

REVIEW



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Council's block on massive housing estate is upheld by Minister

Green Belt carve-up gets the red light

South Staffordshire has secured a famous victory in the Council's battle to save the Green Belt around the District.

A builder's plans to carve up 100 acres of Green Belt land at Landywood for a 1,000-dwelling housing estate have been thrown out by Secretary of State Ruth Kelly, who has backed the Council's decision to refuse planning permission.

Her decision has been "warmly welcomed" by Members and Officers of South Staffordshire Council.

The Council has made no secret of the fact that protection of the Green Belt in South Staffordshire is one of the Corporate Aims of the authority, some would say its most important objective.

Ms Kelly said in a written adjudication that the proposals by George Wimpey UK Ltd, "would conflict with ... the attributes, purposes and objectives of the Green Belt."

Her statement followed a two-week Public Inquiry earlier this year into an appeal by the building company against the Council's refusal of planning permission for a site between the villages of Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley, at Landywood.

Two planning proposals put forward by George Wimpey UK Ltd were the subject of the inquiry

The first was an outline application that sought to establish the principle of constructing mixed housing, local centre and open space on 40.37

hectares (100 acres) of Green Belt land classified as a Greenfield site (ie. not previously developed land). It would have entailed around 1,000 dwellings.

The other was a smaller scheme that represented Phase 1 of the development described above, on 18 hectares (45 acres) of land, with approximately 370 dwellings.

On 26 September, the Secretary of State issued a decision dismissing both of the Appeals.

Proposals by George Wimpey UK Ltd, "would conflict with ... the attributes, purposes and objectives of the Green Belt."

Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State

She agreed with the findings, of the Planning Inspector who had presided over the Public Inquiry held in April, contained in his 90-page report. The full report is available to read on the Council's website.

The overall conclusions of the Secretary of State were as follows:

"The Secretary of State concludes that the proposed development would gain some support from housing policies in the development plan but would conflict with the underlying aims of the RSS and with the

attributes, purposes and objectives of the Green Belt. The proposed development of this Green Belt site would lead to substantial harm through encroachment and the almost complete merging of Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley and the very special circumstances needed to outweigh this harm are not present. The appeal site would make a substantial contribution to meeting the shortfall in housing supply in South Staffordshire to 2011 but the need to make a substantial commitment to the housing requirement at this time is not so pressing as to justify granting planning permission for either scheme.

For the reasons set out in this letter, the Secretary of State considers that there are no material considerations which amount to very special circumstances to justify determining these appeals other than in accordance with the development plan and national policies to protect the Green Belt."

The RSS referred to above is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS), which was confirmed in 2004.

The RSS proposes a fundamental change in policy direction compared with previous strategic planning documents. In essence the RSS seeks to make the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) more attractive places in which to live.

The aim is to halt the migration of people and investment out of the Conurbation and into Shire Areas, such as South Staffordshire, which has been the pattern of development in the past.

For further information contact Andrew Johnson on (01902) 696457 or e-mail a.johnson@sstaffs.gov.uk

A Big Day at Baggeridge



Baggeridge's BIG Summer Event was a gi-normous day of fun for youngsters in South Staffordshire. Even the torrential rain did not dampen the spirits of the children and the fun that they had.

Turn to pages 4-5 to find out what fun everyone had!

COMMUNIT

Fast track to a Fun-filled Day

The opening of a custom-built BMX biking track at Great Wyrley was marked with a spectacular Fun Day.

Bikers from all over the West Midlands came along, but the celebrations - officially launched by Wolves legend Steve Bull - also included a martial arts display and a football tournament.

The main attraction though was the opening of the new bespoke BMX track designed and built by Great Wyrley builder Mr Brett Wallbank with the help of local young people.

The project has breathed new life into the sports and playing facilities and Wyrley Juniors organised football matches for youngsters to enjoy on the new pitch.

There were competitions for BMX bikers, in-line skaters and skateboarders which were judged by Mr Wallbank. The youngsters who entered performed the most amazing and breath-taking stunts to entertain the large audience.

The winners of the BMX competitions each won a BMX bike donated by Sainsbury's.

The Fun Day was organised by the South Staffordshire Community Safety Team. Hard work from a multi-agency group including the Police, Great Wyrley Parish Council, South Staffordshire's Community Safety Partnership,



Steve Bull with Brian Wood, Chairman of Great Wyrley Parish Council

Youth Services, Leisure Services, South Staffordshire Council, local businesses, members of St Andrews Church, local cub group and 'Friends of Essington' helped to make the day a great success.

Police Sgt Maurice Annett, overall project manager, from the South Staffordshire Community Safety Team said "The day was fantastic and well attended by hundreds of local people. When the event closed, youngsters were still using the BMX and skate park facilities and youths wanted the new portable goal posts left out so they could continue to play football.

"This day formed part of the Quinton Project - a multi-agency Community Safety initiative aimed at building bridges within

the local community in and around the Quinton area of Great Wyrley with particular focus on engaging with and gainfully occupying the time of young people. The day was about showing the community at large that the local young people were about more than 'hanging about causing trouble' and I think it did just that. This was a fine example of a community strengthening initiative which was so popular the local Parish Council want to run it every year."

Mr Wallbank said: "I think the day was a great success and everyone enjoyed it. I have lived around here all my life and I wanted to give something back to the community".

Cash for your old banger

A £20 "reward" has been put up by South Staffordshire Council for old bangers heading for the scrapyard.

The Council is willing to pay residents, who own "clapped out vehicles", to dispose of their cars safely.

The £20 offer has been made in a bid to cut down on the number of abandoned vehicles in the District.

To claim the reward, the cars need to be taken to the Council's registered contractor, Cannock Auto Salvage Limited.

If your car is still driveable and - most importantly - insured, you can drive it there.

The address is:

**Cannock Auto Salvage Limited
Unit 1
Cannock Motor Village
Chaseside Drive
Cannock.**

Alternatively, if your car is not driveable, Cannock Auto Salvage will collect the vehicle from your property and the Council will pay the contractor £20 towards the collection cost.

