This Non Technical Summary provides an overview of the Local Plan and the consultation process for the Local Plan Part 2. It then gives a summary of each of the chapters within the Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options consultation document. It is accompanied by a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document.

What is the Local Plan?

Our Local Plan covers the District of Cannock Chase. It helps us to get the right type of well designed development in the right places, to ensure that we have enough homes to meet our communities’ needs, to encourage businesses of all sizes to invest and thrive in the area, to support development with the right infrastructure, services and facilities, and to ensure that we are protecting and enhancing our environment and not damaging it with the wrong kind or amount of development.

The Local Plan is a technical document which sets out policies on how much development is to take place over the next 15-20 years and where it should happen. It can only set these policies based on robust and up to date evidence, and can only be adopted by the Council once it has been examined by a Planning Inspector who has subsequently considered that it is satisfactory (or ‘sound’). Once this has happened, it is used to decide whether planning applications should be approved or refused.

Our Local Plan is split into two parts. Local Plan Part 1 was adopted by the Council in 2014. It sets out how much development we will need to deliver to the year 2028 and how this will broadly be distributed across the district. It also contains a series of planning policies, and a detailed Area Action Plan for Rugeley, which create the framework against which planning applications will be assessed.

We now need to produce the second stage of the Local Plan: Local Plan Part 2.

Local Plan Part 2

Local Plan Part 2 will contain the detail. Part 1 tells us how much development should take place and how this will be spread across our communities but does not say exactly where it should go (with the exception of the large housing site to the west of Pye Green Road, which was allocated for housing). This stage of the plan will select (or ‘allocate’) sites for different kinds of development, making sure that we have enough sites, in the most sustainable locations.

In addition, Local Plan Part 2 can – where necessary – add further detail to the policies contained in Part 1.

We are also required to produce a Sustainability Appraisal which considers how sustainable the sites and options are when looked at in terms of the environmental, social and economic context. We have incorporated this into an ‘Integrated Impact Assessment’ which also includes Equalities and Health Impact Assessment work. This document is available to view at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy or a hard copy is available in the main Council
reception at Beecroft Road. You are welcome to comment on this, and any of the other documents which accompany the development of the Local Plan Part 2.

About this consultation

We are at the early stage of developing Local Plan Part 2. This stage sets out the potential scope of the plan, what issues it needs to cover (and why) and options for addressing these issues. We want your thoughts and ideas on what we are suggesting at this stage, so that we can use these as we develop the next stage of the plan. The next sections of this Non Technical Summary cover the main topics, and ask for your input on these. You can send your views to planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk or write to:

Planning Policy Manager
Cannock Chase Council
PO Box 28
Beecroft Road
Cannock WS11 1BG

Your views must arrive on or before Monday 27th March 2017: we provide a form for you to use for your responses which is attached to the back of this document or alternatively can be found at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

If you want to have a look at the detailed documents, you can visit our website at the address above and hard copies are available in local libraries, at the Civic Centre (Beecroft Road, Cannock) and at the Rugeley Area office (Anson Street, Rugeley). The Local Plan Issues and Options full consultation document is accompanied by the Integrated Impact assessment (which includes Sustainability Appraisal, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment) and the Scoping Report for the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Copies of these are available to view on the website or at the Civic Centre in Beecroft Road, Cannock.

If you would like to speak to one of the team, you can call 01543 462621 and ask for Planning Policy.

Alternatively, we are holding some drop- in events, come and see us at any one of these at whichever time / venue suits you best (the exhibitions will all be the same): these are:

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What happens next

We will take account of all the responses we receive by the deadline and use these to help shape our draft Local Plan Part 2, which will include specific proposals for selecting (or ‘allocating’) sites, and further policies if needed. We will then consult for a minimum six week period before submitting the plan to the Secretary of State who will appoint a Planning Inspector to examine the plan.
Summary of the main issues and options

1. Scope and content of the plan

We think that the main focus of the plan needs to be upon the allocation of sites, and only to provide further policy detail where absolutely necessary.

