

COUNCIL AGENDA

To:- The Members of the Staffordshire County Council

Notice is given that the meeting of the Staffordshire County Council will be a Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams at 10:00 on Thursday, 18 March 2021 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
10 March 2021

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 11 February 2021**
(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. **Retiring Members** (Pages 25 - 26)

Report of the Chairman of the Council

6. **Statement of the Leader of the Council** (Pages 27 - 32)

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

7. **Recommendations to the Council** (Pages 33 - 66)

- a) Proposed adoption of new Code of Conduct for Members
- b) Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 - Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011

8. **Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel** (Pages 67 - 70)

9. **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

10. **Petitions**

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

11. **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

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, 15 March 2021**. 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, 8 March 2021**. 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 20 May 2021 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 10 May 2021.

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 11 February 2021

Present:

Attendance		
Ben Adams	Colin Greatorex	Kyle Robinson
Charlotte Atkins	Gill Heath	David Smith
Philip Atkins, OBE	Phil Hewitt	Paul Snape
Ann Beech	Jill Hood	Bob Spencer
David Brookes	Syed Hussain	Mike Sutherland
Gill Burnett	Keith James	Mark Sutton
Ron Clarke	Julia Jessel	Stephen Sweeney
Tina Clements	Bryan Jones	Simon Tagg
Maureen Compton	Dave 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
Ann Edgeller	Kath Perry, MBE (Chair)	David Williams
Helen Fisher	Jeremy Pert	Victoria Wilson
Keith Flunder	Bernard Peters	Mark Winnington
Richard Ford	Jonathan Price	Susan Woodward
John Francis	Natasha Pullen	Mike Worthington

Apologies for absence: Trevor Johnson and Jason Jones

PART ONE

32. 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
David Brookes	36	Personal	The owner of a site impacted by the Uttoxeter Town Centre Master Plan is also constructing an agricultural building for Cllr Brookes
Mark Deaville	36	Personal	Owner of a small business
Helen Fisher	36	Personal	Co-Chair of Chasewater Friends
Keith Flunder	36	Personal	In receipt of a small grant from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

John Francis	36	Personal	Resides on Cannock Chase and is also a Member of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Johnny McMahon	36	Personal	Board Member of Chasewater Friends
Susan Woodward	36	Personal	Co-Chair of Chasewater Friends
Susan Woodward	36	Personal	Leader of Burntwood Town Council

33. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 December 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 10 December 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

34. Chairman's Correspondence

Staffordshire residents recognised in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours

Members extended their congratulations to Dr Richard Harling, the Council's Director for Health and Care, in being awarded an MBE for services to public health and adult social care in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours.

The Council also extended congratulations to the following Staffordshire residents who had also been awarded an honour:

- Mrs Sarah Ann Beaumont, OBE, lately CEO Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs CIC, for services to social enterprise.
- Mr Lee Pardy-McLaughlin, OBE, child and family principal social worker at Coventry City Council and former Staffordshire County Council employee and Staffordshire University lecturer, for services to children and families.
- Mr Brian Roberts, OBE, finance commissioner at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for services to local government and public sector finance.
- Maj (Rtd) Robert John Cross, MBE, chairman, North Midlands Branch Gurkha Welfare Trust, for services to Gurkha veterans.
- Mr Ronald Flowers, MBE, former Wolves and England footballer, for services to football.
- Mr Joseph Garcia, MBE, director of operations South East Coast Ambulance Trust, for services to emergency response, particularly during the pandemic.

- Mr Paul Jonathan Morris, MBE, founder and CEO, Addmaster UK Limited, for services to exports.
- Mr Darren Teale, MBE, Founder Junction 15, for services to media and vulnerable communities in the UK and abroad.
- Ms Susan Tipton, MBE, managing director Protocol Consultancy, for services to apprenticeships and charity in the West Midlands.
- Dr Nigel John Tringham, MBE, lately editor Victorian County History of Staffordshire, for services to local history, especially in Staffordshire.
- Mr Michael John Deakin, BEM, chairman Kibblestone District Scout Council, for services to voluntary services to Scouting and to charity in Staffordshire.
- Mrs Patricia Diane Geraghty, BEM, pharmacist dispensing technician, for services to pharmacy services in Leek during the pandemic.
- Mrs Maureen Elizabeth Recine, BEM, former Girl Guiding county commissioner, for services to Girl Guiding and charity.
- Mrs Gladys Mary Turnbull, BEM, Wolverhampton Netball and founder of Whitmore Netball Club, for services to sport and the community.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Chairman paid tribute to those who continued to care for and provide support to everyone within communities in Staffordshire during the on-going Covid-19 pandemic.

She also indicated that it was more important than ever that people followed the Government's guidance by only leaving home for a small number of essential reasons which included essential shopping and to go to work if they could not work from home.

The Dignity in Care Awards

The Chairman informed the Council that nominations for the 2021 Dignity in Care awards opened on 1 February 2021. The awards honoured the unsung heroes in Staffordshire communities who cared for the most vulnerable. The Chairman also extended her thanks to all the County's carers for the invaluable work they did and continued to provide each and every day.

Former County Councillor Vera Ivers MBE

The Council were informed of the death, on 15 January 2021, of former County Councillor Vera Ivers MBE. Cllr Ivers served on the County Council between

1985 and 1997 and represented the Leek South (Staffordshire Moorlands) County Electoral Division.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins paid tribute to Cllr Ivers following which Members stood and observed a one minute silence to her memory.

35. Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/2026 and 2021/22 Budget and Council Tax

The Council received a joint report by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources on the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021/26 and 2021/22 Budget and Council Tax proposals.

Cllr Sutherland expressed his thanks to the County Treasurer and those other members of staff who had assisted in the development of the MTFS, the Chairman and Members of the Corporate Review Committee's Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group for the robust manner in which they had challenged and questioned Cabinet Members during their scrutiny of the MTFS/budget proposals, and also to his Cabinet colleagues and Members of the Senior Leadership Team.

In introducing the report, Cllr Sutherland explained that the Strategic Plan was the primary document that shaped the financial plans and the Corporate Delivery Plan. Developed and delivered in tandem, they were supported by a range of directorate, service and team plans across the Council. The Plan had been refreshed and set out a clear vision for Staffordshire: "a county where big ambitions, great connections and greener living give everyone the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. And where the people of Staffordshire will:

- Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth
- Be healthier and more independent for longer
- Feel safer, happier and more supported in their community"

Cllr Sutherland referred to the profound impact the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the work of the Council and also its finances, including the delivery of proposed savings. He added that there was a high level of uncertainty in the MTFS due to a number of factors including the on-going impact of the pandemic, and the demand for the provision of care services.

He informed the Council that Staffordshire continued to have one of the lowest levels of Council Tax amongst the Shire Counties in England. He added that the proposals before the Council provided for the general council tax increase (i.e. in line with the principle of taking the tax increase allowed by government up to the referendum limit) of 1.99% for 2021/22 and thereafter. In addition, the Spending Review announced that the government would again permit social care authorities to raise council tax by a further 3% to help with funding pressures in social care. This would result in a council tax at Band D of £1,360.62 for 2021/22, which was an increase of 4.99% when compared with 2020/21.

Members noted that the capital programme in 2021/22 was over £100m and that the main projects included in the programme were:

- Expansion of three secondary schools in the Lichfield and Stafford areas;
- Expansion of a number of primary schools across the county, plus two new schools;
- Development of Greenwood House, Burntwood in partnership with the NHS to deliver a modern doctors' surgery and pharmacy;
- Continued construction of Stafford Western Access Route and the i54 Western Extension;
- Expansion of business parks in Cannock and Newcastle;
- Regeneration of the Eastgate quarter of Stafford.

Cllr Sutherland also informed the Council that, in February 2020, a balanced budget was reported for 2021/22 with headroom in the future years. Since then, the pandemic had had an impact across all services and its impact would continue to be felt for a number of years to come. The position for 2021/22 was a balanced one but the headroom which was part of the period in February 2020 had now been used to part fund cost pressures and there remained significant budget gaps in years two and three of the period. These gaps reflected the level of financial uncertainty in the future and also the longer term impact of the pandemic.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins expressed the view that the Covid-19 pandemic had highlighted inequalities in society; that the proposed 4.99% increase in Council Tax was a regressive Tax and came despite proposals for £47.7m in cuts by 2024. She also stated that Central Government had failed to deliver on its pledge to solve the crisis in social care; that the promised Green Paper was still to see the light of day; and that Public Sector workers (outside the NHS) faced a proposed Government imposed pay freeze.

Cllr Parry and Cllr McMahon spoke about the role of the MTFS in ensuring that the Council was able to meet the needs of its residents. They also referred to how the Council had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic including the support it had made available to local businesses and the local economy; and measures it had taken to strengthen domiciliary care. They also referred to the Council's proposed £43m increase in the budget for social care. Cllr McMahon added that the Council was in discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Groups regarding how they and the Council could work more closely together.

Cllr Brookes stated that he recognised the difficulties the Council was facing and he expressed his support for the MTFS proposals. He also paid tribute to the Cabinet for keeping the level of council tax amongst the lowest for Shire Councils.

Cllr Sutton referred to the priorities contained within the Council's Strategic Plan and the support the Council gave to children and families. He also referred to how services for children and families were being transformed.

Cllr Philip Atkins referred to the priorities contained within the Strategic Plan and, in particular, how residents and communities were encouraged to help themselves and one another and thus enable the Council to focus its resources on those who were the most vulnerable. He also stated that he supported the comments made by Cllr

Charlotte Atkins in relation to the need for Central Government to find a long-term solution to the funding of social care.

Cllr Woodward expressed the view that the Council had been let down by Central Government during the pandemic, for example, through having to supply personal protective equipment (PPE), support for care homes and the provision of additional testing and thus placing additional burdens on Council Tax payers. She also referred to savings the Council was proposing to make in its MTFS which would impact upon mental health services and also the rural county. Cllr Woodward also expressed concern at the level of debt owed to the Council. In response, Cllr McMahon indicated that there was a task and finish group looking into the level of debt owed to the Council and how this may be reduced. Cllr Deaville added that the Council would continue to deal with the challenges it faced, and he commended the Council's decision to supply PPE to care homes etc. Cllr Edgeller referred to Cllr Woodward's comments in respect of mental health services and indicated that, in Stafford, Members were in discussions with the local MP regarding lobbying Central Government for additional funding for mental health services.

