

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

Friday 26 February 2021

10:00

Meeting to be conducted using Microsoft Teams - Microsoft Teams

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

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
18 February 2021

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 15 January 2021** (Pages 1 - 6)
4. **HS2 Update - Impact on Staffordshire** (Pages 7 - 10)

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
5. **Update on Return to Schools and School Transport**

Oral update from the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)
6. **Work Programme** (Pages 11 - 16)
7. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“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 Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

nil

8. HWRC Update

(Pages 17 - 20)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters

Committee Membership

Tina Clements (Vice-Chairman)	Ian Parry (Chairman)
Mike Deakin	Kyle Robinson
Keith Flunder	Jessica Shulman
Syed Hussain	David Smith
Ian Lawson	Simon Tagg
Alastair Little	Bernard Williams
Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf	

Note for Members of the Press and Public

Filming of Meetings

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

Recording by Press and Public

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

Scrutiny and Support Manager: Nick Pountney Tel: (01785) 278502

Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2021

Present: Ian Parry (Chairman)

Attendance

Tina Clements (Vice-Chairman)	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Keith Flunder	Kyle Robinson
Syed Hussain	David Smith
Ian Lawson	Simon Tagg
Alastair Little	Bernard Williams

Also in attendance: Philip White and Victoria Wilson

Apologies: None

PART ONE

106. Declarations of Interest

Keith Flunder declared an interest in item 5: Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation – Quarterly Update, as a recipient of grant support.

107. Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 12 November 2020

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

108. Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Future Generations

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities had introduced proposals to protect Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Future Generations to the Select Committee on 12 November and whilst accepting the need for mitigating action to protect the SAC, the select committee, mindful of the frustration of some user groups, had asked the Cabinet Member to look again at the consultation and reconsider whether it had been sufficiently robust and inclusive.

The proposals to protect Cannock Chase SAC from the impacts of increasing recreational pressure associated with housing growth included a car parking plan and a site user plan with improved infrastructure and capacity overall but seeking to reduce recreational pressure in the most sensitive areas whilst increasing capacity in more robust areas.

The Cabinet Member had undertaken her review and met with user groups and concluded that a significant and robust evidence base supported the proposals and provided a strong rationale for the suggested measures. Furthermore, she believed the consultation undertaken by SAC had been robust and inclusive and had helped shape the resulting proposals.

The County Council, in its consideration of the proposals on their land, had made some additional recommendations which further addressed and mitigated concern regarding carparking and with the SAC undertook to facilitate further public engagement as phases of implementation are brought forward.

Members noted that many of the 3m visitors to Cannock Chase came from outside of the county and a small parking charge would be a contribution to Staffordshire's economy. A member commented that there seemed to be more concern about car parking location and charges and less about preserving the ecology of the site. The Cabinet Member confirmed that in the new proposals there would still be 500 free car parking spaces.

A Member asked for assurance that the Cabinet Member had spoken to many groups personally since the November meeting. They remained concerned that the consultation process had not been inclusive, that some had found it to be confusing and misleading which could account for the poor participation rate. Furthermore, they were concerned about vulnerable use groups – those with sensory impairment for example – who were worried about the proposed car parking arrangements. The Cabinet Member assured members that she had had conversations with and listened to many interested parties and individuals via various media and was confident that there was support for her proposals. She reminded members that the SAC had conducted the consultation, not the County Council and that she was keen to engage further with people with disabilities over specific provision for them.

Another Member shared concern about the original consultation and urged the Cabinet Member to harness the energy of some user groups and involve them in implementing the proposals and that she should encourage and involve voluntary groups of interested people in the process.

Members accepted it was a difficult balance to protect the SAC whilst maintaining access to the country park for people to enjoy and that ensuring consultation reached the right people was difficult. The Cabinet Member reminded members that this was a 10-15 year plan with opportunities for public engagement along the way.

RESOLVED - That the Select Committee note the further consultation which had taken place into proposals to protect Cannock Chase SAC from the impacts of increasing recreational pressure and mindful of continuing concern of some user groups and support for the proposals from others, agree that a significant and robust evidence base supported the proposals and that their views should be fed back to Cabinet

109. Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation - Quarterly Update

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills outlined progress made against the Staffordshire Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy.

