



To consider a briefing note on the Community Infrastructure Levy and to update Members on the findings and recommendations of the Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study prior to the submission of reports to the Planning Committee on 22 January 2013 and Cabinet on 6 February 2012.

**8 DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following report, because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**9 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012-2015 (Pages 27 - 66)**

To consider the Asset Management Strategy 2012-2015.

**10 WORK PLAN (Pages 67 - 68)**

To discuss and update the work plans to reflect current scrutiny topics.

**11 URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Members:** Councillors Mrs Astle, Miss Baker, Cairns, Clarke, Fear, Holland, Lawton, Matthews (Chair), Olszewski, Mrs Peers, Studd, Taylor.M (Vice-Chair) and Wilkes

**'Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training / development requirements from the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Committee Clerk at the close of the meeting'**

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22nd November, 2012

**Present:-** Councillor Ian Matthews – in the Chair  
Councillors Mrs Astle, Cairns, Fear, Holland and Olszewski

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss Baker, Councillor Lawton, Councillor Mrs Peers, Councillor Studd, Councillor M. Taylor and Councillor Wilkes.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

### 4. NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM PROJECT

The Committee considered a report regarding the working group recommendations for the replacement provision of town centre trees in High Street and Hassell Street as part of the town centre public realm and market refurbishment project.

The Council had been working to improve the town centre for some time, more uniformity to the market was required and the views of all kinds of stakeholders had been sought. The principle aims of the plans were to improve the market by making provision for bigger stalls (which had been a trader request) and changing the orientation of the stalls. A lot of aspects of the market worked well, however it was necessary to address some negative issues. For example, traders built out their stalls to enlarge trading space. There were also storage boxes, bins and empty packaging stored opposite retail premises, which made the market look untidy. Appendix two of the report showed the proposed new layout of the market as two strips of stalls with the market traders in the middle facing outwards. The shoppers would be on the pavement, thereby creating a retail walkway. The proposed new stalls would be 10ft wide by 15ft deep. If the town centre trees remained as they currently were, it would result in some stalls having a tree directly in front of them, which would make the pitch less desirable. It was necessary to try to find balance in the design and layout of the new proposals for the market.

Since the report had been published comments had been received from community safety partners that CCTV visibility was affected by the trees as they currently were as people being tracked were lost when they went under tree canopies. Officers from the Landscape section had graded the trees according to their quality and ideally it would be desirable to retain better quality trees. This had been taken into account by Officers. If the proposal in the report was adopted it would result in seven trees and

two stumps being removed and eight trees being replanted, if the tree pits identified were reusable. If the tree pits were on top of a gas main or an electricity supply then they would not be able to be used.

Members of the working group felt the report was good and other Committee members were happy in general with the proposals, although there were some areas of concern. It was highlighted that public seating areas by Edinburgh Woollen Mill and Superdrug would be lost. Officers advised that seating had been considered and there was guidance from the Department of Transport regarding walking distances for people with mobility problems. There was a possibility that seats could be provided by Natwest due to the night-time economy there and also by the Guildhall. This would be looked at after the changes were implemented.

Members questioned what species the replacement trees would be and whether these would be slow or fast growing. Advice from Landscape Officers would be sought with regard to replacements, but the trees in Hassell Street would be more upright in nature and would not have a broad canopy. There was also consideration by Members that two of the proposed trees in Hassell Street could provide a potential highways hazard by creating a pinch point for taxis accessing that area at night. The width of the carriageway on Hassell Street where it narrowed would remain as it was; the narrowness slowed drivers down to help prevent speeding.

Members had spoken to market traders and the majority were in favour of the proposed changes and the traders of fresh produce had confirmed the problem with bird droppings ruining fresh food. It was important to replace the trees that were being removed and Members would be more satisfied if they knew where the trees would be replanted and how the street scene would look. Members considered it important to look at the market in twelve months time to review the effect of the changes and to address any issues.

There was concern that the proposed new layout would create an empty space in the middle of the square by the Guildhall looking towards Hassell Street, and that this space might be taken up by traders parking their vehicles. Officers advised that traders would continue to take their vans off the market when they had unloaded their stock, and the vans would only be allowed to remain when the weather was poor and stock needed to be protected. Members further considered the narrow corridor between the outward facing stalls and retail premises could look poor. A survey was conducted in 2007/08 and it had been considered that opening up the visuals to the Guildhall would be beneficial to the town centre. Also, from a market management point of view there was difficulty filling the market on some days, with people choosing to walk down the pavements and not through the market. Some Members did not agree and were of the opinion that the public were walking in the middle of the market and that if another survey was conducted then a difference might be seen. The aim of the public realm project was to get more customers into shops and on to the market. By funnelling people on to the pathways, this would slow potential customers down, thereby encouraging them to look around and see what the town centre had to offer.

Members noted that there were underground tunnels from the old trading markets in the town centre which dated from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and questioned whether any unknown tunnels would be disturbed by the proposed tree works. Officers advised that historically there were no buildings around the bottom area of the market; the market toll booth had been situated by the Guildhall (near to the present war memorial) in its early days. As part of the preparation for the project, surveys had been conducted regarding underground workings and the five trees proposed for

planting in Hassell Street were clear of underground services. There were services in the vicinity of Barclays at the bottom of the market, but to the best of the Officer's knowledge the tree pits should not encounter problems. However, this would not be known for certain until a dig took place.

All planters in Hassell Street were proposed to be removed, and during the period of 10am to 4pm the space created could be used for entertainment purposes. The proposals were for Hassell Street to be repaved with no kerbs, similar to the area in front of the Guildhall. There was concern amongst members about the bottom of the market furthest from the Guildhall and the effect the removal of trees would have here if they could not be replaced.

Officers were working with Staffordshire County Council Highways department and traffic flow had been tracked. The journey time of buses had been tracked with the view to buses turning right outside of the bus station. Members also considered that the proposed trees in Hassell Street should not be in the way of CCTV, as CCTV was important in that area due to the nightlife. The Business Crime Initiative and the Council's Engineering Manager were aware of the proposals and had not raised any objections.

The Portfolio Holder would consider the Committee's comments carefully. The market did need to be looked at as it was not trading well and organisation was needed. The trees in the town centre did benefit the area and some of the trees by the Guildhall did credit to the building. However, the trees could not be allowed to negatively affect the market. A prototype stall was to be erected in the market and all Members would be notified of this to give them the opportunity to see the proposed new stall design. It was planned that stalls would be bolted to the floor, and if it was deemed that they should be moved it would mean re-laying the foundations for the stalls. Officers noted that if it was deemed that there should be three rows of stalls by the Guildhall then the canopies for the stalls would need to be of a smaller depth.

The concerns raised by the Committee would be passed to Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the concerns raised be passed to Cabinet for their consideration.

5. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business considered.

