairmanship of the Safety Advisory Group and ensures food safety guidelines are adhered to for food-related events. In addition, the Council via its visitor economy team helps to promote events and provides opportunities for event organisers to use the various Visit Lichfield marketing platforms. Operational Services provides support for street cleaning and rubbish removal, for events on council owned land as well as in the city centre. Democratic Services deal with requests for road closures.
- 3.8 Currently applications for a licence to run special eventsⁱ are considered by officers in Regulatory Services.
- 3.9 Currently applications for events to take place in Beacon Park and Stow Fields are considered and decisions made by senior managers in the Operational Services Parks Management Team.
- 3.10 Outside of the District Council and across the district, events are promoted and hosted by a variety of other organisations and landowners. In seeking to develop a policy the intention has been to capture the varied interests and partners who play a part in providing for events and festivals so that the approach is one which reflects a shared vision and which will truly be of benefit to all parties including local residents and business.
- 3.11 A further consideration with the formulation of a policy has been to bring together the various services that operate within the District Council to promote, regulate and support events and festivals as described above so that a single, clear message can be communicated and also where possible related internal processes and procedures can be streamlined.
- 3.12 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a draft policy and procedure which is the product of the work requested by the EGED Committee. Cabinet will note the reference to an overarching vision to provide for a suitable

range and mix of events that will appeal to different sections of society, that will allow for the involvement of local residents and businesses, that will bring economic benefits and furthermore, help to promote the District as an attractive place to live, work and play.

- 3.13 Through applying the policy and its promotion via various channels, it is hoped that event organisers will wish to bring forward proposals for events and festivals in line with the vision and stated objectives, building upon the already high profile the district has for hosting the same.
- 3.14 To ensure that events are indeed suitable and will deliver the necessary benefits to the district and its communities, alongside the draft policy is a process which it is suggested should be followed to allow the District Council and its partners to assess and evaluate proposed events when these come forward. A two part process is proposed involving an initial stage whereby proposals will be judged by a panel of officers against a set of criteria and scored accordingly. Where an in principle approval is duly granted and confirmed in consultation with the respective Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan then event organisers will be invited to submit detailed proposals and subject to the details being acceptable, then the granting of the relevant consents through existing procedures.
- 3.15 Assuming the policy is subsequently confirmed and to avoid any confusion with other functions relating for example to the granting of licences and consents it should be formally recognised that the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan will be responsible for determining an appropriate annual events programme.
- 3.16 To support the new policy and its implementation & following previous feedback from the EGED Committee, work is in progress to develop a guidance document for event organisers that contains all of the information an event organiser would require to propose and run an event in Lichfield District. This document will be an operational guide informed by the various service areas referred to in paragraph's 3.7 to 3.9 above.
- 3.17 It is expected that the policy and its implementation will be delivered by those services within the Council that already have relevant roles and responsibilities. It will be important however to have a single 'gateway' in to the Council and a single point of contact (SPOC) to help prospective event organisers access/navigate the procedures. It is suggested that the Council's Visitor Economy Manager should be that SPOC. To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and associated procedures it is also suggested that an officer group be established made up of representatives from the said services.
- 3.18 If Cabinet is minded to approve for consultation the draft policy and the process for facilitating appropriate events it is proposed that the views of EGED members, key external partners and those of other interested parties are now sought.

Community events

- 3.19 As stated in the draft policy, subject to proposals meeting the relevant criteria new events particularly those that derive from and support local communities across the district would be welcome adding variety to the annual programme. To encourage new events that serve to meet local community needs and recognising that meeting associated costs may be an issue for some events, it is proposed that the Council agrees a fund that organisers could bid in to where necessary. It is suggested that a fund of £20,000 per annum be available for this purpose with authority given to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to agree or otherwise requests for support where submitted. It is not possible to accommodate the aforementioned sum within existing budgets and therefore if the Cabinet is minded to support the proposal a recommendation will need to be made to Council to agree a supplementary budget to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Covid -19

- 3.20 Finally, in the current climate of the COVID19 pandemic, it is recognised that opportunities for a full events and festivals programme are by necessity limited. The policy is aimed at a post CV19 situation whereby any restrictions are removed. In the interim however it is acknowledged that any events that

may be proposed and agreed will be required to comply with relevant government advice and guidance.

Concluding Remarks

- 3.21 Key events attract more than 340,000 event visitors throughout a typical year to the district, and generate more than £9 million in visitor spend, with more than £5 million of this attributed to visits to Lichfield that would not have occurred if the events were not held. As well as the economic benefit, there are a number of community benefits created by the key events within Lichfield. The events are a source of community spirit and pride for local residents, and help to create a positive image of Lichfield and one that is inclusive for all.
- 3.22 A policy of the kind being suggested in this paper will help ensure events and festivals take place which building upon the successes that have occurred to date and going forward assist in maintaining a high standard and accessible events programme.
- 3.23 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the draft policy and approach for the purposes of consultation and seek the views of relevant partners and other interested bodies.

