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| Report of: | Head of Planning and Regeneration |
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| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Report Track: | Council 23/01/13 |

**COUNCIL
23 JANUARY 2013
CANNOCK CHASE LOCAL PLAN
LOCAL PLAN PART 1 PROPOSED SUBMISSION**

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To gain agreement to publish the Local Plan Part 1 Proposed Submission and accompanying documents under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and to undertake a six week period of public consultation inviting representations on the soundness of the plan. Additionally to gain delegated authority to submit the Local Plan for examination following consultation and to deal with matters arising during the examination process.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council agree to publish the Local Plan Part 1 Proposed Submission and accompanying documents under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 including a six week period of public consultation inviting representations on the soundness of the plan;
- 2.2 That Council authorises the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Leader for Economic Development and Planning to make any non-substantive changes considered necessary to the plan prior to publication.
- 2.3 That Council authorises the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Leader for Economic Development and Planning to submit the plan and accompanying documents for

examination by a Government appointed inspector on completion of the consultation and to deal with matters arising during the examination process.

- 2.4 That authority is given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Leader for Economic Development and Planning to make arrangements for using the Esperance Room and available nearby rooms in the Council suite for the examination, inspector and programme officer.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Local Plan Part 1 forms the central part of the local development plan and brings together and continues the work previously developed as the Cannock Chase Core Strategy and Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan. It sets out the guiding principles and strategic policies for development during the plan period (2006 – 2028). It also provides policy for use in Development Management and for Rugeley Town Centre. Local Plan Part 2 will set out allocations and provide standards for such matters as open space, car parking and certain developer contributions.
- 3.2 Local Plan Part 1 has been written to reflect national changes including the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, which amongst other things allows for the revocation of Regional Strategies and removal of saved structure plan policies, the recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 3.3 **Publication** - Before Local Plan Part 1 is submitted for examination by a Government appointed inspector, there is a proposed submission stage requiring the document to be formally published, together with the completed proportionate evidence base and comments invited on its soundness. **Copies of the Local Plan Part 1 Proposed Submission have been made available for Council Members to view in the group rooms.** The process for Publication is set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.4 **Examination** - Following submission of the Local Plan for examination there will be a requirement to make the examination venue and accompanying accommodation available for the Inspector and Programme Officer (who provides administrative support to the Inspector). These need to be conveniently accessible by the public. The examination is undertaken in a round table rather than adversarial format and it is considered that the Esperance Room is more suited to this approach than the Council Chamber. It is therefore being recommended that authority is delegated for making arrangements to use the Esperance Room and nearby rooms for the examination process.

- 3.5 **Duty to cooperate** - The duty to cooperate has been introduced to (in part) fill the gap in regional/sub-regional level planning formed by the impending revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies. Meeting the duty to cooperate is both a legal requirement and a test of soundness at Local Plan examination. During recent consultation on the Draft Local Plan Part 1 a number of representations were received, which have required further meetings under the 'duty to cooperate'. The main issues, as advised to Cabinet in November 2012 are set out below, together with the way in which these issues have been addressed.
- 3.6 Birmingham City Council made representations regarding Birmingham's housing requirement and implications for the wider Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area. New text has now been agreed with Birmingham City Council officers (inserted in the Local Plan at paragraph 1.8) which reflects Birmingham's position and indicates that Cannock Chase Council will play a part in collecting evidence at a sub regional level to help address the issue.
- 3.7 Further discussion has been required with Natural England and the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership to gain agreement on, and accurately reflect progress relating to SAC protection and mitigation requirements. An updated evidence base has been agreed, although agreement on mitigation measures will take longer. Natural England is content with the progress being made by the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership. Paragraph 4.88 of the Local Plan has been updated to reflect this position.
- 3.8 Meetings are ongoing with Staffordshire County Council. Topic specific work is being progressed to ensure delivery of the transport and education infrastructure critical to support the Local Plan. This work is closely linked to the preparation of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and draft CIL charging schedule.
- 3.9 Further cooperation has been required regarding the relationship with the Black Country Authorities' Core Strategy and the weight to be given to the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy and its intended revocation. Additional text has been added at paragraph 1.12 and in the glossary to reflect the current status of the adopted RSS and its emphasis on the regeneration of the major urban areas.
- 3.10 In response to concerns from Walsall MBC over office provision a ceiling of 30,000m² has been placed on new town centre office provision focused on Cannock town centre (Policy CP11 Centres Hierarchy). Emphasis has been placed on the requirement for sequential testing for any new offices outside the town centre. (This is a national requirement anyway under the NPPF).
- 3.11 Further discussion has been held with the Highways Agency regarding Churchbridge junction to gain clarification on the appropriate scheme to address traffic flow concerns and to provide for the scheme's delivery

via application for Government funding under the pinch point programme.