**COUNCILLOR IAN MATTHEWS**  
Chair

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## **UPDATE ON THE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP AND THEIR APPOINTMENT OF A TOWN CENTRES MANAGER**

**Submitted by:** Trudi Barnard

**Portfolio:** Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres Development

**Ward(s) affected:** Primarily the Town Centre

### **Purpose of the Report**

The report provides an update and clarifies the status of the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership (TCP) including the appointment of their Town Centres Manager (TCM), outlines the current funding and initial TCP key priorities.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) That progress is noted.**

**(b) That Scrutiny Committee directs any comments for the Town Centre Partnership via the Council's Executive Board representative; the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres Development.**

### **Reasons**

It is appropriate that the Scrutiny Committee reviews the progress of this key Council priority and this report provides an update in relation to the formation of the Company, use of theme groups to take forward action and importantly progress in the TCP in appointing their Town Centres Manager.

## **1. Background**

1.1 The formalisation of a Newcastle Town Centre Partnership (TCP) is a clear objective of the Council's Corporate Plan and Transformation Programme. In March 2012, Cabinet agreed to the Council becoming a becoming a director of the Newcastle town centre partnership company and authorised officers to take the necessary steps to facilitate the same. In July 2012 Cabinet agreed to the preferred model and formalisation of the TCP as a Community Interest Group.

1.2 As part of the new administration's commitment to the development of the town centre(s) as a clear priority and in recognising the likelihood that it would take a few months to recruit dedicated support, in July 2012 Cabinet also approved additional support in the form of short term secondment of the current Business Development Officer on a 0.5 FTE basis and continued provision of in-kind support to the TCP.

## **2. Issues**

### **2.1 Formalisation of a Newcastle Town Centre Partnership**

The first shadow TCP Board meeting was on 11 September. Membership comprised representatives from the original group of Chamber of Trade & Enterprise, Partnership Against Business Crime, Newcastle under Lyme BC, the New Vic Theatre, the Roebuck Shopping Centre, Keele University, independent retailers and the commercial sector.

One of the first issues considered by the shadow TCP Board was the establishment of a number of theme groups covering a range of issues. The theme groups comprise local businesses and organisations and relevant officers/members including a Board champion.

The Council officers have submitted the documentation to Companies House to enable registration of the TCP. Once the company is formally established with Companies House, it will be able to set up a bank account to receive funds with which to pay the TCM. A verbal update will be given at the meeting to outline progress with the legal registration of the company.

## 2.2 Delivery of emerging TCP priorities through theme groups

In order that the TCP engages with a wide range of stakeholders and seeks the support of the most appropriate agencies there are a range of theme groups. At the time of writing the status of the theme groups is as follows:

- Business support – the group has met and is establishing its terms of reference. It will consider business support in its widest sense from retail coaching to creating conditions for growth.
- Environment and infrastructure – the group is well established and is considering a number of projects, including better use of upper floors of business premises and chewing gum removal.
- Enterprise and innovation – the group will be responsible for taking forward some of the proposed 'Starting up' Portas projects including developing the Keele University business model for retail and assessing 'early win' projects such as the pop-up emporium.
- Night time economy – group is well established and is working on re-introducing 'Student nights' to improve links to Keele and Staffordshire universities and reviewing the opportunities to link the daytime and night-time activities (5pm-8pm).
- Marketing and events – group is well established and has already organised the Christmas lights switch on and is currently assessing quotations for the setting up of a website.
- Safety and security – this is being delivered by the Partnership Against Business Crime (PABC) and there is a representative linking both Partnerships.
- Finance and funding – this group has yet to meet but at the time of writing, the Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry has agreed to support the group and is providing advice to the TCP.
- Outdoor markets – the group has met and is seeking more representation from market traders. One of the first tasks to be undertaken is a Healthcheck from an accredited body which has commenced.

## 2.3 Town Centre Manager (TCM)

In agreeing to support the development of a TCM, Cabinet recognised that a post would be beneficial to coordinating the development and delivery of the agreed initiatives and plans on behalf of the Town Centre Partnership and to engage the wider business community and the council together to develop the plans in the future. It was also clearly stated that the Town Centre Partnership as the employing company will monitor performance of the post holder and most importantly they will want there to be accountability for delivery of agreed priority actions.

The TCP advertised the TCM post on the Association of Town Centre Management website, the council website and social media. Twenty applications were received and Shadow Board Members of the Town Centre Partnership interviewed four candidates on



22 November. The TCP has informally offered the position to the preferred candidate subject to normal checks including references and the establishment of the CIC company.

The Town Centre Manager will be employed by the TCP and it is expected that the TCM will take up their position in early in January 2013. A verbal update will be given at the meeting to outline further progress.

When Cabinet agreed to support the partnership financially to recruit a Town Centres Manager it was recognised that it was likely that it will take a few months to recruit and therefore interim arrangements were agreed. This included offering 50% of Business Development Officer's time to provide interim management alongside the related post tasks of providing support to town centre-related activities, consistent with the Council's objectives. In July this interim management role was agreed for three months subject to review, this support has continued and it is recommended that it continues until the TCM has been in post for a few weeks in order to provide successful handover of Board and Theme Group activity.

#### 2.4 Funding update

There is potentially a range of funding streams for the TCP and a significant level of funding is already coming together:

- The Council is committed to £30,000pa to support the recruitment of a TCM and a one off sum of £5,000 to develop a website.
- All towns that submitted Portas Pilot applications were eligible for a £10,000 payment from the DCLG provided the local MP confirmed support for the town team. Paul Farrelly signed up as a town team supporter and the money has been received by the Council on behalf of the TCP.
- As part of the M&S plans to develop at Wolstanton there has been a commitment to give the Town Centre Partnership £100,000 to deliver the partnership's objectives, along with a £10k p.a. revenue contribution. The main contribution of £100k is payable to the TCP on commencement of development but this is at least six months away and the five year commitment to an additional £10k per annum doesn't commence until M&S is trading.
- Looking forward it is still intended that the TCP explores the potential opportunity for the establishment of a Business Improvement District to provide sustainable long term funding for the TCP including the Town Centre Manager and a range of initiatives/activities.

It is expected that the formalised TCP will develop annual business plans and allocate funding to their priority areas over the forthcoming months.

### 3. Scrutiny Views

- 3.1 This report outlines progress and does not seek to make any recommendations. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are therefore asked to note progress and to direct any comments for the TCP via the Council's Executive Board representative; the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres Development.

#### 4. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Outcomes from these actions will significantly affect the 'Borough of Opportunity' corporate priority, and will have implications for the quality of life, regeneration, and sustainability of the town centre, the borough as a whole and ultimately North Staffordshire.

#### 5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

There is no statutory requirement to carry out these recommendations.

#### 6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out but the actions identified will help to make the town centre more able to meet the needs of both residents and the business community, in particular those interested in the possibility of starting their own business.

