

Introduction

The Council have prepared a new Local Plan for Cannock Chase District

The Local Plan has to look forward over at least fifteen years. It will determine how much, and what kind of development is needed for the district, and where this should go. It has to make sure that development is provided in a carefully balanced way, meeting our needs but protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment, especially our highest quality and most sensitive areas. It sets the policy against which planning applications are considered so that we know whether or not they should be approved or refused.

Preparing a Local Plan is a complex process and has to follow strict legal procedures – we have undergone several stages since 2018 to refine it from a very broad document to one which contains enough detail to enable us to set planning policy and decide which are the most appropriate locations and sites for different sorts of development.

The Plan has already been subject to 3 separate public consultations.

- Issues and Scope (2nd July - 28th August 2018)
- Issues and Options (13th May - 8th July 2019)
- Preferred Options (19th March - 30th April 2021)

We have considered all of the responses, drawn out the main issues the plan needs to consider and have developed local planning policies to address these. We have also selected sites to meet our development needs over the next 15 years.

If you want to know further detail about any particular issue, please take a look at the full document. This summary follows the broad structure of the full consultation document; however the full document does set out much more detail and also asks a series of specific questions to help us get meaningful responses to particular issues.

Alongside the Local Plan consultation document we are also inviting views on the Integrated Impact Assessment (or Sustainability Appraisal, which is an independent assessment of how sustainable our different options are, also incorporating health and equalities issues). We are also consulting on the scope of the Habitats Regulations Assessment which will ensure that the plan does not result in harm to our highest protect environmental sites. Furthermore, the plan is being informed by updated evidence on infrastructure requirements, housing needs, gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople provision, and the local economy.



The District Profile

It is important that the plan is prepared in the light of the local context so it can address local issues as well as those which arise in terms of the way we fit into a more regional context. Some headline issues, drawn from the full document are as follows:

The district is characterised by its environment: Cannock Chase National Landscape to the north two Special Areas of Conservation (covering parts of Cannock Chase and also Cannock Chase Extension canal), 60% coverage by Green Belt, and a proud industrial heritage especially linked to mining.

The population is growing and between 2011 and 2021 rose to 100,519. It is also ageing at a faster rate than the national average. There are, issues of poor health, lower than average educational performance, and increasing levels of crime. The district is the second most deprived in Staffordshire after Tamworth.

The local economy is more diverse than it has been previously, and is growing, however there is still more to do to bring in investment and link training to new opportunity. Town centres require continued investment in what is currently a challenging and rapidly changing retail market.

There is a need for more housing, and especially housing of an appropriate type, to address the changing needs of the population both locally and across the wider West Midlands area.

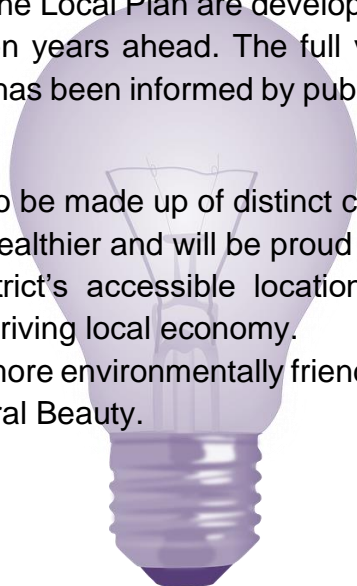
Transport needs ongoing investment. The Chase Line electrification is operational, but stations need improving, cuts to bus services are a concern, cycle and walkways need resourcing and to link together. Capacity on certain roads (e.g. A5/M6T/A460/A34 Churchbridge Junction) only has a design life to 2020 and much of the A5 in the District is also designated as an Air Quality Management Area.

We must do more to mitigate the impact of climate change and protect the quality of our environment

The Vision

It is important that the policies of the Local Plan are developed in accordance with the vision for now we want the district to look fifteen years ahead. The full vision has been based on the Councils Corporate Plan (2022-2026) and has been informed by public feedback over the development of the plan:

- The District will continue to be made up of distinct communities with strong local character.
- People will be safer and healthier and will be proud of the area in which they live and work.
- The potential of the District's accessible location along major transport routes will be maximised to achieve a thriving local economy.
- People will lead greener, more environmentally friendly lifestyles, inspired by Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Objective 1: Deliver high quality development that protects the historic environment and is appropriate, distinctive, attractive and safe

In order to help deliver this objective, three policies have been developed which focus on the good design of places. This is to reflect comments made locally but also to reflect changes to Government policy both in terms of high quality design and the need to make more effective use of land. We already have adopted design guidance in place, but we think we could improve on this.

POLICY SO1.1: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE DISTINCTIVE LOCAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

POLICY SO1.2: ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

POLICY SO1.3: CREATING SAFE PLACES WHICH DETER CRIME AND REDUCE THE FEAR OF CRIME



Objective 2: Create community facilities and healthy living opportunities across the District

We are proposing five policies which seek to encourage active lifestyles and healthy eating, address mental health and reduce isolation. These policies will collectively promote active design which is a term used to describe walking, wheeling and cycling. New developments should be accessible to services and facilities to discourage car use and reduce emissions which has a positive impact on health.

