



Research Report



South Staffordshire Budget Consultation October 2007

**Prepared for: South Staffordshire
District Council**

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Prepared for: South Staffordshire District Council

Prepared by: Steven Handley & BMG Research's Qualitative Research team

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

BMG has been commissioned by South Staffordshire Council to assist in developing priorities for allocation of resources for the forthcoming financial year. South Staffordshire Council has produced a list of proposed schemes that could be included in the forthcoming budget plans. Work was needed to consult with local residents in order to gather their views on these schemes, and to arrange these in terms of perceived priority to them as residents.

To inform the decision making process required for the forthcoming financial year residents were firstly invited to discuss and prioritise the five key aims that the Council holds namely:

- To be a Council which celebrates and improve South Staffordshire's distinctive environment
- To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit
- To be a prosperous district with thriving communities
- To be a District which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities
- To be a well managed Council and Community Leader

Residents were then asked to consider the types of spending (capital and revenue) proposed under each of these aims, with respondents having the opportunity to feed into and react to the schemes put forward. This research aims to provide an overview of reactions to the proposed schemes in the forthcoming budget, and to allow the Council to evaluate the priorities of residents against those of the Council. The aim is to assist the Council to plan spending around a better understanding of residents' needs.

1.2 Methodology

Residents were consulted by means of recruitment to four focus group discussions, held within the local community. All those recruited were existing members of South Staffordshire District Council's residents panel ("The Viewpoint Panel"). Groups, were held in Kinver, Cheslyn Way, Perton and Brewood during the week commencing 29th October 2007 and the week commencing 5th November 2007. For each group 15 individuals were recruited to ensure that a minimum of 10 turned up on the day. As the table below shows each group was well attended:

Group	Location	Attendance
Group 1:	Kinver	12 people

Group 2:	Perton	13 people
Group 3:	Cheslyn Hay	12 people
Group 4:	Brewood	10 people

Respondents were a mix of males and females in both groups, with a cross section of age groups represented.

The groups were moderated by BMG Research's In house qualitative research team, a full topic guide can be found in Appendix 1. Both sessions were audio recorded with the prior permission of respondents. Each respondent was given £20 in cash as a thank you for attending the group.

It is important to bare in mind the age and demographic of the groups when considering the views and priorities put forward. The two groups provide a 'snapshot' of the views of those particular residents and should not be read as 'representative' of the views of the whole community- albeit, they maybe indicative, or reflect wider local opinion. Views on priority schemes tended to reflect, or skew toward the concerns of an older and ageing population and this caveat should be borne in mind when reading this report.

1.2.1 Enabling techniques

In order to stimulate discussion of the topics under examination, respondents were send an outline of the schemes proposed for the forthcoming budget, with a description of the aims and function of each included. Respondents were therefore pre-tasked to read these prior to attending the groups to enable a more informed and full discussion of the topic. (See Appendix 2)

During the groups sessions, BMG moderators asked respondents to break out and discuss in smaller groups which of the proposed capital and revenue schemes would be prioritised, and why.

Following this, groups reported back their choices with the rationale for each of their choices. The groups then had the opportunity to discuss these in more detail. Individual group choices were recorder a well as subsequent censuses and differences across the groups. This technique enabled BMG researchers to open up the discussion and lead into more detailed examination of the topic. The technique was 'a bit of fun' designed to introduce respondents to thinking about budget allocation and planning, and to place themselves in the role of the council's budget planners. A full explanation of the operation of the method is in the topic guide (Appendix 1).

2 Research results

2.1 Discussion of the Council's stated aims

Each group was asked to discuss the five stated areas of the Council. The outcome of these discussions are summarised briefly below.

Table 1: Rank order of aims by area

	Aim	Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
(1)	To be a council which celebrates and improves S.Staffs distinctive environment	1=	5	5	4	5
(2)	To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit	1=	1=	3=	1=	1
(3)	To be a prosperous district with thriving communities	3	3	3=	1=	2
(4)	To be a district which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities	4	4	2	3	4
(5)	To be a well managed council and community leader	5	1=	1	4	3

Aim 1: To be a council which celebrates and improves South Staffordshire's Distinctive Environment.

On balance this was considered a lower priority for the Council by the groups: two placed this as lowest priority (5th, Perton and Cheslyn Hay), one in fourth place (Brewood). Only the Kinver group considered this to be a more significant issue locally, placing it equal first (alongside priority 2, a healthy and safe community). The Kinver group considered that this priority should be valued alongside that of pursuing a healthy and safe district, as the two together made all of the other desired outcomes more likely.