#### 7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 Whilst the Council has allocated £30,000 to the TCP it has been recognised that the new partnership and the delivery model needs to be supported to establish itself and that it would be appropriate to allocate funding for at least a further two years with a review by the end of 24 months. As the TCP is formalising itself in December officers are recommending that this be seen as the formal commencement of the partnership and that the review takes place by no later than the end of December 2014 in order to both inform the Council's budget setting process and to ensure that the TCP is focused upon resolving the long term funding issue.
- 7.2 As mentioned above it is recognised for the Partnership to have long term sustainability it is intended that officers work with the partnership with a view to optimising external funding options (including the M&S funding, the potential for a Business Improvement District and support from Kidsgrove Town Council).

#### 8. **Major Risks**

- 8.1 Whilst the TCP shares many of the Council's aims and objectives in terms of economic development of the centres the Partnership is a separate company and as such the Council needs to be clear that whilst it can utilise the Member involvement at the TCP Board it cannot prescribe actions. There is a possible reputational risk if the TCP fails but potential benefits outweigh the risk.

#### 9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 9.1 Mar 2012 - Cabinet agree to Newcastle under Lyme B.C. becoming a director of the Newcastle town centre partnership company and authorises officers to take the necessary steps to facilitate the same.
- 9.2 Mar 2012 - Cabinet agrees to officers working under the auspices of the Newcastle town centre partnership to prepare and submit a bid to become a "Portas pilot", in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning and for the Council to act as the accountable body for administering any grant.
- 9.3 July 2012 – Cabinet agreed to the formalisation of the Town Centre Partnership and financial support for the TCP to appoint a Town Centres Manager

#### 10. **Background Papers**

None.

## **BRIEFING NOTE TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 19 December 2012**

### **Purpose of the Briefing Note**

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide an update to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny committee on the work that the Assets section have done in respect of pop up shop's subsequent to the meeting of the Committee in September.

### **The Pop-up Emporium Initiative**

An agreement was reached with a partnership formed between the Burslem School of Art and The Pop up Emporium which is managed by Denise O'Sullivan, a local designer maker. The concept behind the shop is to provide town centre retail opportunities for local artists and crafts people in locations not normally affordable to them. In essence the shop provides the artists and crafts people with gallery space.

This has proven to be extremely successful with both artists and their customers, and what was originally proposed to be a few one day events has grown into a longer letting period due to its success.

The unit currently occupied is 13-14 Lancaster Buildings. The business plan provides for a turnover of artists and craft designers and their works. Demonstrations and workshops by different artists are held to showcase their work to the public.

In addition support and advice has been provided to Newcastle College in their search for town centre premises to locate a pop up shop run by the college students. Furthermore, the Mayors charity has been supported by the provision of a shop in Lancaster Buildings for the local fair trade group.

**Authors:**     **Head of Assets**  
                         **Business Development Assistant**

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## HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

**Submitted by:** Joanne Basnett

**Portfolio:** Regeneration, Planning & Town Centres

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek Scrutiny Committee Members views on the proposed 2013/14 Housing Capital Programme.

### **Recommendations**

**That the Housing Capital Programme is considered by Cabinet taking into account the views of Scrutiny Committee.**

### **Reasons**

The Council considers the Housing Capital Programme every year to ensure that our housing investment priorities are up to date. With limited funding available from national funding streams it is appropriate for the Council to continue using the New Homes Bonus for housing purposes.

This report outlines the key options for housing investment in the forthcoming year and seeks Scrutiny Committee views on the proposed housing programme to deliver our strategic housing priorities and to support our most vulnerable residents.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a housing capital programme to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Housing Strategy and associated Housing Renewal Assistance Policy, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Strategy and Empty Homes Strategy. The current 2012/13 programme is funded by the New Homes Bonus and central government grant to support Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).
- 1.2 The New Homes Bonus was established in 2011 by the Government to be a powerful, simple and transparent incentive for housing growth and is a key part of the Government's national strategy for housing growth. It is based on the council tax of additional homes and those brought back into use, with a premium amount for affordable homes, and paid for the following six years. The bonus payment calculation allocates 80% to the Borough Council and 20% to the County Council. It ensures that those local authorities which promote and welcome growth can share in the economic benefits, and build the communities in which people want to live and work.
- 1.3 The Council has received the first two years New Homes Bonus payments and officers have estimated the amount of bonus predicted for next year at £932,000. This report outlines how next years funding can be used to support the Council's key priorities. In considering suitable ways to utilise the New Homes Bonus it is appropriate to take into account the Council's overall financial position. Whilst the New Homes Bonus is intended to support the development of new homes it is not ring fenced for this use and therefore it is appropriate that the Council considers the funding to support the Council's housing priorities.

## 2. **Issues**

### 2.1 **Affordable Housing**

2.1.1 Under the New Homes Bonus, from year 2012/13, the Government will pay an enhancement of £350 (£2,100 over 6 years) for each new affordable unit. The Council can consider utilising the funding to develop new affordable housing. This approach is expected by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Registered Providers (RPs), however developing affordable housing purely to access further grant in future years would not be sufficient justification to promote this approach. The potential to utilise the funding for this approach is outlined in section 4.3 below.

### 2.2 **Empty properties**

2.2.1 Prior to adopting a new Empty Homes Strategy in December 2012 the Council completed consultation which highlighted that often residents believe that new homes shouldn't be built until existing empty homes are brought back into use. The Strategy outlines the issues and approaches to dealing with empty homes and provides a stretching target. The Governments intention of providing additional NHB for empty homes brought back into use, could also help to overcome local opposition to new housing. This would also have the additional bonus of generating further NHB the following year. The Council currently commits £30k of NHB to empty homes within the Housing Capital Programme.

### 2.3 **Support for other housing programmes**

2.3.1 In order to meet residents' needs the Council invests in a range of housing schemes through the Housing Capital Programme. This includes support for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, serious safety and hazard grants, other housing initiatives including empty properties and affordable housing and previously Home Loans programme. The Council could consider that this type of support is targeted to the most vulnerable residents and therefore a suitable use for the New Homes Bonus.

### 2.4 **Energy Efficiency**

2.4.1 The Council is required under the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) to produce a report outlining what is considered to be practicable, cost effective and likely to result in significant improvements in the energy efficiency of homes in the borough. This report should take into consideration the financial assistance offered through national initiatives such as Green Deal, Energy Company Obligations (ECO) and Renewable Heat Incentives (RHI), alongside any street by street roll out. Cabinet at it's meeting in October agreed to support the North Staffordshire Warm Zone to help residents and businesses in the borough to maximise funding on offer from the national Green Deal and ECO energy efficiency programmes. Funding for the Warm Zone could be considered appropriate as part of this overall housing programme.

## 3. **Options Considered**

3.1 It is important that the Council considers the full range of housing schemes that are currently provided to support vulnerable residents and contribute to the sustainability of the Borough. Public funding should be used to ensure schemes offer value for money by maximising any receipts or private sector investment, as well as targeting those in greatest need. Taking into consideration that the funding is coming from the New Homes Bonus, it is appropriate that the funding is prioritised for the housing programme.

