

Planning Deputy Leader's Statement 2019/20



INTRODUCTION

East Staffordshire Borough Council has three Corporate Priorities:

- **Value for Money Council**
- **Community Regeneration**
- **Environment and Health & Wellbeing**

The following statement sets out how the Deputy Leader for Planning and officers within this portfolio area will contribute to achieving these priorities, as well highlighting key achievements from 2018/19.

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

Each of the statements made by the individual portfolio holders will then be collated to form the basis of East Staffordshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan for 2019/20.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018/19

Over the past 12 months, the Council has been working hard to improve its services and is currently on track to achieve **100%** of this portfolio's milestones set for 2018/19 by the end of this financial year.

Some of these achievements are highlighted in the following section.

Informed Elected Members

Elected Members were regularly kept up to date with national policy, revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as local initiatives.

Always Working Smarter

The Council has introduced a new charging regime and sought to identify other commercialisation opportunities. The Council has carried on digitising planning information and services, whilst continuing to improve on historical data quality. It has worked closely with the Chairman of the Planning Committee to identify opportunities for improvements to its wider business and reporting processes and committee management functions. The Council also investigated the use of "Permission in Principle" (PiP) with reference to the Brownfield Site Register. Whilst carrying out these initiatives, the Council continued to achieve top quartile performance in accordance with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidelines.

Local Land Charges

The Council has continued to prepare for the transfer of the Local Land Charges Register to the National Land Registry in the future, and improved the quality and digitisation of our data.

Planning Legislative Changes

The Council has continued to keep abreast of national legislative changes, ensuring it proactively engages with Government consultations and making certain that it complies in accordance with any changes and requirements,

which has included changes emerging from revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in July 2018. Following on from the requirement for the Brownfield Site register to be made publicly available, the Council has updated and republished this in accordance with the statutory guidelines.

Campaign for Improvements to Burton Train Station

This year the Council has worked closely with key partners to get everyone together locally to agree an action plan in order for partners to campaign for improvements to the train station in Burton.

Guidance to Support Planning Services

This year the Council has finalised the Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document. The Council updated guidance that safeguards the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which has been designated under Habitats Regulations for its unique heathland habitat. The Council also devised Borough-wide planting guidance, derived from the “i-Tree study”, and introduced new Heritage Impact Assessment guidance notes.

Keep a Watching Brief on Local Development

The Council continued to monitor and report on the delivery of the Local Plan with a view to identifying quickly any issues emerging which may require further work such as the preparation of supplementary guidance or policy revision. The Borough Council has worked actively with Members, agents and the community to move forward and deliver strategic housing and employment sites in accordance with local planning policy.

A Protocol for Neighbourhood Planning

The Council has introduced a new protocol for Neighbourhood Planning, outlining the services that it offers in order to fulfil the duty to support and guide Neighbourhood Planning. This includes Neighbourhood Plans (and reviews), Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.

Delivering Improvements to the Washlands

The Council, through its Planning Policy team, has developed a Washlands Strategy which outlines the type of features and enhancements it wishes to see created and developed on this locally important and popular floodplain. In addition to this the Council, through its Enterprise team, has also been working closely with key partners, including developing a detailed business case for delivering improvements to the Washlands area to create a more aesthetically appealing and interesting attraction for residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVES FOR 2019/20

The Council is determined to continue to build on its successes during 2018/19 as it moves forward into the 2019/20 financial year. It will continue to improve performance, service delivery and value for money through delivery of the Council's three Corporate Priorities. Achievement of these priorities will be supported by the Planning portfolio through delivery of the objectives detailed in the following section. The specific performance indicators identified to measure these objectives are referenced in the paragraphs below.

Informing Elected Members (Target P01; P02; P06)

Elected Members are integral to the smooth delivery of Planning Services and in order to ensure they are up to date with national policy, national and local initiatives and general working practices and access to information within the Planning Services team, the Council will provide regular Member Briefings. We will also continue to monitor and report on the delivery of sites against the Local Plan so that any issues are flagged up and worked on as soon as possible. We will continue to work actively with Members, agents and the community with the delivery of strategic housing and employment sites.

Always Working Smarter (Targets P03; P04; P05; P07; P08)

The Council will continue to progress its "Smarter Working" agenda and will investigate, through initiatives and revised guidance to applicants and agents, the possibility of reducing the number of invalid applications received by the authority. The intention is to prepare a report on work undertaken which it is hoped will lead to improved processes and deliver further efficiencies. We will prepare and adopt a specific new Developer Contributions SPD, which will help to not only clarify requirements, but will also improve validation and speed up planning processes. Whilst carrying out these initiatives, the Council will continue to achieve top quartile performance in accordance with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidelines.

Improving Planning Guidance and Raising Design Quality (Targets P09; P10; P11; P12; P13)

We will deliver a new suite of either amended or new supplementary planning documents in order to provide clear guidance to developers on the standards expected by the Local Planning Authority when assessing proposals for development. These will include revisions to the Housing Choice SPD and the ESBC Design Guide SPD, as well as a new Shop Fronts Design Guide SPD and a Brewery Building Conversion Design Guidance SPD. Staying on the subject of brewery buildings, we will assist with the preparation of development guidance specifically for the Station Street Southern Brewery site in partnership with Molson Coors, in order to continue the joint work and deliver a key brownfield site within the town.

Delivering Improvements to the Washlands (Target P14)

Building on the solid foundation provided in 2018/19 the Council will continue to engage and work with partners to deliver on the Washlands Strategy.

MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR 2019/20

The Planning portfolio has identified a number of measures and targets for 2019/20 which will contribute to the delivery of the objectives detailed above. These are set out in the following tables.

Value for Money Council

Ref	Measures	Target 2019/20
P01	Continuing to inform and improve Planning awareness with Members	At least 2 briefings delivered to elected members during the year
P02	Continuing to inform and improve Planning awareness with Members	Strategic Sites Progress Report delivered (December 2019)
P06	Monitor Local Plan Performance	Annual Monitoring Report Prepared (December 2019)
P07	Continue to develop SMARTER working practices for Planning	Invalid Applications Review and Report (March 2020)
P08	Continue to develop SMARTER working practices for Planning	Adoption of SMARTER Developer Contributions SPD (December 2019)

Community Regeneration

Ref	Measures	Target 2019/20
P03	Major Planning Applications Determined Within 13 Weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant MHCLG figures
P04	Minor Planning Applications Determined Within 8 Weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant MHCLG figures
P05	Other Planning Applications Determined in 8 Weeks	Top Quartile as measured against relevant MHCLG figures
P09	Improve Planning Guidance	Endorse Development Guidance for Station Street Southern Brewery Site (June 2019)
P10	Improve Planning Guidance	Revise and adopt Housing Choice SPD (December 2019)
P11	Raise Design Quality within the Borough	Adopt Shopfronts Design Guide SPD (October 2019)
P12	Raise Design Quality within the Borough	Adopt addendum to ESBC Design Guide SPD (October 2019)
P13	Raise Design Quality within the Borough	Brewery Building Conversion Design Guidance SPD (March 2020)
P14	Delivering Improvements to the Washlands	Contribute to the ongoing partnership working relating to the Washlands (March 2020)