Alternative Options	The Council could decide not to have a policy or to agree an amended policy to that emerging. The view of the EGED Committee which has considered the matter is that the Council and the district would benefit from having a suitable policy to facilitate an appropriate events programme that benefits the district.
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Consultation	Internal consultation with all relevant service areas has taken place. If approved for consultation the views of EGED members would be sought as well as external partners and stakeholders.
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Financial Implications	The report suggests the creation of an annual fund to support the development of new events serving local communities. A sum of £20,000 per annum is proposed. This sum cannot be met within existing budgets and hence would be a budgetary pressure.
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A key theme of Lichfield District Council’s strategic plan 2020-2024 is we will work collaboratively to shape our place and develop prosperity across Lichfield District. 2. Events and Festivals are recognised as a key part of showcasing our district, and encouraging economic growth. A varied events programme, helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the district for future return visits.
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
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Crime & Safety Issues	A well prepared event management plan, should consider the impact events may have on crime and disorder, plans should be put in place to prevent any disorder, working with the Safety Advisory Group can help to mitigate any impact.
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	Events provide a social activity for residents and visitors.
Environmental Impact	The environmental impact of any event will be assessed, managed and mitigated through the event booking enquiry/assessment process. The draft policy includes a set of environmental criteria against which to judge any EoI.

GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	A Privacy Impact Assessment has not been undertaken at this stage.
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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Will this new policy be implemented in time to develop a varied events programme for 2021?	This will be dependent upon the outcome of consultation and the subsequent timing of the policy's introduction. In the event of delay or other issues emerging, the existing policies and processes will offer a fall- back position. However, the current impact of CV19 is likely to be a significant factor in determining the scope for events in the near future (see below)	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow
B	Will the environment be right, post covid, to develop an events programme for 2021	Continually review the guidelines issues by government with regards to mass gatherings/events.	Likelihood: Red Impact: Yellow
C	Consideration should be given as to whether the policy and associated processes and guidance will deter event organisers from wishing to run events in Lichfield.	Continually monitor and review the policy and its implementation to ensure that it meets the Council's and other stakeholder's requirements.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red

Background documents
Economic Impact report from Bournemouth University from January 2020.

Relevant web links.

ⁱ A special event is defined as an event that has a minimum of 10 stalls and have the potential to deliver significant economic impact

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Draft

**Lichfield District Events & Festivals Policy
and Procedure**

**Lichfield District Council
2020**

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Introduction

Events and festivals are an important part of the business and cultural landscape of the UK, Lichfield District is no different. Lichfield District Council recognises the importance events and festivals play in the cultural and economic wellbeing of the district.

The district plays host to a large and varied number of events and festivals every year, from established commercial events to local charity events. In addition from time to time it hosts one off occasions like that of the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay. These events attract investment and visitors from a wide area.

Many of the events are run by event organisers and specific bodies, others by the District Council and City/Town/Parish Council's. They take place on Council owned and controlled land and on land owned and managed by other parties.

Purpose of Policy

This policy has been developed to facilitate the continued delivery of high quality, well run events and festivals in Lichfield District, to ensure that they are well managed, add to the economic growth of the district and are enjoyable for all. It is intended to bring together the various interests and parties who seek to host events across the district and provide a clear policy which reflects a shared vision and objective.

The council has a variety of roles in the successful promotion and facilitations of events to support its cultural and economic aspirations from regulatory, to land owner, host of an event or promoter of the district. This policy provides for a single point of contact with the council through which any or all of these services can be accessed by event organisers.

Working with all partners our collective aim is to have an engaging and varied event programme that helps build on the heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards, as events help showcase the District for future visits.

Consideration also must be given in any policy to the impacts events and festivals can cause for some residents and businesses, and which need to be carefully managed and mitigated.

The policy will also assist anyone looking to run an event in Lichfield District, as to the types of events deemed acceptable and the requirements that will be placed upon event organisers and operators.

Scope of Policy

Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in a location and reflect on the quality of a place.

The scale and nature of events and festivals can vary significantly and can cover many different themes - sports, leisure, special interest, culture, heritage and the arts. Overall benefits can include:

- Added economic value to an area
- Quality of life improvements
- Community engagement and cohesion
- Promoting good health, vitality & well-being
- Publicity & media exposure
- Delivering & inspiring sporting opportunities
- Culture and artistic expression

There are a number of diverse regulatory and support roles and functions involved in facilitating events. These include the carrying out of statutory functions such as licensing/street trading, food safety, road closures; ensuring health and safety requirements are being met; to marketing support and promotion. This policy acknowledges the wide range of functions and the bodies responsible for undertaking such activities.

For the purpose of this policy, events are classed as a *gathering of people, large or small, for business or pleasure which is time bound, with a particular objective and where associated resources and materials are required to enable it to operate.*

The definition of a small or large event will be determined by, but not inclusive of, the expected number of visitors to an event and the capacity of the intended site and its location.

Policy Considerations

The following matters will need to be addressed by event organisers in putting forward a proposal/expression of interest and will be assessed by the Council when determining whether to agree to or refuse an event taking place:

Event title

The title of an event should accurately represent what it is, to ensure visitors attending know what to expect. If any event does not adhere to this, future event applications will be carefully considered and maybe refused permission.

Event types/themes

Across a year and the various sites & locations available, the District Council and its partners would wish to see a suitable mix of events take place. This will help attract different customers and promote the district as a destination for events and festivals. In assessing applications, the Council will be keen to avoid similar themed events occurring at the same time or close together in the calendar or in the same locations.

Hiring of a site/land

The permission of the owners of a site will always be required to allow an event to take place however the granting of permission does not override any considerations under this policy framework as to an event's suitability.

Safety

The effective management of an event is essential in ensuring it is a safe and well run for audiences, those involved in an event itself and residents and businesses located in close proximity. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to make all of the arrangements necessary to ensure an event is safely planned and well managed.

