

COUNCIL AGENDA

To:- The Members of the Staffordshire County Council

Notice is given that the meeting of the Staffordshire County Council will be held in the Council Chamber, County Buildings at 10:00 am on Thursday, 14 October 2021 to deal with the matters set out on the agenda.

John Henderson
Chief Executive
6 October 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 22 July 2021 (Pages 5 - 26)**
4. **Chairman's Correspondence**

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

5. **Statement of the Leader of the Council (Pages 27 - 34)**

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

6. **Change to the Constitution - Number of Questions by Members at Full Council (Pages 35 - 36)**

7. **Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 37 - 54)**

8. **Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel (Pages 55 - 60)**

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

Note for Members of the Press and Public

Filming of Meetings

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

Recording by Press and Public

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

NOTICES FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Questions

- 1.1. Questions must be addressed to the Chairman, or to the Leader of the Council or to a Portfolio Holder or to the Chairman of a Committee. Notice in writing of any question must be emailed to the office of the Director of Corporate Services (michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk) by no later than 1:00 pm on the third working day preceding the Council Meeting i.e. **by not later than 1:00 pm on Monday, 10 October 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, 4 October 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 9 December 2021 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 29 November 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 interest known to the Member or relatives and close associates 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 22 July 2021

Attendance

Jak Abrahams	Derrick Huckfield	Jonathan Price
Arshad Afsar	Philip Hudson	David Smith
Charlotte Atkins	Graham Hutton	Paul Snape
Gill Burnett	Thomas Jay	Mike Sutherland
Tina Clements	Julia Jessel	Mark Sutton
Richard Cox	Jason Jones	Stephen Sweeney
Mike Davies	Peter Kruskonjic	Simon Tagg
Mark Deaville	Ian Lawson	Samantha Thompson
Janet Eagland	Tom Loughbrough-Rudd	Ross Ward
Ann Edgeller	Johnny McMahon	Jill Waring
Keith Flunder	Paul Northcott	Alan White
Richard Ford	Jeremy Oates	Mike Wilcox
Colin Greatorex	Gillian Pardesi	Bernard Williams
Philippa Haden	Ian Parry	David Williams
Gill Heath	Kath Perry, MBE	Victoria Wilson
Phil Hewitt	Jeremy Pert	Mark Winnington
Jill Hood	Bernard Peters	Mike Worthington

Apologies for absence: Philip Atkins, OBE, John Francis, Syed Hussain, Robert Pritchard, James Salisbury, Janice Silvester-Hall, Bob Spencer, Carolyn Trowbridge, Philip White, Conor Wileman and Ian Wilkes.

PART ONE

18. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 May 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 20 May 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

19. Chairman's Correspondence

Staffordshire residents recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

The Chairman extended the Council's congratulations to the following Staffordshire residents who had been honoured in her Majesty the Queen's Birthday Honours:

- CBE for Amanda Penelope Sunderland, of Burton, formerly Chief Nurse of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, for services to Nursing;
- OBE for Margaret Isobel Bernadette Kincade, of Stafford, tax specialist for HM Revenue & Customs, for services to the taxation of the oil industry;
- OBE for Jayne Lowe, of Caverswall, Managing Director and Education Advisor, Bright Green Learning, for services to Education;
- MBE for Dr John Alexander, of Loggerheads, Consultant in paediatric intensive care at UHNM NHS Trust, for services to critically ill children and young people;

- MBE for Corrine Boden, of Stoke-on-Trent, for services to the community in Stoke-on-Trent, particularly during Covid-19;
- MBE for Barry Michael Bond, of Wombourne, Chair of Governors at Green Park School in Wolverhampton, for services to Education;
- MBE for Julia Catherine Bridgewater, of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Group Chief Operating Officer at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, for services to the NHS, particularly during Covid-19;
- MBE for Zoe Adelle Clark-Coates, of Tamworth, Founder of the Mariposa Trust, for services to the baby loss community and the improvement of bereavement care;
- MBE for Neil Anthony Dawson, of Stoke-on-Trent, for services to the community in Stoke-on-Trent;
- MBE for Aida Haughton, of Stoke-on-Trent, Housing Support Administrator at YMCA North Staffordshire, for services to 'Remembering Srebrenica';
- MBE for Eric Horabin, of Tamworth, Member of, and Poppy Appeal Collector for, the Tamworth Branch of the Royal British Legion, for services to the Ex-Services community;
- MBE for Karl Humphries, of Newcastle-under-Lyme, of Get Hooked on Fishing, for services to Education;
- MBE for Tracey Maria Johnson, of Stoke-on-Trent, formerly HR director at Leek United Building Society, for services to Financial Services during Covid-19;
- MBE for Josepha (Josie) Hannah Morris, of Stoke-on-Trent, Managing Director of Woolcool, for services to manufacturing and the Environment;
- MBE for Ian Andrew Noons, of Yarnfield, Custodial Manager at HM YOI Drake Hall, for services to HM Prison and Probation Service;
- MBE for Alan Pearson, of Hednesford, Headteacher of New Invention Junior School, Walsall, for services to Education;
- MBE for Siobhan Reilly, of Bishops Offley, Regional Chief Nurse, Midlands and East NHS England & NHS Improvement, for services to Nursing and the Covid-19 response;
- MBE for Rebecca Rollason, of Cheslyn Hay, Resourcing Manager for the vaccines taskforce at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for services to the Government during the Covid-19 response;
- MBE for Clifford John Thornton Stott, of Keele, Professor of Social Psychology at Keele University, for services to Crowd Psychology and the Covid-19 response;
- BEM for former County Councillor Lee Bates, of Tamworth, for services to the community in Tamworth and Covid-19 response projects;
- BEM for Councillor Paul Brindley, of Tamworth, for services to the community in Tamworth and Covid-19 response projects;
- BEM for Hannah Findlay, of Biddulph, front line food retail worker for the Co-operative Group, for services to the food supply chain;
- BEM for Janet Hewes, of Gnosall, for services to the community in Gnosall.

Tokyo Olympics

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman extended his best wishes to all the Staffordshire competitors taking part in the Tokyo Olympics, which were to get

underway on 23 July, and at the Paralympics next month. He informed the Council that first to go for Gold at the weekend would be swimming superstar Adam Peaty, who would be the first British swimmer to defend his Olympic title. The GB team would also include Burton boxer Frazer Clarke, Stone Canoeist Adam Burgess and Porthill Triple Jumper Ben Williams.

20. 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.

Update from COVID-19 Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board

(Paragraph 1 of the Statement)

Cllr Smith enquired as to the take-up rates of the Covid vaccine amongst the 18 - 29 age group and also the number of people in Staffordshire currently in hospital with the virus. In response, Cllr McMahon indicated that 40% of those in the 18 – 29 age group in Staffordshire had received two doses of the vaccine and 60% had received one dose. With regard to hospital admissions, Cllr McMahon indicated that rates in Staffordshire were much lower than seen previously.

Cllr Pert referred to the announcement in the Queen's Birthday Honours List that the NHS had been awarded the George Cross in recognition of 73 years of dedicated service, including for the courageous efforts of healthcare workers across the country battling the Covid-19 pandemic. He asked whether the Leader of the Council would, on behalf of residents of the County, write to the leaders of the NHS in Staffordshire to congratulate them on the Award? In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that he would be happy for the Council to do so and that he would ask Cllr Jessel and Cllr McMahon to draft an appropriate letter.

Cllr Afsar and Cllr Greatorex referred to the hesitancy shown by some communities and age groups in getting vaccinated against Covid. Cllr Afsar added that local councils had a vital role to play in tackling this issue and asked the Leader of the Council whether he agreed that community involvement was critical in encouraging people to come forward and get vaccinated at the earliest opportunity? In response, Cllr Alan White stated that he agreed with Cllr Afsar about the importance of community involvement and, by way of example, he referred to the leadership shown by Cllr Hussain in supporting his local community in Burton throughout the pandemic.

Cllr Pardesi enquired whether the award of the George Cross would help NHS workers' pay their bills? In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that he was sure that the last thing on NHS workers minds during the pandemic was "pay and rations" but doing the right thing for their fellow human beings.

Cllr Hutton extended his congratulations to the Council and its staff for the contribution they had made during the Covid pandemic as they had played a major role in helping to reduce hospital admissions. Cllr Jessel also paid tribute to Cllr McMahon for the leadership he had shown. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that the Council's senior leadership recognised the valuable contribution made by the Council's staff during the pandemic and had decided to recognise their efforts by awarding them a day

off on their birthday and also sending to every employee a “thank you” card containing wild flower seeds.

Cllr Jessel also referred to the need for parents to ensure that their children were vaccinated against other illnesses such as measles, mumps and rubella as take-up rates had fallen during the Covid pandemic.

Cllr Flunder and Cllr Deaville referred to the rapid response by the NHS and volunteers to the recent Covid outbreak in Leek and they also praised the on-going contributions made by Cllr McMahon and Dr Richard Harling.

Cllr Hood enquired as to whether it would be possible to have a vaccination centre in Stone as the town had a population of around 20,000 people and the nearest centre was eight miles away. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that he had asked Cllr Jessel and Cllr McMahon to write to the NHS to enquire whether it would be possible to have a vaccination centre located in Stone.

In concluding, Cllr Alan White indicated that Covid had not gone away and he encouraged all Staffordshire residents to get vaccinated.

Staffordshire Means Back to Business – Oral Update

(Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

Cllr Winnington referred to the economic impact of the Covid pandemic on some groups, particularly women and young people; issues with supply chain for a number of materials businesses required; and also how inflation was impacting on local businesses. He praised the work of the County Council for the measures it had implemented to support the local economy such as through loans, apprenticeships and training. He also asked Cabinet to lobby Members of Parliament to work with businesses to find out what support they required.

Cllr Afsar referred to the job vacancy figures which increased by 9% in Staffordshire between April and May, equivalent to 2,100 more job vacancies, and enquired as to in which sectors those vacancies occurred. He also asked for an update on the Council’s apprenticeships scheme. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that he did not have the information to hand and that he would therefore ask Cllr Philip White to respond in writing. Cllr Huckfield added that the apprenticeships scheme was a great initiative, an excellent opportunity for young people to learn new skills, and a means to tackle the skills gap.

Cllr Hudson and Cllr Deaville stated that they welcomed the support that the Government and the County Council had given, and continued to give, to the hospitality sector during the Covid pandemic. Cllr Hudson added that he would encourage Staffordshire residents to support local businesses.

Cllr Sutherland referred to the growing level of confidence by some businesses such as JCB (who had recently announced that they had a full order book) and the new Designer Outlet Centre in Cannock, (the McArthurGlen Group’s 7th designer outlet in the UK). Cllr Northcott also referred to the success of the new Skills Hub in Newcastle-under-Lyme which was working closely with local businesses.

Executive Responses for All Party Working Groups

(Paragraph 3 of the Statement)

Cllr Tagg stated that he was pleased that the Cabinet had accepted, and were acting upon, the recommendations of the two All Party Working Groups (APWGs) and added that he would be presenting the final reports and Executive Responses of the Aspiration, Future Economy and Enterprise APWG to the meeting of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 July.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to whether there were proposals to establish any further APWGs and, if so, would Members be consulted on their terms of reference. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that, going forward, the “forward look” work of the APWGs would be undertaken by the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Cllr Flunder extended his thanks to those Members, officers and organisations who had participated in the work of the Communities and Isolation APWG.