Those groups who did not have this aim higher on their list of priorities generally found it lacked substance, was too nebulous and intangible. Also, it is considered by some to 'state the obvious', without offering any real value back to local residents.

Aim 2: To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit.

This priority was generally placed highly by all of the groups: it was the top priority for three groups, being placed third by only Cheslyn Hay. For many this encapsulated what are recognised nationally as big issues: the healthy and safe agendas. It also touched on the sense of community in terms of a place to live, and prosperity with regard to being a good place to work in and visit.

The group in Cheslyn Hay placed this in third position, largely as a result of considering cause and effect: in order to have money to invest in safety and health initiatives an area needs to be prosperous, and the most prosperous areas were considered to be those that are healthier and safer. Hence it was deduced that to achieve this aim, an area also needed to be prosperous: the two aims were seen as inter-related.

Indeed two of the groups made the link between these two aims: Cheslyn Hay and Brewwood. In Brewwood however, these two aims were given joint top priority. The group in Perton linked this aim with being a well run Council and Community leader, and the Kinver group placed it joint first with being a Council which celebrates and improves South Staffs distinctive environment.

So, all groups linked this with one other aim (the only aim to be considered in this way). This suggests that for many people achieving a healthy and safe community is seen as being an outcome of or at least as having a relationship with other Council priorities.

Aim 3: To be a prosperous district with thriving communities.

Overall, this aim could be considered to be the second highest priority (after healthy and safe) as it was not positioned below third place by any group, and was given top priority by one group (Brewwood).

The group in Kinver considered that their area was already relatively prosperous. However, some in the group did not see this as a universally positive feature of the local area, as prosperity for some can mean lack of affordability for others. In this respect, the group considered part of pursuing this aim should be for the Council to achieve balance and equality for all residents.

In Cheslyn Hay, the group considered that the aim is directly linked with the healthy and safe agenda. The Brewwood group re-emphasised this link, stating that if an area is not safe, employers will leave, hence reducing prosperity.

Aim 4: A district which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities.

This is the second lowest rated priority overall.

The groups in Kinver and Perton each positioned this as the fourth priority. This was not necessarily a reflection of the aim being seen as unimportant, but more over not as important as those aims placed above it by these groups.

The group in Cheslyn Hay gave this aim its highest ranking in second place. This was as a result of linking this aim to the outcome of a safer community, as if people – especially young people – are engaged in a learning environment it raises aspirations and “keeps them off the streets”.

In Brewwood, this aim was placed as third priority, as the group made the connection between lifelong learning and community prosperity, which was this group's highest priority.

Aim 5: To be a well managed Council and Community leader.

The groups were some what polarised regarding their views on this aim. The groups in Perton and Cheslyn Hay rated this as their top priority, as without this other outcomes cannot be delivered: everything else is seen to follow from this. By contrast, the other two groups place this aim in either fourth (Brewwood) or fifth place (Kinver). This is not because this aim is seen as unimportant, but more because it should be seen as a given: if the Council is not achieving this aim, they should not be there.

2.2 Summary of activities mentioned by 2 groups or more

As the summary below shows, most of the options selected by two or more groups relate to aim 2. This is perhaps not surprising, as aim 2 was clearly the highest priority emerging from the four groups. It is also important to note that the only activities mentioned by all four groups relate to aim 2, and specifically to activities for children and young people. (Although many people saw these activities operating together).

It is also interesting to note that many of the other activities mentioned by two or more groups relate to aim 1, which actually emerged as the lowest ranking priority across the groups. This suggests that the substance underpinning the aim was not clearly understood by the groups: Whilst they do not place high priority on the aim, they do support the activities which underpin it.

* Options mentioned by 4 groups:-

Children's and young people's coaching (Aim 2)

Children's and young person's administration (Aim 2)

* Options mentioned by 3 groups:-

Stay safe scheme (Aim 2)

Extension of CCTV control room monitoring contract (Aim 2)

Additional mechanical sweeper (Aim 1)

* Options mentioned by 2 groups:-

Best kept garden competition (Aim 1)

Major Public Open spaces (Aim 1)

Local development framework examinations (Aim 1)

New + replacement recycling containers (Aim 1)

Leisure centre decoration (Aim 2)

Domestic abuse co-ordinator	(Aim 2)
DDA leisure centres	(Aim 2)
Refurbishment of Codsall swimming pool	(Aim 2)
Big summer event	(Aim 4)
Members initiatives	(Aim 5)

Other more localised options

A number of options specific to local areas were identified as priorities but only by those communities to which they relate. This is perhaps not surprising.