Cllr Robinson referred to the aging population in the County and how this contributed to pressures on the health and care system and indicated that the current method of funding was unsustainable and that a long-term solution was needed. He expressed the view that the Council had not been fully reimbursed by Central Government for its additional costs and loss of income arising from the Covid pandemic. He also referred to the vital contribution made by volunteers in the County and expressed his disappointment at the Government's proposal to freeze the pay of public sector workers who were often at the forefront of dealing with the pandemic.

Cllr Philip White spoke about the Council's continuing response to the pandemic, both by officers and Members; and the need for the Authority to create the right conditions for economic growth/recovery through working with partners.

Cllr Alan White and Cllr Sutherland concluded the debate by indicating that the Council provided value for money and spent the Council Tax it received effectively. Cllr Sutherland also referred to how the Council had responded positively to the pressures placed upon it during the Covid pandemic.

Cllr Alan White moved, and Cllr Price seconded, the recommendations contained in the report before the Council.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the Chairman called for a named vote to be taken in relation to the approval of the recommendations contained in the report, the result of which was as follows:

Those Members voting in support of the recommendations:

Ben Adams	Keith James	Bob Spencer
Philip Atkins, OBE	Julia Jessel	Mike Sutherland
David Brookes	Bryan Jones	Mark Sutton
Gill Burnett	Ian Lawson	Stephen Sweeney

Tina Clements	Alastair Little	Simon Tagg
John Cooper	Johnny McMahon	Martyn Tittley
Mike Davies	Paul Northcott	Carolyn Trowbridge
Mark Deaville	Jeremy Oates	Ross Ward
Janet Eagland	Ian Parry	Alan White
Ann Edgeller	Kath Perry, MBE	Philip White
Helen Fisher	Jeremy Pert	Conor Wileman
Keith Flunder	Bernard Peters	Bernard Williams
Richard Ford	Jonathan Price	David Williams
John Francis	Natasha Pullen	Victoria Wilson
Colin Greatorex	David Smith	Mark Winnington
Gill Heath	Paul Snape	Mike Worthington
Phil Hewitt		

Those Members voting against the recommendations:

Charlotte Atkins	Alan Dudson	Dave Jones
Ann Beech	Jill Hood	Kyle Robinson
Ron Clarke	Syed Hussain	Susan Woodward
Derek Davis OBE		

Those Members abstaining from voting: Nil

RESOLVED – (a) That the following be approved:

- (i) the adoption of the Strategic Plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (ii) a net revenue budget of £530.296m for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 14 to the report;
- (iii) planning forecasts for 2022/23 to 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 14 to the report;
- (iv) a contingency provision of £5.000m for 2021/22;
- (v) a net contribution from reserves and general balances of £6.255m plus a contribution to the Local Taxation Fund of £5.204m for 2021/22;
- (vi) a budget requirement of £529.245m for 2021/22;
- (vii) a council tax requirement of £388.150m for 2021/22;
- (viii) a council tax at Band D of £1,360.62 for 2021/22 which is an increase of 4.99% when compared with 2020/21. This results in council tax for each category of dwelling as set out in the table below:

Category of dwelling	Council Tax rate £
Band A	907.08
Band B	1,058.26
Band C	1,209.44
Band D	1,360.62
Band E	1,662.98
Band F	1,965.34
Band G	2,267.70
Band H	2,721.24

(ix) that the County Treasurer be authorised to sign precept notices on the billing authorities respectively liable for the total precept payable and that each notice states the total precept payable and the council tax in relation to each category of dwelling as calculated in accordance with statutory requirements;

(x) the Financial Health Indicators set out in Appendix 13 to the report.

(b) That the following recommendations which are included within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2021/22, the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 and the Commercial Investment Strategy 2021/22 (Appendices 12a to 12c to the report) be approved:

(i) the Minimum Revenue Policy for 2021/22 as contained within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2021/22 in Appendix 12a to the report;

(ii) the Prudential Indicators as set out within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2021/22 in Appendix 12a to the report;

(iii) the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy, based on the 2017 CIPFA Codes (Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code), and 2018 MHCLG Guidance (on Local Government Investments and on Minimum Revenue Provision);

(iv) to adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) 2021/22 as detailed in paragraphs 60 to 107 and Annex A and Annex B of the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (Appendix 12b to the report);

(v) the policies on reviewing the strategy, the use of external advisors, investment management training and the use of financial derivatives as described in paragraphs 109 to 119 of the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (Appendix 12b to the report);

(vi) the proposed borrowing strategy for the 2021/22 financial year comprising maximising the use of cash in lieu of borrowing as far as is practical; the ability to borrow new long-term loans, where deemed appropriate; the use of cash to repay loans early, subject to market conditions and a loan rescheduling strategy that is unlimited where this re-balances risk;

(vii) that the Treasury Management Strategy recommendations operate within the prudential limits set out in Annex C of the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (Appendix 12b to the report) and be reported to the Cabinet Member for Finance, with respect to decisions made for raising new long-term loans, early loan repayments and loan rescheduling;

(viii) the Commercial Investment Strategy for 2021/22 (Appendix 12c to the report) and the circumstances under which commercial investments can be made;

(ix) the governance arrangements that are in place for proposing and approving commercial investments;

(x) a maximum quantum for commercial investments of a further £20 million in 2021/22;

(xi) a maximum limit for an individual service investment loan of £10 million in 2021/22;

(xii) that any upwards change in the amounts of the limits specified in recommendations (x) and (xi) be delegated to the County Treasurer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance.

(c) That the County Treasurer be authorised to adjust centrally-held budgets or contributions to or from reserves as appropriate, to reflect any grant and local taxation changes announced in the final 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement;

(d) That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the County Treasurer be authorised to challenge Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and services to manage and deliver the current five-year plans and to identify further cost reductions and income generation opportunities, as appropriate.

36. Statement of the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work since the previous meeting of the Council.

Uttoxeter Town Master Plan

Cllr Brookes referred to the proposed Uttoxeter Town Master Plan and expressed concern at the way in which the public consultation on the Plan had been conducted by the East Staffordshire Borough Council. He indicated that he had not been consulted prior to the Plan's approval and that the public consultation had only lasted for twelve days. He urged that the Borough Council be requested to review the Plan and also properly consult the residents of Uttoxeter. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that he noted Cllr Brookes' concerns.

Communities Principle – Update and Delivery Plan

(Paragraph 1 of the Statement)

Cllr Robinson expressed the view that, in his opinion, the Community Cabinet Support Member (CCSM) roles did not provide value for money and he asked that they be subject to an appraisal. In response, Cllr McMahon, Cllr Peters and Cllr Wilson stated that the CCSM's in their areas had provided an outstanding service and had been very proactive. Cllr Wilson added that she would ask all Members to continue to engage with their CCSM, their parish councils and volunteering groups, and also stated that the Council had a strong record of working with its communities.

Cllr Edgeller referred to the good work going on in communities to support those with mental health care needs.

Cllr Woodward referred to partnership working with Parish Councils and indicated that little had happened in this respect in her area and that she would like to see a roadmap as to how this may be taken forward. Cllr Jessel responded by indicating that Members should take up the challenge of leading on the establishment of partnership working in their area as it was not just a matter for the CCSMs.

Cllr Sutton highlighted the work taking place regarding children and families and the adoption of a "place based approach" led by the Families Strategic Partnership. He also referred to the three-tier working taking place in South Staffordshire.

Cllr Jessel referred to the Council's Climate Change action plan and the work which had been done to date. She also added that the Climate Change Action Fund had proved to be a great success with local communities and had seen many innovative schemes. Cllr Greateorex indicated that he supported the comments made by Cllr Jessel.

North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan (NSLAQP) – Outline Business Case (Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

Cllr Tagg extended his thanks to the Council for the work it had done, in partnership with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, to tackle the issue of excessive vehicle pollution in one part of Newcastle-under-Lyme. He requested that the Council permits low emission vehicles, and possibly those vehicles up to seven years of age, to utilise the bus gate. He also referred to odour issues arising from Walley's Quarry in Silverdale. In response, Cllr David Williams indicated that he would be happy to work with Cllr Tagg to see what could be done in respect of the odour issues arising from the quarry.

Cllr Brookes referred to the need to address the issues around the Ashbourne and Derby Road junctions on the A50 as they were in need of improvement in order to cope with the amount of vehicles using this corridor. In response, Cllr David Williams indicated that he was aware of the issues on the A50 and that the Council would work with Ministers with regard to securing the funding of the necessary improvements.

West Midlands Rail Ltd Governance Evolution (Paragraph 3 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to what influence the County Council has had over the provision of rail services. In response, Cllr Philip White indicated that the Council had

benefitted from the influence that its officers had been able to exert over the inner workings of West Midlands Rail Ltd. He also paid tribute to Cllr Winnington for the valuable contribution he had made during the time he had served as past chair of West Midlands Rail Ltd.

Cllr Eagland referred to the impact of HS2 on her Division and in particular the amount of parking to be made available at the Cappers Lane Depot and the proposals by Cemex for a new quarry to supply concrete for the high speed rail project. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that any comments in relation to the current consultation on HS2 should be forwarded to Cllr Jessel who was co-ordinating the Council's response.

Cllr Brookes spoke about the importance of East Midlands Rail to the area and the need for improvements to services, for example, those serving Uttoxeter on Race days. In response, Cllr Philip White indicated that he supported the comments made by Cllr Brookes as there was a need to improve services on the line serving Uttoxeter, particularly at weekends and on Race days.

Update from COVID-19 Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins and Cllr McMahon commended the work of the Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board and also the briefings provided by Council's Director for Health and Care. Cllr Alan White highlighted the good partnership working taking place between the County Council and the eight District/Borough Council's in responding to the Covid pandemic. He also informed the Council of the progress with regard to the roll-out of the vaccination programme.

Staffordshire Means Back to Business – Investing in our Economy

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Cllr Brookes extended his thanks to the Cabinet for the support they had given in relation to the recent highway improvements in Uttoxeter amounting to around £600,000.

Cllr Flunder and Cllr Winnington paid tribute to the support provided by the Council through its Business Support Scheme. Cllr Lawson also expressed thanks to the council for the support it had provided to local communities and voluntary groups through its Community Fund and also its Covid Fund.