All events must comply with relevant legislation and recognised safety standards. Event organisers will be responsible for the safety of everyone at the event, including the public, their members and/or any employees and volunteers¹

Traffic Management and use of Highways

Events that are held on, or that require the use of the public highway, will require permission to formally close the highway. This will require a road closure application to be made to either Staffordshire County Council as Highway Authority or the District Council to ensure the event operates safely. Further information can be found in the *Guide to organising an event in Lichfield District*

Off-street events can cause traffic congestion and may need on-street traffic management measures to ensure safety for the public entering or exiting the highway.

Noise

Many events, especially those involving the use of generators and amplified music, can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. Consideration should be given to people residing in nearby properties as well as businesses operating locally.

¹ The most relevant safety law is likely to be the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and its accompanying regulations

Environmental Impact

All events are opportunities to communicate environmental messages to the public. The council aims to actively work with organisers to ensure best practice is introduced at all stages of event management.

Street Trading/Licences

Event organisers will be responsible for ensuring that they have the appropriate authorisations in place to cover the activities they are proposing to carry out, as part of their event. An authorisation is required for any event, irrespective as to where it take place which involves one or more of the following:

- Sales of alcohol – including the provision of alcohol in exchange for donations or as part of the ticket price.
- Regulated entertainment – entertainment that takes place in the presence of an audience, with the purpose of entertaining or partly entertaining that audience comprising of the public, or a section of the public.
- Late night refreshment, hot food or hot drink served between 11.00pm and 5.00am
- Street Trading: anyone who wishes to sell from a fixed location on a street must apply for a Street Trading Consent

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure the correct licences are in place. Please refer to the *Guide to organising an event in Lichfield District* publication.

Funding

It will be an event organiser's responsibility to cover all of the costs relating to running their event, this includes, but is not limited to, infrastructure, hire of land, road closures, traffic management, rubbish removal, facilities such as toilets, during and after event cleansing and licenses/street trading. The Council nor its partners will be liable for any costs incurred by event organisers.

Marketing and Public Relations

The Council would encourage all events organisers to provide suitable publicity information on their approved events and is willing to assist in this by making available the Visit Lichfield website, What's On pages.

The Events and Festivals programme will be promoted via social media and organisers will be encouraged to cross-promote events and collaborate on marketing activity.

Timing of applications and event lead-in times

Applications for permission to hold an event must be made in good time (defined in the *Guide to organising an event in Lichfield District*) as will the submission of information to enable the necessary consents and authorisations to be made. Where such information is not made available, the District Council will reserve the right to not allow an event to take place.

Event organisers will be expected to inform businesses and residents if an event has the potential to have an impact on their access to the home or businesses, this must be done in writing, at least 28 days before the event in question. In addition we would expect to see notices displayed in the areas, detailing any road closures at least 28 days prior to an event taking place.

Cancellation

The Council reserves the right not to permit an event on its land if necessary paperwork or payments, outlined in the *Guide to organising an event in Lichfield District* document, are not made prior to the scheduled date of an event.

Organisers should also note that they should have requisite insurance cover including that necessary to cover any liabilities falling to other parties. Neither the Council nor other relevant landowners will accept any responsibility or liability for the cancellation of an event due to the refusal of any licence, consent or introduction of government legislation/guidance. This is particularly relevant with the presence of Covid-19 and the possibility of local outbreak control being initiated at short notice.

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Application Procedure

Expressions of Interest and Event Applications

The District council is keen to have a year round events programme that offer variety for visitors to enjoy. It will seek to work with other landowners/stakeholders to suitably coordinate a programme across all of the available events opportunities and in doing so serve to ensure that the events themselves are of a quality to meet customer expectations.

In order to co-ordinate events across the district, avoid event clashes and ensure events meet the District Councils criteria, there will be a single point of entry for all festivals and event applications, via the District Councils website. In the first instance event organisers will be invited to submit expressions of interest to the District Council. This will be in the form of an on-line application. All expressions of interest will be evaluated against a set of criteria and a scoring matrix (See **Appendix A**) and a decision duly made and communicated to the applicant.

The council reserves the right to refuse permission for an event which does not accord with the approved policy.

Once a proposed event has been accepted in principle, the applicant will be invited to make a full Event Organisers Application and be expected to pay the relevant financial deposits.

Organisers looking to hold an event and invited to submit an application must do so in good time to allow proper consideration to be given to the proposal and for the relevant consents to be issued prior to the event taking place. Where consents have not been obtained in advance events will be unable to take place.

Event Application and Evaluation Criteria

In the first instance event organisers are welcome to discuss a proposed event idea with the Visitor Economy Manager, who is able to provide a wide range of local information, including advice on possible event locations.

Applications seeking approval for a proposed event must be submitted through the online application process.

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

Each year the District Council will open a window for event organisers to submit an **Expression of Interest** to run events, the dates and the period within which submissions can be made will be posted on the District Councils website www.lichfielddc.gov.uk. For applications to be considered, submissions must be made through an on-line form on the District Councils website.

An application must in all cases include:

1. Proposed title of event
2. Details of the size, theme and nature of the event
3. Intended site and location
4. Intended operating times and overall duration
5. Outline Event Management Plan, setting out how the organiser intends to manage their event.