You can contact the firm on: **01543 504494.**

In both instances, you will need to provide proof to the contractor that the car you are disposing of is your property and also provide evidence that you are a South Staffordshire resident. Once the paperwork is complete, the Council will send you a cheque for £20.

Don't forget, the £20 'reward' is an attractive alternative to a fine of up to £2,500 or even three months in jail if you get caught abandoning your vehicle.

For further information about the reward scheme call (01902) 696203 or e-mail: env.general@sstaffs.gov.uk.

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY FOR THIEVES AND BURGLARS!

Thieves and burglars are looking forward to Christmas - because there are millions of pounds worth of lovely presents just asking to be pinched!

Statistics suggest that nearly £50 million worth of presents will be stolen in Britain during the run up to and over the Christmas period.

People don't expect to be robbed over the festive period - nearly two thirds of homes take no extra precautions and over a third leave presents on view. But the thieves have no shame and no moral scruples!

Crimefighters in South Staffordshire are now urging householders and residents in the District to take extra security measures this Yuletide, both in the home and while out shopping.

Follow this simple advice and you can reduce your risk of being a victim of Christmas crime.

- Never carry more money than you need.
- Make sure you put your money away before you leave the counter.
- Never carry a handbag on the outside of your shopping. Keep it close to you.
- Avoid leaving presents in your vehicle while you continue shopping.
- Put presents away out of sight when you get home.
- Always postcode new electrical items, cameras and mobile phones.
- Make sure your home looks as if someone is in even when you are out. Leave lights or even a radio on.
- Never leave empty cardboard boxes from new TVs, videos, etc on show. Break them up and recycle the card, together with your Christmas waste, following the collection arrangements in your new 'Recycling, Composting and Waste Guide', which you will receive in the next few weeks.

PLEASE don't be a victim over Christmas.

Make sure your home looks as if someone is in even when you are out.

Don't leave presents under the tree, put them away somewhere safe until Christmas.

Mini Motorbikes: A warning

Thinking about buying a mini-motorbike as a Christmas present this year?

South Staffordshire consumer watchdogs are urging parents and other residents to think again.

The police warn that it is **ILLEGAL** to use them on a road without a driving licence, insurance and proper protective gear. A lot of these bikes are not manufactured for road use.

The Council says mini-motorbikes are **BANNED** from use on public open spaces and footpaths and most other open areas. In fact you need **PERMISSION** to use them anywhere other than your own, private land.

Think twice about buying mini motorbikes for Christmas presents.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Measures to tackle anti-social behaviour in South Staffordshire appear to be working - at least in the Giggety area of Wombourne.

The report from South Staffordshire Housing Association's Annual Survey shows that most residents on the village's Giggety Estate feel safe living in their community.

Almost three quarters of those surveyed noted that the amount of anti-social behaviour in their community had decreased or stayed the same in the last 12 months.

Of those surveyed, 69.72% feel safe living in their community.

YOUTH SAFETY



HYPE

A big effort was undertaken to keep youngsters in South Staffordshire out of mischief this summer by getting them to do some worthwhile activities.

Rather than producing an overall programme for six hot spot areas, HYPE is responding to the needs of each area, tailoring a range of activities specific to the nature of the problems identified.

Now in its 5th year, HYPE's previous successes include a number of club nights where venues are totally transformed into real nightclub environments,

with performances from bands such as X-Factor finalists 4Tune and Fun-da-mental. Along with Summer Festivals, young people have been able to participate in a number of different activities including football, basketball, dance and graffiti-art, with guests such as professional BMX biker Matt Mavis.

Approximately 20 young people took part in a graffiti arts project based in Perton at the beginning of August. The project was run as a drop-in session, with the first day involving the young people working with the artist to develop

designs and graffiti styles, painting two murals which are available for the Perton Youth Club to use in the rooms there. The second and third days of the project involved the young people working with the artist at the youth shelter and have magically transformed the youth shelter - including painting the ceiling, the benches and the support posts and then painting three murals, one on each side.

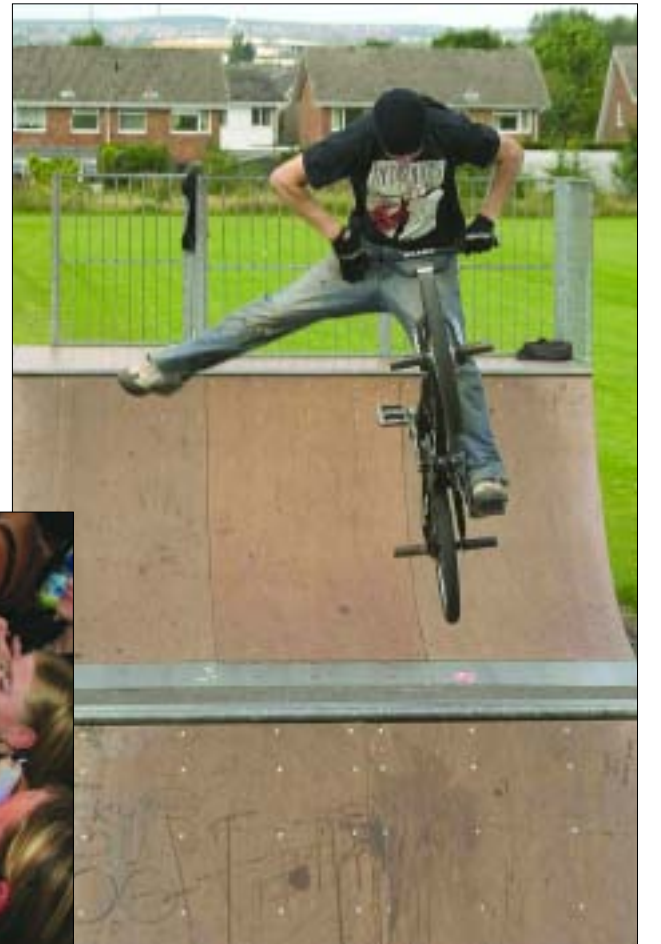
The theme running through the three days was raising awareness of the young people about issues surrounding graffiti and lack of civic pride (e.g. litter, petty vandalism, etc).

The project was a great success and was supported by the South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership and Staffordshire Youth Services, who staffed the project.