- 3.12 Further discussions have been held with the Environment Agency which requires certainty on delivery of flood alleviation measures for Rugeley Town Centre before two key regeneration sites can be delivered. This has been addressed via new policy wording in policy RTC11 (Flood Alleviation Measures) and at policies for the affected regeneration sites; policies RTC6 (Rugeley Market Hall/Bus Station and surrounding area) and RTC5 (Market Street Garages).
- 3.13 **Evidence base updates** - In finalising the Local Plan Part 1 it has been necessary to complete various aspects of evidence base. This work is described below. Where completed the evidence base will be made available as part of the public consultation for the Local Plan Part 1 Proposed Submission.
- 3.14 Work has been progressed to assess ONS population projections and 2011 census information. It will only be possible to complete this work once the next release of household projections is made available by the ONS.
- 3.15 An Economic Viability Assessment of Future Development in Cannock Chase advises on the percentage of affordable housing considered viable on development sites. Its findings have been drawn on to update the affordable housing element of policy CP7 (Housing Choice) seeking provision of 20% affordable housing on sites of 15 or more units.
- 3.16 A viability study is also being progressed with Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council to inform the levels of developer contributions considered appropriate for a CIL Charging Schedule. Once finalised for Cannock Chase District this study may also be helpful in advising on viability issues for delivery of the Local Plan.
- 3.17 An Employment Land Projections update has advised on the appropriateness of the levels of employment land identified in the Local Plan. The study endorses the level of employment land provision identified within the plan (Policy CP8 Employment Land)
- 3.18 An Offices Study advises on the supply and viability of office locations in Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley, focusing on town centres. This has been an important piece of work to inform further duty to cooperate discussions with Walsall MBC (see above). Policy CP11 (Centres Hierarchy) has now reintroduced a ceiling of 30,000m² for additional new town centre office provision focused on Cannock town centre.
- 3.19 A Retail Study update considers the appropriateness of the levels of retail development identified in the Local Plan. Whilst current economic conditions now make achieving the levels of comparison (non-food)

provision in Cannock and Rugeley in particular more challenging, the levels (set out in Policy CP11 Centres Hierarchy) have been retained as appropriate aspirations for the District particularly if linked to a mixed use approach to regeneration with a supporting element of leisure uses.

- 3.20 A Gypsies and Travellers Local Needs Assessment reflecting recent Government Guidance recommends levels of provision for new pitches to 2028 in the order of 41 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, 4 pitches for Travelling Showpeople and 5 transit pitches. These updated figures have now been inserted into Policy CP7 Housing Choice.
- 3.21 An Environmental Capacity Study has been undertaken to clearly set out the environmental constraints restricting levels of development potential in the District. This work is helpful in emphasizing the highly constrained environment of the District and the limiting effects it has on considering future development.
- 3.22 **Conclusions.** The Council must meet the requirements for the preparation of a Local Plan Development Plan Document in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2012, the NPPF and the current regulations and guidance. The Local Plan when adopted will become the local development plan for Cannock Chase District.
- 3.23 If agreed the Local Plan Part 1 Proposed Submission will represent the Council's final plan that it would wish to see submitted for examination and subsequent adoption.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Local Plan Part 1 will help facilitate development of all aspects of the Council's priorities which have development implications.

5 Report Detail

Process for preparation of Local Plan Part 1

- 5.1 **Legal Requirements.** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act') remains the basis of the forward planning system but has been considerably modified by the Localism Act. The Local Plan is described in law as the development plan documents adopted under the 2004 Act.
- 5.2 Under Section 20 of the 2004 Act the Council must submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The purpose of the independent examination is to assess whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate in

Section 33A of the 2004 Act and satisfies the following legal requirements :

- **that it has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement;**
- **that it complies with regulations made by the Secretary of State**
- **that it has been subject to sustainability appraisal;**
- **that it has regard to national policy and guidance issued by the Secretary of State;**
- **that it conforms generally to the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (until revoked); and**
- **that it has regard to any sustainable community strategy for its area (i.e. county and district);**
- **that it is sound**

5.3 The NPPF provides that to be 'sound' a Local Plan must be:

- **Positively prepared** – based on a strategy to meet development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development
- **Justified** – the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives based on proportionate evidence
- **Effective** – deliverable over its periods and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities
- **Consistent with national policy** – to enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF

5.4 If the Inspector is satisfied that the Local Plan complies with all of the above the Inspector will recommend that it is adopted by the Council and give reasons why. If the Inspector is not satisfied they will recommend non-adoption and give reasons.

