

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2022**

**MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE LEAD PLANNING MANAGER**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

1.1 A monthly update report to ensure that the Committee is kept informed on key matters including:

- Proposed training
- Any changes that impact on National Policy
- Any recent Planning Appeal Decisions
- Relevant Planning Enforcement cases on a quarterly basis
- The latest data produced by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Committee note the content of the update report.

**3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Report to Planning Committee	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	25 January 2022	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	Any legal issues are covered in the report.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	No other significant impacts, risks or opportunities have been identified.

IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	District-wide application.
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## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### 4. INFORMATION

4.1 **Future Training** – Changes to Planning Committee were approved at the 26 March 2019 meeting of the Council to reduce committee size from 49 potential members to 21 members. As part of these changes an update report is now being brought to each meeting of the Committee. We have recently circulated 2 surveys to Members; 1 for all Members, and an additional survey for Planning Committee. We've had 29 responses from all Members, and 16 from committee members. A number of suggestions for future training have been put forward and will now be timetabled before future planning committee meetings. Two training sessions, which are open to all Members, have been arranged before January and February's Planning Committee.

- 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 5pm – 6pm Making Good Decisions – Piers Riley-Smith
- 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – 5pm – 6pm Section 106 Agreements – Piers Riley-Smith

4.2 Further training dates will be arranged to cover permitted development and 'Building Better, Building Beautiful', as requested in the recent Member questionnaire responses. Please let us know if there are other topics on which you would like training. In addition, regular training/refresher sessions on using Public Access will be organised in the New Year.

4.3 **Changes in National Policy** – Previous temporary changes to Permitted Development rights, first introduced in 2020 as a temporary measure to boost high streets and small businesses during national restrictions, are being made permanent following a public consultation. As such, pubs, cafes and restaurants will now be able to install gazebos on their own land without planning permission, allowing them to make better use of their outside space all year round. Councils will also be able to permit street markets as required without the need for a planning application, attracting more people to high streets and town centres and boosting local businesses.

News here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-for-high-streets-and-businesses-as-markets-and-outdoor-marquees-allowed-permanently>

4.4 **Planning Appeal Decisions** – every Planning Appeal decision will now be brought to committee for the Committee to consider. There have been 2 appeal decisions since my last report, copies of the decisions are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. These relate to:

- 1 An appeal against a refusal for a lime tree crown lift and reduce overhanging branches to at Pinewood Heights, Top Road, Acton Trussell. Staffordshire, ST17 0RQ. The appeal was allowed, subject to conditions, because the Inspector concluded that whilst proposed works will have an effect on the amenity value of the tree, the visual impact of the works from the public domain would be negligible. The Inspector also felt that sufficient need for the works has been

demonstrated and that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the constraints set out in the conditions.

- 2 An appeal against a refusal for an extension to an existing stable block to include further stables, hay store, grooming, feed, tack and rugs room together with construction of a manège at Shore Croft, West Wing, Sandy Lane, Hatherton WS11 1RF. The appeal was dismissed because the Inspector concluded that the ‘very special circumstances’ necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist, and that the harm to the Green Belt and character and appearance of the surrounding area would not be outweighed by the benefits from improving the quality of the stabling provision.
- 4.5 In May 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport made an order granting development consent West Midlands Interchange (WMI). Documents can be seen here : <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/west-midlands-interchange/> Officers are now working with the site promoters to understand next steps.
- 4.6 **Relevant Planning Enforcement cases on a quarterly basis** –83.53% of Planning Enforcement cases are currently being investigated within 12 weeks of the case being logged. This is above the target of 80%. The team continues to manage day to day workload through the triaging of cases to ensure that the necessary information is obtained from the complainant regarding the alleged planning breach before a case is logged, however we still have an unusually high and complex caseload within the team. A new planning enforcement assistant, Jenny Thompson, has recently joined the team which has now brought the team back up to full strength. Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites continue to take up a large part of the workload. The team currently has 293 open cases.
- 4.7 **The latest data produced by the Ministry of Ministry of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** – As members will recall, MHLUHC sets designation targets that must be met regarding both quality and speed of planning decisions. The targets are broken into Major and Non major development. If the targets are not met, then unless exceptional circumstances apply, MHLUHC will “designate” the relevant authority and developers have the option to avoid applying to the relevant designated Local Planning Authority and apply direct, and pay the fees, to the Planning Inspectorate. Details can be seen at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/760040/Improving\\_planning\\_performance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760040/Improving_planning_performance.pdf)
- 4.8 We will ensure that the Committee is kept informed of performance against the relevant targets including through the MHLUHC’s own data.
- 4.9 For Speed – the 2020 target for major developments is that 60% of decisions must be made within the relevant time frame (or with an agreed extension of time) and for non-major it is 70%. For Quality – for 2020 the threshold is 10% for both major and non-major decisions. Current performance is well within these targets and the position as set out on MHLUHC’s website will be shown to the Committee at the meeting – the information can be seen on the following link tables:

- 151a – speed – major
- 152a – quality – major
- 153 – speed – non major
- 154 – quality – non major

The link is here – <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>

The latest position is on the MHCLG website and the key figures are below:

**Speed**

151a – majors – target 60% (or above) – result = 95.9% (data up to September 2021)

153 – others – target 70% (or above) – result = 84.7% (data up to September 2021)

**Quality**

152a – majors – target 10% (or below) – result = 3.7% (date up to March 2020)

154 – others – target 10% (or below) – result = 1% (date up to March 2020)

4.10 The national statistics above represent an improvement across the board in speed and quality of decision making. However, these nationally reported stats do not show the detail behind the scenes on the types of applications and volume the Team are dealing with. We are currently reviewing options for sharing more statistics with Members to demonstrate trends.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

N/A

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Appeal Decision – Pinewood Heights, Top Road, Acton Trussell, Staffordshire, ST17 0RQ.

Appendix 2 – Appeal Decision – Shore Croft, West Wing, Sandy Lane, Hatherton WS11 1RF.

Report prepared by:

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