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**Please Note Change  
of Venue for Meeting**

Dear Members

### **Cabinet**

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in the **Mountbatten Suite, Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford on Wednesday 4 May 2016 at 6.30pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

*A.R. Well*

Head of Law and Administration

## **CABINET - 4 MAY 2016**

**Chairman Councillor P M M Farrington**

### **A G E N D A**

- 1 Minutes of 31 March 2016 as published in Digest No 219 on 1 April 2016
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

	<b>Page Nos</b>
<b>(a) RESOURCES PORTFOLIO</b>	
(i) Risk Management Policy and Strategy	3 - 19
<b>(b) PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO</b>	
(i) Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal And Proposed Boundary Revisions	20 - 46
(ii) Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision and Options Appraisal - <b>PART</b> <b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	47 - 58

**This Report is part confidential due to the inclusion of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). No representations have been received in respect of this matter.**

### **Membership** **Chairman Councillor P M M Farrington**

P M M Farrington	- Leader
R M Smith	- Deputy Leader and Leisure Portfolio
J M Pert	- Community Portfolio
F A Finlay	- Environment and Health Portfolio
F Beatty	- Planning and Regeneration Portfolio
K S Williamson	- Resources Portfolio

**ITEM NO 4(a)(i)**

**ITEM NO 4(a)(i)**

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>June Hall</b>
<b>Telephone No:</b>	<b>01543 464546</b>
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Cabinet 4/5/16 (Only)</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR K S WILLIAMSON  
RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

**CABINET  
4 MAY 2016  
Risk Management Policy and Strategy**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval of the revised Risk Management Policy and Strategy and agree the Council's risk appetite as shown in the risk matrix.

**2 Proposal of Cabinet Member**

- 2.1 That:-
- (a) the Council's risk appetite be agreed;
  - (b) the Risk Management Policy (**APPENDIX 1**) and Risk Management Strategy (**APPENDIX 2**) be approved.

**3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to have in place arrangements for managing risks, as stated in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:-

"A relevant body must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:-

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk."

- 3.2 The effective management of risks requires a policy and strategy which have been approved by, and has clear support of, leading members and senior officers.

#### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council's risk management arrangements form part of the wider corporate governance arrangements which cut across all corporate priorities.

#### **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Aligning the approach to Risk Management formed part of the Shared Services Transformation Plan. Following the trial of a new risk matrix, a review of the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy has now been completed. There are 3 key amendments:-

- (a) The former 4 x 6 matrix has been replaced with a 3 x 4 matrix. As part of this change, the impact scores have been weighted to reflect the importance of impact over likelihood when assessing risks.
- (b) Key operational risks are no longer subject to a separate risk register. However, operational risks relating to service changes or projects are to be recorded and monitored at service level.
- (c) Responsibility for approval of the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy now rests with the Cabinet. This is because the Cabinet needs to approve the risk appetite, which is defined in the risk matrix (see 5.4 for more details); it would not be appropriate for the Audit & Accounts Committee to do this, though they can refer any concerns to the Cabinet for consideration.

- 5.2 The Policy Statement outlines the Council's commitment to Risk Management. A copy of the policy is attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

- 5.3 The aim of the Risk Management Strategy is to ensure that the Council has an effective process to support better decision making through good understanding of risks and their likely impact. The Strategy provides for a consistent approach and details:-

- Aims and objectives;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Arrangements for managing risks;
- Monitoring arrangements;
- Training; and
- The risk management methodology

The Risk Management Strategy is attached at **APPENDIX 2**.

5.4 As referred to in 5.1, the revised strategy includes a new risk matrix which sets out the Council's appetite for risk. The risk matrix shows that:

- Any risks that score 12 or more are considered to be High Risks and immediate actions needs to be taken;
- Any risks that score from 5 up to and including 10 points will be deemed to be Medium Risks and will require an action plan and/or close monitoring;
- Any risks that score less than 5 will be regarded as Low Risks and those that can be accepted/tolerated without the need for further action.

<b>6</b>	<b>Implications</b>
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6.1	<b>Financial</b>	Nil
	<b>Legal</b>	Nil
	<b>Human Resources</b>	Nil
	<b>Human Rights Act</b>	Nil
	<b>Data Protection</b>	Nil
	<b>Risk Management</b>	As set out in report and Appendices

6.2	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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<b>Previous Consideration</b> - Audit and Accounts Committee - 22 March 2016
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<b>Background Papers</b> - File available in Risk and Resilience Section
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## RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

### Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the chance or possibility of loss, damage, injury or failure to achieve objectives caused by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. Risk management is a planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of those risks which can threaten the assets or financial and organisational well-being of the Council.

### Policy Statement

**The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to control its assets and liabilities, protect its employees and community against potential losses, minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.**

**The Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk.**

**Risk management is an integral part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and has been built into the management processes as part of the Authority's overall framework to deliver continuous improvement.**

### Objectives

The objectives of the Council's risk management strategy are to:-

- Raise awareness of the need for risk management;
- Minimise loss, disruption, damage and injury and reduce the cost of risk, thereby maximising resources;
- Inform policy and decision making by identifying risks and their likely impact.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the council for risk management
- Effective communication with, and the active involvement of, Service Managers and Heads of Service
- Monitoring arrangements on an on-going basis

### **Responsibility for Risk Management**

The Council recognises that it is the responsibility of all Members and employees to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties. If uncontrolled, risk can result in a drain on resources that could better be directed to front line service provision, and to the meeting of the Council's objectives and community needs.

The Leadership Team and Service Managers have responsibility and accountability for managing the risks within their own work areas. Employees have a duty to work safely, avoid unnecessary waste of resources and contribute to risk management initiatives in their own area of activities. The co-operation and commitment of all employees is required to ensure that Council resources are not squandered as a result of uncontrolled risk.



# **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**March 2016**



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## What is Risk Management?

- 1.1 Risk can be defined as uncertainty of outcome. Risk is ever present and a certain amount of risk-taking is inevitable if the Council is to achieve its objectives.
- 1.2 Risk management implies adopting a planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of the risks facing the Council and is a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the Council caused by undesired events.
- 1.3 Risk management covers the whole spectrum of risks and not just those associated with finance, health and safety and insurance. It also includes risks associated with public image (reputation), the environment, technology, contracts/partnerships, projects etc.
- 1.4 The Council also has a statutory responsibility to have in place arrangements for managing risks, as stated in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:-

“A relevant body must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:-

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.”

## The Benefits of Risk Management

- 1.5 The benefits gained from effectively managing risk include:-

### ✧ Improved strategic management

- Greater ability to deliver against objectives and targets;
- Improved Decision Making

### ✧ Improved operational management

- Reduction in managerial time spent dealing with the consequences of a risk event having occurred;
- Improved service delivery

### ✧ Improved financial management

- Better informed financial decision-making
- Greater financial control
- Minimising waste and poor value for money
- Reduction in costly claims against the Council

✧ **Improved customer service**

- Minimal service disruption to customers and a positive external image as a result of all of the above.

## **2 RISK MANAGEMENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The aim of risk management is to ensure that the Council has an effective process to support better decision making through good understanding of risks and their likely impact.

2.2 The objectives of the Council's risk management strategy are to:-

- Raise awareness of the need for risk management;
- Minimise loss, disruption, damage and injury and reduce the cost of risk, thereby maximising resources;
- Inform policy and decision making by identifying risks and their likely impact.

2.3 These objectives will be achieved by:-

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the Council for risk management;
- Effective communication with, and the active involvement of, Service Managers and Heads of Service;
- Monitoring progress in delivering the strategy and reviewing the risk management arrangements on an on-going basis.

## **3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1 The table below outlines the key roles within the risk management framework:-

Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To approve the Risk Management Policy and Strategy (including the Council's risk appetite)</li><li>• To approve the Strategic Risk Register</li><li>• To monitor progress in the management of Strategic Risk</li></ul>
Audit and Accounts Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure that the Council has an effective risk management process in place</li><li>• To monitor progress on the management of Strategic Risks</li></ul>

Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine the Council's risk appetite</li> <li>• To identify strategic risks</li> <li>• To determine actions to manage strategic risks</li> <li>• To monitor progress in managing strategic risks</li> </ul>
Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support Leadership Team in the identification and management of Strategic Risks</li> <li>• To manage operational risks effectively in their particular service areas</li> <li>• To monitor and review risks at appropriate intervals</li> </ul>
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify risks</li> <li>• To implement actions as instructed</li> </ul>
Head of Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that the Council has an effective risk management framework</li> </ul>
Risk and Resilience Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop and review the risk management strategy and process in accordance with best practice</li> <li>• To provide advice and support to Leadership Team and Service Managers on the identification, analysis and prioritisation of risks</li> <li>• To report on the identification and progress of strategic risks to the Audit and Accounts Committee</li> <li>• To provide risk management training as required to officers and Members</li> </ul>
Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice and guidance on the management of risk relating to the design, implementation and operation of systems of internal control.</li> </ul>

#### **4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING RISKS**

- 4.1 The risk management methodology to be employed at the Council is outlined in Annex 1.

#### **5 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1 To ensure that informed decisions are made, it is essential to identify key strategic risks. Strategic risks will be identified at Leadership Team level as part of the Corporate Planning process and will be documented in a Strategic Risk Register which will be maintained by the Risk and Resilience Manager on behalf of the Leadership Team.

- 5.2 Progress in managing strategic risks will be monitored and reported on to ensure that intended actions are delivered and risks managed.
- 5.3 The Strategic Risk Register will form the basis of half yearly risk management reports to Cabinet and the Audit and Accounts Committee.
- 5.4 Internal Audit will carry out a periodic review of the Council's risk management arrangements to provide independent assurance as to their effectiveness.
- 5.5 Internal Audit will also during the course of it's audits throughout the year:-
- Identify and report weaknesses in the controls established by management to manage/monitor risks;
  - Provide advice on the design/operation of the controls established by management to manage/monitor risk.
- 5.6 The Chief Internal Auditor will review the strategic risk register on an annual basis and incorporate strategic risk areas into the Internal Audit planning process as appropriate.
- 5.7 Service Managers should maintain a record of key operational risks within their service area relating to service change, projects and significant procurement. Progress in managing these risks should be monitored on a regular basis. (A template can be found at Annex 2).