3.2 Should funding not be allocated to the Housing Capital Programme the schemes listed below would not be delivered and many vulnerable residents would be left living in unsafe housing. The Council would have to solely rely on our enforcement role which may force some vulnerable residents to become homeless, leave un-inhabitable homes boarded up and homes unrepaired contributing to a decline in the area.

#### 4. Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide DFGs to eligible applicants and due to the increasing elderly population and national policies to enable people to live independently in their own home; the demand on mandatory DFGs is increasing. At the time of writing this report the Government's DFG grant award has not been made and it is anticipated to be known in February 2013. It is anticipated that this Government grant will be similar to current levels at £514,000. Should the Council consider allocating £350,000 this would create a DFG programme of £864,000. It is important to note that the current programme for 2012/13 was for £760,000 and all of this money was allocated by September, therefore all applications since October are being approved and delivered by pre-allocated funding. It is therefore appropriate that the Council increases this year's budget to deliver the adaptations waiting for funding and plans on a continued higher grant level for future years to meet customer needs.

4.2 There are a number of important schemes delivered as part of the Housing Strategy and Housing Renewal Assistance Policy which require housing capital finance and officers are recommending that they are supported in 2013/14:

- **Emergency assistance to deal with properties with serious safety or health hazards** in accordance with the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy. Assistance is only available to low income vulnerable households. This will require a budget of £50,000.
- **Empty property** officer resources to continue tackling an important issue. Void properties are frequently the subject of complaints from neighbouring residents because they harm the appearance of an area and attract anti-social behaviour including vandalism, arson and substance abuse. The Strategy has been agreed and funding needed to implement the strategy. The New Homes Bonus also gives funding for net homes returned into occupation. A budget of £30,000 is proposed for this scheme to continue the support for a Housing Standards Officer to deliver the Empty Homes Strategy.
- Continue supporting a **Home Improvement Agency** to assist vulnerable residents to maintain their independence and continue living safely in their own homes. The Revival Agency based at Staffordshire Housing Association helps the Council to deliver the disabled facilities grants and home loans service as well as helping with issues such as affordable warmth. The majority of the clients are elderly and/or disabled who find it difficult arranging for repairs to be carried out themselves. The Agency relies on funding made up from grants from local authorities, the parent Housing Association, Staffordshire County Council and client's own funds. Officers recommend a grant of £40,000 to support the work of the Agency, subject to contract negotiations. Additional funding will be provided on a fee basis related to individual property grants.
- The **Accredited Landlords scheme** has been very successful and landlords pay a 2 year membership fee. Officers recommend that the Council continues to be part of the North Staffs scheme with the majority of the costs met from membership fees. Due to financial pressures the accredited landlord grants will continue to be suspended.
- **Home Loans** have previously been used successfully to help vulnerable

residents repair their own homes where there is sufficient equity and an ability to meet repayments. In 2012 the Council allocated £10,000 to Revival Home Improvement Agency to support the development of home loans for the most vulnerable in the area. Revival have secured partnerships with the Hanley Economic and Foundations to ensure some vulnerable residents can access suitable loans. Referrals are now made to Revival and loans are being issued to enable vulnerable people supported by Revival to complete home repairs.

- 4.3 The current economic climate continues to bring challenges to households in meeting the financial costs of their current home with some households facing repossession, the Council needs to support the strategic housing enabling role to provide additional **affordable homes** that meet the needs of the community. The Council has previously utilised capital funding in the Housing Capital Programme to kick start development or match fund schemes. Schemes have included Lymebrook at Lower Milehouse and Beasley Place, Chesterton. The allocation of a modest level of capital could enable the Council to support struggling schemes or consider support for the development on a site capable of holding one or two properties.
- 4.4 Delivering schemes to improve home energy efficiency supports delivery key elements of the council's Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Strategy as well as the Housing Strategy. Cabinet considered the options in relation to the new opportunities that are arising through the Green Deal and specifically the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, it was approved that the most approved way forward was to work with the **North Staffordshire Warm Zone**. Officers have been working with the Warm Zone and other partner local authorities to establish a suitable programme to maximise the opportunities and deliver a cost effective service. There will be a need to contribute towards the Team and running costs to enable Warm Zone to dedicate capacity to delivering ECO grants in the Borough.
- 4.5 An important aspect of the housing capital programme is the future planning for the forthcoming year and indicatively for 2 years. For instance there are many referrals for mandatory DFG's that are currently being assessed by Social Services and officers are designing adaptations that are required on the basis that there will be some DFG programme in operation and the funding will be available. If a substantial scheme such as the DFG programme was to be significantly altered there would need to be a significant lead in time of several months.

## 5. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The delivery of these housing schemes contributes to the corporate priorities of Creating Active and Healthier Communities, Creating a Cleaner, Safer and Sustainable Borough, Creating a Healthy and Active Community.

## 6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The housing capital programme will assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties to disabled residents and to households living in unsafe homes.
- 6.2 The housing capital programme will fund the assistance in the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy adopted by the Council in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.



7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The Equality Impact Assessments on the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy has been completed.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Subject to Scrutiny Committee views it is planned that the Housing Capital Programme will be considered by Cabinet alongside the Council's overall budget.

8.2 The NHB allocation for 2012/13 is anticipated at £932,000. Taking into consideration capital requirements it is considered appropriate to allocate £600,000 to fund housing-related activities. As part of the revenue budget planning for next year it would be appropriate to allocate some funding towards the day to day housing services costs for 2013/14.

8.3 The table below shows proposed schemes for 2013/14 utilising the planned £600,000.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>2012/13 NHB funding for the Housing Capital Programme £000s</b>	<b>2013/14 NHB funding for the Housing Capital Programme £000s</b>
Affordable housing	0	70
Viability	0	0
Empty Homes	30	30
Health and Safety	44	50
Home Loans	10	0
DFGs Match funded the Government grant of £514,000 to make a total budget of £864,000 in 2013/14.	250	350
Warm Zone	5	60
Home Improvement Agency	40	40
Accredited Landlords Scheme	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>600</b>

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Without the proposed modest level of investment in the housing programme it will leave many vulnerable people living in unsatisfactory and importantly, potentially unsafe homes. With no options available to repair homes occupation may need to be restricted, leading to an increase in boarded up empty homes, which will make the area less sustainable and may increase antisocial behaviour.

10. **Key Decision Information**

- 10.1 The Housing Capital Programme is available to assist in meeting the housing needs of vulnerable residents in all wards and involves committing significant resources.

11. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 11.1 The current Housing Capital Programme was approved by Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012.
- 11.2 The Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended support for the Warm Zone as a delivery of the Green Deal in 5 September 2012. This was supported by Cabinet on 17 October 2012, the decision was (a) That the Council continues to support North Staffordshire Warm Zone to enable it to maximise the uptake of funds which will be on offer from the national Green Deal and ECO energy efficiency programmes. (b) That officers discuss the level of funding required with Warm Zone with a view to the funding being allocated as part of the Housing Capital Programme alongside the 2013/14 budget setting process.

