

COUNCIL AGENDA

To:- The Members of the Staffordshire County Council

Notice is given that the meeting of the Staffordshire County Council at 10.00 am on Thursday, 8 October 2020 will be a Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams to deal with the matters set out on the agenda.

Note: Attendance by the public and press is via webcast only which can be viewed here - <https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Henderson
Chief Executive
30 September 2020

AGENDA

(Note: The meeting will begin with prayers)

PART ONE

General Housekeeping and Declaring an Interest

1. **Apologies for absence (if any)**
2. **Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16**
3. **Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 July 2020** (Pages 5 - 24)

4. **Chairman's Correspondence**

The Chairman will mention a range of recent items of news which may be of interest to Members

5. **Statement of the Leader of the Council** (Pages 25 - 30)

The Leader will inform the Council about his work and his plans for the Council, and will give an overview of decisions taken by the Cabinet (and Portfolio Holders) since the previous meeting of the Council

6. **People Helping People Fund - Annual Report and next steps 2019/20** (Pages 31 - 38)

7. **Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel** (Pages 39 - 42)

8. **Questions**

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

9. **Petitions**

An opportunity for Members to present and speak on petitions submitted by their constituents

10. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman of the Council will move the following motion so that the County Council can consider confidential business in private:-

“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 the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

PART TWO

(All reports in this section are on pink paper)

Nil

Note for Members of the Press and Public

Filming of Meetings

The Open (public) section of this meeting may be filmed for live or later broadcasting or other use, and, if you are at the meeting, you may be filmed, and are deemed to have agreed to being filmed and to the use of the recording for broadcast and/or other purposes.

Recording by Press and Public

Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

NOTICES FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Questions

- 1.1. Questions must be addressed to the Chairman, or to the Leader of the Council or to a Portfolio Holder or to the Chairman of a Committee. Notice in writing of any question must be emailed to the office of the Director of Corporate Services (michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk) by no later than 1:00 pm on the third working day preceding the Council Meeting i.e. **by not later than 1:00 pm on Monday, 5 October 2020**. All questions and answers will be circulated around the Chamber before the commencement of the meeting.
- 1.2. Questions may be addressed to the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council, any Cabinet Member or a Committee Chairman. The Leader of the Council may refer questions asked of them to the relevant Cabinet Member if they consider it appropriate.
- 1.3. Each Member may submit a maximum of two questions each, however only the first 15 questions received by the Director of Corporate Services before the deadline will be dealt with at the meeting. All other questions will receive a written answer.
- 1.4. Questions and written responses will be circulated to all members at the start of each meeting and will be made available online to accompany the webcast but will not be read out at the meeting.
- 1.5. Each questioner will be entitled to ask up to one supplementary question on each question/answer and the time limit for supplementary questions and answers will be at the sole discretion of the Chairman.

2. Notices of Motion

- 2.1. A Notice of Motion must reach, by email, the Director of Corporate Services (michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk) nine clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council, i.e. **by not later than midnight on Monday, 28 September 2020**. Further information on Notices of Motion can be found in Paragraph 11 of Section 12 of the Constitution.
NB. Notices of Motion for the County Council meeting on 10 December 2020 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 30 November 2020.

RULES OF DEBATE

3. Speaking at Council Meetings

- 3.1. Councillors shall conduct debate politely and with due respect for others.
- 3.2. Councillors shall not use foul or offensive language.

3.3. As far as is possible, Members should use notes for reference where necessary but should avoid reading directly from a script. This will assist with engagement in debate and the ability of the microphones to pick up the sound.

4. Content and Length of Speeches

4.1. Subject to Paragraph 4.2 below, no Member may speak for more than five minutes during debates by the Council unless the Chairman gives an extension.

4.2. When the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members nominated by the Leader or Committee Chairmen propose reports to the Council they may speak for up to ten minutes. Members who have been nominated by the Leaders of minority political groups as spokesmen on a report discussed by the Council may also speak for up to ten minutes.

4.3. Members will confine their speeches to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or a point of order. No Member may question another Member's motives or use offensive expressions to any Member of the Council or Officer.

4.4. The Chairman may call the attention of the Council to continued irrelevancy and tedious repetition or any breach of order by a Member and may direct them to discontinue their speech. If the Member continues to disregard the authority of the Chairman, the Chairman may ask them to retire for the remainder of the sitting. Should a Member refuse to retire the Chairman may order their removal from the meeting.

4.5. The Council operates a 'traffic light' system for speeches. During any speech, the amber light will come on notifying the speaker that they have 60 seconds left.

4.6. Where a Local Member is presenting a petition, they may speak for a maximum of two minutes. The amber light will come on for the final 30 seconds.

4.7. If there is serious disorder or persistent disregard of the authority of the Chairman, the Chairman may, without prejudice to any other powers which they have, direct that the Meeting be suspended for such period as they consider desirable.

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AT MEETINGS - WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY

DEFINITION OF WHAT IS A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

A 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' is an interest of yourself or your partner, ie your spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners, (but only where you are aware that your partner has the interest) within the following descriptions:

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Staffordshire County Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you or your partner in connection with you carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you or your partner (or a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest) and Staffordshire County Council- (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Staffordshire County Council
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Staffordshire County Council for a month or longer
Corporate Tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) (a) the landlord is Staffordshire County Council and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where- (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Staffordshire County Council; and (b) either- (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class

You are also required to declare a pecuniary interest if an issue being considered at a meeting where you're present affects your or your partner's personal well being or financial position to a greater extent than it affects that of a member of the general public.

WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY?

If you also have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you must notify the Chairman of that interest and withdraw from the room when the matter is being discussed.

An example of what you should say

"I have a disclosable pecuniary interest in item number..... on the agenda. The interest is I shall leave the room when that matter is being discussed"

DECLARING INTERESTS AT FULL COUNCIL

The Code of Conduct only requires that disclosable pecuniary interests are declared where the matter to which the interest relates is being considered. Some items will be mentioned in the papers for Full Council but are not actually being considered by Full Council. In particular, some items are mentioned in the Leader's Statement as having been dealt with in Cabinet but are not actually mentioned or discussed at full Council. In such circumstances the Monitoring Officer's advice to members is that there is no need to declare an interest unless the particular matter is mentioned or discussed. As a general rule, members only need to declare an interest at full Council in the following circumstances:

- Where a matter is before the Council for a decision and/or
- Where the matter in which the member has an interest is specifically mentioned or discussed at the Council meeting.

Minutes of the County Council Meeting held on 23 July 2020

Attendance		
Ben Adams	Phil Hewitt	David Smith
Charlotte Atkins	Jill Hood	Paul Snape
Philip Atkins, OBE	Syed Hussain	Bob Spencer
Ann Beech	Keith James	Mike Sutherland
David Brookes	Julia Jessel	Mark Sutton
Gill Burnett	Bryan Jones	Stephen Sweeney
Ron Clarke	Dave Jones	Simon Tagg
Tina Clements	Jason Jones	Martyn Tittley
John Cooper	Ian Lawson	Carolyn Trowbridge
Mike Davies	Alastair Little	Ross Ward
Derek Davis, OBE	Johnny McMahon	Alan White
Mark Deaville	Paul Northcott	Philip White
Alan Dudson	Jeremy Oates	Conor Wileman
Janet Eagland	Ian Parry	Bernard Williams
Helen Fisher	Kath Perry MBE (Chair)	David Williams
Keith Flunder	Jeremy Pert	Victoria Wilson
Richard Ford	Bernard Peters	Mark Winnington
John Francis	Jonathan Price	Susan Woodward
Colin Greatorex	Natasha Pullen	Mike Worthington
Gill Heath	Kyle Robinson	

Apologies for absence: Maureen Compton, Ann Edgeller and Trevor Johnson

Also in attendance -

PART ONE

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Mr Snape moved, and Mr David Williams seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED – That Mrs Kath Perry be elected Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

2. Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16

The following Members declared an interest in accordance with Standing Order 16.5:-

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Martyn Tittley	7	Disclosable Pecuniary	Undertakes work for a Utility company

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 March 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 19 March 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Mrs Perry moved, and Mrs Jessel seconded, and it was:-

RESOLVED – That Mr Paul Snape be appointed Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

5. Chairman's Correspondence

Death of Former County Councillor Ignatius Kelly

The Chairman informed the Council of the death, on 23 March 2020, of former County Councillor Ignatius Kelly. Mr Kelly represented the former Wombourne County Electoral Division (South Staffordshire) between 1989 and 2001. He had served on a number of the Council's Committees including the Education Committee, Enterprise and Economic Development Committee, the Fire and Public Protection Committee, the Planning Committee and the Social Services Committee.