Evaluation of Expressions of Interest

The District council is keen to have a year round events programme that offer variety for visitors to enjoy. It will seek to work with other landowners/stakeholders to suitably coordinate a programme across all of the available events opportunities and in doing so serve to ensure that the events themselves are of a quality to meet customer expectations. In order to ensure we meet the above, all applications will be assessed having regard to the following criteria and a weighted score applied:

- **Economic Benefits**
- **Organisers experience and performance**
- **Financial Viability**
- **Promotion of District and community engagement**
- **Environmental impact**

Full details of the assessment process can be found in the accompanying *Guide to organising an event in Lichfield District*

We would suggest event organisers consult with this guide in the first instance, to ensure any proposed event meets the District Councils criteria for events and festivals.

Once the expression of interest application has been accepted in principle, event organisers will then be invited to make a full application and be expected to pay the relevant financial deposits.

Stage 2 – Full Application

Applications that have met the evaluation criteria, will be duly notified and invited to submit a Full Event Application, this will be in the form of an online form. At this stage other relevant information will be required to be submitted to enable the various consents to be considered. Accompanying each application must be a detailed Events Management Plan (EMP).

Contact details

Visitor Economy Manager – Lisa Clemson

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Planning for the future – Planning white paper

Councillor Iain Eadie, Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy & Local Plan / Cllr Angela Lax Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health Services



Date:	6 October 2020
Agenda Item:	7
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Key	No
Decision?	
Local Ward	All
Members	

Cabinet

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The government published a '[Planning for the future](#)' white paper in August 2020 for consultation. The document sets out the government's proposals to reform the planning system in England. The government states that the range of proposals are designed to 'streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed'.
- 1.2 The proposals relate to plan-making, the determination of planning applications (decision-making), the design of development and developer contributions. Consultation on the White Paper will last for 12 weeks and closes on 29 October 2020. The District Council have considered the white paper in detail and are seeking provide a comprehensive response to the consultation. This response follows consideration by members and officers during the consultation period.
- 1.3 It is proposed that a formal response to the consultation is submitted before the closing date of 29 October 2020 and is based upon the consideration as described above and based upon the key themes and issues identified as a result of this at **Appendix A**.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet note the contents of this report including the key themes and issues which have been identified and are set out at **Appendix A** and that these, along with input from the Councils officers form the basis of a formal response to the white paper consultation.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet be requested to delegate authority to allow the final response to the white paper consultation to be agreed for submission by the Head of Economic Growth & Development in consultation with the Cabinet member for Visitor Economy & Local Plan and Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health Services.

3. Background

- 3.1 The government published a '[Planning for the future](#)' white paper on 6 August 2020 for a twelve week consultation. The document sets out the government's proposals to reform the planning system in England aiming to "*streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed*".

- 3.2 The consultation on the 'Planning for the future' white paper will run until the 29th October 2020 and alongside a narrative includes 26 specific questions which the government are seeking response to. Officers will continue to consider the white paper and prepare a response to the consultation.
- 3.3 The white paper proposes a wide range of reforms, these can mainly be grouped into four categories, relating to local plan making, decision taking on planning applications; developer contributions and design. The proposals for each of these areas are summarised below:

Local Plans:

- 3.4 The white paper proposes a range of reforms to the nature of local plans and plan-making process. These changes seek to simplify local plans and speed up the process involved in preparing them. The first key reform proposed is to simplify the role of the local plan to focus on identifying land under three categories or delineated zones:
- Growth areas - would be zones which are considered to be suitable for substantial development¹. Growth areas would be used to define land for comprehensive development including urban extensions, new settlements and areas for redevelopment (including brownfield land) and regeneration sites. Outline planning permission for the principle of development would be automatically granted for development types within growth areas as specified within the local plan;
 - Renewal areas – areas considered to be suitable for development. This would include existing built up areas where smaller scale development would be considered appropriate. The category would include *“the gentle densification and infill of residential areas, development in town centres, and development in rural areas that is not annotated as Growth or Protected areas, such as small sites within or on the edge of villages”*. In renewal areas there would be a statutory presumption in favour of development being granted for the uses specified as being suitable in each renewal area². It would be for the local plan to specify these uses; and
 - Protected areas – sites and areas that as a result of their environmental and/or cultural characteristics would be protected and have more stringent development controls should planning applications be submitted. The white paper states that this would include for example; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); Green Belt; Local Wildlife Sites; areas susceptible to significant flood risk; other important green spaces and open countryside which is not designated as either a growth or renewal area (see above). Some of these areas would be designated nationally, with others to be designated through the local plan.
- 3.5 The white paper states that these new-style local plans would comprise an 'interactive web-based map' of the council's administrative area where data and policies are easily searchable with a clear key colour coded in line with the three zones. Accompanying text would set out the appropriate development uses and any limitations to that development (for example restrictions on height/density). Local plans, the white paper suggests, should be published as standardised data to enable a strategic national planning map to be created showing all local policies across England.
- 3.6 The second major proposed reform is that policies for development management within a local plan would be restricted to those required to define the respective areas or site specific requirements for the categories described at paragraph 3.4 of this report. The white paper states that the National Planning

¹ The white paper states that the term substantial would be defined in policy through the reforms to ensure to remove debate over its definition.

² Planning permission for other uses could still be granted within growth and renewal areas but this would be subject to a different type of application which would consider the principal of development.

Policy Framework would become the primary source of policies for development management. This the government suggests would change local plans from 'long lists of general policies to specific development standards'.