2. Deciding which sites to assess

In order to select sites for allocation, we need to first establish the methodology for this process and consult on it. We have databases of sites which are being promoted for housing and employment uses. These tell us where there is interest in bringing land forward for different types of development. We keep these databases of sites (for housing and employment uses) updated by running an annual ‘call for sites’ to remind people of the process, although sites can be put forward to us at any time. This does not mean that they will be allocated for any particular use; it simply means that we know what all the options are. This stage of the process is about looking at all of these options and assessing them so we know what might, or might not be suitable.

We do not think it is practical to assess every single site in our databases: for example some are very small (and better dealt with through the planning application, process), some sites are no longer being promoted for development by the landowner, and some already have planning permission so in most cases there would be little point in allocating. So we need to establish which sites we think DO need to be assessed. In summary, we think these should be:

- As yet undeveloped major sites which have planning permission for more than 30 dwellings (to potentially secure these important sites for the right kind of development should the planning permission lapse);
- Sites of more than 10 dwellings which lie outside the Green Belt, and all sites in the Green Belt which are actively being promoted and which could be delivered either in the short term (0-5 years) or medium term (6-15 years);
- All employment sites which lie within the key employment locations of Kingswood Lakeside, Towers Business Park and along the A5 corridor, as well as sites within the Green Belt which are actively being promoted
- All other proposals e.g. local green space.

It is emphasised that at this stage, deciding to assess a site for its suitability does NOT necessarily mean it will be allocated for development: this is about establishing a process in the first instance.

A background paper has been prepared to help inform this process.

3. Deciding how to assess the sites

Once we have decided which sites we need to assess, we then need to establish HOW we will assess them. Again, this consultation is about getting views on the process we are suggesting. We are proposing that we look systematically at each site in terms of how well it
fits with our strategy (ie Local Plan Part 1), how sustainable the site is (using the Sustainability Appraisal results), whether it can feasibly be developed e.g. the landowner is willing to sell the land, whether (in the case of Green Belt options) the site plays an important role as part of the Green Belt, and whether there are any other issues we need to consider.

4 Reviewing the Green Belt boundaries

One of the commitments in Local Plan Part 1 was that we must look at our Green Belt boundaries and consider whether any areas should be removed (or ‘safeguarded’ for possible future development) to enable us to have a potential supply of land beyond the plan period should this be needed (ie beyond 2028): this is something that Local Plans are expected to consider and cater for where possible. For this reason the council commissioned a Green Belt Review, which looks at how different areas (‘parcels’) of Green Belt perform against the five national ‘tests’ of Green Belt (ie preventing unrestricted sprawl of built up areas; preventing neighbouring towns from merging; assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserving the setting and character of historic towns and assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling or derelict and other urban land). The outcomes of this review will help inform the process of site appraisal and selection.

Furthermore, some minor boundary changes may need to be considered to ensure that any anomalies are addressed.

5 Housing supply

- Deciding which sites to assess for potential allocation

Local Plan Part 1 commits us to delivering at least 5,300 homes within the District to 2028. As of March 2016, we had delivered 2,307 of these so we still need to deliver almost 3000 new dwellings. This chapter sets out options for deciding which sites to assess, as it is not necessary to allocate every single site as this process would be too unwieldy.

- Considering whether specific standards should be set for particular sites

The Council has already adopted further policy on good design (the Design Supplementary Planning Document) so this may suffice in guiding high quality development. However, additional standards may be necessary in some cases (eg if specific infrastructure is needed for a particular site) so views are sought on this.

- Supporting the development of small and ‘windfall’ sites

This section queries whether Local Plan Part 1 already gives sufficient support for small scale and self build development and ‘windfall’ sites (ie opportunities for development which happen unexpectedly during the course of the plan period) or whether further policy elaboration is needed.