5.5 The Localism Act 2011 included the following provisions which the Council has had regard to in preparing the Local Plan:

- Abolition of Regional Strategies – until their abolition adopted Regional Spatial Strategies remain in place but their intended removal is a material planning consideration.
- Indication of intention to remove saved Structure Plan policies;
- Neighbourhood Planning – Opportunities for communities to produce neighbourhood development plans, which must be in line with national planning policy and the strategic planning vision for the area (set out in the Local Plan);

- Limiting the discretion of planning inspectors to insert own wording into plans;
- Duty to cooperate on local authorities and other public bodies.

5.6 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and included the following which have been taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan::

- The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions
- A presumption in favour of sustainable development is introduced. For plan-making sustainable development is defined in the NPPF as meaning:
 - Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area
 - Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted
- Increased weight is given to emerging planning policy
- Due weight is given to saved Local Plan policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF
- A five year supply of housing land is required plus 5% where there is a good record of delivery, plus 20% where not.

5.7 The process for preparing development plan documents is set out in regulations, including:

- Commencement – a stage which includes early consultation. In Cannock Chase District this has been undertaken in four stages:
 - Issues and Options – to generate debate on the full range of strategic development options for the District and Rugeley Town Centre
 - Preferred Options – to further develop the options identified through consultation as preferred options.
 - Pre-Publication Draft – to gain views on a draft version with policies.
 - Draft Local Plan Part 1
- **Publication – the final document for consultation – this stage**
- Submission - to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination
- Examination
- Adoption

5.8 **Public Consultation** - Issues and Options consultation responses were reported to Cabinet in 2009 and at this stage Cabinet also

supported the direction that Preferred Options should take. Consultation responses to Preferred Options and Pre Publication Draft consultations were reported to Cabinet during 2010. Cabinet approved the Draft Local Plan Part 1 in July 2012 and agreed to it being issued with supporting documentation for public consultation. Following this decision a six week public consultation was undertaken. A summary of the extent of consultation and the responses received was reported to Cabinet in November 2012. In response to the comments received during consultation, various amendments were agreed by November 2012 Cabinet for inclusion within Local Plan Part 1 before being presented to Council with a recommendation to publish.

- 5.9 The way in which consultation is undertaken is set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This was adopted in 2006 and whilst it has been adhered to throughout the plan making process, it is now becoming outdated following changes in legislation. An updated SCI has been prepared and presented to Cabinet in January 2013 for a period of public consultation prior to adoption. Compliance with the SCI is a legal requirement.
- 5.10 **Timetable** - The Local Plan timetable is set out within a Local Development Scheme (LDS). A revision of the LDS was agreed at the November 2012 Cabinet in readiness for Publication and Submission of the Local Plan Part 1. Having an up to date LDS is one of the legal requirements which will be considered at examination.

Structure of Local Plan Part 1

- 5.11 **Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy** - The strategic element of the Local Plan Part 1 contains the following structure:
1. Introduction
 2. District Profile
 3. Vision
 4. District-wide Objectives
 5. Strategic Approach
 6. Area Implications
 7. Policies
 8. Monitoring
- 5.12 **Introduction** - The introduction explains the Local Plan process and provides contextual information. The national and local policy contexts are set out via reference to national policy, the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's Corporate Plan and other key documents. There is also reference to the evidence base produced to support the document, the various assessments applied to ensure sustainability and to how consultation has helped inform decisions.
- 5.13 **District Profile** - A profile of the District describes local conditions and challenges to be met over the plan period. This information is drawn

from evidence, in particular the 'State of Cannock Chase' reports. During earlier consultation the portrait was generally supported, with a few exceptions, as an accurate description of the District.