Death of Mick Harrison MBE, Commissioner for Safety

Members were also informed of the death, on 2 April 2020, of Mick Harrison, the Council's Assistant Director for Children's System Transformation within the Families and Communities Directorate.

Mick had worked for the County Council for nearly nine years in leadership roles but was well known to many through his illustrious career with Staffordshire Police where he served both across the county and the city of Stoke-on-Trent. His contribution to public services was later recognised by Her Majesty the Queen in the New Year's Honours list in 2012, where he received an MBE.

Members paid tribute to Mr Kelly and Mr Harrison following which they observed a one minute silence in their memory.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Chairman made the following statement:

"These are, as we are all aware, unprecedented and difficult times.

I would like to express, on behalf of this Council, our immense sadness at the deaths suffered during this current pandemic. Our most sincere and heartfelt condolences are sent to all those in our communities who have unfortunately lost love ones, we are thinking of you all and understand the grief you have gone through and are going through.

I would also like to say that our thoughts and prayers are with those of you, or your family and friends, who are suffering from the virus at this moment, and our thanks are with all those involved in your own or your loved one's treatment.

While many people are following government guidance and staying at home, this is not an option for frontline and key workers, you continue to care for and provide support to everyone within our communities who need you, in the most incredibly challenging circumstances. We have all been humbled and astounded at the total selflessness and devotion of our frontline and key workers, in whatever their capacity, they have given so much in the fight against coronavirus. An unreserved thank to each and every member of our frontline and key workers.

Throughout this amazing county there are also many in our communities who are volunteering to work daily to ensure support is given to our elderly and vulnerable residents, making sure everyone has food on their tables, and that vital supplies are delivered to individuals and organisations. Supporting the vulnerable at this time can also be simply going to the shops for a neighbour.

I have heard of some astonishing examples of work being undertaken in the communities throughout the county and I want you to know that I really appreciate all of your efforts. I would personally like to thank you all for going the extra mile during this difficult time.

I stand ready to play a full part in the recovery within this county, as and when our communities can seek to come to terms with all that has happened in recent weeks. The authority will be looking at ways to remember everyone's efforts once the battle with the virus is won and we can come together again."

6. Urgent Additional Item - Appointment of the Leader of the Council

Note by Clerk: On the motion of the Chairman, the Council agreed that this item be dealt with as urgent business as Mr Atkins OBE had given notice of his intention to stand down from his position as Leader of the Council.

Members paid tribute to Mr Atkins for the contribution he had made to the work of the Authority during his eleven years as Leader of the Council. In response, Mr Atkins thanked Members for their kind words and highlighted some of the challenges the Council had faced and its achievements whilst under his leadership. He also extended his thanks to his fellow Members and to the Council's officers for their support.

Mr Atkins moved, and Mr Philip White seconded, that Mr Alan White be appointed as Leader of the Council.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED – That Mr Alan White be appointed as Leader of the Council.

7. Statement of the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining the work of the Cabinet since the previous meeting of the Council. In moving consideration of the report, Mr Alan White made the following statement:

Covid-19 in Burton

“Since lockdown eased on 4 July there has been an increase in Covid-19 cases in East Staffordshire. There have been 58 positive cases in the district, almost all in Burton, of which 45 cases are in the areas of Anglesey, Horninglow and Shobnall. The County Council is working with East Staffordshire Borough Council, partners and most importantly the local community. We held our second virtual meeting yesterday afternoon to discuss how we spread the message, protect local people and avoid the restrictions we have seen for example in Leicester and Blackburn. This is about acting early to reduce the spread of infection. There are currently no plans for lockdown measures in Burton or anywhere in Staffordshire, however more robust localised measures will be considered if necessary.

Burton Covid-19 Rates and Cases:

- The current (15th-21st July) 7-day rate per 100,000 population is 21.8 in Burton-upon-Trent
- Current 7-day rate per 100,000 is 39.4 in Anglesey, Shobnall and Horninglow
- Current 7-day rate per 100,000 is 13.4 in East Staffordshire.
- For comparison, the current 7-day rate per 100,000 is 3.9 for Staffordshire and 5.3 for England.

In response, we are promoting public health messages through the media, social media, letters to homes and via word of mouth to prevent further spread of the infection. Information is available in different languages. We are analysing data every day and working with Public Health England (PHE) to investigate cases and their contacts to ensure isolation and testing messages are promoted. East Staffordshire Borough Council are visiting shops and businesses in the local area to reinforce messages. And we have set up three different testing facilities – a drive through at the Pirelli stadium, a walk-in centre at Uxbridge Road Mosque and an NHS team who can test people in their own homes.

We are acting now to contain the spread and are calling on all people to follow the guidance on Covid-19. Now is not the time to let our guard down and we are already seeing an amazing response from the community in Burton. Our message is that Covid-19 doesn't care about culture, faith, or background so sticking to the rules and booking a test if you have symptoms is the best way to help protect yourself, your family and your community.”

Keeping Staffordshire Moving - Highway Permit Scheme

(Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

Note by Clerk: Mr Tittley declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item and left the meeting during its consideration.

Staffordshire Autism Joint Implementation Plan 2020-2023

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Mrs Woodward concerning what the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups will do to increase capacity to be able to get Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in place more quickly, Mr Price indicated that the County Council was doing a substantial amount of work behind the scenes on EHCPs and would welcome the opportunity to have a conversation about this with Mrs Woodward after the meeting.

The County Council's Response to COVID-19

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Mrs Atkins enquired as to the future sustainability of the care market in Staffordshire given the impact of Covid-19. In response, Mr Alan White stated that this was a concern; that the County Council was providing support to the sector; and that the situation would be closely monitored going forward.

Mr Robinson extended his thanks to all local government workers for their excellent work in keeping services in Staffordshire running, where this has been possible, during the current pandemic. He also enquired about the Government's free laptop scheme and the forecasted need in Staffordshire verses the actual allocation. In response, Mr Philip White indicated that, in Staffordshire, 1694 laptops were provided by Central Government (which was in excess of the requests which had been received from schools) and over 300 wi-fi dongles were handed out to learners who did not have access to broadband. He also undertook to confirm the detail in writing to Mr Robinson following the meeting.

Members spoke about how local community groups, parish councils and volunteers had responded to the pandemic and the valuable contribution they had made during "lockdown". They also praised "key workers" for their commitment and hard work, often under difficult circumstances.

Several Members highlighted the positive impact the Council's Covid-19 Support Fund had had in supporting local community/voluntary groups and other organisations across Staffordshire and how, in some cases, a small grant had had a big impact.

In response to a question from Mrs Woodward about the Government's announcement of a fund aimed at providing food and basic essentials for people during the Covid crisis, Mr Sutton indicated that Staffordshire had been awarded approximately £800,000, £600,000 of which would be distributed to the eight family hubs, £120,000 would go towards warehousing costs and the replacement of perishable goods and £100,000 was to be allocated for on-going food costs for district and borough councils. Mr Sutton also paid tribute to staff in the County Council and in partner organisations for the support

they had given to families and communities including, for example, schools and early years providers who had stayed open in order to care for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.