## **6 TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

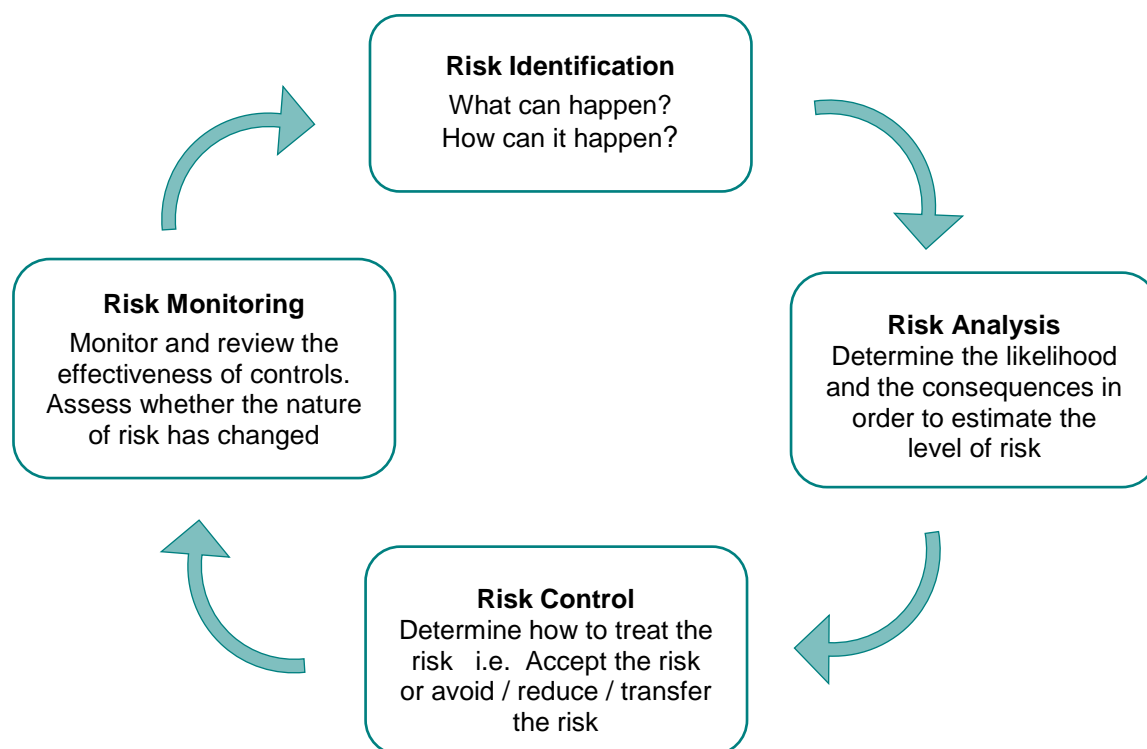
- 6.1 Training in the risk management methodology will be provided to those officers with direct responsibility for / involvement in the risk management process.
- 6.2 Training in the risk management methodology will be provided to:-
- the Cabinet;
  - the Audit and Accounts Committee;
  - Leadership Team;
  - Service Managers; and
  - Other employees as appropriate.

## **7 REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 7.1 This strategy will be reviewed every three years.

## RISK MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

There are 4 key stages in the risk management cycle, as illustrated in the diagram below:-



The 4 stages of risk management are part of a cycle. Risk management is dynamic and so the identification phase needs to be carried out continuously.

### 1. Risk Identification

- 1.1 Strategic and operational risks or threats will be identified as outlined in the Risk Management Strategy (5.1 and 5.7)
- 1.2 To help in identifying risks, there are a number of risk category models which can be used. Guidance on risk categories can be found on the Council's intranet site under Risk and Resilience (resources) however; this is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive and there are a number of risk category models available on external websites which can be used.

## 2. Risk Analysis and Scoring

2.1 Once risks have been identified they need to be assessed. This process requires risk owners to assess the level of risk by considering:-

- The probability of an event occurring - “likelihood”; and
- The potential severity of the consequences should such an event occur - “impact”.

2.2 Not all factors are equally important and higher scores should be given to those risks considered to impact most on the achievement of objectives. The impact scores have therefore been weighted to reflect that more significance should be given to those risks with a medium or high impact than those with a medium or high likelihood.

The following tables provide Impact and Likelihood descriptors to assist with this process:-

### LIKELIHOOD

Score	Description	Indicative Guidelines
4	Very Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a high exposure to the risk</li><li>• Event expected to occur. Has occurred and will continue to do so without action being taken</li><li>• Indication of imminent occurrence</li><li>• There are external influences which are likely to make our controls ineffective</li></ul>
3	Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a moderate exposure to the risk</li><li>• Reasonable to expect event to occur</li><li>• Has occurred in the past</li><li>• Is likely to occur within the Council’s planning cycle</li><li>• There are external influences which may reduce effectiveness of controls</li></ul>
2	Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a low exposure to the risk</li><li>• Little likelihood of event occurring</li><li>• There is a potential for external influences which may reduce effectiveness of controls</li></ul>
1	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extremely remote</li><li>• Not expected to occur but may do so in exceptional circumstances</li><li>• There are few or no external influences which may reduce effectiveness of controls</li></ul>

## IMPACT

Score	Description	Indicative Guidelines
5	<b>Major/Serious Consequences</b>	<p>The consequence is so bad that urgent action must be taken to improve the situation or prevent it worsening. External support from the Government or other agencies is likely to be needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major loss, delay or interruption to services</li> <li>• One off event which would de-stabilise the Council</li> <li>• Financial loss, additional costs or loss of assets which would need a Council decision as the scale of the loss would be outside the Council's budget and policy framework</li> <li>• The risk will cause the objective not to be reached, causing damage to the organisation's reputation.</li> <li>• Will attract medium to long-term attention of legislative or regulatory bodies</li> <li>• Major complaints</li> <li>• Significant adverse media interest</li> <li>• Death or life threatening injury</li> </ul>
3	<b>Moderate/Disruptive</b>	<p>The consequence is sufficiently serious to require attention by Leadership Team and / or the Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant loss, delay or interruption to services</li> <li>• Medium term impact on operational efficiency or performance</li> <li>• Financial loss, additional costs or loss of assets that is within the Council's budget and policy framework but needs a Statutory Officer decision, Leadership Team decision, Cabinet decision or need's to be drawn to Cabinet's attention</li> <li>• The risk will cause some elements of the objective to be delayed or not achieved, causing potential damage to the organisation's reputation.</li> <li>• May attract medium to short term attention of legislative or regulatory bodies</li> <li>• Significant complaints</li> <li>• Serious accident / injury (but not life threatening)</li> </ul>
1	<b>Minor/Non Disruptive</b>	<p>The consequences can be dealt with as part of the normal day-to-day business by the Service Manager and the Head of Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor loss, delay or interruption to services</li> <li>• Short term impact on operational efficiency or performance</li> <li>• Negligible financial loss</li> <li>• The risk will not substantively impede the achievement of the objective, causing minimal damage to the organisation's reputation</li> <li>• No or minimal external interest</li> <li>• Isolated complaints</li> <li>• Minor accident / injury</li> </ul>

2.3 Both gross and residual scores should be identified to effectively review and monitor the effectiveness of the controls in place.

- **Gross Score** - The level of risk faced before internal controls/mitigating actions have been applied / implemented.
- **Residual Score** - The level of risk faced after any internal controls/mitigating actions have been applied / taken into account.

Internal controls are the Council's policies, procedures and processes or any additional controls or mitigating actions taken to deal with a particular risk. A judgement has to be made by the risk owner/facilitator as to the numerical reduction to the gross risk score to produce the residual risk score.

2.4 The residual scores are then plotted onto the risk matrix, see below, which will determine the risk priority.

RISK		IMPACT		
LIKELIHOOD		Minor/Non-Disruptive (1)	Moderate/Disruptive (3)	Major/Serious Consequences (5)
	Very Likely (4)	4	12	20
	Probable (3)	3	9	15
	Possible (2)	2	6	10
	Unlikely (1)	1	3	5

### 3. Risk Control

3.1 Having identified and analysed the risks, it is necessary to decide what to do and who will do it. Priority will be given to the High (red) risks which will require immediate action plans.

3.2 Medium (Amber) risks will require actions plans and / or to be closely monitored as appropriate.

3.3 Low-scoring (Green) risks can be "accepted" and will not require actions plans. However, these risks will need to be monitored to ensure that controls remain operational to manage them and that such risks do not run out of control and become Medium (Amber) or High (Red) risks.



- 3.4 Where it is not deemed appropriate to accept the risk, the risk will need to be controlled. Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. There are 3 main options for controlling risk; avoidance, reduction and risk transfer.
- 3.5 **Risk avoidance** involves the Council opting not to undertake a current or proposed activity because it is considered to be too risky.
- 3.6 **Risk reduction** is dependent on implementing actions which will minimise the likelihood of an event occurring or limit the severity of the consequences should it occur.
- 3.7 **Risk transfer** involves transferring liability for the consequences of an event to another body. This may be done in two ways:-
- (i) Cost, delivery or legal liability may be transferred to an alternative provider under contractual/partnership arrangements for service delivery; however it should be remembered that some responsibility may be retained for ensuring that the risk is managed e.g. Health and Safety.
  - (ii) The costs associated with a damaging event may be reduced by transferring some or all of the financial risk to external insurance companies however; it should be remembered that many risks are uninsurable.
- 3.8 Most risks can be managed – either by minimising the likelihood of the risk occurring and / or reducing the severity of the consequences should the risk occur. Relatively few risks have to be avoided or transferred.
- 3.9 Managers must judge which courses of control action are the most appropriate to address each of the risks they have identified, taking advice from the Head of Governance, the Risk and Resilience Manager and other support services where appropriate.
- 3.10 The cost/benefit of each control action must be assessed. The benefits will not always be solely financial. Managers need to use their own professional knowledge and experience to judge whether the financial cost of risk control is justified in terms of non-financial benefit to the Council. On occasions, managers may conclude that the cost of the control action may outweigh the benefits which will accrue to the Council as a result of the action being taken. In such instances, all or an element of the risk is retained. However, no statute should be breached when making this decision.
- 3.11 For each risk actions should be identified, the officer responsible and timescales.
- 3.12 Responsibility for drawing up the action plans lies with the Leadership Team (for strategic risks) and with Service Managers for service / operational risks.

#### **4. Risk Monitoring**

4.1 To complete the risk management cycle, there must be monitoring and review of:-

- The implementation of the agreed risk control action plan;
- The effectiveness of the action in controlling the risk; and
- How the risk has changed over time.

4.2 Risk owners must monitor the implementation of the risk actions to ensure that responsibilities, deadlines do not slip.

4.3 Strategic risks will also be monitored corporately and the arrangements for this are detailed in section 5 of the Risk Management Strategy.

## OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

Ref No:	<b>Risk:</b>	Risk Owner :	
Consequences Of Risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>			
Gross Risk Score (ie without controls)	Likelihood	Impact	Total Score
Key Controls in Place:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>			
Residual/Net Risk Score (ie with controls in place)	Likelihood	Impact	Total Score
Provisional Assessment of Risk - does the residual risk score need to be reduced		<b>YES*</b>	<b>NO</b>

\* If the risk score needs to be reduced, please complete the action plan below

Actions Planned	Timescale/Person Responsible	Progress/Comments

**ITEM NO 4(b)(i)**

**ITEM NO 4(b)(i)**

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alex Yendole</b>
<b>Telephone No:</b>	<b>01785 619536</b>
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	<b>Swynnerton and Oulton; St Michael's and Stonefield</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Cabinet 4/5/16 (Only)</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR F BEATTY  
PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO**

<p><b>CABINET</b></p> <p><b>4 MAY 2016</b></p> <p><b>The Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Boundary Revisions</b></p>
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**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To report on the results of the public consultation exercise.
- 1.2 To consider the adoption of the Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal as a material consideration in development management decisions
- 1.3 To designate the revised Moddershall Valley Conservation Area boundary.

**2 Proposal of Cabinet Member**

2.1 That:-

- (a) The proposed revised boundary to the Moddershall Valley Conservation Area as indicated on the plans in **APPENDIX 1**, is designated as a conservation area.
- (b) The Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal is approved as a formal Council document, to be used as a material consideration and included within the Local Plan evidence base.
- (c) The revised designation is advertised and the relevant bodies notified in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- (d) The owner/occupiers of all properties affected by the revisions to the Moddershall Valley Conservation Area are notified of the revised designations and the planning implications.

