

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Monday 28 February 2022

**14:00**

Council Chamber, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live which can be viewed at any time here:

<https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell  
Director of Corporate Services  
18 February 2022

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### **A G E N D A**

1. **Declarations of Interest**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes of meeting held on 13 January 2022** (Pages 1 - 8)
4. **Staffordshire Community Learning Service Annual Self-Assessment (2020-2021)** (Pages 9 - 92)  
  
Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
5. **Countryside Estate Review** (Pages 93 - 116)  
  
Report of Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture
6. **Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan** (Pages 117 - 364)  
  
Report of Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
7. **Accessibility Strategy Committee Report** (Pages 365 - 388)  
  
Report of Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)
8. **Work Programme** (Pages 389 - 400)

## 9. Exclusion of the Public

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

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### Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

nil

#### Membership

Tina Clements (Chairman)	Ian Lawson
Mike Deakin	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Keith Flunder (Vice-Chairman (Overview))	Jessica Shulman
Philippa Haden	David Smith
Philip Hudson	Ross Ward (Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny))
Syed Hussain	Bernard Williams
Graham Hutton	

## Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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**Minutes of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 13 January 2022**

Present: Tina Clements (Chairman)

**Attendance**

Keith Flunder (Vice-Chairman (Overview))	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Philippa Haden	David Smith
Philip Hudson	Ross Ward (Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny))
Graham Hutton	Bernard Williams

**Apologies:** Syed Hussain and Ian Lawson

**PART ONE**

**29. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillor Keith Flunder declared an Interest in Item No. 6 on Agenda, "Economic Renewal and Transformation - Six Monthly Review", owing to his receipt of a Small Business Loan.

**30. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**31. HS2 - Education, Skills and Prosperity for Staffordshire - Six Month Update**

The Committee received an oral report and PowerPoint presentation (slides attached at Appendix 1 to the signed minutes) by HS2 giving them six monthly update on the impact of the development of the new high speed rail line on education, skills and prosperity in Staffordshire.

The meeting was attended by:- (i) HS2's Senior Area Engagement Manager (Jonathan Lord); (ii) Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement (Jason Pacey); (iii) Senior Business Engagement Manager (Matt Hadlington) and; (iv) Skills and Employment Strategy Manager (Rebecca Young).

During their presentation, the representatives updated them on the progress made towards construction of Phases 1 and 2a of the Project. They then outlined work which had recently been undertaken to engage with local businesses, promote skills, education and employment in the area, together with news regarding the award of grants made under the Community Environmental Fund and Business and Local Economy Fund initiatives.

In the discussion which ensued Members scrutinised and held HS2 and Cabinet Member to account over their efforts to safeguard/enhance prosperity in the County, raising various matters of concern including:- (i) the efforts being made to link HS2's workshops in Staffordshire's schools into existing curriculum themes; (ii) job vacancies within the local community likely to be generated from the various high value contracts referred to in the presentation (eg Phase 2a - Design and Delivery, Advanced Civils Works and Rollingstock etc); (iii) HS2's involvement in developing training opportunities at Staffordshire Universities leading to recognised qualifications; (iv) opportunities available to local communities not directly affected by the construction of the line to apply for grant aid and; (v) links being made into primary school education.

In response to requests from Members:- (i) the Director of Corporate Services undertook to forward an electronic copy of the PowerPoint slides to them for information; (ii) HS2 undertook to provide a link to the Webinar being hosted jointly by Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and HS2 in March 2022 (as referred to in the presentation) and; (iii) share details of those Staffordshire schools included in their programme of visits, in due course.

The Chairman then thanked the representatives of HS2 for their attendance, an interesting and informative presentation and the opportunity to visit the Apprentice Hub, Curdworth, Warwickshire in November 2021.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.

(b) That the efforts made to date to maximise the opportunities available to Staffordshire residents from the construction of the high-speed rail line by HS2 be welcomed.

(c) That a further update be brought to the Committee in July 2022.

(d) That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills continue to be held to account for his efforts to maximise the opportunities available to Staffordshire residents from the construction of the line, where possible.

### **32. Aspiration Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Working Group - Six Month Review of Action Plan Implementation**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills updating them on progress with regard to implementation of the recommendations of the former Aspiration, Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Work Group (schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

The Aspiration, Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Working Group had undertaken an overview project to consider "How can we in Staffordshire raise aspirations around lifelong career learning and upskilling, ensuring all local people can progress into 'better jobs' throughout their working life?" and "Given the impacts of Covid-19 and looking to our future local economy, how can we ensure that the Staffordshire workforce – of all ages – remain ambitious for their future, and how can we encourage entrepreneurship?" during 20/21.

At their meeting on 16 June 2021, Cabinet considered the final reports from these two investigations together with initial Executive Responses from portfolio holders which provided a planned course of action/update against each recommendation. These were subsequently received by Cabinet and agreed.

During his presentation of the report the Cabinet Member highlighted:- (i) the work which had recently been undertaken to develop the 'Staffordshire Story' and 'We are Staffordshire' brand; (ii) outreach work to promote aspiration through the provision of digital resources; (iii) work to support Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce 'Ignite Programme' encouraging students to develop their hidden entrepreneurship; (iv) the operation of Staffordshire's Business and Rural Loans Schemes; (v) work to increase provision of suitable sites for business growth involving the regeneration of Shire Hall, Stafford, Burton Library and Rugeley Power Station into enterprise hubs and; (vi) the sustainable approach being adopted to encouraging aspiration having regard to the Authority's recent declaration of a climate change emergency.

Members reviewed the progress made against the 17 Recommendations contained in the Action Plan (attached as an Appendix to the report) in turn to ensure that they continued to address the various issues highlighted and were timely, giving detail scrutiny and asking questions where necessary.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations of the former Aspiration, Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Work Group, be welcomed.

(c) That a further update on progress be brought to the Committee at their July 2022 meeting (to be combined with the already programmed 'Economic Renewal and Transformation – Six Monthly Recovery Update' item).

### **33. Economic, Renewal and Transformation - Six Monthly Update Recovery**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills (schedule 2 to the signed minutes) giving them a quarterly update on progress made against the Staffordshire Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy, "Staffordshire Means Back to Business".

The Strategy was adopted in 2020 and set out the County Council's priorities for the next five years through the following four phases:- (i) Respond – "support our businesses and residents through the Covid-19 pandemic"; (ii) Recover – "create the conditions to support our businesses and residents to return to work as soon as possible"; (iii) Renew – "continue to progress those priorities that will play an important role in achieving our ambitions to develop the local economy beyond the current crisis" and; (iv) Transform – "utilise the opportunities presented by the current economic conditions by supporting the transformation of the local economy to be digital, clean and higher-value".

Members were provided with various headline statistics including:- (i) the proportion of working age residents in Staffordshire on Government support schemes which had fallen to 9% against a national average of approximately 11%; (ii) the Staffordshire claimant count for Universal Credit which had fallen to 3.6% from 4.4% in the previous report (July 2020); (iii) the predicted national unemployment peak rate which had been revised from 12% at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic to 5.2%; (iv) then vacancy rate which had increased by 18% between September and October 2021 compared to the previous month. In addition, they noted that there had been several major business expansions announced in the County in recent months including 2000 new jobs at ASOS's development at Fradley and 800 new jobs at Pets at Homes development in Stafford.

During the discussion which ensued Members were pleased to note the positive signs of economic recovery following the recent recession caused by the Pandemic and the continued support being provided by the County Council to business. However, whilst Staffordshire continued to perform better than the national and regional averages, they acknowledged that a return to pre-pandemic performance levels would take time and there was likely to be further setbacks in the economy in the future as it adapted to new market/post pandemic conditions. In addition, they highlighted the need for effective engagement with school pupils and students in further education regarding entrepreneurship and requested the Cabinet Member to ensure appropriate attention was given in this respect.

In response to requests from the Committee, the Cabinet Member undertook to improve liaison with 'local' Members regarding economic development in their areas linked to the various business development initiatives being promoted by the County Council.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the continued signs of economic recovery following the re-opening of the Staffordshire economy be welcomed.

(c) That the Cabinet Member ensure appropriate emphasis on engagement with school pupils and students in further education to improve skills, employability and promote entrepreneurship.

(d) That a further update be brought to the Committee in July 2022 to include key metrics linked to the four priority phases listed above.

#### **34. Highways High Level Transformation**

The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport giving details of the Authority's new vision and ambitions for the County's Highway network over the five-year period to 2027 (slides attached as Appendix 2 to the signed minutes). This was to assist them in giving scrutiny to the related items already included in their Work Programme during the current municipal year with a view to ensuring the Highways Transformation Programme could be as effective as possible.

The Cabinet Member explained that during the 2021 Elections, voters had stated that repairing the County's roads should be a top priority. Funding for road maintenance was a major issue nationally with an estimated backlog of repairs amounting to £10 bn. In Staffordshire, the value of the outstanding repair bill was estimated to be in the region of £200m. Whilst Cabinet continued to consider how this challenging funding gap could be met, fundamental changes to the service were also required in order to achieve their aim of an improved Highway network.

The County Council's current contract with their Highways Partner was due to end in 2024 and Cabinet's ambition was for the new arrangements to be more customer focused. In advance of these changes, the Network Management Unit had been brought back in-house and other services including safety inspections, work identification and asset management were to be 'in-sourced' in April 2022.

During the discussion which ensued Members spoke their concerns including:- (i) the need to ensure the greater quality and consistency of repairs in future; (ii) the importance of routine maintenance eg gulley emptying and the effect of recent cutbacks in the work force on the condition of the County's roads; (iii) the need for the Authority and 'Local' Members to lobby Central Government and MPs respectively for extra resources; (iv) the impact of HGVs on the local road network; (v) the need for an enhanced role for Local Members in setting priorities in future road maintenance and; (vi) road openings by utility companies and the standard of re-instatements.

In reply, the Cabinet Member undertook to have regard to the comments made by the Committee in shaping the future configuration of services and looked forward to working with them in implementing his new vision and aspirations for the County's Highway network.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the presentation be received and noted.

(b) That the various items included in their Work Programme for the current Municipal Year relating to the Highways Transformation Programme, be confirmed.

### **35. Work Programme**

In response to a request from a Member, the Scrutiny and Support Officer undertook to circulate a copy of Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education's Annual report for 2021, to the Committee for information so that they could give scrutiny, as required.

**RESOLVED** – That the updated Work Programme (schedule 3 to the signed minutes) be approved.

**36. Date of Next Meeting - Monday 28 February 2022 at 2.00 pm, County Buildings, Stafford**

**RESOLVED** – That the date, time and venue of the next meeting be noted.

**Chairman**



<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Monday 28 February 2022**

### **Staffordshire Community Learning Service Annual Self-Assessment (2020– 2021)**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers the performance and quality assurance of Community Learning commissioned and delivered through Staffordshire County Council’s Community Learning Team, as set out in the Annual Self-Assessment Report.
- b. Considers any further priorities for improvement and areas for development of our Community Learning offer.

#### **Report of Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. The Skills and Employability Service focuses on a range of education and training opportunities to meet the needs of learners, the economy and the wider community. This report is about the Community Learning the Service provided across Staffordshire during the 2020-2021 academic year.
2. The Select Committee are asked to scrutinise the annual performance of the Community Learning Service to further improve quality, outcomes for learners and for us to remain a good learning provider. The Select Committee are asked to agree improvement priorities.

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

3. On the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee were asked to scrutinise the 2019/2020 performance of the Community

Learning Service, through the Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan. It was recommended future reports include information on appraisal of outcomes.

4. Community Learning is a commissioning Service funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For the 2020/21 academic year the Service received £1,622,044 Adult Education Budget from the ESFA to deliver non-accredited Community Learning and accredited Adult Skills provision.
5. The Service contributes to the Council's Strategic Plan and is aligned to the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) priorities. It targets and prioritises those most vulnerable adults who face barriers to learning. It is a community-based service that reaches out to those most in need of improving skills. The outcomes from this service contribute to the Council's Strategy by more residents gaining confidence through learning, improving skills and employability opportunities, and enabling progression to further learning and work.
6. The Staffordshire Community Learning & Commissioning strategy (2019 – 23) outline the aims, priorities and purpose of the provision. The Service provides learning to Staffordshire residents aged 19+ through a range of formal and informal learning programmes. The programmes support people and their families to gain the skills they need so that they can progress in the world of work, into further learning, develop their wellbeing or access courses designed to support parents to give their children the best start in life.
7. Learning is delivered through the Direct Delivery Unit and a range of subcontracted partners including schools, colleges, third sector organisations and community groups. A total of 23 sub-contractors delivered across our four main strands of delivery in 2020-21:
  - a. Community Learning Framework (2019 – 2023)
  - b. Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund
  - c. Wider Family Learning Grants
  - d. Adult Skills (accredited provision)
8. In 2020-21 academic year the Service delivered a range of online, blended and classroom-based courses to maintain services during national and local lockdown restrictions. Across all terms the use of community facilities to deliver learning was problematic or were not accessible.
9. There were 23 sub-contracted providers and the Direct Delivery Unit delivering provision throughout the year. Of which 16 had their own

premises located in at least one of the eight districts of Staffordshire. Other sub-contractors and the Direct Delivery Unit traditionally utilise local community venues to deliver learning.

10. In terms 1 and 3 sub-contractors without their own premises delivered learning online. Those with their own premises delivered face-to-face learning and/or blended approach following COVID19 guidelines. This was particularly beneficial for the delivery of practical courses in Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM), Leisure, Health & Wellbeing and Supported Learning. There was a broad range of courses delivered: Languages, Art & Crafts, Flower Arranging, Photography, Family History, Pottery, Plumbing, Willow Weaving, Pathways to Environmental Careers, Plant Science and Horticulture.
11. In term 2 all provision was delivered online. Online delivery consisted of using a variety of platforms learners and teaching staff were familiar with and included asynchronous and synchronous delivery. Extensive programme design was required, especially for practical courses where often resources and distance learning packs were delivered to learners.
12. All Family Learning was delivered online throughout the year. Courses were developed to support child development and behaviour, transition to Primary school, family wellbeing and making the most of the outdoors with babies and young children. Families signposted from tier 2/3/4 family support services engaged in small group synchronous learning and received additional support through WhatsApp and telephone calls. Other courses attracted large learner enrolments per course and were delivered using asynchronous methods which encouraged families to be independent and to learn together and collaborate with peers using online methods.
13. In year participation on Digital Skills, Employability and Adult Skills courses was low as it was difficult to engage low-skilled learners without the classroom element. A range of new courses were developed and timetabled: ESOL Progression for Work, English & Math, Personal Development, Animal Care, Video Calling, Getting Started with Blogging, Confidence with social media, Word Processing, Digital Cloud, Web Design, Office Skills and Essential Digital Skills qualifications. Further development is required to ensure the offer meets the needs of learners.
14. Staffordshire Community Learning was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2017 and was judged to be a good provider of adult and community learning.

## Annual Self-Assessment Process

15. The Service strives to engage all staff in the quality assurance and self-assessment process, in particular sub-contractors and their teaching staff. This includes the creation of sub-contractor Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Improvement Plans that feed into the overall Service annual self-assessment report.
16. Our 2020-21 Community Learning Service Self-Assessment report is based on service-wide data and other evidence, including learner feedback, information on learner destinations, course documentation, quality monitoring and other reports.
17. The Community Learning Service self-assess against an internal Quality and Performance Framework and Ofsted's Education and Inspection Framework (2019) which defines the criteria for high-quality provision and continual improvement and monitoring. The 2020-21 Self-Assessment Report can be located in Appendix 1.

## Self-Assessment Summary Judgements 2020-21

18. Staffordshire Community Learning remains a 'good' provider of adult and community learning.
19. Graded using the Ofsted Inspection Framework 4-point scale:
  - a. 1: Outstanding
  - b. 2: Good
  - c. 3: Requires Improvement
  - d. 4: Inadequate

Education Inspection Framework Area	Overall Judgement
Overall Effectiveness	Good
Quality of Education	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Outstanding
Personal Development	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is effective

Quality & Performance Framework – Internal Key Performance Indicators				
<b>KPI</b>	<b>Attendance 90%</b>	<b>Achievement 94%</b>	<b>Pass 98%</b>	<b>Retention 96%</b>
All provision 20-21	89.7%	97.1%	98.8%	98.3%
Community Learning 20-21	90.8%	97.3%	98.8%	98.5%
Adult Skills Accredited provision 20-21	77.2%	93.2%	99.2%	94.0%

## **Impact Leadership and Management**

20. There is clear leadership and governance, with a strong commitment to provide education opportunities to meet the needs of Staffordshire residents. There are highly effective and dedicated partnerships with a wide range of local and national partners, developing the local skills and digital agenda. As a result, the County Council continues to successfully raise local aspirations, enhances curriculum opportunities and is addressing the needs and priorities within its community and the local economy.
21. Leadership and management support of new methods of delivery has enabled sub-contractors to engage with learners who may not have participated otherwise.
22. The total number of Community Learning learners represent a drop of 25% on the previous year – this should be viewed within the national picture where the drop was 32% in 2020-21.
23. In Adult Skills there was a further significant drop of 53% in the number of learners compared to the previous year. Adult Skills is accredited provision targeted at learners who have low digital and pre-entry/entry level English skills who benefit greatly from classroom delivery to support their engagement and success in learning. Classroom delivery was timetabled in terms 1 and 3. In term 2, libraries and Children’s Centres were not accessible for delivery and all provision was delivered online with very few new learners having the skills or confidence and/or equipment and connectivity to participate.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22 Term 1</b>
<b>Staffordshire Community Learners</b>	2430	1820 (-25%)	728 (15.12.21)
<b>Staffordshire Adult Skills learners</b>	170	80 (-53%)	TBC

24. In terms of enrolments, the decline in 2020-21 was slightly smaller as many learners were able to progress internally and enrol on more than one course.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22 Term 1</b>
<b>Total Enrolments</b>	3,711	2,943 (-22%)	877 (15.12.21)
<b>Community Learning Enrolments</b>	3,428	2,782 (-18.8%)	
<b>Adult Skills Enrolments</b>	283	161 (-43.1%)	TBC

25. Online delivery represented 58% of provision and positively contributed to the end-year enrolment figure.

26. In Adult Skills enrolments were down 43.1% on the previous year; many learners in this area have low digital skills, meaning it was harder for them to engage with the online offer.

27. The Community learning Service provided SME grants and digital equipment grants to sub-contracted providers to support with access to digital devices and connectivity. A total of £34,986 was invested in over 40 ipads, 20+ laptops, and a wide range of ergonomic equipment and assistive technology devices, as well as dongles pre-loaded with data to support learners to engage with learning. The equipment has been loaned to learners, and as a consequence they were enabled to take part in online delivery and improve their digital skills.

28. Some sub-contractors have not accessed the digital equipment fund because they have the necessary digital equipment and others reported they do not have the capacity to maintain and monitor the use of the equipment. The purchasing of equipment to 'gift' to learners with a clause to enrol on at least one Essential Digital Skills qualification has not attracted much interest.

29. A further £265,000 of digital equipment funds will remain available to contribute to the Digital Inclusion agenda until the end of the Community Learning Framework 2019-23. As we develop new partnerships to increase participation it is likely further equipment will be purchased to respond to demand and need. And we would like to make use of national initiatives, for example Get Online Week to promote the benefits of digital skills for everyday life, work and employment to our current learners to support their progression in further learning.
30. Across the county, a high proportion (45%) of enrolments are from learners living in identified wards of deprivation, demonstrating that we are effective in reaching our target learner groups.
31. Just over three-quarters, 77%, (2143) of enrolments were from female learners with 23% (642) being male. This is a reduction from 25.7% in the previous year and below the benchmark of 25%. Analysis identified male learners were more likely to enrol in the Tamworth district and on practical courses within the STEM and Supported Learning curriculum areas and least likely to participate in Family Learning.
32. A high proportion of provision (28% enrolments, up from 21% in 2019-20) falls within the Supported Learning curriculum area, and a high proportion of learners (33%) of learners across all provision have a learning difficulty or learner disability; this compares to 18% in national figures for Community Learning participation.
33. Family Learning increased from 22% to 27% of enrolments. Over half of these learners were highly targeted, being referred through safeguarding and early help channels, or schools, and the courses had a significant positive impact on the parenting skills of the adult learners, and subsequently on family life. Case studies can be located in Appendix 2.

### **Quality of Education**

34. Standards for teaching and learning are clearly communicated and learners benefit from an exciting range of learning experiences in a variety of well-equipped and resourced environments, including online and remote delivery. As a result, observations of teaching and learning evidence that 85% of delivery is good or better.
35. Learners are well supported by tutors who understand their needs, are experts in their sectors and provide very good opportunities for wider skill development, including digital skills.

36. Learners are very happy with their experience, with outstanding rates of satisfaction and a wealth of positive feedback on the impact of their learning, which reaches beyond the original subject of the course, and often has a positive impact on other family members.
37. Overall, learner attendance, retention, pass and achievement rates are excellent, and improved from last year. There has been a reduction in gaps in achievement for equality groups.
38. Throughout the year 58% of provision was delivered through online or remote learning, including the vast majority of provision taking place in August - September 2020 and January - March 2021, when national Covid restrictions were in place. The remaining 42% was delivered face-to-face in colleges, schools, children's centres, care farms and community venues across the county.
39. Feedback from learners demonstrates online or remote delivery was successful in enabling more people to participate who had caring commitments, or who would otherwise not have been able to participate in classroom-based learning. These delivery approaches have supported continued attendance and retention of individuals where circumstances, such as Covid-related issues, would otherwise have made it difficult for them to complete their learning.

### **Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes**

40. At the end of the course learners complete a survey. Learner satisfaction is high and has remained consistent with previous years. Just over half (56%) of learners intend to participate in further community learning programmes, although this is a reduction on last year (63%). Of the total number of responses, 82% learners had added a comment to explain the impact of the course with the overwhelming majority of comments being positive.
41. A large proportion (99% or above) of learners stated:
  - a. they enjoyed their learning experience
  - b. had the help they needed to make good progress and achieve
  - c. received the help they required to understand what they could do next.
42. In addition, learners report clear benefits for their personal development, with the most common being the opportunity to take part in new experiences (79%), improved wellbeing and health (65% and 34% respectively) and making new social contacts (44%). The learner comments reveal a common synergy between learning new skills and

significant improvements in mental wellbeing, which has been particularly important to learners during the pandemic.

43. Support for employment-related skills is good. In the feedback surveys, nearly two-thirds of learners across all provision (64%) report a development of their work-related skills, or functional skills in at least one area of the following: skills and confidence to progress in my job/career, ability to re-skills or upskill for work, or development of English maths or digital skills.
44. In November 2021 a telephone survey was conducted to determine learner destination and the impact of learning, in which 979 former learners participated.
45. There is an increase in the number of people who are in employment following their course; this may be partly due to the lower average age of learners in this academic year. However, there are also higher numbers in volunteering and further learning, including amongst those who were not in work before the start of the course, indicating positive destinations for these learners.
46. There is an increase in the number of learners satisfied they achieved their main aim for joining the programme. The 2019-20 increase in learners feeling the positive impact of their course, as measured against some of the key aims of Community Learning, have been mostly maintained or further improved.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Total Number of Learners</b>	<b>2540</b>	<b>1862</b>
<b>Surveys completed</b>	<b>1272</b>	<b>975</b>
What are you doing now?		
Employment	43.8%	49%
Unemployed looking for work	6.5%	5.3%
Further study	3.9%	4.1%
Volunteering	2.1%	3.6%
Wider Outcomes		
Achieved main aim	89.8%	94.8%
Participate in society	50.8%	55.9%
Protect self from online/scams	31.2%	37.2%
Keep well	82.3%	82.3%
Pursue goals	68.8%	67.8%
Improve maths/English	21.1%	20.5%
More independent	56.7%	60.3%

## **Safeguarding**

47. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, with 99.3% of learners stating they felt safe and knew what to do if they did not. The 2 individuals who reported not feeling safe were from the Supported Learning curriculum area and they did confirm that they knew what to do in this situation.

## **Areas for Development**

48. The Community Learning Quality Improvement Plan outlines the identified areas for development. Detail and progress to date can be located in Appendix 3.

- a. Use enrolment and destination data more fully to inform Service development
- b. Increase participation
- c. Targeting learners in priority learner groups, and specifically increase male participation to at least 25%
- d. Ensure Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) practices are adapted to a consistently good standard
- e. Vast majority of learners feel safe, however, need to monitor key groups and increase awareness
- f. Increase capacity to provide mentoring and coaching to get back to a position where 90% of delivery is good or better
- g. Increase attendance and retention for the identified curriculum areas and explore reasons for withdrawal
- h. Continue to build on the improvements in accuracy and use of data
- i. Increase awareness of how to stay safe from radicalisation and extremism

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

### **Economic Growth: Skills and Employability**

49. We will ensure that Staffordshire has an outstanding skills system that helps people to learn new skills and improve their job prospects, throughout their entire career. It will help residents make informed choices about the best way to learn, develop their career, re-train or increase their skills, and in doing so, will give employers the skilled and ambitious workforce they need to drive business success.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

- a. Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021: Staffordshire Community Learning Annual Self-Assessment Report
- b. Delegated Decision, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Approval of funding allocation & distribution
- c. Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020: Community Learning Briefing Paper
- d. Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019: Staffordshire Community Learning Annual Self-Assessment Report and Community Learning & Commissioning Strategy (2019-23)

### **Community Impact**

N/A

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Staffordshire Community Learning Self-Assessment Report 2020-21

Appendix 2 - Case Studies

Appendix 3 - Quality Improvement Plan 2021-22

### **Contact Details**

**Assistant Director:** Anthony Baines, Assistant Director for Skills & Employability

**Report Author:** Amanda Darlington  
**Job Title:** Head of Adult Learning & Skills  
**Telephone No.:** 07800626586  
**E-Mail Address:** [amanda.darlington@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.darlington@staffordshire.gov.uk)



# Community Learning

## Self-Assessment Report 2020-2021

Author: Clare Roberts, Quality and Performance  
Manager

Date: Friday, 14 January 2022

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 UNDERSTANDING STAFFORDSHIRE - BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



Figure 1 Staffordshire's 8 districts: Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands and Tamworth

Staffordshire is a diverse county situated in the heart of the UK. The county stretches from the fringes of the West Midlands in the south, to the uplands of the Peak District National Park in the North. The county shares borders with eleven other strategic authorities, with a sphere of influence which extends into the East Midlands and Northwest regions.

The county covers more than 1,000 square miles and has a population of 883,000<sup>1</sup> people living in eight districts and boroughs. While more than 80% of land is rural, most people live in the urban areas

of Stafford (the County town), Newcastle-under-Lyme, Lichfield, Burton-upon-Trent, Tamworth, and Cannock. Staffordshire has a growing ageing population as people are living longer and healthier lives.

Staffordshire is a relatively prosperous county although there are pockets of deprivation, with the English indices of deprivation 2019<sup>2</sup> showing that approximately 15,750 residents (1.8%) are living in areas that are in the top 10% most deprived nationally. The population is mostly white with only 6.4% from a minority (based on 2011 Census data).

Staffordshire has a diverse economy with strengths in advanced manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, energy, medical technologies, constructions, digital technologies and agri-tech. We are members of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP)<sup>3</sup>, and have representation on the Skills Advisory Panel which is responsible

<sup>1</sup> 2020 ONS estimate 883,172

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Business/Documents/Covid-19/Staffordshires-Economic-Recovery-and-Renewal-Strategy.pdf>

for securing delivery of the SSLEP Skills Strategy<sup>4</sup>. Four of the Staffordshire districts also partner with Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

At the start of the academic year, 32% of Staffordshire residents were on some type of government support through the Job Retention scheme, furlough, or Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS); this was in line with national figures. The claimant count of those claiming Universal Credit was 4.9%, below the national average of 6.4%, although this rose to 6.1% in Tamworth district, with Cannock Chase and East Staffordshire also being above the local average. Young people aged 18-24 were most likely to be claiming Universal Credit, at rates consistently 5 percentage points above the national average.

There was a significant decline (37%) in job vacancies in Staffordshire from Feb to June 2020 at the start of the pandemic and prior to the start of the academic year, 7% higher than the national average. The most common vacancies were in nursing, care work, teaching and van-driving.

During the academic year, Staffordshire County Council put in place a 5-year Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy to mitigate against the impacts of Covid-19 on the local economy, and to support the achievement of the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22<sup>5</sup>. Staffordshire County Council continues to work collaboratively on employment opportunities with residents and businesses, through the work of the countywide Redundancy Service, KickStart scheme, Additional Restrictions Grants, Business Start Up Scheme, Student Start Up Scheme and Business Start Up Loans, and Restart scheme.

Lockdown restrictions aimed at mitigating the effects of the Covid pandemic were not lifted until 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 in England, at the end of the academic year. At this point, 13% of the local population was on some form of government support (compared to 15% nationally) with young people, women, and part-time workers being most affected. This figure has decreased as more workers on furlough and Universal Credit have returned to work, in particular younger people in hospitality and retail sectors. Job vacancies also rose at the end of the academic year, for example by 5% in June to July, with there being a higher number of vacancies than pre-pandemic, particularly in sectors that opened up due to lockdown restrictions being lifted, and also in social care and education.