He acknowledged that despite the challenge of a third lockdown, the UK economy had shrunk by 2.5% - much less than economists had predicted. Furthermore, the EU trade deal struck before Christmas had ensured a smooth transition to Brexit, avoided interruption in trade and finally the continued roll out of the vaccination programme was cause for optimism. The Strategy had been considered by the Select Committee in June 2020 at which time the impact of the pandemic on the economy was unclear and that remained the case.

The Strategy and associated delivery plans were flexible enough to respond to whatever situation became a reality over the coming months. 'Live' assessments informed the development of the strategy and of interventions/projects/programmes. The Council continued to produce a new Economic Bulletin on a monthly basis.

Over all the proportion of working age Staffordshire residents on one of the Government support schemes was estimated to be just over 15%, slightly lower than the national average. The claimant count rate was also relatively low in Staffordshire (4.8%) compared to regionally (7.3%) and nationally (6.3%), however, it was young people, the lowest paid and part time workers who continued to feel the impact of the economic shock the most. The Cabinet Member highlighted youth unemployment as of particular concern and he outlined some schemes targeting this, including the Kickstart scheme now rolled out into Staffordshire.

Although unemployment and those claiming benefits had recently declined there remained a considerable number of employees furloughed within the county (27,000 – 7% of the eligible population and in-line with the national figure). The Cabinet Member identified as a real positive, a significant uplift in recruitment with job vacancies in Staffordshire increasing by 15% between September and October.

The Cabinet Member outlined a number of interventions directly undertaken by the County Council supporting businesses and individuals. These included the new £0.360m small Business Start-up scheme which had supported 125 applicants so far and a Partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the county council and all District and Borough Councils providing back office support to very small employers.

A county wide Redundancy Taskforce had proved invaluable and had become a partnership of 24 organisations to support the co-ordination of services to help to redeploy, retrain, reskill, upskill and signpost people to new employment opportunities. Schemes for young people included Ignite your Entrepreneur which delivered in an engaging and interactive way through an online platform, dedicated resources and ongoing professional support.

The Cabinet Member accepted that this was a time of huge challenge nationally and locally but the County Council were playing their part in supporting businesses and shaping the way forward.

A Member asked why Staffordshire seemed more resilient in terms of job creation/retention. The Cabinet Member believed Staffordshire had a good long term track record of low unemployment and with support, determined to retain staff wherever possible. The Cabinet Member shared members concern regarding the hospitality, retail and tourism sectors which had been most adversely affected.

A Member acknowledged the importance of revitalising the high street in the recovery plans. The Cabinet Member agreed the importance of the retail sector that could not transfer to online and work was underway to support it. Reinvesting in high streets was an important element of recovery and £50m of investment had been announced for Newcastle and Tamworth town centre regeneration. He acknowledged the need for all town centres to benefit and recognised it as a considerable and ongoing workstream. He agreed that high streets needed to be innovative to offer an alternative experience to online shopping.

A Member alluded the county's core strategy which had centred on bringing high skilled, well paid jobs to Staffordshire and he asked if this remained the focus? The Cabinet Member agreed the important relationship between skill set and the future economy of the county and offered this as a theme for a future select committee. The focus had concerned improving the skills of the workforce and it continued to be important to ensure schools, colleges and universities performing well in terms of producing the skill sets required but also in retraining and reskilling the working population. He assured members that the drive remained to get more young people achieving level three or ideally, level four qualifications. The County Councils Open Door scheme offered work placements for young people with a particular focus on care leavers.

In response to a question about the changes of a third lockdown, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that despite the fast changing environment, the strategy was a reference point in terms of where we need to be and what we are accountable for. The challenge of lockdown had brought further funding opportunities. Cabinet were working hard to best utilise further funding announced in November to compliment what was already underway. A further 500 new apprenticeships would be able to be supported in partnership with the District and Borough Councils. The Cabinet Member assured the select committee he was constantly adapting and seizing new opportunities.

Members shared their concern about behaviour changes forced on through lockdowns – will confidence return sufficiently for people to visit hospitality venues. It was understood Government were considering appointing a Minister for Hospitality to support and restore the sector. The Cabinet Member agreed the hospitality sector required a focus across all tiers of government.

A Member believed the country to be resilient but acknowledged businesses needed to be flexible and innovative in terms of meeting emerging need.

In terms of behavioural science, the Cabinet Member was asked to what extent he recognised it as an issue. He agreed the importance of understanding any trends locally and nationally and as thoughts are turned to the future, local intelligence will be key to investing in the right areas.