POLICY SO2.1: SAFEGUARDING THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POLICY SO2.2: SAFEGUARDING HEALTH AND AMENITY

POLICY SO2.3: PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE, SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL BUILDINGS AND LAND, INCLUDING PLAYING FIELDS

POLICY SO2.4: ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

POLICY SO2.5: PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY LIVING AND ACTIVITY THROUGH ACTIVE DESIGN



Objective 3: Deliver a sufficient supply of homes to provide for housing choice and ensure all people are able to live in a decent home

Housing requirement

The amount of housing we need to deliver is calculated using the government's 'standard methodology'. The minimum number of houses we need to deliver each year currently stands at 264 homes a year.

However, we know that in the wider area of Greater Birmingham and the Black Country there is still a significant shortfall in housing which we, with our partner local authorities will need to address. There are fourteen local authorities involved in these discussions (details are in the full document) and each one will consider through their own Local Plans how much additional housing (over and above their minimum figure set by government) it would be reasonable for them to provide. The Cannock Chase Local Plan will provide an additional 500 houses towards the unmet needs of the housing market area.

POLICY SO3.1: PROVISION FOR NEW HOMES

POLICY SO3.2: HOUSING CHOICE

POLICY SO3.3: DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY HOUSING

POLICY SO3.4: GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE



Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

We seek to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes which widen opportunities for home ownership, meet needs for social and rented housing, and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

A mix of housing sizes, types and tenure appropriate to the area and as supported by local evidence should be provided, to ensure there is a range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents. We have also updated our evidence: the Housing Needs Assessment which can be seen alongside this consultation.

Housing Locations

Further to having to determine *how* much housing growth it would be reasonable for the District to take, it is necessary to identify *where* it might go. Through the work undertaken on the previous consultations and the Site Selection Methodology (full document available online), a range of sites across the district are being allocated to meet the development requirements over the plan period.

New housing allocations are concentrated within the existing urban areas, or within planned expansion to the urban areas in accessible and sustainable locations, in accordance with the Spatial Strategy.

Priority has been given to the re-use of previously developed land, including the former Rugeley Power Station site, to meet housing needs.

There was a need to identify new locations adjacent to existing settlements to accommodate the balance of dwellings which cannot be built on sites within the existing urban areas of the District. Therefore, the housing allocations include four Strategic Sites including some or entire release of land within the Green Belt have been identified.

The allocated housing sites are shown on the Policies Map and are identified in the Site Allocations policies.



**THE FOLLOWING
MAPS REPRESENT
HOUSING
ALLOCATIONS IN
THE LOCAL AREA**

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are recognised as having specific housing needs. Local circumstances have resulted in sites being located beyond the urban areas and settlement boundaries of the District, much of which is Green Belt. The allocated sites are shown on the Policies Map and are identified in the Site Allocations policies.



Objective 4: Encourage a vibrant Local Economy and Workforce

Overall employment land needs and strategy

The updated evidence (published as part of this consultation) gives an indication as to how much land is required and for what type of employment (unlike housing, the Government has not issued a standard method for calculation how much growth an area needs).

POLICY SO4.1: SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES

POLICY SO4.2: PROVISION FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT SITES

POLICY SO4.3: INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES

POLICY SO4.4: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND THE RURAL ECONOMY

POLICY SO4.5: LIVE WORK ACCOMMODATION

POLICY SO4.6: PROVISION FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Intensification of Existing Employment Areas

A review of existing Employment Sites through the Employment Land Review and Employment Land Availability Assessment process has identified a number of employment sites which could make an important contribution towards meeting the employment needs. Sites within Existing Employment Areas have been identified that are considered able to contribute to the employment land supply.

Employment Locations

Further to having to identify *how* much employment land is required, it is necessary to identify *where* it might go. Through the work undertaken on previous consultations and the Site Selection Methodology (full document available online), a range of sites across the district have been identified to provide for a range of sizes and types of employment to meet business needs and encourage inward investment, resilience and new investment and create a balance portfolio of employment land.

A number of sites have been allocated to protect them for employment uses and in order to accommodate our local need there is a need to remove land from the Green Belt. Therefore, the employment allocations include two strategic allocations.

The allocated employment sites are shown on the Policies Map and are identified in the Site Allocations policies.



**THE FOLLOWING
MAPS REPRESENT
EMPLOYMENT LAND
ALLOCATIONS**

Economy and Skills

Cannock Chase Council, Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire College work in partnership with employers to develop employment and skills plans to help local people get into work or access training opportunities to upskill and reskill.

Proposals for major development where over 50 full time equivalent jobs will be created during the construction phase will be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan. The Employment and Skills Plan will demonstrate how the development will contribute to the training and employability of residents, especially young people.

Objective 5: Support provision of sustainable transport and communications infrastructure

The Local Plan looks at a variety of ways in which to support the provision of sustainable transport and communications infrastructure by managing the need to travel, supporting low carbon transport systems and maintaining and improving the transport system through a series of policies as listed below.