Staffordshire has 2 universities - Staffordshire University and Keele University - as well as local colleges: Buxton & Leek College (University of

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/skilled-workforce/education-trust/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Business/Documents/Covid-19/Staffordshires-Economic-Recovery-and-Renewal-Strategy.pdf>

Derby), Burton & South Derbyshire College, South Staffordshire College with campuses at Tamworth, Lichfield, Cannock and Rodbaston, and Newcastle & Stafford College Group. In addition, there is a range of independent training providers and employment support programmes available to residents.

Within this context, Community Learning has an important part to play in improving the lives of the people of Staffordshire. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is a key component of strategies to improve health, reduce independence, increase economic prosperity, address inequality, and realise aspirations for a better future.

## **1.2 STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

Staffordshire County Council's vision (2018-2022) is:

*To create a connected Staffordshire, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.*

The three outcomes are that people of Staffordshire will:

- Be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefit of economic growth
- Be healthier and more independent
- Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community

## **1.3 COMMUNITY LEARNING PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES 2019 – 2023**

Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Service's purpose is to improve people's lives through lifelong learning and training, leading to employment and or increased personal fulfilment, supporting the growth of Staffordshire's economy and society. The purpose of our Community Learning Strategy and Commissioning Plan is to provide programmes of learning that:

- align with Staffordshire County Council's priorities
- actively respond to a wide range of individual learner, family and community needs across all districts of the county
- engage with hard-to-reach learners
- develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds
- support individuals to progress towards formal learning or employment

- support individuals to improve their health and well-being, including mental health
- develop stronger communities
- maintain a balanced and wide-ranging high-quality programme offer
- can respond rapidly to local, regional and national priorities
- engage with the best local providers of adult and community learning

The Community Learning Service priorities are based on the needs of Staffordshire residents, with direction coming from the SSLEP, and the County Council's Strategic Plan and Skills and Employability Business Plan.

The overarching priorities are:

**Equality and Inclusion:** Widen participation in learning and promote social inclusion across Staffordshire.

**Partners:** Identify and work with the right delivery partners that will enable us to determine relevant and targeted programmes, to ensure that the needs of our learners are always put first.

**Targeted Delivery:** Prioritise and target delivery to those that are the furthest away from accessing education and activities that will have the most impact in order to provide accessible learning pathways.

**Workforce and Employability:** Embed employability skills throughout all curriculum pathways to support individuals to up-skill and re-skill in order to gain and improve employment opportunities.

**Responsive and flexible:** Be responsive to a fast-changing environment and offer flexibility to change direction if required. Delivery will be prioritised and located in areas where learners want to learn and within local communities.

**Quality of Provision:** Ensure that all programmes are of the highest quality to provide all learners with the very best opportunities to fulfil their full potential.

**Innovation:** All programmes are to align with demand and local, and national priorities whilst providing innovative curriculum capitalising on digital technologies.

**Outcomes:** To improve the learner journey, from recruitment and admission to achievement and progression in learning and beyond, supporting positive outcomes for all.

## 1.4 SERVICE DELIVERY PROFILE 2020-2021

Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Service is a commissioning organisation funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Adult Education Budget (AEB), with a 2020-21 allocation of £1,506,285 for Community Learning and £115,759 for Adult Skills.

Staffordshire's Community Learning is predominantly delivered through a four-year Community Learning Framework Agreement (2019-2023), which was developed in conjunction with our previous learners and stakeholders and provides a broad range of curriculum areas to appropriately meet the needs of Staffordshire residents.

The service has a Direct Delivery Unit, and as a Prime Provider we have sub-contracted with commissioned suppliers including schools, colleges, third-sector organisations and local community groups to deliver a range of learning opportunities for adults aged 19+, families and communities across Staffordshire.

In 2020-21 the commissioned sub-contractors were:

Acorn Training	Pulse for Music
Aspire Training	South Staffordshire College
Bright Beginnings Family Hub	Spark, Burntwood
Buxton & Leek College (University of Derby)	Staffordshire Care Farming
Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise	Staffordshire Venture
Community Forest Services	Support Staffordshire
Dyslexia Association	Two Gates Primary School, Tamworth
Families First	Upper Moreton Rural Activities
Forest of Mercia	West Chadsmoor Family Centre
Fox Training Solutions	Workers' Educational Association
Gartmore Riding School	Victoria Primary School, Burton- upon-Trent
Growing Rural Enterprise	

The service provides a range of informal and formal learning programmes for adults across the County. Programmes support and develop individuals and groups for whom formal learning may have been a barrier in the past and works with them to build confidence and realise their true potential in a competitive world. For the most disadvantaged learners we offer engaging '*first steps*' learning opportunities as a way of increasing participation for people who are least likely to engage in adult learning.

Community Learning programmes are prioritised with funding directed towards sub-contractors who effectively target the following groups:

- Adults residing in the Staffordshire districts with the greatest concentrations of deprivation, worklessness and economic inactivity
- Adult males
- Parents/carers of underachieving children or who wish to develop their parenting skills
- Adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, including mental health issues
- Carers of adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, including mental health issues
- Refugees, asylum seekers and adults from Minority Ethnic Groups
- Care leavers
- Adults yet to achieve a level 2, or those with low skills in English and maths
- Digitally excluded adults
- Adults on low income and/or in receipt of state benefits
- Those who are unemployed and want to improve their chances of finding work by developing or acquiring vocational skills and knowledge and those wanting to re-engage with the STEM sector (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths)
- "New" adult learners (defined as those who have not participated in Community Learning programmes in the previous three years)

The Community Learning Framework consists of six curriculum areas:

1. Digital Skills
2. Employability
3. Family Learning
4. Leisure, Health & Wellbeing
5. STEM
6. Supported Learning

In addition, further learning is delivered through:

1. Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund
2. Wider Family Learning Grants to schools

The Direct Delivery Unit delivers accredited provision in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and IT, funded through Adult Skills AEB, and additional non-accredited Digital Skills learning.

### **Digital Skills**

Courses that give learners the confidence to use the digital tools that are important to them. This could be to access local or national services, to communicate, to research, to store and present information, to use technology safely and to keep their family safe, to make the most of applications and use their potential to improve their lives in a variety of ways eg employment, shopping, creativity, leisure. Learners are supported to continue with further learning including accredited provision in IT, and to gain access to more employment opportunities.

### **Employability**

This curriculum area is focused on up-skilling and re-skilling adults in a vocational context, including sector-specific skills, wider skills and the development of English, ESOL, and maths skills to support learners' employment opportunities for those who are unemployed or on a low income who want to improve their employment opportunities. Courses prepare learners and give them skills for work in various jobs and can include theory and practice, and hands-on job specific training for work, and progression onto accredited provision, volunteering and employment.

### **Family Learning**

Courses that encourage family members to learn together to improve basic skills and skills to equip families to thrive. The courses support well-being, healthy lifestyles, mental health, fitness, family finances, accessing community activities and services, managing children's behaviour and development, transition from primary to secondary, understanding school curriculums and staying safe online. Adults are encouraged to pursue further learning in English, maths, IT, and opportunities in volunteering and employment.

### **Leisure, Health & Wellbeing**

Courses which offer the opportunity to develop a new area of interest or hobby and take part in learning to support their health and wellbeing. For example, arts and crafts, photography, languages, horticulture, and wellbeing. Learners are supported to keep physically and mentally healthy, to develop their personal, social and employability skills and to become active in their communities with progression routes into higher level learning of the same subject, volunteering and accessing other services in their local community.

## **STEM**

This curriculum area supports learners to up-skill and re-skill to gain and improve employment opportunities. STEM programmes are those that are deeply rooted in science, mathematics, engineering and/or are of technical or technology application. Learners acquire skills in a specific vocational area and are able to apply for jobs and/or progress onto relevant accredited provision.

### **Supported Learning**

Courses for adults who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adults who have had long-term mental ill health who require more bespoke and supported teaching and learning. Courses make good use of subjects such as arts and crafts, healthy eating, gardening etc. as a vehicle for developing and practising strategies for improving mental health or for embedding functional and independent living skills. The courses help learners to lead healthier, happier, safer and more independent lives and give progression opportunities into further learning, volunteering and employment.

### **Community Learning Responsiveness Fund**

The fund is for adult learning programmes delivered by third-sector organisations who have access to individuals in local communities. The fund supports a responsive approach to local emerging needs for targeted learners: carers, care leavers, asylum seekers, people with no or low qualifications, learning difficulties and disabilities, adults from ethnic minority groups and male learners. The courses are broad and varied and provide 'first step' learning experiences, skill development, including English, maths and IT, access to other local activities, volunteering and employment.

### **Wider Family Learning Grants for schools**

The grants are made available for schools across Staffordshire who have identified a need to support families to learn together and are targeted at parents who are digitally excluded, where English is not their first language, families at risk, male carers, parents/carers of children with learning/physical disabilities, families with children who are underachieving, Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Groups. Family Learning courses are designed so adults and children can learn together, and enable adults to support their children's learning. Learners are more able to help their families to have a healthy and independent lifestyle, more able to engage their children in learning activities in and out of school, and have higher enjoyment of and aspirations for their own

learning.

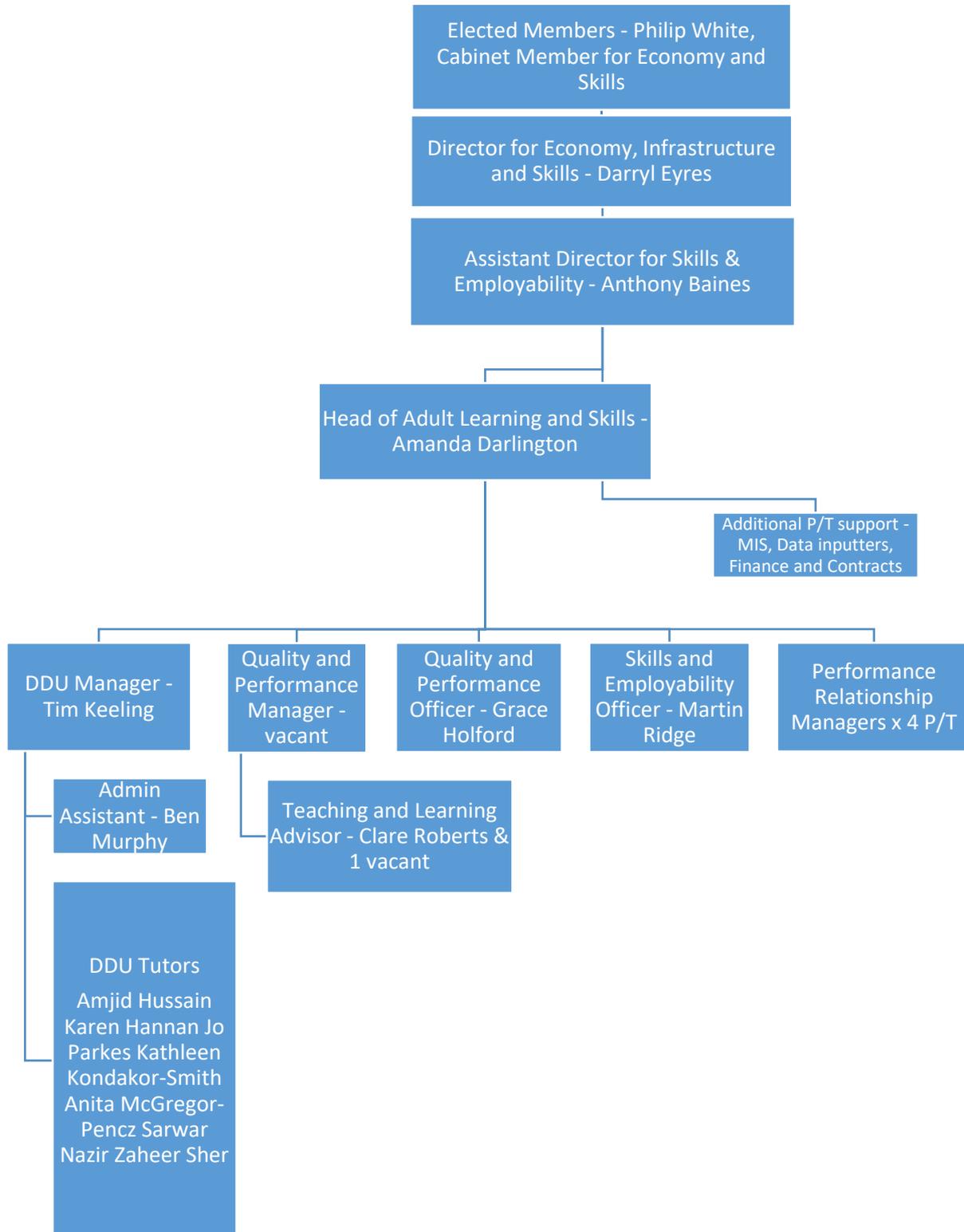
### **Direct Delivery Unit**

The Service's Direct Delivery Unit delivers non-accredited courses in ICT and accredited provision in ICT (Entry levels) and English Speakers of another Language (Pre-entry to Level 1). The curriculum content for ICT gives learners with no or limited experience of ICT the skills they require for everyday use and basic skills required for work. The ESOL curriculum is targeted at those learners who wish to develop their use of the English language in speaking and listening, reading and writing to support them to be active in their community and make positive steps to employment.

### **Course delivery methods**

In 2020-21, 58% of provision was delivered through online or remote learning including the vast majority of provision taking place in August-September 2020 and January – March 2021, when national Covid restrictions were in place. The remaining 42% was delivered face-to-face in colleges, schools, children's centres, care farms and community venues across the county.

## 1.5 STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE STRUCTURE



## **1.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESSES**

The Community Learning Service Specification includes a Quality and Performance Framework which defines the criteria for high-quality provision and continual improvement. The Framework clarifies expectations of all provision, and supports continual improvement by laying out a process of continuous monitoring of and support for direct delivery and sub-contracted providers. There is regular reporting on performance and quality to the Senior Management Team and to leaders through performance reports, with scrutiny at Select Committee meetings. As a result, leaders have a good understanding of the service and can issue appropriate challenge and support to staff.

The Service strives to engage all staff in the quality assurance and self-assessment process. Tutors are expected to reflect on their practice and engage with action plans set following quality monitoring activity, as well as to contribute to Sub-contractor Self-assessment reports. Sub-contractor managers compile these reports, using data and other evidence, and formulate a Quality Improvement Plan for their own provision. Both reports and plans are moderated by the Community Learning Quality staff and feed into the Community Learning Self-assessment report.

Our 2020-21 Community Learning Service Self-Assessment report is based on service-wide data and other evidence, including learner feedback, information on learner destinations, course documentation, quality monitoring and other reports. Provider managers and Community Learning staff are consulted in the process of writing the report, and the final report is scrutinised and approved by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee.

The summary of key findings is shared with subcontractors so they can understand how their provision contributes to the overall development of the service. The resulting Quality Improvement Plan for the service as well as sub-contractors' own Quality Improvement Plans are working documents which are updated through the following academic year to monitor and report on progress.

## 2 SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS 2020-2021

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Graded using the 4-point scale:

1: Outstanding

2: Good

3: Requires Improvement

4: Inadequate

<b>Education Inspection Framework Area</b>	<b>Overall Judgement</b>
Overall Effectiveness	Good
Quality of Education	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Outstanding
Personal Development	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is effective

## 3 SUMMARY OF HEADLINE KEY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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### 3.1 WHY STAFFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE IS A 'GOOD' SERVICE

- There is clear leadership and governance, with a strong commitment to provide education opportunities to meet the needs of Staffordshire residents. Leaders and Council Members maintain highly effective and dedicated partnerships with a wide range of local and national partners, developing the local skills and digital agenda and supporting the sustainability of Community Learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as we successfully respond, recover and rebuild services. As a result, the County Council continues to successfully raise local aspirations, enhances curriculum opportunities and is addressing the needs and priorities within its community and the local economy.
- The intent of the Service is well communicated to all stakeholders, with a broad curriculum offer and clear priorities, and there is effective financial planning to target the learners across the districts who will most benefit from Community Learning, supported by partnership working in communities. Leadership and management support of new methods of delivery have enabled sub-contractors to engage with learners who may not have participated otherwise.
- Highly effective safeguarding policies, procedures and partnerships promote and develop staff and learners' awareness of their safety; as a result, learners report they feel safe and are safe for classroom-based and remote online learning.
- The implementation is also good with very good impacts for learners:
  - Standards for teaching and learning are clearly communicated and learners benefit from an exciting range of learning experiences in a variety of well-equipped and resourced environments, including online and remote delivery.
  - Learners are well supported by tutors who understand their needs, are experts in their sectors and provide very good opportunities for wider skill development, including digital skills.
  - A large proportion of learners experience teaching and learning which is good or better, particularly in the STEM and Family Learning curriculum areas, and face-to-face Supported Learning, where delivery is often outstanding.
  - Learners are very happy with their experience, with outstanding rates of satisfaction and a wealth of positive feedback on the impact

- of their learning, which reaches beyond the original subject of the course, and often has a positive impact on other family members.
- Overall, learner attendance, retention, pass and achievement rates are excellent, and improved from last year. There has been a reduction in gaps in achievement for equality groups.
  - Learners have excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning and work well with their peers, supporting each other to progress.
  - Learners make very good progress in the development of their wider personal skills, supported by effective collaborative work and partnerships, and relevant information and advice about progression opportunities.
  - Strong governance, leadership, and management together with robust quality assurance and improvement arrangements ensure that the curriculum offer addresses local needs and results in good support for high-quality teaching, learning and assessment practices.

### **3.2 WHAT THE SERVICE NEEDS TO DO IMPROVE**

- Use enrolment and destination data more fully, to evaluate how effectively we are reaching our target groups of learners, and how successfully they are achieving their ambitions.
- Increase participation by continuing to build on local partnerships, and ensuring that we support potential learners by offering a curriculum that is relevant to their needs, and that our learners have access to the best progression opportunities, particularly in the Digital, Employability curriculum areas and Adult Skills learning.
- Ensure that RARPA practices have been adapted to a consistently good standard across all curriculum areas and delivery approaches, and with all sub-contracted and Direct delivery provision.
- The vast majority of learners feel safe, but we need to reduce gaps across equality groups and curriculum areas to ensure that all learners in all curriculum areas know what to do if they do not feel safe, and that they understand how to avoid the risks of radicalisation and extremism. To do this we must continue to raise learners' awareness, using approaches that match abilities and which draw on naturally occurring situations in the classroom and online, using relatable language that learners can fully understand.
- Increase capacity to offer on-going mentoring and coaching support where teaching, learning and assessment is less than good, including sharing of good practice, to get back to a position where 90% of delivery is good or better.

- Work with local organisations to develop potential delivery partners in those districts which have not received the intended allocation, and to access learner groups in these communities.
- Increase attendance and retention for learners on Adult Skills and employability provision, including collecting more detailed data on the reasons for withdrawal.
- Continue to build on the improvements in the accuracy and use of data to ensure all officers and sub-contracted provider managers have timely access to, and make good use of, the data available, including feedback and destinations, to bring about improvements in the learner experience and impacts.

## 4 OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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The Community Learning Service is a good Service with the ambition and determination to become an outstanding provider of skills across Staffordshire, working in partnership with local stakeholders. The Service maintains a strong focus on providing good educational opportunities to meet the needs of Staffordshire residents and the wider economy.

The Community Learning Strategy and Commissioning Plan sets out clearly the County Council priority areas of Economic growth, Housing, Education and skills, Health, care and wellness and Children and families, and how the outcomes from Community Learning contribute to addressing these priorities. The document further sets out how each Curriculum Area contributes to the Community Learning outcomes.

This is reinforced through the Community Learning Specification which defines each curriculum area. The Community Learning Strategy and Commissioning Plan, and Specification documents set out the groups of target learners, with further information on district and ward level, and sub-contractors' applications are evaluated on this, to ensure that successful applicants have the capability to engage those who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in learning. The Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund (CLTRF) and Wider Family Learning Grants for Schools (WFLG) specifications are used effectively to evaluate in-year applications, and the quality assurance process also ensures that there is close alignment of all provision to the intended Curriculum area descriptions and outcomes.

The CLTRF and WFLG funds are used to specifically reach out via community groups to ensure best use of public money. For example, in 2020-21 CLTRF funding was allocated, amongst others, to community-based organisations such as:

- West Chads Moor Family Centre, Spark and Bright Beginnings Family Hub who all work with families in priority wards,
- Staffordshire Venture who work with people with learning difficulties and disabilities,
- Pulse for Music who work with people recovering from addiction and long-term mental ill-health,
- Fox Training Solutions who provide employability courses

Of the total funding, 6.2% was allocated specifically through the CLTRF and WFLG funding. What's more, the majority of main framework sub-contractors also have strong ties with their local communities, for example Families First which operate in the children's centres around the county, and South Staffordshire, and Buxton and Leek Colleges. The

Direct Delivery Unit historically uses libraries and family centres to deliver IT and ESOL classes, including to a number of Syrian refugees, although most delivery in the last year has been online due to the pandemic. A number of sub-contractors are smaller, community-based organisations such as Staffordshire Care Farming, Growing Rural Enterprise, Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise and Upper Moreton Rural Activities. These sub-contractors are often able to offer their learners progression opportunities as volunteers either within the organisation as “learning buddies” or with other local organisations such as the Transforming the Trent Valley project. As a result, 55.9% of learners are agreed (mostly or strongly) the course had helped them to actively participate in their community or society.

Across the county, a high proportion (45%) of enrolments are from learners living in identified wards of deprivation, demonstrating that we are effective in reaching our target learner groups.

Feedback from learners shows that the move to online or remote delivery was successful in enabling more people to participate who had caring commitments, or who would otherwise not have been able to participate in classroom-based learning. These delivery approaches have also supported continued attendance and retention of individuals where circumstances, such as Covid-related issues, would otherwise have made it difficult for them to complete their learning. More work now needs to be done to determine how successful the Service has been in its implementation in attracting the participation of learners based on target groups such as employment status and previous qualification level.

Analysis of Pound Plus returns indicates a contribution of £228,967, approximately half of which is from fees and other incomes, mostly generated in the Leisure, Health and Wellbeing curriculum area. This enabled the Service to support fee remission for disadvantaged learners, and to offer smaller groups or taster sessions for learners with higher needs. Some sub-contractors decided not to charge fees where provision had significant wellbeing outcomes. The Pound Plus also evidences a significant contribution from volunteers supporting delivery to the tune of £84,559. The Service now needs to continue to analyse this data effectively in order to benchmark and evaluate accurately, to demonstrate the value of our partnership working and position within local communities.

The Community Learning Service works effectively with a range of local stakeholders to ensure that learners’ employability and wider personal skills are fully developed, and progression opportunities are accessible to learners. Leaders, Members and Officers maintain highly effective and dedicated Place-based partnerships with a wide range of local and

national partners, including a strong representation on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and developing the local skills and employability agenda which in turn successfully raises aspirations, supports local needs and enhances curriculum opportunities within the local economy. There are further established cross-directorate partnerships with Public Health and Families and Communities and external partners to deliver a curriculum that addresses the main strategic priorities of the council and addressing the needs of Staffordshire residents. These partnerships have strengthened further during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, driving forward the digital inclusion agenda with Staffordshire Libraries and other partners, and the provision of digital equipment to sub-contractors and learners who needed it.

Some sub-contractors such as Community Forest Services invite professionals to engage with learners through Q&A sessions, which increases learners understanding of employment in specific sectors. At the Provider Engagement Events, we have invited a range of relevant partners to speak directly to sub-contractor managers, such as representatives from Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, National Careers Service, men's mental health charity Men Unite; the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability also attends the sessions to update sub-contractor managers on the local landscape. As a result, sub-contractors have good relationships with a wide range of partners, meaning they can effectively refer learners to further opportunities that are beneficial to them.

*"The Community Learning Service is widely respected within the local community and partners commented on the high levels of professionalism and integrity the team display. Partnerships are collaborative with examples of interventions such as those supporting the Syrian community adding real value to those accessing the service. Tutors described the reputation of the Council as being strong and they feel a sense of loyalty and pride in being part of this. Partners described "working together" to support individuals as opposed to merely signposting or referring. These working relationships provide tutors with a fuller, more holistic view of the needs, starting points, and progress learners make." Matrix report, January 2021*

Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) within the Service is good. The Quality Assurance Framework sets out clear standards for the Direct Delivery Unit and sub-contractors with monitoring activity, and clear guidance for tutors on the Teaching and Learning blog. This is supplemented by mentoring and coaching support for individual tutors or sub-contractors in-year where audits have highlighted concerns, to ensure that there is rapid improvement. The move to online delivery

has necessitated a change in approach for some sub-contractors where they may have been using largely paper-based systems in previous academic years.

Thus, a range of innovative RARPA tools have been developed and are in use during 2020-21, including the use of Microsoft and Google forms to collect regular learner reflections, and the use of Art journaling to support creative reflection with learners on wellbeing courses. Some sub-contractors used a bespoke app called Seesaw to effectively interact with learners and their carers to share progress and feedback.

The effective use of RARPA and Individual learning plans (ILPs) to set challenging learning goals for all learners, including the most able, has previously been an area we needed to improve, and, from analysis of quality monitoring activity, we can say that the majority of learners now experience effective RARPA practices to support their progress. However, with the move towards remote and online delivery we need to ensure that practices have been adapted to a consistently good standard across all curriculum areas and delivery approaches, and with all sub-contracted and Direct delivery provision.

## 5 SAFEGUARDING

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The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The Community Learning Service is committed to and promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all children, young people and adults in accordance with the Children's Act 1989, the Children's Act 2004 and section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty run through every aspect of the provision from specification and contracts, through compliance requirements and training, course planning and monitoring of delivery, learner voice feedback and self-assessment. Thus, there is a strong intent to ensure all our learners and their families feel safe and are safe

Leaders and managers have put in place comprehensive policies and procedures for Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, and E-safety, that are understood by all and are effectively implemented and monitored. These are underpinned by a clear commitment to Equality and the wellbeing of learners and staff.

Policies and procedures are updated annually and in line with legislative requirements, and include a staff code of conduct and whistleblowing procedure. The Assistant Director for Skills and Employability is responsible for these, and they are cascaded to all sub-contractors and learners and available on the Service's website. There is a Safeguarding and Prevent action plan on which progress is reported to Senior Officers quarterly. Quality monitoring activities report on the effectiveness of safeguarding and good practice. This has resulted in a positive culture and ethos where safeguarding is regarded as an important part of everyday life across the Service.

The Community Learning Service has a well-qualified Designated Safeguarding Lead, who works collaboratively with local adults' and children's safeguarding boards, and is also a member of the Staffordshire Prevent Board. A deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is in place to ensure consistency of support. Subcontractor staff and learners know how to raise a concern, and receive effective support from the Designated Safeguarding lead, and local safeguarding leads within their organisation.

Timeliness to respond to safeguarding concerns raised is good. Records relating to concerns are completed in a timely manner and held securely. Learners and sub-contractors can also report safeguarding concerns via an online disclosure form.

Annual contracts are made with sub-contractors which contain comprehensive contractual clauses on safeguarding, the Prevent Duty, security of premises, modern slavery, whistleblowing, equality of

opportunity, health and safety and learner welfare. Sub-contractors who fail to adhere to these clauses will be in serious breach of contract and their contract will follow the termination procedure.

All staff are recruited following safer recruitment procedures and they, as well as provider staff, are subject to the relevant criminal records checks in line with their role.

Staff and tutors receive Safeguarding and Prevent Duty training at induction and regularly thereafter. All tutors receive safeguarding and Prevent training, including wider safeguarding issues at tutor inductions each academic year. All sub-contractors are required to provide evidence of safeguarding and Prevent training undertaken within their institution and delivery to learners is unable to take place without providing evidence to the Service. As a consequence, tutors are aware of their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding, understand the issues and are able to effectively raise learner awareness of both safeguarding and the Prevent Duty.

A number of sub-contractors have strong links with local agencies that support safeguarding practice, and have expertise in safeguarding and wellbeing issues. For example, Families First delivers parenting courses that are targeted specifically at families who are receiving support from tier 2/3/4 family support services. 94.1% of their learners were referred to the courses by 29 agencies or local safeguarding professionals as part of their individual plans for each family. The manager is a board member on each district 'Family Improvement Board' which also link to the Building Resilient Families and Communities agenda, and has strong relationships with local communities, local professionals such as social housing providers, Health Visitors, local community venues and smaller organisations such as specific faith groups. Other sub-contractors such as Chase Aqua Rural Activities, Growing Rural Enterprise and Staffordshire Care Farming work closely with local Mental Health teams to refer potential learners for wellbeing courses in order to support their wider support. As such, sub-contractors and tutors are well placed to understand safeguarding issues and, in many cases, can support learners to prevent potential safeguarding issues from developing.

Effective and informative induction processes across all programmes support learners' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they don't feel safe. E-safety, Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty are covered at induction and learner resources such as handbooks, classroom posters and links to digital resources reinforce learners' understanding of how to protect themselves. Staying Safe Online information has also been added to the Online Course Directory. Tutors are prompted through the scheme of work to plan opportunities to discuss and embed understanding of safeguarding, online safety, the Prevent Duty and British Values. Discussions in lessons extend knowledge and

understanding using topical themes and local issues. Good practice, information and training opportunities are shared with sub-contractors and tutors through a dedicated termly Safeguarding Update, as well as monthly Provider Updates, and the Teaching and Learning blog, as well as featuring regularly on the Provider Engagement Event agendas, for example the SCC Education Safeguarding Lead attended in March 2021.