### **3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is the statutory duty of the Council to review its existing conservation areas from time to time and designate further areas as necessary.
- 3.2 Stafford Borough Council is updating its existing conservation area appraisals. This renewal process ensures the Council complies with current good practice and has up-to-date, factually accurate appraisal documents to refer to when making planning decisions.
- 3.3 The Appraisal assesses the historical and architectural character of the Moddershall Valley Conservation Area, reviews its boundary and makes general recommendations for future management of the character of the conservation area, to be used by owner/occupiers, developers and the Council in assessing proposals for change.
- 3.4 Some minor amendments to the boundary are proposed, to adhere to existing physical boundaries and include some structures of character that were previously over-looked.
- 3.5 A public consultation was held including an open meeting on 14 December 2015. 51 local residents attended and 36 written responses were received in total. 27 respondents supported the conservation area boundary changes and 9 objected to the inclusion or removal of certain areas, as discussed below. As a result some amendments have been made to the proposed boundary. The responses, plus the Council's response and actions, are summarised in **APPENDIX 3**.

### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The management of conservation areas contributes to the Corporate Priorities of Prosperity and Management of Public Spaces.

### **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon every local planning authority, from time to time, to review and to determine whether any parts, or further parts, of their area are of special architectural and/or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as conservation areas.
- 5.2 The designation of conservation area imposes certain duties on authorities. These duties are two-fold. Firstly, to formulate and publish from time to time, proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their district and submit them for public consultation. Secondly, in exercising

their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced in accordance with "*Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*" (English Heritage, 2011). This sets out the importance of defining and assessing a conservation area's character and the need to record it in some detail. The objectives are: to provide a sound basis for rational and consistent judgments when considering planning applications within the conservation area, and to inform management proposals for the area.
- 5.4 A six week public consultation was carried out between 27 November 2015 and 15 January 2016. The owners or occupiers of all properties within or adjacent to the Conservation Area, and other key stakeholders, were consulted by letter and invited to respond on the appraisal and proposed revised boundary as reproduced at **APPENDIX 1**. The full appraisal was made available via the Council website. A public exhibition was also held at Moddershall Village Hall on 15 December 2015.
- 5.5 The boundary to the original Moddershall Valley Conservation Area was designated in 1979. This was reviewed as part of the appraisal process. The philosophy taken was to concentrate the designation on the buildings and industrial landscapes of the flint milling industry and its supporting historic village, where they are of special historic interest. The landscape in this instance is intimately associated with the historic and architectural interest of the conservation area, as it hosts the water courses and mill ponds that served its mills. It was therefore proposed to continue to follow the visual boundary of the 'valley' area, as did the 1979 boundary, but to follow established woodland edges, roads, or field boundaries rather than to cut across fields as had previously occurred. There are some instances, however, where a 'shortcut' is taken across a particularly large field to avoid including land that extends far beyond the valley ridge.
- 5.6 Many alterations are therefore 'corrections' to the existing boundaries to follow physical boundaries, but there are some more significant additions and deletions.
- 5.7 It is proposed to include the Victorian railway bridge west of Stone Mill. Although it post-dates the mills it creates a clear historic boundary and gateway from the urban environment of Stone to its semi-rural industrial predecessors. No objections were received to this proposal.
- 5.8 It is proposed to amend the boundary south of Nanny Goat Lane in Stone, where it previously followed an indistinguishable physical route. The footpath along Nanny Goat Lane follows the ridge of the gorge of the Moddershall Valley to the southeast and is an identifiable boundary for the conservation area. No objections were raised to this proposal.

- 5.9 It was proposed to add fields to the south and east of Nicholls Lane. The boundary at this point was previously drawn tight around the domestic curtilage of Mill Bank Cottages and included just part of the field to the south. This was inconsistent with the designation in other parts of the conservation area, where the boundary follows contours and significant visual buffers around mill sites. The fields are also known to have a historic connection with the Hayes Mill group of buildings as associated agricultural land. This proposal was widely supported, with the exception of the owners of the field to the east of the lane (**APPENDIX 3**, comment 7). They objected that the field has no historical interest, the existing buildings are of modern construction, significant trees are already protected by TPOs, and that the designation would affect the future prospect to rear livestock. It is considered that inclusion of this field is consistent with the approach taken elsewhere within the conservation area to extend the boundary to a visual termination of the valley. There is no proposal to include the existing bungalow, whilst in this predominantly rural conservation area, there would be no prevention of the existing land use; although additional considerations would apply to the design and siting of new agricultural buildings. Nevertheless it is noted that there is a secondary field boundary across the field, defined by post and wire. Although not a substantial physical boundary, this would be an alternative route for the designated boundary to take which would still include the historical backdrop and context of the group of buildings at Hayes Mill and Millbank Cottages, but not all of the land in question. The boundary has therefore been amended in this location.
- 5.10 It is proposed to add the field to the south of Nicholls Lane between Hayes Mill and Airedale Spinney within the conservation area. Housing development of this field was rejected on appeal in 2015. Many local residents supported the inclusion of this field in specific written comments. The landowner has objected on the grounds that the field has no special interest relevant to the conservation area; that no historic connection with the mills has been evidenced; that there is limited inter-visibility with or views of significance to the conservation area; and that the present boundary forms a natural and logical edge to the conservation area. They acknowledge that the field forms part of the setting of the grade II listed Hayes Mill and that its contribution to the special interest of the conservation area is appropriately protected through national and local policy on setting. In reality the field is part of the rural context of the conservation area. There are views through the perimeter belt of woodland between the present conservation area and the field, especially in winter, such that the latter can properly be considered part of the character and appearance of the conservation area and ought to be included within its boundary. The field is, as the objector accepts, part of the rural setting of Hayes Mill. These observations accord with the views of the Planning Inspector at the 2014 Public Inquiry. As a principal purpose of the designation is to protect the setting of the industrial archaeological heritage of the valley it is entirely consistent to include this field within the revised boundary. It is recommended that no change should be made to the proposed revised boundary.
- 5.11 It is proposed to add a mill pond north of the Boar Inn at Moddershall Oaks which appears from map evidence to date from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and

remains as a well-defined pool. No objections were received regarding this proposal.

- 5.12 Adjacent to the Longton Road in Stone, it was proposed to remove a modern house, 'Elmwood', from the conservation area, and to realign the boundary to omit the gardens to the rear of Airdale Road, so following property boundaries. Two objections were received in relation to this proposal, as it would exclude trees within the gardens which still have woodland character and form a whole with the rest of Coppice Wood to the northeast (**APPENDIX 3** comments 11b and 12b). It is acknowledged that this area still has woodland character despite the property boundaries, and contributes to the continuous physical boundary defining the valley. As following the edge of woodland is consistent with the approach taken elsewhere in the conservation area, the boundary has been redrawn in this area, to omit Elmwood, but include the woodland.
- 5.13 The Drumbles is a 20<sup>th</sup> century building divorced from the valley by Hayes Bank Road. It is proposed to omit this building and redraw the boundary along the historic property boundary of Hayes House. Three objections were raised to this proposal as it would increase distance of MVCA from proposed Cotwalton wind turbine by about 100m (**APPENDIX 3** 3b, 14b and 16b). Conservation Areas should not be designated purely to resist development, and the area has no historic significance or contribution to the character of the Mills Character Area. The boundary has been drawn to the first significant physical boundary back from the Scotch Brook, which is Hayes Bank road.
- 5.14 In Moddershall village there are a number of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings which do not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and it is proposed to omit those that are on the edge of the conservation area: Hill Top semi-detached houses, Hilltop Bungalow and The Bungalow. No objections were raised against this proposal, although it was noted that the proposed boundary was incorrectly drawn around The Bungalow and this has been amended on the proposed plans.
- 5.15 Objections were raised by two residents to the omission of an area to the west of Kibblestone Road and south of the Scout Camp, which contains mature trees and dramatic hillside outcrops (**APPENDIX 3** comments 6b and c and 9). Although acknowledged to be of high landscape value, this area has no historical significance in connection with the Moddershall Valley flint mills and is some distance from the Scotch Brook and focus of the conservation area. It is consistent with the approach taken elsewhere in the conservation area to draw the boundary to the first significant physical boundary from the valley bottom, which in this instance is Kibblestone Road. It is nevertheless recognised that the landscape contributes to the setting of and views out of the conservation area, and this has been identified on the character analysis plans in the Appraisal document.
- 5.16 Two objections were received from the owners of the field adjacent to Moddershall Village Hall (**APPENDIX 3**, comments 26 and 27), stating that the field has no historical significance, contains no significant trees, is not immediately adjacent to the Scotch Brook watercourse and is no different from



the adjacent field which it is proposed to omit. This is in a location where there is a cross-over from the 'Village' character to the 'Mills' character. The adjacent field is part of the 'village' where the boundary had been drawn as a straight line cutting across fields. This has been amended to tightly hug the buildings and property boundaries on the west side of Moddershall Oaks. Alongside Mill Lane, however, there are the dual considerations of the character of the lane itself and the transition to the mills and watercourse character area. It is considered to be consistent with the approach taken elsewhere to continue to include this field within the conservation area.

5.17 One respondent suggested extending the boundary from the Scotch Brook to Nicholls Lane beyond Airedale Spinney (**APPENDIX 3**, comment 36). This would not be appropriate as the buildings on Airedale Spinney are not of historic character and appearance and would not merit the additional planning controls.

5.18 The planning agent for the objector at Nicholls Lane also raises the following issues:-

- (i) That as the special interest of the conservation area is its industrial heritage and not its landscape value paragraph 2.2 should be amended to delete the words: *set in the most attractive scenery*. This wording is descriptive and does not give priority to landscape above industrial heritage and the suggested change is rejected.
- (ii) Considers that the assessment is incorrect in stating that the area around Hayes Mill is unaltered from its 19<sup>th</sup> century character due to recent tree planting. Despite recent tree growth the historic setting and views of Hayes Mill from Longton Road still remains recognisable. Historic England guidance on setting makes clear that setting is not static and can evolve through time. The criticism is rejected. No change recommended.
- (iii) A suggestion that the conservation area should be considered as five character areas rather than the two adopted in the document. Historic England guidance suggests the use of character areas is discretionary and that they might reflect distinctions between architectural character or historic uses. The predominant interest of the Moddershall Valley is its single industrial heritage of historic mills and it would not be appropriate to attempt to sub-divide it in the analysis. The identification of two character areas for Moddershall Valley (the village and the mills) is entirely appropriate and the suggested change is rejected.
- (iv) The connection between the mills and the surrounding agricultural activities is unproven. Although the valley was latterly best known for its association with the flint and bone grinding processes for the pottery industry the early mills originated variously as fulling, linseed or corn mills only later converting to flint or bone. This indicates a very clear relationship between the mills and the surrounding farming economy.

- (v) The categorisation of trees on figures 50-53 as significant woodland is too broad and does not qualify the meaning of “significant”. It would be preferable to use the more detailed categorisation of woodland from the Historic Environment Character Appraisal for clarity and consistency. The principal driver of the conservation area is industrial not natural heritage. Woodland rather than individual trees is the predominant landscape setting for the historic mills of the valley and there would be little utility in singling out individual trees in the document. Where trees have any special merit they will be protected by TPOs. The appellation “significant” is to distinguish those groups which make a special contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. No change in the document is proposed.
- (vi) The draft appraisal is incorrect in its analysis of the history and impact of the A520 on the conservation area. This criticism is rejected. The document makes clear at paragraph 8.3 (and related figure 2) that the road was planned in the 1830s but not actually built until the late 1840s before which time access to the older mills (in use between 1720-1757) would have been from the present Old Road. Paragraph 13.1 makes clear it is the “*roar* of traffic along the (A520)”[emphasis introduced] here] as being a relatively recent introduction not the presence of the road itself. Despite being subject to heavy traffic and consequent noise the road does have the characteristics of a rural thoroughfare (limited pavements, soft verges etc) and for passing through an essentially undeveloped area. There is no justification for varying the appraisal in this respect.
- 5.19 The Appraisal document was widely commended, and some useful additional historical information was provided. Some specific issues were raised in relation to unauthorised works within the area and works carried out by Staffordshire County Council Highways Department. These issues have been referred to the appropriate Council departments.
- 5.20 It is therefore proposed to adopt the boundary as revised and shown in **APPENDIX 2**, and the Appraisal with additions as identified in **APPENDIX 3**.