- 5.14 **Vision** - A view of how the District might look at the end of the plan period is set out under three themes:
- The potential of the District's accessible location along major transport routes will be maximised to achieve a thriving local economy.
 - 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.
 - People will lead greener, more environmentally friendly lifestyles, inspired by Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.15 These themes were generally supported during earlier consultation but more detailed descriptions under each of these headings have been amended to include comments made and to be more locally specific where possible.
- 5.16 **District-wide Objectives** - The Local Plan is 'objectives led' meaning that objectives are fundamental to meeting the Vision, for being delivered by policy and other means and for being regularly monitored. The objectives for achieving the future vision of the District are guided by the Council's corporate aims and the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The eight objectives received strong support from consultation and are:
- Objective 1 Promote pride in attractive, safe, local communities
 - Objective 2 Create healthy living opportunities across the district
 - Objective 3 Provide for housing choice
 - Objective 4 Encourage a vibrant local economy and workforce
 - Objective 5 Encourage sustainable transport infrastructure
 - Objective 6 Create attractive town centres
 - Objective 7 Provide well managed and appreciated environments
 - Objective 8 Support a greener future
- 5.17 The text for each objective describes the main influences driving change including higher level policy, strategies and programmes and seeks to balance these with what the evidence base is saying, the views of consultees and sustainability concerns. This mix of inputs helps inform effective policy making and pointers are then made to which core policies can help contribute to meeting the objective.
- 5.18 **Strategic Approach** - The strategic approach which gained greatest support during earlier consultation was *dispersed development across all urban communities* which would keep proportions of housing and employment across the District more or less as they are at present. In general terms this is now being put forward in the Local Plan as the

Strategic Approach. The effect of this approach is to broadly cater for development in the existing urban areas in the following proportions, Rugeley and Brereton 26%, Norton Canes 6% and Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes 68%. Where there is insufficient capacity within the existing urban areas a limited number of urban extensions are identified (see Area Implications below). The south-east Staffordshire strategy with Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough Councils (see Housing below), proposed under the duty to cooperate, provides a sub-regional strategic context for housing within Cannock Chase District's strategic approach.

Area Implications – Key issues

- 5.19 **Housing** - Under the duty to cooperate introduced by the Localism Act Cannock Chase District, Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough have developed a south-east Staffordshire strategy within which a housing requirement of 900 per annum or 19,800 for 2006 to 2028 can be met within the supply of developable sites across the three authority areas.
- 5.20 Under this strategy the Cannock Chase Local Plan Part 1 provides sites for 5,300 new houses. In addition the Lichfield District Local Plan identifies 500 houses to help meet the needs of Rugeley. The south-east Staffordshire strategy is agreed within a memorandum of understanding between the three authorities.
- 5.21 In Cannock Chase District 1,625 new houses have been completed between 2006 and 2012 and land for an estimated 2,350 houses has been identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012 (SHLAA) as follows: 66% within the urban area of Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes, 29% within the urban area of Rugeley and Brereton and 5% within the urban area of Norton Canes. These broadly match the proportions identified via the strategic approach.
- 5.22 Additionally the plan identifies the most sustainable locations for urban extensions for the housing requirement not covered within the above figures. An urban extension of 750 new houses is identified as a strategic site on land to the west of Pye Green Road and urban extensions for about 670 new houses are identified to the south of Norton Canes. This totals 5,395.
- 5.23 **Affordable housing** - Provision is identified as a priority recognising an annual requirement of 197 affordable houses. The ability to meet affordable housing need is curtailed by issues of viability. An affordable housing viability study commissioned by Cannock Chase Council in 2012 concludes that at the time of the study provision of 20% affordable is viable on sites of 15 or more units and that for sites of less than 15 units, and in exceptional cases some sites of 15 or more units, it is viable and more appropriate to obtain a financial contribution towards delivery on other sites. The percentage of affordable units will adjust in response to changes in market conditions and can be

reconsidered when these changes are identified as being of sufficient scale to merit a recalculation.