Final Financial Outturn 2020/21

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to, bearing in mind the vital role played by Public Health during the pandemic, whether the Council had any plans to increase the allocation in its budget to support the provision of public health services. In response, Cllr Alan White indicated that additional funding would be allocated to support the provision of sexual health and drug and alcohol services in the County.

Cllr Greatorex and Cllr Sutherland commended the performance of the Council and its staff in achieving a saving of £1.924m on the 2020/21 budget despite the additional financial pressures due to Covid. In response, Cllr Parry paid tribute to the leadership shown by Cllr Sutherland during the time he served on the Cabinet as the Cabinet Member for Finance. He also spoke about the speed with which the Council had adapted to new ways of working during the pandemic including the move to “digital” whilst ensuring that vital services continued to be delivered.

National Bus Strategy – Enhanced Partnership

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Cllr Edgeller expressed her thanks to the Chaserider Bus Company in responding to local concerns by expanding its services to the Baswich and Wildwood areas of Stafford.

Cllr Cox and Cllr Charlotte Atkins indicated that they welcomed the “Bus Back Better” strategy and hoped it would tackle the transport issues faced by rural communities in particular. Cllr Atkins added that she hoped that the Council would take this opportunity to work in partnership with the bus operators across the County to find innovative solutions to the various issues which needed to be tackled.

Cllr Smith stated that the Council needed to take action to encourage bus operators to reduce pollution by requiring their drivers to turn off engines when their buses were

stationary. He also referred to the difficult balance to be struck between the need for the Council take action to ensure that rural areas were not left without access to public transport whilst, at the same time, having to take difficult decisions on which services should be subsidised given the cost and the low level of patronage. Cllr Smith added that the Council should work with Parish Councils and local communities to find innovative solutions to the problems. In response, Cllr Heath referred to initiatives in her area financed through the Rural Mobility Fund.

Cllr Pardesi stated that more funding was required to support bus services which, in turn, needed to be more frequent/convenient and cheaper in order to increase passenger usage and therefore economic viability.

Cllr Parry indicated that the Strategy was aimed predominantly at urban areas and that, in rural areas, solutions were more difficult to find. He highlighted the need for innovation and that any proposals must be affordable. Cllr Northcott added that innovations could include the use of smaller vehicles, improvements to evening services and the provision of more information for passengers.

Cllr Peters referred to the pollution from buses and added that the Strategy provided an opportunity for bus operators to become “greener” by modernising their fleets, replacing older vehicles with new, less polluting, ones.

Cllr David Williams spoke about the impact of the Covid pandemic on bus operators including the reduced level of service patronage. He also referred to the vicious circle of reduced patronage leading to the withdrawal of services which, in turn, lead to further reductions in patronage. He added that the public should be encouraged to use local bus services as using those services was the only way to ensure that they remained viable. He also indicated that it was for the bus companies to come up with the solutions to the issues being faced but that the County Council would be willing to work with them to find those solutions.

Covid-19

(Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Cllr Charlotte Atkins expressed the view that although the link between infections and deaths had been weakened by the vaccination programme, it had not been broken and it was therefore vital that everyone should get vaccinated at the earliest opportunity and also continue to take precautions.

Cllr Price paid tribute to teachers and support staff for their hard work during the pandemic in helping pupils to continue with their education and by keeping them safe whilst in school.

Superfast Staffordshire

(Paragraph 7 of the Statement)

Cllr Winnington referred to the success of the countywide broadband partnership which had enabled nearly every household and business in Staffordshire to connect to superfast broadband speeds. He expressed his thanks to all those involved in the roll-out of the project.

Cllr Pardesi enquired as to how many households in the County did not have any access to broadband. In response, Cllr Tagg indicated that he would provide Cllr Pardesi with some information on digital exclusion but it should also be borne in mind that some people preferred to use their smartphone data allowance rather than subscribe to a broadband service.

Cllr Alan White paid tribute to Cllr Winnington for his hard work in leading on the Superfast Staffordshire project.

Euro 2020

(Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

A number of Members paid tribute to the England Team for their strong performance during Euro 2020 and also expressed their disappointment and sadness at the racist comments made against some members of the Team and the need for those individuals responsible to be held accountable for their actions. Cllr Jessel also referred to the excellent facilities available at St George's Park in East Staffordshire; and Cllr Hood and Cllr Charlotte Atkins praised Gareth Southgate and Marcus Rashford as excellent role models in our society.

In response to a question from Cllr Huckfield, Cllr Alan White confirmed that he was appalled at the racist comments on social media following England's defeat in the finals of the Euros and added that he was proud of the performance of the England Team.

Walley's Quarry

Cllr Huckfield referred to the odours being emitted from Walley's Quarry; the impact on the health of local residents, both in the short term and longer term; the inactivity of the Environment Agency (EA) to address the issue; and the need for all Members of the Council to lobby the EA to take action. In response, Cllr Tagg indicated that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council were taking action locally and had recently resolved to serve an abatement notice on the operator of the site.

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

21. Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2020-21

Cllr Sutton moved consideration of the Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2020-21.

Cllr Edgeller, Cllr Hood and Cllr Price extended their thanks to Cllr Sutton, his fellow members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the officers who supported them, for their excellent work. Cllr Price added the "Children's Voice" was now part of the Council's SEND Strategy.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins commented on the low level of attendance at Panel meetings by some District/Borough Council representatives. In response, Cllr Sutton indicated that the Panel worked hard to ensure that there was good and fair representation across the

whole of the County and where difficulties were encountered, he spoke to the Leaders of the Councils concerned.

Cllr Pardesi referred to the statement in the Report that “looked after young people generally experience poor mental health and asked for access to mental health support in a timely manner” and enquired as to what time frame constituted “a timely manner”? In response, Cllr Edgeller indicated that a lot of work was being undertaken to address mental health issues amongst looked after children. Cllr Sutton added that he would share with all new Members of the Council information on Mental Health Pathways.

Cllr Sutton indicated that there were currently around 1,200 young people in the Council’s care and he reminded all Members of the responsibilities as Corporate Parents. He extended his thanks to Members of the Panel, both past and present, for the valuable contribution they had made and he also welcomed new members of the Panel.

RESOLVED – That the Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2020-21 be received.

22. Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund 2020/21 - Report and next steps

The Council were informed that the Covid-19 Support Fund saw £2500 allocated to each County Councillor to invest in projects which supported communities through the pandemic. Councillors were able to use as much or as little of this £2500 as they wanted to support projects which needed it, or to work together with other councillors and jointly support bigger projects.

Funding was available initially for two purposes:

- Projects about providing support to the community re the coronavirus. Group’s activity had to relate to:
 - supporting people who were self-isolating or in quarantine
 - helping the community to be resilient against wider impacts of Covid-19
 - developing community networks to do either of the above.
- Providing funding to existing community groups who were facing a reduced income due to the impact of Covid-19 (for example around paying overheads while facing reduced incomes).

From July 2020 onwards, county councillors were equipped with a second tranche of the funding because of the ongoing emergency situation, with an additional £2000 to allocate per Member. The two fund uses above remained, but a third was added in recognition of the fact that some community organisations were beginning to open back up:

- Projects which related to community recovery, sustaining new social action, restarting activity which had been paused, or adapting provision for the ‘new normal’.

The combined Covid-19 Support and Recovery Fund closed on 30 October 2020, with a deadline for funds being used by 28 February 2021. The Fund was a successful element of Staffordshire's response to the pandemic. As part of a much bigger picture of other funders, agencies and volunteers working together, over £230k was distributed to help community organisations look after those who needed it most.

Several members gave examples as to how the funding had been used in their respective areas. Cllr Greatorex paid tribute to Cllr Wilson for the report and also to Pete Barker of the Council's Member and Democratic Services Team for the advice and support he had given to Members in allocating the funding.

Cllr Wilson informed Members that, going forward, the member fund for 2021/22 financial year, called the 2021 Community Fund, was aimed at helping the voluntary and community sector think about 'where next'. Now that the Country was starting to adapt to a new normal, the 2021 Community Fund was about supporting groups to think about their future offer, how they would fundraise, and how they would return to ideas which they were going to pursue before the pandemic began.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

23. Recommendations to the Council

(a) (i) Members' Allowances Scheme - Independent Remuneration Panel Report

Members were informed that the County Council was required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme. Any decisions on the nature and level of allowances were a matter for the Full Council, but the Council must have regard to any recommendations submitted by the Independent Remuneration Panel before establishing or amending the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel met each year to consider the recommendations to be made to the Council in respect of the level and nature of the forthcoming year's allowances.

The Independent Remuneration Panel's report of July 2021 noted and supported the changes to the Special Responsibility Allowances following the 2021 County Council Elections and Annual Council Meeting. In the report, the Panel also proposed to fully review the Members' Allowance Scheme, the Basic Allowance and the expenses paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the County Council this year and report their findings back to the County Council in due course.

RESOLVED – That (a) the Independent Remuneration Panel July 2021 report be received.

(b) That the Council accept the Panel's proposal to fully review the Members' Allowance Scheme, the Basic Allowance and the expenses paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the County Council this year and report their findings back to the County Council in due course.

(a) (ii) Independent Remuneration Panel – Appointment

Members were informed that the Independent Remuneration Panel currently had four Members who were appointed by the County Council. The minimum number of people permitted to sit on the Independent Remuneration Panel was three and a maximum of five. Members of the Panel usually served a term of four years, but this may be extended where it was expedient to do so.

Christina Robotham was first appointed as an Independent Remuneration Panel member in October 2017. As the other Members of the Panel were still relatively new, it was proposed that Christina Robotham's term of office be extended for a further period of five months in order to retain her expertise as the Panel's Chairman for the duration of the financial year.

RESOLVED – (a) That the period of office for Christina Robotham as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel be extended for a further period to 31 March 2022.

(b) That, if required, the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to carry out a recruitment exercise for IRP members in 2022.

(b) Changes to the Constitution including the review of changes as approved by Annual Council on 20 May 2021 as reviewed by the Audit and Standards Committee on 13 July 2021

Members were informed that, at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2021, the Council considered a number of proposed amendments to the Constitution which were required to reflect changes to decision making structures. Included in the report were several changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as had been requested by Senior Leadership Team members to reflect day to day operational requirements and the Council's involvement in wider projects (e.g. HS2). In supporting the changes to the Constitution, the Leader of the Council indicated his wish for those changes to be reviewed by the Audit and Standards Committee in order to provide reassurance that they were required and in keeping with the Council's 'member-led' philosophy.

The changes were reviewed at the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee on the 13 July 2021. Members of the Committee had no issue with any of the changes presented to Council in May 2021. Members noted, however, that since the Annual Council meeting, three decisions (as detailed in Table 1 to the report) had been reviewed and deemed to be no longer required. In addition, there were two further changes to the constitution proposed for the Council's consideration. These two proposed changes (as detailed in Table 2 to the report) were reviewed and endorsed by the Audit and Standards Committee.

RESOLVED – (a) That the changes to the Constitution detailed in Table 1 within the report and which were approved at the Annual Council meeting in May 2021 and reviewed by the Audit and Standards Committee, be agreed.