<b>6</b>	<b>Implications</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Financial</b>	Advertisements, notifications, publication and revised designation can be carried out using existing resources
	<b>Legal</b>	
	<b>Human Resources</b>	
	<b>Human Rights Act</b>	
	<b>Data Protection</b>	
	<b>Risk Management</b>	

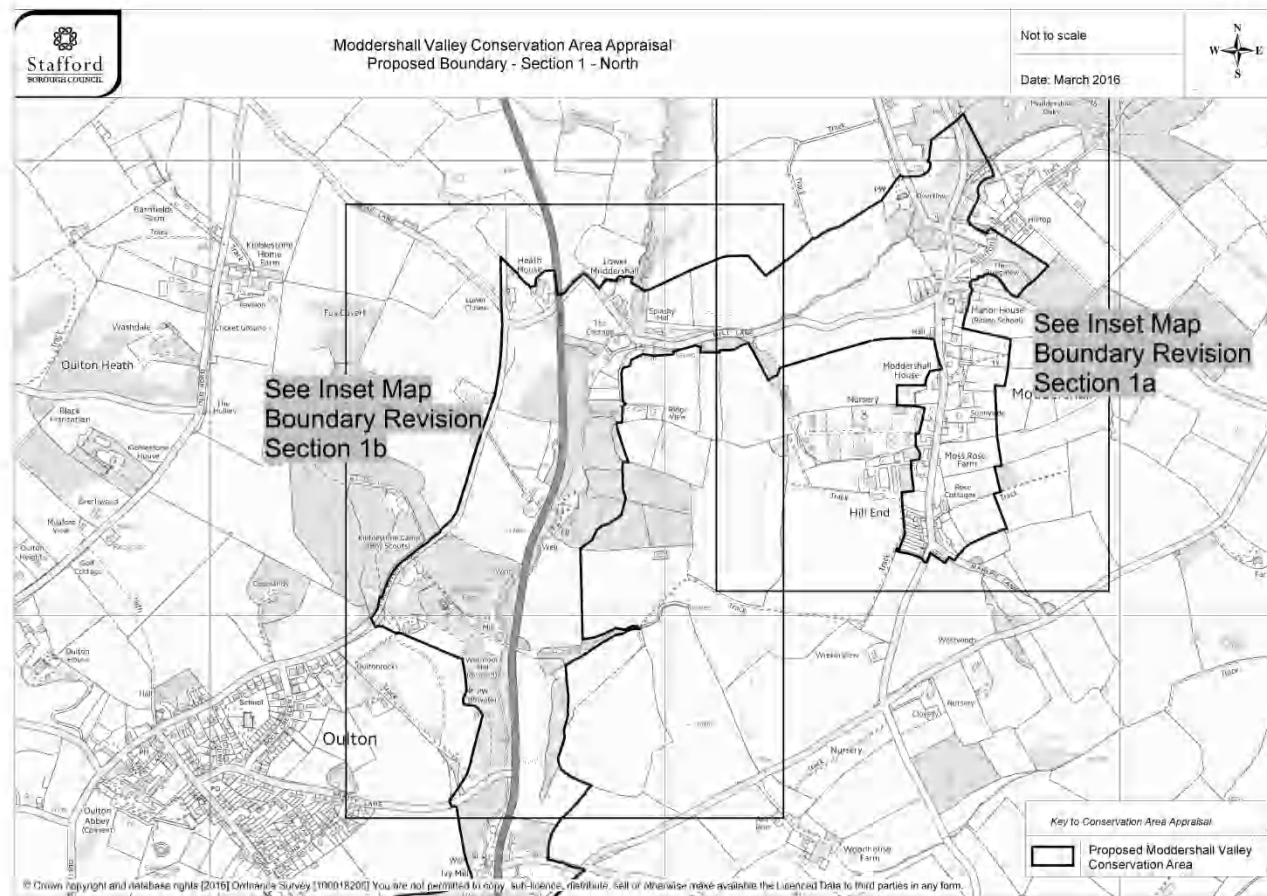
<b>6.2 Equality and Diversity</b>	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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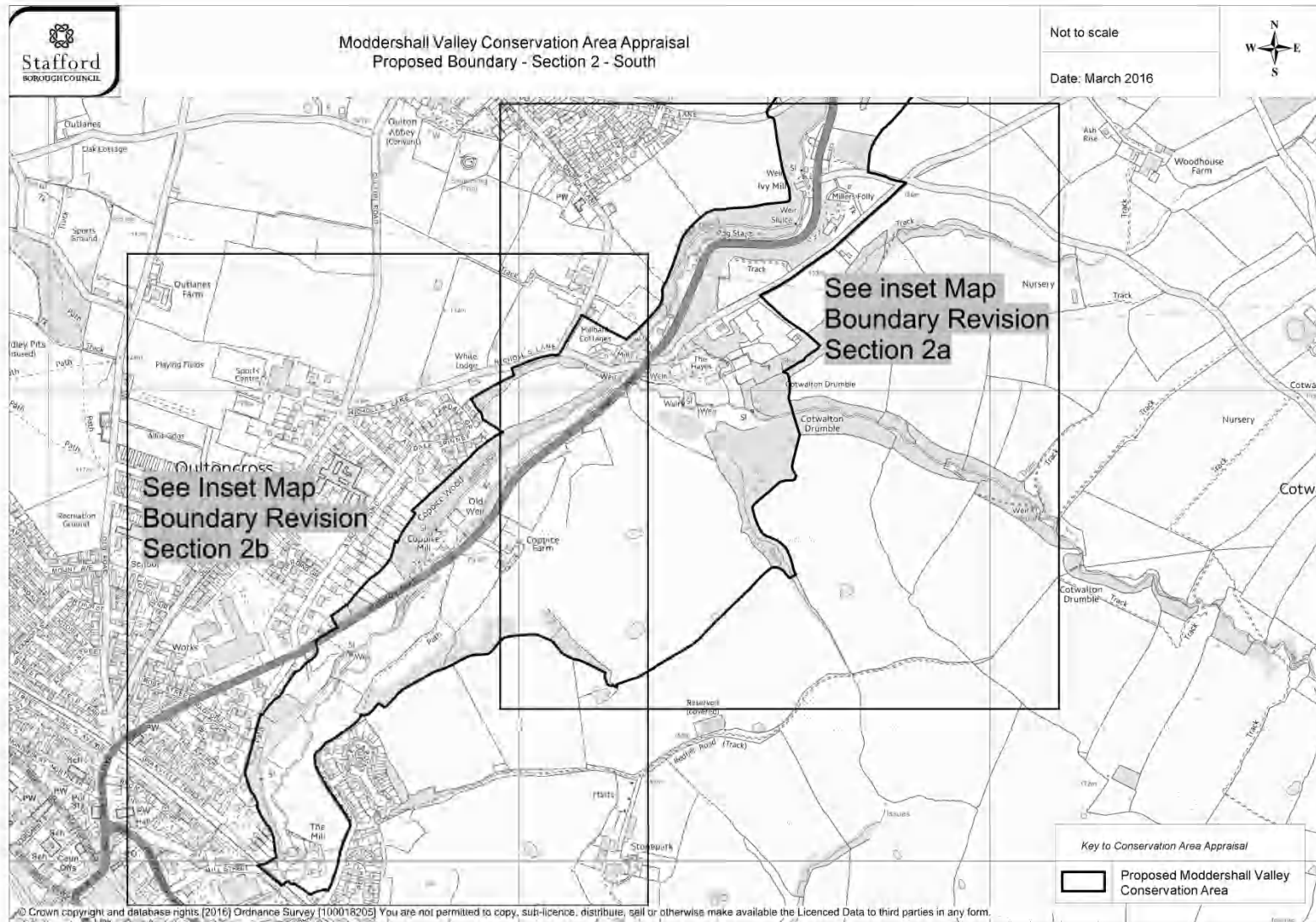
**Previous Consideration** - Consent was sought from the Head of Planning and Regeneration to go out to consultation in November 2015.