Our adult learners consistently demonstrate high standards of behaviour, as expected, and develop positive attitudes to learning, towards other learners and staff. Tutors support learners to be aware of preventing bullying, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and know that immediate and effective action is to be taken to prevent and tackle any discriminatory and derogatory language or behaviours.

Teaching and support staff responded to the lack of visibility of our most vulnerable learners and their families during lockdown by keeping in regular communication and/or providing additional tutorial time to check on learner welfare. A number of learners report they greatly appreciated this additional support which helped them to stay safe and well.

As a result, nearly all learners (99.3%) state that they feel safe in the learning environment. The 2 individuals who reported not feeling safe did confirm that they knew what to do in this situation. Due to the anonymity of the learner feedback it is not possible to identify the individuals, but it is noted that they are on courses that target learners with mental ill-health, often anxiety, and in addition, that this provider has on a number of occasions confirmed actions taken to reassure individuals who initially felt anxious about returning to face-to-face learning.

99.3% of learners know what to do if they or others do not feel safe, with Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) learners slightly less likely to know (96%). Learner feedback results show that 95.7% said they were informed how to protect themselves from risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, up from 94% in 2019-20. Learners on Employability, digital and CLTRF courses are less likely to say they were informed (83-89%), and again, BAME learners were less likely to say they were informed (94%) and action needs to be taken to ensure that all learners across all curriculum areas are equally confident in this area.

## 6 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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### 6.1 CURRICULUM INTENT

At strategic level the commissioning and allocation process is strongly influenced by the local and regional priorities identified by the Local Enterprise Partnership and Skills Advisory Panel and the overarching outcomes of the Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan. The Community Learning specification gives indicative funding allocations weighted to address these priorities, with a larger proportion of funding going to Cannock Chase, Tamworth and East Staffordshire districts as they had proportionally more Universal Credit claimants in July 2020, and higher numbers of adults without qualifications beyond level 2.

Through procurement, the Community Learning Service and sub-contractors respond well to the intent of the provision. Leaders, managers and teaching staff work effectively with stakeholders to shape how the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of learners and communities. Leaders, managers and sub-contractors have developed and maintained strong and effective partnerships with a broad and varied range of statutory and community-based organisations to gain access to targeted learners and use these partnerships well to develop programme content to meet the needs of learners. In addition, teaching staff fully utilise these partnerships to support the additional needs of learners and their progression routes, in terms of wellbeing, further learning, volunteering and employment.

A comprehensive range of policies and statements are made available to sub-contractors and their teaching staff to ensure there is consistency of expectation in key cross-curricular areas such as Information and Advice, Embedded Functional Skills including digital, and Learner Voice.

The quality of Information and Advice is consistently good with aims of courses and potential progression routes well communicated through our online course directory<sup>6</sup>. Whilst most learners hear about the course through word of mouth (53%), a further 22% cited social media and 21% websites. The standard information is supplemented by pre-course activity for more bespoke provision, for example consultation with referring partners, taster activities and dialogue in community settings with potential learner groups.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://staffordshirecommunitylearning.org.uk/>

High quality teaching and learning is at the centre of our Service. The Teaching and Learning Blog<sup>7</sup> has extensive guidance for tutors, including policies and procedures, and sets out clear expectations in terms of course planning to build a curriculum that provides learners with opportunities to develop and retain knowledge, skills, positive behaviours and personal development for current and future learning, volunteering and employment.

Tutors are expected to focus on learners' next steps in learning and plan opportunities to encourage learners to access local and/or online services within their programme of delivery. Relevant information and advice sessions are planned into all schemes of work to enable learners to make positive choices.

A culture of inclusivity and meeting learners' needs underpins the work of all those involved in Staffordshire Community Learning. An Equality & Diversity statement sets out the Service's commitment and expectations, reinforced through sub-contractors' contracts. Expectations are shared with tutors and learners through the Teaching & Learning Blog and the Learner Handbook.

The Community Learning Specification 2020-21 clearly lays out expectations of delivery methods within the on-going pandemic situation, with the majority of term 1 provision planned initially to be remote or online delivery. The Service communicated evolving expectations in line with government guidelines as the academic year progressed, with the support of a comprehensive risk assessment document. This supported all sub-contracted providers and the direct delivery manager to assess the risks and put in place contingency and mitigation measures to ensure that delivery was at all times safe and appropriate to learners' needs. By taking these measures, sub-contractors were able to plan face-to-face delivery to support those learners most in need of face-to-face contact to combat isolation or to support their learning, enhanced by a continuing remote or online offer which maximised the benefits of digital learning opportunities.

A high proportion of tutors fully utilised their expertise and embraced the opportunity to innovate, exploring a range of digital tools to deliver learning, adapting their curriculum and resources and exploring new teaching practices and creative pedagogy delivery.

In planning a mix of remote and face-to-face provision, the Service has been able to reach out to new learner audiences and to continue working with more vulnerable learners during extraordinary circumstances.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://staffsacl.wordpress.com/>

## 6.2 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The Community Learning Service communicated clear expectations to sub-contractors in line with national guidelines on face-to-face activity due to Covid rates during the year and required sub-contractors to make contingency plans to mitigate against the effects of disruption. At the start of the year the majority of provision was online, with some trials of face-to-face delivery where sub-contractors were in control of their venues, and where learners had most to gain from face-to-face delivery due to isolation. As the trials proved successful, face-to-face delivery was planned for the remainder of term 1, in line with guidance for education, although non-educational mixing was limited in November 2020. In January 2021 with the new national lockdown, face-to-face delivery ceased, and all provision was online/remote for the whole of term 2. In term 3, face-to-face delivery restarted with the appropriate risk assessment and control measures in place.

As of January 2021, the Community learning Service was able to offer SME grants and digital equipment grants to sub-contracted providers to support with access to digital devices and connectivity. A total of £34,986 towards was invested in over 40 ipads, 20+ laptops, and a wide range of ergonomic equipment and assistive technology devices, as well as dongles pre-loaded with data to support learners to engage with learning. The equipment has been loaned to learners, and as a consequence they were enabled to take part in online delivery and improve their digital skills.

The Community Learning service continued to support sub-contractors with advice and sharing of good practice to support the changes in delivery. This strategy was successful as it allowed there to be a continued offer throughout the year: 37% of enrolments were in term 1 and 3 each, with the remaining 26% of enrolments being in term 2. This compares with a pre-Covid pattern of approximately 40% of enrolments in term 1, and 30% in the following 2 terms.

*"I took part in the classroom learning. Everything was done to make me feel safe. QR code, temperature taken, hand gel on the tables." Learner on Supported learning course*

As a result of the Commissioning Plan, face-to-face learning takes place in local colleges as well as in inspiring venues such as care farms where learners learn to take care of the animals and connect with the natural environment around them. Learners have access to a wide range of specialised facilities such as IT suites, kitchens, pottery workspace, woodworking sheds, landscaped gardens and vegetable plots, poly tunnels, working farm, riding school, art rooms, portable digital music

suites. All venues are risk-assessed including for Covid-related hygiene measures, and are fit for purpose and well-equipped. Sub-contractors took effective measures to increase learners' confidence in returning to face-to-face environments by ensuring visible measures such as hand-sanitising and one-way systems. In addition, some sub-contractors recorded video to explain to learners in advance hygiene procedures such as taking temperatures on entry. Some sub-contracted providers support participation by arranging transport by mini-bus or taxi to more remote venues. Practical courses are very well-resourced, including remote delivery where sub-contractors have delivered packs of resources to learners to enable them to participate.

Provision is well time-tabled, and a range of delivery methods are used to cater to the needs of the targeted learners, taking place during the day as well as evenings, in intense blocks over the course of a week, or for shorter sessions once a week. Some online learning is synchronous with scheduled video meetings, whilst some remote learning is delivered as asynchronous learning, with materials sent to learners, and follow-up communication to check on learning and offer feedback. This flexibility has enabled people who would not otherwise have been able to participate due to caring or work commitments, to join courses and engage regularly.

Observation of face-to-face provision and joint evaluation of online/remote delivery evidenced that 85% of delivery is good or better, with 16 sessions being judged as outstanding and a further 12 as good. This is a fall from 88% in 2019-20. Where teaching and learning was less than good, support was put in place to ensure timely improvement. In addition to the observations and evaluations of online/remote delivery, unannounced class visits and audits of course documentation including individual learning plans are used to evaluate the implementation of teaching and learning. The following evaluative comments are based on evidence from these observations, class visits and audits.

Tutors have expert knowledge in their vocational areas and are passionate about their subject; they communicate well to inspire learners. For example, in the Direct Delivery Unit Family History course the tutor demonstrates extensive knowledge and experience using a range of online tools.

Learners take part in a range of appropriate initial assessment activities and tools to establish their starting points, for example in digital learning learners use a detailed diagnostic assessment to ascertain what they can already do. As a result, tutors know their learners well and have a good understanding of their needs, and motivations for learning. Tutors are

aware of learners' support needs and access to digital tools, and adapt their courses and resources accordingly.

Five sub-contractors accessed funding support from the Community Learning Service to purchase digital tools to loan to learners who lacked access to these, for example ipads, and data packages and accessible audio tools to assist learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Tutors have adapted course aims and content to take account of the current climate for example by putting in additional wellbeing support in family learning and addressing anxiety issues in Supported learning provision.

*"Tutors are adept at engaging with learners at all levels of knowledge and expertise and they genuinely care about learners succeeding" Matrix report January 2020*

Tutors plan courses well, incorporating a wide range of resources and active learning strategies, to give learners a rich learning experience, and the opportunity to develop new skills in a safe and supportive environment. As a result, learners are highly motivated, feel comfortable to seek clarification where necessary, and make excellent progress in their learning. They have confidence to use subject-specific technical vocabulary well and are often inspired to undertake further learning in their own time, as evidenced in social media groups and feedback comments.

Learners' recall and understanding of learning is monitored through regular and effective checks on learning, through formative assessment activities and questioning, and tutors build in opportunities to recall previous learning through well-designed courses. For example, effective questioning in Supported Learning sessions promotes active and inclusive discussion activities. In digital courses, learners practise and apply skills and knowledge from early sessions in later sessions, as a basis to move onto new learning. Learners on online/remote learning courses comment on the positive support they have received from weekly contact with their tutors via phone or messages. In a minority of sessions, tutors could make better use of questioning at the presentation/ demonstration stage of the session to elicit and reinforce learners' existing knowledge.

Tutors design learning to include activities where learners can apply their learning in real-life and work situations for example in STEM provision learners undertake benefit-risk assessments and work out costings for projects, and consider Health and safety and other legislation relevant to their subject. Learners on these courses benefit from guest speakers and other forms of interaction with vocational experts.

In online learning, resources are equally well-designed and exploited, with tutors using a range of online tools to facilitate learning such as whatsapp, padlets, jamboard, apps and webtools such as google or MS forms, as well as larger platforms such as Google Classrooms. In employability courses, tutors created an innovative digital escape room experience to check learners understanding of Key concepts. In many courses, learners have improved their digital skills through the use of a range of tools, as an unintended, but significant, benefit of learning. This has also led to learners completing more independent learning online, for example, on digital courses, by completing LearnMyWay e-learning modules.

Learning is enhanced by inclusive spaces where learners are supportive of each other. For example, in remote learning they support each other through WhatsApp groups, leaving comments and suggestions for other learners. In Leisure, Health and Wellbeing art classes learners effectively and constructively critique each other's work.

Tutors are attentive to accessibility and make excellent use of strategies and tools to support all learners to participate fully, for example in Supported Learning one provider uses widgets to support literacy for learners with learning difficulties, and another provider makes very effective use of bespoke technology to allow a learner with no speech to take part in sessions. Where necessary in online/remote delivery, tutors were able to give additional support to individuals to help them access learning for example providing 1-1 telephone support or tutorials so that learners could continue to engage with learning activities and to offer individualised feedback and support. Learner feedback comments are overwhelmingly positive, and learners frequently report that the tutor and peer support has made a large impact on their confidence, and self-belief, as well as challenging and supporting them to develop subject-specific skills.

*"I enjoyed receiving feedback from others in the group and seeing how they approached the tasks. It gave me inspiration and some of the others' ideas were brilliant. I have found the activities really therapeutic, reducing my stress and anxiety levels during a difficult time. I enjoyed challenging myself as although I already enjoy craft, some of the activities would have previously been out of my comfort zone. Now I feel confident enough to approach them and undertake the activity." Learner on Supported Learning course*

Across the provision most tutors include good strategies to develop English, maths and employability skills. Tutors embed these opportunities discreetly alongside subject content and provide appropriate support to their learners. For example, on a Supported Learning craft course,

learners make a price comparison on the expense of felted bees for sale on the internet, and discuss as a group. Learners on a STEM Plant Science course develop enterprise skills by looking at the cost and profit margins of products. More able learners use technical vocabulary confidently for example in Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Photography classes, and others are supported to improve their vocabulary by keeping a glossary of terms.

Learners are engaged in the Recognising and Recording of Progress and Achievement (RARPA) process through the effective use of a range of tools for formative feedback. Approaches are adapted to suit the delivery in different subject areas and with different learner groups, so that the process is embedded within delivery and learners are able to take an active role in planning and reviewing their own learning. For example, learners in Supported Learning use art journaling to support their reflection. Tutors discuss and negotiate course and individual learning outcomes with learners. In online delivery, learners often complete online forms to record their starting points and distance travelled at the end of courses, and tutors follow up with individual feedback via email or phone call. Learners on Family Learning courses delivered through schools make use of tools already in place in the schools, such as the Seesaw app to enable regular feedback between learner and tutor. In the best examples, learners are proud of their learning plans and excited to see tutor comments. As a result, learners make very good progress in their learning and are highly motivated and committed.

In a minority of sessions which are less than good, tutors have not clearly defined learning outcomes at key points in the course, meaning that learners' progress is not evident. Whilst they may enjoy individual activities, learners are not supported sufficiently to be reflective about what their next steps need to be.

In some cases, where this has been identified as an issue, Community Learning staff have put in place support and training for tutors to ensure that there is timely improvement, for example in Supported Learning. Continuous Professional Development in this area has been encouraged through the blog posts and sharing of good practice for all tutors to access.

The move to online/remote delivery has been a challenge as tutors have had to adapt their RARPA approaches to suit the new delivery methods; we now need to ensure there are consistently good quality approaches to RARPA in use across the whole provision.

## 6.3 IMPACT

Learner satisfaction is high and above the benchmark<sup>8</sup> and has remained consistent with previous years, with a large proportion (99.4%) of learners stating they enjoyed their learning experience, had the help they needed to make good progress and achieve, received the help they required to understand what they could do next. Just over half (56%) of learners intend to participate in further Community Learning programmes, although this is a reduction on last year (63%).

This data is drawn from a survey which learners are asked to complete at the end of their course, and which gathers their views on the quality of their course, the benefits for their personal development and the overall impact of the course. 54% (1483) of learners who completed their course responded to the survey, which is slightly below the target of 60%. Learners were given the option to complete the survey online, meaning that tutors could not monitor completion as courses finished, whereas with the paper questionnaire completed in class used previously, tutors had been able more effectively to encourage learners to participate. Across the different curriculum areas between 54% and 69% of learners completed the survey with the exception of digital and employability courses where only 33-37% had completed it.

Of the total number of responses, 82% learners had added a comment to explain the impact of the course with the overwhelming majority of comments being positive. See Supporting Evidence.

One notable feature of the comments is recognition of the range of additional benefits to learners across curriculum areas for example learners on non-Digital courses having improved their digital skills, learners on non-Family Learning courses sharing their learning with family members, learners on STEM and Family Learning having gained communication and other skills for work and employment, and learners across the board having seen a positive impact on their mental wellbeing. A number of learners talked about the "life-changing" impact, or the course being a "lifeline" in the context of the pandemic and reducing isolation.

Another notable feature is that the impact of learning extends beyond those who are directly enrolled on the course. It is expected that Family Learning provision benefits the whole family, rather than just the adult learner, but learners also talk about sharing their new parenting skills with other adults in their family, or with their friends. A learner on a Leisure, Health and Wellbeing course reports that she will share her new

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<sup>8</sup> Lincolnshire Benchmarking data 2019-20

knowledge with the children and young people she fosters, and learners on Supported Learning courses have also reported sharing the activities and knowledge with other family members.

### **Learner Participation and Achievement Data**

The use of data has improved, and there is now more consistency in the use of data for quality and financial reporting. The result is that sub-contracted providers are incentivised to direct provision as is intended in the Community Learning Strategy and Commissioning Plan and Community Learning specification, in other words directed at learners who are resident in the 8 Staffordshire districts.

From 2019-20 we collected data on learner district, and updated the definition for attendance (which had previously counted a Known/authorised attendance as an attendance). In term 3 of 2019-20 and 2020-21 attendance figures include asynchronous attendance where the tutor has evidence that the learner has completed the work, and the tutor has given feedback.

We now need to ensure we have data sets that are directly comparable from one year to another, and that evidence our target learner groups so that we can better evaluate the extent to which we are reaching and supporting those target learners. We also need to increase participation across the board.

### **Participation**

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Staffordshire Community Learners (rounded)<sup>9</sup></b>	2430	1820	-25%
<b>Staffordshire Adult Skills learners (rounded)</b>	170	80	-53%

The total number of Community Learning learners represent a drop of 25% on the previous year – this should be viewed within the national picture where the drop was 32% in 2020-21<sup>10</sup>, and it allows us to partially recover from our larger than average drop in 2019-20.

In Adult Skills there was a further significant drop of 53% in the number of learners compared to the previous year.

<sup>9</sup> [Further education and skills, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

<sup>10</sup> [Further education and skills, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

In terms of enrolments, the decline in 2020-21 was slightly smaller as many learners were able to progress internally and enrol on more than one course.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>change</b>
<b>Total Enrolments</b>	3,711	2,943	-22%
<b>Community Learning Enrolments</b>	3,428	2,782	-18.9%
<b>Adult Skills Enrolments (Accredited)</b>	283	161	-43.1%

Online delivery represented 58% of provision and positively contributed to the end-year enrolment figure. We were successful in providing an offer that was accessible to learners, and reached out to new learner groups including those who had not previously accessed classroom-based learning, but found the flexibility of online delivery suited their needs. In Adult Skills enrolments were down 43.1% on the previous year; many learners in this area have low digital skills, meaning it was harder for them to engage with the online offer.

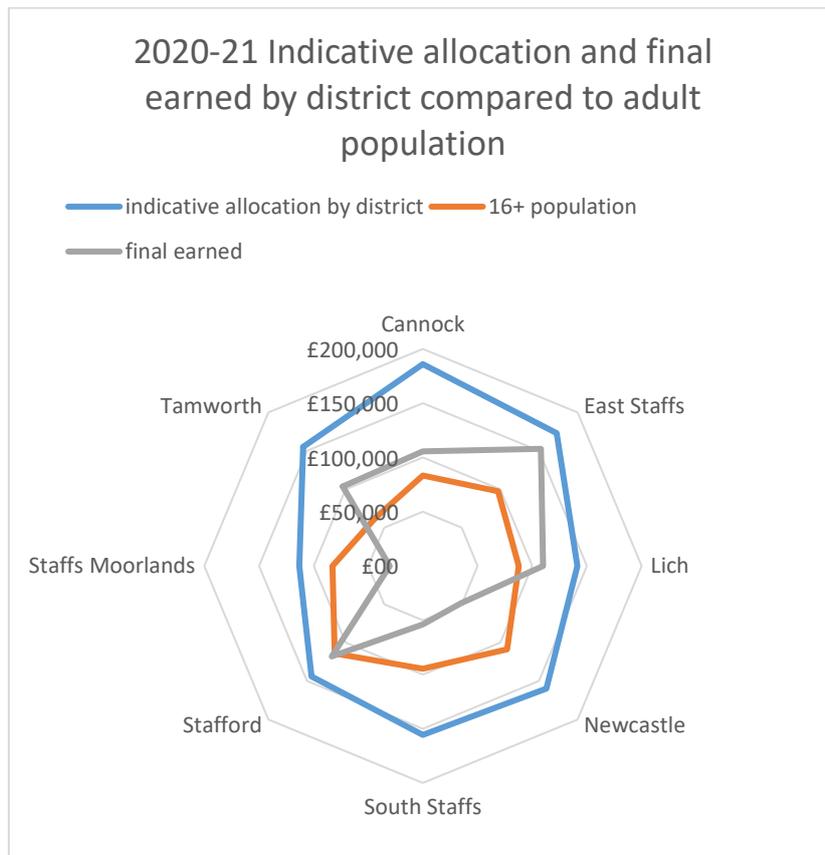
	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>Total Enrolments</b>	3,711	2,943
<b>Out of County</b>	199 (5.3%)	110 (3.7%)
<b>Staffordshire Enrolments</b>	3,512 (94.7%)	2,833 (96.3%)

We aimed to focus funding on Staffordshire residents and to reduce the number of out of county enrolments during 2020-21 by paying sub-contractors based on Staffordshire district residency only. This resulted in a further reduction of 44.8% of out of county enrolments, meaning a greater proportion of funding is targeted at Staffordshire residents.

### **Participation by district**

The Community Learning Specification 2020-21 states indicative funding allocations weighted to address identified priorities, with a larger proportion of funding going to Cannock Chase, Tamworth and East Staffordshire districts as they had proportionally more Universal Credit claimants in July 2020, and higher numbers of adults without qualifications beyond level 2. This aim was not fully realised. Whilst East Staffordshire and Tamworth, as two of the districts with higher levels of

need, actually received 115% and 94% of the intended allocation respectively, Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle received less than 40% of the intended allocation, with Lichfield and Stafford gaining from this. In-year contract variations mitigated to some extent the restrictions on funding allocations for example the Register of Training Organisations limits. However, the Community Learning service also needs to work with local organisations to develop potential delivery partners in those districts which have not received the intended allocation, and to access learner groups in these communities.



Further data below is based on enrolments of Staffordshire residents for whom sub-contractors were funded (learner starts resident in Staffordshire as defined in the Community Learning specification 2020-21) in order to retain the focus on the learner groups who the funding is targeted towards.

## Ethnicity

	<b>Asian</b>	<b>White British</b>	<b>White other</b>	<b>Any other ethnic group</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>2020/21 total starts = 2785</b>	112	2,324	144	131	74
	4%	83%	5%	5%	3%

The majority of enrolments, 88%, were from white learners, while 9% were from all BAME categories. This is in line with the general Staffordshire population, showing a slightly smaller proportion of white learners in the last 2 years compared to 2018-19 when the percentage was 90%. It will be beneficial to track this data more actively when the 2021 census data is realised and gives a more accurate benchmark of the general Staffordshire population.

## Age

	<b>19</b>	<b>20-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-64</b>	<b>65-99</b>
2020/21 total starts = 2785	11	484	830	610	444	222	184
	0.4%	17.3%	29.8%	21.9%	15.9%	7.9%	6.6%

Since 2018-19 when older learners represented over 15% of enrolments, the proportion of enrolments made in 2020-21 made by learners aged 65 or over has dropped by 9% to 6.6% of the total, showing better targeting of funding towards provision aimed at supporting residents to progress into further learning, or work, or support their families.

## Sex

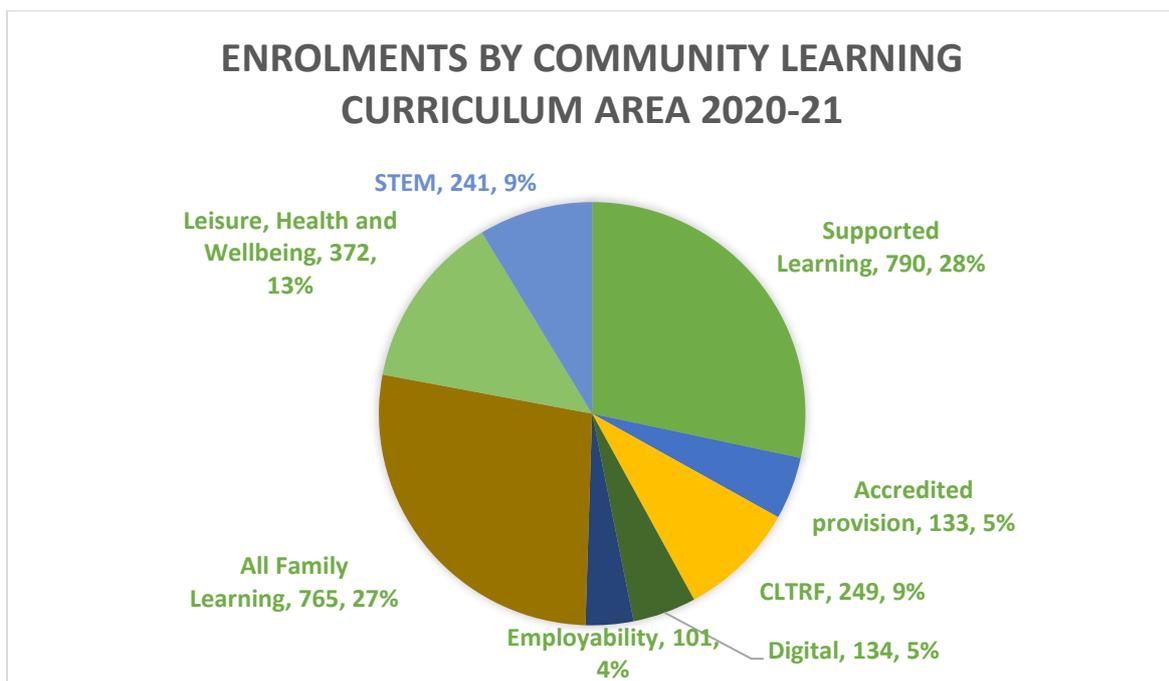
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Total starts = 2875	642	2,143
	23%	77%

Just over three-quarters, 77%, (2143) of enrolments were from female learners with 23% (642) being male. This is a reduction from previous

years from 25.7% in 2019-20 and 28% in 2018-19, and below the benchmark of 25%<sup>11</sup>. Four providers had between 43-65% of their learners who were male, and successful strategies from these providers should be shared with others, particularly in Family Learning, to increase the overall proportion of males to be in line with the national benchmark.

### **Curriculum Area and Disability/Learning Difficulty**

A high proportion of provision (28% enrolments, up from 21% in 2019-20) falls within the Supported Learning curriculum area, and a high proportion of learners (33%) of learners across all provision have a learning difficulty or learner disability, according to self-declaration at enrolment; this compares to 18% in national figures for Community Learning participation<sup>12</sup>. This group were more likely to enrol on more than one course, attending an average of 2.13 courses, compared to 1.3 courses on average for learners without a disability, showing that the Service offers excellent progression opportunities and longer-term support for those who most need it.



Family Learning provision also increased from 22% to 27% of enrolments. Over half of these learners were highly targeted, being referred through safeguarding and early help channels, or schools, and the courses had a significant positive impact on the parenting skills of the adult learners,

<sup>11</sup> [Further education and skills, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics/service/gov-uk)

<sup>12</sup> [Further education and skills, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics/service/gov-uk)

and subsequently on family life. Even where learners were less targeted, qualitative feedback from learners demonstrated the positive impacts on wellbeing for parents and children, at a time when family dynamics and opportunities were being impacted by national lockdowns and restrictions.