12. **List of Appendices**

None.

13. **Background Papers**

None.

# Agenda Item 7

## REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday 19 December 2012

### Purpose of Report

To provide a briefing note on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and to update Members on the findings and recommendations of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Viability Study prior to submitting reports to Planning Committee 22 January, 2013 and Cabinet 6 February, 2012.

### Introduction to CIL

In July 2011 Cabinet agreed to the Council taking the necessary steps to become a 'charging authority' under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2011.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which local authorities in England and Wales can apply to various forms of new development in their area based on the size, type and location of the development proposed. It is designed to be a predictable charge, levied on all development, which will not (except in exceptional circumstances) be subject to negotiation.

The CIL Regulations and Guidance have given local authorities flexibility in their approach to setting CIL. The Levy can be a fixed rate for development across the entire area, or can be set at a variable rate, e.g. different levy rates between the rural and urban areas where there is evidence of different levels of economic viability.

The money raised is intended to contribute to the infrastructure required to support new development as part of the Authority's development strategy. Relevant infrastructure might include:-

- Highways and Transport Improvements;
- Educational Facilities;
- Health Centres;
- Community Facilities & Libraries;
- Sports Facilities;
- Flood Defences; and
- Green Infrastructure

This is not a comprehensive list and it should be noted that there will not necessarily be sufficient funding from CIL to finance all infrastructure identified. Furthermore the infrastructure identified as being funded by CIL can be updated on an annual basis.

The levy cannot be used to remedy pre-existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision except where such deficiencies are aggravated by new development. The intention is to mitigate against the cumulative impacts of development rather than addressing the site specific impacts of a development.

Authorities wishing to charge CIL are required to produce a CIL charging schedule to set out the rates that will be applied to new development. This must be based on evidence of both the need for infrastructure and the impact of CIL on the economic viability of development.

### Relationship between CIL and Section 106 Agreements

All new dwellings will be subject to CIL and any other development over 100 sq metres gross internal floor area (subject to some minor exceptions). Smaller developments (for example one new dwelling) which currently do not make developer contributions towards, open Space or education could therefore make a financial contribution under CIL. This is seen as a more equitable system than the current system of

negotiating developer contributions through section 106 agreements and ensures that smaller scale development makes a financial contribution to new infrastructure.

Once the Levy is in place it will still be possible to seek Section 106 contributions, if the three statutory tests, as set in Section 122 of the 2010 CIL Regulations, are met:

*(2) A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is:*

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- (b) directly related to the development; and*
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

New affordable housing will continue to be delivered through Section 106 agreements negotiated on a site by site basis and there is no limit on the pooling of Section 106 contributions for affordable housing. However, from 6 April 2014, it will not be possible to pool more than 5 section 106 contributions to fund infrastructure; CIL is intended to be the main vehicle for the future collection of pooled infrastructure contributions.

For clarity over which infrastructure is funded by CIL and Section 106 contributions it will be necessary to publish on an annual basis a list of infrastructure items, or types of infrastructure, to be funded from CIL (Regulation 123). If this list is not published, all infrastructure is deemed to be funded by CIL, which would further restrict the scope of seeking developer contributions through section 106 agreements.

### **Implementation of CIL**

A standard charge (set out in the charging schedule) will be placed on a site once planning permission has been granted or where planning permission was not required, when the development has been identified and this charge would normally need to be paid on commencement of the scheme.

The Borough Council will be required to publish an annual report on how much monies they have received from the levy in the preceding financial year, how much was unspent, how much was spent on administration (maximum of 5%) and provide a summary of what infrastructure the levy funded.

### **Introduction to the CIL Viability Study**

The Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council have commissioned consultants to undertake a Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Viability Study with a view to preparing a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for consultation purposes. A draft report has been produced which provides an assessment of the viability of the principal categories of development in Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent and the financial contribution each type of development can make to new infrastructure through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

In basic terms the report assesses the costs and value of development and having made an allowance for a reasonable developers profit return, determines whether any additional margin is available for CIL contributions.

Land value benchmarks have been used to test the viability of various land uses on greenfield, brownfield and recycled land (i.e. development which emerges from regenerated land in the same use). The methodology does not include testing specific sites.

The housing viability was calculated on the assumption that developments provided the full affordable housing provision as set out in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

The report assumes that a funding gap will be found between the funding required to deliver the infrastructure which is needed to support the growth planned for in the adopted Core Strategy (as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>1</sup>) and the funding available to pay for that infrastructure.

## **Key Findings**

### **Residential development**

Following a comprehensive assessment of market values, the borough was split into four Charging Zones based on Ward boundaries so that different CIL rates could be charged for housing development in different parts of the Borough. A map showing these zones can be found at Appendix 1. Equal zones are used across Newcastle and Stoke, although no area of Stoke is covered by the highest value zone (zone 4).

The difference between the Affordable Housing Tenure requirements in Newcastle and Stoke resulted in slightly different levels of viability in each Authority. In Stoke where a higher proportion of Intermediate and Affordable Rent Housing is required viability was marginally better than in the equivalent zone in Newcastle. Nevertheless the viability report sets consistent CIL rates across both administrative areas.

In the very low value zone (zone 1), all residential development was shown to be unviable with no margin for CIL. In current market circumstances the development of apartments is not generally viable in either Authority other than in the highest value zone in Newcastle.

### **Commercial development**

Commercial development covers a range of uses as set out below<sup>2</sup>:

- Food Retail (supermarket)
- General Retail (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5)
- Industrial (Use Class B1, B, B1c, B2, B8)
- Hotels (Use Class C1)
- Institutional and Community (Use Class D1)
- Offices (Use Class B1a)
- Residential Institutions (Use Class C2)
- Leisure (Use Class D2)
- Agricultural
- Sui Generis (using a sample based on Stoke on Trent City Council & Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council recent planning histories)

The assessment of commercial land and property values indicated that one zone should cover the whole of Newcastle and Stoke for commercial development.

The viability appraisals illustrated that most forms of commercial development are not viable in current market circumstances in Newcastle or Stoke and this is reflected in the lack of activity in these sectors.

Food supermarket retail and general retail were the only types of commercial development assessed to be viable and capable of accommodating CIL across the study area. Retail development illustrated high viability with rates ranging from £262-£731 per sq m dependent on existing land use. However it should be noted that this range is based on a limited number of transactions due to the lack of activity in the sector and as specific retail projects emerge it is likely that landowners will expect significant premiums in order to

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<sup>1</sup> The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is currently being updated in partnership with stakeholders at Staffordshire County Council.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the Use Class Order which provides further details about the Use Class codes listed can be found at appendix 2

release sites; this will reduce viability levels significantly and should be taken into consideration when setting the CIL rate.