**Background Papers** - Available in Forward Planning

CABINET - 4 MAY 2016

The Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Boundary Revisions

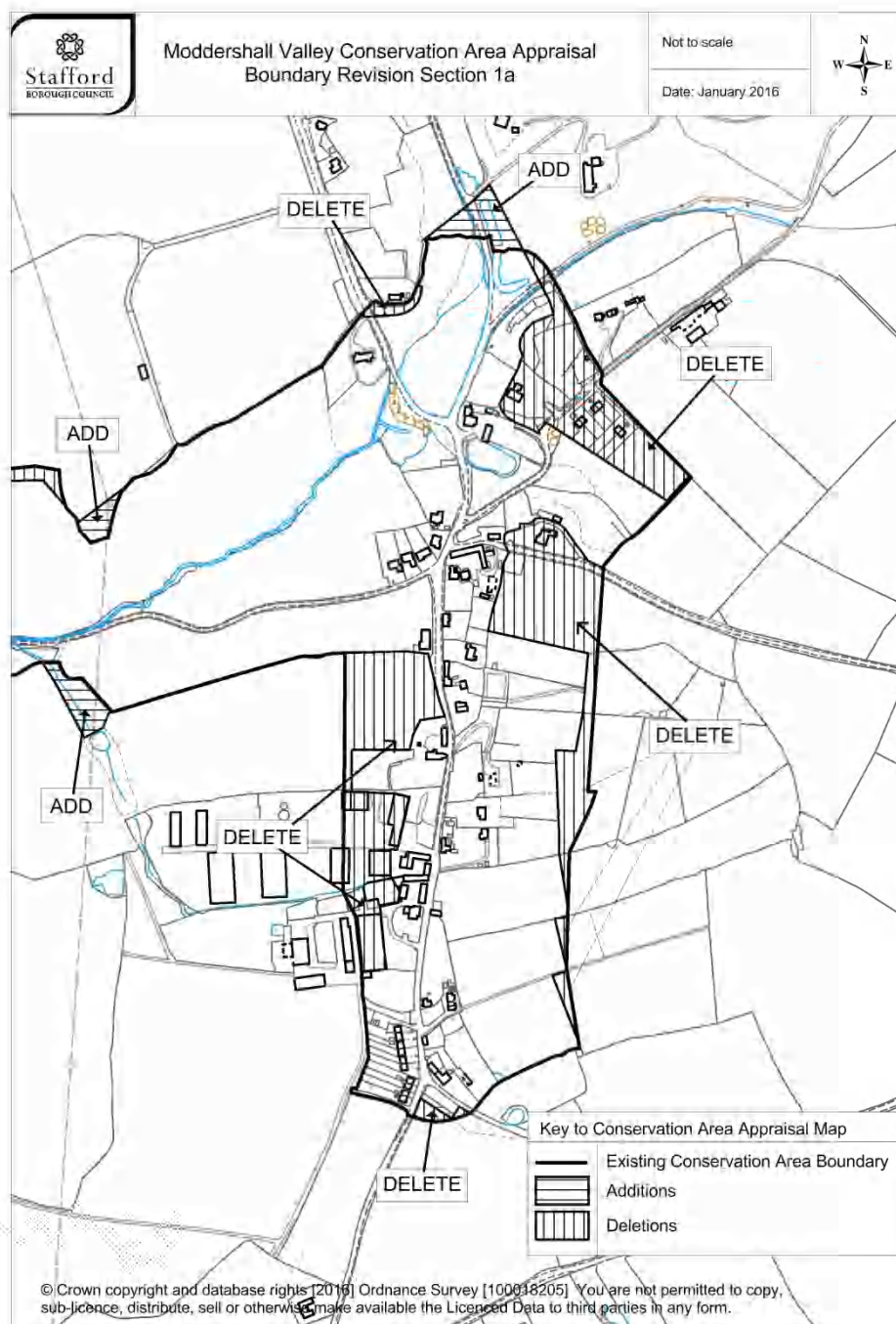




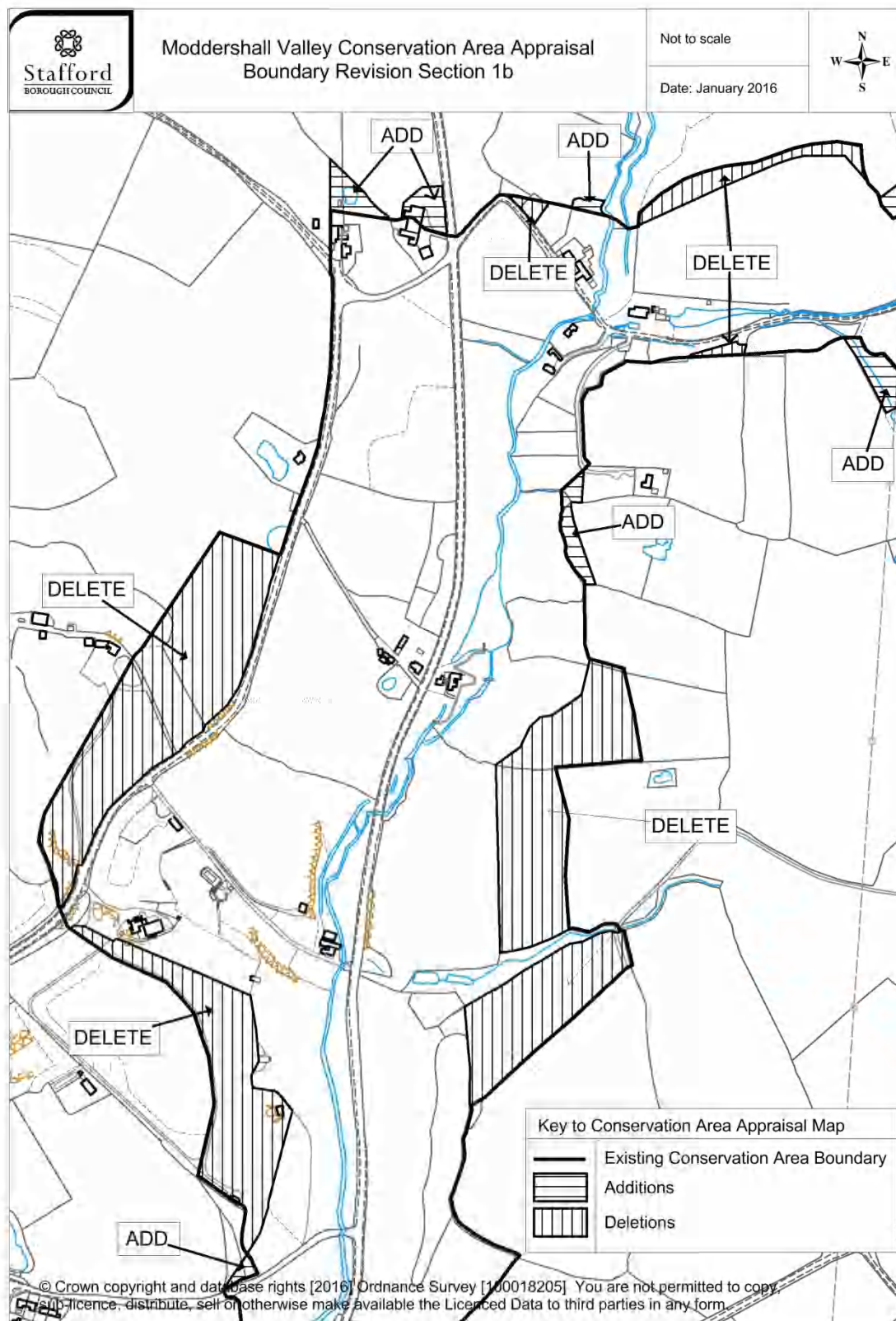
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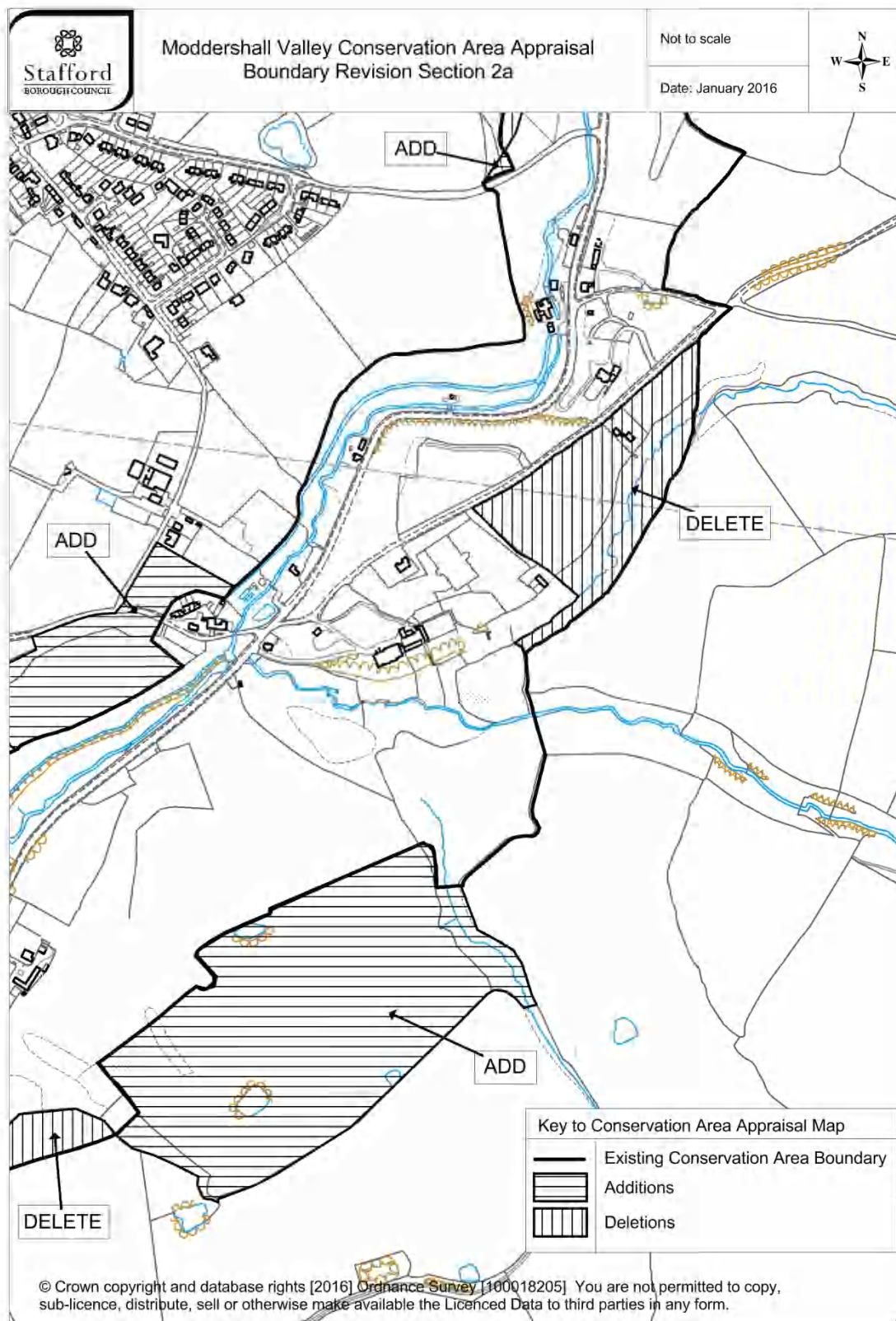
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## The Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Boundary Revisions

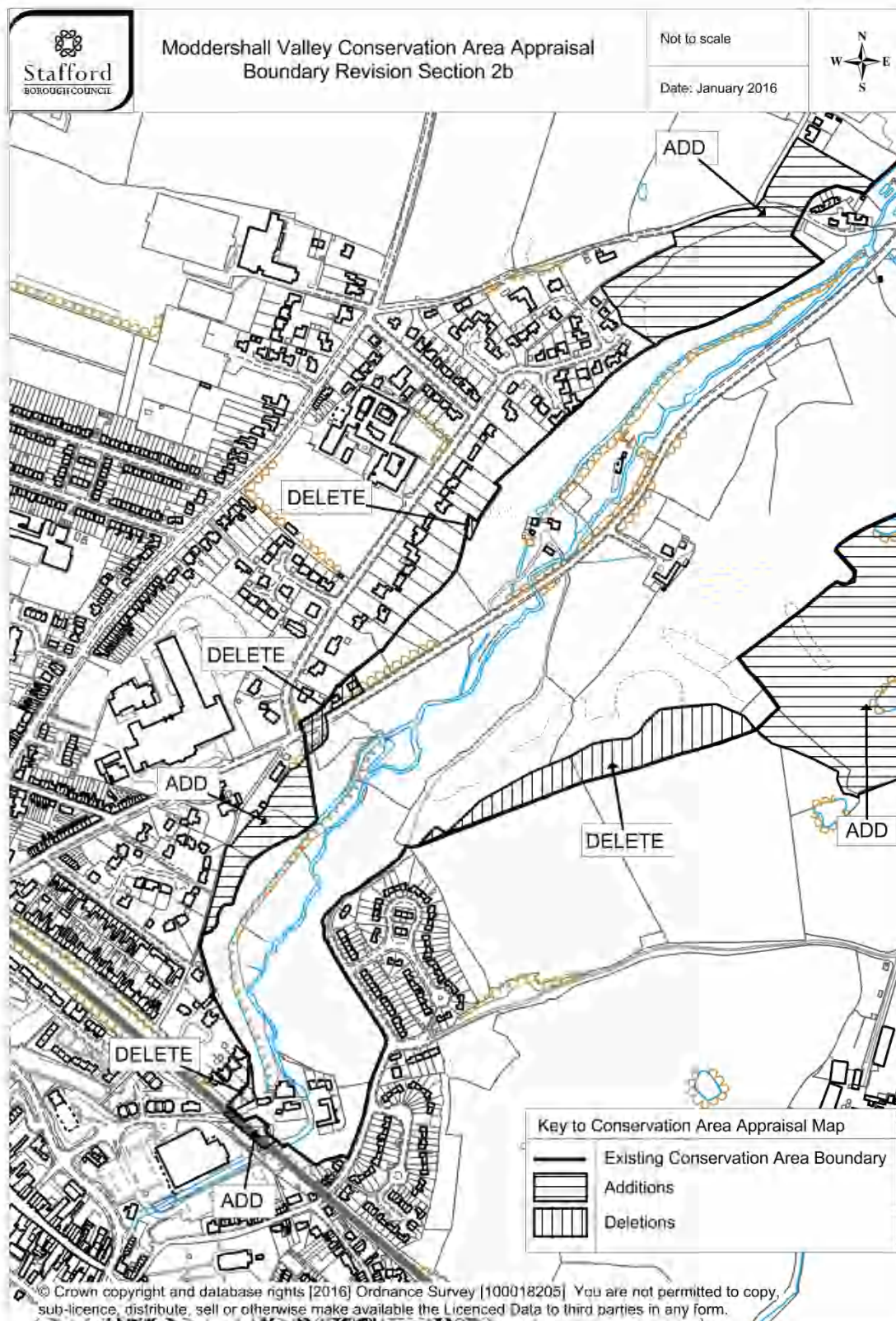












**APPENDIX 3****CABINET****4 MAY 2016****The Moddershall Valley Conservation Area Appraisal - Summary of Responses and Discussion/Action**