These include:-

- Ranger for Wyrley Essington Branch Canal + Wombrook Walk
- Brick Bridge Lane open spaces
- Engineering + environmental Improvements – Crown Bridge
- Engineering + Environmental Improvements – High St, Kinver
- Footpath repairs – Baggeridge Country Park
- Demolition of garages, Chapel Lane, Codsall
- Perton Fitness Centre
- Tree management system – Baggeridge Country Park + S.Staffs Railway Walk
- Wombrook Walk
- Additional CCTV camera at Four Ashes, Nr Brewood
- Education centre, Baggeridge Country Park

The exception to this however was the refurbishment of Codsall swimming pool, mentioned by both Perton and Brewood.

2.3 Summary of activities mentioned under Aims:-

The following set of tables identify more options selected by at least one of the groups.
(Note: Each group was split into two sub groups and asked to select the ten options which they consider priorities).

Aim 1 to be a council which celebrates + improve S.Staffs distinctive environment		Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
REVENUE						
1	Best kept garden competition	√		√		2
3	Ranger for Wyrley, Essington Branch Canal + Wombrook Walk				√	1
4	Major public open spaces	√			√	2
5	Local devt framework examinations	√		√		2
CAPITAL						
43	Additional mechanical sweeper		√	√	√	3
44	Brick bridge lane open space	√				1
45	Engineering + environmental imp – Crown Bridge				√	1
46	Depot waste handling improvements	√				1
47	New + replacement recycling containers	√	√			2
50	Engineering + enviro improvements – Mirth St Kinver	√				1

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Aim 2. To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit.		Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
REVENUE						
6	Additional pest control officer				√	1
7	Extension of CCTV control room monitoring contract	√	√		√	3
8	Homelessness support officer				√	1
9	Children + young people's coaching	√	√	√	√	4
10	Children + young persons administration	√	√	√	√	4
11	Leisure centre decoration	√	√			2
12	Domestic abuse co-ordinator			√	√	2
13	Footpath repairs Baggeridge Country Park	√				1
14	Health promotion Team supplies + services				√	1
16	Alley gating			√		1
17	Demolition of garages, Chapel Lane, Codsall				√	1
19	Stay safe scheme		√	√	√	3
CAPITAL						
53	DDA leisure centres		√	√		2
55	Refurbishment of Codsall swimming pool		√		√	2
56	Perton fitness centre		√			1
57	Tree management system – Baggeridge Country Park + South Staffs Railway Walk					
58	Wombrook Walk	√				1
59	Additional CCTV camera at Four Ashes, Nr Brewood.				√	1

Aim 3. To be a prosperous district with thriving communities.		Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
REVENUE						
24	E-services support			√		1
CAPITAL						
60	Education centre, Baggeridge Country Park		√			1

Aim 4. To be a district which encourages + promotes lifelong learning opportunities.		Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
REVENUE						
28	Big Summer event	√	√			2
CAPITAL						
63	Local view/internet	√				1
66	Additional telephony for contact centre	√		√		2

Aim 5. To be a well managed council + community leader.		Kinver	Perton	Cheslyn Hay	Brewood	Overall
REVENUE						
31	Big Summer event	√		√		2
32	Discretionary housing payments		√			1
33	Local housing allowance scheme		√			1
34	Benefits – loan and training					
					√	1

2.4 NOT WANTED BY ANY OF THE GROUPS

2.4.1 AIM 1

Revenue

2 - Grange Road POS Penkridge

To make specific improvements to the site in preparation for “Green Pennant” submission (Jan 09).

15 - Maintenance of Closed Churchyards

To maintain Closed Churchyards including safety testing of memorials.

Capital

48 - Street Cleansing – Inspection Recording

The project involves a system to record street cleansing inspection data on site in an electronic format. This would increase efficiency by removing the need to key in written notes back at the office.

49 - Engineering and environmental improvements – Central Core High Street, Kier

This project includes environmental improvements to the High Street over and above Staffordshire County Council's standard engineering improvement works with the aim of creating a higher quality public realm on the central core of the High Street.

2.4.2 AIM2

Revenue

8 - Industrial Estates - Electrical Certification Works

To undertake a planned three year programme of electrical inspections leading to certification of the Council's industrial estates.

Capital

51 - South Staffordshire thermal infra-red imaging survey

To identify premises with inadequate insulation, excessive heat loss and/or heat use and through direct and indirect grant aid and advice reduce fuel poverty in the district.

52 - Industrial Estates - Electrical Certification Works

To undertake any rectification works identified by the planned programme of electrical certification inspection of the Council's industrial estates.