Cllr Flunder requested the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to confirm that, not only would there be investment in encouraging more Tourism and Manufacturing, but there would also be a focus on skills including apprenticeships and innovation, for example, in 'green' industries, providing better paid jobs for those who worked and lived in Staffordshire.

Cllr Jessel extended her thanks to those "unsung heroes" of the pandemic including teaching staff, refuse workers and sole traders for the contributions they had made in supporting their communities during very challenging times. Cllr Winnington also referred to the vital role played by the farming community in keeping the country fed.

Cllr Philip White extended his thanks to Members for their comments. With regard to the question raised by Cllr Flunder, he referred to the Council's "Staffordshire Means Back to Business" Strategy and the vital role it played in supporting local businesses throughout the pandemic. He added that the Strategy would be refreshed as necessary including support to be provided to the tourism sector, the green economy and the extension of apprenticeships.

Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for Future Generations (Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to what plans the Cabinet Member had for the Council's Countryside Rangers. In response, Cllr Wilson explained that, in 2016 "Rural County" committed to MTFs savings of £786,000 to be spread over a five-year period. To date, £446,160 of savings had been delivered. This had been achieved through a management review, leaving vacant posts unfilled and halting non-essential spend. In 2019/20 a restructure of the Service commenced and the consultation raised fears around capacity, particularly at the "front line". In March 2020, all restructures were put on hold due to the Covid pandemic. The MTFs savings had been reprofiled and the actual savings required from the "Rural County" were to be reduced.

Cllr Francis, Cllr Hewitt, Cllr Bryan Jones, Cllr McMahon, Cllr Smith and Cllr Snape expressed their support for the Council's mitigation measures to protect the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and expressed the view that the proposals were measured and were necessary in order to protect this valuable asset for future generations. Cllr Wilson thanked Members for their comments and for the resilience they had shown during the onslaught of objections submitted in relation to the proposals.

Cllr Bryan Jones stated that he wished to dispel some of the myths around the proposals and confirmed that there were no plans to tarmac the green at Marquis Drive and that the funding from the proposed car parking charges would be re-invested in maintaining Cannock Chase.

Covid Testing (Paragraph 7 of the Statement)

Several Members extended their thanks to the Council in respect of its provision of Covid testing across the County including extensions to the hours of operation to include evenings and weekends and the roll-out of pop-up testing sites. Cllr Oates referred to the need for additional testing provision in Tamworth. In response, Cllr McMahon referred to the roll-out of additional pop-up testing which was now visiting seven to nine sites each day. He also added the Council was looking to extend its lateral flow testing offer to businesses with 50 or more employees to replace the current offer to businesses of 200 or more employees.

Cllr Woodward expressed concern that those persons who were least able to self-isolate may be deterred from getting themselves tested. She added that nationally, around 70% of those applying for self-isolation payments were being refused and she asked the Cabinet Member as to how this issue may be addressed. In response, Cllr McMahon

stated that he, together with the Council's Director for Health and Care would look into this issue further.

Roll out of the Covid Vaccine (Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins and Cllr Hood referred to the long-term challenges imposed on individuals due to the Covid pandemic such as the learning gap between pupils from different backgrounds. Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to what plans the Council had to assist those from disadvantaged backgrounds to catch-up with their learning and also how the Council would work with the NHS to address mental health distress amongst schoolchildren. In response, Cllr Edgeller referred to the need for there to be a mental health Champion in every school. Cllr Price added that every school had a staff and pupil welfare representative on their governing body. Cllr Sutton also informed Members that there was a comprehensive guide to the pathways available to support mental health amongst schoolchildren on the Council's website and he would ensure that, if it had not already been done, a copy would be circulated to all Members. Cllr Price added members that, with regard to the need for schoolchildren to catch-up on their education, the Government had appointed an Education Recovery Czar who would be responsible for drawing-up proposals as to how pupils would be helped to catch-up.

Cllr Winnington extended his thanks to all those NHS staff and volunteers who were assisting with the vaccination programme across Staffordshire.

Cllr Brookes also paid tribute to Uttoxeter racecourse and the local GP practices with regard to their support for the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccines to the people of Uttoxeter and the surrounding area. He, together with Cllr Woodward, referred to the role which Members could play in relation to being ambassadors for the testing and vaccination programmes. Cllr Woodward, Cllr Deaville Cllr Edgeller and Cllr Perry also referred to the vaccination centres which had been set up in their areas and expressed their thanks to those involved. Cllr McMahon added that, in addition to vaccination centres, the NHS had made arrangements for the vaccination of those who were housebound and also the homeless.

Cllr Alan White indicated that the Council was talking to its MPs about going forward and living with Covid. He also added that, unlike some authorities, the County Council was strictly adhering to JCVI guidelines with regard to the vaccination programme.

Economic Recovery (Paragraph 9 of the Statement)

Cllr Philip Atkins referred to the recent good news that JCB were to recruit an additional 400 people. He also spoke about the impact of new technologies such as electric cars and 5G, and also how town centres would need to change if they were to remain viable.

In response to a question from Cllr Woodward regarding the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, Cllr Philip White informed the Council that details of the Fund were still awaited but it was understood that the Fund would be launched in March 2021. Cllr Alan White added that the Council was working closely with the Local Enterprise

partnership to ensure that when new funds were released the Authority was ready to take advantage of them.

The Dignity in Care Awards (Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

The Chairman encouraged Members to submit nominations for the 2021 Dignity in Care awards. Cllr McMahon indicated that this was the seventh year of the awards. He added that the profile of the care sector had been raised substantially during the Covid pandemic.

Winter Grant Fund

Cllr Woodward indicated that she had been informed that the ability to submit on-line applications under the Winter Grant Fund had been put on hold due to the volume of applications which had been received and she enquired as to when the applications were likely to be processed. In response, Cllr Sutton indicated that monies made available by Central Government under the Winter Grant Fund was finite and it was likely that, very shortly, the Council would have allocated all of the available funding.

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

37. Questions

Cllr Brookes asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Will the Staffordshire County Council or its highways contractors be purchasing the excellent new JCB pot hole repairing machines and how soon will I be seeing these machines repairing the many potholes within my division of Uttoxeter Town and throughout the County of Staffordshire where I understand that they are manufactured, supporting local jobs and efficiently repairing our broken highways in a more cost effective and efficient way, especially now we have no need to follow the EU procurement rules, or perhaps can you tell us how many of these brilliant machines already been ordered or purchased?

Reply

The county council's highways team have been working with and advising JCB on the development of their pothole-repair and other highway maintenance priority solutions for a number of years.

JCB's new Pothole-Pro machine was launched on 11 January. As a flagship Staffordshire based company the county council was delighted to support the launch, including sharing publicity materials across highway sector professional networks.

Arrangements to test the equipment on Staffordshire's road network are in development and we hope to carry out trials in the coming weeks. This involves

testing its practical use against a range of different parameters, including different road construction types and where sites are physically constrained.

The trial will inform both the county council and JCB on how the Pothole-Pro machine compares with the range of different pothole repair techniques already used across Staffordshire's diverse road network. It will show whether the product can add value to Staffordshire's road repair operations now and will also provide JCB with useful feedback on further development potential. I'll be pleased to share the findings with Members in the coming weeks.

Supplementary Question

Could I urge the Cabinet Member to bring this new Pothole-Pro machine into use in the local area so that JCB can use this opportunity to promote their machinery and for the benefit of local residents?

Reply

As you are aware, this is a new machine and we need to access its capabilities before considering rolling it out for use in the County.

Cllr Brookes asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Over the years, very sadly Staffordshire, like other roads and highway networks throughout our Country, has seen many unfortunate fatalities. What policies do we have for permanent memorials on, or adjacent to our public highway network to enable the families of those victims or for others for whatever reason to erect permanent memorials either on or adjacent to our Highways and what policies do we have for pedestrianised highways or Town Centre Market places regarding memorial benches and monuments etc, and have we or do we have a policy to close highways and what would happen to this land?

Reply

The County Council's programme of road safety engineering, education and training activities has contributed to Staffordshire having one of the safest highway networks in the country. By working closely with organisations through the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, a considered and evidence led approach is adopted that ensures best use of resources as we continue to put measures in place to further reduce the number of tragic incidents on our roads.

The County Council recognises that the placing of a tribute at the roadside can be an important part of the grieving process for some individuals following the loss of a loved one; however, we have a responsibility to ensure that no items placed within the highway serve as a distraction to passing motorists and consideration must be given to how the tribute would affect drivers using the road.

Paying tribute at a memorial placed within the highway setting can also present a road safety risk and, therefore, the Council will work with local communities and their representatives to ensure any locally agreed memorial bench or monument is appropriately sited. The County Council's statutory responsibility is to ensure the highway is not obstructed and that any items placed within the highway are covered by an appropriate legal agreement. Within a town centre / pedestrianised setting, full consideration must also be given to maintaining accessibility for all.

The legal process to close a section of public highway is known as "stopping up" which permanently removes highway rights from the road and results in the area of land reverting to the adjacent landowners.

Supplementary Question

The County Council has given temporary permission for the erection of a memorial in Uttoxeter during the period of Remembrance. Can the Cabinet Member inform me, in the light of the statement read during the meeting of the Uttoxeter Town Council on 9 February by Cllr Philip Hudson, of the type of consent given, the type of street furniture being installed in the Market Place in Uttoxeter which is temporary and removable, and the amount of correspondence with Uttoxeter Town Council informing them of this agreement?

Reply

Both telephone conversations and official documents have been sent and the Uttoxeter Town Council is aware and has been given notice by the County Council that the equipment they have on this site is to be removed. The site itself has a temporary permission for use during the period of Remembrance.

Cllr Clarke asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways help to improve the back log of New Residential Parking Zone applications, all new applications which meet the criteria will bring in an annual income, this will help to offset some of the financial losses from the car parking revenue due to Covid 19?

Reply

The County receive a significant number of requests for Permit Parking Schemes (PPS) from local residents every year. Each one is reviewed and prioritised against the criteria outlined in the On-Street Parking Strategy. Schemes anticipated to be delivered this year are:

- Forebridge area of Stafford; and
- Hattrell Street, Newcastle Under Lyme.

Permit Parking Schemes are often difficult to implement quickly. It is not uncommon for us to receive mixed responses to the scheme from residents once the operational restrictions and costs of joining and annual membership have been worked through.