The adoption of a separate CIL rate category for supermarkets is not recommended in the report; the differential between supermarket (food retail) and non food retail is being increasingly scrutinised in recent CIL examinations. Although in most cases supermarkets command higher values both in terms of land price and rate per square metre than other retail uses, a case can be made to counter this position. This is commonly done by analysing 'best case' non food retail floorspace values and contrasting with lower quality food retail floorspace values. It can therefore not be guaranteed that in each and every instance food retail floorspace always command higher values than non food retail floorspace.

For these reasons it has been recommended that a single retail rate to cover Use Classes A1-A5 is used to present an entirely robust position at CIL Examination. However this rate should allow for Section 106 contributions to be made for food retail development if required.

It should also be noted that for the same reasons it is not possible to create a disincentive to out-of-town retailing by charging a higher CIL rate than town centre development, although Section 106 contributions could still be requested.

### **Draft CIL Rates**

The viability results show maximum potential CIL rates which could be applied without threatening the economic viability of development. However the appraisals are generic tests which do not make allowance for site specific abnormal costs or other planning obligation contributions. It is therefore recommended that CIL rates are set at a rate towards the lower end of the identified viability margins to take account of these unknown factors. The recommended rates covering both authorities have been set accordingly and are outlined in tables 1 and 2:

<b>Residential Rates C3</b>	
1. Very Low	£0sqm
2. Low	£20sqm
3. Medium	£50sqm
4. High	£80sqm

Table 1

<b>Retail Rates (A1-A5)</b>	
Districtwide	£100sqm

Table 2

### **Projected CIL Revenue**

At this time there are no CIL revenue projections. In order to calculate the projected revenue we require the amount of floorspace and location of proposed development; it is not currently clear exactly which sites will be put forward to accommodate the Borough's future development. However once we have agreed a list of sites for the preferred options stage of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan we will be able to calculate a rough CIL revenue projection estimate based on those sites and the floorspace of, for example, an average size house.

Sites that are developed using planning permission granted prior to the adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule (which sets out the CIL rates) are not liable to pay CIL. However following the adoption of the Charging Schedule, CIL will be payable on small 'windfall' developments which are currently not subject to planning obligations including individual new dwellings, some changes of use and large house extensions.

For example the levy for a single dwelling with a floor area of 100 square metres would be £2000 in zone 2, £5000 in zone 3 and £8000 in zone 4. Currently a single dwelling does not make any developer contributions

The report does not make recommendations on how any revenue is spent or on how the CIL will be administered; we will need to determine that ourselves.

#### Example of CIL revenue compared to Section 106 contributions

Most recent residential applications have either not made the full affordable housing contribution, made no Section 106 contributions or are located in a zone which has been recommended to have a zero CIL rate due to viability issues.

At the time of writing the recent application (ref. 12/00512/FUL) at Thistleberry House, Keele Road for the erection of 37 dwellings is pending approval subject to the agreement of the Section 106 agreement. However this example has been used as the full Affordable Housing contribution is being provided and it is therefore possible to make a direct comparison between the Section 106 contributions being made and the CIL revenue that would be charged based on the recommended CIL rates.

Section 106 Contributions:

- 9 dwellings as affordable housing
- A financial contribution of £26,224 towards the Newcastle (urban) Transport and Development Strategy (NTADS).
- A financial contribution of £108,891 towards public open space improvement.
- A financial contribution of £88,248 towards the provision of education facilities.

**Total Section 106 contribution = £223,363**

**CIL payable on non-affordable units for equivalent scheme (at £50 sq m in zone 3) including garages = £142,445**

In this case the amount of revenue from CIL would be less than the equivalent payments from Section 106 contributions. However, it is important to note that CIL is payable on small-scale developments which currently do not make any contributions. Furthermore the CIL charges have been calculated so that they will be viable in all cases including when affordable housing is provided; CIL payments will only be negotiated in very rare circumstances.

With large retail developments such as the proposed Marks and Spencer store at Wolstanton there are often site specific issues which need to be resolved through a Section 106 agreement.

It is considered that the only Section 106 Contribution agreed that would be covered by CIL is the contribution of £94,331 towards the Newcastle (urban) Transport and Development Strategy (NTADS). The other Section 106 payments are site specific, necessary to make the development acceptable and would not have been listed on the Regulation 123 list (see page 2) so could not be funded through CIL.

If the recommended CIL rate for retail development of £100 per sq m had been in place the CIL charge for Marks and Spencer, Wolstanton would have been:

**£1,128,200 (for each additional sq m of retail floorspace over the existing retail floorspace)**

Clearly this would represent a very large CIL payment, although the Section 106 payments offered are likely to have been less lower if we were looking to charge £1,128,200 in CIL.

## **Public Consultation**

Once the draft CIL rates have been agreed a Preliminary draft charging schedule will be prepared for consultation purposes.

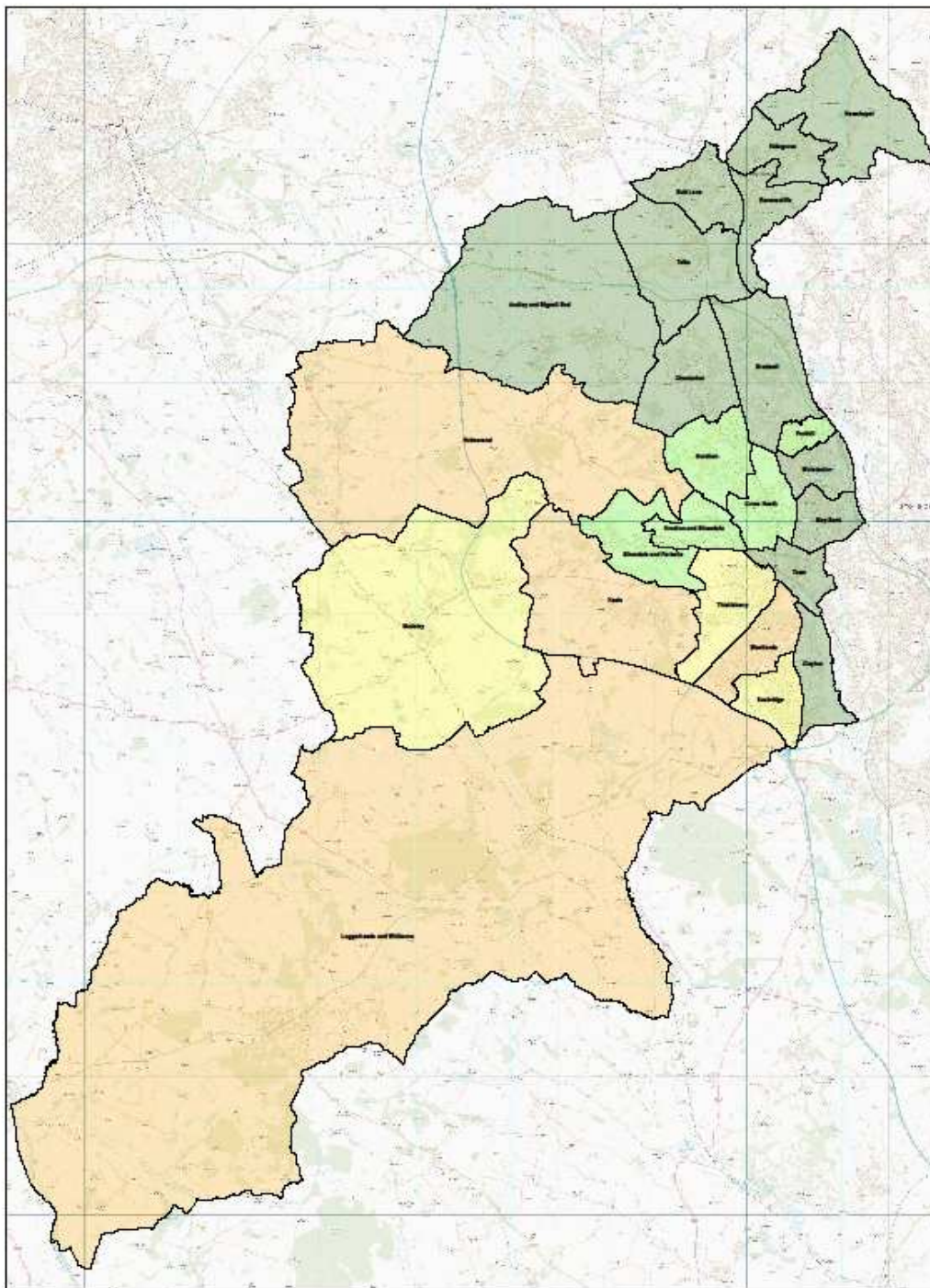
It is intended to undertake a joint consultation of the Preliminary draft charging schedule with Stoke in March 2013 for 6 weeks. These arrangements have yet to be finalised although it is expected that the consultation will be largely targeted at key stakeholders such as developers and agents. However, in the Borough it is also proposed to consult parish and town councils.