54 - Penkridge Leisure Centre Toning Table Replacement

The toning tables at Penkridge Leisure Centre are now 12 years old and showing their age. These need replacing to enable the service to continue and bring more customers into the centre.

2.4.3 AIM 3

Revenue

20 - Private Housing Sector Development Worker

Provision of a worker to develop links with the private rented sector to enable access to private housing for rent.

21 - Sub-Regional Housing Market Assessment

To enable the local authorities within our sub-region to gain a good appreciation of the characteristics of housing market areas and how they function.

22 - Tourism and Events Officers

To enable 1FTE Tourism Officer to become established within Strategic Services and 1FTE events officer to become established in Community Services.

23 - 2012 Olympics Co-ordinator

To maximise the local benefits of the Olympics including tourism, economic development, sports and arts and to coordinate a local legacy from the games.

25 - Planned Maintenance on Industrial Estates

To increase the industrial estates maintenance budgets (over and above the normal annual increase) to facilitate capacity for improved maintenance work schedules.

26 - Locality Working

To align District Council's community development capacity with the current developments around locality work and the county council's community and Learning Partnerships.

2.4.4 AIM 4

Revenue

27 - European Computer Driving Licence – Continuation of Training

To extend the training of staff and members in the use of IT to a recognised national standard, the European Computer Driving Licence, until June 2009.

Capital

61 - PAI/TLC Closure (Additional Resources)

Additional resources to assist in cleansing and validating existing "shifted" data and to also capture new datasets required internally for Automated Land Charge Answering. (The scheme also incorporates installation and rollout costs for future releases of CAPS UNI-form and TLC Software until 2010).

62 - LocalView Intranet

Update and replace outdated GIS Intranet solution (GIS-Net). Designed upon 2003 technology our existing web based mapping solution is no longer fit for purpose. ESRI now offer a future-proof and supported solution using modern technologies (xml) which integrates more readily with other systems using our existing platforms and GIS infrastructure (ArcSDE and ArcIMS).

64 - Extension Of Electronic Data Management Facility

To make provision for the Civica Electronic Data Management facility to be extended through the Council, improving the storage and retrieval of documents and increasing efficiency.

2.4.5 AIM 5

Revenue

29 - Information Technology Staffing Review

Resources for the provision of enhanced I.T. support for the Council's IT systems, network and corporate software systems.

30 - Project Management Development and Roll Out

The development of South Staffordshire Council's approach to Project Management and then providing training and support to all service managers so that they may apply it.

35 - Benefits – Euclidian Online Training

To provide online training to all staff on a regular basis to ensure that they are continually developed and tested in their knowledge of Revenues and Benefits.

NB These programmes are designed to help organizations access e-learning easily and cost effectively. The first Euclidian Online Training programme was funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and since then our product range has developed into an exciting range

of programmes in Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. 395 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales registered for the original online training programme for new entrants into Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and today, the service is used by over 100 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

36 - Partnership Information Analyst

The Information Analyst would work within Policy and Partnerships to deliver 'intelligence' from a wide range of data sources to inform LAA delivery planning and the localities agenda.

37 - Parish Officer

The proposal is to support the development of locality working across the district for two years at a cost of £20,000 per year.

38 - Housing - Archiving of Files on Comino

To copy all of the housing application forms and associated documents onto the Council's Comino Electronic Data Management System. This will make storage and retrieval of the documents more efficient.

39 - Enhanced Staffing Resources (Engineering Section)

Broadening the current Engineering Assistant's role plus creating a new post of Technical Assistant.

40 - Additional Staffing Resources (Building Control Section)

To provide essential support and cover to the Building Control Section to ensure that the service is able to function properly.

41 - Strategic Services Portfolio Plan – Reorganisation

The proposal is to merge the existing service units within Strategic Services.

42 - Support for Staffordshire Observatory

The County Council is asking for contributions for the Staffordshire Observatory, which is a central depository of LAA data, from all District Councils.

Capital

65 - HR/Payroll Management System

To replace the current outdated HR/Payroll system with a new one capable of providing enhanced performance management information to managers.

67 - Addition to 10 Year Plan – Replacement Internal Blinds

Addition to the improvements made by the window replacement project.

68 - Addition to 10 Year Plan – Internal Window Sill Replacement

Addition to the improvements made by the window replacement project.

69 - Production of Benefit Notification Letters via Forms cape

Automation of Benefit Notification Letters so they can be enveloped using the inserting machine and an image produced for automatic downloading onto Document Imaging System. The cost of the project is £6,000.

70 - Implementation of Benefits Electronic Claims System (BECS)

A web-enabled intelligent claim form that calculates entitlement as the user completes the form.