- 3.7 A new standard method for establishing housing requirement figures in Local Plans is proposed within the white paper which would replace the current standard method which is used to establish Local Housing Need (LHN). The white paper states that the new approach would be binding in order to 'drive greater land release' to ensure the government's target of 300,000 new homes annually in England can be met. This new approach would have regard to;
- The size of existing urban settlements;
 - The affordability of places;
 - The extent of land constraints that exist;
 - Opportunities to better use existing brownfield land;
 - The need to make allowance for other forms of development (non-residential) and;
 - The inclusion of an appropriate buffer to account for the non-implementation of permissions and providing sufficient choice to the market.

As part of this approach local planning authorities would still have flexibility as to where homes are delivered to meet their requirements including utilising the categories described at paragraph 3.5 of this report. Additionally, it is proposed that the 'five-year housing land supply' test is removed with the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) remaining as the key test to assess delivery for authorities.

- 3.8 The white paper also proposes the abolishment of the 'tests of soundness' which local plans are currently examined against. This would be replaced by a single 'statutory sustainable development' test which would consider whether a local plan contributes to achieving sustainable development in accordance with policy issued by the Secretary of State. A simplified examination procedure based on the aforementioned test along with the more streamlined content of local plans should reduce delay in the plan-making process the white paper argues. Indeed the white paper goes further and suggests that local plans under the reformed planning system should be prepared in a 30 month statutory time frame.

- 3.10 In respect of the changes to local plans and the plan-making process this will represent a significant change from the current approach. The move to a 'zoned' system with the three designations as described at paragraph 3.4 could lead to an overly simplified approach which does not take account of the diverse nature of areas of the District. The white paper also proposes to limit the use of localised development management policies, with the primary source of such policies becoming the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst such an approach may be beneficial to the development industry who would be effectively dealing with the same nationally set policies across the country it doesn't allow for locally distinctive development management policies to be drawn up and adopted by the Council. These two proposals together appear overly simplistic and remove the ability for the authority to draw up nuanced and detailed locally specific allocations and policies.

- 3.11 The white paper proposes a new standardised method to calculating housing need which would be binding for authorities. There is limited detail as to how housing need would be calculated using the new method so it is not possible to determine what impact this would have for the District in terms of its housing need. However, by setting this approach nationally and making it binding there is concern that this may lead to an approach which does not allow for the reflection of local characteristics and constraints. Alongside this approach the abolition of the five year supply test and reliance on the HDT is worthy of consideration. The HDT tests an authority's housing delivery in terms of annual completions rather than the number of homes it has permitted. Given the Council is not responsible for the actual delivery of homes there is the potential that should the development community not implement consented schemes in a timely fashion that the local planning authority is at risk of being punished through the HDT.

- 3.12 The white paper is relatively limited in terms of its detail around the role of neighbourhood plans in the new planning system. Neighbourhood plans are proposed to be retained as part of the reformed planning system, however the white paper suggests the content of neighbourhood plans should be more focused in a similar way to the proposals for local plans. The lack of detail in the white paper is an area of concern given the large number of neighbourhood plans which have been, and continue to be, advanced within the District.
- 3.13 Proposals to streamline the examination process for local plans are welcomed. There is a lack of detail within the white paper as to how the new approach and the 'sustainable development test' would work in practice. However, an approach which reduces the cost and delay in the plan making process would be beneficial for the Council.
- 3.14 The white paper suggests that public engagement in the planning system should be 'front-loaded' to the plan-making stage and that the proposals for simplifying the local plan process and making this more accessible digitally will encourage this. The proposals would include two opportunities for public engagement in the local plan process, this is broadly similar to the current system. It should be noted that Lichfield District Council has incorporated a number of additional and non-statutory consultations on its local plan to ensure wider engagement. The white paper suggest that by encouraging public engagement at the plan-making stage (both local and neighbourhood plans) and on design codes (see design section below within this report) that the need for public engagement at the planning application stage will be reduced, thus speeding up the determination of planning applications. However, such a proposal could result in a decrease in local scrutiny of planning applications which ultimately will determine the more precise detail of development. It is important to ensure the local people and other stakeholders are afforded an opportunity to be consulted upon individual applications alongside seeking to increase engagement at the plan-making stage.

Development management:

- 3.15 Alongside changes to local plan and how they are prepared the 'Planning for the future' white paper proposes a range of reforms relating to the development management process. Much like the reforms to local plans, these are proposed in order to 'streamline' the planning process.
- 3.16 As discussed at paragraph 3.4 of this report the white paper proposes that automatic outline consent be granted for development in defined growth and renewal areas as detailed in the new-style local plans. Full consent would therefore be granted through routes which should offer a more 'streamlined and faster' route to consent. These routes would be:
- A "reformed reserved matters process for agreeing the issues that remain outstanding"; and
 - A "local development order (LDO) prepared by the local planning authority for the development which could be prepared in parallel with the local plan and be linked to a master plan and design codes". LDOs grant planning permission upfront for specific types of development in a defined area. The white paper seeks greater use of LDO's by authorities.
- 3.17 The white paper says the government wants to see "a much more streamlined and digitally enabled end to end process which is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, to ensure decisions are made faster". In respect of determining planning applications the white paper proposes an approach where the well-established eight and thirteen week determination timescales which exists become 'firm' deadlines with penalties imposed on local planning authorities when deadlines are missed. To achieve this the white paper proposes:

- A 'clear incentive' for authorities to determine applications within the statutory time limits which could involve the refunding of planning fees where timescales are missed and whether some types of application should be deemed to have been granted permission if there has not been a timely determination;
- 'Shorter and more standardised' applications are proposed where the amount of information required for an application is reduced and greater standardisation of technical supporting information (for example heritage, highways or flooding matters) is introduced. Such an approach could include a national data standard for smaller planning applications and/or the digitisation of validation checklists so that the right information is provided as part of an application at the start of the process;
- The white paper also proposes the delegation of detailed planning decisions to planning officers where the principal of development has already been established (for example through the new local plan approach); and
- The strengthening of enforcement powers are also proposed with the white paper saying the government want to see local planning authorities placing greater emphasis on the enforcement of planning standards and decisions. The white paper states that the government intend to review and strengthen existing enforcement powers and sanctions available to authorities to ensure they support the new planning system including consideration of higher fines through the courts.

