

To: All Members and Officers of the County Council.

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**Date:** 10 December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

**County Council - Thursday 10th December 2020**

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 10th December 2020 meeting of the County Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

8. **Questions (Pages 1 - 10)**

Questions to be asked by Members of the County Council of the Leader of the Council, a Cabinet Member, or a Chairman of a Committee. The question will be answered by the relevant Member and the Member asking the question may then ask a follow up question which will also be answered

John Henderson  
Chief Executive

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QUESTION 1

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020**

**Question to Cllr David Williams  
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**By Cllr Woodward**

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**Question**

The Cabinet Member will be aware that £50,000 of funding was allocated in or before 2017 to prepare a design brief for Public Realm works at Sankey's Corner, Burntwood, which would include much-needed traffic management improvements. Discussions have continued between Burntwood councillors and the lead officer since then and a range of options were brought forward in July of this year. However, there is no allocation in the Capital Budget as yet for any proposed works to take place.

Can the Cabinet Member therefore provide me, please, with an update on progress and an assurance that funds will be allocated for these works during the next budget round with a view to early implementation?

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**Reply**

Please see below breakdown of the Section.106 spend to date on the project.

**2018-19 (circa. £9k)**

Inception meetings, site meetings / investigations / observations, traffic surveys at various locations (including turning counts), public realm best practice research, land searches and highways extents enquiries, accident data, feasibility report (commenced) and topographical surveys.

**2019-20 (circa. £20k)**

Preliminary design options for Sankey's corner (3no.) including bus terminus layout, traffic calming options for Cannock Road and the surrounding area, A5190 cycle route design in conjunction with Sustrans, preparation and attendance at Town Council Meeting, data collection for signage review (including extensive on-site surveys), feasibility report development including traffic data analysis/accident data analysis and extensive drainage CCTV survey including a report.

**2020-21 (circa. £21k)**

Topographical survey extension along Bridge Cross Road (for inclusion in public realm design), drainage survey review, detailed design of public realm 3no. options (based on preferred preliminary option from 2019-20 designs) including material palettes and accompanied by technical note including budget estimates, attendance at Town Council meetings, review of comments from meetings and final report compilation.

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The County Council has secured £128,000 for 2021/22 from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Getting Building Grant for the delivery of the following:

- 0.3km cycle and pedestrian provision along A5190 Milestone Way between High Street and Sycamore Road, including upgraded toucan crossing, footway widening and cycle provision

Further funding in 2021/22 for additional schemes in Burntwood will be dependent on the availability of resources and other spending commitments throughout the County. The decision on the final 2021/22 programme will be made by Cabinet in April 2021.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020**

**Question to Cllr Philip White  
Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

**By Cllr Hewitt**

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**Question**

Cannock Chase residents, along with others in Staffordshire want their towns to flourish.

How will the County Council Support Staffordshire Towns in accessing the Chancellors £4bn “Levelling Up Fund”?

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**Reply**

Supporting our town centres and high streets to thrive is a priority for Staffordshire County Council. In our Economic Recovery Strategy, Staffordshire Means Back to Business, approved by Cabinet in June this year, we identified the need to support our town centres and high streets as a key component for responding, recovering and once again thriving as a County. We are absolutely committed to working with our partners across all Districts and Boroughs to access the funding required to enable all our towns to thrive.

The new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund will provide a comprehensive approach to driving prosperity, taking the unique circumstances of each local area into account. We recognise there is much to do to return our town centres to locations of great vibrancy. We supported our Boroughs and Districts in making comprehensive submissions to access Levelling Up funding. Staffordshire has subsequently been successful in being awarded places on the Town Deal and Future High Street Programmes, each promoting a potential £25M investment in a locality. Kidsgrove, Newcastle and Burton Upon Trent have been successful in securing places on the Town Deal Programme, whilst Stafford, Newcastle town centre and Tamworth have been successful in securing places on the Future High Streets Programme. We believe our partners are well placed to be awarded funds.

All of our towns and service centres are important to our communities, and therefore alongside the above we are working to deliver a comprehensive proposition to support the regeneration, renewal and prosperity of all our town and service centres which are so important to us all, regardless of whether they fall under central government initiatives. This will be shaped under the place brand, to deliver all the components of successful areas including opportunities for employment, homes, education, and open space.

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To further aid this process, we will deploy our relevant expertise (particularly skills, infrastructure projects and regeneration) to support our Districts and Boroughs and to ensure they have the full strategic case as part of developing further Levelling Up propositions.

In summary, we are working to ensure as a County, with our respective Districts and Boroughs working with us, we have the strongest possible proposition for securing Levelling Up funding.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020**

**Question to Cllr Wilson  
Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

**By Cllr Robinson**

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**Question**

On Thursday 12th November the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee resolved a recommendation to ask the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture to look again at the consultation which has taken place in relation to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and reconsider whether it was sufficiently robust and inclusive, particularly regarding car parking proposals.

Many members of the public have been in contact with County Councillors to continue to raise their concerns about some of the proposals to significantly relocate parking to other areas. A main concern is the impact that these changes will have on disabled people and their carers.

Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on any progress she has made since the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee meeting in November and can she confirm what action she has taken to ensure all residents are given an opportunity to feed in their concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation?

**Reply**

Part of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation proposals to spend £7.8m on a 15-year conservation programme includes reducing the number of parking locations in the most sensitive areas of the Chase and increasing parking capacity where the flora and fauna are more robust. In the end, as well as managing recreational pressure, there would more parking capacity overall and 50 free parking locations across the Chase.