(b) That the further changes, as detailed in Table 2 to the report, be approved.

24. Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Cllr Edgeller referred to people's use of social media to complain about judgements made by the Commissioner whilst, at the same time, there were very few who took up the opportunity to attend meetings of the Panel. She urged the Commissioner to publicise more widely details of when Panel meetings were to take place and to encourage more public participation. Cllr Hudson also spoke about the need to improve the links between Members of the Council and their respective Local Policing Units so as to improve communication and he undertook to raise this matter with the Commissioner.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

25. Questions

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

Question

Our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members live in small confined spaces next to the Walley Quarry Landfill site. What steps are being taken to ensure their smaller living situations are not more adversely compounded than those of house dwellers? What is being done to make sure that our GRT community is being fully consulted and updated in order that it is able to contribute to the current process and plans for this site?

Reply

The Environment Agency is responsible for regulating the Walleys Quarry Landfill site and has held three virtual public engagement events, they also provide weekly updates via the environment Agencies 'Citizen Space'.

Staffordshire County Council continues to work with other public agencies as part of a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) convened by the Local Resilience Forum, to co-ordinate activities to try and mitigate the risks to the health of all local people.

The SCG held a further a community engagement event on Tuesday 6 July to which all members of the community were invited. Representatives from the Environment Agency, Public Health England, the NHS, and officers from Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council were part of this, with the event chaired by the deputy SCG Chair, Rob Barber Deputy Chief Fire Officer from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee are also considering the important matters further next week (26 July), relating to Walleys Quarry Landfill Site with a focus on health implications for all residents.

All local people can make their views known through complaints to the Environment Agency, representations to Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council or their Elected Members. They are also encouraged to report odour and symptoms to the County Council's 'smell and symptom tracker' to help further inform the SCGs approach.

Supplementary Question

How many members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community living adjacent to the Walley's Quarry site have access to the internet?

Reply

We do not have that information.

Cllr Pardesi asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

In light of the pitiful Covid Education catch-up plan for England students, how can this government claim to be concerned about failing thousands of students and be serious about breaking the link between deprivation and poor outcomes in schools?

Reply

The Department for Education announced a number of different funding streams and packages to support education recovery and children and young people's wellbeing. In June 2020 mainstream schools were allocated £80 for each pupil from reception to year 11 inclusive and special schools were allocated £240 per pupils. Schools were required to use this funding for specific activities to support their pupils' education recovery.

Secondary schools have been provided the opportunity to hold a summer school with a blend of academic education and enrichment activities. The funding to run a summer school equates to £597 per 2-week place (or £1791 per place for pupils in special schools and alternative provision).

To support some of our youngest children attending school, access to the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme, is being made available for free, during the academic year 2021/2022.

In 2021/2022 schools will also receive additional recovery funding, building on the Pupil Premium, to further support pupils who need it most. The average primary school will receive around £6,000 extra, and the average secondary school around £22,000 extra. As this funding is based on the number of disadvantaged pupils, schools with more disadvantaged pupils will receive larger allocations but will have flexibility to direct funding based on their assessment of needs.

Schools have been provided with a range of tutoring approaches: both continuing the work with the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) and offering a new complementary school-led approach, allowing schools to take on local tutors or use existing staff to supplement those employed through the existing NTP.

The DfE has provide access to a range of support to improve mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges. This includes guidance on whole school and college approaches to mental health and wellbeing, funding for senior mental health leads training and funded support through the wellbeing for education recovery programme. This has been received very positively in Staffordshire.

The 16-19 Tuition Fund has been extended for a further two years for 16-19 year olds, into the 2023/24 academic year. The fund will continue to provide targeted small group tuition in English, mathematics and other subjects where learning has been disrupted because of the pandemic and is available to all 16-19 providers.

Nationally Defra initially worked with local authorities on allocating funding for Food and Emergency supplies (allocating over £600,000) and latterly the Department for Work and Pensions have worked to deliver the COVID Winter and Locality Fund (allocating over £4 million) this has enabled the county council to provide vouchers for food and emergency items throughout the pandemic.

These schemes are due to finish in October and will be replaced by the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. This programme delivers food and activities to children who are living in low income families (Free School Meals eligible.) We are working hard to prepare for the summer schemes and will also deliver this in Easter and Christmas to ensure that this much needed support is available for families.

Supplementary Question

Why did the Education Recovery Commission resign over this issue?

Reply

We work particularly hard at supporting our school children and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have about the situation in Staffordshire.

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

Question

As we come out of a difficult period, a community group in Tamworth is organising a Pride event. Could the Cabinet Member arrange for the installation of a pedestrian crossing in Tamworth to be painted with a Rainbow in order to show our support for this community and celebrate Pride?

Reply

The County Council is committed to the promotion of inclusivity within all of our services and welcomes the suggestion to celebrate diversity within Staffordshire communities.

Should the scheme be accepted, careful consideration will need to be given to ensuring the road safety features provided by the crossing are not diminished.

As the Local County Councillor, I hope you will be able to work with your local community to seek agreement for such a scheme and to find appropriate funding both for the implementation and the required continued maintenance.

Supplementary Question

Will the Cabinet Member commit to ensuring that such groups are able to achieve their celebrations and that, where they impact on the highway network, the Council will work with them and manage their aspirations in a simple, clear and safe way which does not feel that the Authority is producing hurdles or hoops for them to jump through?

Reply

Yes, I'd be happy to work with such groups to ensure that their events can be held in a safe manner.

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

Question

Most of the roadside grass verges in Leek are looking very unkempt while many trees badly need pruning. Is this part of a County Council plan to maximise flowering plant diversity, benefiting insects, pollinators and other wildlife?

If so:

- (a) When will the roadside verges be cut and trees pruned, how many times a year, and in which months? Will the grass cuttings be collected to reduce the development of thick hatch?
- (b) Why has a strip not been cut at the edge of verges to keep the verges tidy, preserve good road visibility and ensure pavements and footpaths are accessible?
- (c) What work has been carried out to ensure that road sight lines and junctions are not obscured by vegetation?
- (d) Why are there no signs on the verges, making it clear that wilder verges are part of a thought out management plan rather than, as widely believed by the general public, just cost-cutting? Why has there been little engagement with communities to share this County plan and communicate its objectives?

- (e) Where can Staffordshire residents read the reasoning for the County Council plan for roadside grass verges and trees?
- (f) Will the council consider facilitating a meeting of relevant stakeholders and experts to review the overall plan in advance of next year's growing season, ensure it is meeting best practice, and then draw up a simple means of communicating the results to residents?

Reply

The County Council's approach to highway grass cutting, hedge cutting and tree maintenance is detailed on our webpages: [Weeds, grass, trees and hedges - Staffordshire County Council](#). This includes information about the routine activities that take place every growing season to control the growth of highway vegetation in order to maintain visibility, reduce damage to the road structure and, most importantly, improve road user safety.

This summer, so far, has seen ideal weather conditions for vegetation growth and, in addition to routine activities, reactive works will take place to address specific concerns regarding the safety of road users, e.g. excessive tree growth blocking a footway. These concerns can be reported online and our routine Highway Inspections will also ensure any necessary works are prioritised.

Environmental maintenance service levels were last reviewed in February 2020 when engagement took place with all local councils specifically regarding changes to grass cutting programmes. A number of these local councils deliver urban grass cutting on our behalf to meet our safety specifications but often enhance this level of service to maintain and improve the appearance of the public realm in their area.

The Council also supports those communities who wish to maintain local wildflower areas to promote biodiversity and local identity. A number of schemes are in operation but the views of the community and their contribution to the necessary maintenance of such wildflower areas is paramount.

Supplementary Question

Will you work with Cllr Tagg to ensure we get better biodiversity whilst, at the same time, working with local communities proactively to ensure they get a greater understanding about what the objectives of the Council are?

Reply

I can assure you that we are being proactive in that Cllr Tagg and I are putting together a policy to address this, but we have to remember that when we do plant trees close to highways there is a cost and also on-going costs for maintenance and safety inspections.

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

Question

What is the expected delivery time for traffic calming measures in Morley Street, Leek as a feasibility study has been completed and sufficient DHP monies allocated to pay for the scheme?

Reply

A feasibility scheme for traffic calming on Morley Street was funded by the local member through their Divisional Highway Programme (DHP) to address local concerns about vehicle speeds. The feasibility study, completed in February 2021, established that traffic calming measures could be physically accommodated and provided an initial cost estimate for the scheme. The next phase is to undertake a full consultation with the local community within the next few months on the proposed arrangements, and this work is currently being programmed against all other Member DHP priorities. Upon completion of the consultation the final scheme design/delivery costs will be confirmed so that the Member may consider funding through their DHP; however, it is anticipated that more than one year's allocation will be required.

Supplementary Question

I have allocated my current and future DHP monies to this project so that it is fully funded, and I am increasingly concerned about the lack of progress in bringing it to fruition. I would ask the Cabinet Member to secure a timetable to ensure that this project can get underway as soon as possible.

Reply

Unfortunately, after speaking to officers, I am informed that the project is not fully funded as it is not possible for you to allocate anticipated future DHP monies to the scheme. However, I would be happy to discuss this matter with you after the meeting to see how it can be taken forward.

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

Question

As a new County Councillor, since becoming elected I have been inundated with requests to visit Potholes and general conditions of the Roads around Burton Town Division which are in a very poor state of repair.

Having visited many roads around my division I am constantly finding that there are large areas of the division that have had previous work done by third party contractors such as Gas works, Virgin Media etc and the finish is of a poor standard further leading to pot holes and road sinkage which in turn requires SCC to repair at their own cost.

Could the Cabinet Member confirm what are the arrangements for checking the quality of work by these contractors and by whom, do the works carry any

guarantees, what are the percentages of work completed and are there and KPI's kept of such quality checks?

Finally, would the Cabinet Member for Highways at a mutually convenient date and time accompany me for a short drive through my division to see and experience my concerns?

Reply

Utility companies have legal powers to install and maintain their apparatus in the highway. This legislation and a series of national codes of practice and specifications exist to ensure that their work is safe and fit for purpose. Utility companies, as professional private organisations are entirely responsible for the quality of their work and must ensure that their work meets the national specifications.

All utility reinstatements have a guarantee period of two years during which any faults must be remedied at their cost. The same legislation and national codes of practice permit us to inspect a utility company's work.

There are over 30,000 holes dug in Staffordshire roads each year by utilities. The national code of practice for inspections sets out a process whereby the County Council visually inspects a random 30% sample of utility works:

10% during the works

10% immediately after works have completed, and

10% at the end of the two-year guarantee period

The utility companies pay us to undertake these inspections. If more than 10% of inspected sites fail to comply then the utility company responsible is usually required to put in place an improvement plan to try to prevent further problems occurring. We can also undertake additional random inspections on poor performing utility companies to ensure compliance with their improvement plan. There is currently one utility company with an improvement plan in Staffordshire.

We undertake extra inspections as part of normal highway duties when we receive reports from members of the public. These additional inspections are undertaken at any stage of the reinstatement's life, even after the two-year guarantee period.

Inspections undertaken are mainly visual inspections and are done to check that the correct cones and signs are being used or that the surface of the reinstatement has not sunk, cracked or is not visually defective. We also operate a small program of both random and targeted coring to determine compliance of the layers not visible on the surface.