Mr Alan White concluded by reminding Members that Covid-19 was still impacting communities, that it had not gone away and that was vital that people continued to follow the relevant protocols.

Staffordshire County Council's iCare Campaign

(Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Mrs Woodward referred to the number of people who had volunteered under the Council's iCare Campaign and the fact that it was good that more people had volunteered than had actually needed to be deployed. She enquired as to, now that some of those volunteers would have returned to their day jobs, how many volunteers were still on the books should they need to be deployed if there was a second spike in Staffordshire. In response, Mr Alan White indicated that he did not have the relevant information to hand and would therefore respond to Mrs Woodward following the meeting.

Schools Capital Programme 2020-21

(Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

Mrs Atkins enquired as to whether the County Council was in receipt of the Government's Capital Grant Allocation to Schools. In response, Mr Price indicated that the Council was still awaiting confirmation of the allocation and that he would write to Mrs Atkins as soon as this had been received. He added that it was understood that an additional £1m of funding would be allocated for this area.

Mr Brookes referred to the poor physical condition of some of the schools in his division and also the need for capital investment at Thomas Alleyne's High School in Uttoxeter which had 36 separate buildings.

Mr Pert referred to changes in the job market, the need for people to retain or reskill and the important role to be played by schools and colleges across the county.

Highways and Transport Capital Programme 2020/21

(Paragraph 9 of the Statement)

Mr Brookes expressed his thanks to the Cabinet for their approval to the funding of approximately £370,000 of highway works in Uttoxeter which would improve traffic flows and pedestrian safety in the town. He did however indicate that there remained issues still to be addressed including the delay in replacing the bollard at the top of High Street, Uttoxeter on ongoing problems with blocked gullies.

Mrs Eagland referred to problems in her division caused by HGVs parking overnight along residential roads.

Executive Responses to All Party Working Groups Recommendations on Isolation and Aspiration

(Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

Mrs Atkins enquired as to whether the All Party Working Groups had a future and, if they were to continue, would their terms of reference be discussed with the opposition. She also asked about what role the Council's Select Committees would have in scrutinising and monitoring the action plans which had come out of the last two groups. In response, Mr Alan White confirmed that the All Party Working Groups were to continue and that Members would be invited to join the Groups. He added that he would have a conversation with officers as to how the Council's Select Committees would scrutinise the outcomes from the Groups.

Mr Robinson indicated that the Coronavirus pandemic had certainly helped to identify those individuals who were socially isolated and that community groups would now have more knowledge about those people than they have ever had before. He expressed the hope that those people would continue to receive support going forward.

Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

(Paragraph 11 of the Statement)

Mr Deaville expressed his thanks to the Council's Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team in taking the lead in procuring sufficient PPE to last for 12 weeks.

Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy

(Paragraph 13 of the Statement)

Mrs Woodward welcomed the proposed extensions to the Cannock Chase and Silverdale Enterprise Centres and enquired as to the review of vacancy rates at other Enterprise Centres, particularly those which were located in her Division. In response Mr Philip White indicated that the usage of all the Council's enterprise centres was kept under review and that he would be happy to speak to Mrs Woodward about those located within her Division.

Mr Robinson enquired as to whether the County Council would commit to amending its procurement practices to ensure that local supplies and businesses had more opportunities to bid for contracts which would lead to more money being spent locally in Staffordshire. In response, Mr Alan White indicated that the Council's procurement practices were laid out in the Constitution and were reviewed regularly by the Audit and Standards Committee.

Local Outbreak Control Plan

(Paragraph 15 of the Statement)

Mr Tagg commended the Local Outbreak Control Plan and the work of the Outbreak Control Boards. Mr Clarke expressed his thanks to the County Council for its support in responding to the recent Covid-19 outbreak in Burton upon Trent.

Mrs Jessel and Mr McMahon reminded Members that it was as important as ever that people took personal responsibility, stuck to the rules, washed their hands regularly, followed the latest advice on social distancing and co-operated with the test and trace service. Mr Alan White added that he would ask Members to continue to reinforce this message in their local communities.

Mrs Hood expressed her disappointment that some people going to public houses were failing to comply with the Government guidance on social distancing. She also praised the work of Stafford Borough Council's Environmental Health Team.

Economic Recovery

(Paragraph 16 of the Statement)

Mrs Atkins indicated that she welcomed the comments the Leader of the Council had made about measures to support local businesses and echoed the views which had previously been made by Mr Robinson concerning ensuring that local supplies and businesses had more opportunities to bid for County Council contracts.

Mr Oates referred to the loss of big brands such as John Lewis in Tamworth and the impact this would have on the town and on Staffordshire. He, together with Mr Parry, referred to the challenges to the High Street as a result of internet shopping and the need for people to retrain or upskill in order to be able to compete for the better paid jobs.

Mrs Woodward enquired as to how the message was getting through to small businesses about the support available to them.

Mr Robinson referred to the potential job opportunities in the low carbon and renewable energy economy and the need for the County Council to ensure that Staffordshire residents were equipped with the necessary skills to be able to take advantage of those opportunities. Mrs Jessel added that she shared Mr Robinson's views about the opportunities in the low carbon and renewable energy economy and that the County Council was continuing to work with business leaders, our universities and other public sector partners to grow Staffordshire's economy and create more, better paid jobs.

Mr Francis spoke about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector in Staffordshire and the downturn in manufacturing including the recent announcement of job losses at JCB.

Mr Philip White thanked Members for their comments. He added that Staffordshire had enjoyed low unemployment levels for a number of years and that the County Council had been working hard to attract more, better paid jobs to Staffordshire. Mr White also referred to the role of the Council in supporting Colleges and Universities to ensure that students were equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to compete for those new jobs; supporting local business; and attracting more businesses into the County.

RESOLVED – That the Statement of the Leader of the Council be received.

8. Recommendations to the Council

The Council were informed that as a result of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the Government had introduced legislation, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 ('the Regulations') which enabled local authorities to hold "virtual" meetings.

As a consequence of these Regulations it was necessary to make changes to the Council's Procedural Standing Orders.

RESOLVED – That the amendments to the Council's Procedural Standing Orders to facilitate "virtual" meetings, as detailed in the appendix to the report, be approved.

9. Access to Information Rules - Special Urgency Notices

The Council noted that, in accordance with the Access to Information Rules contained within the County Council's Constitution, the Leader of the Council is required to submit quarterly reports to the Council detailing those key decisions taken by the Cabinet where it had not been possible to give the requisite 28 days public notice of the intention to take such a decision. Similarly, where a decision being taken by or on behalf of the Cabinet is urgent and any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests or the interests of any person(s) to whom the decision relates, then the Leader of the Council may seek the approval of the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee to that decision being exempt from call-in. A report on the use of this procedure must be submitted to Council on a quarterly basis.

Members were informed that the Cabinet, at their meeting on 15 April 2020, took a key decision relating to the provision of a fee uplift and financial stability measures for Care Providers during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Cabinet, at their meeting on 20 May 2020, also took a key decision on further extra funding of £4.3m from the additional grant to support care providers. As it had not been possible to give the requisite 28 days public notice of the intention to take the above-mentioned decisions, the provisions referred to above were utilised. In addition, as there was considerable concern nationally about the risk of care providers failing, which would have a catastrophic impact on people and the NHS, the approval of the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee was sought to the decisions being exempt from call-in.

RESOLVED – That the use of the special urgency and exemption from call-in provisions contained in the Council's Constitution in respect of the Cabinet's decisions on 15 April 2020 (on the provision of a fee uplift and financial stability measures for Care Providers during the Covid-19 pandemic) and 20 May 2020 (on further extra funding of £4.3m to support care providers), be noted.

10. Annual Scrutiny Report 2019/20

Members considered the Annual Scrutiny Report which summarised the work the Council's Select Committees had undertaken during 2019/20.

Mr David Williams extended his thanks to all those Members who sat on the Council's Select/Scrutiny Committees and also to the officers who supported them.