### Learner Performance Data

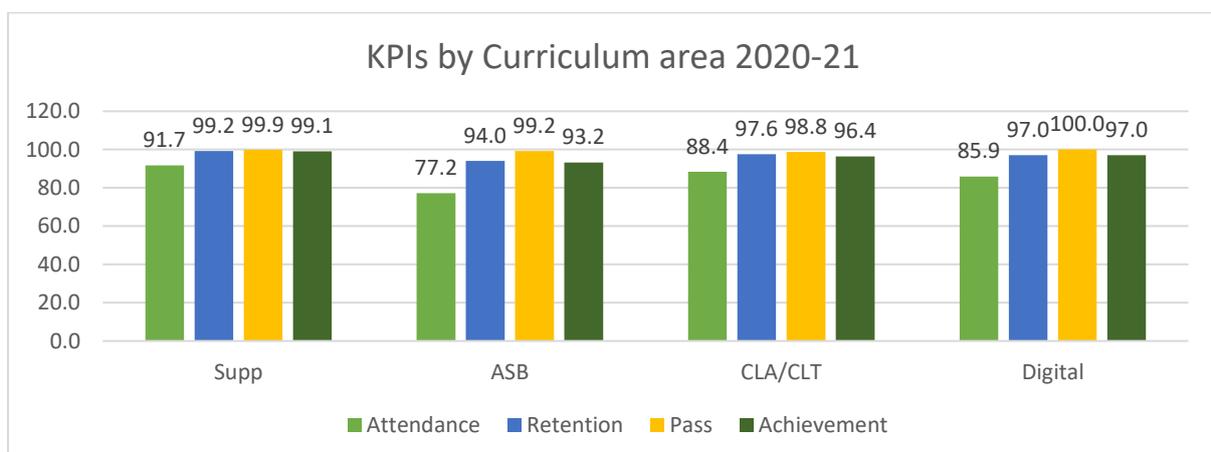
2020-2021	Attendance	Achievement	Pass rate	Retention
<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	90%	94%	98%	96%
<b>All provision</b>	89.7%	97.1%	98.8%	98.3%
<b>Community Learning</b>	90.8%	97.3%	98.8%	98.5%
<b>Adult Skills Accredited provision</b>	77.2%	93.2%	99.2%	94.0%

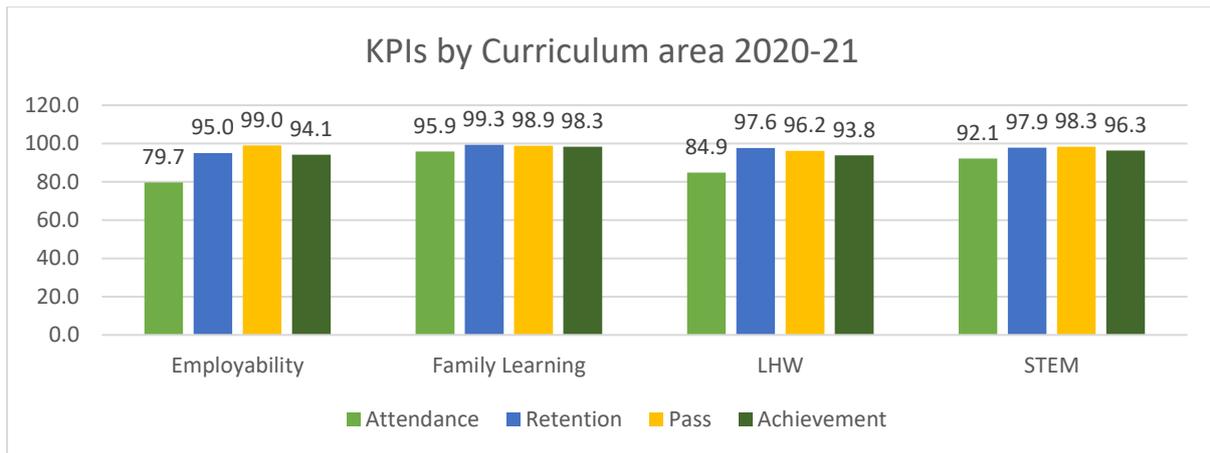
### Attendance

In 2019-20, 193 enrolments of Staffordshire enrolments resulted in an attendance of less than 25% of their course, thereby not counting as a “learner start”, representing 5.5%. In 2020-21, this number had reduced to 48 enrolments, 1.7% of enrolments.

Of those who count as a start, the headline figure for attendance is 89.7%. In non-accredited Community Learning the attendance was 90.8%, however in Adult Skills it was 77.2%. This gap needs to be reduced.

### Retention, pass rates and achievement





### **Retention - Community Learning**

Headline retention in 2020-21 is at 98.5%, above our KPI of 96% and there are no significant gaps in retention between the different demographic groups.

This is also a significant improvement in terms of consistency on the situation in 2019-20 where some groups had retention rates as low as 80% (white, other) and 85.2% (BAME).

Employability courses had a slightly lower rate (95%) respectively, just below the Key Performance Indicator (96%). This curriculum area had also experienced the lowest rate of attendance 79.7%.

It seems likely that more flexible approaches to delivery including asynchronous delivery encouraged learners who had been absent at some point during their course, to return to their learning and eventually complete the course. This is backed up by a number of learner feedback comments which reference the flexible delivery, and the considerable amount of 1-1 support from tutors in addition to the group learning activities.

### **Retention - Adult Skills provision**

Nine out of 10 learners on Adult Skills courses were on ESOL courses. Retention in 2020-21 is at 94%, below the KPI of 96%.

This area had an attendance rate of 77.2%, and learners' lower attendance is likely to have impacted on their ability to complete the course.

Good practice in supporting learners to complete their course must be shared and built on across the curriculum areas and sub-contractors so that consistency can be improved, in particular in the Adult Skills provision and Employability curriculum area.

### **Pass rates – Community Learning**

The high pass rate for all provision has been maintained with 98.8% of learners achieving their course outcomes or passing accreditation, compared with 98% in 2019-20 and 98.6% in 2018-19. This is consistent across curriculum areas with a variation of less than 4%. There are no significant differences for different equality groups. Therefore, pass rates are excellent.

On non-accredited provision, robust RARPA audit measures validate the accuracy of the non-accredited pass rate.

One provider (34 enrolments) had pass rates which slipped below the trend; it will be recommended to take a proactive approach to checking consistency of RARPA practice and accuracy of data reporting with this provider, as observation of teaching and learning did not give rise to concerns.

What's more, it will be prudent to continue to monitor closely RARPA practice, particularly in online/remote learning, to ensure learners have SMART and/or challenging outcomes appropriately recorded so that learner achievement can be fully evidenced.

### **Pass rates - Adult Skills provision**

80 learners took accredited assessments: 12 being IT qualifications accredited by TLM, which were delivered via online learning; and 68 learners made 121 enrolments in ESOL at pre-Entry to E2, again demonstrating a good provision of progression opportunities where most needed.

Around 80% of ESOL enrolments were through non-regulated provision, due to the low levels of learners at their starting point, and the inaccessibility of ESOL accredited assessments while local venues were closed in terms 1 and 2. Progress and achievement for these learners was measured through RARPA. ESOL learners in term 3 were able to complete accredited assessments.

Overall pass rates for accredited provision were excellent at 99.2%.

### **Achievement – Community Learning**

Overall achievement in Community Learning is excellent at 97.3%, ahead of the KPI of 94%. There were no significant differences in equality groups.

There were differences according to curriculum area, but none significantly below the KPI, with Leisure, Health and Wellbeing having an achievement rate of 93.8% and Employability 94.1%, compared to

Supported Learning which had an achievement rate of 99.1% and Family Learning with 98.3%. In Leisure, Health and Wellbeing this was driven by the slightly lower pass rate, and in Employability by the retention rate, as discussed above.

### **Achievement – Adult Skills**

Overall achievement in Adult Skills provision was just under the KPI at 93.2%, driven by the slightly lower retention rate, as discussed above. Actions need to be taken to improve attendance and therefore retention on these courses, to improve this outcome.

### **Learner Impact and Destination Survey**

J2 Research conducted a telephone survey in November 2021 to determine learner destination and the impact of learning, in which 979 former learners participated. For comparison, similar information is provided for the previous academic years.

There is an increase in the number of people who are in employment following their course; this may be partly due to the lower average age of learners in this academic year. However, there are also higher numbers in volunteering and further learning, including amongst those who were not in work before the start of the course, indicating positive destinations for these learners.

There is an increase in the number of learners satisfied they achieved their main aim for joining the programme. The 2019-20 increases in learners feeling the positive impact of their course, as measured against some of the key aims of Community Learning, have been mostly maintained or further improved.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Total Number of Learners</b>	<b>2540</b>	<b>1862</b>
<b>Surveys completed</b>	<b>1272</b>	<b>979</b>
What are you doing now?		
Employment	43.8%	49%
Unemployed looking for work	6.5%	5.3%
Further study	3.9%	4.1%
Volunteering	2.1%	3.6%
Wider Outcomes		
Achieved main aim	89.8%	94.8%
Participate in society	50.8%	55.9%
Protect self from online/scams	31.2%	37.2%
Keep well	82.3%	82.3%
Pursue goals	68.8%	67.8%
Improve maths/English	21.1%	20.5%
More independent	56.7%	60.3%

## 7 BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

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Headline attendance 2020-21 jumped significantly for this year to nearly recover the pre-Covid situation at 89.7%. This can be explained by a number of factors, for example the increase in participation and attendance in Family Learning driven by Community Forest Services who had a large amount of online provision, and who refined their online delivery this year, leading to an increase in attendance from 79% in 2019-20 to 89% in 2020-21; also by the reduction in the size of Leisure, Health and Wellbeing learning and Employability which had previously had low attendance rates, leading to a smaller impact on the headline figure. Overall attendance is now within 0.3% of the Key Performance Indicator (90%) and is good.

However, 9 out of 23 sub-contractors did not meet the Key Performance Indicator. This particularly affected learners from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds (84.1%), and older learners (86%) and may well be explained by the Covid situation affecting learners' ability or confidence to attend. In addition, some of these were small sub-contractors with less than 20 learners who had learning difficulties/disabilities, so it is not necessarily appropriate to attribute these to a wider trend in the current circumstances, with the pandemic ongoing through the academic year.

On the other hand, delivery via asynchronous learning is likely to have supported learners to continue to engage in learning, albeit remotely, meaning that the lower attendance rates for these groups did not translate into lower retention rates, which stayed above 98% for all equality groups.

In terms of curriculum areas, Supported Learning, Family Learning and STEM all reached beyond the Key Performance Indicator, Employability improved from 57.4% to 79.7%, whilst Adult Skills provision reduced from 81.2% to 77.2%. Actions must be taken to improve attendance in these areas.

Evidence from quality monitoring activity suggests that the behaviour and attitudes of learners are very good, and this is backed up by feedback from learners themselves, based on the questionnaire learners complete towards the end of their course.

The vast majority of learners arrive in time for synchronous learning and prepared to start their learning; punctuality is good. Tutors have high expectations of learners, and learners generally are highly motivated and engage very well with the wide range of learning activities that tutors plan for them.

Tutors plan a wide range of teaching and learning activities as appropriate to the subject, to help learners understand how to study and make good progress. For example, in a Plumbing course, learners make their own notes on handouts with diagrams to support their understanding of legislative and regulatory guidelines, before they start practical work. Increasing use of online learning has facilitated learners to learn independently for example, to access a wide range of further reading materials, recommended by tutors using live links or QR codes.

Learners take on board the constructive feedback of their tutors and understand how this helps them to progress. 99.2% reported that they had the help they needed to achieve and make good progress. Through collaborative work, tutors create groups where learners support each other. For example, in online delivery they leave supportive and constructive comments for their peers' photos of work on social media posts; learners are clearly proud of their achievements. In Supported Learning provision in particular, tutors support learners to overcome anxieties in order to engage well, and learners demonstrate a commitment to doing this. In the best face-to-face delivery, there are clear opportunities for prominent learner voice, with learners contributing to the shape of their programmes.

*"An extremely supportive environment where learners can express concerns openly and support each other. Learners are encouraged to share their learning, their achievements and how they like to learn. They share their experiences of learning online or in the classroom, the advantages and disadvantages, the challenges and how being persistent pays off." Observation report, SCF*

Tutors are supported to set high expectations for learners, and to promote British Values, through the provision of a Learner Handbook which is given to all learners, and discussed at the induction stage of courses. The Handbook covers expectations, rights and responsibilities of learners, equality and diversity and safeguarding. In many courses, learners agree a "group charter" or set of ground rules. This also applies to online delivery, for example the padlet for Community Forest Services includes an "Ethos and Ethics" section with a framework of "Be Kind, Be Respectful, Think about the environment, Be safe".

As a result, learners demonstrate British Values in their behaviour; they report that they feel safe (99.3%), that the tutors ensure that all learners show respect for each others' views and ideas, and that the tutor listened to them and took note of what they said (99.6% each).

*"The teacher had a brilliant ability to listen and open up discussions and to note learning in a way that didn't make anyone feel judged" Learner comment, Family Learning course.*

Positive attitudes to learning are demonstrated by the fact that over 99% of learners enjoyed their learning, were happy with their tutor and would recommend their course to a friend. 56% of learners responding to the feedback survey said they intended to do more community learning in future, and in fact learners enrolled on an average of 1.5 courses each.

## **8 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Evidence from quality monitoring activity suggests that the personal development of learners is good, and this is backed up by feedback from learners themselves, based on the questionnaire learners complete towards the end of their course, and on the destinations survey, which is completed by telephone interview, up to 12 months after the course has finished.

Tutors are prompted to consider how their courses support learners to develop their wider personal skills through sections in the scheme of work, monitoring during quality visits, learner voice activity and CPD opportunities and discussion.

Learners report clear benefits for their personal development, with the most common being the opportunity to take part in new experiences (79%), improved wellbeing and health (65% and 34% respectively) and making new social contacts (44%). In fact, the learner comments reveal a common synergy between learning new skills and significant improvements in mental wellbeing, which has been particularly important to learners during the pandemic. In their comments, learners commonly report the wellbeing benefits of sharing their learning either with others on the course, or by passing on their new skills to family and friends.

Approximately 65 learners took part in focus groups during the year to explore their attitudes to digital skills. Overall, it was clear that learners felt it was important to strike a balance between courses offering an escape from everyday stresses in their lives including online issues, and courses that allow them to develop confidence in online safety and also an interest in developing their access to online services such as job searching, and paying council or car tax. Direct Delivery Unit Digital skills courses explicitly develop these skills, whilst tutors develop learners' digital skills and discuss online safety with learners across all types of provision, and 41% of learners reported via the feedback survey that they felt more able to keep themselves and their family safe.

*"I made some nice things this term and really enjoyed using iPads with our art this time. ... we learn more." Learner comment on Art for Life (wellbeing), Supported Learning course.*

Quality audits, class visits, online evaluations and observations evidence that all tutors plan for and embed British Values and the Prevent Duty into inductions and sessions. Most tutors make good use of natural occurring instances to raise awareness. 95.7% of learners said that they were informed about how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism, and 98.3% knew what to do if they or others on the courses didn't feel safe. As mentioned in the evaluation of safeguarding above, more needs to be done to ensure this is consistent across all curriculum areas and equality groups.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are a priority for the service, and tutors are prompted through the scheme of work to plan opportunities to discuss equality issues and British Values with learners on all courses. Learners are consistently respectful of each other and of staff.

*"Excellent group dynamic and high expectations with strong ethos of inclusivity and opportunity from the organisation, and learners contribute to this through good attitudes and relationships" Observation report, UMRA*

*"Learners show appreciation of hidden abilities/talents and bring out the best in each other." Observation report, GRE*

High levels of collaborative work and discussion activities ensure that learners' varied lived experiences are valued, and diversity is celebrated within groups.

*"Tutors engage well with learners from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. This results in learners feeling more able to 'open up' and disclose other areas of support not discussed during initial stages of the service resulting in potential barriers to learning such as housing being identified and addressed" Matrix report January 2021*

Support for employment-related skills is good. In the feedback surveys, nearly two-thirds of learners across all provision (64%) report a development of their work-related skills, or functional skills in at least one area of the following: skills and confidence to progress in my job/career, ability to re-skills or upskill for work, or development of English maths or digital skills. This rises to 91% of learners on Employability provision, and 83% of learners on STEM courses. A further 8% across all provision feel more able to live independently or to take an active role in their community.

Learner feedback evidences learners gaining the confidence to enrol on further learning or starting their own business. For example, in the STEM provision, a number of learners talk about how their confidence has increased to a point where they are now making concrete plans to start their own business or CIC, and sometimes from a starting point of experiencing mental ill-health.

*"The questions and answer sessions were fab as it gave an opportunity to ask the experts about the roles they do to give a good realistic idea of what careers are out there." Learner comment on STEM "Branch into Nature" course.*

Provider staff have effective working relationships with local agencies to support progression into learning, and following courses, into further learning or support, for example Job Centre Plus, local BBO providers, and support agencies such as Malachi and Harvey Girls who offer family support. As a result, learners feel well supported by their tutors. The Learner feedback survey tells us that 99.1% of learners felt their tutor helped them to understand what they could do next. Over half of learners were intending to do more community learning (56%), particularly those aged over 60, or with a learning difficulty or disability. 8 individuals intended to progress onto a traineeship or apprenticeship, whilst 23 intended to start full-time further education. 5.3% of learners were looking for paid employment at the end of their course, based on the latest available data from the destinations survey 2020-21.

The Service maintained its Matrix accreditation in January 2021 with the assessor reporting effective practice in the areas of pre-enrolment information, initial assessment and induction. The report also comments that learners feel confident in making informed choices about their next steps, and that tutors are well informed about the starting points and progress of learners.

*"Learners are provided with information about the requirements of the courses and expectations such as attendance, to ensure they are aware of what to expect once enrolled. Initial assessments ensure learners are enrolled onto the right level of qualification which helps to keep them motivated. Information on next steps and potential progression options is delivered as part of the course and revisited throughout. As a result of this many learners go on to either higher level qualifications, progress into employment or volunteering or take additional courses as with leisure related courses. Without exception, learners described a thorough process of induction which gave them the confidence to take the next steps"*  
*Matrix report, January 2021*

## 9 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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Leaders and managers have a clear vision to use Community Learning to achieve the Staffordshire County Council's objectives, with effective priorities and targeting of the provision to those who will benefit most from lifelong learning. There is effective communication of this vision to all stakeholders from Senior Officers and Members, to local partners such as the LEP and other County Council directorates, through to sub-contracted partners, referring organisations, other local providers, and learners themselves. This is achieved through Member Briefings Meetings, management meetings, social media and Newsletters, and provider meetings.

Senior Officers and Members have a clear and ambitious vision for the future of the Community Learning Service and are strong advocates of education and skills across the County. They provide clear leadership and direction to ensure community learning provision responds to local, regional and national priorities, collaborating with a wide range of local and national partners with strong representation and dialogue with LEP members. They provide timely support, guidance and resources to improve the reach and effectiveness of the Service. In a survey of tutor views, over 96% said they understand how their work relates to Community Learning and County Council priorities.

Senior Officers and Members effectively support and challenge the Service to maintain the quality and performance and to drive rapid improvements where required in order to provide the best learning experiences for learners. In-year, the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee, the Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability, the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills and the Assistant Director for Skills & Employability have been instrumental in shaping the Service to align to the Council's strategic ambitions for promoting prosperity and economic growth. Comprehensive reports have been presented to Senior Leaders and Members, including the Cabinet member for Learning and Employability, to allow for further analysis, scrutiny and challenge, ultimately ensuring high quality learning, good value for money and good outcomes for learners.

The financial management of the service is good and is subject to regular budget reporting procedures. The management team is effective at responding to any external funding pressures to ensure the Service remains focused on priority areas whilst ensuring provision for all learners is accessible. In-year financial contract variations have been implemented resulting in funds being directed appropriately towards the identified local need.

There is a strong focus on the qualifications and professional development of tutors. All tutors are qualified to at least level 3 (Award in Education and Training), as well as having relevant English and maths and subject-specific qualifications.

Experienced Teaching and Learning Advisors provide professional support to promote good practice and to develop the skills of all teaching and support staff. Tutors access a broad range of high-quality training and professional development activities, covering additional safeguarding training, wellbeing and mental health, health and safety, and subject specific training. In addition, the Community Learning staff develop specific training resources, following analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement at observations and class visits, and including online live sessions for example a Show and Tell digital learning workshop, and Family Learning network for tutors. There has been a strong emphasis on supporting the development of digital and remote pedagogies during the academic year, and the aim is always to be supportive and motivating. When surveyed, 86% of tutors felt that leaders and managers in their organisation are considerate of workloads and well-being. There has been good attendance at the Tutor Induction Briefing which was delivered online to fully prepare and develop teaching staff for classroom, blended and online delivery of courses. Nearly 9 out of 10 tutors surveyed felt these opportunities and helped them to develop their professional skills. Consequently, the skills of tutor teams develop over time, and tutors are well-supported.

Managers and Officers have participated in a range of webinars delivered by HOLEX, Education Training Foundation, and Skills & Education Group, including participation in the HOLEX Digital ACE programme and mentoring. The learning from this activity has been cascaded pro-actively to sub-contractors and their teaching staff through coaching and mentoring, CPD meetings, an online social media closed group, sharing of best practice via Twitter and the Community Learning blog.

*"The Teaching & Learning (T&L) Blog is well used by tutors and includes a wide range of information including, the vision of CL, key priorities, learner documents, good practice guides, CPD resources as well as relevant policies. Having all this information in one place and online is particularly useful and allows updates to be actioned quickly and efficiently. Many of the resources on the blog are used to support learners such as 'embedding equality & diversity' and results of focus groups, resulting in a consistent approach to service delivery." Matrix report*

Relevant Learner Voice activities are planned on a regular basis, ensuring that learners' views are listened to and acted on. Learner feedback is gathered informally at quality monitoring visits and more formally through

a survey which learners complete towards the end of their course. A key performance indicator is set for the learner feedback response rate to be 60%; in 2020-21 we achieved a 54% response rate overall, although there were wide variations between sub-contractors, mainly due to the difficulty in monitoring online response rates in real time. The consistency of this needs to be improved. Learner feedback gathered through the surveys was overwhelming enthusiastic, with a wealth of additional comments testifying to the positive impact on learning (See supporting evidence section).

In addition, the Service plans Learner Voice focus groups or forums, centred on a different theme each year, which ensures learner's views contribute to the development of the Service. This year we focussed on digital skills as reported in the Personal Development section above. Some learners also complete a "Success Story" proforma where there have been particularly good outcomes for the learner. The handbook gives contact details for learners to make a complaint or comment on an ad-hoc basis if they wish. Officers and managers address these contacts following the County Council's procedure for responding to complaints and compliments. As a result, Community Learning staff have a good understanding of the learner experience at the various sub-contractors and in the Direct Delivery Unit, and are able to appropriately support or celebrate achievements.

The Service operates a well-developed and robust performance and quality assurance process to ensure contract compliance and quality of provision delivered by the sub-contractors and the Direct Delivery Unit. There is a comprehensive quality framework within a service specification, and a range of quality monitoring activities. In addition, all staff involved in the provision appropriately contribute to the self-assessment process and review of quality improvement planning. The self-assessment process and contract and performance monitoring procedures are systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive; performance data is used well to inform and improve the quality of provision. This results in all staff and sub-contractor staff having a clear understanding of the quality and performance in the areas they are responsible for, and how this relates to the County Council and Services vision and priorities.

The Community Learning team meet regularly and have monitored progress against the Quality Improvement Plan objectives during the year, meaning there is a strong focus on sustaining quality actions and continual improvement, for example by identifying strategies and support for sub-contractors in order to achieve the actions. As a result, attendance has improved, along with retention and achievement, there is better use of data, particularly in relation to equality groups and of Pound

Plus data provided by sub-contractors, and there has been an improvement in learners' digital skills and inclusion across all curriculum areas.

At the outset of the academic year, Senior Managers and Provider Relationship Managers communicate high expectations with sub-contractors during implementation meetings. In-year, contract performance and quality assurance are monitored and recorded through monthly dialogue meetings and termly reviews with subcontractors, with remedial actions identified and actioned. Contract performance is reported monthly to the Assistant Director, Skills and Employability and is subject to challenge and scrutiny.

Officers in each role across the Service are experienced, make valuable contributions and have well established working relationships with their sub-contractors and know the provision well. They share the vision, address under-performance, acknowledge good and outstanding practice, and fully embrace change and developments to support the sustainability of Staffordshire Community Learning. There is a regular schedule of monthly dialogue between provider relationship managers and sub-contractor managers. As a result, any concerns with performance and quality are addressed swiftly and clearly.

In addition to the existing quality monitoring and development activities, quality managers have developed the assurance of online and remote delivery. This has been robust and involved gaining access to online sessions, closed social media groups, online learning materials, learner work and ILPs, as well as professional dialogue and self-reflection with teaching staff which is captured in an online evaluation pro-forma. This has led to teaching staff receiving constructive feedback and sometimes further support and training from the Teaching and Learning Advisors.

These quality assurance interventions allow Community Learning staff to consistently evaluate the quality of teaching and learning against the quality framework set out in the Community Learning Specification. All aspects of quality assurance are reported on with appropriate RAG ratings and action plans. The Quality officers and sub-contractors work collaboratively to develop a quality learner experience. The impact of this is evident in the high quality of taught sessions, and through feedback from learners, standard of their work, their behaviour, and their success stories.

## 10 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

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### 10.1 LEARNER STATEMENTS FROM FEEDBACK SURVEYS

#### **Adult Skills Accredited provision (ESOL)**

Discipline during the learning process create good habit in my life. Supporting environment which was created help me feel confident with my study, I felt encouraged to ask questions. Thanks to this course I am better version of me then I was before. I am grateful for this opportunity to improve language.

I found a new and better job. My communication is better with English native people. I am more confident when I going to go at hospital, bank or choose different services.

In my opinion the courses like this are a great opportunity for learn how to better speak English, understand English people around me and also feel more connected with England.

#### **Digital**

The course was of huge benefit to me as my Word processing skills were very poor and I needed to upskill in connection with a forthcoming new job, so the timing and benefit of this course were ideal for me.

It has given me confidence on Excel where previously I was deterred from using it as felt out of my depth! Very beneficial + will help me improve @ work!

This was a very comprehensive course packed with practical tips on on-line safety and getting to grips with social media.

I started the course with an IT phobia, I now feel more confident that I can keep myself and my family safe.

The skills I have gained from undertaking the "Becoming confident with social media", has enabled me to be more effective and confident in my role as administrator of our local Royal British Legion Branch Facebook. The course content and method of delivery were superb. The instructor was supportive at all times, ensuring that myself and my peers were always treated correctly and equally - Many thanks needs to be passed onto [tutor].

#### **Employability**

The tutor has been amazing the whole way through. She has been giving us plenty of guidance, a lot of knowledge, and very fun video chats which we have all managed to make new friends. The google classroom chat, slides and presentation has been a great way to learn. And we even get some fun questionnaires at the end and some fun videos to watch and some extra research tasks that we can do if we wish.

The impact these 2 courses I have done so far has been immense in the best way possible! They have helped me feel much better about myself and have kick started a drive to better myself which I didn't have before.

### **Family learning**

I have learned to practice taking a step back and thinking about how I deal with my emotions and how I can try harder, so that the children start to handle theirs in a better way.

Nothing but positivity has stemmed for me and my children from attending this course. I wish everyone was lucky enough to access it.

This course has helped me and my family so much. The way I have been with [son] has completely changed his behaviours. It's the only course that I have ever stuck with, it's really helped and I'm happy to join a new course next term. Thank you so much to [tutor].

The course has really helped me, and my future. I know that my little girl is having the best start in life. I have been so up and down, but the course has helped me to be a better parent, much calmer and more consistent, our family is much calmer and happier because of it.

I am so much more confident. I am aiming to get my Driving Licence because at the moment have to rely on public transport. I was linked to [worker] at The Training Initiative by [tutor] and have spoken to her a few times. I will hope to gain a Traineeship in Joinery as soon as a position becomes available closer to home. I am volunteering at a local Charity Shop for the time being.

We are Healthier Eating because I have reduced portion sizes and now my daughter doesn't throw food on the floor.

I feel a lot more confident now and this includes talking to people for work purposes too. I've improved my IT skills because we have used Teams, WhatsApp, email, attachments and sent photos.

It has helped the whole household to be a lot calmer. My child listens better now I communicate better with him. I have changed the way I discipline him, and I reward him a lot more. I also praise him more often than I did.

The course has helped me as a parent, I knew nothing when I started and was anxious and depressed. Through this course, I am now thriving and so are my family.

I'm glad it was a virtual course as I wouldn't have been able to attend a course due to my anxiety.

This has had a very positive impact on our household, as my partner had had to take time off work because of the stresses and lack of sleep. Now he is back to work, and we are moving forwards.

'I' is deaf, and [tutor] gave me many ideas to stimulate her other senses and tips to help communication ie eye contact and close face to face contact. The

Deaf Specialist Teacher has linked with [tutor] and she shared 'signing' to aid communication during calls and sent me hard copies to practice at home too.

Not only have I learnt things to help with my own parenting, I've also learnt skills to share with my friends who are struggling with their children's behaviour.

I now have regular contact with my children and while the rest of my life is tricky, the course has helped me to focus on being the best parent I could be.

I've got way more patience and understanding -knowing that every opportunity is a learning one too. I notice how others handle things as I did and at times feel happy to share tips.

### **Leisure, Health and Wellbeing**

I have really enjoyed the course. Fabulous + inspiring content, well delivered with plenty of opportunity for stimulating discussion. Contribution by all.

New ideas and to focus on me-time, to help wellbeing, positive thinking and keeping a journal has helped.

It's been a lifeline having this course during lockdown. The WhatsApp group has been so supportive, and I have really enjoyed gaining new skills and trying new activities when the world was shut.

I enjoyed this course. Thank you for providing these lovely courses. I really enjoyed the padlet facility available. This was a lovely addition to the learning. I was able to read over the course information at my own pace and was able to seek a look at the following information to add my understanding and offer time to plan what to do the following week. The information and resources given was outstanding

I am going to keep on with what I have learnt and share my new-found knowledge with others including the children and young people we foster so I know the impact of what I have learnt will be massive in supporting them too.

### **STEM**

The course gave me the opportunity to do things I would never have normally done. I used a lathe to make a pen and other items that gave me great satisfaction and I now take time out to do things similar at home.

The skills I've learnt have enabled me to set up a small online business selling craft items. I am now in contact with Shaw Foundation with a one-to-one mentor. To develop this. I see a future now rather than feeling pointless.

The tutors have given excellent feedback and advice throughout the course and helped me to put in place my next steps.

As a participant I felt included and met other people via zoom links. We all shared what we had made, and confidence was built by everyone commenting on the pictures shared. I developed lots of skills and this really helped with my wellbeing during a difficult time.

Everyone that sees my work, or pictures of my work during these times..... are always amazed by how professional they look.

It has given me the confidence that my passion, experience, and enthusiasm for further learning and training are enough for me to set up my own CIC. This feels like a turning point in my career and my recovery from mental illness.

It has helped me to get a better understanding of careers in environmentalism and it has resulted in me being offered a work-based traineeship.

