

Cannock Chase Council
Local Development Scheme
December 2023

Local Development Scheme 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires Cannock Chase Council to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the District. The LDS represents the Council's 3 year project plan detailing the main stages in the preparation of the Local Plan to inform members of the public, stakeholders and external organisations of the main opportunities to get involved in the planning making process. This LDS updates the previous LDS published 1st August 2022.
- 1.2 This LDS reflects the progress made in preparing Local Plan documents since the last LDS was published. It also provides information on future Development Plan Documents that the Council intends to produce and the timetable for their production.
- 1.3 The LDS will be published and kept up to date on the Council's website: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy

2. KEY CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

- 2.1 The Localism Act (2011) changed and reformed the planning system to reflect the localism agenda. One of the key provisions in the Act is the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans give local people the opportunity to decide the future of the places where they live and work with a focus on guiding and positively informing development rather than stopping it. Neighbourhood Plans need to conform to planning policies and guidance at a local, national and European level and meet the Neighbourhood Planning regulations. There is no statutory duty for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, only a right to do so if they wish. Cannock Chase Council has 6 designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas as at August 2023 and other parishes are also considering designation. The designated areas are the parishes of Brereton and Ravenhill, Hednesford, Norton Canes, Rugeley, Cannock Wood and Heath Hayes and Wimblebury. The most up to date information can be seen on the Council's web pages at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy
- 2.2 Upon being made (adopted), a Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory plan carrying equal weight to the Local Plan¹ and be part of the suite of documents that guide development. This will mean that it will be used in making decisions on planning applications by Cannock Chase Council.

¹ Neighbourhood Plans have statutory weight and considered to be part of the Development Plan but are not classified as DPDs.

2.3 The Localism Act does not change the basic plan making structure which remains intact with local plans continuing to be at the heart of the planning system. The form and content of each plan will be shaped to a large degree by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.4 The NPPF was originally published on 27 March 2012. A revised version of the NPPF was published in July 2018 to which minor clarifications were made and a further version published in February 2019. The latest NPPF is dated July 2021. The revised NPPF has replaced previous national guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and various planning circulars. The NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance (Plan-making, Update July 2020) confirms that the planning system continues to be 'plan-led' which means that planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also confirms that the policies in emerging plans will gather more weight as development plans progress towards adoption.

2.5 On publication of this LDS 2023, the Development Plan comprises:

- The Waste Local Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (2010 - 2026), adopted by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council on 22nd March 2013
- The Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015 - 2030), adopted by Staffordshire County Council on the 16th February 2017.
- Local Plan Part 1 (Core Strategy and Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan) adopted by Cannock Chase Council 11th June 2014.

3. THE NEW LOCAL PLAN

3.1 Planning legislation introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required all local planning authorities to produce a new style of Local Plan, called a Local Development Framework (LDF). In 2011, following the introduction of the Localism Act, planning reforms deemed that the term Local Plan would replace the Local Development Framework.

3.2 There is still a requirement to produce a portfolio of documents that either support Local Plan preparation or are used in the determination of planning applications. In addition to the Local Development Scheme, the portfolio of documents includes the following²:

² A glossary of terms is provided in Appendix E of this document.

Type of document	Decision Taking	Support plan preparation	Mandatory
Development Plan Documents (DPDs) incl. Area Action Plans (AAPs)	✓		✓
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	✓		
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)		✓	✓
Local Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)		✓	✓

3.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004(as amended) requires the Council to produce a ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ (SCI) which sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of plans and decision making for planning applications. The Statement of Community Involvement was approved for adoption at the 13th December 2018 Cabinet meeting. This was amended to include minor changes and update March 2022. The current SCI will need to be reviewed within 5 years from the date of adoption.

3.4 The NPPF states that Local Plans are key to delivering sustainable development and that local authorities should produce a Local Plan for their area. The Local Plan can then be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. This LDS is the Council’s commitment to the preparation of a new Local Plan (a Local Plan Review) which will replace Local Plan Part 1 when adopted and will also cover the more detailed elements which would have been contained in Local Plan Part 2 the work on this now having ceased³.