In commending the report, Mrs Atkins and Mrs Woodward referred to the valuable role played by scrutiny in holding the Council's executive to account. In response, Mr Alan White reaffirmed the commitment of the Council's Executive to the work of scrutiny and positive impact it has on shaping decision making.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

11. Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2019-20

Mr Sutton moved consideration of the Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2019-20. He extended his thanks to Members of the Panel, and the officers who supported them, for the valuable contribution they had made. He also extended his thanks to those Members and Officers who had offered to be a mentor to a child in care and he reminded Members that they were all Corporate Parents.

Mr Philip White referred to the work of the virtual school for the support it provided to children in care.

Mr Philip Atkins also spoke about the role of the County Council in trying to prevent children from needing to enter into the care system.

Mr Bryan Jones commended the work of the Panel and how it engaged with those young people in the Council's care.

RESOLVED – That the Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2019-20 be received.

12. Committee Membership

The Council noted that the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Group Leaders, would notify Members of any changes to Committee memberships in the coming days.

13. Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Panels (Including the appointment of Community Cabinet Support Members)

Mr Alan White moved, and Mr Philip White seconded, the nominations for the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committee.

RESOLVED – That the under-mentioned be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committees stated for the period up to the annual Council meeting in 2021:-

Corporate Review Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Opposition Vice-Chairman

Colin Greatorex
Conor Wileman
Susan Woodward

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Opposition Vice-Chairman

Ian Parry
Tina Clements
Kyle Robinson

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Opposition Vice-Chairman

John Francis
Bob Spencer
Ron Clarke

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Opposition Vice-Chairman

Jeremy Pert
Paul Northcott
Charlotte Atkins

Planning Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mark Winnington
David Smith

Pensions Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Alastair Little
Mike Davies

Audit and Standards Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Martyn Tittley
Carolyn Trowbridge

Corporate Parenting Panel

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mark Sutton
Bryan Jones

Charities and Trusts Committee

Chairman

Kath Perry

Vice-Chairman

David Smith

Appointment of Community Cabinet Support Members

South Staffordshire

Mike Davies

Newcastle

Trevor Johnson

Cannock Chase

Phil Hewitt

Lichfield District

Janet Eagland

Tamworth

Jeremy Oates

Staffordshire Moorlands

Ross Ward

East Staffordshire

Bernard Peters

Stafford

Carolyn Trowbridge

14. Appointment of members to Outside Bodies 2018/19

The Council noted that the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Group Leaders, would notify Members of any changes to Appointments to Outside Bodies in the coming days.

15. Questions

Mrs Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Communities whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

What actions has the County Council taken to tackle climate change since it declared a Climate Emergency a year ago?

Reply

Since the County Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2020 the authority held an all member workshop to consider potential suitable actions which could form part of a future climate change action plan. All suggestions were considered by the newly formed All Party Climate Change Working Group with the aim of creating a prioritised list. Whilst this work has been temporarily paused due to Covid-19 activities I can confirm that we are looking to approve and publish the plan in the autumn. This will provide a framework to spend the £2.43m of resources that were approved in the current MTFS last February.

Whilst some elements of the climate change work have had to be temporarily paused as the Council responds to the Covid-19 pandemic, I am pleased to report that since declaring a Climate Change emergency a number of activities have still progressed:

- the local authority has switched to green electricity for buildings, street lighting and traffic signals;
- undertaken a full review of the authority's carbon baseline so we can track progress made since our carbon reduction strategy, Green Shoots, was published;
- supporting Engie to ensure the Rugeley site is as sustainable as possible and unlocking innovation;
- jointly commissioned a climate change study to support the refresh of local plans;
- started a review of possible locations for solar farms on county land;
- launched the Waste Savvy Staffordshire campaign;
- worked with SCVYS to capture the views of younger people for our Action Plan;
- ensured climate change is a golden thread of our Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy; and
- Restarted the Climate Change Working Group with its next meeting on 29th July to consider a comprehensive action plan of deliverable items which will be taken through Cabinet.

Work, of course, has continued on many fronts on the numerous activities that support a sustainable Staffordshire such as sustainable transport planning, active travel, building energy management and smart working to name a few.

Supplementary Question

When will real progress be made by the County Council in meeting its climate change obligations, particularly incorporating a green recovery? We have never been in a better time to pursue green initiatives as there is currently public support for directing and shaping the economy towards zero emissions. I hope that the County Council will seize the moment.

Reply

You will see from the list of Cabinet Member Portfolios that the commitment we have to climate change is now set out in a full Cabinet role. Councillor Jessel will be taking on a cabinet portfolio called Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change. I hope that Councillor Atkins recognises that new commitment to the climate change agenda and reshaping our economy and infrastructure in a way that supports those objectives.

Mrs Atkins asked the following question of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Given the expected surge in mental health distress following the challenges of Covid-19, will the County Council ensure that the Occupational Therapy Department working at the Kniveden Partnership operating from a County Council owned site at The Mount, Leek has a sustainable future caring for over sixty clients?

Reply

The Kniveden Partnership relates to Growthpoint, an horticulturally based mental health service that was established and is run by North Staffordshire Combined Mental Health Services Trust, (NSCHMST). This service is currently provided by NSCHMST from SCC's Kniveden/Springhill site, at The Mount Leek. This is not a service delivered or commissioned by SCC.

The three individual council owned sites at the Mount are allocated in the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Plan for much needed housing development. Sale of these sites will also release money locked into surplus or underused and inefficient properties to invest in our key services.

We will respond to the many challenges that Covid-19 presents and will try to support NSCMHST in their valuable work. When a decision is taken to release the Mount Road sites, SCC will offer advice and guidance to support, if required by NSCMST, in seeking alternative community options for its 47 service users.

Supplementary Question

This project has done excellent work and I hope that the Partnership will get more support from the County Council and that the Council will work with Combined Health to make sure that this project survives and grows, whether it be on this site or another?

Reply

I meet with the Chairmen and Chief Executives of the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust and also Combined Healthcare on a monthly basis and we have been talking about mental health challenges. I can't give a specific solution to this particular case but I will certainly look into it with officers and Councillor McMahon can pick this up with Dr Harding in due course.

Mrs Woodward asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

I am sure that the Leader will have been pleased to hear the comments made in Parliament by Wes Streeting MP, Shadow Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, citing the County Council's Covid19 Support Fund as an example of "the creativity and ingenuity" of local authorities during this crisis.

Can he tell me please whether all Members have fully spent their first tranche of this fund and publish a list of Members' allocations - by Member and by organisation - as has always been the case with previous Community Fund allocations?

Reply

I am very pleased by the efforts of Members to spend their allocations of the Covid-19 Support Fund, to support the most vulnerable in our communities and help our key community groups to survive throughout the crisis period.

Members who had not fully spent their first tranche of the Covid-19 Support Fund by the end of June are now able to use any underspend in the current tranche as addition to their extra £2000. This closes for applications on 30 October 2020.

As has been the case previously, it is important to show transparency on how Members have used this public money, and the county council's website has an area devoted to this. From the area where groups can make their applications, there is a link to a page called "Covid-19 Support Fund Projects supported in 2020". This provides information, by Member, showing allocation amounts, organisation name and a brief summary of the project, using information provided in the original applications. The page is constantly being updated – as soon as a project is paid and is closed in the processing system, the information will appear on this page.

Supplementary Question

I have tried to find the information about individual Councillor spend and the organisations supported from the link provided but it is very difficult. Therefore, will the Leader let us have a list detailing spend per Member on the first tranche of the Covid-19 Support Fund?

Reply

I will speak with the lead officer but spend per Member is a pretty crude indicator of the activities of Members in their communities and I do not consider that is the right way to go.

Mr Robinson asked the following question of Cabinet Member for Communities whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Can the Cabinet Member for Communities please set out what Strategy the County Council has in place to help tackle the plague of misuse of Nitrous Oxide in communities across Staffordshire? Specifically, what strategy and action has been taken by the County Council's Trading Standards department in relation to this issue and will the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council commit to writing to all Staffordshire MPs to press the Government for tougher action on dealing with this problem?