A massive impact. Been a very emotional journey through illness and recovery. I've met friends for life who themselves have been through traumatic experiences. The staff and volunteers very empathic to each person's needs whilst encouraging new skills. Massive part in reclaiming my life.

I have found it incredibly difficult to find time for myself during the pandemic and juggling life and childcare. This course has encouraged me to put time aside for me, to feel engaged in something I love and to keep a hand in education and adult learning. I was able to build upon existing skills and try new approaches within the course and even involve my child in activities.

### **Supported Learning**

The courses I have completed at UMRA, have changed my life. They've helped with my confidence, motivation & self-esteem. I would like to now move on to do some volunteering. I have a wealth of knowledge with flowers & would have to use my experience to inspire & help others. ...This course has really helped to remind me of what I am capable of. I realise I am very creative + hope to inspire others. It has helped with my motivation, especially important during this pandemic.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this course. It has been invaluable to my mental health during Covid lockdown. I have enjoyed all the activities and the equipment / items that were sent were fantastic along with clear instruction.

The course was excellent. The videos each week were very informative, and I learned a lot. The Facebook group was very supportive. The course wildly exceeded my expectations of what could be achieved with an online course.

Wellies has enabled me to keep on living during this difficult time: without them and their unique input during this time. with video chats and zoom meetings it's been very different / difficult at times, but this in itself has taught me new IT skills and a bit more computer confidence.

The course is great as it gets me out of the house + socialising staff are always so calm + friendly + helpful. We are always learning something new, building confidence, and also reminds me to be kind + patient to others when in class.

In particular really enjoyed the Asian art and learning more about the background behind it. I also enjoyed the social aspect of the course, meeting new people, sharing my work, and receiving feedback meant I felt very positive. I improved my digital skills on the course not having used some of features of Facebook before such as watch parties.

The course has given me the confidence to go back into learning and I am in the process of doing a web page to promote UMRA wellbeing and mental health courses. Because I am in a wheelchair I do not have to be limited, I have multiple disabilities - I cannot stand on my feet for too long and I never did that well at school. I have been able to clean out the hens, groom a Shire horse foal. I have had plenty of choice of activities to do. I have even sorted out the internet so that I can learn more. The course has inspired me to want to learn more.

I am close to my family, especially my mum so felt proud to tell her about what I've learnt and bring her things I've made as part of the sessions.

I want to try volunteering soon at a shop and this course helped me feel confident enough to do that.

Wellies is a family where are there to support each other, you can be yourself, no judgment is made. They continuously stretch & challenge me. I dislike the fact we can't be at the venue in person, but I love Zoom calls that we do - practicals are my favourite. I am becoming more confident and gaining new skills that help me mentally deal with life.

I have also been able to involve my young children in all of the activities, so their and my own wellbeing has been supported + improved.

### **CLTRF**

I have thoroughly enjoyed this course and I feel I have taken more away from it than I anticipated before commencement. I was hoping to gain an understanding of dyslexia and how I could perhaps recognise signs or early indications in students but what I have actually gained in not only a wealth of knowledge and in depth understanding of the condition but also ways in which I could help learners who struggle with dyslexia. The course was taught at exactly the right pace and was very engaging so thank you.

This course has helped my writing and I am now writing match reports for Stafford Rangers – learner with disabilities/learning difficulties.

The course has helped me to become more confident following a recent mental health issue. I now feel myself again and the course and tutor helped me to do this. It has also improved my knowledge and skills in my voluntary work and given me confidence to pass on to others. I'm also inspired to follow a new career path in working with horses and vulnerable people.

Built confidence, knowledge of the horses, markings likes & dislikes. Very comfortable with horses. Excited to come every week.

I like [tutor] and [tutor] and doing the courses. I have written poetry. It is good fun. I have used the ipads and I can do it on my own now Learner's mum has asked to record that learner absolutely loves learning on these courses and continues the learning at home with his family.

I have to use my computer to speak but I am never left out of the learning. [Tutor] makes sure I am part of all of it

I'm very happy I enrolled for this course it's helped me in lots of way communicating, using apps on my phone and more supporting my daughter with using creatively, she also enjoys getting her pencil and paper out making designs with me.

I home-educate two of my children as they have extra needs, and this course has really helped me to help them with their learning. When my children are bigger, I'd like to work with children who also need extra help.

I have enjoyed myself on the [Family Learning] course. I found it interesting how much more I could do other than just read a book. My son used to get bored after a while when I use to read to him, ...now he stands right near me to look at the pictures and we have more of an interaction where he points at the pictures, and I ask him simple questions. I didn't always take part in the WhatsApp groups, but I did look at other students' ideas and learnt from them.

I have really enjoyed this course there was times where I could not join as I have children's appointments or poor internet connection, but work was always shared with me via the WhatsApp which I used to share my homework with, and I was confident to do that independently.

This course has helped me to establish a fitness routine that I intent to continue with now that the course has finished. I feel healthier and have changed my mindset in making healthier choices for me and my family.

## 10.2 STATISTICAL DATA AND CHARTS

The following data are based on learners who were resident in the 8 Staffordshire districts and who attended at least 25% of the GLH of their course, thereby counting as a “start” for finance purposes. This means actual numbers may vary slightly from the ILR return to the ESFA due to small differences in definitions.

### Total learners and enrolments

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Staffordshire Community Learners (rounded)<sup>13</sup></b>	2430	1820	-25%
<b>Staffordshire Adult Skills learners (rounded)</b>	170	80	-53%

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>change</b>
<b>Total Enrolments</b>	3,711	2,943	-22%
<b>Community Learning Enrolments</b>	3,428	2,782	-18.9%
<b>Adult Skills Enrolments (Accredited)</b>	283	161	-43.1%

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>Total Enrolments</b>	3,711	2,943
<b>Out of County</b>	199 (5.3%)	110 (3.7%)
<b>Staffordshire Enrolments</b>	3,512 (94.7%)	2,833 (96.3%)

<sup>13</sup> [Further education and skills, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

## Ethnicity

	<b>Asian</b>	<b>White British</b>	<b>White other</b>	<b>Any other ethnic group</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>2020/21 total starts = 2785</b>	112	2,324	144	131	74
	4%	83%	5%	5%	3%

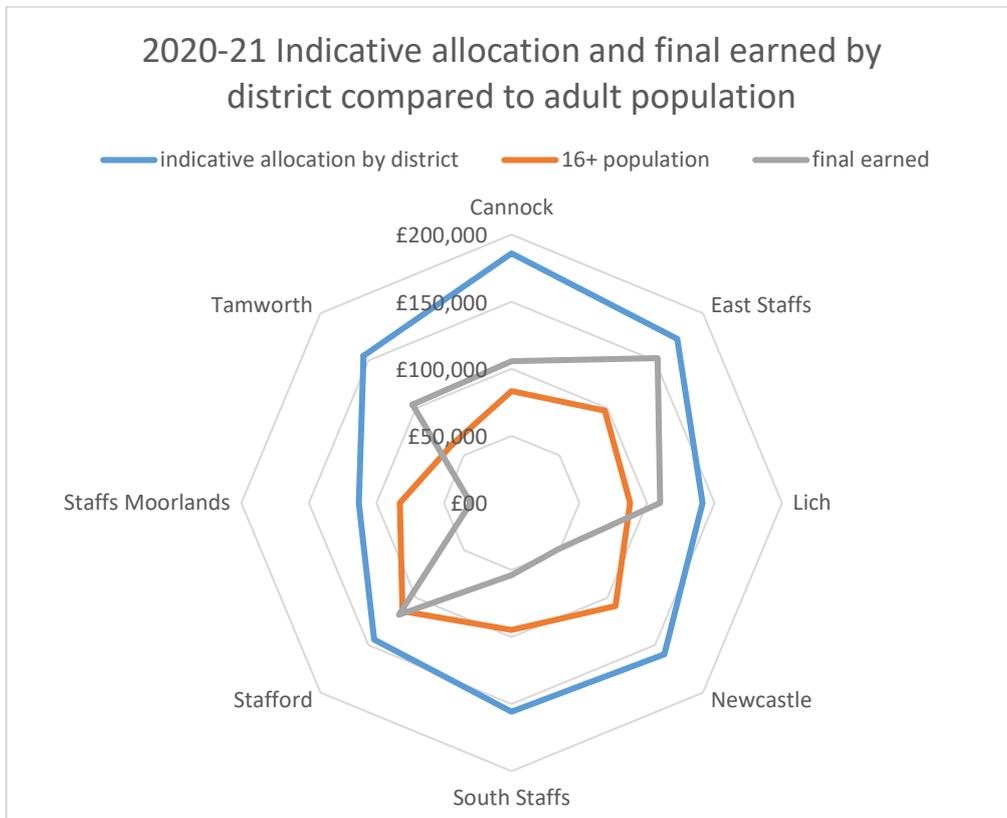
## Age

	<b>19</b>	<b>20-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-64</b>	<b>65-99</b>
<b>2020/21 Total starts = 2785</b>	11	484	830	610	444	222	184
	0.4%	17.3%	29.8%	21.9%	15.9%	7.9%	6.6%

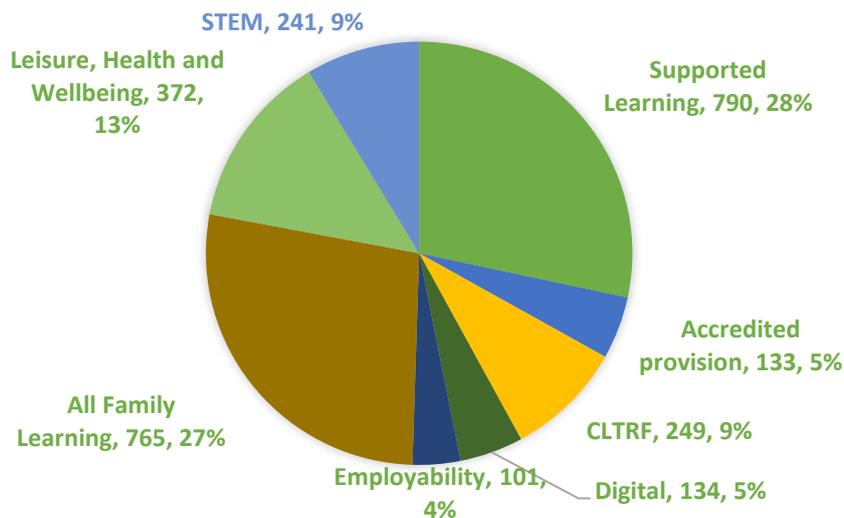
## Sex

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>2020/21 Total starts = 2875</b>	642	2,143
	23%	77%

**Indicative allocation and final funding earned by district, and compared to population**

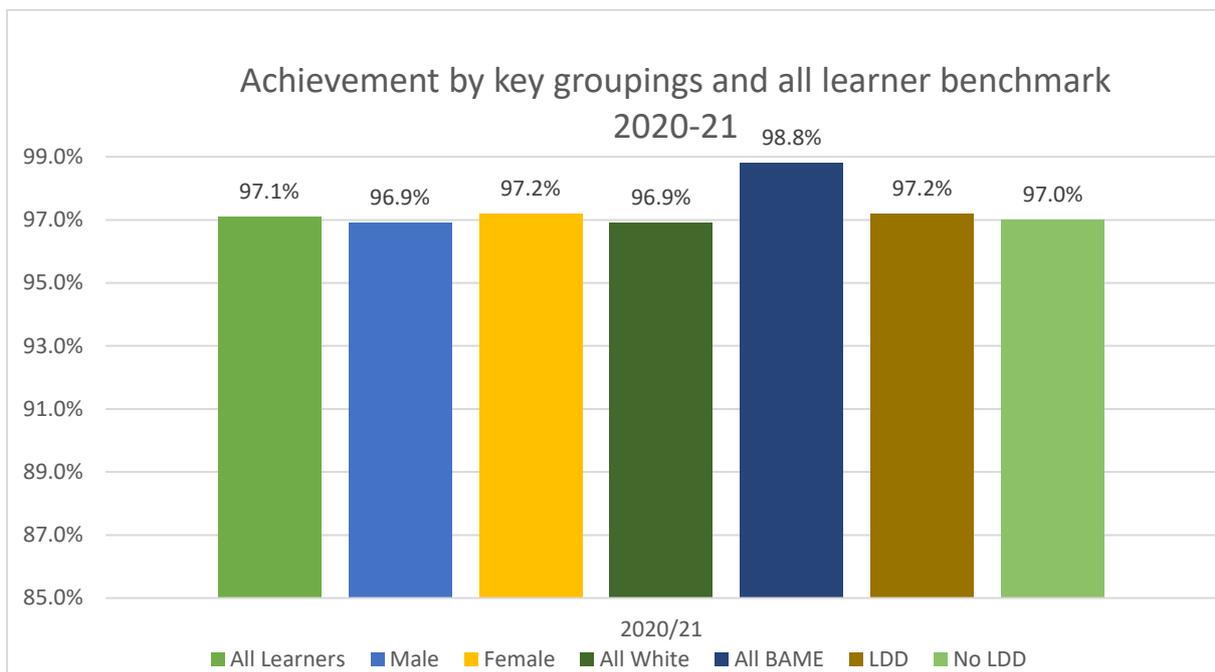


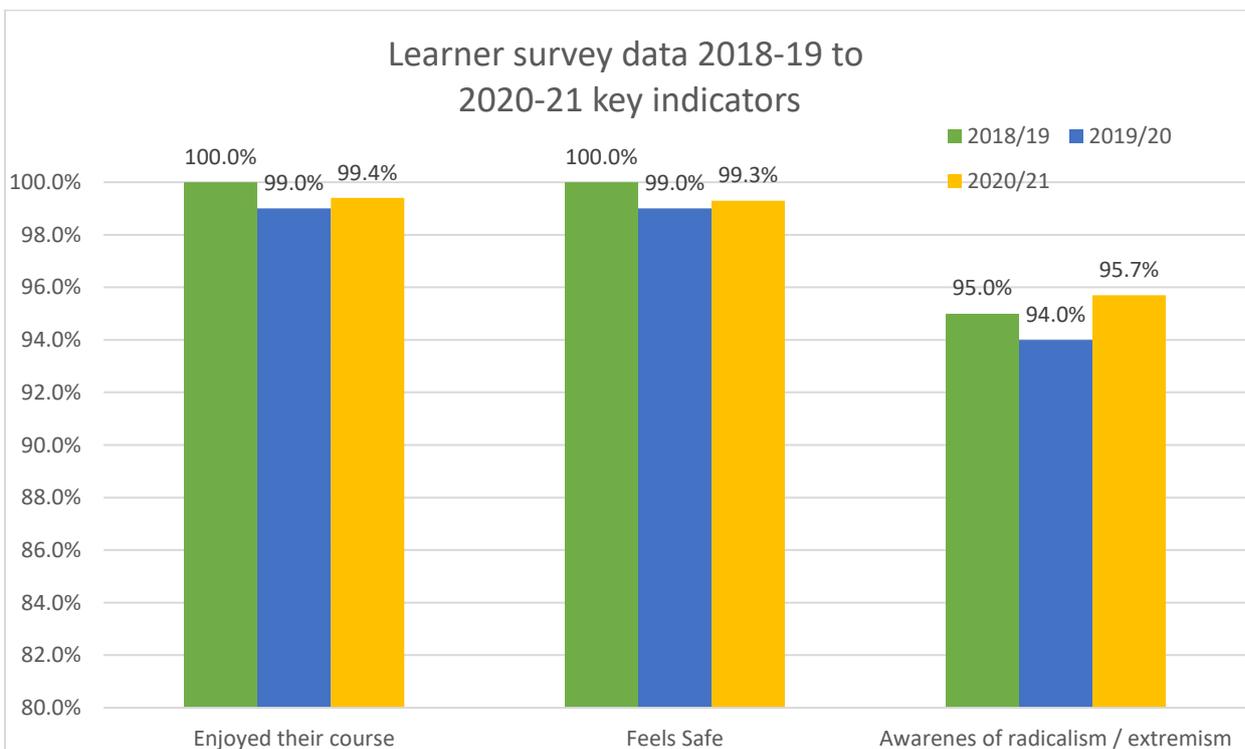
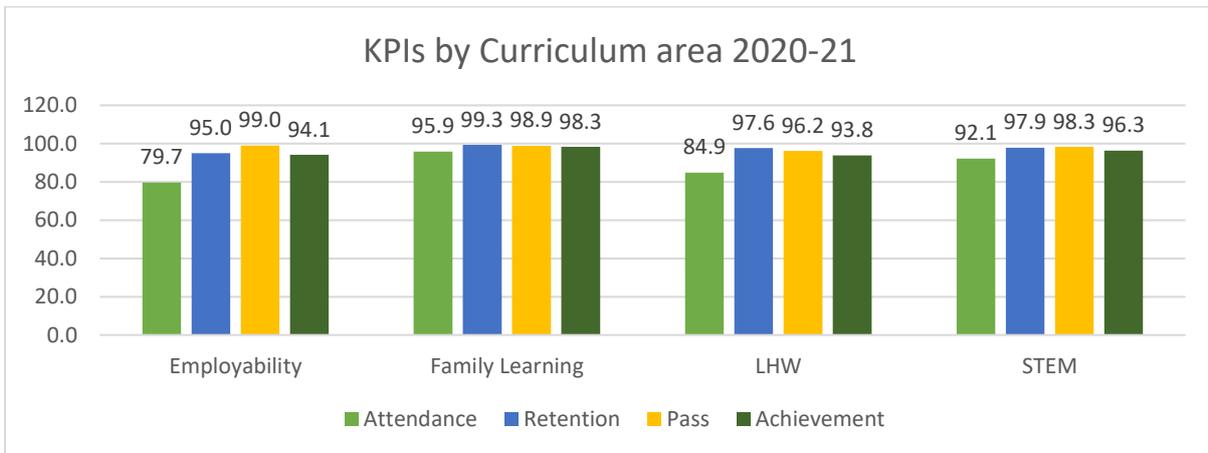
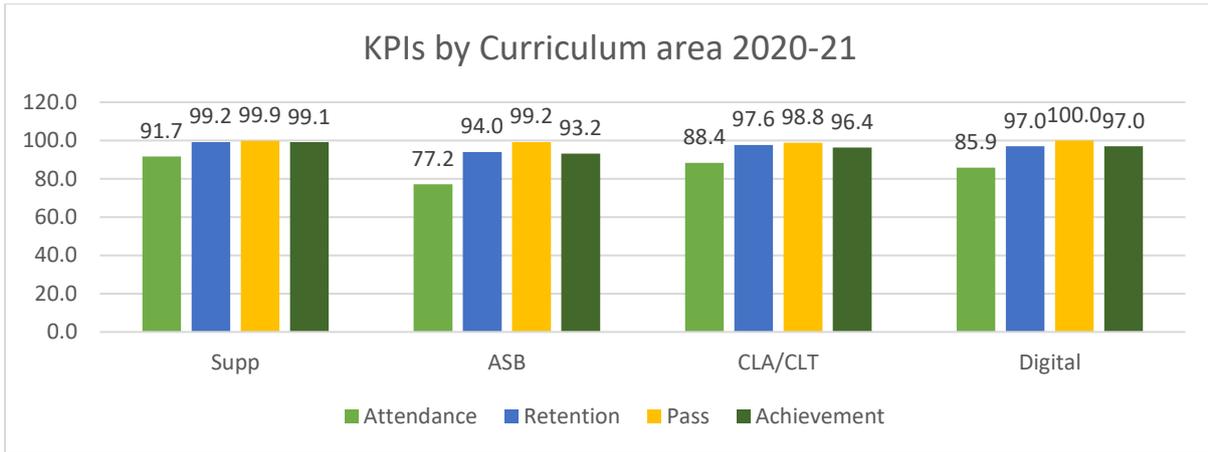
**ENROLMENTS BY COMMUNITY LEARNING CURRICULUM AREA 2020-21**



### Key Performance indicators for learner achievement

2020-2021	Attendance	Achievement	Pass rate	Retention
<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	90%	94%	98%	96%
<b>All provision</b>	89.7%	97.1%	98.8%	98.3%
<b>Community Learning</b>	90.8%	97.3%	98.8%	98.5%
<b>Adult Skills Accredited provision</b>	77.2%	93.2%	99.2%	94.0%





### Learner destinations

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Total Number of Learners</b>	<b>2540</b>	<b>1862</b>
<b>Available for Survey</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Surveys completed</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>
What are you doing now?		
Employment	43.8%	49%
Unemployed looking for work	6.45%	5.3%
Further study	3.85%	4.1%
Volunteering	2.12%	3.58%
Wider Outcomes		
Achieved main aim	89.8%	94.8%
Participate in society	50.8%	55.9%
Protect self from online/scams	31.2%	37.2%
Keep well	82.3%	82.3%
Pursue goals	68.8%	67.8%
Improve maths/English	21.1%	20.5%
More independent	56.7%	60.3%



Staffordshire Community Learning (Skills and Employability) Quality Improvement Plan 2021-22

Key roles and staff  
Governor/with Learning Manager: Amanda Dardington

Area for development 2021-22	Theme EIF 2019	Risks of not addressing this	Outcomes	Actions to be taken	Responsible 2021-22	Timescales	Agreed 1/12/21	Already actioned?	Review data R06	Review comment	Status	Review data R8	Review comment	Status
1 <b>Participation</b> - Increase participation through a curriculum offer that is relevant to the needs and demands of Staffordshire residents, targeting learners in priority learner groups	Quality of education - intent, Leadership and Management	provision not reaching target learners; not contributing to business plan and strategic priorities not achieving ESFA allocation triggering Ofsted inspection and withdrawal of ESFA funding	KPI for new learners 97% of ESFA allocation met (2020-21 - 76%) all sub-contractors on track to meet allocations within 97% by the end of the contract year actual delivery meets indicative allocation across curriculum areas and districts more closely in order to meet the intent of the service 25% of learners to be males	1.1 Develop comms materials, info for stakeholders, attendance at partnership/network meetings to increase awareness of offer to target learners amongst professionals 1.2 Improve internal progression, forum workshop late Feb - to support internal progression opportunities for term 3 1.3 Investigate and increase rate of conversion of enquiries to enrolments in 21-22, particularly in EMP & dig 1.3b add poll to emails to ask if info was useful 1.4 Promote CLT and WFL grants in districts with under-participation particularly term 2 onwards 1.5 Ensure timely info from Providers and via PRMs to inform variations at end of term 1/R06 and term 2 1.6 Use enrolment and destination data fully to analyse participation and reach to target groups - employment status and existing quals - particularly in Employability - first report available Feb 22 1.7 Monitor the data and communicate with providers to reduce the number of learners who are out of county / attend less than 25% (currently 5% of total) 1.8 Develop strategic map of demand as it relates to gaps in provision eg English and Maths	AD, CR, TK, PRMs, Comms	ongoing through year	y							
2 <b>Digital Inclusion</b> - Further development of the digital curriculum offer - accredited and CL - in collaboration with partners to contribute fully to the digital inclusion agenda.	Quality of education - implementation	Residents unable to access services and learning due to low skills	Digital and Progression Pathways offer is accessible and effective in increasing digital inclusion Blended and Online courses judged to be good quality in all curriculum areas, supporting learners to develop their digital skills for learning and life and work Potential and actual learners are supported to access devices and data to improve inclusion	2.1 maintain and increase partnerships within SCC (Digital inclusion task and finish group members, SCC Libraries) to support participation and appropriate curriculum development in Digital - see also 1.1 2.2 continue with grants for devices funding to providers 2.3 maintain sharing of good practice of digital skills/ILT in all curriculum areas	TK, CR, TLAs	ongoing through year	01/12/2021	2.2 communicated to providers in Dec 21 Provider Update						
3 <b>Use of data and reporting</b> - Embed good practice from last year that led to improvements, monitoring of equality groups, other data in year, monthly report, focus on attendance, data/admin team ways of working.	Leadership and management	progress made in previous year is lost incorrect data being returned to ESFA lack of understanding of how provision is performing L&M unable to make strategic decisions based on performance data unable to target support to ensure all provision is effective pockets of under-performance left un-addressed triggering Ofsted inspection and withdrawal of ESFA funding	Clear and consistent data reporting Accurate and up-to-date data readily available at the regular points established on CL calendar for data returns and contract management Pound Plus data available for reporting increased capacity to be responsive to extraordinary requests for data	3.1 Agree CL reporting schedule and formats 3.2 new Q&P manager and MIS to undertake further Yeti training to support reporting 3.3 Review and embed contract management report with PRMs 3.4 Pound Plus sharing good practice in Provider engagement event March/May	CR, LWW, PRMs	Feb-22	01/12/2021	3.1 agreed 9/12/21						
4 <b>Attendance and retention</b> - Further develop and implement strategies for increasing/improving attendance through in-year monitoring focusing on digital and employability curriculum areas (included accredited provision) CLTRF and LHW	Behaviour and Attitudes	provision has less positive impact on learners not all learners reach potential negative impact on retention and achievement rates	Attendance across all curriculum areas to be at 90%, retention at 96% Reduced number of learners attending less than 25% Learners recognise their responsibility to commit to attend the course, and how this will impact on their next into further learning or employment. CL has a thorough understanding of reasons for withdrawals in order to implement improvement where relevant CL has a clear understanding of attendance in	4.1 Sharing good practice in supporting attendance 4.2 Providers able to text learners to remind them to attend 4.3 Early identification of learners and courses with low attendance/withdrawal to be discussed at quality monitoring meetings 4.4 Support for tutors where necessary - link to T&L item 4.5 consider/trial more details register marks for asynchronous etc?	TLAs	on-going through year	01/12/2021							
5 Maintain effective <b>safeguarding</b> practices	safeguarding	Learners are at risk and CL is not aware of situations and not able to refer learner to appropriate channels.	Tutors fully vetted and trained and aware of policies and procedures Tutors aware of issues and have access to information about issues/updates as they arise during the year All staff take responsibility and use effective and prompt procedures to address any issues. CL has good understanding of the risks and the effectiveness of procedures with aim of continual improvement Digital safeguarding embedded in all delivery	5.1 All internal support staff and all external staff to read KCSIE 2021 update and confirm with AD for central record 5.2 All CL team to update training. 5.3 Agree actions from Safeguarding forum Dec 2021 5.4 IT audit to cover digital safeguarding Jan 2022	AD, CR, MR - all staff	Dec-21	01/12/2021	5.1 complete 5.2 complete						
6 Continue to raise learners' awareness of the risks of <b>radicalisation</b> and extremism using approaches that appropriate to starting points and which draw on naturally occurring situations in the classroom and online, using relatable language that learners can fully understand.	Personal development and Safeguarding	Learners unaware of how to protect themselves and others from radicalisation and extremism; learners do not demonstrate values consistent with British Values.	99% on learner feedback questions on Prevent, radicalisation and extremism, e-safety with no gaps across curriculum areas and ethnicities Reduce disagree on progression survey question to 15% - may be updated in relation to benchmarking 0 tutors to have grade 3 or 4 on British Values criteria	6.1 Tutor CPD and Sharing good practice in developing understanding of how to protect themselves from risks of radicalisation and extremism 6.2 Increase consistency of response rate (KPI 60%) to learner feedback survey across curriculum areas to ensure the data is representative, monitor for EDI participation	AD, CR, TLAs, PRMs	6.1 Feb 2022 6.2 termly	01/12/2021							
7 <b>Wellbeing</b> of CL and sub-contractor staff and learners is extremely important for a sustainable delivery	Leadership and management	Learners are not safeguarded due to low wellbeing CL and contractor staff are under-performing due to stress and demotivation	Learners feel and are safe, and learner voice indicates high levels of satisfaction with course, increased confidence Tutors report good support for wellbeing and consideration for wellbeing Tutors are able to access and signpost learners to	7.1 Share resources on wellbeing with learners, sub-contractors and staff on regular basis through Provider Update 7.2 Learner voice activity on wellbeing, monitor for EDI participation 7.3 more celebration of learner success and tutor/provider contribution	AD, CR, TLAs	May-22	01/12/2021							
8 <b>Teaching and learning</b> - we are aiming for an outstanding quality of education with fully compliant RARPA - individual goals are challenging in online and blended learning.	Quality of education - implementation	provision has less positive impact on learners not all learners are aware of, or reach potential learners have reduced motivation to complete and achieve	100% RARPA audits to be RAG rated green by end of term 2, indicating all learners are setting and working towards challenging personal outcomes. 96% of observations to report positively on challenge in lessons observed. 90% of lesson observations to be graded good or better with 40% of observations at grade 1.	8.1 Overview of curriculum areas through position statements, to bring together evidence and highlighting current strengths and areas for development by Jan 2022 8.2 Triangulation of RARPA and register data to ensure RARPA is compliant and robust, early term 2 8.3 TLAs recruited to restore CL team capacity for coaching and mentoring, and tutor CPD offer 8.4 timely use of feedback data/comments back to providers to action improvements - end of each term 8.5 DDU ILPs to include outcomes star for personal development 8.6 continue to review relevance of QA for remote delivery and adapt if necessary 8.7 share good practice on embedded digital skills to ensure Embedded English and Maths is fully recognised and recorded	AD, CR, MR, TK, TLAs	on-going through year	01/12/2021							
9 Measure <b>impact and progression</b> more effectively by further developing the reporting, tracking and monitoring of intended and actual destination across all programme areas to fully inform future curriculum development and to strengthen reporting to Members and Senior Officers	Quality of education - impact, Leadership and Management	unable to access accurate data about actual progression of learners following learning unable to accurately evaluate the impact of learning provision	50% of learners to have responded to progression survey during year following learning to report on actual progression destinations compared to intended destinations ILR data from progression survey actual destinations to be input into Yeti for reporting to ESFA	9.1 Telephone survey to take place Nov-Dec 2021 9.2 Analyse of data on intended and actual destination to be used effectively - see points 1 and 2 above 9.3 Reporting on learner employment status and existing qualifications to be analysed in relation to learner achievement and progression, to evaluate delivery of our priorities and inform development of offer - see points 1 and 2 above 9.4 DDU staff to complete L2 IAG qualifications 9.5 celebration of positive progression case studies 9.6 improve recording of signposting to E&M progression opportunities in RARPA	CR, LWW, AD, TK	9.1 Dec 2021 9.2 Jan 2022	01/12/2021	9.1 underway						
10 Governance - develop communications a) from Select committee down to officers b) about delivery to all stakeholders	Leadership and management	Officers don't understand the issues raised through scrutiny Governors and other partners/stakeholders don't have clear understanding of our offer	CL staff are informed of key points of discussion following scrutiny and performance reporting Governors and other stakeholders receive regular, clear comms messages about the CL offer	10.1 CL team meeting to take place following scrutiny and issues/actions added to QIP 10.2 Regular CL newsletter to stakeholders	AD, CR, Comms	on-going through year	01/12/2021							





**Community Learning Service**

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# Success Stories



<b>Provider</b>			
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Simply Play Virtual for Babies</b>	<b>EHT referral</b>	
<b>Curriculum Area</b>	<b>Family Learning</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Jan-April 2021</b>
<b>Learner Name (optional)</b>			

## Some background information about me (for example, previous learning and challenges)

**Taking part in this course was my first time. -JK**

JK was employed as a support worker. She came to parenthood later in life and admits that she was very anxious about the whole thing -pregnancy, birth, caring for a child on her own. She was referred to the course by an Early Help Practitioner during Covid -19 lockdown. JK had never attended a course before and a Virtual Course was a big challenge!.