The Cabinet Member for Highways would be pleased to meet with yourself and the Network Inspection team at a mutually convenient date and time to look at local issues with utility reinstatements.

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

Question

While I totally support projects that are designed to counter Climate Change, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the misuse of Electric Scooters across the County. I have had many communications from residents who have seen younger people riding these scooters in an unsafe way. Could I ask the Cabinet Member what controls are in place to register those scooters that are under the County supported scheme? I would also like to know if driving licences are being checked?

Reply

As the Member will be aware the Council is one of several Local Transport Authorities taking part in the national pilot study on the use of E-scooters on the public highway. The Department for Transport believe that E-scooters may be a potential low emission solution to replace short distance car journeys. It is important to remember that national travel data shows that 2/3 of all car journeys are less than 5 miles in length.

The pilot E-scooter schemes in the Stafford and Newcastle have generally had a positive response from users and take up is increasing. As you would expect there are several controls to encourage safe usage and we are working closely with the operators and the police on this issue. The controls include:

- Fixed Bay Parking Model - Across both trials areas we operate a fixed parking bay model, this means E-scooters can only (without incurring a fine and potential account suspension) be parked and left in designated bays that is agreed by the operators and the council.
- Speed Cap - Each E-scooter on the trial is capped at 12mph, the legal limit set by the DfT is 15mph.
- Age Restrictions - E-scooters cannot be rented by anyone under the age of 16, they must upload a picture of their driving license and a "selfie".
- Area of operation - In conjunction with the operator we determine the operational area. Outside of this area, E-scooters stop.
- No-Go Zones - There are some areas in the operational area, such as pedestrianised areas, where using a E-scooter is not appropriate, E-scooters come to a stop in these areas.
- Slow Zones - Areas where it's appropriate to use a E-scooter – but there are high number of pedestrian and vehicle movements scooters slow to 6.5mph in these areas.
- Curfew - The E-scooters in both trial areas have a curfew of 10pm, this means no new rides can start after this time.

- **Banning Users** - A small number of users have been banned for unsafe riding or antisocial behaviour, this is done by the operators when incidents are reported to them. Using the built in GPS tracking system, a rider will usually receive a warning and then, if appropriate a ban. We are working with all stakeholders including the police to improve rider education and reduce misuse.

In Staffordshire, you must be 18 years or older to use the rental E-scooters and as mentioned above, driving licences are checked prior to rental although it is recognised that like any system this is open to potential abuse. The operators are constantly working on ways to improve rider education in this area to minimise this happening.

The Council is in close contact with the Department of Transport which is collecting data from all the E-scooter pilot areas prior to deciding on whether to legalize E-scooters for use across England on the public highway. The control of private E-scooters, operating outside the control of rental schemes such as the two in Staffordshire, will clearly be a matter for full debate and careful consideration.

Supplementary Question

Who enforces the regulations and does the County Council have any liability with regard to the inappropriate use of the e-scooters operated under the pilot study?

Reply

Many of the e-scooters in use on our highways are privately owned and are therefore being used unlawfully and I understand that the Government are to bring forward a White Paper on this matter. With regard to the use of e-scooters under the pilot study, liability rests with the operators of the pilot.

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

Question

In her video on the Burton library consultation, respected Councillor Victoria Wilson, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, says that moving the library into the market hall would "create increased footfall into the town centre to grow and attract more businesses". On what statistics is this based? According to data from the Freedom of Information Act, the present market hall had a footfall of 249,083 in 2018/19. (the last full year not affected by Covid restrictions.) The Burton library had 276,156 visitors that year. Given that BOTH locations are in Burton town centre (they are less than 250 meters/ 275 yards away), HOW can shutting the market hall and relocating the library "create increased footfall into the town centre"? Without a doubt, it reduces footfall into the town centre by 249,083! Can I ask Cllr Wilson, what statistics did she depend on to make this assertion, or is it a mistake that may severely mislead people being consulted?

Reply

The Council are aware of the Market Hall footfall. At the point of submitting the Town Investment Plan to Government an uplift in footfall of 40% was proposed. The increase in footfall achieved in Lichfield was much higher than this (97%) but the projections were moderated down to take account of the footfall which would be lost because of the market hall closure.

The figures quoted in Cllr Hussain's question are just for the Burton library service itself. Cllr Hussain will be aware that the proposals are broader than moving just the library service. The consolidation of all County staff into the town centre and the footfall from the Registry Office will be moved on top of the library footfall.

In addition to the increase in footfall on the Market Place, the proposals which would follow on from this Council's move away from the existing library site will open up exciting new regeneration opportunities for redevelopment of the waterfront (known as project D – High Street Linkages). This project forms another of the seven inter-related projects contained within the Burton Town Improvement Plan submitted to Government. East Staffordshire Borough Council will lead a public consultation process on project D later in the summer.

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

Question

According to Councillor Wilson, the relocation of the library to the Market Hall is "very essential for the rehabilitation and preservation of the market hall, which is such an ancient structure." The county council plans to invest £8.3 million for this purpose. HOWEVER, according to freedom of information statistics, just £345,000 is required to maintain the ancient market hall over the next ten years (£1.4 million was spent on it in 2014). According to Councillor Wilson, relocating the library would save taxpayers £84,000 per year in maintenance and operating expenses. That sounds admirable until one considers that it would take the council 100 years to spend the £8.3 million that it plans to spend on the library relocation. HOW ON EARTH CAN THIS BE CONSIDERED VALUE FOR MONEY? Would this council consider such a proposal if it was going to be funded by the council rather than the government? Is this the wisest use of the town's windfall funds?

Reply

The £8.3 million estimated project cost caters for much more than relocating the library. Investment in the fabric of the Market Hall will go way beyond the recommendations contained within the latest condition survey (£343,000 in September 2017) to preserve this locally important building for decades to come. High cost interventions include replacement of the existing roof, new heating system, new electrical systems along with construction of new internal and external meeting rooms and extension of the existing balcony to create modern office accommodation.

Calculations on whether this provides value for money for Staffordshire tax payers should relate to this Council's £1.3 million investment, which at a saving of £87,000 per annum when compared against the "do nothing" scenario, will be recouped in just

under 15 years. This investment should also be offset against increasing footfall in the town centre and furthering the regeneration ambitions of the town.

The Town Fund is one of the Government's national funding interventions aimed at "levelling up" the country and is an acknowledgement that Burton needs additional funding for projects of this nature. Ultimately, it is for East Staffordshire Borough Council, the Burton Town Board and Government to determine whether they believe this investment provides value for money within the constraints of the funding criteria. At a contribution rate of around 15% of the overall project costs, this Council believes the project delivers value for money for the Staffordshire tax payer.

26. Petitions

There were no petitions on this occasion.

Chairman

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Intensive Support for Staffordshire Children with Disabilities

The Cabinet have approved proposals to bring together the commissioning of the previously separate arrangements for Children with Disabilities' Community Support and Aiming High 1-1 intensive support and short breaks into one contracting arrangement. The County Council currently commissions a range of providers from across Staffordshire to deliver Children's Community Support and Short Breaks on behalf of the local authority, though these are currently commissioned and contracted as two separate support programmes. The proposal approved by the Cabinet advocates the benefits of bringing these arrangements together under one commission, to provide more flexible, responsive support that draws on children and families' existing strengths, and focuses on development, independence, preparedness for adulthood, and cost effectiveness. The first two years of the new contract will be used to further investigate the merits and risks associated with In-house delivery of this support, and the efficacy of this model within the proposed new Children's System, as the Options Appraisal demonstrated a number of potential strengths to this approach.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

2. Future Delivery of Replacement Care Services in Staffordshire (Learning Disabilities)

In November 2020 Cabinet endorsed an options analysis to be undertaken for future provision of residential replacement care in Staffordshire as well as the potential expansion of in-house services to offer a greater range of support for people in their homes and communities as part of a single integrated service, pending a business case and public consultation. These Cabinet decisions have been reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate and this has identified an opportunity to expand the scope of the options appraisal and consultation to include all replacement care services, not just those provided in-house or within a residential setting, in order to determine the optimum way to configure replacement care in the long term to maximise individual experience, quality and cost effectiveness. The Cabinet have approved the commencement of the options appraisal and the results will be presented to Cabinet in the third quarter of 2021.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

3. Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People Service

Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office are proposing to commission a Pan Staffordshire Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service. The proposed Service will see the Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children & Young People Service Model reconfigured to be inclusive of all forms of "Exploitation", as outlined in the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Child Exploitation Strategy. It is proposed that the Service will consist of four core elements, each of which will interlink

with the other to ensure that the need and voice of a child is centric to any support that is provided within the Service and across wider partnerships. The Service will adopt a whole family approach to empower families in achieving their goals with the aim of sustaining long term change and stability. The Cabinet have approved proposals for the procurement of the proposed Service by Staffordshire County Council, on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

4. Public Health Commissioning Plans

The Cabinet have received details of the forthcoming commissioning plans for adults' public health services (sexual health, drug and alcohol and lifestyle services) for the next two financial years. The aim is to improve the quality of and access to services and have been developed with partners. Authority to award and enter into relevant contracts for the services in the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 has been delegated to the Cabinet Member for Health and Care in consultation with the Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Integrated Care and the Director for Health and Care. All the commissioning plans are funded through the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant or other dedicated Central Government funding. There is no impact on the Council's MTFS.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

5. Recommission of Staffordshire Integrated Advocacy Service

The County Council currently commissions a Staffordshire wide, single, Integrated Advocacy Service which provides a comprehensive approach to coordination and delivery of the following statutory advocacy services:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) including Deprivation of Liberty
- Safeguards (DoLS) and paid Representatives
- Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)
- Care Act Advocacy, including for Prisoners
- Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

The contract term of the current service expires on 31 March 2022 with no further extension option. The Cabinet have therefore approved the commencement of a competitive tender process to procure the commissioned service from 1 April 2022 for a maximum contract period of four years.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

6. UK Community Renewal Fund - Priority Projects

The Cabinet have approved proposals for the County Council to take on the role of Accountable Body for the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) in addition to its current role as Lead Authority. The £220m UKCRF aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people

into employment. The level of interest seen locally in the UKCRF bidding process has been very positive and as a result a pipeline of projects has been created from a broad range of organisations reflecting the Council's ambitions for Staffordshire.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

7. Waste Management – Retender for the Disposal of Sweepings and Gully Waste

Sweepings (street cleaning residues) collected by Staffordshire Waste Collection Authorities are currently treated under arrangements procured by Warwickshire County Council and involving, in addition to Warwickshire, Staffordshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Council and Coventry City Council. These current arrangements will end on 2 January 2022 and there are no further extensions available. The Cabinet has therefore delegated authority to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change, to let a contract (or contracts) to provide treatment facilities for sweepings (street cleaning residues) collected by Staffordshire Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) and gully waste collected by Amey LG (Amey) on behalf of the County Council.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

8. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1 2021/22

The Cabinet have received an overview of Staffordshire County Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. They noted that the latest revenue forecast outturn showed a saving of £8.1m (1.5%). Due to Covid 19 Central Government had issued additional grant payments to support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services while protecting the workforce and local residents.