The Planning Policy Business Unit is satisfied that the viability assessment has been undertaken satisfactorily and that the recommended rates should be put forward for consultation.



## APPENDIX 1

### Newcastle-under-Lyme Residential Zones

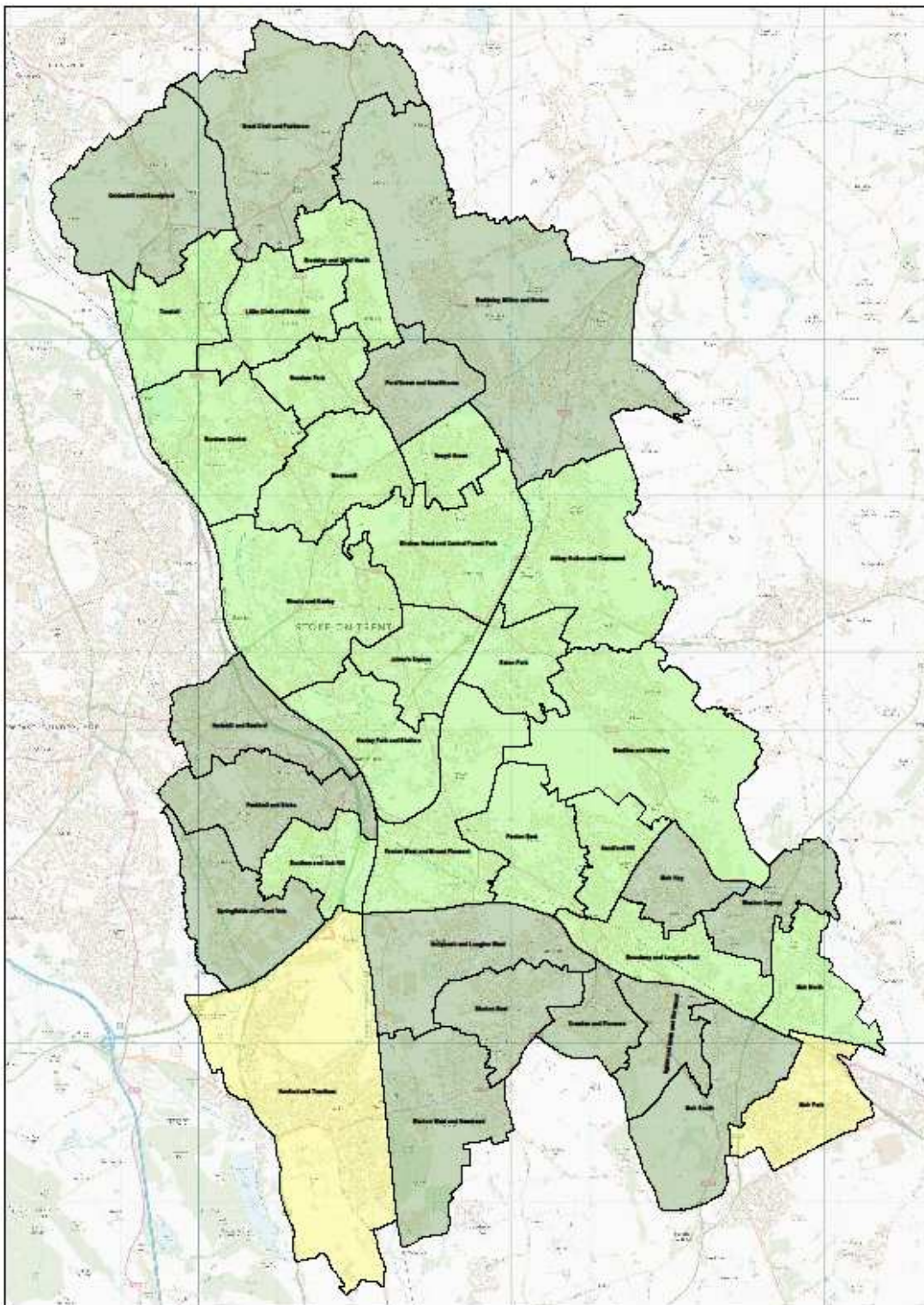


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Four differential value zones were identified in Newcastle-under-Lyme whilst only three were identified in Stoke-on-Trent.

