

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 15 November 2022

PRESENT: Councillor I. Fordham in the Chair, and
Councillors: K. Argyle, A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson (from Minute Number GP23/124), Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies, M. Green, M. Hatton, J. Hickling, P. Leason, R. Kenney, J. Powell (Mayoral Engagement), C. Thornicroft and S. Walley

GP23/120 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs L. Davies, M. Green, J. Hickling, R. Kenney, J. Powell (Mayoral Engagement), C. Thornicroft and S. Walley.

GP23/121 Declarations of Interests

None

GP23/122 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP23/123 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP23/124 Stafford Borough Council Local Plan 2020-2040

The Committee considered Stafford Borough Council's new Local Plan 2020-2040 consultation which runs from Monday 24 October 2022 to Monday 12 December 2022 with enclosed Preferred Options document, which includes:

- New levels of housing and employment land requirements, and how these will be distributed across the Borough through a new settlement hierarchy;
- Proposed development allocations including Stafford Station Gateway and a new garden community at Meecebrook, which is adjacent to Cold Meece and near to Yarnfield and Eccleshall.
- A range of draft planning policies on topics such as climate change, economic development, housing provision, transport and the environment

As part of the consultation, the Borough Council had arranged an online event and a number of drop-in exhibitions across the Borough for interested parties to discuss the Local Plan and to ask questions.

Rather than being attached to the agenda, due to its size, a copy of the Preferred Options document was distributed to all Councillors electronically in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman asked the Committee to consider the Town Council's response to the Local Plan Consultation for submission to Stafford Borough Council.

As a starting point for this consideration the Committee received a hardcopy of a draft response produced by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, the Chairman of Neighbourhood Planning and the Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee. The document had also been previously circulated electronically to all Councillors.

The Chairman paused while the Committee read over the representation* and the following points were agreed as additions:

Housing and Distribution

- Point 1: Insert 'Doctors, Dentists, **roads**, schools plus other vital services
- Point 1: Insert the requirement for definitive improvements to infrastructure. When are we going to improve the infrastructure? Stone doesn't have the capacity to service the growing population and would like to see the promise of an allocation of infrastructure.
- Point 2: insert 'overexpansion with no accompanying increase in services'.
- Points 2 and 3: Insert the request for a formal Transport Assessment which should look at the traffic travelling along Marlborough Road, Pirehill Lane and Eccleshall Road. This has to be financed by the developer but carried out by an independent organisation.
- HS2 Transport Feasibility Reports should be reviewed as part of the process as the development off Marlborough Road should not be considered in isolation.
- Point 3: In the last sentence (where it states, 'mitigation measures are considerable') add 'and costly (£225,000)'.
- Traffic movements between Pirehill Lane and the new development which could take place over a five-year period.
- HS2 traffic up and down Pirehill Lane. A development could give the residents of the area dreadful problems.
- Point 4: Land off Lichfield Road has been approved for the development of 21 houses and 5 shops with pedestrian crossing on the Lichfield Road further adding to the stalling of traffic. This development does not appear in the Local Plan and the pedestrianised crossing will not mitigate the additional traffic and delays that regularly occur at the level crossing.
- There is no mitigation to address traffic congestion. The mitigation will be a new surface on the crossings and cameras.
- Meecebrook Garden Development will bring more traffic through Walton. A map of the development does not show roads in or out of the development and the Town Council would like to know how this will work.
- Flood risk and alleviation (such as at Oakleigh Court) is not detailed.
- Air Quality in Walton will deteriorate as a result of the additional proposed development. There appears to be no Green Plan and the environment will be decimated by congested traffic.
- The proposal includes development of agricultural/farmland that has been farmed for generations. This is against Government Policy when brownfield sites are available.

* Items marked with an asterisk refer to reports or papers circulated with the agenda or distributed at the meeting. They are attached as an appendix to the signed copy of the Council minutes.

Policies

This section of the report was accepted by the Committee without amendment.

RESOLVED: That the Committee accept the report with the addition of the amendments detailed above for submission to Stafford Borough Council.

GP23/125 Boundary Commission for England Review

The Committee considered the Boundary Commission for England's Revised Proposals in its final public consultation which runs from Tuesday 8 November to Monday 5 December 2022.

The Committee noted that all news will be published on the Boundary Commission for England's website and the consultation website which provides a platform to view interactive maps of the proposals and submit representations directly.

Paper copies of the Boundary Commission's proposals were available to view at the Council's offices and it was noted that the Commission's proposals for Stone remained unchanged from the previous version.

The Chairman advised the Committee that, what appeared to be an artificial new constituency had been created with a lot of drawbacks that would result in Stone being cut off from its local surrounding communities and the loss of a logical geographical boundary to reflect the interests of Stone in all aspects.

Despite a formal presentation being made by Councillor Fordham (as representative of the Town Council) which was supported by many people including the south, no notable changes had resulted in the revised boundary proposals for the Stone and Great Wyrley Constituency apart from a small area around Lichfield.

Councillor Fordham was congratulated for the presentation he delivered to the Boundary Commission and the Committee decided that it did not wish to commit any further time to the issue.

RESOLVED: That no further representations are made by the Town Council in response to the Boundary Commission for England's Review.

The meeting was adjourned and then reconvened after the Estates and the Environment Sub-Committee meetings had taken place.

GP23/126 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next items of business are discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate.

RESOLVED: to exclude the Press and Public from the next items of business

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GP23/127 **Heritage Centre**

The Committee considered an update on the Stone Heritage Centre building works tendering process and the appointment of a main contractor for this work. He advised the Committee that he was currently awaiting the report from the Council's mechanical and electrical engineering consultant.

CHAIRMAN