

To: All Members and Officers of the County Council.

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My Ref:

Your Ref:

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam,

County Council - Thursday, 14th February, 2019

I have recently forwarded to you a copy of the agenda for the next meeting of the County Council.

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 14th February, 2019 meeting of the County Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

10. **Question 1 from Susan Woodward (Pages 1 - 2)**

11. **Question 2 from Alan Dudson (Pages 3 - 4)**

12. **Question 3 from Charlotte Atkins (Pages 5 - 6)**

13. **Question 4 from Charlotte Atkins (Pages 7 - 8)**

14. **Question 5 from Ron Clarke (Pages 9 - 10)**

15. **Question 6 from Syed Hussain (Pages 11 - 12)**

16. **Question 7 from Kyle Robinson (Pages 13 - 14)**

17. **Question 8 from Kyle Robinson (Pages 15 - 16)**

John Henderson
Chief Executive

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QUESTION 1

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council

By Susan Woodward

Question

I was very surprised to see you as a co-signatory for an open letter to Party Leaders (<https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/media/1550/hs2-open-letter-final-210119.docx>) urging their support for HS2, in spite of unanimous and cross-party opposition to the project here at Staffordshire County Council and wide opposition across the communities we represent. You say, inter alia, “Our support must not flounder or stall. We must unite to deliver HS2, and we urge you to join us by offering your vocal and unwavering support.” Can you explain to me, the Council and the wider public, when your position on HS2 changed, why you decided to act in a way that is contrary to the County Council’s clearly expressed position and what discussions took place with fellow councillors before you co-signed this letter?”

Reply

The position of the county council remains as per the motion set out below and as approved by Full Council in December 2015.

However, HS2 is a complex issue with partners, Members and people across the Midlands and in the North West having differing views, concerns and priorities. While of course it is easy to pick out any one line from a comprehensive letter, as a county council we are keen to seek clarity on the progression of the scheme.

Phase One has already been given Royal Assent, where we have gained substantial environmental mitigation, and which will allow Staffordshire residents to benefit from HS2 via the Handsacre Link, and the key part of this letter for Staffordshire is that if HS2 is to be delivered, we would like to see “support for *Phase 2a in reaching Royal Assent before the end of 2019, as planned.*” This will not only remove uncertainty for everyone, particularly those whose property is blighted, but will allow us to press on with our commitment to get the best deal for Staffordshire.

It is important to remember that the decisions on HS2 rest with Parliament and not this council.

That motion approved in December 2015 said this council:

(i) Continues to express concerns on the impact of HS2 on Staffordshire, especially given the acceleration of the phase to Crewe.

(ii) Welcomes the efforts the council has made to mitigate the impact of Phase One on the county and its communities and our commitment to build on the experience gained to reduce the impact of Phase 2a

(iii) Continues to ensure Staffordshire's voice is heard in terms of mitigation on the environment and meaningful compensation for affected residents.

(iv) Engages with Government, HS2 Ltd, district and borough councils and neighbouring authorities to gain maximum economic benefits from HS2, building on the partnership of Midlands Connect to deliver better connectivity for all Staffordshire.

As a county council, we remain focused on getting the best deal for Staffordshire in terms of mitigation, compensation for residents, economic benefits and improved connectivity if Parliament makes the decision to proceed with HS2.

We petitioned against Phase 1 and successfully achieved the lowering of 8km of the line in Lichfield. We also secured an assurance that the Handsacre link, connecting HS2 to the West Coast Main Line, would be constructed. This will provide the infrastructure needed for Staffordshire to receive HS2 services and gain economic benefit as a result.

We also petitioned against Phase 2a and gained several assurances which amongst other matters will see improvements to the local highway network which will have long term benefits for the communities along the line of the route.

As Parliament has decided to date that the HS2 project will go ahead, we have a duty to make sure that Staffordshire shares in any economic benefits and improved connectivity that we can derive from the scheme.