**JK stated - I decided to attend the course because I wanted my daughter to have a more confident mum who can understand her needs better.**

The course involved a weekly communication via WhatsApp Video Call, followed by emailed information for Individual Learner Plan and activity ideas. A closed WhatsApp group was set up to give opportunity to chat with other learners, share ideas, activities, photos and support each other during lockdown.

Learners were asked to try out activities and share feedback before the next session. This information was saved as an electronic Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

### **What I gained whilst on the course...**

**JK stated - A confidence regarding my little daughter, as well as a knowledge (health and safety for babies) and ideas about creative play with my girl.**

JK has discussed how she felt anxious and worried about whether she was doing the right things for her baby. During the course JK gained confidence in her own abilities. She learned a great deal during the Communication week -understanding how her baby tries to communicate with her, becoming very good at 'reading' her baby's cues and allowing her baby to explore her emotions -to self soothe at times, knowing she is safe.

JK tried many of the activities shared during the course. She often took the idea researched similarities and then created something original. She made a lovely wrist shaker to aid Physical development, used a clear zipped pencil case filled with colourful items for her baby to hold and suck. She made a den under the coffee table, with light, sounds and textured items to explore.

JK used the Teeth and Weaning themes to research information ready for when her baby begins to wean and pops up milk teeth.

From JK's ILP

**I have gained lots of ideas for activities from the course. I now feel joy at being a mum.**

**Understanding Communication has enabled me to 'read' her communications, respond but also sit back, in the knowledge that she is safe & needs to express emotions sometimes. I am far less anxious about being a parent, about what others think. I understand her needs and can recognise her development. Got info about Carbon Monoxide alarms & thumb sucking**

### **How has the course impacted on my life? (for example, personal, family or work etc) I**

**I can honestly say that I could not wait for another week during the course.**



I would say that course has had an impact on me and my daughter more than anyone else. and I am happy to share my experience with family and friends.

JK stated that she likes to read more on information presented to her. She has therefore done a great deal of research in Home safety- Carbon Monoxide Alarms, Sun safety, Healthy Eating, Weaning strategies, Toothcare, Emotional health.

From JK's ILP

Techniques for Massage was wonderful, I wouldn't have known about that and it has helped us to build a very close bond.

I made a colourful zippy bag full of colourful feathers , paper etc and shared it on WhatsApp group. We did a coloured Heuristic set to touch & look at. I made a safe 'ribbon ring' to encourage her to stretch & reach.

She is such a happy, sociable baby and I am sure that is because she has a more confident Mummy.

I have learned to recognise her needs and how to approach her, so she is relaxed and happy. Her physical strength has improved -she is almost at the stage of sitting independently. She communicates with loads of verbal sounds, smiling at everyone. Our routines are exceptionally good.

**What am I planning on doing next? eg more learning or work/volunteering as a result of doing the course, getting involved in other local opportunities?**

From JK's ILP

I will miss the weekly contact and I would wish to join the next course even though it will be virtually.

April 2021 update - I have started a course at the Uni and I have no time to do anything else. I regret that, but I cannot make a commitment now. I am studying at De Montford Uni in Leicester- International Year Zero as a first year for International students and I'd love to go for Psychology with Health and Wellbeing in Society thereafter, this is what I have chosen, therefore I am with Life sciences group.

**My top tip for people thinking about joining a course is...**

Do not think about it, just simply go for it 😊



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# Success Stories



<b>Provider</b>			
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Simply Play for Babies</b>	<b>STAFFORD</b>	
<b>Curriculum Area</b>	<b>FAMILY LEARNING</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>APRIL 2021</b>
<b>Learner Name (optional)</b>			

**Some background information about me (for example, previous learning and challenges)**

Young parent, first baby at 16, 10 year gap between my eldest and second child. Recommended course by my family support worker from Safeguarding Team, I have lacked confidence, need to update regarding how to keep my baby safe as things have changed.

**I decided to attend the course because...**

Recommended by my family support worker from the Safeguarding Team

**What I gained whilst on the course...**

New ideas, activities to try using resources at home, no cost to having fun, learning and exploring. Activities we can do as a family.

**How has the course impacted on my life? (for example, personal, family or work etc)**

My confidence has improved, I used Microsoft teams and that has developed my digital learning and understanding. We as a family take part in activities together my older child is 10 and my baby is under 1 year. I have recognised how much my baby can do, how I can encourage her learning and development. It has been very helpful during the lockdown to have ideas to do at home, someone to talk too and I looked forward to the teams call each week.

**What am I planning on doing next? eg more learning or work/volunteering as a result of doing the course, getting involved in other local opportunities?**

Looking to return to employment when I feel the nurseries are safe for my child to attend following the lockdown, attend children centre groups when they reopen, meet others and hope to make new friendships.

**My top tip for people thinking about joining a course is...**

It has been good for me to do and it has helped with communication in our home.



Learner Name (optional)	A and B		
Provider			
Course Title	From Pram to Primary School course. TAMWORTH		
Curriculum Area	Family Learning	Date	24.06.21
Completed by (please circle)	Learner's	Tutor/staff on behalf of learner	

A and B are going through the adoption process and enrolled on to the course to gain new knowledge and skills before they reached the panel stage and were accepted as potential adopters.

‘We have found the "From Pram to Primary School" course so useful and gained a lot of valuable information from completing the sessions. It has been so useful to go through lots of theory and then talk through how to put these into practice, as well as think about what all this means to children depending on their chronological age / development stage. We can all read the books, but we knew our biggest knowledge gap was actual parenting experience and this course has really helped us think about real examples and talk about different scenarios and how we would handle certain situations. It has been so accommodating and tailored the course to include scenarios where parenting techniques may need tweaking to reflect the needs of an adopted child.

If we could summarise our learnings and what we have taken from this course, then we would draw on the following areas:

- The importance of being a **positive role model**: we know children learn by copying and they are taking everything in around them. Equally we must remember the way we react to certain situations and handle our emotions could determine how a child learns to handle their own emotions and in turn how they cope
- We need to **pick our battles** and understand not everything needs to be dealt with, sometimes distraction is the key but most of all we need to remain calm
- It's important to give **children time to process** as often we expect an answer / reaction straight away, allowing a little more time can really pay off
- When suitable **give children a simple choice** as this will help with their development and give them a sense of independence and self-worth
- Reward and **praise good behaviour** / give less attention for poor behaviour. Often, we forget to tell children when they are doing the simple things well.
- **Be a team / be consistent**: if we both use the same style and approach this will be so beneficial to the child and won't cause confusion - this can be applied to so many areas. Thankfully from what we have discussed between ourselves and with our tutor we seem to be singing from the same hymn sheet so to speak.
- Sometimes **less is more** so remember to use less words, be simple, be clear, be fair, use eye-contact and listen



- **Routine:** this is key for children as it keeps them feel safe and secure as well as manage their expectations - it also makes family life so much easier
- **Repetition is key:** be ready to repeat everything! Children love the safety of knowing what to expect and develop their language and communication skills through repeating
- **Language rich environment:** we can achieve this in the simplest ways by giving a narrative and bring an aspect of fun to day to day activities. We can bring the world to life to help children to start to understand what's around them, i.e. blue sky, green grass, car goes beep beep. It's also important to allow children to explore their senses so they can make sense of their world.
- We were both raised in an **authoritative** way and this is the **parenting style** we plan to use. We hope to create a home where our children have clear limits and boundaries but are given choices and a chance to input with some flexibility to allow them to develop a sense of self.

and lastly... **have fun**, allow times to be silly and be free. Children just love the sense of freedom and those moments away from rules just as much as they need the safety from structure and routine itself.

**Update received since the success story was written. 14.07.21**

Hi T,

Hope you are well. Just wanted to send you a quick email to say we were approved at panel last Thursday, got a unanimous yes from all panel members. We are over the moon and just got home after a little break to celebrate.

Thanks so much for all your time and content from the course, hopefully we will be putting it to good use soon.

Thanks,



<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday 28 February 2022**

### **Future Vision for the Countryside Estate**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers and provides comments upon the draft revised vision for the countryside estate in advance of a recommendation to County Council Cabinet.

#### **Report of Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

#### **Summary**

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

1. The Committee is asked to consider and comment upon the revised vision for the Council's countryside estate. Cabinet previously agreed a two-stage approach to the management of the Estate, firstly to deliver an MTFS commitment and secondly to deliver longer-term financial sustainability.
2. With the first stage complete, the Committee is asked to consider a revised approach to the estate's long term financial sustainability which reflects the changed situation and is more in line with the Council's strategic objectives.

#### **Report**

##### **Report Summary**

3. In March 2019, Cabinet agreed a two-stage approach for the Countryside Estate; firstly, a review of the countryside service operating model to achieve MTFS savings, and secondly a formal process to explore transferring management to external bodies or to a newly created charitable trust. Alongside this a range of further measures were proposed to improve financial sustainability including through cost recovery.

4. Key contextual changes since Cabinet agreed this approach have prompted a review of this decision. This includes the impacts of the pandemic and the urgent need to focus on environmental outcomes such as climate change and nature recovery. The paper sets out a revised vision for the countryside estate, placing it at the heart of our ambition for a greener and healthier future for Staffordshire.

## **Background**

5. Staffordshire County Council owns a large countryside estate, including six country parks, nine picnic / local sites and three greenways. The review of the management of this estate began in 2013 driven by a requirement to identify financial efficiencies. The estate was included within the scope of the 'Infrastructure+' contract, however it was concluded that this was not an appropriate model for this work area.
6. An Expression of Interest exercise took place in 2016/17 inviting external bodies to register interest in management of the sites. This resulted in only two sites being transferred to external bodies (RSPB and Wimblebury Parish Council) on a nil-cost basis. Research and a detailed options appraisal for the rest of the estate were subsequently completed, following which, management proposals were presented to Cabinet in March 2019.
7. As it was clear that management transfers were complex and would not achieve the scale of MTFS savings required within the necessary time frame, Cabinet agreed a two-stage approach. The first stage was a review of the operating model for the service to achieve the MTFS saving of £786,000. This commenced in January 2020 but was put on hold due to the pandemic and the subsequent increase in demand across the Estate. In 2021 the MTFS requirement was revised to £496,000 and the re-organisation recommenced; it is now approaching completion and the new staffing structure will be effective from May 2022.
8. The second stage was a procurement exercise with the intention of seeking alternative management options for the estate; this was planned to follow completion of the review of the operating model. It was anticipated this would most likely involve external environmental bodies and/or creating a charitable trust, with the management of any remaining countryside sites being retained in-house. Measures would also be introduced to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the estate.

## Changing context

9. Since the Cabinet decision of 2019 there have been several significant contextual changes. These include:
  - a. Significance of the estate to the community – the pandemic saw people connecting with green spaces and exploring their local countryside assets at a scale not previously experienced. Whilst this placed huge pressure upon the service, it has also been a great opportunity for communities to connect with nature, benefitting their physical and mental health. There was also an increase in people’s desire to get involved. Proposed changes to the management of sites have highlighted the high level of public interest in the estate and its future.
  - b. Significance to Staffordshire’s ‘offer’ – work on Staffordshire’s place brand highlighted the significance of the county’s green assets to our reputation and visitor economy, underpinning Staffordshire as a great place to live, work and visit.
  - c. Delivery of new environmental goals – Staffordshire County Council aims to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. The Council also has new duties under the Environment Act 2021, strengthening its obligations to biodiversity and nature recovery.
  - d. Nature Recovery Declaration – in February 2022 the Council made a declaration on nature recovery. This includes leading development of a nature recovery strategy and managing Council-owned land to support biodiversity.
10. With the review of the operational model approaching completion and delivering the revised MTFs commitment of £496,000, under the proposals agreed by Cabinet in 2019 the next step would be to begin the procurement process to explore alternative management arrangements for the sites.
11. Bearing in mind the changing context we are now operating within; it is proposed that the County Council reconsider this next step. An alternative is proposed which would maintain the Council’s role as managers of its estate. This would link with wider strategic goals and minimise the risks associated with a significant and complex procurement exercise with uncertain outcomes. This approach would also provide certainty for communities and staff and enable resources to be focused directly on improving outcomes.

## **Proposed way forward**

12. Informed by the above factors, it is suggested that the recommendations from 2019 should be reviewed and an updated proposal is drafted for consideration.
13. The revised vision for the countryside estate is:
  - a. Management of the estate is retained by Staffordshire County Council. Opportunities to build community capacity and involvement will be developed. Due to the recent increased significance of countryside sites to communities; should interest emerge from local community bodies in increasing their involvement in the management of local / picnic sites, this will be explored as opportunities arise on a local site basis.
  - b. Expansion of the volunteering offer, including creation of volunteer warden roles in addition to the volunteer task force. This would enable paid staff to focus on strategic duties and support greater involvement by the local community in the delivery of the parks.
  - c. Car park charges – installation of car parking charges at more car parks across the estate, with the option of an updated parking permit scheme covering multiple sites, providing a more affordable option for regular users. Under existing legislation, costs can be recovered to support provision of facilities and any surplus must be ring fenced for reinvestment in the countryside sites. This has been agreed as part of the Cannock Chase protection proposals and is already successfully operating at two locations on the Chase and at Chasewater Country Park. The approach would be extended to other sites in the county.
  - d. Cafes, business opportunities and leases – expansion of the current offer and improvement to café facilities, with retail opportunities, to offer improved services for visitors and generate income to support operating costs of the parks. NB these opportunities should be focused on complementing the overall site offer.
  - e. Rebranding of the service and a 'friends' scheme to facilitate public support for operating the sites with updates on activities and benefits to scheme participants such as the annual parking permit, discount vouchers etc.
  - f. Building on the success of the EU-funded RDPE Countryside Explorer project and existing Countryside Stewardship and S106 schemes, further investment through external funding bids for environmental management and infrastructure development.

- g. The countryside estate acts as a 'shop window' to raise awareness and directly contribute to the Council's environmental priorities – actively tackling climate change and nature recovery.
  - h. The service provides a route into environmental work for young people in Staffordshire, offering opportunities through seasonal roles and modern apprenticeships.
  - i. The estate directly supports physical health, active lifestyles and mental wellbeing through programmes of health walks, dementia trails, enabling more inclusive access and opportunities to increase wellbeing. Creating better links with GP surgeries and other health professionals to benefit the community more proactively.
14. The Countryside Act 1968 gives Staffordshire County Council powers to provide parking spaces, as well as allowing for charges to be made on countryside sites for the provision of facilities and services, including for vehicle parking places. On this basis, the County Council intends to introduce car park charges on further countryside sites where it is financially viable to do so (where the cost of introducing and operating car park charges on a particular site can be recovered by the parking fees it will generate). The legislation allows for any surplus generated to be reinvested back into the sites.
15. In designing new countryside estate parking schemes where charges are to be introduced, regulation and measures needed on the public highway adjacent to those schemes to mitigate the risks of dangerous parking from displaced vehicles avoiding payment will be considered as part of scheme development.

### **Financial Impact**

16. MTFS savings of nearly £500k associated with the service area have already been delivered through the revision of the operating model. There are no further MTFS commitments associated with the countryside estate.
17. The proposals seek to secure greater long-term financial sustainability through cost recovery, income generation and external funding. However, some investment funding may be required to pump-prime these opportunities. If the broad vision is supported, further work will be undertaken to provide greater detail on investment needs and opportunities as part of a Cabinet paper and this will be brought back to this Committee for its consideration and comment.

## **Community Impact Assessment**

18. The revised proposal addresses several impacts identified in the CIA of the 2019 decision, reducing change and uncertainty for both communities and staff and enabling a more rapid approach to improving the sites.
19. Car parking charges may impact; however, mitigation is proposed including keeping charges modest and offering more affordable annual passes for regular users. Funds would be used to cover costs of providing parking facilities, improving their maintenance, and any surplus would be reinvested in the sites, supporting improved facilities to support more inclusive access, wider site management and conservation.

## **Conclusion and recommendation**

20. The revised vision presented above would enable the Council to focus its resources on improving the countryside estate and maximising the benefits it provides to residents and visitors. It builds public confidence in the Council's commitment to the environment while also reducing uncertainty for both staff and communities.
21. It is recommended that the Committee considers and provides comments upon the draft revised proposals for the countryside estate in advance of a recommendation to County Council Cabinet.

## **Scheme of delegation**

22. Should the proposal be agreed by Cabinet, operational decisions on key investment projects and implementing car parking charges at specific sites would be made by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member and local members as appropriate.

## **Next Steps**

23. Following consideration by the Committee, proposals will be presented to Cabinet noting any feedback through the scrutiny process.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

**Appendix 1** – Community Impact Assessment

## Contact Details

**Assistant Director:** Janene Cox OBE, Assistant Director for Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

**Report Author:** Sarah Bentley

**Job Title:** Head of Environment & Countryside

**Telephone No.:** 01785 276047

**E-Mail Address:** [sarah.bentley@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bentley@staffordshire.gov.uk)



# Community Impact Assessment

**Name of Proposal:**

Countryside Estate – New Vision 2022

**Project Sponsor:**

Janene Cox, Assistant Director – Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

**Project Manager:**

Sarah Bentley, Head of Environment & Countryside

**Date Completed:**

**24/01/22**

## Completing a CIA

- A CIA will help you to identify the potential **impacts, risks and benefits** of your proposed policy, service or project. Doing this at an early stage enables engagement and research to be undertaken to identify actions that will either **lessen the risk** or **maximise the benefits**. The assessment will also help you to identify mitigating factors whereby risks may be balanced out to an extent by the benefits.
- This template should be used to support the development of a proposal during the **planning stage**, therefore supporting the council's approach of [Achieving Commissioning Excellence](#).
- A good CIA will involve input from more than one person. A **Project Team** should be identified with different, but relevant expertise to ensure that a full range of views are considered.
- **Engagement and/or consultation** should take place with appropriate and representative groups of people that are most likely to be affected. This must then be used to help shape the design/outcomes of the project. Please note that due to the publication of CIAs, it is advisable not to record personal details of members of the public, such as names or addresses.
- **Once completed**, the main findings from your CIA should be transferred to the '**Checklist and Executive Summary**' template. Then both documents need to be approved/signed off by the appropriate people. Depending on the size of your project, this could be your manager, project lead, sponsor or SLT.
- For CIAs that are going to **Cabinet**, only the '**Checklist and Executive Summary**' will be uploaded as part of the **Cabinet Papers**. The full CIA document will be uploaded as a **Background Paper**.

## Completing the CIA Template

This table describes what is required when completing the key sections of your assessment.

Which groups will be affected	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Which groups of people will be impacted by the proposed policy, service or project? This could be people in a particular area, a street, or a group of people with similar characteristics e.g. older people, young people or people with care needs. Also consider staff, residents and other external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Think about the impact the proposal may have on each of the different category areas and identify the benefits of each decision.</p>	<p>Think about the impact the proposal may have on each of the different category areas, and identify the risks associated with the proposal.</p>	<p>Set out any recommendations as to how the benefits will be maximised and the risks minimised.</p> <p>Also highlight any trade-offs that may occur.</p>
<p><b>Please note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impacts should <b>not</b> be included if it is considered highly unlikely that they would occur.</li> <li>• Where <b>no major impacts</b> have been identified, please state N/A.</li> <li>• Due to the publication of CIAs, it is <b>advisable not to record personal details of members of the public</b>, such as names or addresses.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b>            How certain are you about the assessment of each potential impact, and what evidence have you used to arrive at the decision?            E.g. Data – population trends data, census data, service data. Research – national, regional, local research. Engagement/ Consultation – with partners, the public, the voluntary sector.</p>			

Use the following template to highlight the impacts of your proposal on each of the following categories: The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Health and Care, the Economy, the Environment, and Localities/ Communities.

## Community Impact Assessment

### Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Use this section to identify if the proposal will impact on our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 for both residents and staff. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.

Please consider:

- Who is currently using the service, across the protected characteristics?
- What do we know about their experiences and outcomes?
- What relevant information is available from the Census and population trends data?
- What were the findings of the engagement/consultation?
- Is there any relevant national, regional and/or local sources of research/evidence available?
- Is there any relevant information from partners or voluntary, community, social enterprise organisations?
- What is the analysis of the impact on those with relevant protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristics :	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<b>Race</b> <b>Disability</b> <b>Sex</b> <b>Age</b> <b>Religion or Belief</b> <b>Gender Reassignment</b> <b>Sexual Orientation</b> <b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> <b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships in relation to employment issues.	As a universal service, all protected groups may use the countryside estate. We do not have specific data. However numerous studies have found that people with some protected characteristics are under-represented as users of the countryside due to a range of barriers, including physical and	Under the revised proposal, resource would be focused on frontline delivery and improving facilities rather than management arrangements. This would enable more rapid delivery of improvements and investment in the sites that would address the barriers to use by some protected groups.	Financial pressures on Council budgets could impact on service delivery in future due to retaining the estate mainly in house. However current MTFS commitments have been delivered.	The proposal includes measures to increase the long-term financial sustainability of the estate to address the potential financial risks  The focus the proposal gives on delivery rather than further transformation would deliver benefits more rapidly to site users.

Protected Characteristics :	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	cultural barriers, safety concerns and availability of facilities.			
<p><b>Impact on SCC Staff</b></p> <p>If the proposal affects SCC staff, consider the workforce profile compared against the protected characteristics pre and post change, the impact of job losses, available support for staff, and HR protocols.</p>	Staff within the Countryside Service with responsibility for the sites.	Under this proposal, the uncertainties regarding job security which have been ongoing since 2013/14 would come to an end. This would be a huge benefit to staff following the impacts of both the uncertainty of change processes but also the impacts of service delivery during COVID. This would support staff health and wellbeing. It also reduces the risk of staff leaving and absence which would be high if further change processes were to be required.	n/a	n/a
<b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b>				

<b>Protected Characteristics :</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
<p>The Monitor of Engagement in the Natural Environment (MENE) report 2018-19 shows that there are “larger proportions of infrequent visitors in the oldest age groups, lower socio-economic groups and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds”</p> <p>The MENE Children’s report 2018-19 also found disparities in the numbers of children spending time outside between more affluent / deprived areas, and that children from BAME backgrounds were less likely to spend time outdoors.</p> <p>Due to ongoing selection processes under the staff review, specific data for staff cannot be provided at this time.</p>				

## Health and Care

Use this section to determine how the proposal will impact on resident’s health and wellbeing, and whether the proposal will impact on the demands for, or access to health and care services. Please consider the Care Act 2014 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

<b>Category Area</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
<b>Mental Health and Wellbeing</b>  Will the proposal impact on the mental health and wellbeing of residents or services that support those with Mental Health issues?	Residents and visitors	Proposed model includes focus on opportunities to support health and wellbeing through improved access to green space and offering targeted activities / offers	n/a	n/a
<b>Healthy Lifestyles</b>	As above	As above	As above	As above

<b>Category Area</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
Will the proposal promote independence and personal responsibility, helping people to make positive choices around physical activity, healthy food and nutrition, smoking, problematic alcohol and substance use, and sexual health?				
<b>Accidents and Falls Prevention</b>	As above	Earlier investment in site infrastructure would reduce risks on site	n/a	n/a
Does the proposal reduce or increase the risk of: falls in older people, childhood accidents, road accidents, or workplace accidents?				
<b>Access to Social Care</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal enable people to access appropriate interventions at the right time?				
<b>Independent Living</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on people's ability to live independently in their own home, with care and support from family, friends,				

Category Area	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
and the community?				
<b>Safeguarding</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal ensure effective safeguarding for the most vulnerable in our communities?				
<p><b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b></p> <p>Research has concluded that "green prescribing" by GPs and other medical professionals could be a valuable way of helping people maximise the benefits of spending more time outdoors. Green spaces are claimed to have therapeutic benefits, helping people recover from illnesses.</p> <p>Research carried out by 'Fields in Trust' calculated that country parks and green spaces across the UK provide people with over £34bn of health and wellbeing benefits. It states that they save the NHS at least £111 million per year through prevented GP visits.</p> <p>The Houses of Parliament publication, 'Green Space and Health' (October 2016), sets out the following health-related facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of physical activity are higher in areas with more green space with people living near the greenest areas achieving the recommended amount of physical activity.</li> <li>• Those living closer to green space are more likely to use it, and more frequently.</li> <li>• People who live within 500 metres of accessible green space are 24% more likely to meet 30 minutes of exercise levels of physical activity.</li> <li>• A correlation has been observed between those living closest to greener areas and reduced levels of mortality, obesity and obesity-related illnesses.</li> <li>• Adults who move to greener areas have better mental wellbeing and sustained improvement in self-reported happiness, compared to those moving to less green areas.</li> <li>• Views of trees reduced the amount of moderate to strong analgesics needed by patients' post-surgery and the number of days in hospital.</li> </ul>				

Category Area	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patients and hospital staff report feeling happier and more relaxed after spending time in a garden or outdoor space, suggesting that hospitals could incorporate green spaces to improve the wellbeing of healthcare staff, and patients.</li> <li>Some indicators of psychological stress, including blood pressure and heart rate, are reduced in participants exposed to visual and auditory stimuli associated with nature.</li> <li>Engaging with nature benefits those living with conditions such as ADHD, depression and dementia, by improving cognitive functioning and reducing anxiety</li> </ul>		
<p>For further information, please see 'Green Space and Health', Houses of Parliament, October 2016.  <a href="http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0538/POST-PN-0538.pdf">http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0538/POST-PN-0538.pdf</a></p>				

## Economy

Use this section to determine how the proposal will impact on the economy of Staffordshire and the income of residents.

Category Area	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
<p><b>Economic Growth</b></p> <p>Will the proposal promote the county as a "go to" location for business, and make it easy for businesses to start up, innovate and expand?</p>	General economy; businesses linked to countryside and hospitality sector; businesses local to the	Investment and improvement of the countryside estate improves the role it can take in underpinning Staffordshire's	Car parking charges may impact but are now commonplace at countryside sites.	The mitigations as outlined in the proposals – annual permits at reduced cost for regular users - would reduce any impact of car parking charges on the countryside estate.