For more information about HYPE activities in your area, contact the HYPELINE on 0800 5836 531 or check our website www.hype-youth.co.uk.



above: Performance by 4Tune



right: Professional BMX biker Matt Mavis



Graffiti Art Project at Perton



below: Hype Club Night

THANK YOU FOR ENTERING

The correct answer to the last word search was **WALKING**.

A big thank you to everyone who entered and well done to those who got the answer right!

WORD SEARCH COMPETITION

Can you find the following Crime Safety words in the grid? They may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal and could be backwards or forwards.

- NEIGHBOURHOOD
- RURAL • WATCH
- POLICE • BURGLARY • THEFT
- DOMESTIC • VIOLENCE
- ROAD • SAFETY • SPEEDING
- ALCOHOL • MISUSE
- ANTI • SOCIAL • BEHAVIOUR
- PARTNERSHIP • EDUCATION
- YOUTH • WORK • CCTV
- CRIME • AWARENESS

D	A	Y	E	G	S	R	E	R	D	W	C	W	V
O	L	O	T	N	I	U	U	I	O	H	E	T	I
O	C	U	F	I	R	O	K	R	T	A	C	N	E
H	O	T	E	D	P	I	K	A	A	C	D	D	Y
R	H	H	E	R	V	W	N	D	L	U	A	R	
U	O	F	T	E	G	A	F	O	P	C	W	W	A
O	L	A	T	P	R	H	M	C	A	A	R	A	L
B	P	I	H	S	R	E	N	T	R	A	P	T	G
H	S	W	I	I	S	B	I	E	R	I	U	C	R
G	O	T	A	T	O	O	N	E	E	O	M	H	U
I	C	D	I	N	N	E	P	O	L	I	C	E	B
E	I	C	P	A	S	V	I	O	L	E	N	C	E
N	A	M	I	S	U	S	E	E	A	L	R	N	E
R	L	A	S	A	L	S	A	F	E	R	Y	S	H

There is one word in the list that is **NOT** included in the grid.

Write it on the back of a postcard (or sealed envelope) TOGETHER WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS and send to:

Helen Dye
Word Search Competition,
South Staffordshire Council,
Council Offices, Codsall,
South Staffordshire. WV8 1PX

The first correct entry picked after the closing date of

14th December, 2006,
will win a
£25 Prize

WORDSEARCH WINNER:

Congratulations to **Mrs Janet Cox** from Kinver who won £25 in the Word Search Competition in the Summer 2006 Edition of the South Staffordshire Review.

AT YOUR LEISURE

Live and at your Local

Music lovers and theatre goers could soon be flocking to village halls and community centres in South Staffordshire to see top class artists and actors.

A Midlands-wide scheme called Live and Local has earmarked 120 venues for the promotion of exciting and varied professional shows - right on people's doorsteps.

In South Staffordshire they include Codsall, Perton, and Featherstone.

The organisers say it's a great

opportunity to liven up local communities and bring them together.

All the shows are chosen and promoted by local people for their community.

Covering Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire and Solihull, Live and Local is one of 40 similar schemes across the UK that make it possible for people to enjoy a great night out just around the corner.

There is choice from a broad range of shows that will appeal to all interests and ages -



Frankly Sinatra

including drama, comedy, music, dance and storytelling. The performers 'fit in' with the community from the moment they arrive - they enjoy what they're doing and they're good at performing in local venues.

Live & Local is a non profit making organisation funded by South Staffordshire Council, other local authorities in the County and by Arts Council England (West Mids) so the cost of the shows is subsidised, making it possible for smaller venues to afford the fees. Any group or venue can become a Live & Local promoter and there are shows suitable for big and small venues that are definitely not theatres.

If you would like to find out how to join the Live & Local network and have a performance in your community or simply join the Live & Local audience mailing list, then contact us at the address below or email us on info@liveandlocal.org.uk or visit our web site at www.liveandlocal.org.uk

Live & Local
Pageant House
2 Jury St
Warwick
CV34 4EW
Tel: (01926) 402173



New Ropes Flying Fiddle

Our **BIG** Summer of Fun

Hundreds of youngsters descended on Baggeridge Country Park for South Staffordshire's BIG Summer Event.

And despite the appalling weather, the award-winning park was alive with the sound of music and kids having FUN.

Comper David Graham, from ITV's Pop Idol presided over a myriad of activities, including aikido, kite making, tag rugby, cricket, parachute games, dance, drama and bug hunts.

The hive of activity also fired the imaginations of more than 350 boys and girls through competitions and song.



Some excellent prizes, kindly donated by local attractions, were given out on the day to children who created the most imaginative slogan with regards living a healthy lifestyle. The winning slogan was "Eat 5 vegetables and fruit a day and your life will go the healthy way."

While the event, on August 23rd, was all about fun and freedom of expression, it was also promoting healthy lifestyles to young people.

All children who participated took away with them a 'goodie bag', which included a skipping rope and step meter with information cards on how they can use the equipment to keep themselves active. There

was information on healthy eating, how your body benefits from exercise, contact numbers for local sports and dance groups, as well as a Walter Whale pass which entitled all participants to free swimming sessions at any of South Staffordshire Council's Leisure Centres until the end of the summer!

Partner organisations such as Crime Stoppers, Environmental Health Services, the Police and the Fire Service were on hand during the day to educate parents, brothers and sisters on a variety of issues including the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, the importance of clean hands, fire safety and much more.

The terrible weather conditions on the day didn't dampen the kid's enthusiasm or excitement and the event turned out to be a great success. The event finished off with a bang with all 350 children participating in a mass aerobic/ dance session of **BOOM!** leaving them happy and ready for their journey home!

The event was part of an ongoing project in South Staffordshire to improve the health of children in the District, and has been made possible due to funding received from Staffordshire Children's Fund to deliver activities over a two-year period.



Every picture tells a story and these youngsters are definitely enjoying the Big Summer Event at Baggeridge.



Hands up for a healthy lifestyle

School children in South Staffordshire have been learning valuable lessons about healthy lifestyles and the dangers of drugs.