- Catering for longer term housing needs (ie beyond 2028)
National policy requires that Local Plans consider how development beyond the plan period might be accommodated although it does not provide further guidance in terms of the amount which should be provided for. Local Plan Part 1 committed the Council to a Green Belt review to enable this matter to be considered at the Part 2 stage so that land could potentially be identified for ‘safeguarding’ for future needs. In the absence of any national guidance, the Council is suggesting that this could either be achieved by identifying land which could deliver a further 5% of the District’s needs (around 265 homes), or alternatively considering whether the existing safeguarded land at Wimblebury Road could (or should) continue to meet longer term needs. Other ideas are also invited.

- Taking account of the housing shortfall across the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area.

The District lies within the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA) which covers Southern Staffordshire, parts of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, Birmingham and the Black Country. There is a significant shortfall in terms of housing provision across this wider area which mainly, but not exclusively, arises from Birmingham which has demonstrated that it is unable to accommodate all of its development needs within its boundaries. The Councils within the GBHMA area are required to work together to address this need, and this commitment is clearly stated in Local Plan Part 1. Cannock Chase Council has agreed to test how it might deliver a further 1000 homes (to 2031, which therefore runs slightly beyond this plan period). Options are therefore put forward to consider whether this matter should (or indeed could) be dealt with through Local Plan Part 2 or whether this is a matter for a later review – or whether a combination of these options might be more appropriate.

6 Housing Choice

- Considering how to deal with changes to Government Policy in terms of the definition of the term ‘affordable housing’.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 widened the definition of ‘affordable housing’ to include discounted starter homes for first time buyers aged 40 and under (although further changes may be made which have not yet been confirmed). Currently, the Government has indicated that 20% of housing developments will need to provide for starter homes, however the adopted Local Plan policy only allows for 20% affordable housing delivery in total, so based on current Government thinking, the Council would have no further scope to deliver any other kinds of affordable housing. Options are put forward for addressing this issue including dealing with this through an updated Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, or delaying the matter until a full Local Plan Review.

- Delivery of sites / pitches for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs

Local Plan Part 1 identified a requirement for 41 residential pitches, 4 travelling show people plots and 5 transit pitches with evidence showing that these should ideally be
provided in the southern part of the District around the A5 corridor (much of which is Green Belt) as this is where the need has been shown to be especially significant. This has been titled the ‘Area of Search’ in Local Plan Part 1. A background paper has been prepared to identify possible sites and options, including taking account of the possibility that options may need to be investigated which lie beyond the ‘Area of Search’.

In providing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites, as mentioned previously much of the area of most need lies within the Green Belt, options for dealing with this matter are suggested including their removal from the Green Belt, or alternatively retaining them within the Green Belt, with suggestions and comments being sought.

Comments are also sought on whether there should be any site specific standards or requirements or whether the existing adopted Local Plan Part 1 policies and the Design Supplementary Planning Document already provide sufficient direction.

7 Employment Land

- Deciding which sites should be assessed

Local Plan Part 1 commits the Council to delivering a minimum of 88 hectares of new and / or redeveloped employment land.

Much of the Council’s employment land supply is made up of large sites already ‘available’ or already delivered in ‘key locations’ as set out in Local Plan Part 1 ie Kingswood Lakeside, the A5 Corridor and Towers Business Park in Rugeley. It is considered worth assessing these larger ‘available’ sites with a view to potential allocation as this could provide further certainty and security for the District’s economic offer. Around 4 hectares is available elsewhere, but these are minor sites mainly either for very specific uses or already with planning permission so there seems little point in assessing these for potential allocation.

Once completions and available sites (as shown in the Council’s data base) are taken into account (and allowing for the loss of an employment site to the Mill Green Designer Outlet village which was recently granted planning permission), there is a shortfall of around 3 hectares, meaning that further land will need to be considered for allocation.

This means that sites in the database currently categorised as ‘unavailable’ need to be considered and this is explained below.