Regarding business preparedness for the Brexit transition, the Cabinet Member said that despite some minor challenges, overall it had worked out well. He regretted the two years of uncertainty prior to the trade deal and acknowledged that what businesses most need regardless of Brexit or the pandemic, is stability and certainty.

RESOLVED - That (a) the Select Committee note the quarterly update provided on progress made against the Staffordshire Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy and note the interventions already made by the County Council and partner organisations,

(b) request the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to continue to update the Select Committee on delivery of the Strategy every three months and

(c) the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills bring a report to the Select Committee on the relationship between training and skills and the future Staffordshire economy

110. Work Programme

The Select Committee agreed to include an item on the relationship between training and skills and the future Staffordshire economy in their work programme. They agreed that considering items on schools was not timely during periods of national lockdown and that such items should be postponed. The Select Committee requested an item on the work undertaken by the All Party Member Working Group on Future Economy and Enterprise, chaired by Simon Tagg, and any response to that groups report.

RESOLVED - That changes to the Select Committee's work programme be agreed.

Chairman

Local Members Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – Friday 26 February 2021

HS2 Update - Impacts on Staffordshire

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Acknowledge the work undertaken to secure economic mitigation in Staffordshire to date.
- b. Select any areas of interest from the topics listed below that they wish to be reported regularly to this select committee.

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

1. Information on the economic impacts of HS2 in Staffordshire has been requested by this select committee. This report presents the various areas which may be covered by this heading in the context of the committee, and requests that Members select any topic areas they wish to be reported regularly to this committee.
2. The County Council does not support HS2, and acknowledges the significant human impact of the scheme on our residents and communities. We remain focused on getting the best deal for Staffordshire in terms of mitigation, compensation for residents, improved connectivity and economic benefits (the latter being the remit of this report). We will retain this focus throughout construction, undertaking our statutory role to minimise impacts wherever possible and ensuring that commitments made during the parliamentary process are delivered.

Report

Background

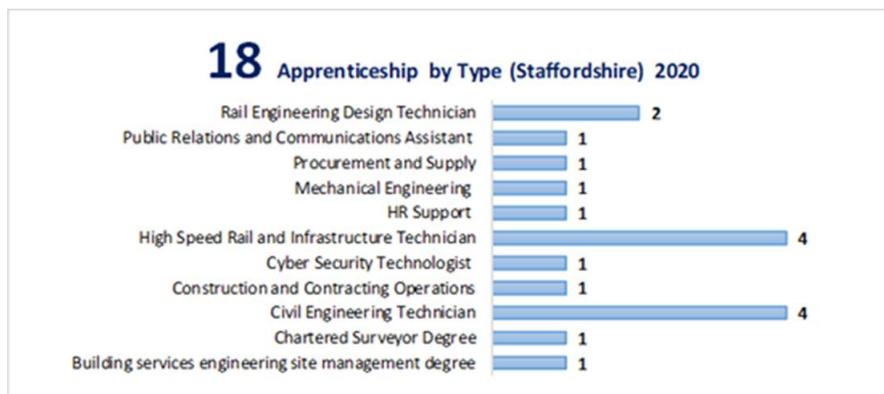
3. Some of the impacts of HS2 on Staffordshire, both positive and negative, where further detail could be provided on a regular basis are as follows (expanded from the pre committee meeting briefing note with examples where available):

Positive impacts:

4. Following petitioning by the County Council during the parliamentary process for Phase One, followed by extensive lobbying, the Handsacre link will be constructed,

with potential large scale development in Stafford coming on that back of that. Stafford will benefit from a high speed service to key cities around the country, including London in less than an hour. Information on growth linked to Stafford's high speed service could be provided in liaison with the Assistant Director for Business and Enterprise.

5. HS2 Ltd.'s commitments to use local suppliers, materials and labour in Staffordshire where possible. A desktop map of the HS2 supply chain can be viewed at: [HS2 supply chain map - desktop | High Speed 2](#)
6. Spending in local communities by the HS2 workforce (this cannot be quantified in terms of £ spent, but approximate information can be provided on the type and scale of spending). HS2 Ltd have been asked to collate this information and provide to the HS2 Project Manager on a quarterly basis.
7. There is potential for delivery of HS2 highway works through the I+ partnership, which could generate income for SCC, which the authority may then choose to reinvest back into services. This could be quantified by contract value.
8. Apprenticeships and local jobs generated. An example of what this would look like is provided here. The data show new apprenticeship starts within HS2 (HS2 Ltd and supply chain) who have postcodes in the Staffordshire area. Members are advised that these are the only apprentice data that HS2 Ltd. holds postcode information on. Also, individuals already on an apprenticeship at the time of a contractor's mobilisation onto HS2 are not included, as postcode data are not collected for these individuals. The information provided is for Phase One, from Royal Assent (April 2017) up to and including Quarter 3, 2020/21. As some postcode data are not reported, a margin of plus/minus 2% should be applied to allow for this exception.