The Council's "Natural High" tour featuring singer-songwriter David Graham has been round senior schools in the District to get the message across to youngsters.

"Natural High" is a unique presentation aimed at 8 - 13 year olds with David performing his trademark song of the same name. The song encourages the use of talents to get a natural high.

During the 'show' students have the opportunity to interact using their own individual skills to take part in competitions and 'mind sports' based on the lyrics.

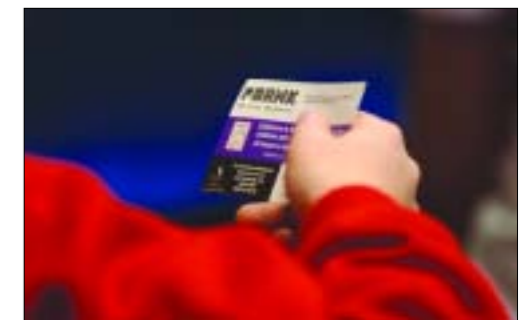
Everyone, including teachers and guests, has a chance to join in the performance, proving that a good time can be had without resorting to 'fake highs'.

The schools tour strongly reinforces peer education and gives 'street cred' to a serious



subject, without the feeling of it becoming a lecture.

The Natural High programme supports the continuing work of teachers, police officers, drug action teams, health education, crime prevention panels, community safety partnerships, charities, and many other organisations promoting healthy lifestyle messages and offering support to young people.



It's music to your ears

Local communities in South Staffordshire will get the chance to hear quality professional musicians in a series of Spring concerts organised by the Council.

The concerts have become an annual event and are designed to bring live, professional music to local groups, who would normally not have that opportunity.

They are hosted by local groups, who provide refreshments and organise the venue, as well as selling tickets and promoting the concerts locally.

Most importantly, the concerts are provided FREE of charge to community groups in South Staffordshire.

Groups can pick from a selection of musicians chosen for their suitability and experience of performing for community groups. All concerts are light-hearted, with the audience often being invited to sing-a-long, or even dance in the aisles!

If you or your organisation are interested in hosting a concert, get in touch with Rachel Henley on 01902 696534.



Musicians Elizabeth Keetley and Debbie Bennett preparing for their next performance.

Schools get set for healthy option

Youngsters in South Staffordshire GET SET for a healthier future.

The Council's Leisure Services division is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and getting children active.

Their Get Set Schools programme aims to do just that by providing children with the opportunity to participate in a wide range of physical activities as well as providing them with advice on healthy lifestyles.



Now, after five years of activity in local schools, the Get Set scheme is expanding to offer a wider variety of opportunities for children.

This academic year Get Set Schools is introducing three areas of involvement:

Get Set Sport - where qualified sports coaches provide after-school clubs in a variety of sports including Netball, Cricket, Football, Golf, Hockey, Athletics and Multi Skills.

Get Creative - Where schools are provided with Contemporary Dance sessions within curriculum time.

And the latest initiative: **Get Walking** - As part of get walking, qualified staff will go into schools and encourage children to walk as part of a healthy lifestyle. Children will be taught the benefits of walking and be encouraged to do so by being given a step meter to record how many steps they do over a 4 week period. Schools who participate will be given walk leader training and a resource pack to help develop the project.

Get Set coaching is already taking place at 29 schools within the District, so look out for coaching opportunities at YOUR child's school.

For further details please contact Victoria Haynes on 01902 696519 or email v.haynes@sstaffs.gov.uk



Steppin' Out in Kinver

Villagers at Kinver put their best feet forward to mark the opening of a new footpath in the parish.

They were led off by South Staffordshire Council Leader, Cllr Brian Edwards, on a walkabout in the picturesque Staffordshire village.

The new path has been funded in a partnership between the Council and South Staffordshire Housing Association. It runs from the Community Centre at Sterrymere, leads onto a route that crosses the River Stour and heads onto the Staffordshire-Worcester canal and back through the Village.

Further work on the route is planned which will make it fully accessible for disabled people.

Cllr Edwards commented "It is great to see so many people interested in walking as it not only gets you out in the fresh air but can help to get you more active. Hopefully with the laying of this new path many more people will be



Villagers at Kinver get ready to step out along the new footpath.

encouraged to walk around the route and with further work the walk will be accessible to all."

The celebratory walk was mapped out by Kinver Parish Council and the Kinver Rights of Way Committee, with a view to encouraging more people to be active through walking.

All the walkers were given a step meter to record the amount of steps they took - an

average of 5,000! Health experts recommend 10,000 steps per day to stay healthy.

More details are available from Marc Neeld, Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator on (01902) 696802.

Don't forget - Kinver Rights of Way Committee run regular weekly walks of varying lengths. Details are available from Kinver Parish Council on (01384) 873878.

BUDGET FORECAST

A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING THE BUDGET FOR 2007/08 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY.

This overview sets the scene for the Council's budget and is circulated to all members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Parish Councils and to members of the Local Strategic Partnership. It is published (*in shortened form*) here and on the Council's website www.sstaffs.gov.uk in order that everyone with an interest in the Council's budget may put forward their views and comments for consideration as part of the budgetary process. There is no set format for comments.

The Executive's Medium Term Financial Strategy, incorporating its initial budget proposals will be approved for consultation by the Executive at its meeting on 5th December, 2006. This will include a balanced budget, taking account of all relevant matters, including the consideration of any representations received in time. Consultees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have four weeks - until 9th January, 2007 - to respond.

The initial Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12th December, 2006.

Final proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy, together with the Capital programme and recommendations for the level of Council Tax, will be approved at the meeting of the Executive on 9th January and submitted to the Council on the 6th March, 2007.

Comments may be made in writing to

**Budget Consultation,
SSC
FREEPOST MID 21881
Codsall,
Nr Wolverhampton,
South Staffordshire,
WV8 1BR**

By fax to Budget Consultation on:
01902 696136

Or by e-mail to:
budgetconsultation@sstaffs.gov.uk

District Council Budget

It is important to bear in mind that this document and the budget setting process it refers to is concerned solely with the budget and council tax for **South Staffordshire District Council**. Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority and the 27 parish councils within the District all have their own

budget setting processes. They set their budgets during January and February each year, notifying the District Council of their requirements when their budgets are set.