As well as those raising their concerns about aspects of the conservation proposals, the council has received correspondence from other people who wholeheartedly support the actions proposed. In relation to access for people with disabilities, we have made clear that access will remain available and should in fact improve. Proposed improvements to the car parks that will remain, and associated paths and tracks, are likely to make access easier. Parking for blue badge holders will continue to be free at SCC sites. As a county council, we are also investing in the repair of our all ability route at Brindley Heath.

Following discussions at Select Committee, I am considering how the proposals should be taken forward and discussing this with key partners and will report back to Select Committee in the new year.





## COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020

### Question to Cllr Price Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)

By Cllr Charlotte Atkins

#### Question

Which Staffordshire schools now have contracts with Entrust? In 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 how many (1) maintained and (2) Academy schools had contracts with Entrust? How satisfied is the County Council with the services provided to schools by Entrust?

#### Reply

Entrust provides a range of education services for schools. For the education improvement services which includes Early Years, School Improvement Services and Governor Services the following information is taken from 2016 and 2020. Entrust was founded in 2013. Between 2016 and 2020 the number of schools purchasing education improvement services has increased as shown in the table below:

#### Number of Staffordshire schools and academies buying Entrust education services

	2016/17	2020/21
Packages/Products	276	293
Training	274	313

Entrust provides a range of services to schools and if the non-educational services (such as school property, human resources and school finance) were also included in this answer, the number of schools purchasing would be greater.

The table below provides responses between September 2019 - Nov 2020

Service	Response	Key data
Early Years SENCO	110	99% of respondent rated their consultant as Good or Excellent (86% of respondents rated the consultant as Excellent) 95% agreed that the service they received enabled them to identify and implement improvements in practice to support children.
Primary Behaviour Support	35	97% of respondents rated their consultant as Good or Excellent 94% agreed that the service they received enabled them to identify and implement improvements in practice to support children.

Governor Services	74	98.65% of respondents rated the Clerking services as Good or Outstanding 95% rated the customer service provided by the Governor Services office team as Good or Outstanding 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Our assigned Entrust Clerk has a clear understanding of governance and can be relied upon to provide good quality advice and guidance"
School Improvement	128	100% of respondents rated their Consultant as Good or Outstanding (76% outstanding) 92.1% would recommend Entrust Education Improvement to others 100% of respondents were satisfied with their visit
Early Years	35	89% of respondents said that the support overall was Good or Outstanding

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020**

**Question to Cllr Philip White  
Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

**By Cllr Northcott**

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**Question**

My Division is mainly rural but across the district of Newcastle it's a mixed picture with the urban areas such as the Towns of Newcastle and Kidsgrove having similar needs. I would like to ask the Portfolio holder how is the County working with the Districts to support the self-employed, SME's and start-up businesses through the economic uncertainty we find ourselves in today and the work required to aid the regions recovery moving forward?

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**Reply**

Supporting our economy is a top priority for Staffordshire County Council. Our Economic Recovery Strategy, Staffordshire Means Back to Business, approved by Cabinet in June 2020, builds on how Staffordshire can continue to be one of the best places in the UK to recover and grow. This strategy is a roadmap of how we'll further support business by continuing to invest in the conditions all businesses need to thrive, and how we'll renew the economy by supporting the creation of those clean, digital, highly-productive businesses that will provide the jobs of the future.

Our partnership with the Districts/Boroughs is key. We are operating on an open dialogue basis to ensure there are no delays in identifying issues in addition to ways that we can work together to find solutions. We have weekly briefings with our District Regeneration and Economic Development Directors to ensure they have appropriate assistance to deliver the various support mechanisms being channelled through them by central government, most recently Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).

From the start of the Covid 19 crisis, communications were considered essential and enhanced campaigns including 'Staffordshire Means Back to Business', #ShopSafelyinStaffs and #EnjoyStaffordshireSafely were launched through traditional and social media sources in partnership with District and Borough Councils, promoting the County and importantly town centres and their reopening. In response to their request for information, we have also developed a monthly Bulletin, providing detailed data on the issues facing our economy.

The Growth Hub, which we are a key partner to, publishes weekly newsletters and news bulletins which are shared with nearly 8,000 Staffordshire Businesses and partners. These publications are shared widely across Stoke-on-Trent and

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Staffordshire and information is included on Local Authority schemes as well as national government initiatives.

Measures have been put in place by partner organisations including the SSLEP, Growth Hub and District/Borough Councils which have been heavily promoted by the County Council. Some of the main interventions made so far include:

- a. £143m of Government grant being passed through to businesses by Districts and Boroughs;
- b. The Countywide Redundancy Task Group where more than 20 local partners are working together to support businesses and employees with potential redundancies.

Responding to information relating to how businesses were struggling, the County Council has developed a new partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to provide a business support package to small employers (1 to 4 employees). This is jointly funded between all the Districts and Boroughs and will start in January 2021.

Referring once again to ARG, the County had made a detailed proposal to our Districts and Boroughs relating to how they can utilise this grant support to work with the County Council on a number of its activities including business support and apprenticeships. All tailored to focus on those most heavily impacted by C19 including young people and those in the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors.

Turning to rural areas, we are working to develop a Rural Economic Strategy, in conjunction with partners, to ensure that businesses based in rural areas are provided with the support they need to grow and diversify. This will be considered by Cabinet early in 2021 and be the subject of consultation with District and Boroughs and wider stakeholders.

In all the County Council is working closely with our partners, both rural and urban, to deliver our Staffordshire Means Back to Business strategy and to once again enable our businesses to thrive.

Cabinet will receive the first of a new monthly economic recovery update at their December meeting. The report is comprehensive and covers a range of activities the County Council and are partners are involved with, I would encourage all Members to read this important report.