The latest capital outturn projection was £126.7m, compared to the budgeted position of £108.8m, an increase of 16.4%. This projection was a fully funded position. This increase was due to additional developer contributions for schools, new grants and additional costs and rephasing on the i54 project.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

9. Framework Agreement for the Provision of Asbestos Removal and Encapsulation Services

The Cabinet have approved proposals to proceed with the procurement of a framework agreement for the provision of Asbestos Removal and Encapsulation Services (the "Framework Agreement") and to secure approval for the Director of Corporate Services to be given delegated authority to approve the award of the Framework Agreement and the subsequent award of any call-off contracts under the Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement will be for a period of 2 years starting 1st March 2022 to 28th February 2024 and dependent on the quality of their delivery, a 24-month service extension to a final contract end date of 28th February 2026.

(Cabinet – 21 July 2021)

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

The Cabinet received an update from the COVID-19 Member led Local Outbreak Control Board. They noted that the number of new cases of Covid nationally and in Staffordshire rose during August 2021 and was continuing at high levels; vaccination was limiting the number of hospitalisations and deaths from Covid, however, the NHS and social care were experiencing considerable pressure from Covid and other conditions; people should exercise personal responsibility and continue to take sensible precautions to prevent the spread of infection (maintaining good hygiene, keeping a respectful distance, and wearing face coverings in crowded indoor places, as well as testing twice weekly); the Covid vaccination programme continued to make progress with more than 1.3 million doses having been administered, and more than 80% of adults in Staffordshire having now received two doses; the current focus was on vaccinating younger adults and 12-17 year olds; and the Government was expected to announce a booster campaign for older adults as well as vaccination of 12-15 year olds.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

11. Staffordshire Means Back to Business – Oral Update

The Cabinet received an update from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills giving an update on “Staffordshire Means Back to Business” activity including the following matters:

- Staffordshire’s recovery continues apace. Staffordshire saw a significant increase in Universal Credit Claimants early in the Covid crisis but recent signs of recovery with claimants reducing by nearly a fifth (17%) or 4,350 claimants between February and July and our rate of 3.9% is lower than the 6.5% regionally and 5.5% nationally.
- Although job vacancies in Staffordshire were heavily hit early in the crisis, overall levels have recovered and are now above pre-COVID levels.
- Our Ignite Programme, designed to support young people looking to start their own businesses, has enabled us to reach a significant number of students and raise awareness of both entrepreneurship and the Ignite programme through the delivery of the “Encouraging Enterprise” lesson plan. This would not have been possible without the support of the colleges who rolled it out effectively through their staff. As reported previously 7,000 students have received an Ignite lesson which must be unprecedented. We have now approved grants to support 171 companies with free training enabling them to work in a post Covid competitive environment. We are supporting 147 new apprentices which would not have been available without this initiative.

- We are seeing unprecedented levels of activity to revitalise our town centres following successful government awards through Town Deals and Future High Streets funds including proposals for the regeneration of Stafford Town Centre.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

12. Call-Off Contract for the Supply of ICT Equipment and Services

The Cabinet have given approval to proceed with the award of a Call-Off Contract for the Supply of ICT Hardware and Software Services from the ICT VAR Framework Agreement. They have also agreed that the Director of Corporate Services be given delegated authority to approve the award of the Contract for a period of 3 years starting 20 September 2021, with the option to extend by 2 x 12- month periods. The estimated value for the contract is c.£1.6m per annum for the Council.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

13. Developing Family Hubs in Staffordshire

The Cabinet have considered proposals for the development of Family Hubs in Staffordshire. They noted that the County already has a well-developed existing network of Children's Centres which currently focus provision on the Early Years. This network of Children's Centres, operated through the Early Years Coordination Service, seeks to deliver a seamless integrated service within communities in relation to the Early Years. The delivery of Staffordshire's Children's Centres is underpinned by the Children Centre Statutory Guidance which requires that Local Authorities consult with families if they plan to make changes to the delivery of the Children's Centre Services. The Cabinet have agreed proposals to engage in a period of consultation with families to develop the Children's Centre's into Family Hubs with a broader age remit and offer of holistic placed based support working with partners. The Family Hubs will be a core component of the Council's Place Based Approach. This approach seeks to ensure that families can access the right support, at the right time, within their local communities, increasing families' resilience and preventing needs from escalating. The Cabinet have also agreed that, subject to the outcome of the consultation, the design and subsequent phased implementation of Family Hubs across Staffordshire be endorsed as an integrated model of working, whilst acknowledging the future commissioning intentions in relation to the Family Support and Outreach Service and the Early Years Coordination Service (Children's Centres).

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

14. High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Funding

The Council has been allocated £2,441,299.98 High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) funding. The aim of the funding is to deliver new places and improve existing provision in education settings for children and young people with SEND, particularly those with more complex needs, and with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), although the funding can also be used to support SEND pupils without an EHCP and pupils that require Alternative Provision (including children in

Alternative Provision settings without an EHCP). The Cabinet have approved proposals to use the funding for projects which involve:

- Developing Resource Bases at Mainstream Schools for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or SEN Support with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and/or Autistic Spectrum Condition
- A partnership approach through co-location of specialist provision on mainstream sites
- Increasing capacity in specialist provision to reduce the need to access placements at independent schools/out of county provision.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

15. Strategic Review of the Care Home Market in Staffordshire 2021

The Cabinet were informed that Covid-19 has had a profound impact on care homes, and despite the vaccination programme and the release of 'lockdown' restrictions, there remains considerable uncertainty about the long-term impact on the market. The fall in demand for older people's care home placements, both Council funded and self-funded, is likely to recover but this may take a considerable time. This may leave some care homes well below their planned bed occupancy rate for a prolonged period. This, along with increased operating costs and ongoing challenges with staff recruitment and retention, may compromise financial viability for some care homes. This risk is likely to be greater in older care homes where structural issues limit capacity and/or make social distancing difficult, as well as in care homes owned by smaller companies that do not have significant financial reserves. It is reasonable to expect that there may be some consolidation of the market in the next five years. The Cabinet have approved revised commissioning and contracting arrangements, as detailed below, to ensure access to good quality and affordable care home placements when they are needed:

- The implementation of guide prices for care home placements.
- The extension and variation of the current dynamic purchasing system contract for care homes for a further period from 1 April 2022 until no later than 31 March 2023.
- The re-procurement of a new dynamic purchasing system for care homes with a revised service specification.
- A phased increase in the number of block booked care home beds in accordance with demand.
- A review of the approach to contracting for complex residential and nursing home placements
- Opportunities to use technology and innovation to support care homes to meet the challenges they face.

The Cabinet have also agreed that, owing to the results of the structural and feasibility studies, the refurbishment of the Hillfield site, Burton-on-Trent to provide additional nursing home capacity be not progressed.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

16. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

The Cabinet have considered the Council's investment and borrowing activity during 2020/21 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time. These activities involve large sums of money and reflect the huge scale of the County Council's operations. As at the 31 March 2021, the County Council's overall debt level stood at £568 million, which reflects capital expenditure decisions made in the past. Investments totalled £279 million. The Council's treasury management activities were carried out prudently during the year and its policy of funding new borrowing from internal cash balances continues to generate significant savings. The Cabinet also noted that the Council's Annual Investment Strategy was considered prudent and sufficiently robust to meet any market challenges created by the UK's decision to leave the European Union and pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and that Officers would continue to monitor the position.

(Cabinet – 15 September 2021)

17. Covid Rates Update

It was great to see pupils back at school for a new term and, hopefully a very different academic year. With students mingling it wasn't surprising to see Covid rates start to shoot up, particularly in the 11 to 18 year old age group. At one point the seven-day rate for this age group in Stafford Borough was more than 3,500 per 100,000 population.

Throughout this pandemic, both schools and parents have worked with us to help manage local outbreaks and bring case rates down and I thank them for their continued efforts.

Like everyone, we want to keep children safe, reduce the risk to the older or more vulnerable and keep our school doors open and minimise any further disruption to schooling.

18. Community Testing and Vaccinations

As we head towards winter, the recent outbreaks across schools are a timely reminder that Covid is still with us.

We need to keep moving forward and the best way to do this is to get tested twice a week, have both vaccines as soon as you can, and have the flu jab and Covid booster as soon as you are eligible.

The vaccine has proved the game changer, but we all need to continue to play our part to reduce the risks and ease the pressure on our hospitals over the winter months.

19. Olympics and Paralympics

While the summer seems a distant memory already, I am sure council members will want to join me in congratulating all the athletes who represented Staffordshire in the Olympic and Paralympic games and in particular our medal winners Adam Peaty, Frazer Clarke and Sir Lee Pearson.

Their performances were truly amazing and we are exploring how we can mark their achievements in a way in which will inspire young people in sport.

20. Afghan Evacuees

Staffordshire has always been proud to play its part to support people affected by war or conflict.

Last month, we welcomed a large number of families fleeing Afghanistan and they are being temporarily accommodated in Newcastle as they start out on the difficult road to rebuilding a new life here in the UK.

Of course, the people of Staffordshire wanted to help and within days more than £3,000 was raised

21. Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Finally, we know how the pandemic has disrupted so many lives, so it was great to see the Holiday Activities and Food Programme support low-income families over the summer holidays.

In total we teamed up with 22 local providers and more than 40,000 activity places and food items were delivered

Schools also noticed the benefits, reporting that the children were more focused, healthier, with bigger friendship groups and improved social skills.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Council – Thursday 14th October 2021

Change to the Constitution – Number of Questions by Members at Full Council

Recommendation

I recommend that paragraph 8.3 of Section 12 (Procedural Standing Orders) of the Council's Constitution is amended to limit the maximum number of questions that may be submitted by a member to one rather than the current two so that the wording of paragraph 8.3 will then read:

Each Member may submit a maximum of one question each, however only the first 15 questions received by the Director for Corporate Services before the deadline will be dealt with at the meeting. All other questions will receive a written answer

Report of the Director for Corporate Services

Proposed Change

1. The Staffordshire County Council Constitution sets out in section 12 the procedure to be followed at Council Meetings (known as Procedural Standing Orders). Among other things, these deal with how many questions may be submitted by each member at each meeting of the Council under the agenda item known as Members' Questions Under Standing Order 8. The maximum number of questions that may be submitted by Members under Standing Order 8 is currently 2 per member per meeting. It is suggested that the limit is revised to a maximum of 1 question per member per meeting.

Reason for the Change

2. The change will ensure that each member has a better chance of being able to successfully put forward a question at each meeting. It would guarantee that 15 members are allowed to submit a question at each meeting whereas under the current maximum the number of members able to submit a question can be limited by those members who choose to submit two questions.
3. The change was presented to the Audit and Standards Committee on the 13th September whereby the recommendation was approved.

Risk Implications

4. The change proposed should not reduce the ability of members to either obtain information, or to hold the Executive to account, as members would still have a range of other routes to seek answers to questions (e.g. by writing to the Portfolio Member or Officer, by raising the matter under the Leader's Statement).