- Deciding how to meet the shortfall

Some sites which are being promoted for employment are categorised in the Council’s database as being ‘unavailable’ because they face particular restrictions: for many of these it is because they lie within the Green Belt. These have the potential to help address the shortfall but are not the only options available. Other options will also need to be considered including newly arising opportunities (eg from Rugeley Power Station) and the potential from ‘windfall’ (ie as yet unknown) sites. Views are therefore sought as to the best way to address the shortfall.
• Deciding whether to protect existing key employment areas

Local Plan Part 1 already identifies Kingswood Lakeside (Cannock) and Towers Business Park (Rugeley) as strategic high quality employment sites and the Council considers that these should be considered for formal allocation which would protect them from other less suitable uses, given their size and significance to the economic offer of the District. The Council is not proposing to allocate any other existing employment sites as Local Plan Part 1 already sets out the approach to assessing their potential loss to other uses, and National Policy requires plans to be flexible to allow areas to adapt to changing economic circumstances. Views are sought on this approach.

• Whether site specific standards should be adopted for employment sites

The Council has already adopted further policy on good design (the Design Supplementary Planning Document) so this may suffice in guiding high quality development. However, additional standards may be necessary in some cases (eg if specific infrastructure is needed for a particular site) so views are sought on this.

• Catering for the employment needs of the District beyond 2028.

As with housing, the Council also needs to consider how it can provide for employment needs beyond the plan period. There is no national guidance on this, so the council is suggesting that a further 5% (about 4.4 hectares) is a reasonable figure but that, given the limited options available, Green Belt land will need to be considered. It suggests that options to expand Kingswood lakeside in Cannock could help address this need, and also suggests the possible consideration of other Green Belt sites for employment use. Comments are sought on the matter.

• Existing employment sites within the Green Belt

There are a number of long-established employment sites set within the Green Belt. The Council does not think there needs to be any further policy development in relation to these, but is seeking views on the matter.

8 A Balanced Economy

• Supporting different sectors of the local economy

A number of sites have been put forward for possible allocation for recreation / tourism and leisure proposals, and it is considered that these should be assessed accordingly. Comments and views are welcomed.

9 Rugeley Power Station

• Future redevelopment of Rugeley Power Station

Rugeley Power Station closed in June 2016 and is due to be demolished in 2020. It is being put forward as a mixed use site for employment and residential purposes. This site lies within both Cannock Chase and Lichfield Districts and the two Local Authorities are
working with the site owners and others to develop a plan for how the 150 hectare site could be used in the future. As this work is still in its early stages it is not possible to put any options forward at this stage but the situation will be kept under review. However, the site contains a rail freight facility and the Council thinks that this should potentially be protected and retained until the detailed future of the site becomes clearer. Comments are welcomed.

10 Town Centres

• The threshold for the ‘Impact test’

National planning policy places great emphasis upon the need to support the viability and vitality of town centres, and sets out which types of uses / business should be defined as a main town centre use for example retail, offices, cinemas leisure and so on. If such uses are proposed outside of defined town centre boundaries (which are set in Local Plan Part 1) then they could have negative consequences for town centres themselves, depending on their size. Therefore national policy states that if such a proposed development is over 2,500 sq.m. then it will need an ‘Impact Test’ to show whether or not it will adversely affect a town centre. However, Councils are able to set more localised thresholds if evidence shows this to be necessary. Based on the latest evidence the Council is therefore proposing to introduce thresholds of 1000 sq m for both Cannock and Rugeley, 500 sq m for Hednesford and 200 sq m for other centres. Views and comments are sought on this proposal.

11 Green Space

• Should the Green Space Network be revised further?

The Green Space Network covers a range of open spaces across the District from small informal areas of play space to playing pitches and nature reserves. These are shown on the Policies map for Local Plan Part 1. Local Plan Part 1 also committed to further reviewing the network via Part 2, which would include potentially allocating Cannock Stadium for open space, sport and leisure use. Commitment was also given to considering the allocation of land at Rawnsley Road / Rugeley Road for inclusion as a Local Green Space designation. We are also asking for feedback on whether this site could instead be considered for including as a site in the Green Space Network, and Local Plan Part 2 sets out suggested criteria for determining whether a site is appropriate for either type of designation. Comments are sought on this issue.