3.18 The white paper's proposal to penalise local planning authorities when determination timescales are not met by refunding application fees is a concern. The white paper makes the case that presently extensions of time are too often agreed between applicants and local planning authorities, leading to delays in determination. Such extensions of time are often necessary to ensure the appropriate information has been submitted and sufficient opportunity for all stakeholders to consider this information is provided. It is concerning that by arbitrarily focusing on timescales could lead to less clear and rushed decision-making and a potential reduction in the quality of decisions.

3.19 As noted at paragraph 3.10 a concern is that the proposed changes will lead to a simplistic system which lacks locally distinctive policies upon which planning applications are determined. Additionally, the proposals would also seek the delegation of a wide range of planning applications to officers where the principal of development has been established through a council's local plan. This risks removing scrutiny of those applications by local authorities planning committees and elected members, thereby potentially removing a degree of local democracy from the development management process. When this is coupled with the approach to provide nationally set development management policies there is a risk of significantly curtailing the decision-making ability of a local planning authority, and its consideration of locally important and specific issues in the planning process.

Developer contributions:

3.20 The white paper proposes to reform the current approach to developer contributions which primarily consists of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other obligations which are usually achieved through Section 106 agreements (S106). These approaches would be replaced by a nationally set 'value-based flat rate charge' to be known as the 'Infrastructure Levy'. The levy would be either a single rate across the country or a series of area-specific rates which would be set nationally and chargeable on developments which exceed a nationally set threshold. The 'value-based' charge would be based on the final value of a development which it is proposed would be more effective in capturing increases in value and be sensitive to economic fluctuations. It should be noted that at present the white paper does not define the threshold at which it would be applied. There is limited information within the white paper as to how the Infrastructure Levy is proposed to be calculated. Should the approach capture and interact with land values it is considered important to ensure that local land values are used rather than a value set nationally. Using local land values would ensure that the levy is responsive to local characteristics

and the market to ensure that the levy received from development within the District is as much as viably possible. As detail emerges on the infrastructure levy in the future it will be important for the District Council to continue to respond to such consultations. A nationally set infrastructure levy should not inhibit the ability of local planning authorities to deliver development in locations in line with its local plan.

- 3.21 The white paper suggests that this new national levy will aim to raise more revenue than the current approach and ‘at least as much –if not more’ provision of on-site affordable homes. It is proposed that affordable homes would be delivered ‘in-kind’ on a development site with the value of the provision being taken into account in the calculation of the Infrastructure Levy for the site.
- 3.22 It is proposed that the reformed approach to developer contributions will provide greater freedom and flexibility to local planning authorities on how they wish to spend any monies accrued through the infrastructure levy. In addition it is proposed that a ‘neighbourhood share’ of monies collected would be transferred to Parish Councils for them to spend on priorities in their areas. This approach mirrors that currently in place with CIL.
- 3.23 The proposal to simplify the current approach to developer contributions and provide greater transparency could potentially bring benefits. Presently, the use of S106 agreements and CIL can be time consuming and open to negotiation and challenge, indeed in the District the agreement of S106’s has led to delays in bringing forward development. A clearer approach which removes some of these difficulties would potentially be welcomed. However, there is a lack of detail within the white paper in respect of how the national ‘Infrastructure Levy’ will be calculated and what this could mean for authorities. It is not possible, with the detail provided, to determine whether the new approach to developer contributions would deliver more infrastructure, affordable homes and other obligations compared with that of the current system.
- 3.24 The paper suggest the levy would generate at least the same level or more on-site affordable homes, without sufficient detail there is some concern as to how the levy would impact provision of affordable homes and other developer contributions. The white paper suggests the on-site provision would be delivered ‘in-kind’ with the value potentially taken away from the infrastructure levy as such there is a concern that this could lead to less ‘obligations’ being achieved. As noted above the lack of detail on the new approach however makes it difficult to determine exactly what impacts the proposed reforms would have in terms of the obligations the Council could seek.

Design

- 3.25 Another key aspect of the reforms proposed by ‘Planning for the future’ relate to the design of new development and the government aspiration of creating ‘beautiful and sustainable places’. The white paper states that following the publication in October 2019 of the [National Design Guide](#) this will be supplemented by a National Model Design Code which will be published in the autumn of 2020 setting out detailed parameters for development in different locations and a revised Manual for Streets thereafter. The government expects this national guidance to have a direct bearing on the design of new development.
- 3.26 Alongside this government will expect design guides and codes to be prepared locally with community input to reflect the diverse character of places across the country. Part of this proposal is to ensure that any such guides and/or codes are prepared with effective input from the local community and consider evidence of what is popular and characteristic to the area. Only where this has been demonstrated will local design guides or codes be given weight in the planning system. The white paper envisages such guides and/or codes to be progressed in one of three ways:

- By local planning authorities to supplement their local plans and add a visual element to the 'categories' which have been designated in the local plan;
- Through the work of neighbourhood planning groups; and
- By applicants when bringing forward proposals.