- 5.24 Land east of Wimblebury Road, taken out of the Green Belt in 1997 is not required to deliver the Local Plan strategy and will continue to be safeguarded for potential development beyond the plan period subject to consideration within a Local Plan review or replacement. The definition of the Green Belt boundary at this site will be assessed against policy criteria set out in the NPPF as part of Local Plan Part 2.
- 5.25 Local Plan Part 1 caters for Council's request to Cabinet, in May 2012, to remove the former Stadium site from the list of land available for housing development and develop it as a site for use as public open space and sport and leisure purposes.
- 5.26 **Accommodation needs of Gypsies Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** - The Government has produced national policy to inform future assessment which reflects local need and historic demand. The Local Plan therefore reflects the Government position by stating that future provision will be informed by an up to date assessment of local need and historic demand. This shows a requirement for 41 additional residential pitches, 4 travelling showpeople pitches and 5 transit pitches by 2028. Allocation of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is proposed via allocations in Local Plan Part 2 based on an area of search around the A5 corridor.
- 5.27 **Employment** - The evidence base for employment land indicates that the distribution of available land matches the strategic approach relatively well. Local Plan Part 1 seeks to ensure delivery of at least 88ha of new and redeveloped employment land. Initially from 2006, the plan has identified 91ha. High quality areas in the District are the Kingswood Lakeside and Towers Business Area. These locations are well established. Other key locations are the A5 corridor through Bridgtown and Mill Green, Cannock.
- 5.28 Future supply will be monitored and managed; an extension of Kingswood Lakeside employment area is identified as an option within the plan period should it be required or beyond the plan period if not.
- 5.29 **Transport** - Improvement to Churchbridge junction represents the most significant item of road infrastructure. A previous scheme cost was estimated at £12.5 million. The Highways Agency (HA) are currently modelling and costing a scheme to be submitted as part of the Government's Pinch Point Programme. The HA expect any scheme costs in excess of Pinch Point to be funded from developer contributions.
- 5.30 The Local Plan provides support for increased public transport provision. This reflects the Council's position on continuing discussions with CENTRO and other stakeholders on Chase Line electrification and

other station and line improvements and support for improvements in bus services.

- 5.31 **Town Centres** - Policy for both food and non-food retail provision provides thresholds supported by recent retail evidence for the District, elements of which are currently being taken forward via the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan element of Local Plan Part 1 and the regeneration of Hednesford Town Centre. Cannock, as a strategic centre is specifically identified to provide up to 35,000m² of additional non-food retail floor space. Finding opportunities for further office development (up to 30,000m²) has been informed by a specific study undertaken to assess both the availability of land for offices in Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley and the suitability of sites to meet market requirements.
- 5.32 **Green Belt** - Further release of Green Belt land is not considered necessary at this stage to deliver the Local Plan strategy and a review of Green Belt land will be undertaken as part of Local Plan Part 2. The review will consider land safeguarding requirements for development beyond the plan period and locations for extension of Kingswood Lakeside employment area into the Green Belt if required during the plan period based on criteria to be set out in Local Plan Part 2.
- 5.33 **Open Space, Sport and Recreation** - Provision of new and improved indoor and outdoor sports facilities is identified as a key infrastructure requirement reflecting Council priorities for provision in particular providing opportunities for health improvements in the District's residents. The identification of a site for a new cemetery for Cannock/Hednesford is also identified as a priority. The former Stadium site has been removed from the list of land available for housing development to enable it to be developed as a site for use as public open space and sport and leisure purposes.
- 5.34 **Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** - Suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) is identified as a key infrastructure requirement in order to provide satisfactory mitigation for the protection of the Cannock Chase SAC. Compliance with the legal requirements of the Habitat Regulations regarding SACs is a key issue which if not progressed appropriately runs the risk of the Strategy being found unsound by the Planning Inspectorate. To ensure that the policy approach in the Local Plan is appropriate, confirmation of support from English Nature has been sought and legal advice taken. The outcome of this is that a mitigation strategy will need to be identified in sufficient detail to ensure that it will achieve the required level of protection of the SAC, including seeking financial contributions towards mitigation from development in the District.
- 5.35 **Local Green Space** - The NPPF introduces a new designation of Local Green Space which, when raised by a local community, may be applied to valued areas meeting specific criteria. One such Local Green Space

which meets the criteria has been identified by the Hazelslade and Rawnsley Community Association and will be addressed further within Local Plan Part 2.

