

DECISION NOTICE

Cabinet Meeting - 19 July 2017

Present: Ian Parry (in the Chair), Mark Deaville, Gill Heath, Mark Sutton, Alan White and Mark Winnington.

Cabinet Support Members in attendance: Helen Fisher and Mike Sutherland.

Also in attendance - Susan Woodward.

Apologies for absence: Philip Atkins, OBE.

PART ONE

12. Decision notice of the meeting held on 21 June 2017

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 be approved.

13. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Deputy Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the deposit of the Hybrid Bill on Phase 2a of HS2, the progress of the Superfast Staffordshire programme and the temporary closure of the A50 in Uttoxeter to enable foundations of a new bridge to be lifted into place be noted.

14. First Quarter Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18



“The county council continues to focus on growing the economy and investing in what is important for Staffordshire families, including improving roads, creating schools and ensuring people have the skills to share in this prosperity. In this first quarter we also confirmed an extra £5 million will be spent tackling the historic backlog of lower category potholes in the county.”

Philip Atkins, Leader of the County Council.



“Funding adult social care for an increasing ageing population continues to be a huge challenge and this year we will be spending a record £300m on the care of the elderly, supporting people with learning disabilities and looking after children in our care.

Robust financial management is absolutely key if we are able to protect services and balance the books. By taking proactive steps to address financial pressures we are managing the potential overspend, which at £8.6m equates to 1.7 per cent of overall budget.”

	Ian Parry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Finance and Corporate Issues
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Reasons for the Decision – To inform the Cabinet of the financial position of the county council (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) at the end of the first quarter 2017/18.

Decision – (a) That the first quarter finance position be noted.

(b) That the allocation of £0.504m from the contingency budget to support the costs of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017/18 be agreed.

(c) That the additional investment of £5m for repairing potholes, to be funded from borrowing, be approved. (The revenue implications of this approval are to be included in the 2018/19 MTFS process).

(d) That the progress made in the Capital Receipts Programme and the revision to the County Farms Strategy be noted.

15. Quarter 1, 2017/18 Performance Report

	<p>“We have seen a good start to this financial year with a continued drive to create more and better paid jobs and ensure Staffordshire residents are happier, healthier and more prosperous. We are seeing continued near full employment in the county, with more development taking place at i54 South Staffordshire and Kingswood Lakeside. This is in addition to the support we have put in place for smaller businesses and we have recently launched our Rural Enterprise Programme. This will lead to vacant buildings across the county being converted for productive use. Over the last three months we have also been encouraged to see a decrease in the number of children who are subject to a child protection plan.”</p> <p>Philip Atkins, Leader of the County Council.</p>
	<p>“Over the first quarter of the year we have managed to reduce the county council overspend to £8.9 million from £9.4 million, which represents just 1.9 per cent of our overall budget. This is mainly due to the pressures relating to the Better Care Fund and the cost of social care, which is a national issue. We remain confident in our ability to manage these financial challenges effectively.”</p> <p>Ian Parry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Finance and Corporate Issues</p>

Reasons for the Decision – To provide Cabinet with an overview of the county council’s performance (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) and the progress being made in delivering the three priority outcomes –

- The people of Staffordshire will be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth.
- The people of Staffordshire will be healthier and more independent.
- The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their Community.

Decision – That the report be received.

16. Highways and Transport Capital Programme 2017/18

	<p>“Good roads are important for the council, for communities and for businesses, not just for getting from A to B safely, but for supporting economic growth and better access to jobs, education and learning. We have already announced an extra £5m this year to tackle the historic backlog of low-risk potholes and this annual plan sets out priorities for further maintenance and investment in our huge road network.”</p> <p>Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2017/18.

Decision – (a) That the proposed capital investment detail as set out in the appendices to the report be approved.

(b) That the Commissioner for Highways and the Built County reports progress and proposed in-year alterations on a quarterly basis for approval by the Cabinet Member for Commercial.

17. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2017

	<p>“The historic Brexit vote in 2016/17 meant that uncertainties associated with the UK economy continued. The County Council still faced risks in undertaking its treasury management activities and retained its policy of not borrowing money, choosing to use internal cash balances instead. This has delivered significant savings for taxpayers, as the infrastructure to deliver more skilled, better-paid jobs is being funded at a lower cost.”</p> <p>Ian Parry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Finance and Corporate Issues</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To inform the Cabinet of the Council’s investment and borrowing activity during 2016/17 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time.

Decision – (a) That the treasury management activities for the year ended 31 March 2017, including the Prudential Indicators outturn detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, be noted.

(b) That the use of the Minimum Revenue Provision at 31 March 2017 as set out in paragraphs 33 and 34 of the report be approved.

(c) That it be noted that the current Annual Investment Strategy is considered prudent and sufficiently robust to meet any market challenges created by the vote for the UK to leave the European Union and that Officers will continue to monitor the position.

18. Public Analyst and Scientific Services



“Testing food and products to keep Staffordshire residents and consumers safe is one of the County Council’s key responsibilities. For many years we have been one of the few Councils in the country to carry out this work in-house, using the good reputation of our laboratory to sell services to other local authorities and organisations.

In recent years, the changing nature of this sector means that the laboratory in Stafford is losing money annually. As a well-run council we constantly review the way we work and how we can make the best use of taxpayers’ money to provide essential support and services for Staffordshire residents.

We will, of course, continue to protect the public by providing scientific services. However, by commissioning the work from other providers, rather than doing it in-house, we can deliver the same service to the public at a lower cost.”

Gill Heath, Cabinet Member for Communities

Reasons for the Decision – To inform Cabinet of a Review recently carried out into the Public Analyst and Scientific Services and to make recommendations regarding the future of this service.

Decision – (a) That the views of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee and the responses thereto be noted.

(b) That the Public Analyst and Scientific Services in-house laboratory is closed to reduce the county council’s operating costs.

(c) That the County Council appoints a Public Analyst and Agricultural Analyst from any of the five remaining Local Authority laboratories or alternatively it appoints one/more employed by an approved private sector company.

(d) That those departments within the Council that currently use the in-house laboratory facility should use an external laboratory that offers the best value for money.

19. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Decision – That the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers be noted:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Communities	In approving proposals to transfer the future management and maintenance of Wimblebury Mound Picnic Area, Cannock to Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council.
Cabinet Member for Communities	In approving proposals for the future management and maintenance of Consull Nature Park.
Cabinet Member for Commercial	In approving the commencement of a public consultation to help shape the supported bus network in Staffordshire post April 2018.

20. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 19 July to 15 November 2017, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Staffordshire Transforming Care Partnership Financial Update	Name: Dr Richard Harling Tel: (01785) 278700
Countryside Estate Review	Name: Janene Cox Tel: (01785) 278368
Stafford Western Access Route – Section C Land Transactions	Name: James Bailey Tel: (01785) 276591
Libraries and Arts Strategy	Name: Janene Cox Tel: (01785) 278368
Quarter 2, 2017/18 Performance Report	Name: Lauren Jackson Tel: (01785) 854561
Second Quarter Budget Monitoring Report	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Treasury Management Report for the half-year ended 30 September 2017	Name: Johirul Alam Tel: (01785) 276011

21. Exclusion of the Public

Decision – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the

paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

PART TWO

22. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2017 (Exemption paragraph 3)

Decision – That the exempt notes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 be approved.

23. Economic Growth Programme – Capital Projects Next Steps (Exemption paragraph 3)

The recommendations contained in the report were agreed.

Philip Atkins
Leader of the County Council