



Local Plan Submission 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

- The council submitted the Local Plan 2023 -2041 to the Secretary of State (SoS) on 11th December 2024.
- The Secretary of State will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to conduct an **Examination in Public**. The Inspector's role is to consider whether the Plan is **sound and legally compliant** (including the **Duty to Cooperate**). In doing this they will consider any representations received on the final draft and hold public hearing sessions where the main matters and issues raised in the representations can be discussed in person.
- This includes how the council has developed the plan in the context of national planning policy, and whether the proposed sites and policies can be justified.
- The examination is a democratic process, taking account of the views of all participants which will be heard by an independent planning professional. After the examination process and subject to the plan being found sound, the final decision with whether to adopt the plan rests with the council.

What is a Local Plan?

Every local planning authority must produce a Local Plan which sets out the planning framework for their area. It contains the amount of housing and employment growth being planned for in the next few years and where that growth will be located. It also contains policies which will be used to decide planning applications. The Local Plan is just that, local to the area it covers, so the policies in our Local Plan are tailored to South Staffordshire.

Why are we reviewing our current Local Plan?

All councils must review their Local Plans at least every five years to take on board updated information. The government has made it very clear that plans should be put in place without delay and having a new, up to date adopted plan will put us in a very strong position to resist developer led, unplanned development in locations outside of our control, or planning by appeal and we believe this is in the best interests of our residents.

What stage is the Review at?

We have now submitted the Local Plan 2023 – 2041 for independent examination under Regulation 22 of the local planning regulations. The plan submitted was the Publication Plan 2024 version, together with some proposed amendments known as 'modifications'.



What is an Examination?

The examination starts when the local plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (via the Secretary of State) and ends when a report to the council has been issued by the Inspector(s). During the examination the planning Inspector(s) will assess whether the local plan has been prepared in line with the relevant legal requirements (including the **duty to cooperate**) and whether it meets the tests of '**soundness**' contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF). As part of the examination public hearing sessions will be held where the Inspector(s) discusses the issues with participants.

How can I be involved?

We consulted in 2022 and 2024 on the Publication Plan version of the local plan, and all the representations made to those two consultations will be available to the Inspector. So, if you responded you have already had input into the examination. Some people who made representations, asked to formally attend the hearing sessions and take part in the round table discussions. Ultimately, it is up to the Inspector(s) who can speak at the hearings. The sessions will be open to the public and anyone can attend to observe proceedings.

The role of the Programme Officer

An external Programme Officer has been appointed who manages the examination and liaises between the Inspector(s), the council and all other parties. This is for transparency and to ensure no-one can unduly influence the Inspector(s). Therefore, all correspondence and contact must be through the Programme Officer. The Programme Officer is Louise St John Howe and she can be contacted at:

Email: louise@poservices.co.uk

Telephone: 07789-486419

Post: PO Box 10965, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 3BF

Where can I find information about the examination?

The council has dedicated webpages that provide news and updates, matters for discussion and a timetable for the hearing sessions and links to the Local Plan 2023 – 2041 and the proposed modifications, the full evidence base and representations made in 2022 and 2024. You can find these **[here](#)**

Stay Informed

We will keep our website and Facebook page updated with details of the examination. The Programme Officer will ensure that participants are kept up to date with examination progress and all enquiries should be directed to her.



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