QUESTION 2

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Alan Dudson

Question

My Group was not in favour of setting up All Party Working Groups but we accept the majority decision by Council and, in the spirit of genuine cross-party working, my name was put forward to the Leader as a nomination for one of the four Chairs. Why have I and the Opposition Leader not received the courtesy of a response from Cllr Atkins?

Reply

As discussed at December's County Council, All Party Working Groups will continue to be tasked with providing a forum to drive the debate and overview around the medium to long term issues that affect the communities of Staffordshire and how public services, working with the private and voluntary and community sector, can plan for and address these issues.

As agreed with Council in December there are 2 All Party Working Groups, taking an even more rigorous focus on developing new ideas and solutions to key challenges. Also as agreed the investigations will be Jointly Chaired by the All Party Working Group Cabinet Support Members and driven by community and digital first thinking. These will draw further on community perspectives and the Elected Member's important role to help shape policy and reform of public services.

This is absolutely in the spirit of all party working and I'm sure that all County Councillors will be aware that an open invitation has been issued to each and every Elected Member to be part of this. It's important that we build on this together and to help develop and strengthen the 'thought leadership' we have right across the Council - and for Staffordshire as a place.

The All Party Working Groups are Jointly Chaired by Mr Alastair Little and Mr Mike Davies; and Mr Simon Tagg and Mr Keith Flunder.

It's clear for me that harnessing the vast skills, experience and insight across Elected Members is crucial to help the Council to think differently and tackle the key issues the Council and our communities face – and I welcome Mr Dudson and wider Members to be part of the All Party Working Groups.

The appointment of APWG Chairs is a matter for the County Council, not the Leader of the Council.

QUESTION 3

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Helen Fisher
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

By Charlotte Atkins

Question

How does the County Council monitor the performance of Amey and ensure it meets acceptable deadlines for repairs which impact on the safety of residents?

Reply

Amey's operational performance is monitored through the governance arrangements of the Infrastructure+ contract.

A suite of operational performance measures is used to regularly report performance to the Operating Commissioning Board (OCB) and the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB). These include: Defect response times; and Quality.

Performance levels are determined and agreed against historic performance and industry benchmarking. Amey's performance, and the Infrastructure+ contract in general, compares very favourably across the sector.

However, without enough money do everything we'd like as quickly as we'd like repairs are prioritised in accordance with the level of risk they present to the public.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019**Question to Alan White, Deputy Leader and
Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing****By Charlotte Atkins**

Question

How have the cuts in public health spending impacted on the ability of the County Council to deliver its health promotion agenda?

Reply

Despite cuts to the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant, the County Council continues to provide an active range of quality health improvement programmes. The change process has been challenging but we are confident that we are delivering good value to citizens and some examples of good practice.

Between 2016/17 and 2019/20, the grant fell by £3m (7.5%), from £40.m to £37.2m.

Drugs and alcohol

The £4.5m savings made from the drug/alcohol contracts has primarily been achieved by redesigning the pathway to focus on core addiction services, while drawing on support from other agencies working with the same client group.

0-19 children's services

We have saved £4.5 million from the Families Health and Wellbeing Service (Health Visiting and School Nursing). This has been achieved through close working with MPFT to develop a new model that seeks to balance public health promotion work and working with families with more complex needs.

Sexual health

The £2.5m saved from sexual health services has been achieved by consolidating a number of contracts with a range of service providers. The economies of scale this process provided has enabled us to continue to provide treatment to all residents presenting to services.

Healthy communities

Around £3.5m has been saved from previous healthy lifestyles contracts. By designing a more targeted approach that focuses on the people who need it most, we have been able to manage the reduction in funding without a similar impact on outcomes.

Wider support

In addition to the core health improvement programme, we also developing a range of new approaches to improving outcomes, including: Supportive communities programme; Partnership opportunities; digital/IAG/ communications.

QUESTION 5

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Helen Fisher
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

By Ron Clarke

Question

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport review the continuous problem we have in Burton with our drainage system? I very much appreciate that 37 drains are in the process to be replaced. The Burton town centre was reported in the media last week because of shoppers getting soaked due to the drains being unable to take the rainwater. This is not good for businesses and the people in the town centre.