	<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Support proposed boundary</b>	<b>Comment Summary</b>	<b>Discussion/Action</b>
<b>1 a</b>	Resident	Yes	Congratulate on detailed content and sensible recommendations	-
<b>b</b>			Consistent with view of Planning Inspector (Nicholls Lane Public Inquiry) to include Nicholls Lane field	-
<b>c</b>			Nicholls Lane field should also be local green space in neighbourhood plan	Referred to Stone Town Council
<b>2</b>	Resident	Yes	Welcome inclusion of Nicholls Lane field to be consistent with rest of valley drawn to ridge line	-
<b>3 a</b>	Resident	Yes	Important to recognise and preserve the history of the Potteries which is of significant historical interest	-
<b>b</b>			Concern regarding removal of The Drumbles and the effect on the area.	The Drumbles is not a historic building, the landscape south east of Hayes Bank is not of historic character and does not contribute to the character of the Mills Character Area at this point. Boundary drawn to follow first physical feature

				back from the valley bottom which is Hayes Bank road.
4 a	Resident	Yes	Includes all areas that need protecting. Shows that areas although taken out will fall within the remit of the conservation valley to protect it for the future	-
b			Concern ref condition of walls to grade II listed building in village [Boulton's Offices]	Refer for action to rebuild wall
5 a	Resident	Yes	Corrections/additional historical info/tipos	Amended Appraisal text
b			No mention of Hayes Mill being first purpose-built flint mill in valley, as in Proof of Evidence for Nicholls Lane Inquiry	From further research seems that cannot make definitive claim, but add to text 'thought to be the first purpose-built wet-grinding flint mill'.
c			No mention of Ancient Woodland designation to north of Hayes Mill	Added to Appraisal text and plans
			Recent works have added kerb to lane adjacent to Hayes Mill Cottage. Concern that future Highways works will damage character of area, particularly if use exposed gabions as have done elsewhere along the valley.	Issue added to Section 26 'Negative Features within the Conservation Area'. SCC Highways will be notified of revised appraisal and should seek conservation advice on works in accordance with their policies for the historic environment. E-mailed SCC to raise issue and ensure consultation if future works proposed.
			Supports addition of field off Nicholls Lane for consistency with opposite side of valley, where boundary follows ridgeline.	-
			Recognises landscape and topography important and enables understanding of mills grouping in the landscape and role of topography in enabling industrial development.	-
			Historical link between grade II listed Hayes Mill and associated buildings with	-

			field to northwest (from 1844 Tithe records) and Nicholls Lane field (from records in William Salt Library). Probably for horses for transport and cows for meat and milk.	
			Addition of field [Nicholls Lane] will protect integrity, group value and interlinkage of historic buildings and structures.	-
			Should the clustering of buildings along the Scotch Brook in an otherwise isolated rural setting be included in para 2.2. Argument upheld by Inspector [Nicholl's Lane]	2.2 applies to MVCA as a whole. This would not be applicable in the village. These characteristics are summarised in Section 25.1 which addresses Mills Character Area.
6a	Resident	No	Generally support boundary changes as uniting the most significant parts of the Moddershall Valley into a coherent whole. Area vulnerable to development which should be avoided at all costs.	-
b			Concern reference deletion of area west of Kibblestone Road. Has rare and lovely trees dating from the time of the Copeland family's residence. Inclusion would protect and recognise arboricultural significance.	Conservation areas should not be designated to protect trees alone, and the MVCA is focussed on the flint mills adjacent to the Moddershall Valley rather than the Kibblestone estate, which is unrelated to the industry and does not have a direct contribution to its significance.
c			Object to removal of field to the west of Kibblestone Road which provides attractive hillside views. Suggest drawing boundary to ridge line and Cross Lane which provides most perfect views of the Moddershall Valley.	Conservation areas should not be designated to include landscapes of no historic significance. The boundary has been drawn to the first physical boundary west of the watercourse, which in this instance is Kibblestone Road. The stunningly attractive scenery here lies within the green belt, is covered by landscape policies, and contributes to the setting of the MVCA, but does not have historical significance.
7 a	Resident	No	Object to inclusion of field between Mill	

			Bank Cottages and Summer House View:	
b			NPPF states at para 86 that cannot be both greenbelt and conservation area.	Para 86 discusses Green Belt designations. It states that green belt should only be used to protect the openness of areas, and where other characteristics are to be protected, alternative designations should be used, for example, conservation areas. It is common to have 'overlapping' designations to protect different aspects of character, here the openness of the green belt in addition to the historic character of the area. Much of the Moddershall Conservation Area is within Green Belt, and other conservation areas such as Trentham and Swynnerton are wholly within Green Belt.
c			The field has no historical interest. The bungalow and an agricultural building are modern.	The bungalow is not included within the conservation area as it has no historic merit. The field was historically associated with the buildings at Millbank and Hayes Mill. The boundary is currently drawn very tightly around the buildings at Hayes Mill and Millbank, whereas the spacious setting of the mills is respected by the boundary elsewhere within the conservation area. It is proposed to include this field for a consistent approach.
d			The field is used to rear livestock and being within the CA would affect the future prospect to rear livestock.	Conservation area status would not hinder the current land use, but may influence the location or design of any associated buildings where planning permission is required. The existing conservation area includes a number of fields in agricultural usage where this already applies.
e			The trees in the field are already protected by TPOs	Protection of trees within conservation areas is a consequence of the designation, but does not

				form the justification for designation. In this instance it is the open space around the historic buildings which is of concern.
8 a	Resident	Yes	Supports retention and protection of heritage assets. Considers the Moddershall Valley to be an area of significant importance. Inspector (Nicholls Lane Appeal) considered no development should be allowed here as would impact on natural beauty of the Moddershall Valley.	-
b			Summary of Special Interest makes one realise how many important aspects of the area need to be given consideration.	-
c			Section 11 is a wonderful pictorial journey. Owners have retained characteristics of the original buildings; demonstrates importance of protecting buildings through planning regulations.	-
9	Resident	No	Supports most of boundary, but object to deletion of land west of Kibblestone Road just beyond the Oulton boundary and the strip of land within the east side of the camp. Has rock face used for training and woodland with rare species of trees and daffodils and bluebells. Further along landscape opens up to ridge that is natural western boundary to valley.	Conservation areas should not be designated to protect trees or ecology. The MVCA is focussed on the flint mills adjacent to the Moddershall Valley. (See response to 6 b and c, above).
10	Resident	Yes	Planning authority should be prepared to take action against breaches by land owners. Refers to unauthorised works at Coppice Farm barns.	Referred to Enforcement for response.
11a	Resident	No	Support majority of proposals	

b			Object to revision to boundary of Coppice Wood adjoining Elmwood. Should be included as indistinguishable from the rest of Coppice Wood and merits comparable management.	Boundary was redrawn to follow existing property boundaries. However, the trees in the gardens are clearly integral with the Coppice Mill woodland as a whole. Retention of the whole of the woodland within the MVCA would be consistent with the approach taken elsewhere in the conservation area. Boundary amended.
c			Important built structures fundamental to harnessing water power should be identified and given protection. Suggest either survey of features and addition to 'positive buildings', or to be covered by Section 27 (Protecting the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area)	Consideration was given to adding these features of industrial archaeological significance to the character analysis maps. A thorough survey is recommended as a future Appendix to the Appraisal. The watercourses and associated engineering structures are 'positive features' identified by the appraisal and covered by Section 27, although many would fall outside of planning control. The text is nevertheless amended to clarify that it is not just 'positive buildings' that are covered here, and a paragraph in Section 26 (Negative Features) to identify the threat to the condition of these structures and features. Appraisal text amended.
d			Suggest guidance within Appraisal to achieve a balance between the tree cover, built environment and open spaces. To address concerns reference increasing tree and hedge cover over years affecting character of area. Suggests guidance included to inform plans for tree and woodland management. Proposals for management of trees should be considered favourably where the works would reveal and reinforce listed/positive	The SBC Appraisals do not include specific Management proposals, but are designed to be used in conjunction with local and national planning policies. Specific guidance on tree management alone could not be included without comparable guidance for other aspects of the environment. The proposals go beyond the remit of the Appraisal and the LPA does not have powers to control these works. A paragraph is added, however in Section 26 'Negative Features' to raise the issue of the changing landscape and

			buildings and introduction of new trees that detract be avoided. Proposes 7 year survey by SBC to identify self-set trees to be removed. Height of some hedges should be reduced.	potential harm to views.
12a	Resident	No	Support majority of proposals, especially inclusion of field off Nicholls Lane and land behind Mill Bank Cottages	-
b			Object to removal of the area to the rear of the houses on Airedale Road as indistinguishable from other adjacent parts of valley.	See response to II.b above. Boundary amended.
13	Resident	Yes	-	-
14a	Resident	Yes	Support boundary revision as essential and very sensible indeed. Otherwise will be destroyed by greed.	-
b			Concern over deletion of area around Drumble House. Will increase distance between proposed Cotwalton Wind Turbine and MVCA. Might influence Appeal decision on horribly noisy wind turbines.	Conservation area designation should not be used to combat development, but to define areas of special historic and architectural importance. See responses to 6 above.
15a	Resident	Yes	More logical than the existing boundary in encompassing the whole of the valley to the ridge line	-
b			Support decision of Planning Inspector (Nicholls Lane Appeal) that this field should remain a green space for this and future generations.	-
16a	Resident	Yes	Fine and appropriate inclusion of Nicholls Lane field	-
b			Concern that removal of area around Drumble House will increase distance of	The Drumbles is not a historic building, the landscape south east of Hayes Bank is not of



			proposed Cotwalton wind turbine from MVCA by approx. 100m.	historic character and does not contribute to the character of the Mills Character Area at this point. Boundary drawn to follow first physical feature back from the valley bottom which is Hayes Bank road.
17	Resident	Yes	Only clear view of Moddershall Valley from the village is from the old bus stop and should be identified as an important view.	Added views from Moddershall Oaks across valley to plans.
18 a	Resident	Yes	Historical importance of valley and its heritage should be protected for future generations. SBC should budget for funding to assist in the maintenance of buildings to the required standard.	Area does not qualify for current Historic England funding and there is no current SBC budget for historic buildings. Grant schemes could be considered when local or national priorities and budgets allow.
b			Inclusion of: Nanny Goat Lane, Railway Bridge west of Stone Mill, fields south and east of Nicholls Lane, mill pond north of Boar Inn. Agree to additions, are very logical.	-
19 a	Resident	Yes	Glad railway bridge is included, it needs to be refurbished appropriately	Network Rail will be informed of designation and should take this into account in future repair works.
b			Essential to preserve all our mills for sake of our heritage. Funding is needed.	Area does not qualify for current Historic England funding and there is no current SBC budget for historic buildings. Grant schemes could be considered when local or national priorities and budgets allow.
20	Resident (verbal)	No	Boundary north of The Bungalow incorrectly drawn, should include whole of the steep wooded bank.	Incorrectly drawn following boundary on SBC maps. Boundary corrected.
21 a	Barry Job (Moddershall Valley)	Yes	Congratulations on excellent and comprehensive document. Pleased that boundaries more sensibly drawn and	-

	historian/ author)		village character included. A first rate piece of work.	
b			Correction to number of grinding pans at Ivy Mill and typos	Appraisal text corrected
22 a	Stone Rural PC	Yes	A comprehensive document with consistent and logical approach. Boundary removes previous anomalies where landscapes that contribute to listed and positive buildings were omitted.	-
b			How will other organisations, e.g. Highways Dept be forced to adhere and respect conservation area appraisal?	Cannot force adherence or adopt on behalf of County Council. However Highways will have a copy of the appraisal and should consult the BCO on proposals within the area. Response sent.
23	Resident	Yes	Updated boundaries will remove anomalies and ensure historic nature of unique area is preserved. Welcome inclusion of fields south and east of Nicholls Lane which contribute to setting of Hayes Mill buildings.	-
24	Resident	No	Consider areas should be added rather than deleted. Effect around village is to reduce the 'buffer zone' and developers will use this to their advantage.	Boundary around village has been amended to follow physical boundaries and remove some modern houses of no historic interest.
25	Resident	Yes	Revised boundary closer to natural horizon of valley	-
26	Land owner	No	One field extending from Moddershall village hall has been highlighted for removal and the adjacent has not. There is no difference in character and both should be removed. It contains no structures, woodland or trees of special significance; it is of no historic interest and	Field already in conservation area. This is where there is a change from the 'Village' character area to the 'Valley' character area. To define the valley of the Scotch Brook it is necessary to take in adjacent fields, whilst Mill Lane itself is of character to the area. Adjacent field does not bound Mill Lane or Scotch Brook.

