

CABINET

8 OCTOBER 2024

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LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

2.1 Noted the progress to date on the new local plan and its associated evidence base.

2.2 Approved the Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options document, the Habitat Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal for public consultation between 30 October and 11 December 2024 and approved the approach to consultation as laid out in the report.

2.3 Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan, in consultation with the Policy and Strategy Manager, to make any minor changes to the appearance, format and text of the Issues and Options document (and associated evidence documents) in the interests of clarity and accuracy prior to their publication for consultation.

2.4 Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan, in consultation with the Policy and Strategy Manager, to agree the arrangements for any consultation events or activities.

2. Statement of Reasons:

1.1 Following the withdrawal of the Local Plan 2040 from examination in October 2023, work commenced on a new local plan for the district. Once adopted the new local plan, to be known as the Local Plan 2043, will replace the adopted Local Plan Strategy and Allocations documents. In March 2024 Cabinet approved a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the anticipated timetable for the preparation of the new plan.

1.2 The Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options is the first formal consultation stage in the preparation of our new local plan for the district. In accordance with regulations, the council is required to consult with stakeholders about what it considers the scope of its plan to be and the key issues that will need to be addressed. The Issues and Options stage is an emerging stage in the Local Plan 2043's preparation and provides the opportunity to receive comments from interested parties that will inform the future stages of the plan's progression.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to undertake public consultation on the first stage of the new local plan for Lichfield district, to be known as the Local Plan 2043. This report sets out the work to date on the new local plan and provides the draft consultation document along with the proposals for its consultation.

1.4 Consultation will take place for a period of six weeks between 30 October and 11 December 2024. The consultation methods which will be used are detailed within the report.

3. Any Alternative Options:

To not undertake Regulation 18 consultation and await clarity on the introduction of the new approach to plan-making enabled by the LevellingUp and Regeneration Act. At present further detail is required to be set out through secondary legislation. This would mean a longer period until the adoption of a new local plan.

STAFFORDSHIRE'S NET ZERO PLANNING POLICY COMMITMENTS

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

2.1 Discussed and provided feedback on the broad policy directions in Staffordshire County Council's Net Zero planning policy document ahead of the Staffordshire Leader's Board on 7th November 2024.

2.2 Agreed that the council signs its commitment to Staffordshire's Climate Emergency - planning policy as part of the development of policies in our new local plan.

2. Statement of Reasons:

1.1 In January 2024, the Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB) received a presentation outlining the climate emergency and emphasised the importance that local planning policies have in delivering sustainable development. Appendix A of the report provides the broad policy directions which have been put forward by SSB following this presentation. Staffordshire County Council has asked that each district reviews these policy themes and endorse them as informing the basis of future planning policies in their respective districts or boroughs.

1.2 The policies covering topics such as achieving carbon neutrality, delivering sustainable housing and development, and extending tree cover, would help us achieve the goals that we have committed to in our Lichfield District 2050 strategy of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. However, this will need to be balanced against making requirements too stringent and discouraging development. Viability testing will therefore be crucial to ensure that inclusion in our local plan policies would not render development unviable, which could result in other obligations for example affordable housing being reduced. As such this paper is recommending that we explore the policy directions as part of the development of policies in our new local plan

3. Any Alternative Options:

1. To not provide feedback for consideration at the Leader's Board in their November 2024 meeting.
2. To not agree to sign the broad planning policy directions put forward by the SSB.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

2.1 Approved the publication of the IFS 2024 in line with statutory requirements set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England)(No. 2) Regulations 2019.

2.2 Noted monies received, held and spent from CIL and s106 in the financial year 2023/2024.

2.3 Approved the proposed Infrastructure List (IL), which outlines a shortlist of strategic projects and/or types of projects eligible for CIL funding applications in 2024/2025

2. Statement of Reasons:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the 2024 annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) and revised Infrastructure List (IL). The report also details the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) monies received and spent during the 2023/24 financial year.

1.2 The IL outlines the strategic infrastructure projects that the council considers eligible for CIL funding applications in the financial year 2024/25. The IL reflects priorities identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), adopted Local Plan, Lichfield District 2050 Strategy and ongoing discussions with infrastructure providers, including the Integrated Care Board (ICB) who confirmed their health care priorities

3. Any Alternative Options:

IFS Financial Report:

- No other options have been considered as the IFS is a factual record setting out developer contributions received and how they have been used. It is a legal requirement to publish an IFS no later than 31st December each year. The content is dictated by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.

Infrastructure List:

- The council could choose to not adopt the proposed Infrastructure List and revert to the previous process of open bidding. This may result in a larger number of projects bidding for CIL monies and risks CIL being awarded to projects that do not support the Local Plan but score highly using the previous criteria. This approach would contradict the council's own adopted procedures and the requirements set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations. As such, a new approach would need to be established to ensure the council undertakes its duties in respect of planning obligations.

- The council could establish an alternative approach to the governance and administration of CIL monies to that proposed. The council can adopt any approach it sees fit, however the one proposed has regard to best practice from other authorities and was approved by Cabinet on 5th March 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

2.1 Noted the current position on the development of the MTFS and the next steps.

2.2 Noted the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 October 2024.

2.3 Identified any Revenue Budget and Capital Investment priorities including the approach to using 'windfall' income from the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 to fund Business-as-Usual; capital investment in 2028/29.

2.4 Recommended to Council that a new project is added to the Capital Programme in 2024/25 of **£50,000** for changing room refurbishment at Burntwood Leisure Centre. The funding will be provided by the Leisure Centres Compensation Reserve.

2. Statement of Reasons:

1.1 The ability to deliver the outcomes set out in Lichfield District 2050, is in part dependent on the resources available in the MTFS.

1.2 The MTFS was approved by Council on 27 February 2024, and this is refreshed each year to:

- Remove the previous financial year and in this MTFS this is 2023/24
- Formally add the new financial year and in this MTFS this is 2028/29
- Refresh and update assumptions to reflect the latest information available.

1.3 The MTFS is the overall budget framework and consists of the Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves.

1.4 There have been reports to Cabinet and Council that have updated the MTFS since its initial approval.

1.5 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 Committee and therefore will be considered by that Committee as part of the development of the Draft MTFS.

1.6 The timetable for consideration of the various elements of financial planning is shown in detail within the report.

1.7 There remains an inherently high level of uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Finance regime that has been heightened with the General Election and therefore the likelihood of Government Policy changes is significant.

1.8 The Council has a statutory duty to undertake budget consultation, set a balanced budget and to calculate the level of Council Tax for its area.

1.9 The Approved Capital Programme including a projection for Business as Usual capital investment in 2028/29 taken from the longer term capital investment model, is also included for consideration.

3. Any Alternative Options:

In the main, the options are focused on the level of resource allocated to Strategic Priorities, the strategy to be utilised to achieve a balanced budget and the level of Council Tax increase and these will be considered as part of the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