The District Council, as "billing authority", acts as the council tax collector on behalf of all these bodies, sending out a combined bill to the local taxpayers, collecting the payments and passing on the various shares at agreed stages throughout the financial year. South Staffordshire Council has no control over the budgets or levels of council tax set by the other bodies.

The table below sets out the budgetary requirements for each of the other authorities involved for the current financial year, along with the resulting charges. (These are shown at Band D equivalent only. Properties in other bands are charged proportions or multiples of the Band D charge based on a nationally agreed formula. A - 6/9, B - 7/9, C - 8/9, E - 11/9, F - 13/9, G - 15/9 and H - 18/9.)

Authority	Budget Requirement £	2006/07 Tax Levied £	% of Total Bill
Staffordshire County Council	34,641,775	902.85	72.75
Staffordshire Police Authority	5,852,451	152.53	12.29
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority	2,202,523	57.40	4.62
South Staffordshire Council	3,250,253	84.71	6.83
Parish Councils	1,670,734	43.54	3.51
Total	£47,617,736	£1,241.03	100.00

The table (*above*) shows South Staffordshire Council will keep for its own purposes less than 7% of the money that it will collect this year.

Nationwide, only four district councils set a lower level of council tax than South Staffordshire in 2006/07. (*Source CIPFA Council Tax Demands and Precepts 2006-07*).

This is the result of the application over many years of sound financial practices, the consistent application of the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and careful control of what is, and remains, public money.

This consultation refers only to the budget for South Staffordshire District Council.

Aims of the Budget

In setting its budget, the Council faces many challenges, some beyond its direct control.

The Executive of the Council proposes a budget in line with the Council's longstanding aim to keep council tax as low as possible, whilst continuing to deliver the quality services people need and value.

Background Briefing

Central Government has imposed many new duties and changes on local authorities over recent years. Significant work has had to be put into these new areas by the Council, for

example the regime of Best Value Reviews and requirements to collect data for statutory performance indicators and Comprehensive Performance Assessments.

Some of these new tasks have received specific and targeted funding to enable the Council to make initial progress, such as recycling and the advancement of electronic government. However, these activities will involve continued revenue expenditure by the Council in future years.

South Staffordshire Council benefited from an increase in core Central Government funding in 2006/07 compared with the previous year of almost £920,000 (16%). It is especially important to ensure that this money is invested wisely in services that will bring maximum benefit to the residents of the District.

Partnerships

The Council is raising its voice and influence in

new partnership arrangements with other public bodies on behalf of South Staffordshire people in areas which affect their lives: health, crime and disorder, transport, education, social benefits, are just some.

A Local Strategic Partnership has been formed, comprising representatives of bodies with an interest in public services in South Staffordshire. It will actively seek out the views, opinions and ideas of local people and encourage them to participate in deliberations. The proposed Staffordshire Local Area Agreement with Central Government will also require enhanced partnership working.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The current strategy covering the period up to and including 2010-2011 was approved by the Council on 7th March this year. It is based on a detailed projection of current service provision costs and known new developments and takes into account the effects of inflation on both pay and prices. This report marks the first step, following the approval of the Budget and Policy Framework and Timetable, in updating the current strategy for factors and developments that have changed since then. The result will be a new strategy covering the period up until 2011/2012 and a budget and council tax requirement for 2007/08.

There are many factors to be taken into account. These include the level of financial reserves, assumptions on inflation and interest rates and spending requirements identified since the budget was set.

All of these, and any others that emerge over the coming weeks, will be evaluated and taken into account before the next stage of the process, which is the publication by the Executive at its meeting on 5th December, of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and initial budget proposals.

Service Challenge 2006

This process, headed by the Council's elected members, took place during September and saw close scrutiny of current and proposed service plans across the Authority. Once again, the focus was on enhanced service provision in pursuit of Council objectives through increased efficiency. Proposals for efficiency savings and enhanced service provision were costed and built into the budget plan.

Central Government Expectations

Last year the Government announced that it would consider capping councils proposing council tax increases of more than 5%. South Staffordshire Council was able to agree a medium term financial strategy which will see increases pegged to 3% each year.

Central Government Funding

Two-thirds of the Council's funding comes from Central Government in the form of South Staffordshire's share of the national business rate pool (£5.541m in 2006/07) and revenue support grant (£1.069m), a total of £6.610m. Indicative figures for 2007/08 were received as part of last year's settlement process indicating an increase of 4.63% to £6.916m.

You can help

The Council's elected members and its officers will continue to search for efficiency savings and improvements across all services, with a brief to maintain or improve service quality and to achieve tight performance targets. Through its partnership working, the Council will continue to bid for funds, to bring in partner contributions and to gain economies of scale in order to make South Staffordshire a better place in which to live and work.

If there is any point, large or small, concerning the Council's finances or services you feel should be taken into account when the Executive draws up its detailed budget proposals, let us know by whatever means you find convenient. The deadline for representations is: 24th November 2006.

Thank you in advance
for your time.

Double tops for Coven



Yvonne Millward, (second on the right) celebrates Coven winning the Best Kept Village Award.

The parish of Brewood & Coven has had a double celebration this year - A Best Kept Village award and the champions trophy in the annual South Staffordshire Inter-Parish Games.

Coven took the accolade as Best Kept Village 2006, thanks to the tireless efforts of a 30-strong team of volunteer workers. The team's co-ordinator, Yvonne Millward said; "I am really proud of our achievements in Coven. The village really came together to win this award".

Brewood & Coven together showed their community spirit in capturing the Inter-Parish Games trophy. Paul Guest, organiser of the Inter-Parish Games for Brewood and Coven said, "This is the second year running Brewood and Coven has won the Inter-Parish Games and it is really good news that the hard work and commitment of our competitors has paid off."

Both awards demonstrate not only a real sense of community involvement in the parish, but also the commitment of individual volunteers whose tireless work improves the quality of life for the residents of South Staffordshire.

• If you want to know more about the Best Kept Village Competition please contact the Community Council of Staffordshire on 01785 242525; for the Inter-Parish Games please contact Victoria Haynes on 01902 696519.