Reply

Firstly, I thought it would be useful to provide Council members with some background information on Nitrous Oxide.

Nitrous oxide (N₂O) is a colourless sweet-tasting gas often referred to as 'laughing gas' and it has several legitimate uses in medicine and dentistry. It is also used as a

fuel additive and as a component of rocket fuel, and is sold as an aerosol spray propellant within whipped cream canisters.

Products include small canisters in large packs, each enough for a recreational dose, and paraphernalia such as 'creamers' or 'crackers'. These dispense the gas from canisters into balloons, which are used to inhale the gas. Nitrous Oxide is covered under Psychoactive Substances Act 2016,

The act bans psychoactive substances, known as 'legal highs', in the UK and prevents the supply of previously unregulated and frequently harmful substances for human consumption.

This Act also includes controls on a number of other products including solvent-based glues, any kind of aerosols and nail varnish/nail varnish remover. Retailers need to pay particular attention to the potential for abuse of nitrous oxide, especially where customers seek to buy in bulk or large volumes involving nitrous oxide.

Trading Standards work closely with the Police and following the implementation of the new act in 2016 did a lot of work removing "Legal Highs" and providing advice and guidance to retailers to ensure they took the necessary precautions. Initially when the act was introduced trading standards committed a large amount of resource to education and advice to retailers over a period of several months. However more recently we have received no intelligence regarding matters relating to Nitrous oxide and, as with any enforcement, trading standards act on intelligence received to base any response accordingly.

Our Police partners also inform us that they also have no intelligence of any specific problems currently regarding nitrous oxide, advising that empty canisters have been seen discarded on the side of the road, but that there is no impact on crime reports. Should intelligence or complaints be received into trading standards this will be investigated, in conjunction with the police, as each partner has specific powers within the Act and enforcement is most effective with joint working.

The Staffordshire Safer & Stronger Communities Strategy Group acts as the countywide strategy group for community safety and is responsible for producing a Community Safety Agreement based on the priority areas highlighted in the County Community Safety Strategic Assessment. The latest strategic assessment was produced earlier this year and the SSSCSG is currently updating its Community Safety Agreement with the current priority areas highlighted in the strategic assessment. This recent strategic assessment has not highlighted Nitrous Oxide as an area of concern and therefore no specific actions are currently identified for the partnership. Districts and Boroughs may have this area highlighted as an issue within the Strategic assessment for their own Local Authority area and may have developed plans to address at local level.

Supplementary Question

What more will the County Council do to assist in educating some of our young people about the dangers of misusing Nitrous Oxide?

Reply

I will ask Councillor Price, with officers, to see what we can do in conjunction with the Criminal Justice service and the Staffordshire Constabulary.

Mr Robinson asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

4.2 million children were living in poverty in the UK in 2018/19 and the Government's Social Mobility Commission recently highlighted the shocking fact that there has been an increase of 600,000 more children living in relative poverty since 2012. In light of this appalling situation will the Leader of the Council now commit to reversing his administration's decision to cut and close Staffordshire County Council's Local Welfare Assistance Fund?

Reply

Within Staffordshire we have been working for some time with the MHCLG on the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme. This programme is focussed on a range of outcomes one of which is financial exclusion. As such we have a range of support that is available to families in Staffordshire including;

- Access to employment advisors who can support families to maximise their income and support them to access volunteering, training or alternative employment. These employment advisors have mapped out a range of support to assist families which includes the community support groups, access to funding, emergency equipment all of which is accessible and available for families in need.
- The borough and district councils offer support to families facing financial hardship with rent and council tax.
- We fund a range of organisations to support families to manage their finances including Money Smart in Newcastle-under-Lyme which run through aspire for all Newcastle's families. This service supports with budgeting, reducing bills, maximising income, accessing emergency funds and savings. We hope that this service helps families develop the skills needed to support their ongoing financial security.

During COVID-19 we have been working hard to ensure that families in need are supported and the potential risks are identified. This has included the delivery of a targeted access to a virtual family hub and survival kit which have been delivered to over 3000 children. These survival kits have shared details of the family hubs and connected people to community support. In addition, the government have announced additional funding for food and emergency supplies, and this will be available to support families over the next 12 months.

The Early Help partnership have agreed that Financial Exclusion is a common theme which may require a countywide focus and funding from the 20 / 21 Earned Autonomy budget. A multi-agency partnership Task Group has been established to map existing provision, identify gaps and demand and scope the potential to commission a service across the county using Earned Autonomy funding.

Mr Hussain asked the following question of Cabinet Member for Economic Growth whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

How many BAME enterprises have been awarded monies from the £500K business grant scheme and have received additional support within the Staffordshire county area?

Reply

The County Council does treat all business equally that request our support. However, we can't provide any data on ethnicity of businesses for the County Council's Emergency Business Grant nor the wider support provided through the Growth Hub, as this is data we do not collect from a business when they request support. It is also data that is not required by government when using their funding to support businesses.

We do know the locations of businesses and can make an assumption that some them will be from BAME groups given the diversity of Staffordshire's communities, but this is not formal confirmation of them being BAME enterprises.

We are completely supportive of all our communities, including BAME, and I am grateful Mr Hussain posed this question. Considering this, we will review our processes to reaffirm equal access to opportunity and indeed if improvements can be made.

Mr Hussain asked the following question of Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

What has been the county's response to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the BAME community?

Reply

The Council recognises that people from BAME communities are at higher risk of complications from Covid-19. Information about Covid-19 has been made available on the Council's website in a range of the most common languages spoken by BAME communities. The Council's Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan includes targeted communication for people from BAME communities.

In recent weeks the Council has been working with the BAME communities in parts of Burton-on-Trent in response to an excess of cases in the local area. The Council has been engaging with these communities to promote awareness of Covid-19 prevention and control as well as how to access testing. The Council has deployed a mobile testing unit to the town and established a dedicated service to offer testing to symptomatic people from this area in their own homes. The Council is also exploring innovative ways to extend testing to asymptomatic people from these communities.

16. Petitions

(i) Footpath between Colton and Rugeley

Mr Tittley presented a petition from Colton Parish Council seeking improvements to the footpath running alongside the B5014 between Colton and Rugeley.

(ii) Request for Traffic Calming measures along Sydney Street, Burton upon Trent

Mr Clarke presented a petition from local residents seeking the implementation of traffic calming measures along Sydney Street, Burton upon Trent.

Chairman

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2020-21

The Cabinet have considered an overview of the Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. They were informed that, at the end of Quarter 1, the overall assessment on the Council's performance and financial position was Amber. Particular areas of risk were in Adult Social Care and Children's and Families. The latest revenue forecast outturn showed a forecast overspend of £10.149m (1.9%). This was mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also due to underlying cost pressures that were evident before the crisis hit.

(Cabinet – 15 July 2020)

2. The Award of the Service and Testing of Domestic Water Systems Framework Agreement

The Cabinet have approved the procurement process to secure and manage the Framework Agreement for the service and testing of domestic water systems which will commence around 1 September 2020 for up to 4 years. The estimated spend envisaged through this Framework Agreement over 4 years is approximately £2.8 million.

(Cabinet – 15 July 2020)

3. Provision of Apprenticeship Services

The Council has successfully used the Nottingham City Council DAAP (Directory of Approved Apprenticeship Training Providers) as a route to procure apprenticeship training provision since March 2019. In April 2020 Nottingham City Council gave notice that it would not be continuing to manage and operate the DAAP after September 2020, therefore the Council would need to consider other procurement routes from October 2020. The Cabinet have therefore agreed that the Council should join the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation's (ESPO) Apprenticeship Dynamic Purchasing System (ADPS) for the fixed period of 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2024. The ESPO ADPS has similar processes to that of the DAAP and therefore the transition to the ADPS should be straightforward, and the provision of Apprenticeship training is not expected to be disrupted.