9. Details of Community Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF) monies awarded in Staffordshire can be provided on demand. These can be viewed at:

<https://hs2funds.org.uk/home/projects-funded-by-hs2-funds/>

Negative impacts:

10. Disruption to drivers on the road network during construction. The authority has successfully petitioned for a range of mitigation, but clearly there will still be an impact. However, we have secured a range of permanent schemes and improvements to offset this. A range of data could be provided here including details of the schemes secured, with more detail available as design progresses, or complaints received by HS2 Ltd.'s helpdesk.
11. Disruption to individuals and local communities during construction noise. This information could be provided through analysis of complaints received, as detailed by the monthly helpdesk reports sent to the HS2 Project Manager by HS2 Ltd.
12. Loss of environmental habitats. This can be described using the HS2 environmental statement, but it would not be possible to quantify economic impact (on tourism for example).

Link to Strategic Plan

13. Help Staffordshire's economy to grow and generate more good jobs.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

14. Not applicable.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

[HS2 supply chain map - desktop | High Speed 2](#)

Contact Details

Assistant Director:	James Bailey, Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County
Report Author:	Sarah Mallen
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WORK PROGRAMME – February 2021

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

This document sets out the work programme for the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee for 2020/21.

The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee is responsible for scrutiny of highways infrastructure and connectivity, flood and water management, education, learning and skills. As such the statutory education co-optees will sit on this committee. The Work Programme is linked to the Vision, Outcomes and Priorities detailed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

We review our work programme at every meeting. Sometimes we change it - if something important comes up during the year that we think we should investigate as a priority. Our work results in recommendations for the County Council and other organisations about how what they do can be improved, for the benefit of the people and communities of Staffordshire.

County Councillor Ian Parry

Chairman of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please contact Nick Pountney - Scrutiny and Support Manager 01785 276153 or by emailing nicholas.pountney@staffordshire.gov.uk

Work Programme 2020/21

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Information/Action/Outcome from meeting
18 June 2020 Teams meeting	Covid-19 effects on Further Education Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Anthony Baines	FE Principle invited	
	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy Cabinet Member: Mark Winnington/Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyres	LEP Chairman invited	
24 July 2020 Teams meeting	Community Learning Service – Outcomes from Investment Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Amanda Darlington		Comments outlined by Members fed back into future Community Learning offers
	Covid-19 school update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Tim Moss	Verbal report – School Heads invited to attend	Noted – further update requested in November (Inc. transport)
17 September 2020	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation- quarterly update. Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyres	Requested at triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommends the Cabinet Member to continue to explore further interventions to enable the successful delivery of the Strategy, and, • request relevant Cabinet Members bring updates on delivery of the strategy to this Select Committee for scrutiny every 3 months.
	Performance of the Highways Contract to include PFI Street Lighting (new item) and pot hole repair. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officer: James Bailey	Six month update plus information on pot hole repairs	That that the Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County share location specific information regarding the roll out of LED street lighting.
	Flood Management -	Raised by the Chairman and Vice Chairs	Noted and copy of slides requested

	Cabinet Member: David Williams/Julia Jessel Lead Officer: David Walters/James Bailey/Jamie Cooper		
12 November 2020	Staffordshire Air Quality Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officer: Clive Thomson/Louise Clayton /Nick Dawson	Pre decision scrutiny. Subject to Gov. approval of Business case	That the Select Committee was satisfied that the business case had been properly prepared and due process had taken place
	Cannock Chase SAC mitigation plans. Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officer: Sarah Bentley	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	(a) the Select Committee accept the need for mitigating action to protect the SAC but mindful of the frustration of user groups, ask the Cabinet Member to look again at the consultation which has taken place (by the SAC) and reconsider whether it was sufficiently robust and inclusive, particularly regarding car parking, (b) The Cabinet Member report back to the Select Committee in the New Year.
	Household Waste Contract Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Clive Thomson	Pre decision scrutiny.	That the Select Committee supports the approach of the Cabinet Member looking to re-procure the Household Waste Recycling Centre Contract and request that he return with proposals in the New Year
	SEND Strategy Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officer: Laura Beaumont	Pre decision scrutiny. Invite SEND Working Group to the meeting	That the Select Committee's feedback on the draft Strategies – appreciated by the Cabinet Member would be taken on board
15 January 2021	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation- quarterly update. Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyres	Requested at triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	
	Cannock Chase SAC mitigation plans Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officer: Sarah Bentley	Update on recommendation made 12 November 2020	