3.27 The white paper also proposes a 'fast-track for beauty' approach which is designed to incentivise and accelerate high quality developments which reflect local character and preferences. This will be achieved in three ways:

- Revised national policy will make clear that proposals which comply with local design codes and guides will have a greater certainty about their prospects of a swift approval;
- Masterplans and design codes will be required as a condition of the local plan when designated 'growth areas'. These could be prepared alongside or subsequent to the local plan and will provide detail as to the expectations on development prior to this coming forward; and
- Production of 'pattern books' for 'renewal areas' which will allow the pre-approval through changes to permitted development rights of popular and replicable design.

3.28 The focus on design and the desire to 'build beautiful' within the white paper is to be welcomed. However, as with many of the proposals there is an emphasis on determining what is considered to be good design at a national level through the use of the National Design Guide and forthcoming design code. It is noted however that this section of the white paper does then make further reference to the need for local planning authorities, working with their communities including neighbourhood planning groups, to define more localised design codes for their areas. This is to be welcomed.

3.29 The white paper proposals for better design include an aspiration to focus on delivering better energy efficiency in development. This is something the Council is supportive of and continue to seek to deliver increased energy efficiency through the policies within the adopted Local Plan. However, it is considered important to recognise that such issues should be locally determined rather than set at a national level. This will ensure the Council is able to consider its own energy efficiency standards, with links to viability, and seek to enshrine this in its policies.

Resource implications:

3.30 In respect of funding the new system the white paper suggests that this should be principally paid for by the 'beneficiaries of planning gain – land owners and developers'. Whilst this would appear to be a positive, the white paper then continues to state that the costs of development management activities should be covered by planning application fees which should continue to be set nationally. This does not allow for local fee setting which could be used to ensure the full costs of the planning system are met by those who gain from it. Enabling authorities to set planning fees would help to ensure that the full costs of planning for the area are met. The white paper goes further and also states that the national setting of fees should also include greater regulation of discretionary pre-application charging to ensure 'it is fair and proportionate'. As members will be aware the Council currently charges for pre-application requests and any regulation introduced nationally which could put this at risk would be a concern. The white paper further states that 'some local planning activities should still be funded through general taxation given the public benefits from good planning'. Such statements coupled with the proposed approaches to fee setting would seem to limit the ability for the council to increase its revenue to fund its statutory planning services.

3.31 The white paper proposes as part of its reforms relating to the implementation of the new planning system is for each local authority to have a 'chief officer for design and place-making'. The white paper envisages that this role will support the transition into the new planning system with their colleagues in a council's planning teams. Alongside this the white paper recognises that with the implementation of a

new planning system there will be a need to ensure appropriate training is made available to planning professionals. There is limited information within the white paper as to how and when such training would be made available. Presently the Council is well placed with its planning teams including Development Management, Spatial Policy and specialisms such as urban design, ecology and arboriculture which would have experience and transferable skills to adapt to the new planning system. Additionally the white paper's proposals for greater use of technology throughout the planning system will likely require the procurement of new IT systems and the training and resources to utilise these. As noted previously there is limited information within the white paper as to how this will be delivered. Local Planning Authorities will require support from government to procure and deliver such systems should the proposals be introduced.

Concluding remarks:

- 3.32 As a whole the reforms proposed in the housing white paper are clearly significant and would represent a considerable change in the planning process for the Authority. There is though a lack of detail around many of the proposals within the white paper, something the paper itself acknowledges and suggests will be 'fleshed out' in the future as the reforms are considered further. However, this lack of detail does make responding to the Government's consultation more challenging. The Council will assess these details once these become available and respond to any further consultations issued by the government.
- 3.33 Throughout the white paper the government continues to advance the view that the planning system is responsible for delaying development and for the number of homes being built nationally not meeting government targets. This fails to recognise that a key issue in bringing forward development is the development industries failure to deliver consented schemes. Whilst in Lichfield District there is a relatively low level of planning permission not being implemented nationally we see that a large number of consented homes are not built. The white paper continues with the narrative that by allocating more land for growth this will drive housing completions without recognising the need to deliver changes which encourage those with extant planning permissions to implement consented schemes.
- 3.34 The white paper itself does not detail the timescales within which the reforms, if progressed, would take place. It does state that subject to the responses to the consultation the intention is to make 'rapid progress toward this new planning system' with legislation to be brought forward to implement the reforms. The white paper makes clear that should the proposed planning reforms come into fruition that there would need to be transitional arrangements which ensure that recently approved plans, existing permissions and any associated planning obligations can continue to be implemented as intended. Whilst the exact timescales of implementation are unclear the white paper states that to support the transition into the new system authorities will be statutorily required to have an adopted local plan (under the new planning system) within 30 months from the legislation being brought into force or 42 months for local planning authorities who have already adopted a local plan or submitted one for examination. In such circumstances this means having an adopted Local Plan would provide more certainty in decision taking while the legislative reforms are going through the system. Also, it means that once legislation comes into force, Lichfield will be likely to benefit from the 42-month grace period (3.5 years).
- 3.35 A concern overall with the proposals is that there appears to be a move away from 'localism' and local decision making to more centralised control. A number of the proposals (see the local plan and development management sections of this report in particular) appear to take decisions away from local plan authorities and pitch them at a national level. Such an approach does not take account of the great differences in administrative areas across the country and indeed the very differing characteristics and issues we find within our own District. There is a risk that such an approach which reduces the role of local planning authorities in both plan-making and decision-taking will make it harder for authorities to reflect local needs and issues within their plans and decisions.