The council does not generate a net income from its on-street parking activities. Permit Parking Scheme charges contribute to the operating costs performed by the council's parking team, which is also responsible for responding to day to day activities, regulatory functions and potential Pay & Display schemes. However, the current impact of Covid has seen a reduction in demand for some of these other activities, meaning that more resources are currently able to be directed towards progression of potentially viable Permit Parking Schemes.

The upfront costs of design, Legal Adverts and the onsite signing and lining measures can also be a barrier to the viability of Permit Parking Scheme. Recently, this has been overcome by securing developer contributions, such as at:

- Cherry Blossom in Hednesford; and
- A future scheme earmarked for Castle Brickworks in Stafford.

Supplementary Question

I understand that a local resident has not received a response to his application and 12 months have now passed since it was submitted. Can arrangements be made for residents to at least receive an acknowledgement of their application?

Reply

If you would like to send me the details of the application to which you refer I will ensure that the application is acknowledged.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

On average, how long does it take for the County Council Highways design team to design a traffic calming scheme involving speed humps to be paid for out of a County Councillor's Divisional Highway Programme?

Reply

The timescales for the design and delivery of traffic calming schemes vary greatly depending on the complexity of the proposed measures; the impact on the local community and key stakeholders; and the detailed design and construction issues that need to be addressed as part of the scheme delivery.

In general, it is traffic calming feasibility reports that are delivered through a councillor's DHP allocation. Traffic calming scheme costs will invariably exceed a councillor's DHP allocation and can cost many tens of thousands of pounds to design, consult and construct.

A feasibility report to consider traffic calming for an area would typically be completed within the financial year it is requested, normally within 6-12 months. The length of time to produce the feasibility report is determined partly by any site surveys that are required to complete the study, for example traffic surveys, pedestrian surveys, topographical surveys; and also by the level of design team resource available to produce the report. The engineers in the design team work on multiple projects concurrently to deliver the Integrated Transport programme across Staffordshire that is circa £8 million per annum. If the feasibility study recommends traffic calming, recommendations need to be agreed, and funding needs to be sought for the estimated scheme costs.

A typical traffic calming scheme timeframe would be as follows:

- Year 1 – complete a feasibility study and produce a report. Agree which recommended measures to take forward. Seek funding for the proposals.
- Year 2 – once funding is in place, carry out the detailed design of the scheme; consult statutory and key stakeholders, the local community and members of the public; construct the scheme on site. Many simpler, less contentious schemes would be completed in the second year.
- Year 3 – for more complex and contentious schemes - continue with detailed design, consultation and construction processes as required.

Turning specifically to Cllr Atkins's DHP request for a feasibility report into traffic calming on Morley Street, Leek, the request to carry out the study was received by the design team on 11th November 2020. The report and associated drawings have been completed and, if they haven't already, will be issued to Cllr Atkins shortly. In this instance, the study has taken approximately 3 months from the request to the design team to the issuing of the report.

Supplementary Question

I have chased this issue six times since November and have still not received a response. How much is the traffic calming proposal on Morley Street, Leek likely to cost as I need to see whether it can be facilitated from my DHP funding?

Reply

I am sorry to hear that you have not received a response and if you forward copies of your correspondence to me I will ensure that you receive a response in a timely manner.

Cllr Hood asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

My Division has seen an unprecedented crime wave since the beginning of the pandemic culminating with two arson attacks on Friday, January 29th. This has led to many residents expressing their serious concerns to me of feeling unsafe in their own homes and business owners feeling extremely vulnerable. There is considerable pressure on Stone town police officers who are stretched to the limit in tackling crime. They are working all hours and shifts to combat what is happening in the town and their continued hard work is showing results with arrests made.

Can the Cabinet Member please give an update of how Staffordshire Police are dealing with the changing face of crime during this pandemic and could this involve an increase in police officer numbers to give out a clear message that we will not tolerate the activities of the criminal element who have been coming into Stone from other areas to profit during this pandemic?

Reply

Thank you for the question. Following a discussion with Chief Superintendent Jennifer Mattinson, Head of Neighbourhoods and Partnerships at Staffordshire Police, I can provide the following update on how Staffordshire Police are dealing with the changing face of crime during this pandemic and confirmation that police officer numbers in Staffordshire are increasing.

Firstly, it is pleasing to read that the policing of Stone has drawn positive comments. The neighbourhood policing team, alongside other force depts have moved quickly to effectively tackle the recent increases in offences and to ensure the community feels safe.

During the pandemic there have been significant crime reductions across the vast majority of crime types. All crime has reduced by 14.7% meaning there have been 12,155 fewer victims this year. There have been new challenges of course for policing with a significant amount of new legislation related to Covid 19 and the Police have been asked to 'police' activities which ordinarily would not have required any intervention such as gathering with others from your household. It has been a challenge to balance the police response between what has become known as 'the 4 Es' – Engage, Educate, Encourage and Enforce.

The number of officers in Staffordshire Police is increasing as part of the 3 year programme to increase the national number of officers by 20,000 as announced by central government. The policing of Stone or any other community is never the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Policing Team alone. Whilst that team will work with local residents and are our local face of policing, they are able to call upon central resources to assist them when greater resource is needed.

This may be in the form of support from the Police's Tactical Support Team, the Roads Policing Team or the Neighbourhood Tasking Team for example. Superintendent Mattinson has confirmed that the issues that Councillor Hood referred

to in Stone did receive this extra support from police force resources beyond the neighbourhood team.

Supplementary Question

As we are only in February, are you satisfied that this is a true reflection of crime numbers and will a three-year programme of increasing officer numbers be time enough to stop the predatory crimes we are seeing due to lockdown.

Reply

I do feel that the answer you have been given is a robust one. If you wish to understand better the policing arrangements in Stone, may I ask you to speak to Superintendent Mattinson as she has responsibility for those arrangements.

38. Petitions

Uttoxeter Town Master Plan

Cllr Brookes submitted a petition from local residents entitled "Shelve the Master Plan until residents of Uttoxeter and Surrounding Areas have their say".

Chairman

COUNTY COUNCIL – 18 MARCH 2021

Report of the Chairman of the Council

Retiring Members

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform the Council of the names of the Members who will be retiring from the Authority in May 2021.

2. Background

2.1 The following Members have indicated their intention not to seek re-election at the County Council elections in May 2021 and will thus be retiring from the Authority:

- Ben Adams – Elected 2009 – Perrycrofts (Tamworth)
- Ron Clarke – Elected 2011 – Burton Town (East Staffordshire)
- Maureen Compton – Elected 2013 – Stafford Central (Stafford)
- John Cooper – Elected 2017 – Bradwell, Porthill and Wolstanton (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
- Derek Davis – Elected 1985 – Chadsmoor (Cannock Chase)
- Helen Fisher – Elected 2017 – Burntwood South (Lichfield)
- Keith James – Elected 2013 – Perton (South Staffordshire)
- Trevor Johnson – Elected 2017 – May Bank and Cross Heath (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
- Bryan Jones – Elected 2017 – Hednesford and Rawnsley (Cannock Chase)
- Alastair Little – Elected 2017 – Amington (Tamworth)
- Natasha Pullen – Elected 2017 – Lichfield City North (Lichfield)
- Kyle Robinson – Elected 2017 – Talk and Red Street (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
- Martyn Tittley – Elected 2013 – Lichfield Rural West (Lichfield)

3. Recommend

3.1 That the above-mentioned Members be thanked for the valuable contribution they have made to the work of the Authority.

Kath Perry MBE
Chairman of the Council

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. 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 and noted that the number of cases of Covid-19 across the country and in Staffordshire was falling but remained high, placing on-going pressure on the NHS; the vaccination programme was proceeding according to the priority groups defined by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation, with those at highest risk from Covid-19 vaccinated first; most residents of care homes for older people and those aged 80 and above had already received their first dose of the vaccine and the NHS was now focusing on vaccinating frontline health and social care workers who provided care for clinically vulnerable people, as well as those aged 70-79, and individuals who were clinically extremely vulnerable; the next groups to be vaccinated were those aged 65-69 and individuals with a range of underlying health conditions; and the Council and its partners continuing efforts to prevent and control the spread of the virus with more testing being made available for people with and without symptoms.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

2. Staffordshire Means Back to Business: Investing in our Economy

The Cabinet received an update on “Staffordshire Means Back to Business” activity including the following matters:

- UK clothing firm Asos’s decision to build a £90million distribution centre in Staffordshire at Fradley Park, Lichfield, creating 2,000 jobs over the next three years.
- A £48million distribution base for national retailer Pets at Home has been approved in Stafford creating 1,200 jobs.
- Pledges from District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire totalling just under £3M to support the following initiatives:
 - Staffordshire 500, Apprentices Wage Support
 - Nil Cost Training for Employers Top Up Project
 - Small Business “To Thrive” Financial Support
- The Council taking ownership of the former Magistrates building in Stafford which will form part of the Eastgate regeneration scheme.
- The extension of i54 in South Staffordshire and the discussion with a potential investor on the site.
- 158 people signing on to the Staffordshire Start Up Scheme.
- The Council’s new Start-Up Business Loans scheme was now operational.
- The work with the Council’s Destination Management Partners to support the Leisure Tourism and Hospitality sectors.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

3. Climate Change Strategic Development Framework

The Cabinet have approved the Council's proposed Climate Change Strategic Development Framework which sets out, in simple terms, the Authority's approach to the complex challenge of achieving net carbon zero which is a legal requirement set by government in May 2019.

The document provides a refreshed carbon base line for the Authority, measured in 2018/19, so that the scale of the challenge is understood. It is intended that a system is put in place to monitor and report progress on an annual basis.

The framework also sets out the authority's role in influencing both the local and national agenda, working with key stakeholders and ensuring that County Council Members are informed and seen as climate change champions for the community that they serve.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

4. Implementation of the Updated Staffordshire County Council Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy (SEICP)

The Cabinet have approved an updated Education Planning Obligations Policy, now called "Staffordshire Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy" (SEICP) in response to new and revised guidance/legislation. The Policy outlines the Council's approach to assessing the impact of new housing developments on mainstream and early years educational provision and the appropriate mitigation measures.

By updating its contributions policy, the Authority can ensure that it can continue to secure enough mainstream and early years places, as well as securing special education places and home-to-school travel assistance for eligible pupils.