Legal Implications

5. The changes proposed in this report are designed to ensure that Staffordshire County Council operates a system of good governance, accountability, and transparency as required by the Localism Act 2011, other legislation and more generally as required.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

Climate Change Implications

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

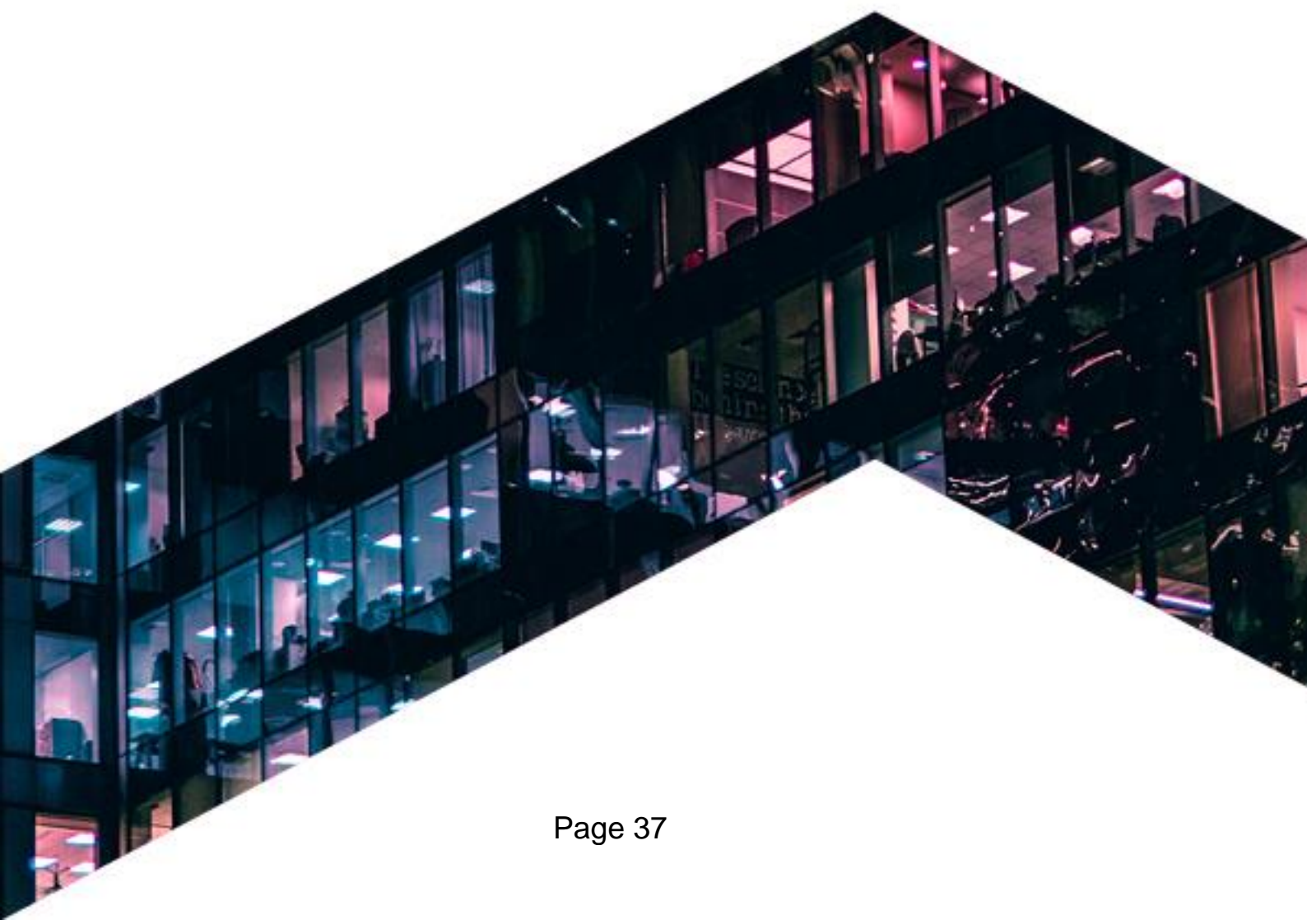
List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Section 12 of Constitution – Procedural Standing Orders

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Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-2021



Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to Staffordshire County Council's Annual Scrutiny Report. I have pleasure in introducing this report which summarises the work that our Select Committees have undertaken over the last 12 months.

This has been a year of unprecedented change, when the Covid-19 pandemic took hold and the Country had to act to make drastic changes to everyday life and routine services. Local Authorities had to operate differently, many services were suspended, schools and public facing services closed, and resources reallocated to point of most need. The Council had to adapt and rise to emerging challenges and demands facing our services, citizens, partners and businesses. Throughout the year new guidance, new pressures and the emerging severity of the situation meant that Local Authorities had to continue to adapt and change.

The Council's scrutiny function has kept a close eye on the changing landscape, new ways of operating, allocation of resource and change through necessity to ensure that all citizens welfare and wellbeing is protected. Flexibility and innovation has resulted in significant progress in the use of new technology and partners and voluntary organisations have worked closely with the Council to maintain equity and supply of services and healthcare to vulnerable people. How the Local Authority adapts and operates post pandemic will be of great focus for scrutiny.

On behalf of the Chairmen of our Select Committees, I would like to thank all Councillors and Officers for their continued support during these ever-challenging times.

Councillor Colin Greatorex

Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Select Committee Chairs



Councillor Colin Greatorex
Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee



Councillor Jeremy Pert
Chairman of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee



Councillor Ian Parry
Chairman of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee



Councillor John Francis
Chairman of the Safe and Strong Select Committee

Introduction

This year saw a different way of working for Select Committees owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and imposition of social distancing restrictions. At the start of the pandemic Corporate Review Select Committee was the only Select Committee to meet virtually and as such took the lead on the help and support being provided to the public and local businesses. When necessary arrangements were in place, all four Select Committees held virtual meetings which were broadcast to the public through live webcasts on the Staffordshire Web.

Work programmes were refreshed to ensure that the right things were considered at the right time, that resources were where they needed to be, to ensure services kept pace with Government guidance, to communicate to local residents, to ensure access to services could be maintained and to plan for the lifting of restrictions as quickly and safely as possible.

Officers and Partners have all worked closely together to maintain checks and balances for service delivery, to re-assure the public and to plan for the future.

What is Overview and Scrutiny

Good scrutiny is an essential part of the Council's governance framework and is integral to decision making. Select Committees in Staffordshire fulfil the statutory responsibility placed on local authorities to review and scrutinise decisions and actions taken, and they play a vital role in influencing services and shaping policies and plans which affect our business and our citizens.

What is a Select Committee

This report refers to Select Committees that were in place in 2020-21. For the remainder of this report we refer to Select Committees, however from May 2021 Select Committees became known as Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Staffordshire County Council's (SCC) Constitution allowed for four Select Committees. The Select Committees investigate issues affecting the communities of

<u>Corporate Review Committee</u> This is the Council's Principal Scrutiny Committee, responsible for the overall management and coordination of Select Committees as well as; overall performance; Strategic Corporate Planning; improvement and transformation; the Local Enterprise Partnership; and the Council's support services. It also deals with any Executive decisions that have been called in.	<u>Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee</u> The Select Committee is responsible for scrutiny of matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Authority's area, including public health and adult social care, in accordance with regulations made under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and subsequent guidance.
<u>Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee</u> The Select Committee is responsible for scrutiny of achievement against the Council's strategic ambitions for promoting prosperity and economic growth including highways infrastructure and connectivity and flood and water management, education, learning and skills.	<u>Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee</u> The Committee is responsible for scrutiny of safeguarding vulnerable people, community safety and localism.

Staffordshire. Each Select Committee has its own area of responsibility which is themed around SCC directorates and reflect the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

The terms of reference are approved by Council and are set out in the Constitution:

Each Select Committee is made up of County Councillors from the different political parties represented on the County Council. They consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and members. Some committees also have co-opted members who are District or Borough Councillors or who are co-opted for their particular expertise.

Select Committees are designed to support and enhance the decision-making process, they aim to make a positive impact by supporting the development of policy, monitoring performance and making important recommendations that will lead to

improvements in services and make best use of resource in everything the Council does.

Select Committees are able to review and scrutinise a wide range of functions and responsibilities including those delivered in partnership with other agencies and organisations. Partnership working is an integral part of the scrutiny process and of good governance which creates a platform to question, shape and develop policies and services with key strategic partners for the people and communities of Staffordshire.

How Does Scrutiny Work

Scrutiny Members identify matters that are importance to local residents or business, or that are of strategic importance to deliver services in order to meet the Local Authority duty as required by law and form a scrutiny work programme for the year.

Select Committees can invite people to attend meetings or inquiry sessions to provide information, explain structures and situations and respond to questions. Committee meetings take place regularly, they are usually open for the public to attend and they are broadcast on the Staffordshire County Council website.

Other methods of scrutiny where members investigate a topic in depth are scrutiny reviews or working groups, these take place over a set period of time and are scoped to ensure the right focus and evidence is gathered to inform a final report and recommendations. Review reports are usually reported to Cabinet or the lead for an external organisation, for example the Chair of a Clinical Commissioning Group.

How Does Scrutiny Make a Difference?

There are many ways scrutiny can have impact, by looking closely at something Members gain an understanding of the facts, the issues and of different perspectives and scrutiny starts to make a difference. How?



Alignment to the Corporate Plan

The Select Committees remit and work programmes are developed to ensure that scrutiny reinforces the value and importance of challenge and they are aligned to the ambitions and delivery of the principles, priorities and outcomes of the Staffordshire Corporate Plan.

'The Staffordshire Vision: A county where big ambitions, great connections and greener living give everyone the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.'







Principles	Select Committee remit
Our workforce will be ambitious for Staffordshire, and make a difference for our people	Corporate Review
Be digital, using technology and data to connect, inform and support our citizens	Corporate Review
Think climate change in all we do to limit our impact on the planet	Corporate Review
Our Pledge: Deliver value for money for residents and businesses and live within our means	Corporate Review

Outcomes Everyone in Staffordshire will: —	Select Committee remit
Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth	Prosperous

Be healthier and independent for longer	Healthy Staffordshire
Feel safer, happier and more supported in their community	Safe and Strong Communities

Priorities	Select Committee remit
Help Staffordshire's economy to grow and generate more good jobs	Prosperous Staffordshire
Invest in infrastructure for growing communities	Prosperous Staffordshire
Improve education and training so that lifelong learning offers everyone the opportunity to succeed	Prosperous Staffordshire
Inspire healthy, independent living	Healthy Staffordshire
Support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well	Healthy Staffordshire
	Safe and Strong Communities
Encourage residents and communities to help themselves and one another	Safe and Strong Communities

What Did Scrutiny Do In 2020-21?

	Select Committee Activity	2020-21
	Number of meetings	30
	Number of reports	61
	External Partners at meetings	62
	Call ins	1
	Working Groups	2

This table provides a snapshot of scrutiny activity this year. Later in this report tables are provided to list all of the topics considered in Select Committee meetings in 2020-21 (see appendix 1).

How Has Scrutiny Added Value?

Corporate Review Select Committee

The Corporate Review Select Committee focus is on the principles in the corporate plan that build a strong organisation, keep Staffordshire strong and look to future proof services and resources.

Staffordshire County Councils **Response to Covid-19** was a regular feature on the agenda. The Committee considered matters that impacted on residents to give assurance and monitor progress, these included food distribution, care home operations, PPE support, School and nursery services, Business support, Covid testing and the work of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which co-ordinated the multi-agency response.

The **Staffordshire Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP)** was a particularly informative session which was attended by a number of Health Care providers. The LOCP was a new and important role for local authorities and helped to prepare for 'Best', 'Middle' and 'Worst' case scenarios, in respect of testing and response to local outbreaks.