3.5 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 clarify that the term Local Plan applies to DPDs only. The Local Plan is therefore the collection of DPDs which may be one document or it may be several.

3.6 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are not part of the Local Plan, nor are they considered to be development plan documents as they supplement adopted policy. Therefore, information on their production is not set out within the LDS. Instead, such information can be found on the Council’s website. A programme for the development of new SPD’s will emerge as the new Local Plan evolves.

4. LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

³ Council, 21st February 2018

New Local Plan (Local Plan review)

Adoption Target 2025: A full timetable for the production of the Local Plan can be seen in Figure 1.

Coverage: Cannock Chase District (Map at Appendix A)

Conformity: The document will be produced in conformity with the NPPF.

Scope: The new Local Plan will replace the adopted Local Plan Part 1 and previously intended Local Plan Part 2, will set the context for delivering growth, set out and describe a spatial strategy, present strategic and detailed planning policies to manage change, will allocate and safeguard land for different types of development and establish a monitoring framework.

Figure 1: Local Plan Preparation Timetable

Document	Preparation Stage	LDS Target Date
New Local Plan	Issues & Options consultation	May/June/July 2019
	Preferred Option Consultation (non statutory stage)	March/April 2021
	Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) consultation	WINTER 2023/24
	Submission	SUMMER 2024
	Examination in Public	AUTUMN/WINTER 2024
	Adoption	SUMMER 2025

4.1 Setting out a future timetable is not straight forward. For example the time it takes to move from Pre-Submission to Submission depends upon the level and complexity of objections, and therefore the length of time it will take to process them, which cannot be quantified until after the plan has been consulted upon. At the point of Submission of the plan to the Secretary of State the plan timetable is in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate and will depend upon on a range of factors which are outside of the control of the local authority. These factors include the need for a pre-hearing meeting, the availability of an inspector to examine the plan and the length and complexity of the hearing process.

4.2 The revised timetable takes into account the best information available at this time and reflects lead in times to obtain consents and approvals to move between different stages of the Local Plan Review. Further changes may need to be made to the timetable again depending on what transpires.

4.3 Appendix B sets out a risk register which identifies risks to the delivery of the Local Plan. These risks will be kept under review to ensure that risks are addressed quickly if they arise.

4.4 Appendix C sets out the resources in relation to Local Plan production.

4.5 Missed milestones from the previously published LDS in 2022 have been due to various factors including:

- The Team has carried vacancies since the LDS 2022 was published. The Planning Policy Manager post was filled on an interim basis by the Principal Planning Officer and that role has been covered through the use of agency staff. The Interim Planning Policy Manager left the authority July 2023 and a Senior Planner has been successful in obtaining the Principal Planner position and the Planning Policy Manager role is overseen by a Consultant. A similar arrangement will need to be secured to cover other gaps in the team in order to progress the Local Plan.
- There have been delays in obtaining key evidence documents to support the Local Plan some of which has been outside of the control of the Team. A review of the evidence base has also been necessary given the passage of time and updates are being commissioned.
- Government proposals set out within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act and proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework have impacted on the timetable as potential implications have had to be assessed.

5. PROGRESS REPORTING

5.1 The Council produces the Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) each year, covering the 'monitoring year' (of the preceding April-March period). The AMR sets out the list of documents that are included within the LDS, their timetable for preparation, the stage they are currently at, and if they are behind schedule the reasons for this. This is published on the website.