POLICY SO5.1: ACCESSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

POLICY SO5.2: COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

POLICY SO5.3: LOW AND ZERO CARBON TRANSPORT.

POLICY SO5.4: MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

POLICY SO5.5: HATHERTON CANAL RESTORATION CORRIDOR

POLICY SO5.6: SAFEGUARDING PROPOSED RECREATIONAL FOOTPATH AND CYCLE ROUTES

POLICY SO5.7: PARKING PROVISION



Objective 6: Create attractive Town and Local Centres

The Local Plan sets out a hierarchy of town centres and primary shopping areas (as required by national policy). Cannock is designated as the Strategic Town Centre for the District with the next tier being Rugeley and Hednesford Town Centres, followed by the Local Centres of Hawks Green, Norton Canes, Heath Hayes, Chadsmoor, Bridgtown, Fernwood Drive and Brereton. The hierarchy reflects the needs of the settlements they serve.

The Town Centres and Primary Shopping Areas of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford, along with the Local Centres are shown on the Policies Map.

As well as setting out a hierarchy in the Local Plan, the policies look to safeguard existing town centre services, create an attractive and safe environment through good design to ensure the growth and resilience of our town centres, and identify redevelopment opportunity sites in the town centres.

National Policy requires Local Plans to support town centres by allowing them to respond to rapid changes in retail and leisure industries by allowing a suitable use of mixes (including housing) as part of a positive strategy for each centre. When planning applications are submitted for such uses outside of town centre boundaries this may trigger an 'impact assessment' to see what effect they would have on other areas. However, this is only triggered for developments that meet the thresholds as outlined in national and local policy.

POLICY SO6.1 HIERARCHY OF TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES

POLICY SO6.2: PROVISION OF MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES AND TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

POLICY SO6.3: SAFEGUARDING EXISTING TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

POLICY SO6.4: TOWN CENTRE DESIGN

POLICY SO6.5: CANNOCK TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT AREAS:

POLICY SO6.6: RUGELEY TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

POLICY SO6.7: HEDNESFORD TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT AREAS



Objective 7: Protect and enhance the natural environment

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Local Plan includes policies that will protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity of designated sites, ecological networks and priority habitats and species, and ensure that development takes opportunities to improve biodiversity, especially where this can secure measurable net gains.

In line with National Policy requirements, policies ensure that development delivers a minimum 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity and ensures that development does not lead directly or indirectly to an adverse impact upon a Special Area of Conservation - parts of Cannock Chase are especially fragile and by law need very high levels of protection to ensure that they are not harmed.

POLICY SO7.1: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

POLICY SO7.2: BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

POLICY SO7.3: HABITAT SITES

POLICY SO7.4: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

POLICY SO7.5: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE CANNOCK CHASE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

POLICY SO7.6: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE GREEN BELT

POLICY SO7.7: AMENDMENTS TO THE GREEN BELT

POLICY SO7.8: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Landscape Character and Cannock Chase National Landscape

Local Plan policies identify the need to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and landscape areas within the Cannock Chase National Landscape from damaging or inappropriate development.

Green Belt

In line with National Policy, the Local Plan will protect, conserve and enhance the Green Belt within the Cannock Chase District with the highest degree of protection from development and safeguard areas required for compensation of Green Belt losses. The Local Plan also identifies areas of safeguarded land and amendments to the Green Belt where necessary to meet the development requirements over the plan period. Any loss is supported by compensatory mitigation.

Objective 8: Support a greener future

National Planning Policy Guidance supports the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, and the Local Plan provides a positive response to development proposals which increase the production of renewable and low carbon energy and heat within the District.

National Guidance also supports appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, and the Local Plan policy requires all residential development proposals to meet or exceed the standards set out by the Home Quality Mark (one way of demonstrating the standard of a new residential development), or equivalent.

POLICY SO8.1: LOW AND ZERO CARBON ENERGY AND HEAT PRODUCTION

POLICY SO8.2: ACHIEVING NET ZERO CARBON DEVELOPMENT

POLICY SO8.3: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

POLICY SO8.4: MANAGING FLOOD RISK

POLICY SO8.5: AVOIDING AIR, WATER, NOISE OR LIGHT POLLUTION AND SOIL CONTAMINATION

POLICY SO8.6: BROWNFIELD AND DESPOILED LAND AND UNDER-UTILISED BUILDINGS

POLICY SO8.7: SAFEGUARDING MINERAL RESERVES

POLICY SO8.8 MANAGING WASTE



Make a Representation!

You can make a comment during the 6 week consultation period using the representation form available at libraries and on the website. (All comments must be made on the provided form)

Please submit comments before **5 pm 18th March 2024** to the Council via email planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk or post to us using the following address:

Planning Policy
Civic Centre
PO Box 28 Beecroft Road
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 1BG.

For more information about making a comment, please see the Statement of Representation Procedure on the Planning Policy pages of the Councils website ([Planning Policy | Cannock Chase District Council](https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/Planning-Policy) ([cannockchasedc.gov.uk](https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk)))