Reply

There are more than 3,500 highway gullies in Burton Town Centre and nearly 10,000 across the wider area of Burton. Many are of an old Victorian design and known to be prone to blockage.

Over the last four or five years the highways team have been using GPS technology to capture the individual locations of all these gullies, together with silt levels and any other records of reported problems, to help inform a new 'intelligent' routine cleansing programme as well as future priorities for replacement or repair.

My thanks must also go to the all those local Members who have engaged with this process and by engaging with their local communities have helped to minimise the number of parked cars and other obstructions so that planned gully cleansing can be carried out most effectively.

In the current financial year, with input from the local members, we've also embarked on an initial programme to replace 37 of the most problematic known gullies in the area.

A similar commitment is provisionally programmed for 2019/20. Added to which local Members will also have available to them a further £20k to spend on any local highway maintenance priorities of their individual or collective choosing.

QUESTION 6

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Mark Sutton
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

By Syed Hussain

Question

Why has the Anglesey area in East Staffordshire got the highest number of children living in poverty in Staffordshire; what are the causes of this poverty; and will the Cabinet Member consider developing an action plan or pilot programme to alleviate children poverty in this deprived area that I represent?

Reply

The report developed by End Child Poverty <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/> suggests that levels of poverty are higher in some wards such as Anglesey. This report has been developed using overall household income using tax credit data as the main source. This is not the way we traditionally would have looked at child poverty. Previous estimates of child poverty have focused on out of work benefits only.

The changes in recording of child poverty presented in this report does affect the number of children identified in Anglesey who are living in poverty. This is because data relating to household income are included and not just those out of work, therefore people who are unemployed and in low paid jobs for example would appear in this new data.

There are multiple causes of poverty e.g. poor education attainment, low level of skills, levels of aspiration, actual cost of living in an area (e.g. housing, access to basic amenities, etc) versus income/benefits.

Across the county we are implementing a Place Based Approach (PBA). This is “A collaborative approach using the right resources (multi-skilled teams, universal services, voluntary sector, communities etc.) at the right time to improve outcomes for children, young people, families, vulnerable people and communities in an identified area”.

The approach focusses on addressing shared demand and need which is intelligence led and aims to tackle at the earliest stage the root causes of the issues which families and children were dealing with. It was recognised that this would improve outcomes and reduce the requirement for intervention by statutory services. There was a stated partnership ambition to extend the PBA to vulnerable adults once progress was being evidenced with children and families.

Research has shown that children failing to meet their Good Level of Development before they start school never catch up, leading to poor educational attainment and higher than average unemployment. Workless families struggle to provide the basic components to raise a child leading to children living in poverty.

The Place Based Approach work is being led locally by the East Staffordshire Local Strategic Partnership seeks to improve the uptake of funded childcare for 2-year olds and reduce the number of workless households. An innovative approach has been developed for a consortia of local organisations based in Burton to provide the community intelligence to drive these initiatives. The Anglesey ward will benefit from this work. The objective of this work will include a range of partnership and engagement but there will be a focus on improving aspirations of children and families for example:

- a. empowering families and raising aspiration
- b. support with developing skills
- c. encouraging healthy lifestyles and community safety
- d. link individuals into training, education and employment
- e. community involvement, responsibility and a sense of ownership
- f. reducing and managing the levels of debt that families are faced with

We are also continuing with our efforts to create the right conditions for economic growth across the whole of Staffordshire to produce more, better paid jobs for residents whilst improving education and skills provision in our schools, colleges and universities so that more people gain the training and qualifications they need to succeed. Since 2010, 43,000 additional jobs have been created in Staffordshire including 5,000 within East Staffordshire. Our resident's wages have also increased by around £57 per week, with the average £551 earned by a resident of Staffordshire working full-time exceeding the West Midlands Region average of £537.