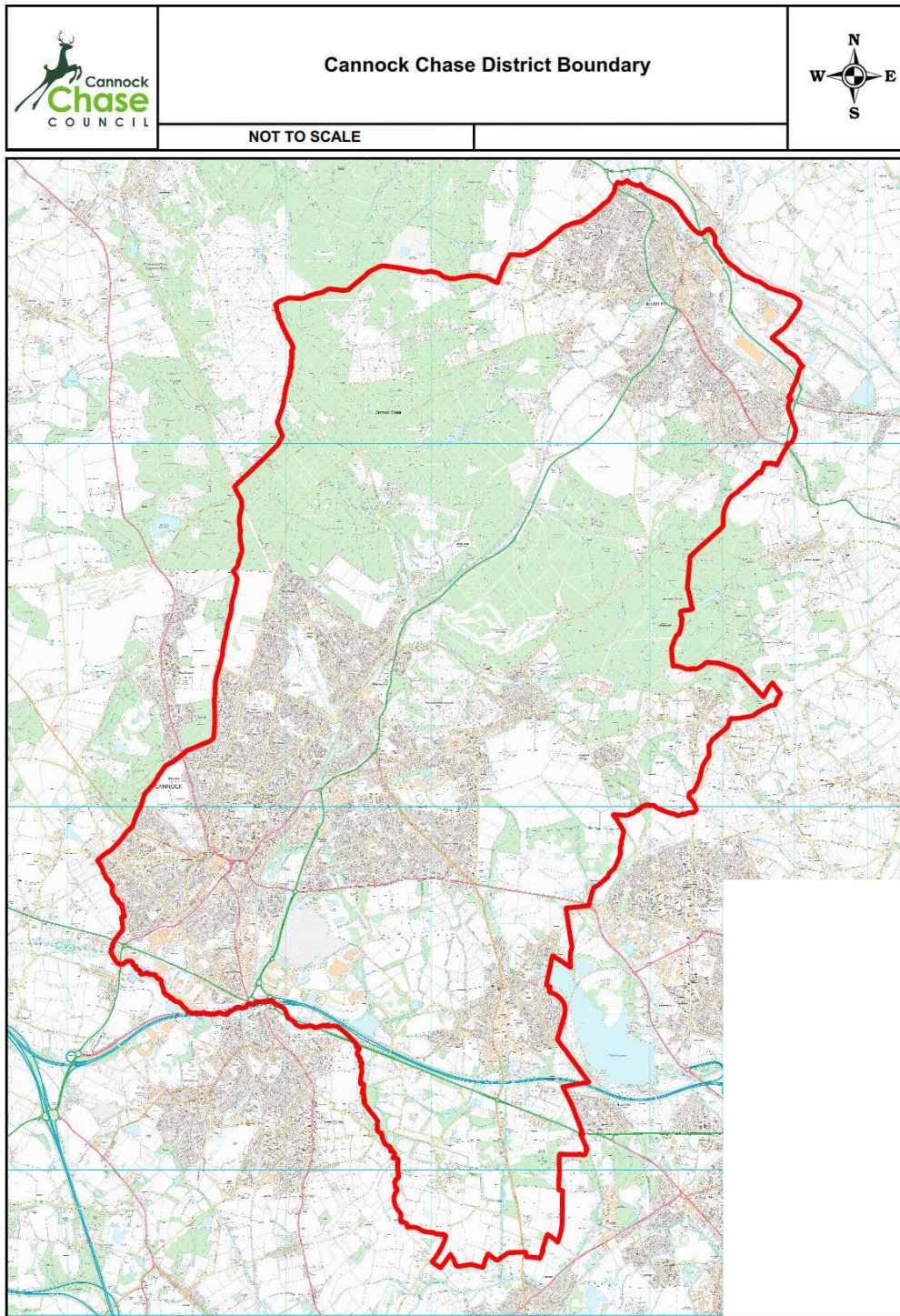
6. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

6.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) states that local authorities can revise their LDS at such times as they consider appropriate. The Council's website will be updated to set out if the LDS has been subject to further revision. A new LDS must be approved by Council.

6.2 In terms of changes to the previous LDS, the details can be seen at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy The LDS page also provides a link to the relevant Cabinet Report (Cabinet 12th October 2023 and Council 8th November 2023). The scheme has been amended to reflect what is legally required of a LDS, and

streamlined accordingly to set out the project plan for the Development Plan Documents which are being produced by the District Council i.e. the Local Plan.

APPENDIX A: AREA COVERED BY THE NEW LOCAL PLAN



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APPENDIX B: RISK

The Council has produced a business plan approach to service delivery and identifies some of the key risks directly related to the development plan preparation process. These include officer time and financial implications. Subsequent paragraphs identify key risks to the Development Plan process, those in **RED** being high risk and those in **BLUE** considered moderate.