The updated "Staffordshire Education Infrastructure Contributions Policy" will be implemented with effect from 1st March 2021.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

5. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021-26

The Cabinet have approved an updated SEND Strategy 2021-26 which details how the Council and its partners will support the inclusion of all children and young people, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This Strategy builds on the outcomes of the 2018 Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND Inspection and the Written Statement of Action.

The Strategy has been co-produced with key stakeholders including health and education representatives, parents and carers. The draft strategy was also the subject of public consultation, which took place between November 2020 and January 2021, to seek feedback on the proposed vision, priorities and activities by which the Council would shape its work and decisions in relation to SEND over the next five years, and to inform the development of the new strategy.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

6. Staffordshire History Centre: National Lottery Heritage Fund – Round Two Submission

The Cabinet have approved the submission of the round two bid for National Lottery Heritage Funding for the Staffordshire History Centre project which will provide additional storage, release the current QB Archive Outstore and support the Council's Property Strategy. If the bid is successful, the Cabinet have also agreed that that the planned capital investment and project delivery costs of £6.332m for the four-storey extension of the Staffordshire Record Office be approved and that this is added to the Council's capital programme.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

7. Digital First - Update and Plan for the Digital Principle

Digital is fundamental to the way Staffordshire County Council works as an organisation, as well as how it interacts with partners, citizens and communities. As such, digital is one of the four key principles set out in our Strategic Plan 2018-22.

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, digital has become even more critical to how we live, work, and communicate with each other and it is vital that as an organisation the Council continues to review and develop its approach to digital so that every citizen and business can flourish in the digital age.

With this in mind, the Cabinet has approved a new strategy for the digital principle called 'Digital First' which builds on the progress the Council has made with digital so far and sets out how the Authority will become a genuinely digital organisation for the 21st century. The proposed delivery plan for Digital First, features 32 projects. The Plan also includes proposals as to how continuous digital improvement will be embedded across the organisation.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

8. Integrated Performance Report 2020-21 – Quarter 3

The Cabinet have received an overview of the County Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. They were informed that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic remained a huge challenge to the Council's finances.

At the end of Quarter 3, the overall assessment on the Council's performance and financial position was amber. There were £14.5m savings currently classified as Low confidence of delivery, of which £10.3m was due the impact of Covid 19. Savings classed as undelivered were Adult Placement Services Savings of £19,000, Reducing Nursing Care placement costs of £0.2m and Reviewing Enterprise Centres of £50,000. Some savings classified as low confidence included Adult Social Care In House Services, and Reduction in Looked After Children as a result of transformation and property rationalisation.

The latest revenue forecast outturn showed an overspend of £0.587m (0.1%), compared to the overspend of £1.809m (0.3%) at Quarter 2. This was mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

9. Supportive Communities – Update and Delivery Plan 2021/22

The Supportive Communities Programme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2020. Since its 'go live', shortly afterwards, the programme had worked in collaboration with the voluntary sector and adult social care practitioners to support the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic; introduced and embedded Community Help Points; launched multiple online tools to strengthen our digital information, advice and guidance offer; and handed out £203,199 in funding to local community groups to help them to support their communities.

The Cabinet have considered the achievements of the Supportive Communities Programme during 2019/20, including its response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lessons learned. They have also approved the Council's aims and priorities for 2020/21 which include:

- Widening the scope beyond the primary support need of older people to include all adults who contact Staffordshire County Council Adult Social Care.
- Extending focus across the adult social care workforce to encompass all support areas.
- Extending focus to embed this approach within the Council's commissioned providers and wider partnerships.
- To continue to improve the digital and assistive technology offer whilst supporting individuals who are digitally excluded in alternative approaches by improving access.
- To engage and work more collaboratively with communities and voluntary sector partners with a particular focus on working with Parish Councils.
- To underpin all of this with strong partnership arrangements, robust data and insight and effective communication and engagement.

(Cabinet – 17 February 2021)

10. Covid-19 Lockdown Anniversary

It is difficult to believe that in a matter of just days, on March 23, it will be the first anniversary of when the country was placed in national lockdown.

It has been a year that none of us will forget. It has been an incredibly difficult 12 months and so many families and businesses have suffered so much heartbreak and loss.

However, I am also incredibly proud of the hard work our partners and our communities continue to do to help us through this.

With the continuing roll out of the vaccine, we are all at last daring to feel hopeful that the worst is behind us, but whether this is the case is now down to each and every one of us.

As lockdown restrictions are eased even further over the coming months, it is hugely important that we continue to stick to the rules, get vaccinated when eligible and make testing for this virus part of our routine.

We will continue to work with community and faith leaders to ensure information and advice is factual, proportionate and accessible to all.

We remain absolutely committed to focusing on the challenges which still lie ahead whether that be a new variant, localised outbreaks or fluctuating cases and it is our partnership work which will put us in the strongest position to deal with these.

11. Schools

I am sure most parents were delighted to see all children returning back to school this month, not just because of the challenges of home schooling but because our schools in Staffordshire are happy, vibrant places of learning.

Our schools have worked tirelessly to keep their doors open to help parents who are key workers, but have also made sure all our schools were safe for pupils to return.

I would like to thank all school workers who have ensured our children still received the education they need during this pandemic.

12. Hospitality Sector

The tourism, leisure and hospitality sector play a key part in not only helping our economy flourish, but also in employing thousands of Staffordshire people.

This sector has of course, been particularly badly affected during the pandemic and we want to do everything we can to ensure that businesses are able to reopen their doors safely soon.

I would encourage everyone to do what they can to support our local businesses and venues when they reopen and shop and spend leisure time here in the county.

13. Staffordshire Day

Finally, I know we are all incredibly proud of this county and Staffordshire Day is our chance to bang the drum about what a fantastic place it is.

Over the last five years, Staffordshire Day has allowed us to celebrate everything that's great about our county, from our rich heritage and culture to our stunning locations and places to visit.

Being mindful of the pandemic, we have had to be creative about how we mark the day and this year will see the first ever Staffordshire Day Film Competition.

There's huge talent and creativity in our county, and this will give film makers of all levels the chance to get involved and tell their Staffordshire story.

Recommendations to the Council

Audit and Standards Committee

Proposed adoption of new Code of Conduct for Members

The Audit and Standards Committee have recently considered a new Model Code of Conduct for members as produced by the Local Government Association (LGA), with a view to its adoption by this Council. The full report and Appendices are shown as Attachment 1.

This Council's comments to the LGA during the consultation stage are shown in italic/shaded text in the Model Code attached as Appendix 1.

Overall, the new Code is seen as an improvement on Staffordshire's current Code primarily because:

- It applies to the behaviour of members when acting/claiming to act/giving the impression of acting in their capacity as a Councillor and/or representative of their council, or when publicly referring to their role of Councillor or using knowledge that could only be obtained by being a councillor
- It gives clear and concise explanations of each undertaking and the expectations on members
- It clearly states that the whole Code applies to member's actions and behaviour on Social Media

The Audit and Standards Committee particularly discussed:

1. The proposed introduction of the requirement to declare (general) pecuniary interests

This is detailed in paragraphs 7 and 8 of Appendix B to the attached Code. The requirement is to declare interests which either directly relate to or affect the financial interest or well being of relatives and close associates. The Audit and Standards Committee felt that it was unrealistic to expect members to have such detailed knowledge of the personal affairs of so many individuals and therefore recommend that the requirement be limited to *declaring the general (pecuniary) interests of relatives and associates where the interest is known of by the member.*

2. Gifts and Hospitality

The County Councils' current £25 threshold for declaring Gifts and Hospitality was generally agreed to be too low. After discussion, the Audit and Standards Committee voted to recommend the adoption of a £50 threshold, as proposed in the Model Code (paragraph 10 of Appendix 1).

Recommended -That:

(a) approval be given to the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct for members with an amendment to the requirement to declare general (pecuniary) interest of relatives and close associates to refer to those *interests known to the member*; the Code to be effective immediately after the next Staffordshire County Council elections (6 May 2021 or any re-arranged date)

(b) the threshold for the declaration of Gifts and Hospitality be confirmed as £50.

(c) the existing Internal Resolution Procedure and Sanctions be applied to the new Code.

(d) the Director for Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Audit and Standards Committee – Tuesday 09 February 2021

Local Government Association – Model Code of Conduct for Members – Proposed Adoption by Staffordshire County Council

Purpose

- (a) To seek Members' views on the suitability of Local Government Association's Model Councillors Code of Conduct for adoption by Staffordshire County Council
- (b) if the Code is considered suitable, to recommend to full Council on the adoption of the Model with effect from the date of the next County Council elections, and the consequent amendment of the Constitution.

Report of the Director for Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer)

Background

1. In July 2020 I reported to members on a Draft Model Councillors Code of Conduct being consulted on by the Local Government Association (LGA). Members' comments were submitted to the LGA at that time. The LGA has now published its final version of the Code recommending that Councils consider its adoption. A copy is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
2. The development of the new Code has been carried out in compliance with one of the 26 recommendations in the Committee for Standards in Public Life's (CSPL) report on their Review of Ethical Standards in Local Government. Members may recall that this Council acted early to implement a number of those recommendations without waiting for national action or legislation, having recognised the improvements which could be made immediately to the Council's processes particularly around the handling of complaints against members and the declaration of interests.

Model Code of Conduct

3. The copy of the LGA Model Code shown at Appendix 1 includes in italic/shaded text reference to the comments submitted by this Council during the consultation exercise. These are included to provide a reminder of the detailed discussions held at this Committee and the feedback received when the consultation exercise was shared with all elected members. The level of interest by members demonstrated their wish to see improvements to our overall 'Standards Regime' including our Code of Conduct. Many of the comments submitted are reflected in the final version of the LGA Model Code.
4. Overall, the new Model is an improvement on Staffordshire's existing Code as it applies to the behaviours of members beyond when acting in their official capacity,

to now include when they are claiming or giving the impression of acting as a Councillor or publicly referring to their role of Councillor or using information which only a Councillor would be party to. Additionally, the new Code gives clear concise explanations of each undertaking and the expectations on members. A key feature is that it clearly states that the whole Code applies to member's actions and behaviour on Social Media – an issue which this Council has sought to address. The political group leaders have voiced support for the adoption of the new Model in view of the improvements it offers.