26 February 2021	HS2 update – impact on Staffordshire. Cabinet Member: Lead Officers: Darryl Eyres		
	Household Waste Contract Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Clive Thomson	Pre decision scrutiny.	Requested at 12 November meeting
	Update on Return to Schools Inc. school transport. Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officer: Tim Moss	Requested at July meeting. Invite Headteachers (July meeting) Verbal Update 21 February 2021	Moved to February to allow for a full term's information to be gathered.
15 April 2021	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation- quarterly update. Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyres	Requested at triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	
	LCWIP (cycling and walking) – link to the active travel/sustainable travel to school. To include information on Live Labs Cabinet Member: Julia Jessel/J Price/ D Williams Lead Officer: Clive Thomson/Louise Clayton /Nick Dawson		Moved from February to allow for other business.
Additional Items for Discussion			
Briefing note requested	Superfast Broadband Cabinet Member: Mark Winnington Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/Paul Chatwin		Briefing note with reference to map that Members can access that details coverage. Emailed 7/12/20
Briefing note requested	Entrust - Progress Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Ian Turner	Initial contract runs from 1.8.19 – 31.7.20, with option to extend for a further 3 years. Update on contract; contract performance. Impact of change in local authority expectations.	Agreed at 17 September meeting to defer to Corporate Review Select Committee. Take off work programme.
To be advised	Local Industrial Strategy/Strategic Infrastructure Plan Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/Mark Parkinson	Item agreed at the Triangulation Meeting on 30 October 2019.	

To be advised	Apprenticeship funding/ Decentralisation Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Anthony Baines	Requested at triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	This has been requested by Corporate Review Committee. Information to be sent to Prosperous committee for information
To be advised	Digital Strategy/ Roll out of infrastructure (separate items) Cabinet Member: Julia Jessel Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/Paul Chatwin	Requested at triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	Possible Corporate Review item. Needs to be agreed which committee. Potential item Corporate Review March 2021
To be advised	Delivering Housing in Staffordshire Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/ Mark Parkinson/Matthew Shufflebotham	Aspire Housing and Homes England	Was due to be considered in November but Agenda too busy. Nothing to report at the moment.
To be advised	The relationship between training and skills and the future Staffordshire economy Cabinet Member :Philip White Lead Officer:	Raised at Committee meeting 15 January 2021	Potential item 15 April 2021
To be advised	Future Economy and Enterprise - All Party Member Working Group	Raised at Committee meeting 15 January 2021	

Working Groups

SEND Working Group Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Tim Moss	Next meeting 27 July 2020	Three representatives of the Committee will participate in a Working Group to consider the Joint local area SEND inspection in Staffordshire and draft action plan. The Group meets regularly.	Invited to 12 November meeting for SEND Strategy.
Community Transport and the Supported Bus Network Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Clive Thomson	An Inquiry Day is to be held in April 2020.	The Committee agreed to monitor the impact of the removal of bus subsidies going forward. The Leader of the Opposition also requested that a report come back to the Committee on benchmarking with other local authorities. To include issues in respect of public transport and changes to the Your Staffordshire Card Scheme.	
How Well are Small and Medium Sized Businesses Supported? Cabinet Member: Philip White Officer: Anthony Baines	An Inquiry Day is to be held.	Agreed at the Triangulation Meeting on 30 October 2019. Discussed at Triangulation meeting 15 July 2020.	

Membership

Ian Parry (Chairman)
Tina Clements (Vice Chairman)
Kyle Robinson (Vice Chairman)
Keith Flunder
Syed Hussain
Ian Lawson
Alisair Little
David Smith
Simon Tagg
Bernard Williams
Mike Deakin (Co-optee)
Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf (Co-optee)
Jessica Shulman (Co-optee)

Calendar of Committee Meetings – Venue to be notified.

18 June 2020
24 July 2020
17 September 2020
12 November 2020
15 January 2021
26 February 2021
15 April 2021

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of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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