Paul Guest (second on the right) Inter-Parish Games Event.



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO LET

**Landywood Enterprise Park,
Great Wyrley**

874 - 4,500 sq ft (various sizes)

**Heathmill Enterprise Centre,
Wombourne**

2,350 sq ft

**South Staffs Business Park,
Cheslyn Hay**

2,422 sq ft

Contact:

Glen Parker, Commercial Development Section,
Council Offices, Codsall, South Staffordshire WV8 1PX

Tel: 01902 696117 Fax: 01902 696705

Email: g.parker@sstaffs.gov.uk

Environment-conscious Villagers at Essington have banded together to help protect their community and put environmental issues on the local agenda.

The Friends of Essington were formed by four people who met at a South Staffordshire 'Environmental Eye' meeting barely a year ago.

But since then the group has gone from strength to strength and now boasts a membership in excess of 60!

Their shared aims are to enhance and protect their local environment by raising public awareness and engaging the local community in their projects.

Monthly meetings, held every second Thursday in the month, enable the committee to discuss and organise projects.

Keeping an eye on Essington

The meetings also feature an open forum for members to raise any issues and concerns.

Since being formed, by Colin Richards, Paul Woolley, Wayne Whitehouse and Jon Hanson in August 2005, the group now has a formal structure, with a chair, serving officers and a committee. It also has the full blessing of both South Staffordshire Council and the County Council.

Members of the group have a wide range of interests and this is reflected in the range of projects that have been tackled, including village awareness walks, litter picking and clearing and planting areas of the village.

The latest completed project was the planting of the traffic island at the junction of Cannock Road and Bognop Road. (Plants were donated by Essington Fruit Farm and mulch by Holly Bush Nurseries).

In addition, an area of Shoal Hill Common has been cleared to encourage wild life to be attracted to the area, in particular ground nesting birds. No trees were harmed during the operation, a number of saplings were 'rescued' and subsequently replanted in a selected area close to the Green Pool in Essington.

Bat and bird boxes have also been located in the woods adjacent to the pool's area off

Brownshore Lane.

Fund raising events such as Quiz Nights give the group a social side as well.

Local authorities and other land owners are contacted for their permission before projects are carried out and the membership is kept informed by e-mail, telephone and, to date, two newsletters.

The group is forging links with the local primary school, St. John's (CE). An introductory talk about the

group was given at a school assembly and pupils were invited to take part in a competition to design a logo for the group, the winning designer receiving a Bill Oddie Wildlife Book.

In the future, the group will be undertaking joint planting tasks and building and positioning of wildlife refuges with the children and teachers in the coming months.

guided walks

Other projects underway and in the pipeline include regular guided walks local and further afield, a new sponsored traffic

island enhancement, village gateways, an evening bat walk, litter clearance and signage cleaning and refurbishment.

An unforeseen benefit from the group has been the new friendships that have been and continue to be formed, bringing a stronger sense of community to the village.

The group has plans for non-fund raising social events in the near future, simply just to have a good time!

For further information contact Colin Richards on (01902) 722789 or Paul Woolley on (07803) 253558.

Electoral Update

Residents of South Staffordshire are reminded that the deadline for electoral registration is 27th November, 2006.

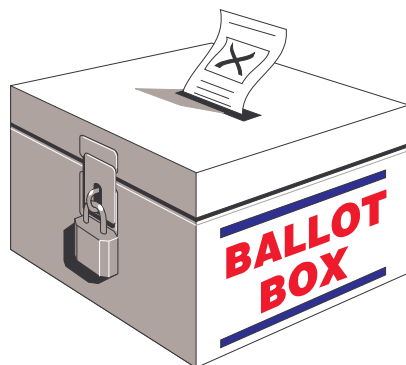
Your electoral registration form must be returned by this date so you can be included on the revised electoral register, which will be published on 1st December.

This register will be the basis for voting in next May's District and Parish elections. Another point to bear in mind is that your credit rating may also be affected if you are not on the register.

If you have not already returned the form, or registered by the free phone, or on-line, please do it now!

The Council's electoral registration department would like to thank all those households who sent their survey forms back promptly. It helps the Council to improve and raise standards. The results will be published in the next edition of the "Review".

For further information on registering and voting please phone (01902) 696121 or e-mail elections@sstaffs.gov.uk



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX SERVICES

MONDAY

9.30am - 12.30pm Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, **WOMBOURNE**, WV5 9HA
Tel: (01902) 897757

9.30am - 12.30pm The Health Centre, High Street, **KINVER**, DY7 6HL
Tel: (01384) 872999

WEDNESDAY

10.00am - 4.00pm The Village Hall, Pinfold Lane, **CHESLYN HAY**, WS6 7HP
Tel: (01922) 413338

9.30am - 12.30pm and
1.00pm - 4.00pm Community Centre, Church Road, **PERTON**, WV6 7PD
Tel: (01902) 745667

THURSDAY

9.30am - 12.30pm The Haling Dene Centre, Cannock Road, **PENKRIDGE**, ST19 5DT
Tel: (01785) 716767

10.00am - 1.00pm Codsall Village Hall, Wolverhampton Road, **CODSALL**, WV8 1PW
Tel: (01902) 843412

FRIDAY

9.30am - 12.30pm The Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, **WOMBOURNE**, WV5 9HA
Tel: (01902) 897757

FREE CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE



2006-2007
Transforming the Delivery of
Services Through Partnerships

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REVIEW



An appointment at the Palace



Off to the Palace went Cllr Keith James and his wife Gwyneth, with Chairman of the Council, Cllr Mrs. Kath Perry and her husband Ray.

The Chairman of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Mrs. Kath Perry, had a Royal appointment during the Summer.

She and her husband Ray, together with Cllr Keith James and his wife Gwyneth, had a 'once in a lifetime' experience of attending a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

As an added treat for the foursome, they were taken to London for their special day by a chauffeur-driven car.

The party took place in July and Cllr Mrs. Perry said: "What an honour and a privilege it was, as Chairman, to be able to represent South Staffordshire at Her Majesty the Queen's Garden Party. Both Ray and I were deeply grateful for the opportunity, and will treasure this special day as one of the most memorable in my year as Chairman."