2.5 Selection of quotes to support choices

2.5.1 Additional Mechanical Sweeper and Recycling Containers

“Its like toy town with rubbish trucks. At least four trucks go up the road opposite and they’re collecting, recycling just for 19 houses”

“When you’ve only got two mechanical sweepers in the first place – it’s pointless. Get more sweepers”.

2.5.2 Leisure Centre Decoration

“It would be nice to have a leisure centre which has gone to rack and ruin”

2.5.3 Local Development Framework

“The thought of them robbing you, kids being on the street, drugs by the high school, police not doing anything about it”.

“You need the local development framework which is to cover the cost of preparing managing development plans”

2.5.4 Best Kept Garden Competition

“It is felt to encourage to encourage people into their front gardens and therefore more community interaction”.

“It improves the look of the area and should be developed to include all gardens and not just council properties”.

2.5.5 Major Public Open Spaces

“This is a good example of the sort of environmental project the council should be involved with”

2.5.6 Extension of CCTV

“Quite an effective way of controlling anti social behaviour”.

“It’s a useful anti crime measure the police need all the help they can get”

2.5.7 Young People

“9 and 10 should work together”

“To live out here – it’s a totally different world to living in the city. I never wanted my children to grow up in the city”.

“They’ve closed the youth clubs because there were problems with them”.

“Nothing for children, even less for teenagers”

“The park is disgusting as well to support all there children”

“The thought of them robbing you, kids being on the street, drugs by the high school, police not doing anything about it”.

“We need young people to do in the community rather than just cause trouble”

2.5.8 Codsall Swimming Pool

“Codsall is the nearest swimming pool to Brewood”

3 Appendix 1 – Topic Guide

3.1 Introduction (5 minutes)

Welcome and thank you for taking part in the group. I am/we are xxxx from BMG Research an independent research agency

Project commissioned by South Staffordshire Council. The aim is to talk to a cross-section of residents about your views on South Staffordshire's budget proposals for next year, and what the Schemes they should prioritise. The findings of this research will help South Staffordshire Council to ensure that they take into account residents' priorities regarding spending. Two types of spending will be looked at; Revenue and Capital. Revenue is the day-to-day spending on delivering services to the residents of South Staffordshire. It is paid for from council tax; an allocation from the national pool of business rates and central government grant allocation. Capital spending involves schemes to improve the Council's land and property and also to provide grants to supply more social housing, to improve the quality of existing houses and to enable disabled people to live in their own homes. A small amount of this money comes from central government with the majority coming from the Council's own capital reserves.

Confidentiality and anonymity: Assure group that they will remain anonymous and that the information they give will be put together with information obtained from other participants. No one will be identified in any quotes included in the report at the end of the study.

Permission to record the session: this is to make sure we capture what is said accurately and that we don't take up more of their time than is necessary by making notes.

Ground Rules: In order to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk and just as importantly a chance to be listened to we need to agree some ground rules for the session.

- Not to talk over each other
- Allow everyone a chance to speak
- Confidentiality within the group – no repercussions
- Feel free to say what you feel – (within reason – no abusive comments please)
- There are no wrong or right answers -Interested in a range of views and opinions

It is the moderators job to make sure all the questions are asked and everybody gets a chance to give their views. There are lots of questions to get through so please don't be offended if I ask you to move to a new topic and to keep your answers to the point.

Do you have any questions?

3.2 Warm Up (5 minutes)

First of all, perhaps you could each tell me a bit about yourself...?

- Your first name
- Your approximate age
- Where you live
- If you are working, what you do for a living

3.3 Living In South Staffordshire/Priorities (20 minutes)

- What are the best and worst things about living in your area?
- What are the big issues for people living in your area?
- What do you feel the Council's priorities should be?
- **(Prioritise aims 1 to 5)**

3.4 Team deliberation Exercise (50 minutes)

N.B The objective of this exercise is to assess the priorities of respondents by asking them to discuss what importance should be placed on ten schemes of their choosing, and to stimulate debate as to why those schemes are chosen.

Moderator Notes: For the first exercise I would like you to split yourselves into two/three groups. (Depending on number attending). Each group will nominate a spokesperson.

I would like you to study the cards each team has been given and imagine that as a team you are in charge of South Staffordshire's budget for next year. On the cards there are the 5 aims we have already discussed and under each aim there are a number of schemes. You need to decide which 10 schemes are most important. I would like you to consider both revenue and capital spending and to select schemes from both. Remember this is a deliberation exercise, so I would like each team to come to a democratic decision on each allocation. There are a lot of proposals to consider so perhaps each group could start by discarding any schemes they feel should not be considered.