Skills levels also continue to improve with over 16,000 more Staffordshire residents now holding a degree or above level qualification compared with 2010. Our Economic Growth Programme continues to deliver homes and jobs across the county, including supporting the delivery of the Branston Locks development in Burton upon Trent which will see 400 acres of land immediately west of the A38 developed with 2,500 new homes, a range of community facilities and a 50-acre employment site.

QUESTION 7

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Kyle Robinson

Question

Whilst Staffordshire County Council is making millions of pounds of cuts to front line services, does the Leader of the Council think it is acceptable to use taxpayers money to send councillors and staff to the MIPIM conference held in the South of France?

Reply

The total cost of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent delegation attending MIPIM in Cannes is estimated to be in the region of £130k in 2019. Staffordshire County Council's financial contribution to this is £12,500 (matched by Stoke-on-Trent City Council). The remaining £105k is raised through sponsorship and in 2019 we have secured support from companies including St Modwen, Keele University, Staffordshire University, Wardell Armstrong, Knights plc, Harworth Group and ENGIE. For the County Council's contribution of £12,500 we gain access to the Midlands Engine pavilion, which is a £1 million plus project, with the majority of this investment also coming from the private sector. Every destination in the West and East Midlands will be represented at MIPIM.

It should also be noted that of the 6 local authority representatives attending MIPIM (4 from Staffordshire and 3 from Stoke-on-Trent) the team have secured 6 of these passes free of charge from organisers Reed Midem plus an additional free pass for David Frost, Chair of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP. The cost otherwise through the Midlands partnership is £595 per pass.

MIPIM is attended by over 24,000 delegates from over 100 countries and is one of the largest events for attracting investment and raising the profile of our area on an international stage. There will be a particular focus for Staffordshire on skills through our partnerships with both Keele and Staffordshire Universities as well as promotion of the County as a great place to visit. This will include serving food and drink produced in Staffordshire at our events.

Our attendance at MIPIM is particularly significant this year in light of the country's proposed exit from the European Union and it provides us with a timely opportunity to showcase our area as being open for business in terms of both trade and investment. Having a well-balanced and mixed economy will be important for Staffordshire in being able to address economic shocks and maintain the resilience of the local economy and MIPIM can provide an important platform to demonstrate how we will achieve this and engage with new potential partners. Staffordshire has already seen the percentage change in private sector employment (18.4%) increase more than the West Midlands and Great Britain

(16.5%). We need to be highlighting this along with the increase in GVA in Staffordshire, which is up 17.0% between 2011 and 2016 from £14.3 billion to £16.7 billion. This stands the area in good stead in a competitive market and MIPIM is the ideal place to showcase this with significant opportunities available for a very modest financial contribution.

Please see our recent press release

<http://www.makeitstokestaffs.co.uk/promoting-stoke-on-trent-staffordshire-on-the-world-stage-at-mipim/>

QUESTION 8

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 FEBRUARY 2019

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Kyle Robinson

Question

The decision to scrap the 'Your Staffordshire Card' scheme will have an adverse effect on the ability of Staffordshire's young people to access education, training and work. It will also put more pressure on hardworking parents and carers to plan extra journeys, putting more cars on Staffordshire's busy roads. Can the Leader give details of conversations the council has had with private bus operators to provide schemes with similar benefits to the 'Your Staffordshire Card'?

Reply

The Your Staffordshire Card (YSC) is a non-statutory service that was introduced by the current administration some 7 years ago to encourage use of public transport and to demonstrate to bus operators the advantages of similar products.

The number of YSC holders and the number of bus journeys undertaken by pass holders has seen a significant decline in recent years, and this decline in usage is possibly due to the growth of commercial bus fare products from some operators that offer better value for money, and it is right that non-statutory services such as the YSC are kept under review to ensure that they offer value for money for the Staffordshire tax payer.

I am aware that on some routes, it is likely that the existence of the Your Staffordshire Card has influenced and impacted on available commercial products across Staffordshire. This has been raised with all the main bus operators in Staffordshire and they have agreed to review their available commercial products prior to the YSC scheme ending this summer.