The Council's Assistant Director for Skills and Employability has been authorised to approve the award of contracts with training providers through the ESPO ADPS, and the release of funds from the apprenticeship levy to fund training.

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability, in discussion with the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability, has also been requested to develop a number of asks of Government to decentralise responsibilities and resources to enable Staffordshire to drive the local skills agenda.

(Cabinet – 15 July 2020)

4. Delegation of authority to issue Directions under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020 (The Regulations) came into force on 18th July 2020 and grant upper tier local authorities, such as the County Council, the power to issue directions imposing prohibitions, or restrictions in relation to premises, events, activities or open spaces without needing to apply to the Court. In the most serious of cases, the County Council will have the ability to close business who are deemed to be posing a risk to public health. The Cabinet have delegated authority to issue direction notices to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director for Health and Care in his capacity as Director of Public Health.

(Cabinet – 19 August 2020)

5. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

The Cabinet have considered the Council's investment and borrowing activity during 2019/20 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time. They noted that the UK economy continued to face an uncertain environment in 2019/20, with Brexit deadline extensions and the Covid-19 pandemic. The County Council retained its Treasury Management Policy of using internal cash balances instead of borrowing money. This has delivered significant savings for taxpayers, as the infrastructure to deliver more skilled, better-paid jobs is being funded at a lower cost.

(Cabinet – 19 August 2020)

6. #DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme

Encouraging our communities to support each other to remain well and independent is one of the key priorities of the Council and an area that we have invested in. Throughout the pandemic we saw how people and communities came together to support each other. A key priority for recovery from the pandemic is to sustain community capacity to help manage demand. However, we know that the voluntary sector is facing challenges to recover operations and is concerned about their long-term financial stability. The Cabinet have therefore approved a one-off injection of funding of £200k into a Community Grants Scheme. Applications will be encouraged from support groups and organisations that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable and older adults as well as those that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable children and families.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

7. Update from COVID-19 Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board

The Cabinet have received an update from the COVID-19 Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board. They were the number of new confirmed cases in

Staffordshire had risen to around 20 a day and that the Council was managing an increasing number of Incidents related to care providers, educational settings, businesses and communities. There had recently been an outbreak related to the Silverdale Working Men's Club and an ongoing elevated level of infections in parts of Burton.

The Cabinet also noted that there had been a shortfall in national laboratory capacity which meant that it could be very difficult for people in Staffordshire to book a test close to home. It was understood that this may take several weeks before it can be resolved and so the Council was therefore exploring the potential for alternative local testing arrangements. Concerns had also been raised about the completeness and timeliness of contact tracing by the NHS test and trace service with the Department of Health and Social Care. A system had therefore been put in place to mitigate this with the Council tracing some cases and contacts in order to identify common exposures and ensure that they are self-isolating. The Council was also proceeding with a Local Enhanced Contact Tracing pilot to trace those cases and contacts that the national service had been unable to reach.

(Cabinet – 15 July, 19 August and 16 September 2020)

8. Strategic Review of the Older People Care Home Market in Staffordshire 2020

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the care home market and the Cabinet has therefore reviewed the Council's strategic approach and plans to ensure that they address the ongoing challenges arising from the pandemic. As part of this review, the Cabinet has agreed to:

- Extend the duration of the current Dynamic Purchasing System and overarching agreement with providers until April 2022.
- Pause the intended refurbishment of the Council owned site to provide 38 additional nursing beds within Staffordshire to allow further evaluation of the impact from Covid-19 and associated infection control requirements.
- Continue with the project to explore building two Council owned care homes to provide additional nursing capacity and to review the intended design and delivery models to ensure that they are consistent with enhanced infection control requirements from Covid-19;
- Proceed with the review and update of the long-term demand model for care homes placements, taking into account the impact of Covid-19 and the views of local communities to reflect the needs and expectations of current and future residents.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

9. Recommissioning of Home Care in Staffordshire

The Cabinet have approved the procurement process for the future provision of Home Care as the current contracts are due to expire in August 2021. This process will build on the successes and incorporate the lessons learnt from the previous procurement in 2017/18. The aim is to support the development of home care, increasing supply and encouraging innovation, whilst avoiding large-scale disruption of the market.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

10. Nexxus Trading Services Limited - Annual Report 2019/2020

The cabinet have considered Nexxus Trading Services Limited's annual report which provides an update on the activities and performance of the company. In 2019/20 Nexxus Care generated a small surplus of £46k and the Cabinet have agreed that it should be retained by and within Nexxus Care for reinvestment in the company. This would include further investment in digital systems and other technologies to improve quality and productivity as well as providing a contingency against future one-off or capital investment costs.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

11. Street Lighting – LED Invest to Save Initiative

The Cabinet have given their approval to proceed to the delivery phase of the street lighting LED invest to save initiative as agreed in the 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The premise of the invest to save initiative shall see the replacement of street light lanterns not impacted by the delivery requirements of the PFI Project Agreement. To achieve this the Council has negotiated with Lighting for Staffordshire Ltd to commission the appointed service provider, currently E.ON Energy Solutions Limited, to replace over 47,000 lanterns with energy efficient LED lanterns. The project will be delivered over four phases with each phase taking 12 months to complete. Upon completion of all four phases the project will reduce energy consumption by 8,627,502 kWh which equates to a carbon emission reduction of 2,650 tonnes CO₂e and generate energy savings in the region of £1.6m per annum.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

12. Additional Investment in Community Highways Issues

The Cabinet have approved an additional one-off £2m investment in highways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) services. This will provide for an investment of £1.9m in current local highway priorities which will provide quick-win improvements to issues relating to drainage, verges (including hedges), grass cutting and weeds; and a £0.1m investment in immediate small-scale improvements to the Public Rights of Way network.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

13. Consultation on Proposals for Changes to Marshlands School and Greenhall Nursery

The Cabinet have approved changes at Marshlands School and Greenhall Nursery which seek to maximise the use of the learning environments in both settings. Marshlands School is currently oversubscribed, particularly in Key Stage 2 whereas Greenhall Nursery is undersubscribed. The proposed changes, which are supported by the governing bodies of both schools will provide for the following:

(i) Marshlands Primary School – a change of age range, from the current Early Years to Year 6 to focus on children in Year 1 to Year 6 by removing Early Years and reception provision and specialising in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 provision.

(ii) Greenhall Nursery – a change of designation of types of special education needs and disabilities catered for – to include children with needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage prime areas of learning, physical, communication and language and personal, social and emotional development.

(Cabinet – 16 September 2020)

14. Thank you to schools

I wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to our teachers, our wider school staff and our parents for their efforts and support in getting Staffordshire schools ready to welcome pupils back this term.

It is hugely important that pupils are back behind their desks and our schools have pulled out all the stops to make this happen.

Managing class or year bubbles was always going to be challenging and will remain so for the foreseeable future, so schools and indeed the service need our support more than ever.

15. Flu

Summer seems to have been and gone this year without many of us really having the opportunity to enjoy it as we normally would.

In a matter of just days, our army of gritters will be dusted off in preparation for the winter ahead.

Another seasonal event is the launch of the flu jab, which this year is more important than ever.

I would encourage everyone who is eligible to take up the offer and everyone else to think about having the jab if they can and, I hope many members will lead by example on this.

16. Covid-19 Testing

I know there is also huge frustration at how difficult it is to get a test through the national booking portal due to the issues with lab capacity. It is really important that everyone who has symptoms gets tested as this helps us identify who needs to self-isolate and in turn helps to prevent the spread of infection further.

This is something which I have raised both with our MPs and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

However, as a council we also pride ourselves on looking for solutions and together with Stoke-on-Trent City Council we have rapidly turned around three pilot testing schemes in Fenton, Stafford and Burton.

These are not the complete answer to the national issues, but are allowing more of our residents who need a test to get one.