## Stoke-on-Trent Residential Zones



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APPENDIX 2

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2010

Use Classes (Amendment) Order 2005	Description	General Permitted Development (Amendment) Order 2005
<b>A1 Shops</b>	The retail sale of good to the public, including shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel agencies, post offices, dry cleaners, internet cafes etc Pet Shops, Sandwich Bars Showrooms, domestic hire shops, funeral directors.	No Permitted Changes
<b>A2 Financial and Professional Services</b>	Banks, building societies, estate and employment agencies Professional and financial services, betting offices	Permitted Change to A1 Where a ground floor display window exists
<b>A3 Restaurants and Cafes</b>	Restaurants, snack bars, cafes	Permitted change to A1 or A2
<b>A4 Drinking Establishments</b>	Pubs and bars	Permitted change to A1, A2 or A3
<b>A5 Hot food take-aways</b>	Take-Aways	Permitted change to A1, A2 or A3
<b>Sui Generis</b>	Shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles, retail warehouse clubs, laundrettes, taxi or vehicle hire businesses, amusement centres, petrol filling stations	No permitted change

<b>B1 Business</b>	(a) Offices, not within A2. (b) Research and development, studios, laboratories, high tech. (c) Light industry.	Permitted change to B8 Where no more than 235m=
<b>B2 General industry</b>	General industry	Permitted change to B1 or B8 B8 limited to no more than 235m=
<b>B8 Storage or distribution</b>	Wholesale warehouse, distribution centres, repositories	Permitted change to B1 Where no more than 235m=

<b>C2 Residential Institutions</b>	Residential schools and colleges Hospitals and convalescent/nursing homes	No permitted change
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<b>C3</b> <b>Dwelling houses</b>	Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by— (a) a single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household; (b) not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents; or (c) not more than six residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use within Class C4). Interpretation of Class C3 For the purposes of Class C3(a) “single household” shall be construed in accordance with section 258 of the Housing Act 2004(3).”	Permitted change to C4
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<b>D1</b> <b>None residential institutions</b>	Places of worship, church halls Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, consulting room Museums, public halls, libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls, law courts Non – residential education and training centres	No permitted change
<b>D2</b> <b>Assembly and leisure</b>	Cinemas, music and concert halls Dance, sports halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasium Other indoor and outdoor sports and leisure users, bingo halls	No permitted change

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Title	Scrutiny Method	Progress to Date/Actions from last Meeting	Expected Completion Date	Expected Outcomes/Date for Progress to be Assessed
Economic Development Strategy <b>(GREEN)</b>	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet agreed strategy &amp; 1<sup>st</sup> year action plan 23.05.12</li> <li>Feedback &amp; progress on action plan possibly end Q4 or Q1 2013/14</li> </ul>		
The S-O-T & Staffs LEP <b>(AMBER)</b>	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllrs Matthews, Peers & Studd	Receiving summary paper. Will meet as/when required.		
Broadband Provision <b>(AMBER)</b>	County Council Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jeanette Hilton to attend working group &amp; feedback to EDE.</li> <li>Re-scoping required. WG need to define what needs to be scrutinised &amp; where they would like to go with it.</li> </ul>		
High Speed 2 Limited <b>(AMBER)</b>	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllr Becket Cllr Loades Cllr Cairns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>04.07.2012 - wg resolved to recommend: <b>1)</b> continue stance to object, but should it take place then local station should be provided <b>2)</b> EDE (through WG) continue to scrutinise &amp; meet when consultation stage begins <b>3)</b> highlight to Cabinet consultation due to begin in Autumn.</li> <li>Cabinet resolved 18.07.2012: <b>1)</b> modify Council stance to offer support for principle of HS2 as long as potential economic benefits for N. Staffs could be demonstrated to outweigh environmental consequences &amp; whether such benefits would be derived from local station to serve area. <b>2)</b> EDE continue to monitor through wg who will reconvene when consultation begins.</li> <li>Update provided to EDE 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Still awaiting consultation as at 07.12.12, however stance on Dept of Transport &amp; HS2 websites has changed to 'early 2013 engagement programme on phase 2 initial preferred route'.</li> </ul>		
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) <b>(AMBER)</b>	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief report received 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Expected at Dec meeting.</li> </ul>		
Staffordshire Strategic Assets Review <b>(GREEN)</b>	Full Committee	Report discussed at 21.06.2012 meeting. To be considered at Jan Cabinet with the Asset Management Strategy.		
Asset Management Strategy <b>(GREEN)</b>	Full Committee	Next update to Committee expected December 2012.		
Town Centre Partnerships Development <b>(AMBER)</b>	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update report for 2<sup>nd</sup> round Portas Pilot bid on 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Update briefing at Dec meeting clarifying status of TCP incl. appointment of Town Centre Manager, funding update &amp; key priorities.</li> </ul>		
Town Centre Initiatives for Vacant Shops <b>(AMBER)</b>	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair &amp; vice-Chair met with officers to discuss town centre initiatives for vacant shops 06.09.12. Briefing note provided 17.09.2012 to update EDE. EDE comments to be considered by Portfolio Holder &amp; Officers</li> <li>Officer briefing note re pop-up emporium initiative 19.12.12</li> </ul>		
Former St Giles and St Georges <b>(AMBER)</b>	To be decided, possible working party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recs for Cabinet 28.06.12: EDE would support further investigation of combination of options 'A' &amp; 'C'. 'B' should be discounted completely</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconsidered 17.09.12. Museum resiting still considered desirable. Indoor market suggested. EDE remain opposed to demolition, but would be less hostile if could be satisfied replacement would be correct scale &amp; design. Likely value of cleared site, costs of indoor market &amp; museum suggestions requested. More info required before a preferred option can be offered.</li> <li>Cabinet agreed option A (market bldg again in current condition) 17.10.12. Requested Officers look into option 'e' (use site for housing). Open item for EDE while waiting for decision, can discuss without referring back to Cabinet.</li> </ul>		
Knutton Recreation Centre (GREEN)	To be decided, possible working party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional meeting 28.07.2012.</li> <li>Recs to be passed to Sept Cabinet.</li> <li>Will be brought back to Committee if necessary.</li> </ul>		
Town Centre Car Parking (AMBER)	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllrs Baker, Peers, Studd & M. Taylor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leader request to investigate &amp; consider potential options that may exist to improve current arrangements</li> <li>Scrutiny brief for 17.09.12. WG formed – 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting 24.10.2012. Interim report expected.</li> </ul>		
N/C Town Centre Public Realm Project (AMBER)	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllr Baker Cllr Cairns Cllr Holland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WG met 24.10.12. EDE considered 22.11.12.</li> <li>EDE expressed some concerns, passed to Cabinet.</li> <li>Await outcome of Dec Cabinet.</li> <li>Request for review 12 months after implementation – dependent on Cabinet decision</li> </ul>		
Empty Homes Strategy	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report provided for consideration on 17.09.2012. Being considered at Dec Cabinet.</li> </ul>		
Home Improvement Agency Services	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report/scrutiny brief to Committee – expected for Dec meeting. More likely the report will be ready in early spring given the complexity of partnership arrangements.</li> <li>Service currently provided by Revival, options to be reviewed incl county wide service or NBC standing alone.</li> </ul>		
Housing Capital Programme 2013/14	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider the allocation of funding, particularly from New Homes Bonus funds to deliver housing priorities ensuring that the most vulnerable residents receive support.</li> <li>Expected at Dec meeting</li> </ul>		
Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) – Homelessness, Housing Options & Housing Register Contract Retendering Exercise	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation in March 2014</li> <li>Overview of retendering exercise will be provided at March meeting.</li> </ul>		

## MEMBERS SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY TOPICS

Suggested by:

Suggestion for Scrutiny Topic:

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