Cllr James added: "My wife and I were delighted to be invited - it was certainly a day to remember and will be for many years to come."

The Customer must always come First!



South Staffordshire showed its commitment to improving services by taking part in National Customer Service Week in October.

The Council's face-to-face customer contact centre, 'Solutions', launched the Customer Satisfaction Survey and Customer Suggestion Scheme during the week.

The Satisfaction Survey revealed an overwhelming positive response from our visitors with 63% stating that the facilities provided in 'Solutions' excellent. Importantly, 73% of our visitors rated our staff as excellent.

The 'Solutions' staff are determined not to be complacent with the excellent results of this recent survey and to improve services a Customer Suggestion Scheme has been launched.

Phil Hardy, the Head of Customer and Electoral Services said, "We are particularly interested to learn how you view the services you receive from 'Solutions'. Our aim is to review and continually improve what we do so that we provide you with the best possible experience every time you visit."

To encourage visitors to participate in the Customer Suggestion Scheme there is now a quarterly prize draw worth £25 of high-street vouchers. Next time you visit 'Solutions' please take the time to write your comments on the suggestion cards that are freely available and put them in the box provided.

For further information on what the Council is providing please contact Phil Hardy, the Head of Customer and Electoral Services on 01902 696119.

Folk Festival scores a Hit

This year's Baggeridge Folk Festival - held in the grounds of South Staffordshire's beautiful Country Park - has been hailed yet another huge success.

This was the seventh annual folk festival at Baggeridge, organised by South Staffordshire Council Community Services. The event attracted nearly 2,000 people, over the course of the weekend, to see great groups like The Band of Rack n Ruin and solo performances from the likes of Eddie Morton.

Neither campers nor day visitors were put off by heavy showers on the Saturday as they enjoyed live performances from The Toads, Ananfa, Eddie Morton, Bedlam Phoney Folk and Bill Ding and the Regulations. The Band of Rack n Ruin headlined Saturday evening's line up leaving the crowd shouting for more!

With Sunday's weather picking up and the sun shining, Morris dancers, circus skills workshop, balloon modellers, donkey rides and inflatable fun kept families entertained whilst a ceilidh band warmed everyone up whilst music from the Isambarade, Phil and Rosie Bates and R Cajun kept those feet tapping until the early evening.

Next year's event will take place over the weekend of Friday 31st August, 1st September and Sunday 2nd September at Baggeridge Country Park.

Further details will appear on the folk festival website, www.sstaffs.gov.uk



'Graham and Helen' open the performances on Saturday

Festival enthusiasts enjoy a bite to eat before the bands perform.

Pictures courtesy of Express & Star



For Further Information:

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں
 ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਨਕਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ
 अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें
 ਜੇ તમને આ દસ્તાਵેજની નકਲ તમારી ભાષામાં ખેંਚતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને સંપર્ક કરો
 যদি আপনি এই দস্তাবেজের আপনার ভাষায় প্রতিলিপি চান অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন
 假如閣下希望索取中文版的本文件，請聯絡

If you would like a copy of this document in another language or format (eg. Braille, audio cassette), please contact:

**South Staffordshire Council,
Council Offices,
Codsall,
South Staffordshire.
WV8 1PX
Tel: (01902) 696000**


SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

CONTACTS:

**Tel: (01902) 696000
Fax: (01902) 696800
Website: www.sstaffs.gov.uk**

OPENING TIMES

for personal visits to the Council's
Customer Contact Centre are:

8.45am to 5.00pm - Monday, Wednesday,
Thursday & Friday
8.45am to 8.00pm - Tuesday
9.30am to 1.00pm - Saturday

FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE



Core Strategy *Summary of Issues & Options*

Local Development Framework

A New System

The planning system is changing. Under the new system, the South Staffordshire Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the Local Plan. The LDF is a collection of documents setting out the Council's policies for development and land use up to 2021.

The Framework- What are we doing now?

The LDF will contain many separate documents. Those which the Council is currently preparing are shown below.



This Summary aims to explain what we are proposing in the Core Strategy and how you can be involved!

What is the Core Strategy?

This is a key document in the LDF which will set out our long term vision and aims for South Staffordshire.

It will not identify specific sites for development – that will come later in other Development Plan Documents – but it will identify broad locations where housing development could take place. It will look at how best to use the land we have available to create quality places and strong communities, that people will enjoy living and working in, and be attractive to visitors too.

The Core Strategy will steer development to the right place at the right time and will help the District to grow and prosper in a managed way, so that we can meet our needs and the needs of future generations.

What You Can Do?

You can help us to focus on what is important for South Staffordshire by telling us what you think about our approach.

Overleaf you will see a set of key issues for South Staffordshire. Have we got it right? Are we moving in the right direction? Is there an important issue we have missed? Your response will help us to determine what will make South Staffordshire a better place for all.

This is just a summary of what is contained in the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper. If you would like more detailed information on this or any other document in the Local Development Framework, please contact a member of the Development Plans team.



“Creating a Sustainable Future for South Staffordshire”

- PULL OUT AND KEEP -

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy ...

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Key Issues

The Core Strategy contains a set of key issues, which we think are important for South Staffordshire. They are explained in greater detail in the Issues and Options Paper, but they are summarised here to give you an idea of the challenges we face. To help achieve these aims, we will develop a set of Core Policies that we believe will give us the best chance to bring forward what is best for the District. It is very important that we get this right. Please tell us if you think that the issues we have highlighted are the right ones? Are there any issues you feel we have missed? Let us have your views so that the policies we put into the Core Strategy will be built on firm foundations.

Who is Involved?

We aim to reach everyone we think will have a view on what is important for the future of South Staffordshire.

This will include your Parish Council, local businesses, partners, land owners, developers and of course our residents.

If you wish to discuss the Core Strategy Issues and Options, or would like to be added to our database so that we can keep you up-to-date with progress on the LDF, then please contact the Development Plans Team on 01902 696423/317 or email: developmentplans@sstaffs.gov.uk

Green Belt and Open Countryside

We know that the protection of the Green Belt is a high priority for our residents. Our aim is to protect the Green Belt from unwanted development and to maintain and enhance the character and quality of our countryside and villages.