17. Covid-19 – The Next Six Months

While many of us will have hoped that Covid-19 would have been consigned to history by now, sadly this is not the case, with the Prime Minister warning current restrictions could be in place for six months.

On the eve of what is the 200th day since the Covid-19 “lockdown”, we have seen how the virus once again is tightening its grip on the county and indeed on some of our neighbours.

Two hundred days ago we were there for the vulnerable, supplying emergency food parcels to thousands of people and providing millions of items of PPE to help people care for the frail and elderly, many of who sadly lost their lives.

We have achieved much since then, our schools are open, our businesses have welcomed back workers and our towns are no longer the ghost towns that they were, but we know that this can easily be snatched away.

That’s why as a county council we need to regroup, refocus and rise to the challenge of what lies ahead.

We are a great team at the county council and I know as members and officers we will do what ever to protect our residents and keep Staffordshire open for business.

People Helping People Fund

Staffordshire County Council People Helping People Fund – Annual Report and next steps 2019/20



Introduction – County Councillor Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Staffordshire County Councillors play a key role at the front line of what the county council does. They work to make things happen across Staffordshire, bringing together the most active people, facilitating partnerships and developing a complete understanding of their local area.

As leaders in their communities, the county councillors have for some years been equipped with a small grant fund, called the Local Community Fund, which they have used to invest in the things that matter most in their divisions.

In 2019, as the county council drew up its budget for the coming year, we faced some hard decisions. With the county council spending more of its resources on supporting the most vulnerable, we need to ensure that ‘prevention’ work – keeping people independent and safe long before they end up needing council support – can be delivered in a different way, which is why Communities is a key strategic principle to the way we work. The People Helping People Fund was created so that County Councillors can play a key part in this, using it in a more targeted way than ever before.

We asked councillors to use their funding as an investment, in the kind of prevention that will make a difference for people all across Staffordshire. We wanted projects that could show that they would make an impact on keeping people supported within their own communities. We also looked for projects that were a joint investment with the local community, where local people brought their own resources and energy to the table. Lastly, we sought projects that were about developing this energy further, expanding what was already out there to ensure that more Staffordshire residents could take advantage of the opportunities these groups and activities could offer.

This report gives a snapshot of some of the activity we saw, and some of the local examples of those who stepped up with exactly the kind of community-led prevention we were hoping to support. With this funding, councillors have made a real difference to Staffordshire’s communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our planned next steps for the fund this year, and this report tells some of that story, but also looks at how we can return to this ambition afresh next year, with our councillors at the heart of what we do.

Background

The People Helping People Fund saw £2500 allocated to each County Councillor, to invest in projects about keeping people independent, healthy and supported within the places they live. Councillors were able to use as much or as little of this £2500 as they wanted to support projects which needed it, or even to work together with other councillors and jointly support bigger projects.

The rules of the Fund were designed to ensure that projects would make a tangible difference, were things that mattered to the local community, and were about building on the success and energy that already exists across Staffordshire, or helping to create it where it didn't exist already.

This is why all successful projects had to meet the following criteria:

- The activity had to relate to children and families, or health and care. The County Council delivers lots of services in these two areas, and this fund was designed to support community projects which help us to do it – by supporting people early on.
- Funding bids had to be matched locally, in cash or in kind (for example in volunteer hours or use of a local room/facility).
- Funding had to support new activity (groups themselves didn't have to be new, but this Fund was about filling gaps by supporting new activity and projects). Funding could also support the purchase of new equipment, or even improvements to buildings – but applicants always had to demonstrate how the funding would help to unlock new provision.

Success of the Fund

Using councillor funding in this very targeted way was a new approach in Staffordshire, and came at a time when some other local authorities in England have removed Member funds altogether.

Some of the activity which funding was due to support had been planned to take place into the 2020/21 financial year, and unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national lockdown have impacted on this. The totals below reflect this, showing the final totals for activity which could go ahead, supported by the County Councillors. County Councillors drove this effort and have made a huge difference with the funding.

- Final total grant awarded of £86,127 (out of £155,000 total budget)
- This raised a total match value of £276,035 which in terms of a return on investment is more than £3 for every £1 spent through the Fund. This is made up of £193,845 in 'cash' value brought to the table by applicants (either through their own resources, grants awarded to them by other donors, or fundraising efforts taking place to support the project), and £82,190 in 'in-kind' value (for example the value of voluntary hours associated with a project, or the value of room use).
- This has all supported the delivery of projects (or parts of projects) worth a total of £362,162 – and it has helped to support the next steps for some projects which were much bigger than this total even on their own.

Projects which were supported have made a real difference for Staffordshire people, and kept them supported and independent in the places where they live. Some examples of this are:

- Brand new and expanded befriending services and dementia and carers support, such as the expansion into Rugeley of MHA Lichfield & District Live at Home Scheme's **Befriending Service** and **Dementia Singing Friends** in South Staffordshire
- Several one-to-one support courses for specific cohorts of children, such as **Fireworks** in Cannock Chase which supported families at the crucial primary-to-high school transition by helping them to connect to the new school, and **Me b4 Media**, which worked with children in East Staffordshire around maintaining self-esteem and positive mental health in the world of social media.



- Intergenerational work, making links between young and older groups who are both at risk of isolation, such as the **Generations Lounge** project in Stafford
- Community events which helped to develop the connections between residents and key agencies further than ever before, some of which directly helped Staffordshire County Council services to go further and have greater impact. **Amington Fete** and **Bradwell Health Event** are examples, along with the **Community Hub Fun Days** in Stafford. In this project the Children's Centre and Family Action teamed up with agencies like Stafford and Rural Homes, Adult and Community Learning and the Department for Work and Pensions, and community organisations like Penkside Community Champions, to run fun days in the local community that helped to identify how people in the area got their information, and left them better connected to the support available.



- Huge new sporting investments, such as helping to set up the **Beacon Parkrun** in Lichfield, and a range of smaller projects aimed at getting people more active
- Large scale community improvements and investments unlocked (including supporting a part of **Wyrley Juniors FC's** £764k move to a new venue)
- Helping schools and agencies to commission support for young people, such as the Staffordshire University Academy commissioning a **Mental Health Support Service** for its young people
- Helping new groups to establish and grow, such as helping **Butt Lane Youth Club** to get established in its first year



- Making improvements to community buildings to allow expanded activity, for example **Red Lion House Community Centre in Burton**, where funding helped to further the project of turning a disused

public house into a community and church centre, by supporting the kitchens' development

- Supporting part of the costs of a new community café, as an extension of social inclusion activities with **E.L.I.T.E Community Café** in Chesterton
- Making improvements to education and community assets for the benefit of those who use them, for example providing funding for the last piece of the **Log Cabin Therapy Garden** at Werrington Community Library and Wellbeing Centre
- Helping care settings to provide new activities for residents, such as **Pickwood Close Residents Centre** setting up its new weekly film club
- Supporting major expansions to programmes like **Places of Welcome** across East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire, which create a network of local venues which open weekly, provide friendship and hospitality and a warm welcome to everyone who attends.
- Cookery and healthy living support programmes, such as the **Family Cookery** programme at Haregate Community Centre, which worked with families and their support networks across 5 sessions around nutrition and how to make healthy eating affordable
- Several projects using the summer holidays and Christmas in 2019 as a springboard to finding new ways to engage with families, such as in **Newcastle South** and **Kidsgrove**



These are just some of the examples, and the rest can be viewed on the Staffordshire County Council website at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Your-council-and-democracy/People-Helping-People-Fund/People-Helping-People-fund-overview.aspx>.

Next steps

As a first step towards Members spending their funding in a new, more targeted way, the People Helping People Fund was a success, and planning had taken place to continue the approach for the 2020/21 financial year.

However, global events overtook this, and Staffordshire County Council moved quickly to refocus its Member funding around support to communities around the issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the lockdown which followed.