5. Whilst the new Model and the emphasis on openness and transparency is welcomed, members' particular attention is drawn to sections 7 and 8 of Appendix B to the Code – relating to the declaration of (general) pecuniary interests. I have concerns about whether it is reasonable to expect members to always know whether an item would relate to the financial interests or well being of individuals whom he/she may not necessarily be in regular, close contact with. Furthermore the member would also be required to distinguish whether the matter 'directly relates' or 'affects' the individuals financial interest or well being. The difficulties which members would experience in identifying links between reports and their family/associates was the gist of the argument which the County Council put forward to the LGA when they originally proposed to widen the scope for declarations of the statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to cover the members family and close associates. It is notable that the LGA have not included this proposal in their final Model Code.
6. Our current Code of Conduct was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and differs from the Model produced at that time by the LGA. Whilst our Code was therefore most suited to this Council's own preferences, it has caused a degree of confusion for those who serve on both the County and a District or Borough Council as those Councils generally adopted the LGA version. Whilst I advocate omission of the section on (general) pecuniary interests, the adoption of the remainder of the Model Code by Staffordshire County Council would contribute to a more consistent approach across the County, and minimise the risk of confusion amongst dual role members which in turn will lessen the risk of members unintentionally breaching the Code of Conduct.

Implementation date for any new Code

7. The LGA's publication of the new Model Code provides for its introduction to coincide with the County Council elections scheduled for 6 May 2021. The initial requirement placed on new members is to sign the Acceptance of Office which incorporates a commitment to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct. The priority training event for all new members is on the Code of Conduct and the standards of behaviour expected of them. If this Committee and full Council decide to adopt a new Code, my Member and Democratic Services Team will work on its development and implementation in time for the forthcoming elections.

Internal Resolution Procedure and Sanctions

8. The LGA's new Model Code does not go on to refer to the Internal Resolution Procedure or the sanctions which accompany it. In December 2019, stemming from

consideration of the CSPL report, as part of the review of this Council's Code of Conduct, both the Standards/Complaints processes and sanctions were updated. Given that recent review it is suggested that both the process and sanctions be applied to any new Code approved by members. Details can be seen at Appendix 2 to this report.

Legal/Risk Implications

9. This report serves to ensure that Staffordshire County Council has a Code of Conduct for members which supports members in fulfilling the expectations of their constituents whilst demonstrating high standards of behaviour and minimising the risk of legal challenge to themselves and/or the Authority.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

10. The proposals in the report do not generate any additional resource implications for the Authority

Climate Change Implications

11. There are no climate change implications arising as a result of this report.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members

Appendix 2 – Staffordshire County Council Standards/Complaints Procedure and Sanctions

Contact Details

Report Author:	Julie Plant
Job Title:	Governance and Support Manager
Telephone No.:	01785 276135
E-Mail Address:	Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk

Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "councillor" means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A "co-opted member" is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority’s requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when:

- you are acting in your capacity as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you are claiming to act as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you are giving the impression that you are acting as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you refer publicly to your role as a councillor or use knowledge you could only obtain in your role as a councillor.*

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.**

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and Parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

***SCC comment at consultation stage: Re Scope of Code:** *SCC supports, to a great extent, the proposal that councillors demonstrate the behaviours set out in the Code when they are publicly acting as, identifying as, and/or giving the impression that they are acting as a councillor, including when representing their council on official business and when using social media?*

****SCC comments at consultation stage:** *The draft Code did not make sufficient reference to the use of social media and therefore fails to address the issue facing most Councils regarding the 'control' of Members' use of Social Media. Reference is limited and under the Civility heading is restricted to the action which a member might take against offensive 'posts' but doesn't refer to the control of their own use of Social Media. In response to last year's CSPL Report on Ethical Standards, Staffordshire added the following to its' Code of Conduct which might serve as a start point for the addition of a section on Use of Social Media in the LGA draft Code:*

'Ensuring that my use of social media is at all times respectful to the audience (both intended and co-incidental) and does not portray the actions or views of either the County Council or me as a member of that Council as offensive, discriminatory, abusive, inflammatory or defamatory. Furthermore, for anything that I publish on social media I will endeavour to remain mindful of the fact that the general public is likely to interpret that material as a reflection of

my views as an elected member rather than a private individual.'

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

*** SCC comment at consultation stage:** *(In response to the original proposal to refer to treating Councillors and members of the public with Civility) We do not support the adoption of the word 'Civility' as we consider it to be less clearly understood/defined amongst the public than the concept of 'Respect' that it is intended to replace. It is quite possible to be offensive during a 'civil' conversation. Equally it is perhaps easier to bring a vexatious complaint about a lack of civility than one about respect.*

Alternative suggested wording: Treating people, including fellow Councillors, officers, organisations and members of the public, respectfully, fairly and impartially in a manner which I would expect and wish to be treated myself. (One of our Members advocates the use of the term 'Common Sense' (noun – good sense and sound judgement in practical matters) as part of a phrase such as 'behaving as Common Sense Dictates' or 'by Using Common Sense At All Times.'

This term covers the individuals total responsibility at all times wherever they are and whatever they may be doing or saying

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

** SCC comment at consultation stage (In response to the ACAS definition of bullying and harassment) The notes to the Draft Code show that the definition is that of ACAS. However, we would query the wide scope of the definition – for example - a complaint from an individual about an e mail that they'd found offensive would be regarded as bullying. How would we determine where the fine line between Respect (Civility) and Bullying had been crossed?*

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them

to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/it's functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.*

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes

undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

***SCC comment at consultation stage:** *Holding the view that the phrase 'bringing the council into disrepute' is not sufficiently clear, we would support its amendment to read : Behaviour that is considered dishonest, deceitful or derogatory.....*

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. *Complying with the Code of Conduct*

As a councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. *Interests*

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and declare my interests.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should declare an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be declared by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or declare a disclosable pecuniary (i.e. financial) interest is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and declaring interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.*

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

***SCC comment at consultation stage:** *The reference to 'may apply to the council for any permission etc....'leaves the member open to challenge if they accept a gift or hospitality without knowing an individual's future intention to apply for a permission etc. As alternative text we would suggest Not accepting significant gifts or hospitality from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the council, or persons that the member might reasonably expect to apply for permission or a licence or other significant advantage.*

**** SCC comment at consultation stage:** *(in response to the original proposal that the threshold be £25) SCC supports a threshold of £50 The current £25 threshold deters members from accepting hospitality from local organisations thus hindering their involvement in community initiatives. The threshold should be a matter for local determination but there should be a requirement to take into account thresholds applied for other public sector positions eg Magistrates*

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B

Registering interests

1. Within 28 days of this Code of Conduct being adopted by the local authority or your election or appointment to office (where that is later) you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) and Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests). Disclosable Pecuniary Interests means issues relating to money and finances.
2. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
3. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor/member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.
4. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Declaring interests

5. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.
6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', again you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.
7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which *directly relates* to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room

unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.*

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which *affects* –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to declare under Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

you must disclose the interest.*

9. Where the matter affects the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest

* **SCC comment at consultation stage:**(In response to the proposed widening of the scope of the requirement to declare interests to include friend/relative/close associate) Members are required to declare the interests of their Partner where they are aware of those interests. The widening of this requirement to family members and associates would be unenforceable as the Member cannot be reasonably expected to be aware of the detailed personal financial/land/business interests of wider family and associates.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her 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 made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the
	councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the 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 and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the 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 the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

Any Body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council;	
Any Body -	(a) exercising functions of a public nature;
	(b) directed to charitable purposes; or
	(c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.	

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

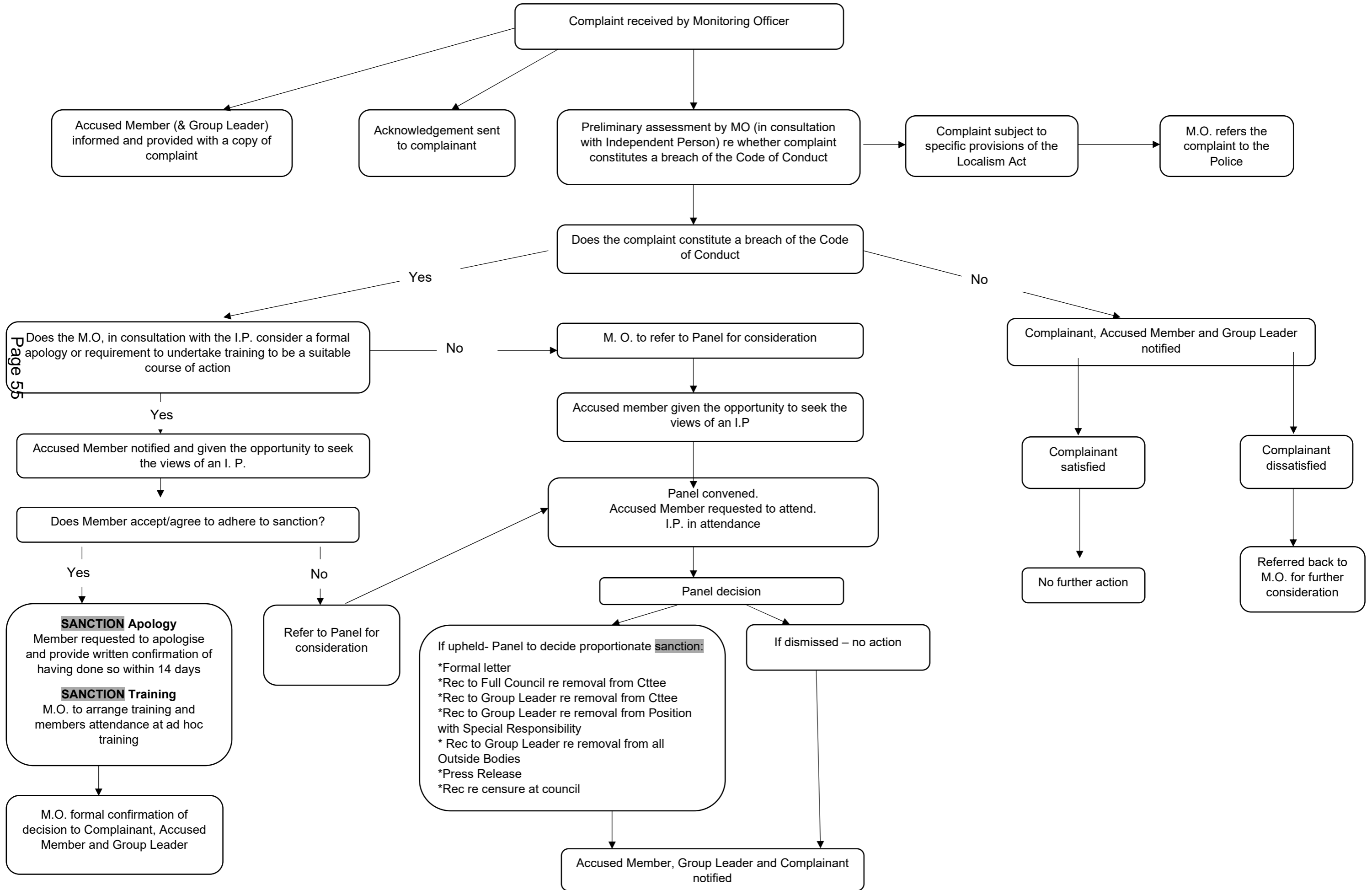
Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Decision Making Procedure under Local Code of Conduct (Approved 19/12/19)



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Recommendations to the Council

Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 - Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011

It is a legal requirement of the Localism Act 2011 for Staffordshire County Council to have a Pay Policy statement. There is also a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 for the local authority to prepare a pay policy statement on an annual basis. A copy of the draft Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 is attached.