Housing

There is strong pressure on the housing market in South Staffordshire. We need to look at the type of housing needed and, in particular, the amount of affordable housing to meet local needs. It will be important to consider design and density and to ensure the character and distinctiveness of our villages are taken into account.

Sustainable Communities

We aim to improve the quality of life in the District and believe that a thriving and sustainable community needs access to good local facilities and services. We will aim to ensure that new housing developments will provide adequate facilities including green spaces, education, health care and transport.

Locations for Growth

Our aim is to ensure that future growth in the District happens in the right place, at the right time. In doing so, we will need to take account of the housing and employment requirements set for us by the West Midlands Region.

Local Economy

We need to think about our employment opportunities, how we can support existing businesses and attract new ones, and how we can help support the rural economy. Tourism too has an important role to play, and we have to decide how we can promote tourism in a way that will not harm the qualities that makes South Staffordshire an attractive place to visit.

Natural Environment

South Staffordshire has a diverse and distinctive natural environment, which we aim to protect and enhance. We have a responsibility to ensure that the rich landscape and the wildlife it supports is passed on to future generations in an improved state. We will also be looking at ways to deal with the effects of climate change and to promote the use of renewable energy in new development.

Transport and Accessibility

We will be looking at ways in which we can reduce our reliance on the car and the need to travel. This will mean encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, such as cycling and walking and to support schemes to improve public transport. We will give consideration to the best locations for new development that will reduce our need to travel.

Leisure Recreation and Culture

Open space and recreation facilities should be available to everyone. We aim to protect and enhance existing facilities, and ensure that new open spaces and green areas are provided where they are needed. We want to make sure that there are opportunities for the whole community to enjoy the facilities and activities South Staffordshire has to offer.

Community Safety and Design

South Staffordshire is a safe place to live with overall crime figures reducing. We need to ensure that opportunities are taken to plan out crime in new development. Good design in the creation of buildings, streets and spaces will help our communities to be safer and more secure, whilst respecting the special character and distinctiveness of our villages.

Historic Environment

South Staffordshire has a valuable historic environment with many fine buildings, historic parklands and gardens. We also recognise the value of locally important buildings and structures that make a significant contribution to the character of our villages. It is important to protect, conserve and enhance this legacy for the enjoyment of all and for future generations.

Have your say on the future of South Staffordshire

Local Development Framework: The Core Strategy

Community Strategy

One of the changes in the new system is that we need to move away from traditional land use planning to a new 'spatial' approach – basically looking at not only how the LDF will affect land, but how other strategies and plans will play their part too.

One of the most important strategies is the Community Strategy – prepared by a group known as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is made up of a number of public, private and voluntary bodies, such as local businesses, health authorities, police etc all of whom have an interest in South Staffordshire. There will be strong links between the LDF and the Community Strategy as they share common aims and objectives. Other strategies, such as the Crime Reduction Partnership Community Safety Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Housing Strategy, will play their part too. Working in partnership we hope that South Staffordshire will grow and develop for the benefit of all.

For more information on the LSP telephone (01902) 696229.



“We will strive to make South Staffordshire a safe and healthy place to live, with prosperous villages and thriving communities, where everyone can develop their abilities to the full, and pass on to future generations a better environment.”

Shared vision - South Staffordshire Community Strategy, Corporate Strategy and LDF.



Sustainable Communities

What does sustainable mean? It's a simple idea of planning for a better quality of life for everyone, both now and for future generations.

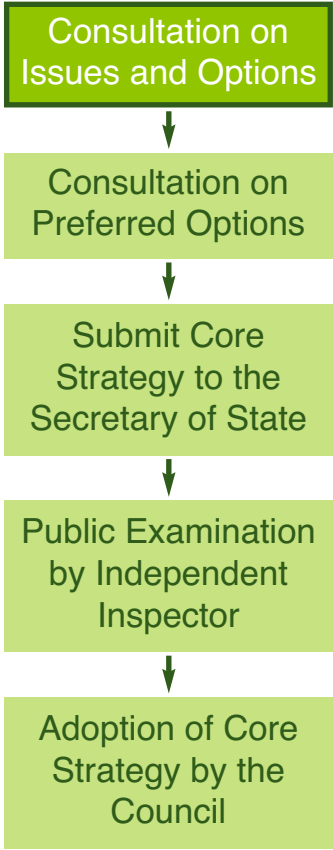
We need to get the balance right in protecting both the natural and built environment, but also look to our future needs. For example, the location and type of new housing and employment development, transport issues, design, and access to a good range of services and facilities will be guided by the Core Strategy and will ensure we promote sustainable communities.

“Together we need to make sure that we plan for the successful future of South Staffordshire”

What Happens Next?

This is the first stage in the consultation process on the Core Strategy. We will be holding a number of exhibitions across the District and staff will be available to explain the Core Strategy Issues and Options in more detail. After the six-week consultation period has ended we will look at all the information sent to us and prepare a Preferred Options document, which will take into account the comments we have received. There will then be a further consultation period, following which a final document will be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State. An Independent Inspector will be appointed to examine the Core Strategy and objectors will have the chance to make representations to the Inspector.

For exhibition times, dates and locations see www.sstaffs.gov.uk or parish council offices and libraries throughout the District, or telephone (01902) 696426/696317.



Your Views Count!

The Core Strategy Issues and Options paper has now been published for consultation. Please let us have your views in writing by completing a response form, or by letter or email to:

Development Plans Manager
 South Staffordshire Council
 Council Offices
 Codsall
 South Staffordshire
 WV8 1PX
Email: developmentplans@sstaffs.gov.uk
Fax: 01902 696403

Copies of the full Core Strategy Issues and Options document, or a response form are available on our website at www.sstaffs.gov.uk

Copies are also available at libraries across the District and from your local Parish Council.

If you require any further information or would like to speak to a member of the Development Plans Team, please telephone 01902 696426/423/317.

* Please note that any comments you make are not confidential and may be made publicly available.

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Telephone: (01902) 696000