			not connected to industrial activities in the valley.	
27	Land owner	No	There is a road and 3 or 4 houses and another field between the field at the corner of Mill Lane and Scotch Brook. Would accept bottom 20% being in as does come close to Scotch Brook, but not top section. Adjacent field being removed but no difference between the two fields. Field has no historical reference, buildings or significant woodland or trees.	Field already in conservation area. This is where there is a change from the 'Village' character area to the 'Valley' character area. To define the valley of the Scotch Brook it is necessary to take in adjacent field, whilst Mill Lane itself is of character to the area. Need to follow physical boundaries, here the field boundary.
28	Resident	Yes	The field [Nicholls Lane] has been used for recreational purposes , e.g. do walking and enjoying wild life. Needs protecting for future generations	-
29	Stone Town Council	Yes	-	-
30	Resident	Yes	Supports proposed additions as distinctive parts of the area. Rejection of housing proposals within the field south and east of Nicholls Lane was largely as result of being in setting of conservation area	-
31	Resident	Yes	Important to protect heritage areas such as Moddershall Valley. Welcomes inclusion of meadow land off Nicholls Lane	-
32	Resident	Yes	Good document, well-balanced	-
33 a	Mills of the Moddershall Valley Group	Yes	Support updating of document. Welcome distinction between Mills and Village character areas. Provides deeper understanding and historic perspective.	-
b			Logical approach to delineation of conservation area removing previous	-

			anomalies and omission of important aspects of landscape.	
c			Welcome acknowledgement of millworkers cottages and stabling as 'positive' [Millbank cottages].	-
d			Various structures such as dams, weirs, mill pools, sluice gates, mill races and culverts should be included as 'positive structures'	See response to 11c above
e			Concern that other local authority departments do not use appraisal, e.g. Highways. Would welcome accessible, transparent policy and procedure to hold other authorities to account.	See response to 22b above
f			Trees make a significant contribution to character and appearance of the area including sense of intimacy and seclusion. But woodland management scheme would ensure woodland continues to provide special character and not diminish or overpower it	See response to 11d above
<b>34</b> a	Resident	Yes	1979 boundary was naively drawn. Review welcome to consider up to date issues and threats. Welcome specific character areas as logical way of understanding.	
b			Only one side of valley previously included at Hayes Mill. Including field south and east of Nicholl's Lane to follow contour and ridge provides greater protection to setting of Hayes Mill and its positive buildings	
c			Correction to date of completion of Longton	Appraisal text amended

			Road. Other factual corrections to names of buildings etc.	
			Concern reference potential use of gabions to shore soft sloping verges at Hayes Mill/Hayes Mill Cottage. Would urbanise area. Need joined up approach with County Council to implement document.	See response to 22b above. Specific Issue referred to Highways.
35	Resident	Yes	Values the areas historic buildings, ancient woodlands and fields. Well preserved thanks to Conservation Officer. Welcomes inclusion of Nicholls Lane field	-
36	Resident	Yes	Considers boundary should be drawn from stream to Nicholls Lane beyond Airedale Spinney and the Nicholls Lane field included in Green Belt.	Would not be appropriate to include buildings on Airedale Spinney etc... within the conservation area as they are not of historic character or interest.
37	Landowner	No	<p>(i) Objects to the inclusion of fields to south and east of Nicholls Lane within the CA on the grounds that this land has no historic connection with Hayes Mill, and has no visual connection with the CA.</p> <p>(ii) Considers that the assessment is incorrect in stating that the area around Hayes Mill is unaltered from its 19<sup>th</sup> century character due to recent tree planting.</p>	<p>There is inter-visibility between the field and the existing conservation area especially in winter. It is considered to be part of the setting of the conservation area. It is also part of the setting of the grade II listed Hayes Mill (both points recognised by the Planning Inspector at Inquiry in 2015). It is appropriate to include the field in the revised CA. No change recommended.</p> <p>The historic setting of Hayes Mill is still recognisable despite recent tree growth. The criticism is rejected. No change recommended.</p>

			<p>(iii) Considers that the assessment document should include five character areas rather than two.</p> <p>(iv) The connection between the mills and the surrounding agricultural activities is unproven.</p> <p>(v) Considers that the depiction of trees on the assessment plans is insufficiently detailed.</p> <p>(vi) Considers that history and analysis of the impact of the A520 is incorrect in particular that it does not appear a rural road.</p>	<p>The document makes clear that the focus of the conservation area is on the historic mills which form one continuous zone and the village area. It would be misleading to attempt to further divide the area in the appraisal. No change recommended .</p> <p>Although the valley was latterly known for its association with flint and bone grinding processes for the pottery industry the early mills originated variously as fulling, linseed or corn mills only later converting to flint or bone. This indicates a very clear relationship between the mills and the surrounding farming economy.</p> <p>The emphasis of the appraisal is on the industrial heritage of the valley and its broad woodland setting. It would be inappropriate to focus on individual trees where individual specimens are of arboricultural interest they can be protected by TPOs. No change recommended.</p> <p>The appraisal is quite clear that many of the mills were established by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and accessed from Old Road whereas the present alignment of the A520 was not built until 1847. The document is also clear that it is the noise from traffic which is intrusive not the visual impact of the road which does still have the appearance of a rural road with soft verges and narrow pavements. No change recommended.</p>
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**ITEM NO 4(b)(ii)****ITEM NO 4(b)(ii)**

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Robert Gatensbury</b>
<b>Telephone No:</b>	<b>01785 619748</b>
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	<b>Forebridge</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Cabinet 4/5/16 (Only)</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR F BEATTY  
PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO**

**CABINET****4 MAY 2016****Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision and Options Appraisal****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision report and separate Options Appraisal, consider future actions being taken forward and agree funding support to continue the regeneration and growth of Stafford Town Centre.

**2 Proposal of Cabinet Member**

- 2.1 To receive the Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision report and the Options Appraisal report, to agree which actions for the Town Centre should be further developed and provide funding support to progress a footfall counter and business rate relief scheme as detailed in this report.

**3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Nationally, town centres across the country have been experiencing significant change in shopping habits, with increasing online shopping and closure of several major brands. Stafford has not been immune from this. Coupled with the advent of the new Riverside shopping centre, cinema and multi storey car park, it was recognised that a response was needed to offset the potential impact on the traditional town centre.
- 3.2 Consultants were engaged by the Borough and County Councils to prepare a town centre health check, comparing Stafford to other county towns of a similar nature. The work included options appraisal documents to look at opportunities for attracting new and additional uses to the town.

- 3.3 In summary the consultants identified the need to remodel the Guildhall Shopping Centre, focus investment in a wider range of uses including residential in the Princes Street area and the triangle of land between Eastgate Street and South Walls, opportunities to increase car parking, provide a new major visitor attraction and to improve the town centre environment.
- 3.4 A range of actions derived from the Options Appraisal to support the town centre are proposed for consideration; and guidance is sought in terms of which should be taken forward in more detail.

#### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Enable future population growth through housing, employment and town centre development. The report directly supports Priority P1.2 - Continue to develop Stafford Town Centre by supporting inward investment and the attractiveness of Stafford Town Centre.

#### **5 Report Detail**

##### **Background**

- 5.1 In 2011, the current Riverside Development proposal was submitted to develop a retail centre on South Walls and Kingsmead. The proposal is at an advanced stage of construction with an anticipated opening of summer 2016. The new centre will be anchored by a larger Marks & Spencer and a Primark store, with other confirmed tenants including H&M, Costa Coffee, Outfit, River Island, Vision Express, JD Sports, Chiquito and New Look. This investment is complemented by the new development on the Kingsmead/North Walls car park, a short walk to the established retail businesses in the north end of town, which is providing a Morrison's supermarket along with B&M and Just for Pets stores.
- 5.2 Whilst the developments are raising the retail ranking of Stafford and will result in more people visiting the town centre, the move of some retailers, such as Marks & Spencer, from the north end of the Town Centre will leave some empty retail units during this transition period. This is naturally a concern to businesses in that area.
- 5.3 Although agents and property owners advise that there is continued interest in vacant retail units, there are a number of underlying considerations in this part of town, including traditionally higher shop vacancy rates and a public realm that would benefit from further investment.
- 5.4 In order to address those concerns Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council engaged consultants DTZ and Urbed to provide the Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision document. A summary is attached in **APPENDIX 1**. The consultants have also prepared an options appraisal (**CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX 2**) for the two councils to consider, which contains exempt information of the type specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 and is **NOT FOR PUBLICATION**.



- 5.5 The work provides a baseline study, ascertaining where Stafford Town is now, the issues it faces, how it compares with towns of a similar size and type, and opportunities for the future. The key emphasis is that regeneration and investment would take place over the medium to longer term and will be private sector led.
- 5.6 The ideas and opportunities identified through the DTZ/Urbed Vision document could trigger a package of projects and investment, which would be primarily led by the private sector with support provided by both the Borough and County Councils where appropriate. A summary of DTZ/Urbed recommendations is included in Appendix 1.
- 5.7 In terms of private sector development, this is most likely to focus on the investment plans being developed for the Guildhall Shopping Centre by its owners, Edinburgh House including the new i-Motion Gym; proposals to convert the upper floor of property in Princes Street to apartments and proposals for apartments above shops in Salter Street; and Morrison's in North Walls.

### **Town Centre Action Plan**

- 5.8 The Borough Council intends to develop and take forward a package of actions for the Town Centre which embrace the suggestions made by DTZ/Urbed in terms of:-
- Encouraging investment in the Princes Street area
  - Diversification of uses including residential in the northern part of the Town Centre
  - Delivering a Parking Strategy
  - Encouraging delivery of a new major heritage-based visitor attraction
  - Quality design of buildings and street furniture, and
  - Improving the environment
- 5.9 These actions will in most cases involve other organisations and private investors taking the lead with Borough Council support as well as initiatives which the Borough Council could directly take forward.
- 5.10 These actions comprise existing commitments which will complement private investment as well as new proposals for which Cabinet approval is sought.