The Councils **Covid-19 - Financial situation** was discussed regularly the information provided related to Government funding and Infection Control Fund grants specifically provided to care providers. Members found that loss of income, and unachievable savings from service transformation or unmet budget savings had added to financial pressures. Key financial concerns were the increased demand in adult social care and children's services; support for local businesses; economic regeneration; the delivery of transformation and cost reduction savings; and a shortfall in Business rates.

The Communities Delivery Plan was discussed under the **Communities Principle - Update and Plan for 2020/21**. The Committee understood that the impact of Covid had hit families with Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) more harshly than most, particularly those out of School/Education settings and felt that more work was needed to address this through the Digital Inclusion Plan.

The Committee considered an update on **Gender Equality** to look at the actions taken to advance equality and inclusion for the workforce and for Elected Members and explored how gender imbalances in different roles would affect the pay gap. Later in the work programme they also considered the draft **Parental Leave Policy for Members**, this policy was aimed at bringing the arrangements for Elected Members in line with those of staff, taking into account that Members procedures and processes needed to be slightly different because they were elected. The Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member consider a number of

amendments and suggestions made at the meeting prior to the final policy being considered at Council.

The Committee considered **Integrated Performance** quarterly, as an outcome of scrutiny of Quarter 2 (2020-21) performance the Committee asked to look deeper into the findings from the **Covid 19 Residents survey**. They considered the key messages from the full survey which revealed essential qualitative data to inform service shaping and delivery.

Members explored and commented on the work being undertaken to tackle **digital exclusion in Staffordshire**, they reviewed the approaches in the context of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, Social Care and Health, Families and Communities and the overall impact on service delivery. It was found that Digital is fundamental to the way Staffordshire County Council works as an organisation and how we interact with our partners, citizens and communities. Digital is one of the four key principles set out in our Strategic Plan 2018-22 and the Committee recognised the need for the Council to ensure that as many of our residents as possible are digitally included, to be able to access, have support available and use the wealth of digital information. They agreed to continue to monitor progress in this area.

Reports and minutes <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=604>

Call-In

The Corporate Review Committee also considers 'Call-In' of Cabinet Decisions. In February 2021 it considered a call-in of a decision relating to **Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for Future Generations**.

This issue was of public interest and had been high profile. Prior to Cabinet considering the special area of conservation the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee had carried out scrutiny of the proposals to mitigate the impacts of increased visitor numbers to Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation, including changes to visitor infrastructure at the Council-owned country park such as car parking and site infrastructure. At that meeting the Cabinet Member and public representation were invited to consider the proposals with Members and concerns raised prompted a further report and meeting on matters in relation to consultation. It was agreed to refer their views and comments to the Cabinet 20 January 2021 when making its decision.

Following a Cabinet decision scrutiny has five working days to call-in a decision. The Corporate Review Select Committee called in the decision and a meeting was convened on 5 February 2021 to consider the decision taken by Cabinet and the detailed reasons for the call-in prior to implementation. Members questioned the Cabinet Member on the detail and their concerns in relation to the decision. Following detailed discussion Committee made a recommendation within the options available to them and agreed for the decision to be implemented as set out in the original decision notice. This was agreed by a majority.

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=871>

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee 2020/21

The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee focus is to ensure that health and care services in Staffordshire are doing everything they can do and have to do to look after resident's health and wellbeing.

This year Covid-19 presented many and varied challenges for Adult Social Care, Public Health and NHS services, with pressures not known in recent years and an urgency to adapt and respond to the developing situation. Lockdown 1 impacted on health and care services, not only by Covid itself, but by closure and suspension of other services, staffing pressures and residents' concerns.

The Committee considered other **service reviews and changes to maintain oversight of services** Members reviewed decisions made by the Council in 2019 to ensure that they remained appropriate in light of the pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic it was important to have a wide view of situation, the Committee considered many aspects of **the impact of Covid-19 on health and care services**. Members scrutinised the rising infection rates, pressures on health and care services and the various measures implemented to deal with the effects of the Pandemic including:- service changes to comply with social distancing guidelines, forward planning for a increase in demand, ensuring access to services by existing patients and reaching residents in high risk groups. They identified immediate actions aimed at **improving access to services in the County** and considered the **restoration and recovery of services** following the first lockdown of the pandemic.

The Committee discussed **Residential Care Provision in Staffordshire they were assured that** measures were in place to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and satisfied that the County Council had implemented a Care Homes Support Plan, in line with Government guidance to put in place additional funding and a range of requirements (advice and guidance; training and support; Personal Protective Equipment and testing and surveillance and response to cases and outbreaks). In March 2021 the Committee considered the impact of Covid-19 on **the County Council's strategy for provision of care homes for the elderly in Staffordshire** and the measures to develop the care home market, increase supplies and ensure that the needs of older people could continue to be met at a cost effective price. Projections of future demand were to be remodelled in Spring 2021 with a view to republishing a revised approach to influence the market late 2021. The Committee agreed to revisit the revised approach in the work programme for 2021-22.

The Committee discussed the **implementation of the extended Flu vaccination programme** and were assured that stocks of vaccine were adequate to meet the needs of Phases 1 (over 65-year olds) and 2 (over 50-year olds) in Staffordshire but were determined to highlight any issues in individual localities to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). In February 2021 the Committee considered the

implementation of the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme in the County and agreed to keep progress made in its roll out under close review.

The Committee considered the **mental health burden** arising from the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic and **Public Health responsibilities**. They found that although the long- term effects of the pandemic were not yet known, actions to improve mental health in the wider population would require a sustained system-wide, multi-agency approach.

Members evaluated the **lessons learned so far during the pandemic** with regard to mental health services, virtual appointments and engagement with local communities, they agreed to give reassurance and encouragement to local residents to attend **GP surgeries** as necessary and asked for further data relating to face to face and virtual appointments by general practice.

The Committee invited partners from the CCG, University Hospital North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM), University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (UHDB) and Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RW) and other organisations to attend meetings to provide information, plans and statistical data about several key services and to respond questions about performance, plans and changes to services. They considered a range of key health topics:

- **Backlog of hospital appointments as a result of the pandemic**
- **Winter Plans for the 2020/21 season**
- **Reconfiguration of the Community First Responders (CFR) Service in the County**
- **NHS hearing aid provision in Staffordshire**
- **Together We're Better – NHS Digital programme and key learnings from the 2020/21 Covid-19 pandemic**

The Committee emphasised Health Scrutiny's statutory duty to consider consultation on **substantial variations** in service provision and they considered the status of critical services and other local health facilities temporarily closed or impacted by the pandemic, highlighting the health inequalities that may have arisen during the pandemic.

The Committee considered proposals for the **development of an Integrated Care System (ICS) for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent** to reconfigure the County's current clinical commissioning arrangements into a single strategic unit and develop Integrated Care Partnerships and sustainable Primary Care Networks. A further report provided joint consultation findings and advised that the General Practices had supported their merger into a single strategic commissioning body. The Committee will continue to engage with health partners on the development of an ICS for Staffordshire and will undertake further scrutiny in 2021-22 work programme.

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=871>

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

The Select Committee's focus is on the Council's strategic ambitions for promoting prosperity and economic growth including highways infrastructure and connectivity and flood and water management, education, learning and skills.

The Committee considered a report regarding proposals to protect **Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Future Generations**. Whilst they accepted the need for mitigating action to protect the SAC, they were mindful of user groups' concerns and therefore asked Cabinet to review the consultation they had undertaken to ensure it had been sufficiently robust and inclusive. In addition, they made additional recommendations in order to mitigate concerns raised.

In their Quarterly dates, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills updated the Committee on progress being made towards securing the **Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation** of the County. They heard of the challenges ahead arising from the pandemic but noted that the Authority were continuing to support businesses and contribute towards shaping the future recovery of the County. Members highlighted, the importance of revitalising high streets and town centres, attracting high skilled, well paid jobs and raised concerns regarding behavioural changes brought about by on-going 'lockdowns'.

The Committee discussed **the economic impact of HS2 in Staffordshire** and scrutinised the action being taken to secure the best deal for Staffordshire in terms of mitigation measures, compensation for residents, improved connectivity and economic growth. Owing to the importance of the issue, they decided that HS2 would be a standing item at each meeting in 2021-22.

An update was considered by the Committee on preparations for returning **children to school from 8 March 2021**, in line with Government's direction. They were reassured that most Staffordshire schools had remained open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. However, some schools were forced to close owing to local outbreaks of Covid-19). During their deliberations, Members raised specific concerns regarding:- (i) The health and safety of school communities and implications for the wider population ; and (ii) the quality of learning achieved during the pandemic,.

The Cabinet Member updated the Committee on the **impact of the pandemic on home to school transport**. Transport had been provided for all pupils who needed it and the Council had worked closely with bus, coach and taxi operators to ensure their businesses were sustainable, as far as possible, through the pandemic. Members were pleased to note that school transport would be ready to return to full operations from 8 March 2021.

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=868>

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

The Committee focus is on safeguarding vulnerable people, community safety and localism. The key focus of scrutiny during the year was the impact of the 2020/21

Covid-19 pandemic on the County Council's work to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

The Committee considered the **Customer Feedback and Complaints Service – Adults Social Services Annual report 2019/20** the Authority has a statutory duty to publish details of complaints made under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and Local Authority Act 1970. The committee was encouraged that the volume of complaints had been relatively small in relation to the extent of Adult Social Services provided by the Authority. There had been 187 Stage 1 – Local Investigation complaints and 35 Stage 2 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints. The Committee was encouraged to find that there had been no complaints requiring independent investigation. Members were satisfied that the Authority had taken appropriate steps to improve service delivery where necessary.

The Committee considered the **Customer Feedback and Complaints Service – Children's Social Services Annual report 2019/20** which had been prepared to comply with the Authority's statutory duty to publish details of complaints made under the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The committee was encouraged that the volume of complaints had been relatively small in relation to the extent of Children's Social Services provided by the Authority. The number of complaints received during the year was as follows:- (i) 124 Statutory Stage 1 – Local Investigation complaints; (ii) 12 Statutory Stage 2 – Independent Investigation complaints; (iii) 1 Statutory Stage 3 – Complaint Review Panel complaints; (iv) 47 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints; (v) 169 Corporate Stage 1 – Local Investigation complaints and; (vi) 18 Corporate Stage 2 – Internal Review complaints. Members welcomed that 225 complements had been received during the same period. Members were satisfied that the Authority had taken appropriate steps to learn from the criticisms made and improve service delivery where necessary. Committee requested more real-time data relating to complaints in order to assist them in their overview and scrutiny role.

Committee considered reports relating to **Court Backlog: Impact on Children's Social Care** and the **Impact of Covid-19 on Children appearing in Criminal Courts**. They heard that the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic had exacerbated a pre-existing backlog in the family and criminal justice systems which, unfortunately, had significant implications for those families and individuals concerned. In addition, there were considerable financial pressures on the County Council from delays in cases being heard. The Committee helped to ensure that appropriate action was being taken by the County Council to highlight the difficulties caused by delays in cases being heard in court, with Central Government, the judiciary, independent sectors and other stakeholders.