We will reconvene in 20 minutes and then I would like each team to present their budget spending proposals; saying why you chose the schemes, whether you found it hard to choose between certain schemes, and why you discounted certain schemes. Thank you.

3.5 Breakout groups (30 mins)

3.6 Groups present findings (20 mins)

For each group probe for:

The process- First discards, Why?

Disagreements/Consensus in preferred choices, why?

3.7 Consensus on top ten priorities

3.8 Summing Up

Any other comments?

THANK AND CLOSE

4 Appendix 2 – Budget Options

Budget proposals for 2008/2009 for BMG

REVENUE:

This is the day to day spending on delivering services to the residents of South Staffordshire. It is paid for from council tax; an allocation from the national pool of business rates and central government grant allocation.

Aim 1: To be a Council which celebrates and improve South Staffordshire’s distinctive environment

Best Kept Garden Competition £20,000

To organise and coordinate the competition, which aims to promote pride in the community.

Grange Road POS Penkridge £5,000

To make specific improvements to the site in preparation for “Green Pennant” submission (Jan 09).

Ranger for Wyrley Essington Branch Canal and Wombrook Walk £20,000

To Provide a Part Time Ranger Service for the sites.

Major Public Open Spaces £5,000

To Provide Site Interpretation Boards on selected Major Open Spaces.

Local Development Framework Examinations £20,000

To enhance the Local Development Framework budget to cover the cost of preparing and managing Development Plan Document Examinations.

Aim 2: To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit

Additional Pest Control Officer £9,000 per year

To ensure sufficient resources are available to satisfy the Council’s statutory responsibilities and to effectively address requests for pest control services.

Extension of CCTV Control Room Monitoring Contract £11,000 per year

To retain the high quality CCTV monitoring service provided by the current contractor for a further 3 years before re-tendering.

Homelessness Support Officer £25,000 per year

A scheme to provide a floating support service to households within South Staffordshire by commissioning a specialist support service in partnership with South Staffordshire Housing Association and the Staffordshire Supporting People team.

Children and Young People's Coaching £10,000 per year

The project aim is to increase sessional activities for children and young people's coaching across the district.

Children and Young Persons Administration £5,000 per year

To drive forward and coordinate the developments of children and young people's services within the district of South Staffordshire.

Leisure Centre Decoration £20,000 per year

The Leisure Centres in South Staffordshire are becoming aging stock and management are keen to ensure that they remain in good condition through refurbishment work, which has been well accepted by customers. This funding is to ensure that there is a regular maintenance / decoration programme adopted to keep the facilities looking in good condition and not deterring customers from using them due to their appearance.

Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator £15,000

Provision of a Domestic Abuse Coordinator for the South Staffordshire area in 2008/09.

Footpath Repairs Baggeridge Country Park £8,500

Emergency action was required to repair the footpaths in Baggeridge Country Park following the torrential rainstorms in August.

Health Promotion Team Supplies and Services £18,000 per year

The project involves the provision of resources for the development, design and production of materials to support the work of health promotions team.

Maintenance of Closed Churchyards £10,000 per year

To maintain Closed Churchyards including safety testing of memorials.

Alley Gating £3,000

The proposal is to support parish councils where appropriate in the costs of alley gating in 2008/09 in an effort to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Demolition of Garages, Chapel Lane, Codsall £6,000

The demolition and clearance of this site will assist in the control of anti-social behaviour around this site which adjoins an area of open space in the ownership of Codsall Parish Council.

Industrial Estates - Electrical Certification Works £23,500 per year

To undertake a planned three year programme of electrical inspections leading to certification of the Council's industrial estates.

Stay Safe Scheme £10,000 per year

To provide improved security for victims of domestic violence enabling them to remain in their homes and preventing them from becoming homeless.

Aim 3: To be a prosperous district with thriving communities

Private Housing Sector Development Worker £18,000 per year

Provision of a worker to develop links with the private rented sector to enable access to private housing for rent.

Sub-Regional Housing Market Assessment £5,000

To enable the local authorities within our sub-region to gain a good appreciation of the characteristics of housing market areas and how they function.

Tourism and Events Officers £10,000

To enable 1FTE Tourism Officer to become established within Strategic Services and 1FTE events officer to become established in Community Services.

2012 Olympics Co-ordinator £4,500 per year

To maximise the local benefits of the Olympics including tourism, economic development, sports and arts and to coordinate a local legacy from the games.

E-Services Support £15,000

Increased resources for eServices provision and Web based applications. The estimated cost is an average £15,000 per year.