- **STAFFING AND RESOURCES** - One of the most important factors in the production of the Development Plan is that of staffing. The timescales for preparation identified are based on an assumption of full staffing. Furthermore, consultants are relied upon for production of the evidence base where specialist expertise is needed and the plan is dependent upon consultants meeting required deadlines. It is important to use resources effectively and efficiently, having clear priorities which are supported corporately.
- **THE POLITICAL PROCESS** - The active involvement of Members is important to the successful progression of the Development Plan. A cross party Local Plan Working Group works jointly with officers to help progress the Local Plan through its various stages and helps to ensure early understanding of and buy-in to the plan along with helping to anticipate some of the challenges which might occur and where possible to mitigate accordingly.
- **DUTY TO CO OPERATE** – with the increasing emphasis on partnership working across wider housing market areas to deliver a cumulative shortfall, many different local authorities with different political balances are having to work together to address strategic issues in the absence of a higher tier of planning (ie the former ‘region’). This has proven complex and whilst the Government is seeking solutions this matter has not yet been resolved. To mitigate for this the Council needs to be proactive and engage positively in cross boundary discussions and actions.
- **NATIONAL POLICY CHANGE** – The Government could propose further changes to the national planning system and depending on the extent of these changes this may require further revision to the timetable should further evidence etc be required.
- **PLANNING INSPECTORATE** – The timetabling and requirements of the planning inspectorate are beyond the Council’s control and the Council will have to be reactive once the plan is submitted for examination.
- **ASSESSMENT OF ‘SOUNDNESS’ OF DPDs** - As the ‘soundness of the plan’, will be tested at Examination, the Council will seek to have a ‘health check’ of its plan at appropriate stages.
- **LEGAL CHALLENGE** - Every effort will be made to minimise the risk of Legal Challenge by ensuring robust community involvement throughout the process, through compliance with the regulations, the Statement of Community Involvement and ensuring the “soundness” of the DPDs. However, any challenge through the High Courts or Judicial Review could affect the defined timescales.

- **PANDEMIC** – The recent Coronavirus Pandemic could not have been foreseen and has had an impact on plan preparation processes. Whilst it is unlikely that there may be further period of restrictions to control the spread of the virus or deal with new strain, this risk cannot be dismissed entirely.

APPENDIX C: RESOURCES

The Departmental Structure involving officers' time in the production of the Development Plan (including SPDs, monitoring, evidence base) is approximately as follows:-

Officers	Full / Part time	% time spent on the Local Plan
Planning Services Manager	Full time	40%
Planning Policy Manager	Full time - vacant Consultant support secured	70%
Principal Planning Officer	Full time	70%
Senior Planner	Full time	80%
Senior Planner	Full time - vacant	60%
Planning Obligations (CIL/S106 Officer)	Full time	10%
Technical Assistant	Full time – Vacant	60%

APPENDIX D: Glossary

Term	Acronym	Definition
Adoption		The final stage in the preparation of a planning document.
Area Action Plan	AAP	A Development Plan Document (DPD) that may be used by the local planning authority to provide a planning framework for areas of significant change or conservation. Intended to deal with specific areas and specific requirements.
Authorities Monitoring Report	AMR	A required report undertaken by a local planning authority that reports on the implementation of the Local Plan and to what extent and effectiveness policies are being achieved.
Development Plan Document	DPD	A term used to describe the statutory components of the Local Plan.
Local Development Scheme	LDS	A public project plan identifying which documents will be produced within the Local Plan, in what order and when.
Local Plan		A term used to describe either a single DPD or a collection of DPD's which together comprise the Local Plan.
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	Published in 2012 this document streamlines national guidance into one document.
Statement of Community Involvement	SCI	A document setting out how and when stakeholders and other interested parties will be consulted and involved in the preparation of the Local Plan and development management.
Supplementary Planning Document	SPD	A Supplementary Planning Document can give further guidance on specific policy topic areas such as affordable housing provision, that have been identified in policies embedded within DPD's or give detailed guidance on the development of specific sites in the form of a master plan framework plan or development brief. SPD's are not part of the statutory plan but are a material consideration.