- 5.36 **Rural Areas** - Whilst most development will go to urban areas the Strategic Approach aims to ensure that both service provision and support are maintained for the continued viability of the rural settlements of Rawnsley, Hazelslade, Prospect Village, Cannock Wood and Slitting Mill and the hamlet of Little Wyrley around Little Wyrley Hall. New development will generally be limited to small scale infill development in the main rural settlements.
- 5.37 **Climate Change** - District level opportunities for responding to Climate Change are identified, including the mapping of the District's opportunity areas for wind power and combined heat and power to be further developed in a Supplementary Planning Document. These opportunity sites are however qualified by the need for detailed assessment of any schemes coming forward.
- 5.38 **Policies** - 16 policies provide the crux of the Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy. Policies are written to help contribute to the meeting of more than one objective and are cross related accordingly within the document:
- CP1 Strategy - provides a clear statement of how housing and employment development will be distributed around the District and reflects the national presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - CP2 Developer Contributions for Infrastructure – provides policy for how the Council will require different types of developer contributions
 - CP3 Chase Shaping–Design - places a requirement for new development to be high quality in layout and use of materials, to minimise opportunities for crime, to provide access for all and to respond to Climate Change challenges
 - CP4 Neighbourhood Led Planning – provides local policy on the national requirement for local planning authorities to facilitate neighbourhood planning
 - CP5 Social Inclusion and Healthy Living - helps ensure sufficient community and leisure infrastructure is forthcoming alongside new development and is of sufficient quality. This will include health and education facilities, a cemetery and buildings and open space for community use. The Council's assessments of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation needs are particularly important and link closely to ensuring improvement of facilities to both cater for growth and deficiencies in existing provision.
 - CP6 Housing Land – identifies where new housing will be expected to be provided in order to meet the land requirements and the Strategic Approach. This is by a combination of completed sites, urban sites and limited urban extensions.

- CP7 Housing Choice – elaborates on the type and quality of housing to be provided to encourage a balance in housing markets in terms of size of dwellings and affordability and to cater for the specific accommodation requirements of an aging community and Gypsies, travelers and traveling showpeople.
- CP8 Employment Land - provides a statement on where new employment will be expected to be provided in order to meet the Strategic Approach. This is by a combination of completed sites, key high quality sites and other provision. An extension of Kingswood Lakeside employment area is identified as an option within the plan period should it be required or beyond the plan period if not.
- CP9 A Balanced Economy – is concerned with the need to provide a competitive and mobile workforce and increasing the job density of the District closer to that of the County average via support for a broadening of the District's economic base but with continued support for high quality manufacturing. The importance of the voluntary and community sectors is recognised via support to provision of premises and infrastructure. The economic potential of tourism and the local canal network is also recognised.
- CP10 Sustainable Transport - seeks improved bus services linking homes to jobs and centres for all users. Similarly ongoing rail improvement initiatives are supported. Provision of routes for walking and cycling are encouraged. The role of developer contributions is highlighted.
- CP11 Centres Hierarchy - provides a tiered structure to the District's centres of Cannock Strategic Centre, Rugeley and Hednesford Town Centres, Hawks Green District Centre and other Local Centres. Hawks Green is identified as being suitable for alternative appropriate uses, including residential, should its District Centre retail role be discontinued during the plan period. Gross comparison retail provision levels are set for Cannock (35,000m²), Rugeley (10,000 m²) and Hednesford (8,000m²). Gross convenience retail provision levels are set for Rugeley (4,900 m²) and Hednesford (6,400 m²). A ceiling of 30,000m² of office provision is set for the District's three town centres. Figures are informed by the 2009 Retail Study and 2012 update and emerging development/ regeneration schemes.
- Policy CP12 Biodiversity and geodiversity – recognises the importance of these aspects in development decisions applying a tiered approach to protection of sites.
- Policy CP13 Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - protects the SAC as a national asset and seeks mitigation via developer contributions from all development involving a net increase in dwellings within its sphere of influence.
- Policy CP14 Landscape Character and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – promotes protection, conservation and enhancement of the areas landscape character and provides the framework for sensitive development in and around Cannock Chase guided by the AONB Management Plan.

- Policy CP15 Historic Environment – protects Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas. Local opportunities for heritage contributions to the regeneration of Rugeley Town Centre and the local canal network are also highlighted together with an integrated management approach for Castle Ring and Beaudesert Designed Landscape.
- Policy CP16 Climate Change and Sustainable Resource Use – sets out how the Local Plan will contribute to the Council's responsibilities for reducing the effects of Climate Change. This includes promoting development which has good accessibility to services via sustainable transport networks, utilises land assets sustainably, positively influences overall renewable and low carbon energy generation, mitigates pollution and safeguards the highest-risk flood areas.