Planned Maintenance on Industrial Estates £23,000 per year

To increase the industrial estates maintenance budgets (over and above the normal annual increase) to facilitate capacity for improved maintenance work schedules.

Locality Working £17,200 per year

To align District Council's community development capacity with the current developments around locality work and the county council's community and Learning Partnerships.

Aim 4: To be a District which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities

European Computer Driving Licence – Continuation of Training £13,300

To extend the training of staff and members in the use of IT to a recognised national standard, the European Computer Driving Licence, until June 2009.

Big Summer Event £14,000 per year

The project involves continued provision of high quality cultural activities for Children and Young people during school holidays, and also continued provision of the annual family fun day at Baggeridge Country Park.

Aim 5: To be a well managed Council and Community Leader

Information Technology Staffing Review £28,000 per year

Resources for the provision of enhanced I.T. support for the Council's IT systems, network and corporate software systems.

Project Management Development and Roll Out £15,300

The development of South Staffordshire Council's approach to Project Management and then providing training and support to all service managers so that they may apply it.

Members' Initiatives £49,000 per year

A local project fund for elected members to enable members to contribute towards the costs of local projects. Estimated cost £1,000 per member per year.

Discretionary Housing Payments £19,000 per year

To ensure that there is budgetary provision to provide for support to claimants of Housing and/or Council Tax benefit through the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme.

Local Housing Allowance Scheme £12,000

To ensure that there is a seamless introduction of the Local Housing Allowance which arises out of a change in legislation that will be effective from 1st April 2008 in respect of new claims for Housing Benefit. We are required to implement this change. The cost is estimated at £12,000 in year one falling to £7,500 per year thereafter.

Benefits – Lean and Kaizen Training £8,600

Training for Team Leaders in Lean & Kaizen techniques to change the work culture in Direct Services to one control and continuous improvement. The cost is estimated at £4,300 for each of two years.

Benefits – Euclidian Online Training £4,600 per year

To provide online training to all staff on a regular basis to ensure that they are continually developed and tested in their knowledge of Revenues and Benefits.

Partnership Information Analyst £25,000 per year

The Information Analyst would work within Policy and Partnerships to deliver 'intelligence' from a wide range of data sources to inform LAA delivery planning and the localities agenda.

Parish Officer £20,000 per year

The proposal is to support the development of locality working across the district for two years at a cost of £20,000 per year.

South Staffordshire Budget Consultation October 2007

Housing - Archiving of Files on Comino £5,000

To copy all of the housing application forms and associated documents onto the Council's Comino Electronic Data Management System. This will make storage and retrieval of the documents more efficient.

Enhanced Staffing Resources (Engineering Section) £10,000 per year

Broadening the current Engineering Assistant's role plus creating a new post of Technical Assistant.

Additional Staffing Resources (Building Control Section) £16,000 per year

To provide essential support and cover to the Building Control Section to ensure that the service is able to function properly.

Strategic Services Portfolio Plan – Reorganisation £4,000

The proposal is to merge the existing service units within Strategic Services.

Support for Staffordshire Observatory £6,000 per year

The County Council is asking for contributions for the Staffordshire Observatory, which is a central depository of LAA data, from all District Councils.

CAPITAL:

These are schemes to improve and repair the Council's land and property. We also provide grants to provide more social housing, to improve the quality of existing houses and to enable disabled people to live in their own homes. A small amount of this money comes from central government with the majority coming from the Council's own capital reserves.

Aim 1: To be a Council which celebrates and improves South Staffordshire's distinctive environment

Additional Mechanical Sweeper £55,000

The scheme involves the procurement of an additional "mini" sweeper to complement the Council's current fleet of 2 mechanical road sweepers (1 "large" and 1 "mini") in order to achieve a higher standard of cleansing achieved on roads, footpaths, and other public areas.

Brick Bridge Lane Open Space £70,000

Site clearance and grading; pedestrian/disabled access creation and improvements; wildlife habitat enhancement; signage/interpretation; fencing and seating.

Engineering and Environmental Improvements - Crown Bridge, Penkridge £10,000

This project includes environmental improvements to the Crown Bridge area over and above Staffordshire County Council's standard engineering improvement works with the aim of creating a high quality public realm

Depot Waste Handling Improvements £12,000

To improve the facilities for handling street cleansing waste by installing an enclosed compacting skip and undertaking modifications to the surface water drainage.

New and Replacement Recycling Containers £70,000 per year

To provide residents with new and replacement waste bins and recycling containers.