The current procedure for special committee (reward and recruitment) in appointing chief officers already involves elected members. It is a published and transparent procedure contained in the Council's constitution. Therefore, the pay policy statement is sufficient to build upon what is already a transparent process, under which elected members are fully accountable.

Nothing in the provisions of the act or guidance supersedes the Council's existing responsibilities and duties placed on the council as an employer under relevant employment legislation.

Recommendation - That Council approves the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/2022.

HR Policy

People Services



Localism Act: Pay Policy Statement

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a pay policy statement for 2012/13 and for each financial year after.

Year: 2021/22

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you, please contact People Services

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Introduction and Purpose

Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit”. This Pay Policy Statement (the ‘statement’) sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement is to increase accountability in relation to payments made to senior employees in the public sector by enabling public scrutiny.

Once approved by the full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

This Pay Policy Statement will aim to cover Staffordshire County Council's policy on the following points:

- the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
- the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of “lowest-paid employees” and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers;
- other specific aspects of chief officers’ remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments and transparency.

The County Council’s Reward Philosophy is:

- To be flexible so as to enable the Council to recruit and retain high quality staff to achieve its business aims.
- To regularly review our reward and recognition arrangements to ensure the Council keep and attract talented people.
- To ensure we are focusing on individual and team contribution and how we recognise performance in a positive and supportive working environment.
- To be fair, open and transparent and ensure we consider the impact of our Reward policies for all employees.

The County Council’s Pay Principles

1. Pay and Grading

- 1.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of employees, the Council will comply with all relevant and current employment legislation. With regards to equal pay the Council ensures that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of its job evaluation mechanism.
- 1.2 The Council, as per the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties & Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, will publish annually a Gender Pay Gap report no later than 30 March annually. This report is a measure of the difference between the average hourly earnings of men and women.
- 1.3 For the majority of its employees the Council’s policy is to implement the pay framework and terms and conditions, unless locally agreed otherwise, prescribed by the National Joint

Council for Local Government Services ('NJC').

- 1.4 The NJC pay framework currently comprises 43 salary points, between spinal column point (SCP) 1 (£17,842 pa) and SCP 43 (£46,845 pa) for a full-time employee (based on a 37 hour week).
- 1.5 In 2019, following consultation with the appropriate representatives of the Green Book Trade Unions, a new collective agreement was reached incorporating the implementation of the new NJC Green Book pay spine and required changes to the Councils pay structure.
- 1.6 The Council has an established pay and grading structure which, when determined, was aligned to median quartile for its chief officers. This pay and grading structure is based on a current 'points to pay' relationship, determined through a job evaluation process, aligned to market rates across the public sector and ensuring value for money.
- 1.7 Other groups of employees are paid in accordance with salaries or salary scales agreed by the relevant national negotiating bodies. These groups include such workers as NHS workers (statutory transfer from Primary Care Trusts), craft workers, the Coroner and those falling within the group of the Soulbury Committee or School Teachers' Pay and Conditions agreements.
- 1.8 The process for the recruitment and appointment of its chief officers is set out in the [Council's Constitution](#) document.
- 1.9 The Council uses an incremental spinal column point progression approach linked to length of service for Grades 1 to 16. Increments are due on 1 April each year, or 6 months after appointment if less than 6 months in the new grade by 1 April, i.e. an increment is paid after 6 months if the employee is appointed between 1 October and 31 March.
- 1.10 The maximum point of each grade is aligned to the public sector market rates. The Council uses this external data and a pay modelling system to determine its grading structure ensuring both alignment and relativity against the market.
- 1.11 As a 'points to pay' relationship already exists for positions within the senior management structure, the provisions of the Single Status Collective Agreement do not apply.
- 1.12 Appointments are usually made to the lowest point of each grade. It is possible from time to time there is a market force/retention rationale that may require consideration when making an appointment. Where necessary, the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources, including affordability, available from within and outside the local government sector.
- 1.13 The Council presently adheres to national pay bargaining in respect of the national pay spine and any annual cost of living increases negotiated in the pay spine. Pay points referred to in this document may be subject to ongoing national pay bargaining and updated pending any agreed pay award.

2 Level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer

For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act as follows:

- (a) *the head of its paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;*
- (b) *its monitoring officer designated under section 5(1) of that Act;*

- (c) a statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(6) of that Act;
- (d) a non-statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(7) of that Act;
- (e) a deputy chief officer mentioned in section 2(8) of that Act.

In relation to this section and specifically sub section (e) the definition of a ‘deputy chief officer’ as per the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 is as follows:

“deputy chief officer” means, subject to the following provisions of this section, a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers.

- 2.1 The Council’s Chief Executive is paid a basic spot salary of £180,000 pa. In addition, there is up to 8.3% available by way of performance related pay which was agreed by Special Committee in December 2014.
- 2.2 The NJC scale is extended locally from SCP44 to SCP67 with JNC Chief Officers being paid on one of two incremental scales/grades (Grade 15: ££72,614 - £78,059 pa or Grade 16: ££86,406 - £90,726pa) agreed by the Council in accordance with independent advice from Hay Management Consultants and is reviewed annually under the JNC for Chief Officers. Single ‘spot’ salaries for chief officers exist outside this range aligned to market rates.
- 2.3 The salary levels of chief officers on appointment have been set by elected members, at the relevant Council committee. The salary details for chief officers can be seen in Appendix 1 and will be updated as and when necessary via the website (www.staffordshire.gov.uk).
- 2.4 Between annual approval of the pay policy statement and in respect of chief officer posts (as defined within S43 of the Localism Act):
 - 2.4.1 In accordance with the constitution, decisions made in relation to the variation in number and/or nature of posts are reserved for the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
 - 2.4.2 Variation(s) in pay must be dealt with in accordance with [Council’s constitution](#).

Relationship between the highest and lowest paid employees

- 3.1 The Council’s definition of its ‘lowest paid’ are employees on Grade 1, SCP 1 who currently receive £17,842 pa, or on a pro-rata basis if they work for less than 37 hours per week. This definition does not include those working as apprentices who are paid in line with the National Minimum Wage guidelines.
- 3.2 The current pay levels within the Council define the multiple¹ between the lowest paid (full time equivalent) employee and the [Chief Executive] as [1:11] and between the lowest paid employee and average chief officer as [1:6]. The multiple between the median (average) full time equivalent earnings and the [Chief Executive] is [1:8] and between the median (average) full time equivalent earnings and average chief officer is [1:4].

4 Performance Related Pay

- 4.1 Some chief officers may be subject to performance related pay in addition to their basic salary. Payment of this element will be linked to agreed performance objectives and measures that are set and reviewed as part of the annual performance review cycle. The outcome is reviewed and agreed annually by way of a remuneration panel. Chief officers

¹ Note – multiple or ratio rounded up or down where applicable

subject to performance related pay are identified in Appendix 1. The mechanism of performance-related pay is currently under review for eligible chief officers.

5 Lease Car Subsidy

5.1 The Council only offers a lease car subsidy or cash alternative for JNC Chief Officers based on a 3 tier approach (Tier 3: £4,395, Tier 2: £5,483 or Tier 1: £8,375 pa). Two options are available to chief officers: either:

- A non pensionable subsidy to the hire of a lease car; or
- A non pensionable cash payment (dependent on the appropriate tier) as an alternative.

Chief officers in receipt of the lease car subsidy or cash alternative are not authorised to claim business mileage.

6 Allowances

6.1 Green Book (NJC) allowances are applied to both NJC and JNC posts.

6.2 On occasion, it may be agreed to pay other allowances to chief officers which will be objectively justified.

7 Honoraria

7.1 All honorarium payments are subject to local arrangements and criteria set out in the Green Book terms and conditions of service and will be objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence, using appropriate data sources, including affordability, available from within and outside the local government sector.

7.2 All honorarium payments must be approved in accordance with the relevant scheme of delegation, and for chief officers as defined in section 2 above, will be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet member responsible for People Services (the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources). All honorariums will be reviewed regularly.

8. Pay Protection

8.1 Employees who are displaced from their substantive post and redeployed to a lower graded role as a result of organisational change or for medical reasons receive pay protection (subject to meeting the eligibility criteria). The period of pay protection is currently three years (Grades 1 to 11) or one year (Grades 12 and above) from the date of the change.

9. Market Supplements

9.1 Market supplements will no longer be part of the Council's pay and reward strategy at this point subject to 1.12 above.

10. Pensions

10.1 All Council employees are entitled to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS is the occupational pension scheme offered by Local Government Employers and other public sector employers such as colleges and academies. Employees are eligible to join LGPS provided they are not entitled to be a member of another Public Sector Scheme such as the Teachers, Police or Fire Pension Scheme. Eligible employees join the Scheme automatically on commencement of their employment provided they are under age 75 and have a contract of more than 3 months.

10.2 Members have the right to leave the Scheme at any time. The benefits and contributions payable are set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. Both employees and employers contribute to the Pension Fund.