Following an announcement by the Leader of the Council at the 19 March meeting of the County Council, the Covid-19 Support Fund was launched on 30 March 2020. It used the existing budget of £2500 per County Councillor to focus on Staffordshire's response to the coronavirus, and groups were able to apply for either:

- funding to help support vulnerable people locally to get through the crisis, through the local response we saw across Staffordshire in neighbourhood-level support organisations, many of which were brand new and created by local people who wanted to help
- funding to cover an existing group's overheads in situations where they have lost normal income due to the crisis, to protect the vibrant voluntary and community sector which Staffordshire possesses, and ensure it still exists after the pandemic is over.

On July 1st 2020, the County Council put further investment into the fund, giving each County Councillor another £2000, and broadening the scope of the fund in recognition of the fact that with Covid-19 cases reducing nationally, some community activity was looking to restart. The Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund could still be spent on the initial two priorities, but with a third option of supporting the costs of adaptations to community activity so that it could restart.

These two tranches of funding are an ongoing success in helping Staffordshire's communities to respond to an unprecedented situation, seeing a combined total of £152,180 being released so far, against a total Member allocation so far of £181,935 (as at 23 September 2020).

The Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund has so far helped a wide variety of organisations, from a wave of the new neighbourhood-level support organisations, to a range of community hubs and venues across the county which needed support to keep going. We also saw groups who had received funding under the People Helping People Fund continuing the conversation with their County Councillors, about how the Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund might be able to help them adapt and build on the success of projects in the previous year.

We recognise that activity is starting back up where it is possible and appropriate. The Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund is being treated as emergency funding for the financial year 2020/21, and at this stage it is of course too soon to say what the situation will be in June 2021 when any new Member fund would launch. However, one clear opportunity if conditions allow, is to build on the success of the People Helping People Fund with a further focus on the kind of impact it made. A full report on the successes and learning of the Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund will

therefore be brought to County Council in 2021, at which point the situation should be clearer for understanding the next steps of the County Councillors' funding.

Conclusion

As a new way of working, the People Helping People Fund in 2019/20 has been a successful shift, and forms a great foundation to build on. Though the coronavirus pandemic meant that Staffordshire County Council naturally refocused its resources to help with the crisis, it is hoped that by next year the timing will be right to move the County Councillors' fund back towards a targeted approach aimed at making a real and lasting difference – building on the success so far and taking it further.



Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Report of the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on Monday 13 July 2020.

The main items considered were:

Temporary Amendments to Panel's Procedural Rules due to COVID 19 Epidemic

The Panel approved temporary changes to their procedural Rules reflecting the provisions for meetings and access to information during the Covid-19 emergency, as provided for under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Independent Co-Opted Member - Extension of Term of Office

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Panel appoint two independent co-opted members. Under the Panels' Procedural Rules co-optees serve a four year period of office, renewable for a further four years. Mr Paul Darby, Panel Co-optee, will have completed his second term of office in September 2020. Due to Covid-19 the recruitment process, which would have begun in April, has been unable to take place. Consequently the Panel agreed measures to allow Mr Darby to serve for an additional nine month period expiring in June 2021.

Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

Details were submitted of 2 decisions published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting. In respect of the decision to move Staffordshire Police Northern Response Hub to Hanley Fire Station Members sought clarification on the financial benefits set out for this decision. The £1.8m saving was anticipated capital cost required for refurbishing Hanley Police Station. Fire and Rescue Service Transformation Funding Grant monies would be used to make the necessary refurbishments to accommodate the Police. This Fire Service funding was available for collaborative blue light projects, with the Home Office having been consulted in its use for this project.

Secretary's Annual Reports

Consideration was also given to the Secretary's Annual Reports on the allocation of the Home Office Grant to the Panel and on the Handling of complaints against the Commissioner.

Safer, Fairer, United Communities Strategy Update- Effect of COVID 19

In May 2017 the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue, and Crime (Staffordshire Commissioner) published an updated Safer, Fairer, United Communities strategy for 2017-2020. As a result of Covid-19 the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner elections were postponed to May 2021. Consequently, the Staffordshire Commissioner had updated his strategy for this interim period, determining that priorities set out in the Strategy should remain broadly the same for his extended term of office, but with a refocus on resources to take account of the emergency situation created by the pandemic. A plan, "Covid-19 Response 2020/21", had been issued to:

- ensure that there was sufficient workforce to respond to the crisis and that their safety and wellbeing needs were met;
- hold both services to account for service delivery in a changing environment, including a sufficient, proportional and ethical response;
- facilitate effective partnership working, enabling a joined-up approach in ensuring community safety, protecting vulnerable people and delivering criminal justice;
- ensuring commissioned services continue to deliver support for people throughout the crisis and, where necessary, commission services to address newly identified needs; and
- play an active role in ensuring the local, regional and national response to the crisis met the needs of the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Referring to the postponement of the Commissioner Elections until May 2021 the Chairman specifically thanked the Commissioner for agreeing to defer his personal plans for the future in order to continue in office for a further 12 months period.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service - COVID 19 Update

The Panel received details of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) response to the Covid-19 crisis. The pandemic had impacted on all areas of society and SFRS had adapted quickly to new ways of working and Service delivery. Following a multi-agency assessment meeting (SAM) instigated by the Civil Contingencies Unit on 4 March 2020, and chaired by Public Health England, the Service had instigated its Incident Preplanning and Logistics Framework. This Framework set up a tactical planning cell that supported the Services response to the pandemic.

SFRS has been involved in delivering a wide range of services and in adapting existing services to address the restrictions resulting from the pandemic. These include:

- delivering food parcels to the most vulnerable;
- storing and delivering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline Healthcare professionals;
- supporting the national effort by conducting 618 vulnerable persons visits to those most at risk, taking the opportunity to provide home safety information during these visits;
- providing an on-line safe and sound schools education programme for delivery in schools.

Staffordshire Police - COVID 19 Update

The Staffordshire Police Force response to Covid-19 formally commenced through the establishment of Operation Jafar on 18 March 2020 and the Panel received details of the mechanisms for national, regional and local connectivity and co-ordination that were established to address issues resulting from the pandemic.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Corporate Safety Plan 2017 - 2020 Update on Delivery

Publication of the SFRS Corporate Safety Plan (CSP) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) fulfilled the legislative obligations as defined within the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018. An update was given on the various initiatives designed to deliver the 3 stated priorities in the Plan namely: Education and Engagement; Community Safety and Wellbeing; and Planning, Resilience and Response.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Corporate Safety Plan 2020/23 – Update on consultation/preparation

The Panel received details of the consultation process undertaken on the new SFRS Corporate Safety Plan 2020/24, with comments on the draft Plan to be forwarded to the Secretary after the meeting.

Boeing Defence UK Contract Update

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner had entered into a strategic partnership based contract with Boeing Defence UK (BDUK) on 1 April 2016 for the provision of IT services. The contract had an estimated value of £110m over 10 years, inclusive of revenue and capital funding. The Commissioner made a decision on 18 December 2019 to mutually terminate the contract with BDUK from 30 June 2020. This decision was taken in light of BDUK's strategic and corporate decision to no longer have an interest in UK policing and the Commissioner's review of the changing IT needs of the Force, following significant advances in this area. The delivery of the Niche record management system prior to 30 June 2020 also meant that Staffordshire Police had completed their most significant investment ever.

HMICFRS Report on the PEEL Inspection of the Staffordshire Police Force 2018/19

The Panel noted the results of the HMICFRS PEEL inspection of Staffordshire Police in 2018/19. Overall the inspection had rated Staffordshire Police as “Good”. The Panel congratulated the Commissioner on this excellent report which, alongside the Fire and Rescue Service report, showed that these two Services were working well for the people of Staffordshire.

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Julie Plant (01785 276135 email Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Helen Phillips (01785 276143 or helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Details of Panel meetings are issued to contact officers in each of the District/Borough Councils in the County and Stoke-on-Trent City Council for posting on their own web sites.

Stephen Sweeney

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Chairman

Staffordshire County Council