Street Cleansing – Inspection Recording £5,000

The project involves a system to record street cleansing inspection data on site in an electronic format. This would increase efficiency by removing the need to key in written notes back at the office.

Engineering and environmental improvements - High Street, Kinver OPTION 1 £242,550

This project includes environmental improvements to the High Street over and above Staffordshire County Council's standard engineering improvement works with the aim of creating a higher quality public realm on the central core of the High Street.

Engineering and environmental improvements - High Street, Kinver OPTION 2

£466,000

This project includes environmental improvements to the High Street over and above Staffordshire County Council's standard engineering improvement works with the aim of creating a higher quality public realm over the whole length of the High Street.

Aim 2: To be a healthy and safe district in which to live, work and visit

South Staffordshire thermal infra-red imaging survey £20,000

To identify premises with inadequate insulation, excessive heat loss and/or heat use and through direct and indirect grant aid and advice reduce fuel poverty in the district.

Industrial Estates - Electrical Certification Works £35,000 per year

To undertake any rectification works identified by the planned programme of electrical certification inspection of the Council's industrial estates.

DDA Leisure Centres £25,000

To improve the access for those with disabilities.

Penkridge Leisure Centre Toning Table Replacement £29,000

The toning tables at Penkridge Leisure Centre are now 12 years old and showing their age. These need replacing to enable the service to continue and bring more customers into the centre.

Refurbishment of Codsall Swimming Pool £200,000

The swimming pool at Codsall Leisure Centre is now 32 years old and in need of refurbishment. The project will repair the concrete re-enforcing, replace the tiles with a laminate covering and replace the promenade with a tiled surface. In addition the air handing system will be changed to improve the air quality and use a more efficient system.

Perton Fitness Centre £510,000

To build a new fitness facility in the Parish of Perton to satisfy the needs of one of the most densely populated parishes in South Staffordshire.

Tree management System - Baggeridge Country Park and South Staffordshire Railway Walk £22,500

To enable proactive tree management and inspection in accordance with HSE advice. The Council needs to establish a database of the condition of the mature trees on land for which it is responsible.

Wombrook Walk £25,000

To provide a pedestrian footbridge over an existing service pipe (currently used as a bridge).

Additional CCTV Camera at Four Ashes, Nr Brewood £25,000

The provision of an additional CCTV camera linked to the control room at Codsall.

Aim 4: To be a District which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities

Education Centre, Baggeridge Country Park £35,000

The aim of the project is to improve the facilities of the sample yard at Baggeridge Brick and develop an Education Centre to be used for school visits, organised walks, parties, group meetings etc.

Aim 5: To be a well managed Council and Community Leader

PAI/TLC Closure (Additional Resources) £109,000

Additional resources to assist in cleansing and validating existing "shifted" data and to also capture new datasets required internally for Automated Land Charge Answering. (The scheme also incorporates installation and rollout costs for future releases of CAPS UNI-form and TLC Software until 2010).

LocalView Intranet £28,500

Update and replace outdated GIS Intranet solution (GIS-Net). Designed upon 2003 technology our existing web based mapping solution is no longer fit for purpose. ESRI now offer a future-proof and supported solution using modern technologies (xml) which integrates

more readily with other systems using our existing platforms and GIS infrastructure (ArcSDE and ArcIMS).

LocalView Internet £15,000

Implement LocalView Internet to make GIS available to the public, councillors and other interested parties unlocking its true business potential. An ESRI product, LocalView Internet is a future-proof and supported solution using modern technologies (xml) which integrates more readily with other systems making use of our existing platforms and GIS infrastructure (ArcSDE and ArcIMS).

Extension Of Electronic Data Management Facility £35,000

To make provision for the Civica Electronic Data Management facility to be extended through the Council, improving the storage and retrieval of documents and increasing efficiency.

HR/Payroll Management System £100,000

To replace the current outdated HR/Payroll system with a new one capable of providing enhanced performance management information to managers.

Additional telephony for Contact Centre £15,000

Installation of 50 additional telephone lines to support telephone contact centre development.

Addition to 10 Year Plan – Replacement Internal Blinds £20,000

Addition to the improvements made by the window replacement project.

Addition to 10 Year Plan – Internal Window Sill Replacement £10,000

Addition to the improvements made by the window replacement project.

Production of Benefit Notification Letters via Formscape £6,000

Automation of Benefit Notification Letters so they can be enveloped using the inserting machine and an image produced for automatic downloading onto Document Imaging System. The cost of the project is £6,000.

Implementation of Benefits Electronic Claims System (BECS) £32,300

A web-enabled intelligent claim form that calculates entitlement as the user completes the form.



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