10.3 Further details of the employee and employer contribution rates can be found on the Staffordshire Pension Fund Web site:

<http://www.staffspf.org.uk/>

10.4 Employer Contribution Rates

<https://www.staffspf.org.uk/Finance-and-Investments/Actuarial-valuation-report/Actuarial-Valuation-Report.aspx>

10.5 Employee Contribution Rates

<https://www.staffspf.org.uk/Members/New-Members/Joining/How-much-will-it-cost-me.aspx>

11. Payments on Termination

11.1 The Council's approach to (statutory and) discretionary payments on termination of employment of chief officers, prior to reaching normal retirement age, is set out in accordance with regulations five and six of the local government (Early Termination Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, and the Council's policy on increasing an employees total pension scheme membership and on awarding additional pension under Regulations 31 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

11.2 Any other payments falling outside the provisions, or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the full Council or relevant elected members, committee or panel of elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments.

11.3 The Council will implement any proposed government changes to exit payments when they become law, however this may necessitate a review of current Council policies.

12. Publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of chief officers and other employees

12.1 The Council's policy is to provide information on the remuneration of its Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors on its website (www.staffordshire.gov.uk) in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and as required by s.7 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

12.2 The Council, as per 1.2 above, will publish its Gender Pay Gap report no later than 30 March annually. This information will be available at www.staffordshire.gov.uk and also <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/Viewing/search-results>.

Policy Revisions

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
February 2015	Reviewed for 2015/16
February 2016	Reviewed for 2016/17
February 2017	Reviewed for 2017/18
February 2018	Reviewed for 2018/19
February 2019	Reviewed for 2019/20
February 2020	Reviewed for 2020/21
February 2021	Reviewed for 2021/22

Appendix 1 – Chief Officer Remuneration

Service Area	Position	Full Time Equivalent	Annual Salary	Performance Related Pay (per annum) (i)	Honorarium (per annum) (ii)	Other allowances (per annum) (iii)	Lease Car Subsidy Tier (iv)
	Chief Executive	1.00	£180,000	£15,000			1
Corporate Services	Director for Corporate Services	1.00	£146,127				1
Corporate Services	Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets	1.00	£90,726				3
Corporate Services	Assistant Director for Corporate Operations	1.00	£88,566				3
Corporate Services	County Treasurer	1.00	£109,968		£10,997		2
Corporate Services	County Solicitor	1.00	£109,968				2
Corporate Services	Assistant Director for People	1.00	£90,726				3
Corporate Services	Assistant Director for Strategy Public Health and Prevention	1.00	£109,968				2
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills	Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills	1.00	£116,843	£10,854			1
Economy Infrastructure and Skills	Assistant Director for Business and Enterprise	1.00	£90,726				3
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills	Assistant Director for Connectivity and Sustainability	1.00	£90,726				3
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills	Assistant Director for Highways and Built County	1.00	£90,726				3
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills	Assistant Director for Skills and Employability	1.00	£78,059				3
Families and Communities	Director for Families and Communities	1.00	£146,127				1
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Commissioning	1.00	£74,427				3
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Culture, Rural & Safer Communities	1.00	£90,726		£6,804		3
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Early Help, Safeguarding and YOS	1.00	£86,406				3
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Education Strategy and Improvement	1.00	£88,566				3
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Intelligence, Improvement & Development	1.00	£74,427				3
Families and Communities	Assistant Director for Looked After Children and Disability Services	1.00	£90,726				3
Health and Care	Director for Health and Care	1.00	£132,500	£11,262		£13,000	1
Health and Care	Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and Safeguarding	1.00	£109,968				2
Health and Care	Assistant Director for Care Commissioning	1.00	£109,968				2
West Midlands Employers (Hosted by Staffordshire County Council)							
	Chief Executive (WME)	1.00	£90,726				3
Midlands Engine (Hosted by Staffordshire County Council)							
	Executive Director	1.00	£114,448				NA

- (i) Performance related pay is in addition to basic salary and subject to an annual performance review as specified in 4.1.
- (ii) Post holder is temporarily receiving an honorarium for undertaking additional responsibilities which is paid in addition to basic pay and approved as per 7.2.
- (iii) Post holder currently receives a monthly travel and accommodation allowance as per section 6.
- (iv) Car lease cash alternative is paid as a monthly allowance in addition to basic salary as specified in 5.1.

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 meetings on Monday 1 and Monday 15 February 2021, particularly the Commissioners proposed Budgets and Precepts for the Policing and Fire and Rescue Services for 2021/22.

The main items considered on the 1 February were:

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

Details were submitted of one decision published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting:

Joint Emergency Transport (JETS) (Decision no. 202021/003)

<https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/SCPF-D-202021-003.pdf>

Proposed Police and Crime Budget and Precept 2021/22

(NB For each Precept the Commissioner is required to submit his proposals to the Panel. The Panel has the power to veto that Precept if they consider it to be too high or too low. The veto has to be approved by two-thirds of the Panel membership (i.e. 8 of the 12 members). If the veto is exercised, a process set out by Regulation has to be followed for the submission/consideration of alternative proposals).

The Panel considered the Commissioners proposed budget and precept proposals for the **Police and Crime** element of his portfolio for 2021/22. The Home Office Police Grant for Staffordshire had been set at £122.417million, an increase of £7.259million on the previous year. The total policing requirement was £222.051 million. Other sources of funding were from the Police Pension Grant £1.825million; Uplift Ring-fenced grant £1.483million; Revenue Support Grant of £8.423million and Council Tax freeze grant £3.541million; Local Council Tax Support grant £1.365million and a deficit of £200,000 from the Council Tax Collection Fund.

The Commissioner was proposing to part fund the balance from Council Tax funding of £83.197 million proposed increase of 5.99% per annum (£13.48 pa per Band D property). This figure was below the permitted limit of £15.

The Commissioner explained that this was a difficult financial position, with significant uncertainty into the medium term which made planning very challenging. The current Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the tax base and deficits on collection funds from 2020/21.

The Panel noted that the Settlement was for one year only in view of Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and acknowledged the increased level of risk built into the 2021/22 budgets due to uncertainty around future funding.

Members considered the level of debt and level of reserves as detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Programme. There was concern that this may increase in the medium term due in part to the proposed investment in an Operation Hub / Firearms Range. It was explained that this had only been granted outline business case approval at present and a more detailed business case was needed prior to decision, but if granted this may affect borrowing. The Business case to develop an Operation Hub / Firearms Range, was included into the Panels work programme for further scrutiny.

The Governments uplift programme, recruitment of the additional officers, and its financial implications was discussed. The Panel felt that it was important that the public should see an increased visual presence in communities. The number of PCSO's was also challenged as it was felt that their number had reduced recently. It was explained that the type of staffing posts had changed but the number of employees had remained the same. It was also noted that there was an additional 35 members of support staff recruited during 2020/21. The Panel asked to be provided with the numbers of PCSO's, Police Officers and Support Officers employed over the last three years.

The proposed Precept was supported by the Treasury Management, Reserves and Capital Strategies for the Service.

The Panel unanimously agreed to support the 5.99% increase in the Police and Crime Precept for 2022/23. They also asked that the next Commissioner consider ways of demonstrating increased number of officers to the public who feel there is a reduction in their communities.

Other issues discussed at the meeting:

National Conference for Police, Fire and Crime Panels/ National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panel AGM Feedback Report

The Panel received a report from its member and officer representatives at the AGM of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels and the National Conference for Panels, both held virtually on 23-25 November 2020. The keynote speakers included Lord Toby Harris (Co-Chair of the all-party parliamentary group on policing and security); Paddy Tipping (Chair of the Police and Crime Commissions); Yvette Cooper (Chair of Select Committee on Home Affairs); Olivia Pinkney (Chief Constable, Hampshire Police) and Becci Bryant (Chief Fire Officer, Staffordshire).

At its meeting held on the 15 February 2021, the Panels main item of business was the consideration of the **Proposed Fire and Rescue Budget and Precept 2021/22**.

The Panel considered the report which set out the proposed budget and precept proposals for the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2021/22. It was reported that the Settlement Funding for 2021/22 was £14.571million made up of; Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which had been set at £4.777million; Local Business Rates revenue of £3.735million and Business Top up of £6.059million. It was noted that the RSG had reduced by £9million since 2012.

The total budget requirement for the service was £42.404million. The Commissioner was proposing to part fund the balance from Council Tax funding of £27.406 million and proposed an increase of 1.99% per annum (£1.54 pa per Band D property). The Commissioner informed the Panel that this figure was below the permitted limit of 2%.

The Panel also considered the Treasury Management Strategy, the Reserves Strategy update and the Fire Authorities Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 which included the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

The Council Tax surplus/deficit, which would normally show a surplus, was showing a deficit of £602,258 due to the impact of collection fund and the pandemic. The Chief Finance Officer felt that the Local Tax Support Grant would support the reduction at the moment but there was concern over future years. The Panel were also concerned over the Sargeant and McCloud case and the impact on the pension fund long term implications and challenges for the service.

The Panel noted that the Settlement was for one year only in view of Government's Spending Review and felt that this was a challenging financial position which made future planning difficult. The current Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the tax base and deficits on collection funds from 2020/21.

The Panel unanimously approved the proposed precept increase of 1.99% (£1.54 per annum, per household (Band D)).

At the meeting the Panel also discussed the **Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan 2020-2024 update report**

The report provided the Panel with an update on the delivery of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan (SP) and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Safety Plan was designed to underpin the Staffordshire Commissioners Fire and Rescue Plan and four priorities for the Service were determined following consultation across Staffordshire in 2020. Detail on the priorities and the progress to date was contained in the report.

Specific questions were asked on the Princes Trust work which had stopped during the pandemic and also the Cadets scheme. It was planned that both schemes would start again when it was safe to do so. The Safe and Well visits had been reduced during 2020 and the service was being provided through a revised approach using either telephone advice only; telephone advice and smoke alarms dropped off; and

for residents with an immediate threat to life telephone advice and a full safe and week physical visit.

Along with the Safety Plan, the Commissioner presented a **COVID-19 inspection letter from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**. The Inspection was carried out between the 19 and 30 October 2020. It was noted that staff absence had increased by 63% from April to June 2020. Members asked for more information on staff absences during 2020 for both Fire and Police services and if the absence had been due to Covid-19.

The Panel also requested information on the number of high-rise blocks of flats in Staffordshire and the situation was regarding cladding. This information would be provided however, it was confirmed at the meeting that there were no ACM cladding in Staffordshire.

The Panel and the Commissioner expressed their sincere thanks to the Fire and Rescue Service for all their work during the pandemic, particularly the work with the vaccination programme.

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Mandy Pattinson mandy.pattinson@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