Responding to the consultation

3.36 The initial consideration of the white paper and its proposals (set out from paragraphs 3.1 to 3.35) was presented to members at Economic Growth, Environment and Development Overview & Scrutiny committee on [6 September 2020](#). At that meeting Members were asked to provide comment and thoughts on the white paper to inform the Council’s response to the consultation. The issues and themes which were discussed have been summarised below and set out in greater detail at **Appendix A**.

- Proposals are a centralising approach which will lead to a loss of local democracy and accountability on planning matters;
- The white paper does not address the issue that developers do not always implement consented developments and continues to seek to penalise local planning authorities where housing delivery is below requirements.
- Concern that white paper proposals will hinder the delivery of affordable homes and infrastructure.
- Not allowing local authorities to set their own planning charges;

3.37 As set out at paragraph 3.2 of this report the governments consultation on the white paper will conclude on 29 October 2020 with all responses being required to be submitted by that time. The consultation itself consists of 26 questions.

3.38 It is recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy & Local Plan, Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health Services and Head of Economic Growth and Development to agree the final consultation response to the 26 questions prior to the submission of the response.

Alternative Options	1. None – the report is for informational purposes.
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report on the planning white paper was presented to Economic Growth, Environment and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2020. Members were asked to provide comment at the meeting to inform the consultation response. 2. The planning white paper is currently the subject of a consultation.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no financial implications from this report which details the proposed response to the government consultation. 2. The planning reforms proposed within the white paper, if enacted, would give rise to financial implications in terms of the financial obligations from development which could be set nationally and financial implications for the authority in terms of meeting the requirements of any new/changed planning system.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	1. Supports the shaping place and developing prosperity branches of the strategic plan.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. Not required.

Crime & Safety Issues	1. None.
Environmental Impact	1. There are no specific environmental issues arising from this report.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	1. Not required.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	White paper proposals may reduce local planning authority's role in planning and decision making. Proposals propose a centralised approach which would reduce local influences on plan making.	Response to consultation to make clear views on proposals which reduce role of local planning authority.	Y

Background documents <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for the Future – White Paper (August 2020) National Design Guide
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Relevant web links Planning for the future - https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future
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Appendix A: Key issues identified through member engagement

The following key themes and issues were identified following discussion from members at Overview & Scrutiny committee in September 2020 following the presentation of a report on the 'Planning for the Future' white paper. Such issues are to be included within the formal response to the government's consultation against the most appropriate question within the consultation.

Key issue/theme

The white paper is a significant step away from the principles of 'localism' and 'devolution' which the government has previously supported. The proposals represent an approach which will reduce the role of local planning authorities and elected members in the planning process with many issues being set at a national level. This reduces the Council's ability to influence planning matters through the proposals to reduce the role of planning committees, proposed establishment national policies for development management and 'simplification' of the local plan process.

There is an overall lack of detail within the white paper around a number of the proposals, for example its approach to the proposed infrastructure levy and affordable housing provision. The lack of detail makes it very difficult to formalise full views on some of the proposals.

Local Authorities should be able to set their own planning charges to ensure the cost of processing planning applications is fully met but those submitting them.

Concern that proposals relating to the 'Infrastructure Levy' and planning obligations are unclear and will lead to a decrease in the levels of infrastructure and obligations provided from development. This concern is echoed in the delivery of affordable homes.

The white paper continues the government's assertion that local planning authorities should be penalised when housing delivery falls below requirements. This does not recognise that local authorities do not deliver new homes (or may only deliver a limited number of new homes) nor address the issue that housebuilders and developers 'sit' on planning permissions and do not always implemented consented schemes in a timely manner, waiting until the market would provide for its highest profit. It was recommended that there should be penalties for housebuilders where permissions are not implemented this could include for example loss of the permission or an increase in the infrastructure levy/planning obligations agreed.

Simplification of the planning system is welcomed and can be a good thing. However, there is concern that by overly simplifying the system local accountability will be lost.

Speeding up of the planning application process is supported, and performance targets for this are not something the authority should be afraid of. However, it is important to ensure that any new process enables the Council to take the appropriate time to consider planning applications and not 'rush' decisions as this could cause a reduction in the quality of decisions. The proposal to pay back planning application fees is not an 'incentive' and may cause authorities to make errors or rush through applications.

Concern that the white paper proposals along with changes to permitted development rights could lead to the delivery of poor quality and sub-standard homes.

The proposed 'zones' approach could be overly simplistic and not allow for local distinctiveness, although an approach which simplifies and creates better public understanding and access the information is

supported. It is suggested that multiple zones within the three zones or more clear guidance's as to what can be specific within each zone is provided to enable more local distinction.

Concern that the proposals could affect the progression of the District's local plan and would reduce the role of neighbourhood plans in the planning system. There was some suggestion that the 30 month time limit on the development of local plans would not be achievable.

Supportive of the proposals which could deliver a more 'objective' approach to planning. Presently we do not build enough homes in the country and an objective system could assist with this. This would remove subjective objections which can be based on people not wanting building close to them. An approach which standardises and simplifies planning will increase house building.

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