• Assessing Green Space Network and Local Green Space options

The Issues and options document proposes an assessment methodology for appraising the suitability of sites and comments are invited on this.

12 Historic Environment

• Should the historic environment help to regenerate the District and how can it do this
The district provides many opportunities through its rich heritage to encourage further investment. A range of options and suggestions are proposed: the first suggests a focus upon town centres (Rugeley, Cannock and Hednesford), the second adds to this by including references to the potential in relation to the Cannock Extension Canal / Grove Colliery and Brereton Colliery and the third option also includes the addition of an improved cycleway / footway network using former mineral lines to link the different aspects of heritage – led regeneration together. Views, comments and ideas are sought with regard to this.

- Should sustainable management of change in the historic environment be further promoted – and how?

Local Plan Part 1 already places great emphasis on managing change in order to protect and enhance the historic environment, supported by other documents such as Conservation Area Management Plans, the adopted Design Supplementary Planning Document and the commitment to developing a Local List to protect locally significant buildings. There is the potential to provide further guidelines at relevant allocated sites to indicate key historic environment matters which should be taken account of by developers. Views are sought on this.

- Should the wider role for interpretation of the historic environment be maximised – and how?

Making people aware of the significance of their historic surroundings can help with local enjoyment and pride with potential social benefits. Appropriate information is sometimes provided, sometimes not, but it is considered that there is potential to maximise opportunities at key historic areas and sites by requiring information collected in the course of preparing a planning application to be made publicly accessible in an appropriate and locally relevant manner. Views and ideas are sought on this.

13 Infrastructure

Development needs to be supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure and Local Plan Part 1 was accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This needs updating so comments are sought on this. It is appended to the Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options document.
Appendix A – maps showing which sites are being promoted by developers and landowners and for which type of use.
Note: the site reference numbers used on this map correspond to the references used in the database of sites being put forward by landowners/developers for consideration (see accompanying site option lists- Appendix 1). This map does not mean these sites will be selected; these are only options we need to consider at this stage.
Note: the site reference numbers used on this map correspond to the references used in the database of sites being put forward by landowners /developers for consideration (see accompanying site option lists- Appendix 1). This map does not mean these sites will be selected; these are only options we need to consider at this stage.
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Appendix B – comments form.
Comments form

This comments form can be used to respond on the following consultation documents:

- Cannock Chase District Local Plan Part 2 Issues & Options
- Integrated Impact Assessment including Sustainability Appraisal, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment (Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options)
- Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options Habitats Regulations scoping report
- Cannock Town Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options
- Sustainability Appraisal Cannock Town Centre Area Action Plan Issues & Options

Please state clearly the document you are commenting on and include page / paragraph number, issue / option reference and chapter title where relevant. You can submit multiple forms if you need to.

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Contact details

Please provide your contact details. Please note that your views will not be confidential and will be made publicly available, via paper based reports, which will also be placed on our website. Only names (not addresses) will be attributed publicly. Your comments will be used to shape our Local Plan Part 2 / Cannock Town Centre Area Action Plan and a report summarising all responses received will be made publicly available and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate when the relevant Plan is ready for examination. Your address and contact details will not be shared with anyone else and will be protected. We will retain your details on our database so we can keep you up to date with progress on the plan and other consultations unless you request that we do not do so.

Name

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Postcode

Email address (please provide if you have one as it is the most efficient way of contacting you)

Phone number

Please place an x in the box that best describes you / your role in responding to this consultation

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Please tick as applicable

- Yes, please keep me on your database so that I am kept up to date with progress of the Local Plan and future consultations  □

- No, please do not retain my details on your database.  □