<b>Category Area</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
	countryside estate	role as a visitor destination and great place to live / work, attracting inward investment.		
<b>Poverty and Income</b>	n/a Site users on low incomes	Free to use green spaces	Car park charges may be a deterrent for those with low incomes	Annual permit to reduce cost to regular users. Could explore whether a 6-month ticket would help affordability in addition to 12-month option; explore better walk / cycle links so local people can be less dependent on cars
Will the proposal have an impact on income? Will it reduce the gap between high and low earners?				
<b>Workplace Health and Environments</b>	Businesses generally. Also see section 'Impact on SCC Staff'	An improved countryside estate can support Staffordshire's workforce to be healthier and improve wellbeing.	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on working conditions and the health of Staffordshire's workforce?				
<b>Access to jobs/ Good quality jobs</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal create the right conditions for increased employment in more and better jobs?				
<b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b>				

Category Area	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
<p>Green and natural spaces are fundamental to people’s prosperity and contribute to a more successful economy. They underpin sustainable economic growth by attracting businesses and investment and can improve workforce productivity.</p> <p>Green spaces are more than just places for recreation or to help wildlife thrive – they also provide important functions to society which have an economic value. For example, woodlands absorb pollution and lock up carbon, which cleans our air and wetlands store water, reducing flows and help reduce the risk of flooding. These functions are known as ‘ecosystem services’ and they benefit society and help reduce costs on local and wider communities, such as to the NHS, other public-sector services and local businesses.</p> <p>A Staffordshire Ecosystem Assessment carried out in 2014 estimated monetary values for ecosystem services for a set of broad habitat types. Altogether, 956 km<sup>2</sup> of habitats were assessed which constituted just over 35% of the total geographical area of Staffordshire. Stating the best guess, the ecosystem services assessed have been valued at more than £110 million annually. If aggregated over 200 years, the value of ecosystem services performed in Staffordshire adds up to more than £7 billion (Hölzinger &amp; Everard).</p> <p><b>Recent research carried out by the ‘Fields in Trust’ calculated that the Total Economic Value to an individual of country parks and green spaces is £30.24 per year (£2.52 per month), and includes benefits gained from using their local park or green space and non-use benefits such as the preservation of parks for future generations.</b></p> <p>The Economic Value of Our Green Spaces Report (February 2018) published by the Land Trust looked at one of its newest parks – Port Sunlight River Park – as a case study to demonstrate how the creation and good quality maintenance of a green space can add value to nearby houses, create and safeguard jobs and generate revenue for local businesses. The benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £7.8 million added to the value of houses within a 500 metre radius of the park – an average of £8,674 per property.</li> <li>• £48,000 annual revenue generated for the small businesses that operate in the park, such as dog walkers and ice cream vendors.</li> </ul>				

<b>Category Area</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£38,000 a year additional revenue for other local businesses, where people have spent money while visiting the park.</li> </ul> <p>The Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership say in their Strategic Economic Plan (April 2018) that "our natural assets are of great importance locally and nationally and form a major part of our offer to investors."</p>				

## Environment

Use this section to identify the impact of the proposal on the physical environment. How does the proposal support the utilisation and maintenance of Staffordshire's built and natural environments, thereby improving health and wellbeing and strengthening community assets?

<b>Category Area</b>	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
(Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)				
<b>Built Environment/ Land Use</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on the built environment and land use?				
<b>Rural Environment</b>	SCC Countryside estate	The proposals would improve the environmental quality of the estate and access to it	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on the rural natural environment or on access to open spaces?				
<b>Air, Water and Land Quality</b>	SCC Countryside estate	Improved management would offer environmental benefits	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal affect air quality				

(e.g. vehicle, industrial or domestic emissions), drinking water quality or land quality (e.g. contamination)?				
<b>Waste and Recycling</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal affect waste (e.g. disposal) and recycling?				
<b>Agriculture and Food Production</b>	n/a			
Will the proposal affect the production of healthy, affordable and culturally acceptable food?				
<b>Transport</b>	SCC Countryside estate	Improved physical access through better infrastructure		
Will the proposal affect the ability of people/ communities/ business to travel? Will the proposal impact on walking/ cycling opportunities?				
<b>Noise</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal cause disruptive noise?				
<b>Climate Change</b>	SCC Countryside estate	Positive contribution to net zero and adaptation	n/a	n/a
Does this proposal have any Climate Change implications?				
<b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1970 and 2013 in the UK 56% of species declined and 15% are extinct or threatened with extinction (State of Nature 2016)</li> <li>• In the UK we have lost 80% of our heathland since 1800 – in Staffordshire probably more like 90%</li> <li>• 13% of heathland and grassland species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain (State of Nature 2016)</li> </ul>				

Green spaces are more than just places for recreation or to help wildlife thrive – they also provide important functions to society which have an economic value. For example, woodlands absorb pollution and lock up carbon, which cleans our air and wetlands store water, reducing flows and help reduce the risk of flooding. These functions are known as ‘ecosystem services’ and they benefit society and help reduce costs on local and wider communities, such as to the NHS, other public-sector services and local businesses.

A Staffordshire Ecosystem Assessment carried out in 2014 estimated monetary values for ecosystem services for a set of broad habitat types. Altogether, 956 km<sup>2</sup> of habitats were assessed which constituted just over 35% of the total geographical area of Staffordshire. Stating the best guess, the ecosystem services assessed have been valued at more than £110 million annually. If aggregated over 200 years, the value of ecosystem services performed in Staffordshire adds up to more than £7 billion (Hölzinger & Everard).

## Localities / Communities

Use this section to identify the impact of the proposal on communities. How will the proposal strengthen community capacity to create safer and stronger communities? It is important to recognise the different localities and communities your proposal may impact upon and identify any communities that could be more adversely impacted than others. Strategic Delivery Managers (SDMs) have a great deal of knowledge about their relevant locality and they must be engaged with as part of your Project Team at an early stage of the process.

<b>Category Area</b> (Areas highlighted are suggestions only and there may be other impacts in these categories)	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
<b>Community Development/ Capacity</b> Will the proposal affect opportunities to work with communities and strengthen or reduce community capacity?	Communities near countryside estate, volunteers	Potential to build community capacity and involvement in the estate	n/a	n/a
<b>Crime/ Community Safety</b> Will the proposal support a joint approach to responding to crime and	Communities near countryside estate, visitors	Greater community capacity and involvement will increase pride of place in these local amenities,	n/a	n/a

addressing the causes of crime?		creating a safer and more welcoming visitor environment.		
<b>Educational Attainment and Training</b>	Communities near Countryside estate, visitors	Opportunities for forest schools and educational activities to support learning	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal support school improvement and help to provide access to a good education? Will the proposal support the improved supply of skills to employers and the employability of residents?				
<b>Leisure and Culture</b>	All	Improved facilities will enhance leisure offer on sites	Car parking charges could impact, but these are now common at countryside sites	Mitigation measures are included in the proposals
Will the proposal encourage people to participate in social and leisure activities that they enjoy?				
<b>Volunteering</b>	Volunteering opportunities on the estate	Enhanced volunteering offer provided by the service	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on opportunities for volunteering?				
<b>Best Start</b>	Communities near estate, visitors	Whilst not impacting directly on parental support, there are positive outcomes for children from outdoor visits.	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal impact on parental support (pre or postnatally), which helps to ensure that children are school-ready and have high aspirations, utilising a positive parenting approach?				
<b>Rural Communities</b>	Communities near estate	Improved facilities and opportunities for	n/a	n/a
Will the proposal specifically impact				

on rural communities?		involvement for individuals or community groups		
<p><b>Evidence Base: (Evidence used/ likelihood/ size of impact)</b></p> <p>The Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces 2018 report references a range of research sources, summarising the following evidence in support of how green spaces are of benefit to communities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “an active life is essential for physical and mental health and wellbeing and that access to local green spaces has a positive impact on health by encouraging people to be active every day”</li> <li>• “Playing and learning outside is a fundamental part of childhood, and strong evidence from a four-year project commissioned by Natural England showed that learning outdoors results in children being happier, healthier and more motivated to learn.”</li> <li>• “Parks and green spaces improve community cohesion by offering shared spaces for community connections and to tackle social isolation (Cohen-Cline et al., 2015; Hartig et al., 2014; White et al., 2013).”</li> </ul> <p>The MENE Children’s Report 2018-19 identified a range of positive visit outcomes reported by adults who had spent time outdoors with children (mainly outdoor visits taken by children, moderated by parents) – with the strongest levels of agreement being in relation to outcomes of enjoyment, feeling calm and feeling relaxed and revitalised. It also found that parents, guardians and other family members are an important influence on children’s engagement with nature.</p>				

### Submitting a CIA

Now transfer the main findings of this assessment to the ‘**Checklist and Executive Summary**’ template. Then both documents need to be approved/signed off by the appropriate people. For CIAs that are going to **Cabinet**, only the ‘**Checklist and Executive Summary**’ will be submitted as part of the **Cabinet Papers**. The Full CIA document will be submitted as a **Background Paper**.

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 28 February 2022**

### **Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers the content and endorses the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for Staffordshire.
- b. That the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the above in its wider context including for example the current and predicted condition of the asset, financial resources, customer demand and public satisfaction.

#### **Report of Cllr David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

#### **Summary**

#### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. Staffordshire's road network provides a fundamental resource, essential both to the economy of the area and for the quality of life for residents and visitors. Its effective management and maintenance have an impact on activity of all kinds, from day-to-day journeys to work, school, shopping or for leisure, through to the needs of the emergency services and the road freight industry. The appearance of our streets helps to shape the character and quality of the local environment in which people live.
2. Staffordshire County Council is responsible for maintaining over 6,200km of highway network and its associated assets. Our roads, footways, streetlights, street furniture, drains, trees, signs, road markings and bridges are just some of the different types of highway assets that are considered in our Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP).
3. Like many councils, Staffordshire is facing significant challenges in maintaining a safe and reliable highway network during a time of

diminishing resources, ageing highway assets and increasing public expectation. In recent years the investment in highway Infrastructure and its performance has been increasingly under the spotlight. The current financial challenges and increased public demands and expectations have meant the management of our highway assets has never been more important to ensure we achieve our outcomes.

4. Having a documented approach to highway asset management is good practice. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan will ensure that the Council as the Highway Authority continues to meet its statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980, optimise the allocation of our resources and secures the maximum available funding from central government.
5. Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and endorse the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan; and the comments of the Committee will be reported to the Cabinet at their meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, for them to take into account in their consideration of this matter.

## **Report**

### **Background**

#### **What is a HIAMP?**

6. The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan is the link between our strategic objectives and our operational activities. The HIAMP sets out in detail how the authority manages each of our highway assets to meet strategic goals in the most effective manner having regard to statutory requirements, customer expectations and funding constraints.
7. The HIAMP supports delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and also ensures we are able to maximise DfT Incentive Fund resource, make the case for additional funding, and optimise our ability to defend claims. The format and content is based on national guidance, linking optimum allocation and resources to achieve the council's strategic ambitions.
8. For a connected Staffordshire, the HIAMP will help all those involved in delivering highway services, including members, senior decision makers, asset managers, service providers and practitioners, to embed asset management principles into the management of the asset.

## **The HIAMP for Staffordshire**

9. The current HIAMP was approved by Cabinet in March 2019. Despite making significant progress in recent years, we, like other highways authorities, are in an increasingly challenging environment, with deteriorating assets, increasing demand, uncertainty around future funding and, more recently, facing the impacts of the global pandemic. It is therefore timely to develop a new single and updated HIAMP document, to identify a clear investment strategy and action plan for the future that is fit for purpose and recognises the challenges and opportunities ahead.
10. The new document is a forward-looking document covering the next three years which sets out:
- a. how highways asset management, as a key enabling service, contributes to achieving strategic outcomes and delivering Staffordshire Council's strategic plan
  - b. describes how we go about asset management and risk-based decision-making
  - c. explains what we know about the condition of our assets both now and going forward based on various investment levels
  - d. sets out our service levels in terms of what we do and what we do not, alongside an assessment of associated risks
  - e. outlines our progress in implementing the recommendations contained in Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice which provides guidance to councils regarding the management and maintenance of local roads.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

11. Asset management supports making the case for funding, for better communication with stakeholders, and facilitates a greater understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth, climate change and social well-being of local communities, in line with the outcomes and priorities set out in the Council Strategic Plan.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

None

## **Community Impact**

12. The HIAMP lays out SCC's approach to maintaining highway assets strategically and efficiently which supports communities to feel safer, happier and more supported.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

**Appendix 1** – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

**Appendix 2** – Management of Highway Trees

## **Contact Details**

**Assistant Director:** James Bailey, Highways & the Built County

**Report Author:** David Walters  
**Job Title:** Head of Highway Asset and Network Management  
**Telephone No.:** 01785 854024  
**E-Mail Address:** david.walters@staffordshire.gov.uk

# Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

## Change Control

**Date: January 2022**

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan</b>
Author	Matthew Thomas
Owner	Highway Asset and Network Management Team
Document Status	Draft (2021)

### Reviewer List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Version</b>
Colin Perkins	Governance and Improvement Manager	V1:2021

### Approvals

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Version</b>
David Walters	Head of Highway Asset and Network Management	V1:2021

### Cabinet Approval

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Version</b>
		V1:2021

### Revision History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change Description</b>	<b>Author</b>
First Issue	January 2022		

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Volume 8 – Soft Landscapes

Volume 9 – Trees and Hedges

Volume 10 – Signs and Lines

Volume 11 – Heritage Assets

Volume 12 – Street Furniture

Volume 13 – Emergencies and Adverse Weather Events

Commented [PC(1)]: VRS ?

Commented [PC(2)]: And lit signage ?

5

Volume 14 – Mines, Tips and Quarries

Volume 15 – Land acquired for highway purposes

Volume 16 – General Highway Management

**Annexes**

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## Introduction

If you live, work, or pass-through Staffordshire whether on foot, cycling, using public or personal transport you will use the largest and most visible asset Staffordshire County Council is responsible for – the highway network.

The Council recognises the vital role played by the local highway network in supporting the Council's Strategic Plan. The Plan 2018-22 describes the Council's vision of a County where big ambitions, great connections and greener living give everyone the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.

A well maintained and managed network that is safe, serviceable, and sustainable is one of the best ways to foster job creation, encourage economic growth and support local communities. It makes an important contribution to social inclusion, community safety, and education and health. The appearance of our streets helps to shape the character and quality of the local environment in which people live.

The highway network is a huge and complex system that includes the inspection, maintenance and renewal of roads, footways, cycle routes, bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, lighting, drainage, traffic signals, trees, land and much more – filling potholes is just the tip of the iceberg.

The Council understands that effective asset management will deliver clarity around standards and levels of service and help it to make best use of its available resources. This document sets out Staffordshire's approach.

## Executive Summary

### BACKGROUND

Asset management has been widely accepted by central and local government as a means to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to management of highway infrastructure assets through longer term planning, ensuring that standards are defined and achievable for available budgets. It also supports making the case for funding and better communication with stakeholders, facilitating a greater understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth and the needs of local communities.

In Staffordshire County Council we have significantly developed our approach to asset management in highways in recent years, including introducing measures to implement the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure code of practice. As a result, we have been able to maximise Department for Transport Incentive Fund resource, secure additional funding, and continue successfully defending claims.

Despite making substantial progress in recent years, we recognise we are in an increasingly challenging environment, with deteriorating assets, increasing traffic volumes, uncertainty around future funding and, more recently, coronavirus impacts.

We have therefore developed this comprehensive Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP).

This is a forward-looking document covering the next three years which:

- Sets out how asset management contributes to achieving strategic outcomes, including environmental.
- Describes how we manage our assets and make decisions based on risk
- Explains what we know about current and predicted asset condition
- Sets out our service levels alongside an assessment of associated risks
- Sets out how we prioritise schemes into a forward works programme
- Supports the use of sustainable modes of transport
- How we meet our statutory obligations.

This document seeks to highlight the importance of consistency of funding and approach over that longer period, to enable us to deliver a more efficient service with better condition outcomes.

**Commented [PC(3)]:** Asset management or managing the asset ?  
What does the asset or individual asset groups bring to Staffordshire, i.e., trees and verges ?

**Commented [WD(4)]:** Does LTP objectives to support sustainable modes of travel need to be pulled up into one of these bullet points?

## STRUCTURE OF THE HIAMP

This document comprises five parts:

- Part 1: Overarching Principles: describes the background to our highways asset management principles and sets it in the context of our legal obligations and strategic objectives.
- Part 2: Policy Framework: How the HIAMP fits with the council objectives and local and national agenda.
- Part 3: Implementing Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice describes the recommendations of the Code of Practice for highway maintenance and our subsequent implementation of key components of it.
- Part 4: Implementing Asset Management Principles in Highways sets out the principles that directly influence the organisation's asset management systems and plans and how this may affect future condition, stakeholder perception and investment.
- Part 5: Managing our Assets: takes a detailed look at what our approach to asset management means for each of our asset groups, and what that means for each group over the next three years.

## MANAGING OUR ASSETS

Asset Management describes a common sense, systematic approach for managing our highway assets through their design, construction, maintenance and replacement. It provides a connection between the high-level strategic context and the day-to-day decisions we make in maintaining our highway network.

Implementing the principles of effective asset management ensures we make transparent, consistent, well-communicated and better-informed decisions.

The consequence of poorly maintained highway infrastructure across the County impacts directly on all road users - both businesses and domestic - has a detrimental impact on the local economy and on user's perception of Staffordshire. Poor roads mean increased vehicle operating costs, delays and less safe roads, and as a result is likely to influence business investment, decisions about where people live, work and travel as well as leisure and tourism. Our communities rely on a good road system as a basis to access jobs, health care, education, social interaction and to propagate pride in our communities.

This plan sets out how an asset management led approach, puts the customer at the heart of our service. Our members are elected by the local community to represent their views. This HIAMP recognises the importance of member engagement in order for local priorities to be reflected in our highway service.

## THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

The scale of the task of maintaining Staffordshire's highway infrastructure and the resources needed to do this are significant. The replacement cost of our highway assets is calculated at in excess of £7billion.

The highway network in Staffordshire includes :

- Over 6,200km's of carriageway
- More than 4,360km's of footway
- 200km's of cycleways
- Over 1,000 structures
- 150,000 road gullies
- 115,000 streetlights
- Over 500 signal-controlled junctions or crossings
- 475,000 trees
- 2.2 million square metres of urban grass and 5,800km's of rural grass verges
- Over 400 milestones and other historic monuments
- 16 pumping stations
- 6 reservoirs
- 261 electronic warning signs

In addition to the assets above, we are responsible for road markings, traffic signs, road studs, pedestrian barriers, vehicle restraint systems, cycle stands, bollards, hedges, embankments, grit bins, catchpits, lagoons, trash screens, kerbs, laybys, ditches, grips, weather stations and much more.

The Council's highway infrastructure is continuing to grow in length, size and quantity which will increase maintenance costs by approximately £162k per annum, based on the last ten years growth.

## CONTEXT

Managing the highway network is challenging in the context of national legislation and guidance, climate change, reducing levels of funding, asset growth and increasing customer expectation.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for funding local roads renewals and upgrades, while the Ministry for Housing, Communities and

Local Government (MHCLG) provides revenue support to local highways authorities for routine road maintenance.

Capital funding is used to provide renewal and replacement of all highway assets including carriageways, footways, structures (bridges), safety fencing, drainage, traffic signals and signs but as noted above, excludes street lighting in Staffordshire which is managed under a PFI contract.

Revenue funding is typically spent on all other areas that support the operation of the highway infrastructure such as routine maintenance such as grass cutting and energy for street lighting

Historically, capital maintenance grant falls somewhat short of the threshold required to achieve optimum whole-life-cost management of our highway infrastructure. The variable nature of Government funding year on year impacts on the ability of the service and its supply chain to plan and invest in resources and the future workforce.

Highway infrastructure is increasingly fragile and less resilient to damage from wear and tear, ageing, the changing nature of traffic and the impact of climate change. Public pressure can result in short term fixes, to potholes for example, rather than properly planned and implemented longer term solutions such as preventative maintenance.

The condition of our highway infrastructure is forecast to decline over the period of this plan at the expected levels of funding. As capital funding reduces the amount of reactive type work required to keep the network in a safe and serviceable condition increases.

## **DEMAND AND EXPECTATION**

The highway infrastructure is accessed on a daily basis by residents, businesses and visitors. As such we recognise the importance of engaging with the public to understand their levels of satisfaction and obtain their views on the condition of our highway infrastructure, service standards and levels of performance. Therefore, in order to better understand residents views we commission the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey annually.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and subsequently developed its Climate Change Strategic Development Framework, which committed the Council to reach the target of net-zero carbon by 2050; and also sets out how the council will work collaboratively to protect the future of the county and its residents. In addition, our four-year plan, sets out a series of actions up to 2025 to cut carbon, improve air quality, reduce

waste, improve the natural environment and support people in changing their behaviour to become more environmentally friendly.

Highway infrastructure related contributions to carbon reductions include supporting the creation, protection and enhancement of our green estate, recycling materials and arisings, material innovation, LED replacement programme.

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## Part 1: Overarching Principles

### 1.1. WHAT IS ASSET MANAGEMENT

Highway asset management describes a common sense, systematic approach to designing, constructing, maintaining, modifying, and replacing assets in the most cost-effective manner whilst also taking into consideration the performance of the asset and the risks involved in managing it. Asset management supports making the case for funding, for better communication with stakeholders, and facilitates a greater understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth and social well-being of local communities, in line with the requirements set out by the Council Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>.

The benefits of this approach are now widely recognised. National government have stressed the importance of highway asset management in order to deliver some of the required public-sector efficiencies.

### 1.2. ASSET MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE

When putting together our works programmes, we have two key questions to consider:

#### 1.2.1. Which roads shall we treat?

Because we look at the long-term impact of our decisions, we do not simply prioritise our programmes based on what appears to be most pressing at the moment but rather we look to pick the package of works, which, within the budget available, will give us the best long-term result for the network.

What this means for road maintenance is that we consider over a much longer term all the roads in the county in relation to one another when working out which ones to maintain or repair first, rather than automatically fixing the roads which look worst. This enables us to make the best use of the limited resources we have but sometimes causes confusion when people see us working on roads that appear to be in better condition than some others.

#### 1.2.2. Which treatment shall we use?

Since our programmes are limited by the available budget, each pound we spend on a particular road is a pound that is not available to be spent elsewhere. It is not, therefore, simply a case of selecting the 'best' treatment for a particular road, we must select the most cost-effective treatment for that road - they are sometimes the same thing, but not

<sup>1</sup> [Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022 - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Commented [PC(5)]: Where do we reference 'whole life costs'?

Commented [TM(&S6R5)]: Covered elsewhere in depth

always. If a low-cost option will significantly delay the need for more expensive repairs, then it deserves serious consideration even if a more expensive option would deliver a wider range of benefits.

For example, when looking at some roads in a particular area, we may find one road in a really bad condition and three other roads in a slightly better condition – not yet 'bad' but, perhaps, vulnerable if we should have another period of severe weather.

Within the set budget available to us we have to decide whether to spend all our money on fixing the worst road (and let the other three roads continue to deteriorate into a worse condition) or whether to spend the minimum amount necessary to keep the worst road safe and invest the remaining budget in preventative maintenance works on the three vulnerable roads to protect them and stop them deteriorating into the same poor condition as the first road.

Preventative maintenance is usually cheaper, so we can often maintain three or four roads for the price of fixing one bad one. It is also generally more sustainable and less disruptive than full repair work and so it offers better value all round, but, with competing demands on the programme it means that we need to be prepared and able to take the tough decisions and do the minimum on the bad road to keep it safe while spending most of the money (in this example) on less bad roads in order to maintain and protect them.

To conclude the example, if we repaired the worst road first, we could find, in a year's time, that we have one good road (the one we fixed) and three other 'bad' roads (the vulnerable ones that we ignored, which have subsequently deteriorated) all needing a larger amount of money spent on them. However, if we spend the budget on preventative maintenance on the three vulnerable roads, in a year's time we would find that we have three good roads and only one bad road to spend our budget on.

In the long term, it is obvious that this is a good way for us to spend the set amount of money we have for our road network. However, in the short term, it may appear that we are ignoring those roads which appear to be in the greatest need of our attention, but this is not the case.

This is just one illustration of how asset management can be applied, there are many others too. For instance, it can help us make decisions about which type of streetlight offers best value for money and it can help inform our improvement works to make them cheaper to maintain in the future.

### 1.3. THE BENEFITS OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

There are many benefits of asset management. The County Council sees the main benefits as:

- Captures stakeholder and community feedback and shapes the service to take account of local needs and priorities.
- A comprehensive understanding of extent and condition of the highway infrastructure assets.
- A clear methodology for linking goals, aspirations, and objectives with levels of service.
- A sound approach for predicting the levels of funding required to deliver the desired levels of service at minimum cost over the asset's whole life.
- A mechanism for assessing the impact of funding constraints.
- Better understanding risks associated with these assets, not simply health and safety, but also financial risks, environmental risks and hazards which may affect the service it provides; for example, preventing the closure of a bridge.
- An opportunity to maximise funding and ensure that secured funding is used efficiently and effectively.
- A route to minimising lifecycle costs and reducing expensive reactive repair costs.
- Alignment and co-ordination of existing initiatives, including competency development.
- Greater engagement of the workforce, including leadership, communications, and cross disciplinary teamwork.
- Making better informed decisions about investments. Decisions are made using a long-term 'whole-life' approach leading to optimum outcomes.
- Aligning highway maintenance service provision to the County Council's objectives, including the plan to reduce carbon emissions.
- Increasing transparency of the challenges faced and the performance of the asset as well as how we are meeting out statutory duties leading to improved customer satisfaction, stakeholder awareness and confidence.
- Understanding the consequences of changes to investment levels.

**Commented [WD(7)]:** Perhaps also add a bullet point to emphasise towards the top of the list how asset management benefits local communities – a key benefit that Members will be looking for.

**Commented [PC(8)]:** Add something about carbon ?

A key benefit of an asset management approach is to move decision making away from the imminent and the urgent to a planned regime where the needs of the asset are better understood so that appropriate preventative maintenance treatments can be planned within a wider whole-life approach. This enables decisions to change from those based on a worst-first priority to those that delivers greatest value.

### 1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE HIAMP

The objective of this Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) is to lay out, in a clear and transparent manner, how Staffordshire manages our highway assets to keep them safe for use and fit for purpose.

This HIAMP recognises that a well-managed highway network is the lifeblood of our local communities. Our communities rely on a good road system as a basis to access jobs, health care, education and social interaction.

It is easy to think of our highway network as simply a means for people to travel from A to B. In reality, the highway network has many other functions. Our roads form vital components of residential areas, affecting the overall quality of life for local people and helping to engender pride in our communities.

The term 'highway' as used here refers to the highway maintainable at public expense (HMPE) by Staffordshire County Council and to all assets (physical components) in this area. The types of assets covered in this HIAMP include carriageways, footways, highway structures, lighting (including lighting columns), and other assets, such as Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS) and the green estate (trees and planted and grassed areas). The HIAMP is an organic document and will be revised from time to time as necessary.

One key role of the HIAMP is to make the connections between the higher-level legal and strategic context governing work (for example, the Highways Act 1980<sup>2</sup>) and the day-to-day decisions the Council makes to maintain its road network.

Following this approach of linking strategy with practice, the document sets out the levels of service which we intend to provide from the physical assets themselves. The HIAMP explains the processes undertaken to assist in providing this service efficiently and achieving value for money. In particular, the HIAMP aims to explain how decisions are made to replace or extend the life of an asset (through capital renewal) or repair it (as part of operational management).

### 1.5. LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

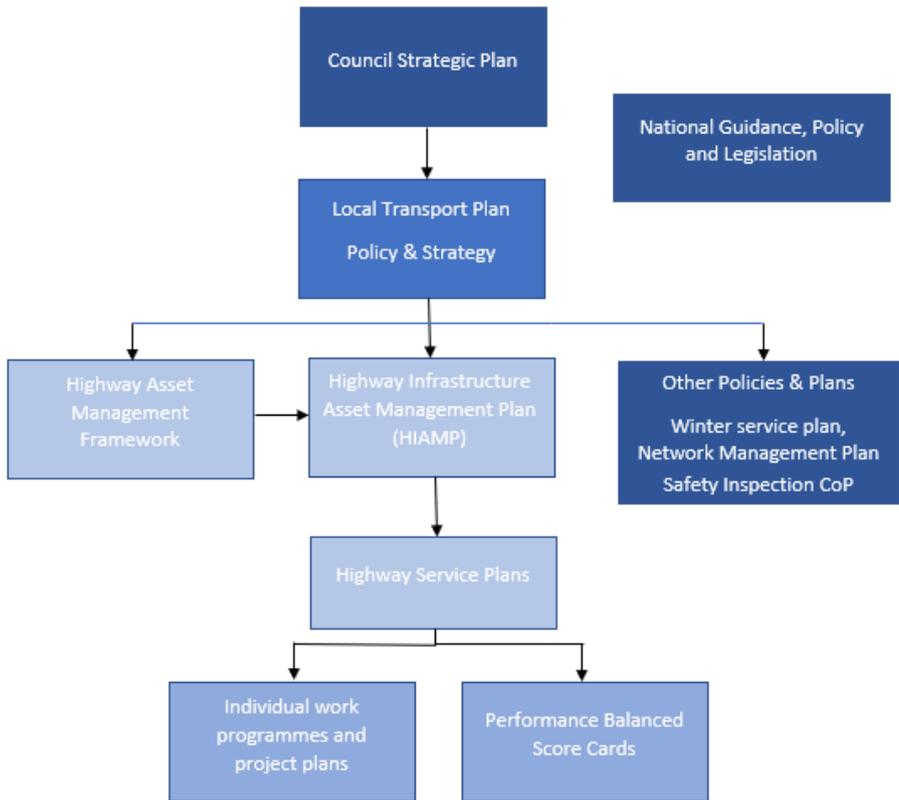
This HIAMP together with the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will form the link between the Council Strategic Plan, Corporate Strategy, Local Transport Plan and individual service delivery plans.

<sup>2</sup> [Highways Act 1980](#)

*Commented [WD(9)]: As above, also opportunity to show how the highway network contributes to the 'place' agenda – perhaps a phrase based on Manual for Streets 'Streets are the arteries of our communities – a community's success can depend on how well it is connected to local services and the wider world. However, it is all too easy to forget that streets are not just there to get people from A to B. In reality, streets have many other functions. They form vital components of residential areas and greatly affect the overall quality of life for local people.'*

*Commented [TM(&S10)]: Add safety inspection to the 'other policies & plans'*

**Figure 1 – Highway Asset Management Document Framework**



Staffordshire County Council’s Highway Service has developed an Asset Management Policy<sup>3</sup>, outlining its approach towards effective asset management in line with the member-approved commissioning strategies developed by the authority as a whole.