- 5.39 **Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)** - The AAP forms the second element of Local Plan Part 1. Rugeley Town Centre was identified early in the plan making process as requiring a plan led process to halt its decline and address regeneration needs. The purpose of the AAP is to promote the further development of Rugeley Town Centre for retail, commercial, leisure, tourism, housing and transport purposes ensuring that the Council's decisions best reflect the needs and aspirations of residents, shoppers, visitors, businesses and commercial interests in the town centre.
- 5.40 The AAP strategy provides the overall approach to focusing investment in the town centre, locating the main town centre land uses and encouraging high standards of urban design throughout. Initially the strategy seeks to balance investment in the core town centre with the reinvigoration of the Trent and Mersey Canal corridor as a leisure destination.
- 5.41 The strategy focuses new development within a strengthened core town centre by the regeneration of key sites at the Market Hall/Bus Station and Wellington Drive sites, together with edge of centre retail with its key feature, the development of a superstore on the former Celcon site, Leathermill Lane. Towards the end of the plan period the strategy will seek to integrate and consolidate the area between the core town centre and the canalside. A fourth major development site, is the existing Aelfgar 6th Form Centre, which on relocation to a new learning campus at Hagley Park, will leave this site available for residential development. All sites will be required to provide developer funding towards the regeneration and enhancement of the town centre, including the public realm, sustainable transport and leisure, community, cultural and recreational facilities.
- 5.42 Five key objectives have been identified emphasizing the importance of creating appropriate environments around buildings to enhance the attractiveness and biodiversity of the area, with resulting economic benefits to the town centre. The key objectives are:-

- **Shopping** – ‘A more competitive town centre which provides for the daily shopping needs of its local community.’
- **Movement and Access** – ‘A centre which is accessible to all and benefits from increased pedestrian and cycle linkages.’
- **Community, Leisure and the Arts** – ‘A centre which stays alive in the evening as well as the daytime and provides cultural and leisure opportunities for residents and visitors alike.’
- **Conservation and the Built Environment** – ‘High quality public spaces which complement the existing Conservation Areas and take full advantage of the Trent and Mersey Canal.’
- **Housing** – ‘An increase in the resident population through the provision of high quality housing in appropriate locations with a mix of dwelling types.’

- 5.43 The AAP defines the Primary Shopping Area and specifies the types of uses that will be acceptable within this area, acknowledging the NPPF and the Mary Portas high street review. It also identifies areas that will be a priority for enhancement, key buildings and features of the town centre. Rugeley Town Centre and the Trent and Mersey Canal are designated Conservation Areas and there are another three Conservation Areas that lie within the plan area. The enhancement of the canal, is identified as a key part of the strategy in linking the existing core town centre and the proposed food superstore at the former Celcon site, and will include the creation of a new public space centered around the canal, together with the renovation of existing historic canal side buildings and the potential provision of a new canal basin, subject to feasibility and funding.
- 5.44 The AAP strategy also includes enhancements of the public realm, public transport improvements and pedestrian/cycle route improvements. Two of the five Conservation Areas (Rugeley Town Centre and Talbot Street/Lichfield Street) have been identified by English Heritage in 2009 as being ‘At Risk’ from unsympathetic alterations. These historic assets form a key part of the regeneration strategy in order to enhance the local distinctiveness of Rugeley Town Centre and combat deterioration and decline. A partnership scheme with English Heritage is already providing funds for addressing some of the buildings most at risk within the Conservation Areas. The plan will also seek to create new or improve existing leisure, community, cultural or recreational facilities. The use of developer contributions will be a key part of delivering all of the above town centre improvements.
- 5.45 The AAP includes eleven policies. These include three area wide, strategic policies related to the town centre regeneration strategy, the Primary Shopping Area and a town centre Urban Design Strategy; five policies relating to individual site development proposals and four policies relating to the public realm and sustainable transport, the Hagley Park flood alleviation area and improvements to leisure, community cultural and recreational facilities.

- 5.46 **Monitoring** - Monitoring the effectiveness of the Local Plan will be undertaken via the Authority Monitoring Report and will relate to performance indicators whether national or local. There will also need to be reference to monitoring of other plans and strategies such as the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 5.47 **Replacement of Saved Policies** - The Local Plan contains an appendix giving a full list of how saved Local Plan policies will be replaced by policies within the new Local Plan.