### **Vision**

- 5.11 The Vision is to:-

“Grow a successful town centre as a place for people to shop, visit, live, work and enjoy”

## 5.12 Objectives:-

- To bring forward regeneration and business support projects through existing funding mechanisms and by drawing in external support
- Support and encourage the investment of other partners in the public and private sector
- Promote and take advantage from future opportunities including HS2, European and Government regeneration funding, University Technical College, MoD and the general growth of housing and business parks in Stafford
- Encourage a more diverse range of uses in the Town Centre embracing town centre living, a café culture, offices, leisure facilities, hotel/conference facilities, community and educational uses as well as retail to cater to as wide an audience as possible
- Examine the opportunities to expand the Town Centre beyond its current boundaries in line with Local Plan policy.
- Create an inviting and vibrant place for people of all ages.

### **Strategy development**

## 5.13 Key strategies are being refreshed to help guide and contribute to the growth of the Town Centre. These include:-

- the Night Time Economy Strategy which looks to broaden the appeal and attractions of the Town Centre to a wider customer base,
- the Parking Strategy which will ensure the long terms parking needs of customers are being met, including the development of new car parks as appropriate,
- Design Supplementary Planning Document – to promote high quality design of new developments and their surroundings to complement and enhance Stafford's townscape.
- Undertake a Marketing and Promotions Strategy – To “sell” Stafford as a place to come: aimed at potential business investors, tourism operators, senior executives/visiting executives – to address the “modest” catchment area identified by DTZ/Urbed.

### **Current Initiatives**

## 5.14 The Borough Council is taking the lead in terms of strategy development, environmental improvements, major investment in new car parks and regenerating Victoria Park which are summarised as follows:-

Current Initiative	Lead Authority	Time Frame	Outcomes
1 Encourage further investment in office and residential accommodation and explore opportunities for funding through the Local Enterprise Partnership.	SBC/SCC	Ongoing	Provides new uses for vacant property that cannot otherwise be filled.
2 Undertake a strategic parking review to ensure the long term needs of town centre users are catered for, and develop new car parks as appropriate.	SBC	Strategy Review - June 2016	Increased provision of long-stay parking. Better distribution around the town. Offering car users choice and flexibility.
3 Work with Virgin Trains to identify additional parking for rail users.	SBC	June 2016	Reduction in overflow parking using residential streets. Encourage increased use of trains.
4 Support further and higher education in the town, including the creation of a University Technical College through the University of Wolverhampton.	SCC	Ongoing	New University Technical College in Stafford. Expansion of University of Wolverhampton presence.
5 Undertake a programme of town centre environmental improvements.	SBC	March 2017	Higher quality environment to encourage further investment.
6 Encourage further investment in the Guildhall Shopping Centre.	SBC	Ongoing	To provide a viable retail anchor for the northern town centre. Refreshing the retail offer to meet customer needs.
7 Improve the Pearl Brook pathway linking the leisure centre and St George's.	SBC	September 2016	Creating an improved and better used link between the new St George's development and the town.
8 Work with the County Council to deliver the Stafford Western Access Route.	SCC	June 2018	Supporting the long term growth of the town centre and increasing passengers using rail station.
9 Support County Council plans to develop the Staffordshire History Centre as a key attraction for the Town Centre.	SCC	September 2018	Major new visitor attraction created.
10 Deliver the restoration of Victoria Park, subject to HLF funding	SBC	June 2019	Major attraction enhanced. Increased

Current Initiative	Lead Authority	Time Frame	Outcomes
support.			visitors and increased “dwell” time in the town centre.
11 Refresh the Night Time Economy Strategy to encourage further investment in restaurant and leisure uses and to attract a wider customer base.	SBC	Autumn 2016	Increased number of visitors in the evening. New restaurant and leisure uses investing.
12 Work with the Town Centre Partnership to continue to develop and grow promotional activities for the town centre including the Cheese and Ale Festival, Arts Festival etc.	SBC	Ongoing	New events/ activities promoted. Attract increased footfall and spend in the town centre.
13 Market available vacant space within the Civic Centre to attract more tenants.	SBC	Ongoing	Providing co-location of public services that meets the needs of our communities.
14 Support the County Council with re-investment in their town centre property.	SCC	Ongoing	New investment and increased town centre employment opportunities.
15 Encourage the County Council to review on-street parking provision and proposals for a Town Centre bus corridor with a delivery timetable.	SCC	March 2017	Additional car parking spaces created. Ease of access to the town centre. Encourage increased use of public transport.
16 Prepare Design Supplementary Planning Document	SBC	2016	Ensure high quality design of the built environment and surrounding landscape.
17 Support the Indoor Market to increase number and variety of retail stalls	SBC	Ongoing	Increased occupancy. Broaden range of goods on sale. Increase customer foot fall.
18 Receive the new Waterfront and Riverside Undercroft Car Parks	SBC	April 2016	Creation of 1200 parking spaces to support the town centre economy.

## **Key delivery Proposals for 2016/17**

5.15 Borough Council investment in the Town Centre would build on and complement the initiatives outlined above to bring targeted support to encourage the growth of the north end of the Town Centre. Key proposals to promote economic development and regeneration of the north end of town are outlined below:-

- Retail Business Rate Reduction Scheme - a targeted scheme carefully controlled and defined to focus on specific streets, based on existing vacant premises, to encourage new retailers. A similar model is used in Cannock where 100% rate relief of up to £10,000 is offered to eligible businesses and exclusions apply (for example charity and betting shops and off licences). This scheme would not be available to assist existing retailers moving into different premises in the Town Centre and is intended, subject to Cabinet agreement in May 2016.

The scheme would be limited up to a set amount of £100,000 each year over a three year period. This £100,000 reduction to business each year would have an impact of £28,000 reduced income to the Borough Council through business rates (as the current Borough Council receipt is 28% of the total business rates). It is proposed that the scheme would run for a three year period with regular reviews being undertaken to assess effectiveness at encouraging the take-up of vacant units. This would have to be viewed in the context of the existing Retail Business Rate Reduction scheme and the changes announced by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement.

- Town Centre Footfall Counter – the counter will record overall footfall passing through Market Square and is provided by research company, Springboard. The data is essential to record the amount of people walking through the northern Town Centre area and helps to demonstrate the value of running events in the Town Centre with the additional visitors they bring. This data is licensed and the cost to access would be £2,000 per year. It is suggested that the data is sought for a three year period to provide an appropriate insight into pedestrian patterns in the Town Centre before and after the opening of the new retail developments in Riverside.
- Town Centre Workspace Project - The Borough Council would seek to work with the County Council to encourage additional office space in the Town Centre, which would diversify uses, increase day time footfall and support business and job creation. Initial desk top research is being undertaken to develop a viable business case which would be reported back to Cabinet in due course. The total project cost, subject to securing sufficient Growth Deal and private sector contributions would be of the order of £3 million.
- Undertake a cross departmental review of all Borough Council departments involvement in the town centre - to improve authority coordination of all relevant town centre functions to better support the town centre economy.
- Marketing and Events Programme – Linked to the production of a new Marketing and Promotions Strategy for the town centre. This would review

existing events and identify new events in the annual calendar. A key partner would continue to be the Town Centre Partnership, which already organises a number of highly successful events, including the Cheese, Ale and More Festival and the Arts Festival. In addition the Borough Council itself promotes a number of events including the Stafford Half Marathon, Farmers Markets and the Stafford Christmas Lights Switch On. The target set for the investment required to undertake this work would be of the order of £50,000 per year, in addition to existing budgets, which would need to be identified from available grants, sponsorship, as well as any direct funding which the Borough Council would be able to consider.

<b>6</b>	<b>Implications</b>
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<b>6.1 Financial</b>	Several existing capital programme allocations benefit the town centre and assist in the regeneration of the town, including Waterscape Project and the Town Centre Environmental Improvement Project. The proposed Retail Business Rate Reduction Scheme would result in a decrease in business rate income of up to £28,000 per year. Funding to provide the footfall counter for a 3 year period (overall cost £6,000) is being met from existing resources.
<b>Legal</b>	None identified.
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None
<b>Data Protection</b>	None
<b>Risk Management</b>	Risks include the physical delivery of projects to time, budget and quality.
<b>6.2 Equality and Diversity</b>	The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:- Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

<b>Previous Consideration - Nil</b>
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<b>Background Papers</b> – Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision document available from the Economic Development office.
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**CABINET**

**4 MAY 2016**

**Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision and Options Appraisal**

**Summary of Stafford Town Centre Health Check and Future Vision**

A baseline study was undertaken DTZ/Urbed which examined a range of issues which define a town centre including:-

- Retail provision - including the balance between independent and national retailers and the vacancy rate in the Town Centre
- Commercial analysis - examining the demand for further retail, new leisure, office and residential uses
- Historic development - showing how the Town Centre has grown and evolved over time
- Townscape and heritage - the quality and attractiveness of properties and spaces in the Town Centre
- Access and parking - quantity and location of parking and ease of accessing them from the roads into town

Benchmarking was undertaken with similar, albeit slightly larger, county towns of Shrewsbury, Gloucester, Worcester and Bedford. This examined comparisons of the amount and type of retail, the proximity of large supermarkets to the town centre, the quality of visitor attractions, and the ease of access to and from major cities by public and private transport. The consultants concluded that Stafford held its own when compared to the other centres, although it was considered not to have a primary attraction (which would be the prime reason for people visiting the town centre) and the ease of accessing a number of major cities does have a downside in that Stafford faces competition from larger city centres. Despite that Stafford does have a contained economy with 73% of the Borough's economically active population living and working in its boundary.

The consultants undertook further analysis looking at Attractions, Access, Amenity and Action and diagnosed that Stafford was not doing badly, but not doing as well as it wants to due to the lack of a primary attraction and having a modest catchment and consideration need to be given to the opportunities the new Riverside development will bring. A wider view was sought on ideas for the town centre through a round table discussion of stakeholders and a more visible public consultation exercise with a red bus in Market Square during the Summer of 2014.

The analysis and opinions helped to generate a vision for possible projects which are highlighted in the body of this report, but in summary include, the Guildhall Centre, the "northern quarter" the "Eastern gateway", a space to park, a space to visit, a place to shop and enjoy and a place to live.

The consultants key ideas of this Vision are:-

- Guildhall Shopping Centre - a remodelled centre incorporating the Market with new housing development fronting Earl Street and the churchyard and new retail anchor store on Chapel Street.
- Northern Quarter (Princes Street area) - looking at the opportunity to create a new multi-storey and surface car parking along with environmental improvements to the streets and open spaces in the area.
- Eastern Gateway - This is the triangle of land between Eastgate Street and South Walls which is located across South Walls from the new Primark store. This area could lend itself for redevelopment for a range of uses including retail, housing and offices.
- A Space to Park - in addition to the opportunity mentioned above for a new car park in the Northern Quarter, consideration should be given to increasing on-street parking in Eastgate Street and North Walls.
- A Place to Visit - it was identified that Stafford lacked a major tourist attraction in the Town Centre that would act as a primary reason for people visiting the town. Ideas included investing in the Ancient High House, Broad Eye Windmill and Shire Hall Gallery together with the relocation of the Library into Staffordshire Place.
- A Place to Shop and Enjoy - This includes improvements to enhance the town centre environment, particularly along Gaolgate Street to Market Square and along Market Street to the new Morrison's store. The "animation" of the public spaces was also seen as being important with greater opportunity being taken to hold outdoor markets and other events.
- A Place to Live - with encouragement for vacant properties to be converted into residential uses which would increase the immediate customer base for the town centre. This was considered an opportunity for County Council properties as part of their property review.