Members heard that the number of children and young people in **Elective Home Education (EHE)** in Staffordshire had increased by 537 to 1296 during 2020/21 and was attributed to the pandemic. In these circumstances, the Committee renewed their focus on the progress made by the County Council in implementing the

recommendations from a review of EHE support undertaken in Staffordshire during 2018 in respect of:- (i) off rolling pupils from school to EHE; (ii) an annual event to celebrate achievements of EHE students and; (iii) Staffing levels within the EHE service. They also undertook to continue their efforts towards achieving legislative changes for the establishment of a register of children not attending mainstream schools and associated duties on parents/proprietors of certain educational settings”.

The Committee considered the **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Report 2019/20**. They noted that there had been 4150 occasions during the year where concerns about adults with care and support needs being at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect were reported, which represented an increase of 439 (11%) compared to 2018/19. Whilst they expressed the need for more consistency in methods of data capture between Authorities to enable benchmarking, they were encouraged by the lessons which had been learnt and commended all Officers and the Independent Chair on their excellent work and commitment to safeguarding.

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=870>

What's Coming Up In 2021/22

The Elections in May 2021 has brought a change in Councillors appointed to the County Council, District and Borough Councils

We have entered the municipal year 2021/22 still operating in extremely challenging times. Government has decided not to extend the emergency legislation relating to remote/virtual meetings, but social distancing remains in place. This means that not all meeting rooms have the capacity to hold the full complement of both officers and members. Therefore, we will introduce ‘hybrid meetings’, with Members in attending in person and officers and partners attending remotely, where necessary.

The lessons learned through this period of remote working provides valuable experience and progress for the future of virtual scrutiny work. This will see us working in different ways and engaging the public and partners with more technology-based solutions in the future.

Staffordshire County Council Overview and Scrutiny will start the new Municipal year with development of the work programmes, when the Council and Partners will provide a summary of their services and plans, highlight the challenges and priorities for the services for 2021-22 and beyond in order to identify and prioritise topics for Overview and Scrutiny.

To find out more about Overview and Scrutiny work for 2021-22 visit: [here](#)

Appendix 1: Items considered during the year 2020/21

Corporate Review Select Committee

- Staffordshire County Council response to COVID 19 and regular COVID 19 updates
- Gender Equality Update
- Parental Leave Policy for Members
- Quarterly Integrated Performance Reports
- Staffordshire COVID 19 Local Outbreak Control Plan
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Service – Annual Report 2019-20
- Communities Principle Update and Plan
- Staffordshire COVID 19 Residents Survey – Key Findings
- Digital Inclusion
- Scrutiny of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-26
- Call – in: Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for future Generations

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

- West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust – Reconfiguration of Staffordshire First Responders Service and update
- Mental Health Burden & 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic in Staffordshire
- Residential Care Provision in Staffordshire
- Backlog of Hospital Appointments arising from the Covid-19 9 Pandemic
- Winter Plans 2020/21 and the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic
- NHS Hearing Aid Provision in Staffordshire
- Adult Learning Disability 2022 Community Offer – Update on Learning Disability Services provided by Staffordshire County Council
- Covid-19 Challenge to Service Delivery
- Digital Inclusion / Exclusion
- Integrated Care System Delivery Plan
- Covid-19 Vaccination Programme
- The Journey towards an Integrated Care System – Stakeholder Engagement
- Together We're Better – Digital Programme Update and Key Learnings from Covid-19 Pandemic
- Care Homes for Older People: Implications of Covid-19 for Council Strategy
- District / Borough Health Scrutiny Activity Updates

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

- The Effects of Covid-19 on Further Education
- Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy and Quarterly Updates
- Community Learning Briefing Paper
- Covid-19 School Update
- Infrastructure and Lighting for Staffordshire Performance Review
- Flood Management
- Draft SEND Strategy and Draft Accessibility Strategy
- North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Action Plan (NSLAQP) – Outline Business Case
- Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for Future Generations
- Household Waste and Recycling Centre Contract – Re- Procurement
- HS2 Updates – Impact on Staffordshire
- Update on Return to Schools and School Transport
- The relationship between Training and Skills and the Future Staffordshire Economy
- Staffordshire Community Learning Service Annual Self-assessment (2019-20)
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

- Response to Covid-19 for SCC Children a& Families Services
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (SSSCB)
Response to Covid-19
- Children & Families System Transformation (Exemption paragraph 3)
- Customer Feedback & Complaints Service – Adult Social Services Annual Report 2019-20
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Service – Children's Social Services Annual Report 2019-20
- Court Backlog: Impact on Children's Social Care
- Impact of Covid-19 on Children appearing in Criminal Courts
- Customer Feedback& Complaints Service
- Elective Home Education
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Report 2019/20
- Children & Families Transformation Phase 2 Update & Learning from the Serious Case Review
- Contextual Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adolescents
- Commissioning of Child Exploitation and Children and Young People Missing from Home or Care

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

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

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on 23 September 2021.

The main items considered were:

Minutes Silence – Councillor Brian Edwards

The Panel held a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Brian Edwards.

Police and Crime Plan / Fire and Rescue Plan Update

The Commissioner updated the Panel on the progress made in developing his Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan. He emphasised that there would be wide consultation with both partners and other bodies and that he was particularly interested in hearing from the public. Consultation would be with as many people from all areas of the community as possible.

The Panel thanked Mr Adams for his presentation and after a number of questions the following information was noted:

- Hard to reach groups such as BME groups would be encouraged to comment on the plan. It was hoped that every part of the community would be reached.
- A variety of methods of consultation would be used from social media to paper copies of the plan in libraries and public buildings.
- Those who don't have access to technology would still have a chance to respond.
- The plan would be subject to review if government direction changed. This was a particular issue should the current national review of the PFCC role make recommendations for the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), to changed or expanded.
- The plan would be reviewed annually, and progress monitored via this Panel.
- Parish and District Councils would be consulted, and all Councillors had already been emailed directly with contact information for both the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner.
- The Police and Crime Plan would compliment the Police Force Plan and the Fire Service Plan and would aligned the two. The Commissioner stated that he may be asking for improvements in performance which may not be considered a priority for either service. Consultation would take place between services, but the priority would always be on Staffordshire residents.

The Commissioners Police and Crime Plan would be considered at the next formal meeting of the Panel on 25 October 2021.

Police Performance Update

The Commissioner had temporarily halted the public performance meetings with the Acting Chief Constable during the selection and interview period for the permanent Chief Constable. He explained that in holding the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account, the Commissioner would concentrate on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan; Statutory requirements; public satisfaction; recruitment and national indicator comparison.

It was intended to reintroduce the performance meetings on a quarterly basis for the Police Force and Biannually for Fire and Rescue Services.

Knife crime was part of the national indicators and was outlined in the report. Work was taking place with partners around serious crime, anti-terrorism/drug related crime/county lines to ensure that priorities were being targeted. There were good working relationships with all neighbouring forces including Derbyshire and Cheshire and similar statistical neighbours to ensure information was shared and lessons learnt.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that Police response and contact times would remain a priority and a separate piece of work was being undertaken to look at improving figures.

Following a question on road safety funding, Helen Fisher explained that there was a small budget for road safety schemes but there were plans to strengthen the partnership and put the community at the heart of activities by strengthening Community Speed Watch groups. Reducing accidents, including catching and removing criminals driving stolen cars or driving without insurance was also a priority. Extending the support provided and sharing equipment may enable improvements without the need for increased funding or more speed cameras. The Commissioner emphasised that road safety was a top priority for the public and would not be ignored. Further information on this review would be supplied to members at a later date. The possible reintroduction of powers for PCSO's to issue parking fines was discussed especially near to schools. It was explained that this was an operational matter, but the Commissioner would discuss this with the new Chief Constable.

A question was asked on a scheme carried out by Medway Police Force covering the issue of safer schools and reducing offending. The Commissioner explained that he was not familiar with the project but agreed that better results were found by keeping people out of the judicial/penal pathway. The way that reoffending was tackled would be considered by the Panel as part of the Police and Crime delivery update.

The Panel supported the priorities outlined by the Commissioner and felt that they were the ones that the public raise with them on a regular basis. Contact was a priority, however the pandemic was still a concern and the numbers contacting the force following the lifting of lockdown measures was a significant increase on

previous years. Particular increases had been seen in missing persons, suicides, and mental health concerns.

Officer recruitment was progressing well. Different skills were required for different geographical areas and services and a more diverse workforce would help to support this.

Fire and Rescue Performance Update

The Panel received the performance report for the Fire and Rescue Service. It was noted that the plan was for 2020-2024 but would be reviewed annually to meet the changing needs of the service.

The additional work carried out by the service during the pandemic was discussed, particularly the work carried out with the Local Resilience Partners and the NHS mobile vaccination unit. The effects of Covid on staff members had been felt, particularly with the loss of a team member. The effect of long Covid on lung capacity was a national issue which would be monitored.

The Commissioner expressed concern that during the national discussions on Fire Officer pay, the four Commissioners who cover Police and Fire Services had not been invited to comment, but they had been for Police pay discussions. However, the local relationship with unions was considered to be positive and strong.

The safety of transient people and the work undertaken with landlords of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) was explored. It was explained that the fire service gave advice and guidance to the private sector and it was also a recommendation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Following a question on the approach taken on checking the quality of work undertaken by the service, it was explained that the HMI were due to start an inspection and the Commission would pay particular attention to quality monitoring and risks.

Response times in some circumstances was not ideal. A hybrid of full and part time station/work force provision was needed and this need to be risk based and in the right location. This would be considered at a future meeting.

The Panel agreed to write to both the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Force to thank them for all their work throughout the pandemic.

Progress report on appointment of Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable

The Commissioner reported that the selection process for both the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer had been completed and the Commissioner was now in a position to refer his preferred candidates to the Panel for consideration at a confirmation hearing. The Chairman reported that a provisional date had been set for 12 October to consider the appointments

Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

Members of the Panel questioned/sought the views of the Commissioner on the following issues and received the responses indicated:

Question/Issue	Response
Was there anything that could be done to improve Town Centre Policing in Newcastle as there was a perception of increased anti-social behaviour and intimidation?	The Commissioner would look at the concerns with local officers and report back to Councillor Heesom.
Had there been any progress in the development of a local Firing range?	This item was on the Panels Work Programme.
Rural wildlife crime (including livestock and farming equipment) was an issue in some parts of the County but it was not mentioned in any of the plans.	The Commissioner stated that responding to theft was a fundamental part of policing and was a priority. The term 'rural' may not have been used but it was covered in all plans.
Was there any guidance on working together to support and relocate travellers?	The Commissioner was keen to have a forum where all partners could come together to share their knowledge and expertise. It was noted that one consistent way of dealing with issues would be useful.
Could Neighbourhood watch forums be reinstated?	It was explained that as from 1 st October Safer Neighbourhood Panels would end and the Commissioner was looking at a new model of local engagement. He wanted to see the public and partners having a bigger voice and able to raise local concerns which was difficult under the current model.
The Chairman welcomed the recognition that the community need to have a voice in local policing and a means of raising concerns. A further comment was made on the need for clear policies and procedures, so it was clear who was responsible for which service/deliver of actions.	The Commissioner restated that this was being reviewed and brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

Webcast can be found at

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1150&MId=13737&Ver=4>

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

Councillor Bernard Peters
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Chairman