Local Plan – Accompanying Documents

- 5.48 The Local Plan Part 1 is accompanied by a range of other documents; a Sustainability Appraisal, Appropriate Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and evidence base all of which will form part of consultation. An extensive evidence base has been prepared to inform the content of the Local Plan. It is considered comprehensive, is available for public view on the Council's website and a full set will be made available in hard copy for the consultation. A statement of the representations procedure will be made available with the Local Plan as required by the 2012 regulations (Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).
- 5.49 **Sustainability Appraisal** - The Council is required to ensure that the Local Plan is subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The purpose is to appraise the social environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in the Local Plan from the outset of the plan preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with the principles of sustainable development. Following an initial scoping report, SA (including SEA) has been undertaken at each stage of the Local Plan's development.
- 5.50 **Appropriate Assessment** - As the scale of development identified in the Local Plan has the potential to impact on sites of international importance, in particular the Heathlands of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and floating water plantain in the Cannock Extension Canal SAC, the Council is required to ensure that the Local Plan is subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA).
- 5.51 AA must ensure that the policies in the Local Plan will not cause damage to these sites. The Chase heathlands are identified as being most at risk from surrounding development. Key concerns relate to pressures likely to result from additional vehicle exhaust emissions and additional recreational visitors arising from housing growth.
- 5.52 In response, mitigation measures are required to deal with these pressures. A partnership including local authorities affected by this

issue and Natural England has been established to identify the measures needed. Such measures are likely to include changes in visitor management and provision of large areas of suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS). SANGS will be needed in the District to divert visitor pressure away from the Chase heathlands. Some SANGS could be existing sites which can be managed to absorb/attract more visitors. The Local Plan Part 1 includes a specific policy to deal with this.

- 5.53 **Equalities Impact Assessment** - An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) sets out how the Local Plan has been progressed to engage and cater for all sectors of the community. The proposed policies contained in Local Plan Part 1 have been refined through the whole process to mitigate any potential adverse impacts. The actions needed form an integral part of the delivery, management and monitoring of the Local Plan. The Local Plan seeks to address the Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity and as such the EqIA has shown only positive and neutral impacts with no negative impacts found.
- 5.54 **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** - A significant benefit of producing the Local Plan is the need to produce a parallel Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will for the first time identify the wide range of infrastructure requirements needed to cater for both existing deficiencies and to accompany new development. This includes (where possible) the costs involved, phasing and sources, including developer contributions. Such contributions, currently provided via section 106 obligations are in future likely to also be drawn from a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for which the Council will be producing a charging schedule. The production of a Draft Charging Schedule for consultation was agreed at Cabinet on 17 March 2011. **The IDP will be kept as a live document and updated as new information comes forward.** It helps provide more certainty by making clear which elements of infrastructure are critical for delivery of the Local Plan and which elements are otherwise prioritised. The headings covered within the IDP are:

Physical infrastructure

- Transport
- Energy
- Water and Drainage
- Waste
- Information Technology and Communications
- Public Realm

Green and Historic Infrastructure

- Open Space
- Rivers
- Historic Landscapes

Social and Community Infrastructure

- Education
- Employment
- Children's Services
- Health/wellbeing
- Community Services
- Culture
- Leisure

5.55 **Policies Map** - An electronic Policies Map has been prepared to support the Local Plan and this shows the areas where certain policies will apply. This is viewable on the Council's website.

Next Steps

5.56 It is intended to publish the Local Plan Part 1 for consultation in February 2013 and subject to responses received submit for examination in May 2013.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Any costs associated with the Local Plan will need to be contained within existing approved budgets.

There are no further direct financial implications for the Council as a result of this report; however a number of elements within the report do have a financial impact on the Council for example the housing requirement for the District during the plan period will affect the level of New Homes Bonus receivable by the Council.

These elements will form the basis of future Capital and Revenue reports which will be submitted for Members consideration and will include detailed financial implications as and where required.

The cost of the Examination by the Secretary Of State's Inspector cannot be estimated as it will depend on the length of time involved, however a provision of £100k has been made within the Planning Delivery Reserve to meet the total cost of any pre- inspection advice and the Examination itself. Should the cost exceed this provision a supplementary estimate for the additional cost will need to be requested.

6.2 Legal

The legal implications are set out in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

There are currently no additional human resource implications.

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention) –

The Local Plan Part 1 policy provides opportunities to help design out crime.

6.5 Human Rights Act

The process of formulating and adopting the policy in the Local Plan Part 1 is likely to have implications which affect individual's rights and possessions and due account must be taken of the need to adopt procedures which take account of the right of individuals to make representations in respect of the guidance and adopt guidance which, as far as possible, enables action in the public interest to be balanced against individual rights.

6.6 Data Protection

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act arising from this report.

6.7 Risk Management

Local Plan risks are identified within the Local Development Scheme.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

Any implications are identified in an accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment

7 Appendices to the Report

Previous Consideration

Background Papers