

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 July 2022

Attendance

Mark Deaville	David Williams
Julia Jessel	Simon Tagg
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	Alan White (Chairman)
Mark Sutton	Victoria Wilson

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Paul Northcott

PART ONE

16. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

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

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Mark Deaville	27	Personal	Director of Nexxus

17. Decision notice of the meeting held on 15 June 2022

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 be approved.

18. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including advice to the public not to swim in open water and not to bring barbeques to Cannock Chase or country parks; Keele being named best UK university in the Student Crowd awards, with Staffordshire University ranked 4th; more than 80 apprentices being recognised at an annual graduation ceremony at Keel University last month including a number working at the county council; the recent opening of the superb Shire Hall Business Centre in Stafford town centre; the initiative to encourage people to cut down on plastic use or even go plastic free; the offer of free activities and food for children over the summer to those on low incomes; and wishing the best of luck to all of our Staffordshire athletes competing in the Commonwealth Games; be noted.

19. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 July 2022

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 July 2022 be received.


20. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills giving an update on “Staffordshire Means Back to Business” activity including the following matters be noted:

- How the Staffordshire economy is well placed to deal with the economic conditions Staffordshire businesses find themselves working within and how those businesses not only survive but continue to thrive.
- How SME’s are the foundation upon whom the success of the Staffordshire economy rests. Over 400 people have attended the business start-up training offered by the Council’s business start-up programme resulting in 170 new businesses starting to trade.
- The Council continues to promote and support the local economy at multiple levels. Whether that be national, through the recent very successful “We Are Staffordshire” promotional trip to the Palace of Westminster, to regional work through the Midlands Engine and our own direct activity along the A50 A500 corridor or locally, through partnerships with our Boroughs and Districts and the highly successful Staffordshire Means Back to Business Programme. The Council is working closely with our District and Borough Partners over plans of collaboration to maximise the benefits of governments UK Shared Prosperity Fund, working at scale but also at a very localised level. We are also supporting our colleagues in the preparation of their Levelling Up Fund 2 applications in addition to working to submit our own based on transport priorities.
- How the Council is investing its own money in the local economy such as through the recently opened Shire Hall. This important building in the centre of Stafford has been refurbished into managed workspace with easy tenancy arrangements, including virtual, designed to be flexible and meet the needs of small and start-up businesses. Getting more businesses back into our town centres is also critical to support plans through Town Deals and Future High Streets, helping to generate footfall and vibrant places.

- The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has decreased further and now stands at 3.7%, or 2,400 young people which for the first time is now 15 below the pre-pandemic level. This is reflective of our strong and resilient local economy and the record number of job vacancies currently available across the full economy, with more young people finding employment in areas of demand to aid the recovery from the pandemic. There remain clear opportunities for more young people in a number of our priority and locally important sectors such as manufacturing, construction, logistics, health & social care and hospitality.
- The decline in young people claiming Universal Credit has contributed to an overall decline of 180 claimants in June and our claimant rate which now stands at 2.7% of the working age population which is well below the regional rate of 4.9% and national rate of 3.8%.

21. Approval of Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Procurement Arrangements 2023 to 2027

	<p>"Community learning is targeted to help those who may need help with core English, Maths and digital skills in an environment that works for them and give others the opportunity to improve their vocational skills to increase their employability.</p> <p>With capable workers in demand, this programme helps hundreds of people take steps towards either finding a job or improving upon the one they have. Incorporating lessons from the pandemic, these arrangements for 2023 to 2027 will also help our community learning programme evolve to deliver learning in different ways that reach new audiences".</p> <p>Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To seek approval to procure and develop a four-year Community Learning Framework to continue to meet the priorities and outcomes of the Community Learning & Commissioning strategy and approval of the funding allocation and distribution for the first contract year 2023-2024


Decision – (a) That approval be given to conduct an Open tender process in line with Staffordshire County Council's Procurement Regulations and the

Public Contract Regulations to put in place a Community Learning Framework, ensuring the Council achieves value for money and delivers its Community Learning & Commissioning Strategy.

(b) That the award of the Community Learning Framework and subsequent call-off contracts relating to the annual allocation and distribution of funding, be delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills.

22. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022/23

	<p>"Creating the right conditions for businesses and our economy to grow and thrive remains a priority for the county council. Supporting businesses to create better quality jobs helps improve people's financial security, especially at a time when living and energy costs are on the increase.</p> <p>We continue to do and spend what is necessary to support those who need us most, however, the rising demand and cost of social care for adults and children continues, and we face challenges alongside our residents in dealing with increasing inflationary pressures.</p> <p>To help with the pressures in health and social care, an extra £19.25 million has been allocated through the Better Care Fund (BCF), to help people remain in their homes and communities for longer. This is on top of the £123 million BCF, which is used by the council and local NHS to help people needing health and social care.</p> <p>The transformation of our Children's services continues with areas of improvement, such as multi-agency working and improved processes, however, challenges remain in relation to increasing demand, market availability of children in care placements, workforce capacity and recruitment of social workers. An Ofsted focussed visit in relation to Children in Need and Child Protection was also carried out in quarter 1 which found that interventions are having a positive impact on children's lives and keeping families together.</p>
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	<p>The current Warmer Homes scheme has been extended to Quarter 2 and continues to provide significant benefits to residents, especially given the rising price of energy. As of 8th June 2022, 528 households had benefitted. While over 2,300 people had received support from 'Beat the Cold'.</p> <p>Despite the pressures facing councils like ours, we will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We want Staffordshire people to enjoy a better quality of life, in thriving communities, and live longer in good health".</p> <p>Alan White, Leader of the Council</p> <p>"All council departments continue to deliver against their priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation's delivery plan.</p> <p>Good progress has been made across the organisation during Quarter 1, however inflationary pressures across the organisation are having a significant impact. In addition, workforce capacity and recruitment, and demand challenges remain, particularly within Health and Care and Families and Communities.</p> <p>The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £14.693m (2.76%). Inflationary pressures are forecast to be in the region of £50-70m in the current and future years and we continue to monitor the situation carefully.</p> <p>Like many local authorities, we still face financial challenges, but we continue to keep our finances in as strong a position as possible. Well managed finances ensures that we provide good value for money for local tax-payers and means we can continue to invest in our future and growing our economy".</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider an overview of Staffordshire County Council’s progress, performance and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan.

Decision – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the allocation of £6m from the Contingency budget to mitigate the pressures in Children’s Services and the allocation of £5.050m from the inflation reserve to mitigate pressures caused by increasing prices, be approved.

(c) That, further to the investment in Highways agreed in February as part of the MTFS, an additional £1m be allocated to the service on an ongoing basis, to be funded from interest earned.

23. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	<p>“Staffordshire County Council is a well-run council, and we continue to manage our finances prudently while doing and spending what is required. By using cash reserves rather than borrowing more, we have been able to achieve substantial savings in what remain challenging times. As well as being prudent, our low-risk investment approach, which focuses on lending to low-risk institutions, means we have been well placed to deal with challenges arising from difficulties the current global economy presents. We remain committed to supporting local businesses along with providing access to funding, as we work to grow our economy.”</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To inform the Cabinet of the Council’s investment and borrowing activity during 2021/22 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time.

Decision – (a) That the treasury management activities for the year ended 31 March 2022, including the Prudential Indicators outturn (detailed in Appendix 4 to the report), be noted.

(b) That the use of the Minimum Revenue Provision at 31 March 2022 (as set out in paragraphs 29 and 30 of the report) be noted and approved.

(c) That the proposed revision to the Non-Standard Investment limits (as detailed in paragraphs 56 and 57 and Appendix 5 to the report) be noted and approved.

24. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Decision – That the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers be noted:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills	In approving the Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning funding allocation and distribution for 2022 to 2023
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)	In approving the recommendations of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

25. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 17 August to 21 December 2022, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Start-up and Step-up Support Delivery Plan	Name: Anthony Hodge Tel: (01785) 277204
Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service - from April 2024	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Section 75 Agreement for Adult Social Care Assessment and Case Management and Occupational Therapy in Staffordshire	Name: Jo Cowcher Tel: 07772 011078
Adult Social Care Reform Implementation	Name: Jo Cowcher Tel: 07772 011078
Award approval for the Framework Agreement the Provision and Installation of PVC-U Windows, Aluminium Doors and Ancillary Work – Non-Domestic	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Multiply - National numeracy programme	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Healthy Lifestyles Contract	Name: Anthony Bullock Tel: (01785) 276649
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2022/23	Name: Kerry Dove Tel: 07855 679112

Family Hub Model	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
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26. Exclusion of the Public

Decision – 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 Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

The Cabinet then proceeded to consider the following matters:

PART TWO

Cllr Philip White took the Chair.

27. Enhanced Home Care Service

(Exclusion paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals for the development of an Enhanced Home Care Service which would work flexibly, offering additional home care capacity to meet demand when necessary, and reablement for some people when demand is lower to increase their independence.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

28. Highways Future Delivery Model

(Exclusion paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider future delivery model options for Staffordshire Highways from October 2024.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

29. Decision Making for Looked After Children/ Use of Regulated placements - Update

(Exclusion paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To provide Cabinet with an update in relation to the use of unregulated placements.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

Leader of the Council