Staffordshire County Council’s Highway Service has further developed an Asset Management Strategy<sup>4</sup>, outlining its approach towards formalising strategies for investment in key highway asset groups through life-cycle planning, defining affordable service standards, improving how the highway assets are managed and subsequently enabling more effective and efficient highways services to be delivered.

The HIAMP contains a series of annexes that provide further detail regarding the management of each highway asset group.

<sup>3</sup> [SCC Highway Asset Management Policy](#)

<sup>4</sup> [SCC Highway Asset Management Strategy](#)

Details of the winter service and the highway safety inspection process undertaken by Staffordshire County Council are outlined in separate documents named the Winter Service Operational Plan and the Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice. These documents are not included as annexes to the HIAMP due to their very specific legal requirements.

#### **1.6. SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

The document will comprise of a number of Volumes, each outlining a specific Asset Group.

Each Asset group Volume will contain the following information:

- Legal Framework,
- Asset Condition,
- Asset Management,
- Asset Inspection
- Asset Programming.

All these core elements generate a consistent approach to best practice asset management and put into practice the demands of good lifecycle planning outlined within the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy.

## Part 2: Asset Management Framework

### 2.1. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Stakeholder expectations and effective customer communication are highly important to Staffordshire County Council, with a Communication Action Plan<sup>5</sup> in place for the authority. This has driven the Communications Strategy for Highways, Pitching the Message, written in line with service delivery and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP).

#### 2.1.1. Aims

The aim of our communications is to:

- To engage and listen to our citizens and our communities' concerns about the highway network and to meet their needs and feedback our progress on a regular and timely basis.
- Inform the public about physical road works, operational highways issues (including defect repairs, winter maintenance etc) and value-for-money highways and transport activities in a timely manner.
- Communicate proposed changes to highways asset management in Staffordshire, encourage public engagement through our communications and raise awareness about changes if these are adopted.
- Encourage people to make the best use of reporting channels – e.g., 'self-serve' via our website.
- Ensure the public is aware of funding bids awarded to the council to help maintain and enhance the local transport network.

Commented [WD(11)]: Add extra bullet point at the start to reflect some of the key outcomes for additional investment i.e., 'Engage effectively to understand and meet the needs of our citizens and communities'

The plan sets out how an asset management led approach, puts the customer at the heart of our service. Considerations for this strategy and the communication of Highways Asset Management have been developed to and in excess of recommendations within UKRLG Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance document<sup>6</sup>.

#### 2.1.2. Key Groups/Stakeholders

People, groups of people, or organisations that can affect or be affected by the policies and actions of Staffordshire County Council are all stakeholders of the highway network. Effective engagement with stakeholders is a key

<sup>5</sup> [SCC Communications Action Plan](#)

<sup>6</sup> [UKRLG Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance](#)

issue in managing expectations and therefore satisfaction with the highway service.

We will seek to engage and communicate with a wide range of people and organisations that have a stake in Staffordshire's road network. The Highway Infrastructure Communications Strategy identifies our key stakeholders.

Commented [WD(12): 'engage and communicate']

### 2.1.3. Stakeholder Expectations

The Council monitors stakeholder expectations using the National Highways and Transport<sup>7</sup> (NHT) customer satisfaction survey and through ad-hoc consultation exercises.

Commented [WD(13): Check with MAR – there is also an annual Member survey and there may other corporate resident/business user's surveys that the COG are aware of?]

The County Council participates in the NHT customer satisfaction survey each year and the outcomes of this survey are used to inform asset management planning. As well as the levels of satisfaction that are also reported levels of service, of particular relevance to this plan in the context of dealing with the challenge set out in the medium-term financial strategy, is the levels of service which are not acceptable to reduce.

Commented [TM(&S14R13): Waiting for response from MAR]

The survey collects the public's views on different aspects of Highways and Transport in local authority areas, it covers:

- Pavements
- Cycle Routes/Lanes
- Local bus services
- Local taxi services
- Community transport
- Demand responsive transport
- Safety on roads
- Traffic congestion
- Levels of traffic pollution
- Street Lighting
- Condition of roads
- Local rights of way network

It asks detailed questions about each of these aspects in turn.

The Staffordshire public consistently place most importance on 'Safety on roads' and 'Condition of Roads'. In terms of satisfaction the public are most satisfied with 'Street lighting' and least satisfied with 'Condition of roads'.

The biggest difference between how important and how satisfied the public is with the 'Condition of roads'.

<sup>7</sup> [The National Highways & Transport Network](#)

With regards to spending priorities the public identified 'Condition of roads' as the area they consider the authority should be spending more to improve the level of service.

These priorities are acknowledged in this HIAMP and will be considered as the asset management approach is developed.

#### 2.1.4. Best Practice – Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

The Midlands Highway Alliance plus (MHA+) is a collaborative alliance for adjacent/peer authorities to share knowledge and good practice. Although not a founding member, Staffordshire was one of the early members of the alliance and remains active in leading in innovation. Many of Staffordshire's processes that ensure the implementation of this Plan, have been developed in conjunction with other local authorities within the MHA+.

The County Council will also be enhanced by benchmarking our data with other similar authorities through the Alliance and the NHT customer satisfaction survey/CQC Efficiency Network.

The County Council is also a member of other national alliances such as the Future Highway Research Group. The council has representation on national groups such as the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG), National Highway Sector Schemes (NHSS), UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT).

**Commented [WD(15):** Check with wider leadership team the other groups we are involved with e.g., ukRLG roads board

**Commented [PC(16):** Mention of individual officers in national groups, NHSS, HAUC, Adept/NWSRG etc ?

## 2.2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This section contains information on duties and powers specifically related to highways.

### 2.2.1. Powers and Duties

There are several pieces of legislation which provide the basis for powers and duties relating to highway maintenance. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Highways Act 1980
- Traffic Management Act 2004
- New Roads & Street Works Act 1991
- Transport Act 2000
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002
- Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003
- Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Noxious Weeds Act 1993
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015
- Local Government Act 2003
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equalities Act 2010
- Environment Act 2021

### **2.2.2. Highway Act 1980**

The Highways Act 1980 sets out the main duties of Highway Authorities in England and Wales. Section 41 imposes a duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense. Section 58 provides for a defence against action relating to alleged failure to maintain on grounds that the authority has taken such care as in all the circumstances were reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway in question was not dangerous for traffic.

The Act also identifies other powers that highway authorities can exercise to undertake activities on or within the highway such as improvements, drainage, acquiring land, authorising skips, scaffolds etc.

### **2.2.3. The Traffic Management Act 2004**

The Traffic Management Act<sup>8</sup> was introduced in 2004 to tackle congestion and disruption on the road network. The Act places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities. The Act gives authorities additional tools to better implement parking policies, moving traffic enforcement and the co-ordination of street works. The Act states that local traffic authorities shall make appropriate arrangements for performing their network management duty. These arrangements must include provision for the appointment of a Traffic Manager whose function it is to ensure that the authority complies with the duty.

The Act introduced a number of provisions:

- National Highways Traffic Officers
- local authority duty for network management
- permits for work on the highway
- increased control of utility works
- increased civil enforcement of traffic offences

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<sup>8</sup> [Traffic Management Act 2004](#)

The most important feature of the Act is Section 16(1) which established a new duty for local traffic authorities 'to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and the following objectives:

- securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network
- facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority'

Section 31 of the Act specifically states that the term 'traffic' includes pedestrians, so the duty requires the authority to consider all road users. The Traffic Management Act 2004 has also strengthened the regulatory regime with regard to works of utilities and others within the highway including permit schemes, new conditions, and fixed penalty notices. The Act changes significantly the provisions of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, but much of the guidance remains valid.

#### **2.2.4. The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991**

The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991<sup>9</sup> (NRSWA) requires highway authorities to coordinate works and develop systems to record works so that utilities could be held financially responsible for failings in their operations and quality of workmanship (reinstatements).

#### **2.2.5. The West and Shires Permit Scheme (WaSP)**

The permit scheme that operates in Staffordshire requires any organisation carrying out works in the highway to apply for a permit in order to 'book' time on the highway. The West and Shires is a common permit scheme currently operating in a number of Local Highways Authorities across the country.

We issue permits with conditions attached to better focus the activity in terms of reducing the impact of road users and other stakeholders; this might be in relation to the timing of the works, the traffic management and methodology or any other factor that is deemed important.

Equally, we can refuse to issue a permit if we feel the planning, or the detail of the application is insufficient. The WaSP<sup>10</sup> scheme allows us to recoup the cost of coordinating and managing the activity by charging for issuing a permit.

<sup>9</sup> [New Roads and Street Works Act 1991](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Permit scheme - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Commented [WD(17)]: Perhaps add a paragraph either in 2.2.3 or 2.2.4 to note that SCC are a Permit Authority, what that means and that we use the WaSP scheme which is common across a number of authorities in the midlands (and beyond) which helps with a consistent approach for utilities.

### **2.2.6. Well Managed Highway Infrastructure**

The Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' (WMHI)<sup>11</sup> provides guidance to councils regarding the management and maintenance of local roads. The Code of Practice was <published< commissioned by the Department of Transport and came into effect in October 2018.

The Code of Practice is non-statutory however it is deemed to be guidance of best practice by the courts. The County Council is required to demonstrate a robust decision-making process, an understanding of the consequences of those decisions, and how the associated risks are managed to ensure highway safety.

### **2.2.7. Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974<sup>12</sup>, together with the Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 set a requirement for highway, traffic and street authorities to carry out work in a safe manner and establish robust arrangements for the management of construction works.

### **2.2.8. General and Specific Requirements**

Much of highway infrastructure maintenance activity is based upon statutory powers and duties contained in legislation and interpretations of these powers and duties provided by the court.

The authority has developed a training and competency framework for asset management to ensure that those involved in highway maintenance have an appropriate understanding of their duties and powers, their implications, and the procedures used to manage and mitigate risk.

## **2.3. FUNDING**

### **2.3.1. Background**

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for funding local roads renewals and upgrades, while the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provides revenue support to local highways authorities for routine road maintenance.

The DfT provides annual capital funding for highway maintenance through the Highways Maintenance Block and Integrated Transport Block. In addition, the DfT, on occasions, provides additional maintenance funding, typically for pothole repairs, or provides the opportunity for local authorities to bid for additional maintenance funding.

<sup>11</sup> [Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Capital maintenance expenditure is used to add to the value of a fixed asset. Highway works eligible for capital funding include activities that:

- extend the life of an asset, such as reconstructive resurfacing or preventative treatment schemes
- enable the construction of improved infrastructure, including the acquisition of land
- replace an existing feature with an enhanced structure, such as drainage renewal schemes Revenue expenditure covers day to day expenditure, such as works to maintain the value of a fixed asset.

Capital funding is used to provide renewal and replacement of all highway assets including carriageways, footways, structures (bridges), safety fencing, drainage, traffic signals and signs but as noted above, excludes street lighting in Staffordshire which is managed under a PFI contract.

Revenue funding is typically spent on all other areas that support the operation of the highway infrastructure such as routine maintenance such as grass cutting and energy for street lighting

### 2.3.2. Capital Funding Streams

#### Highway Maintenance Block (Needs Element)

The Maintenance Block funding allocated to each local highway authority is based on a formula using road length data and the number of highways assets such as bridges and lighting columns for which they are each responsible for.

Highway Maintenance Block funding is not ringfenced and local authorities are free to prioritise their spending as appropriate to meet local needs. However, the DfT do allocate a notional proportion of the total funding to the four elements as follows:

**Table 1 – DfT Notional Funding Apportionment**

Element	Proportional Allocation
<b>Roads</b>	75%
Split evenly between:	
A roads	25%
B and C roads	25%
U roads	25%
<b>Bridges</b>	14%
<b>Lighting</b>	2%

Commented [PC(18)]: Do we know if we get all minus the 5% below ?

Commented [WD(19)]: Add paragraph to note that SCC 'top slice' the DfT block grant – see Cabinet Paper for Highway & Transport Capital programme approval – March 2021 example.

<b>Cycleways &amp; Footways</b>	9%
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Historically, Cabinet has agreed that a 5% top-slice of Highways Maintenance Block funding are used to support other centrally funded capital projects in areas such as Economic Development, Waste Management and Libraries, which receive no such allocation from government and provision has similarly been made for 2021/22.

### **Integrated Transport Block (ITB)**

The Integrated Transport Block (ITB) provides funding support to local authorities for transport capital improvement schemes worth less than £5 million. The ITB is not ringfenced and is spent at the discretion of the authority.

**Commented [PC(20):** Can we provide statement on if SCC spend this on ITB or highways ?

### **Highway Maintenance Incentive Fund Element**

In recent years an increasing proportion of DfT funding has been dependent on the authority being able to evidence that we have fully embedded asset management principles into the management of highway business. The incentive fund does not provide additional funding but incentivises local authorities to ensure they receive their full share of available funding.

**Commented [PC(21):** Worth mentioning doesn't include unitary authorities ?

Councils are banded 1 to 3. Staffordshire has received its full share of the incentive fund, based on its band 3 status – the top band. In 2021/22 ensuring the authority achieves the top band is worth £2.785m to the authority.

**Commented [WD(22):** Perhaps add – in 2021/22 the incentive fund element t band 3 is worth £2.7?M

### **Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund**

The local highways maintenance challenge fund enables local highway authorities in England to bid for major maintenance projects that are otherwise difficult to fund through the usual formula funding allocations they receive from government.

Staffordshire have been successful in recent years in securing funding from the Challenge Fund for critical maintenance repairs to some of our highway structures.

**Commented [WD(23):** Possibly worth citing the examples and values?

In 2017 £6.1m investment was secured for St. Peter's Bridge in Burton to replace bearings, safeguarding the future use of the bridge for HGVs while boosting access for businesses and securing skilled jobs locally.

In 2020 the authority was successful in securing £2.35m to restore Chetwynd bridge, Alrewas. The road width was reduced to a single lane following issues identified with the iron road railing following inspection.

### Additional Funding

In recent years the Government has provided additional discrete pots of capital funding for local councils to help repair potholes and to undertake other routine maintenance. Funding is allocated in accordance with the needs-based formula, is not ring fenced and is expected to be spent within the financial year.

As part of wider plans to boost active travel the government are placing increasing emphasis on improving and developing walking and cycling infrastructure. Ensuring the council's highway asset management strategy is aligned to the changing nature of government priorities will be important in securing future funding.

**Commented [WD(24):** Might be worth thinking about a paragraph (again possibly from the Cabinet paper for capital programme referred to above to reflect the changing nature of government priorities, for example walking and cycling and that HIAM may need to take increasing account of this to ensure able to bid for extra funds, or stay at level 3?

### 2.4. APPROACH TO MAINTENANCE

Staffordshire County Council undertakes various maintenance activities on the highways network which will be outlined throughout the course of this document.

Maintenance activities contribute in varying degrees to the core objectives of safety, customer service, serviceability, and sustainability. Levels of service and delivery arrangements are established having regard to these objectives and focussed on outcomes.

The main types of maintenance are as follows:

- Routine – Regularly scheduled works (often cyclic) e.g., lamp replacement, drainage cleansing, grass cutting and weed spraying etc.
- Reactive – Safety-based, responding to inspections, customer reports or emergencies.
- Planned – Planned schemes include structural and preventative maintenance to extend the life of or renew an asset.
- Regulatory – Inspecting and regulating the activities of others affecting the highway.
- Winter Service – salt spreading and snow ploughing in adverse weather.

**Commented [WD(25):** /preventative?

**Commented [PC(26):** Salt spreading ?

### 2.5. CARBON STRATEGY

The County Council is committed to establishing a clear action plan to embed carbon reduction measures across the Authority and make Staffordshire more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. The

**Commented [WD(27):** Add reference and footnote link to [Climate Change Strategic Development Framework?](#)

Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Strategic Development Framework<sup>13</sup> sets out the council's approach to achieving net zero by 2050.

The Staffordshire Highways Carbon roadmap sets out a long-term view on reducing carbon emissions and providing network resilience, beyond that of the current Staffordshire Infrastructure+ Highways Service Contract. The strategy sets the investment to ensure Staffordshire has the continued capacity to being carbon neutral.

Transforming the approach in engineering design is the first step in the journey towards creating a low carbon, low cost, highly resilient highway network. Staffordshire Highways will seek to create or identify the tools to assess, reduce & offset carbon, design out waste, reuse materials and design in recycled materials.

Measures will be employed to reduce the Council's carbon footprint in the maintenance of the Highway Services Assets employing measures to:

- Make use of low temperature carriageway and footway treatments
- Recycled and recyclable materials
- Fuel efficient fleet and tools
- Efficient routing of services, including reactive management repairs, inspections and monitoring, winter service, etc.
- Whole life cost calculations including carbon calculations and enhanced design to extend durability.
- Behavioural changes such as green driver training.
- Moving to electric/hybrid fleet where possible.

Staffordshire highways have been a leading authority in areas of carbon reduction. For example, we have had Low Temperature Asphalt (LTA) in our base specification for over 10 years. LTA can achieve carbon savings of around 20% over conventional asphalt.

We crush and recycle around 30,000 tonnes of asphalt per year. Diverting from landfill and putting valuable stone back into the road network. Decreasing the need to quarry new stone. In doing so, we save 37 Tonnes of Carbon output from sending to arisings to landfill. Further to this we save over 1,100 Tonnes of Carbon by not needing to source primary material.

## 2.6. TRAVEL QUALITY

The way in which the highway network is managed, including works to the highway, and the choice of materials and particular products, can have a significant effect on the travel quality experienced by all highway users.

<sup>13</sup> [Climate Change Strategic Development Framework - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Commented [WD(28)]: Might be worth a conversation with Andy Ward (AMEY) and Will Shipley (AMEY) about these measures – there are already some good news stories about the way waste is managed, and intention to go further. Highway investment will generate more opportunity but more waste and need clearer links between what material will be generated and how it can be re-used or recycled.

Commented [TM(&S29R28)]: E-mailed Will Shipley

The predominant activity, in maintenance terms, are structural repairs and preventative works to sustain the highway structure. The provision of such measures as dropped kerbs for disabled people, or parents with prams, can make a journey easier.

Well maintained carriageways with a good riding surface, and well-defined edges, provide a smooth ride and minimise driver stress when travelling and encourage activities such as cycling.

Peak hour roadworks restrictions, vehicle activated temporary traffic signals, and waiting restrictions on the major traffic routes, can help traffic flow.

Textured footway and cycleway surfacing, or audible alerts at pedestrian crossings, help blind and disabled people.

Good information, warning, and regulatory signs can help all road users.

It is therefore important that if the key objectives which relate to travel quality are to be achieved, clear policies and standards exist. The key objectives relating to travel quality are:-

- To ensure that the highway network is able to carry both the volume and weight of traffic, as determined by the road network hierarchy.
- To have regard for the long-term future of the network when formulating expenditure plans, and to ensure efficient and economical use of resources in the maintenance of the network.
- To minimise the impact of adverse weather conditions on travel quality.
- To seek to ensure that the highway network satisfies the reasonable expectations of the community's needs for transport, in business and leisure activities. The work carried out by the SCC asset management team will complement the traffic management and safety measures implemented by the wider highway design service.

## **2.7. CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT**

The impact of highway management on the environment can take the form of aesthetic or visual intrusion and noise intrusion, conservation, pollution, or the impact on wildlife or other nature conservation interests, as well as the sustainable use of resources.

It is therefore important that the Highway Authority has a clear set of policies and standards which address these impacts. The following are considered in all design stages:-

- To minimise the environmental impact of traffic, especially Heavy Goods Vehicles, on the quality of life of the community.
- To encourage traffic speeds that are appropriate to the nature of the highway and surrounding environment.
- To maintain and enhance the environment of the highway corridor in a manner which is sympathetic to the nature of surrounding area.
- To conserve energy and other natural resources, wherever possible, in the Network Management process, and avoid the use of materials known to be harmful to the environment.
- Contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development to ensure that flood risk is properly managed.

Commented [WD(30): Might be worth reference to Staffordshire Freight & Community Forum and the 'Freight Strategy for the County of Staffordshire'

Commented [TM(&S31R30): To be covered elsewhere in the plan

## 2.8. SERVICE LEVELS

Levels of Service is a term used to describe.

"The quality of services provided by the asset for the benefit of users".

Commented [PC(32): Users ?

One of the hardest challenges of asset management is finding a balance between investing in an asset in order to safeguard its integrity and value, while providing a high-quality service to the public.

The Level of Service relates to our highway infrastructure, the way highway services are delivered and how the services are perceived, these include.

- Condition of the asset.
- Performance of the asset.
- Quality of the services that the asset provides.
- Performance of the management in delivering the services.

Levels of service and standards are derived from various strategic considerations with reference to relevant legislation and national guidance and best practice documents.

In defining any such targets and performance levels it is important that they are 'SMART'; that is 'Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-based'.

## 2.9. RESILIENCE REVIEW

As part of good asset management practice, Staffordshire have established a resilient network to increase the resilience of the highway network during

extreme events. This covers events such as extreme heat, increased rainfall, and industrial action amongst others.

Reviews are undertaken every two years to gauge the economic viability of the extent of the network and the efficiency of managing the resilient network.

Commented [PC(33): Weather ?

DRAFT

## Part 3: Implementing Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice

The Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' (WMHI) provides guidance to councils regarding the management and maintenance of local roads. We follow this guidance as best practice to deliver an efficient and effective service.

This HIAMP explains how the County Council is adopting each of the 36 recommendations in the Code of Practice.

### 3.1. POLICY FRAMEWORK

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1 – USE OF THE CODE**

This Code, in conjunction with the UKRLG Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance, should be used as the starting point against which to develop, review and formally approve highway infrastructure maintenance policy and to identify and formally approve the nature and extent of any variations.

The code of practice is founded upon the principles of best value and emphasise the use of an asset management approach to highway maintenance. The intention of the code 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure' is that authorities will develop their own levels of service through a local, risk-based, approach. This Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) does just that and has been developed in conjunction with the asset management policy and strategy that is detailed in that plan.

This HIAMP details the mechanisms that will be deployed as we work towards attaining the Council's objectives as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2018-22. This will be through planned performance against the life cycle plans for all major components of the highway asset. This plan sets out the risk-based approach, which will be embedded in every-day decision making.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2 – ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

An Asset Management Framework should be developed and endorsed by senior decision makers. All activities outlined in the Framework should be documented.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3 – ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY**

An asset management policy and a strategy should be developed and published. These should align with the corporate vision and demonstrate the contribution asset management makes towards achieving this vision. (HIAMG Recommendation 3)

This HIAMP sets out in more detail the principles outlined in the Council's Asset Management Policy and Strategy which are published on the Council's website.

The highway asset management policy and strategy are endorsed by senior decision makers.

The highway asset management strategy sets out the asset management objectives which support the County Council's core purpose. The policy explains the corporate approach to managing our highway infrastructure.

The objectives state that:-

- Senior decisions makers will adopt the principles of highway infrastructure asset management.
- The principles and approach to delivering highway services are documented and defined.
- We communicate with all staff and stakeholders on our approach to managing all highway infrastructures.

The Highway Asset Management Strategy sets out how the Highway Asset Management Policy will be delivered.

The strategy has been developed to support the Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives, by utilising investment programmes to provide an efficient and resilient highway network. The relationship between SCC's outcomes and our asset management objectives are clearly defined. The performance of which is measured and enabled through a clear reporting structure and a framework of asset management documents which include the asset data

management strategy, highway inventory policy and the performance management framework.

### 3.2. STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNICATION

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4 – ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

Relevant information should be actively communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders in setting requirements, making decisions and reporting performance.

Our Community Highway Engagement Officers act as ambassadors for the County Council and they are the main contacts for stakeholders including elected County Councillors (Members) when it comes to enquiries relating to highways and transport matters.

Key stakeholders are invited to comment on the policy and strategy, these include the interests of Members, contractors, highways users, neighbouring authorities, local business and key partners, such as the NHS and the Police who rely on the network for delivery of their services.

Through this way of working, we ensure that the delivery of our investment programmes is informed by the intelligence gained through working alongside the community within localities. We also ensure that the work undertaken at a local level complements the activity delivered through our borough wide programme of maintenance and improvement works.

Future work programmes are approved and shared with Members and the public and scheduled or planned work details are set out in simple to understand letters so that when works are taking place residents are clear on the process and who they may contact within the Council if they have additional questions.

### 3.3. CONSISTENCY OF SERVICE

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5 – CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES**

To ensure that users' reasonable expectations for consistency are taken into account, the approach of other local and strategic highway and transport authorities, especially those with integrated or adjoining networks, should be considered when developing highway infrastructure maintenance policies.

The Council was one of the early members of the Midland Highway Alliance which has now joined together with the Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG) and West Midlands Highway Alliance (WMHA) to form the Midland Highway Alliance Plus (MHA+). The MHA+ is a collective of Councils sharing best practice to drive improvements and efficiencies within the highways and road safety disciplines of Local Authorities. In particular, the Asset Management Task Group has worked to develop a set of High-Level Principles for the Risk Based Approach to safety inspections and defect response times.

Agreements are in place with our neighbouring authorities for cross boundary maintenance and winter service provision.

### 3.4. INTEGRATED NETWORK MANAGEMENT

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6 – AN INTEGRATED NETWORK**

The highway network should be considered as an integrated set of assets when developing highway infrastructure maintenance policies.

This plan, and the risk-based approach it details, enables the wide variety of highway assets to be managed as an integrated set. It details an approach to assessing and undertaking maintenance that is used across all assets.

A 'Candidate List' of sites requiring maintenance, for consideration in future works programmes is developed for each asset. These are discussed between teams who lead on the various assets on the network with a view to shaping the integration, scope, and timing of any potential works to ensure value for money efficiencies are achieved. This includes, though not exclusively, street lighting, structures, drainage, and any third-party assets such as those owned by utility companies.

Through programme coordination and visibility of future SCC schemes which may affect other key highway asset or major improvement scheme, we adjust the priority place in the programme so that we can combine activities in order to maximise financial efficiencies.

### 3.5. RISK BASED APPROACH

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7 – RISK BASED APPROACH**

A risk-based approach should be adopted for all aspects of highway infrastructure maintenance, including setting levels of service, inspections, responses, resilience, priorities, and programmes.

Meaningful risk management is an intrinsic part of the management of our highway infrastructure. Inspections, maintenance, renewals, and improvements present extensive choices and therefore it is vital that the impact of implementation and the consequences of failure are fully understood. In addition, there is a variety of external influences which impact on the performance of the highway network. Weather, budget, political direction, and demand from other service areas also need to be considered when determining the approach to maintenance and investment.

Adopting a risk-based approach has facilitated the establishment and implementation of levels of asset condition and service standards that are appropriate to their circumstances.

We have adopted a risk-based approach for all aspects of highway infrastructure maintenance, including setting levels of service, inspections, response, resilience, priorities, and programmes. The management of current and future risks has been embedded within our approach to asset management and service delivery.

The key actions of this risk-based approach are:

- Understanding our statutory duties and ensuring that these are fulfilled.
- Identifying the value and criticality of the County Council's assets and operations to fulfil the asset management objectives and achieve the levels of service.
- Gathering sufficient and appropriate information to support risk-based decisions.
- Ensuring staff have sufficient knowledge and competency to make risk-based decisions.
- Identifying and prioritising risks associated with the assets using systems that are consistent with the County Council's corporate approach to risk management.
- Implementing appropriate controls.
- Documenting risk-based decisions ensuring that the whole approach is transparent.
- Applying the risk-based approach equitably for all stakeholders and in all locations.
- Communicating the approach and the outcomes of where it is applied to stakeholders.

Commented [PC(34): Where do we mention asset management competency framework ?

Commented [TM(&S35R34): Recommendation 15

This HIAMP sets in place the over-arching approach which will be deployed for operational procedures.

Risk management is therefore at the heart of good management practice and corporate governance arrangements. Our approach to risk management is proactive and enables decisions to be based on properly assessed actions and events that balance risk and reward with a view to ensuring that the right actions are taken at the right time.

**RECOMMENDATION 14 – RISK MANAGEMENT**

The management of current and future risks associated with assets should be embedded within the approach to asset management. Strategic, tactical, and operational risks should be included as should appropriate preventative and mitigation measures.

SCC has a highway infrastructure risk management policy and risk register. The policy links to the corporate risk framework, corporate risk register and the business continuity plan.

The Highway Asset Management Delivery Project Team has been established to regularly review highway asset risks and consists of officers designated as asset leads and service managers. The group maintain a detailed risk register used to assess the potential risks encountered when managing the highway network. The risk register records what the risks are, evaluates the impact, identifies how the risk can be mitigated, the investment required to control the risk and designates a risk action owner.

The Highway Infrastructure Plus partnership has a clear procedure for identifying, reporting, and controlling the escalation of risk.

**3.6. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

**RECOMMENDATION 8 – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Information to support a risk-based approach to highway maintenance should be collected, managed, and made available in ways that are sustainable, secure, meet any statutory obligations, and, where appropriate, facilitate transparency for network users.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9 – NETWORK INVENTORY**

A detailed inventory or register of highway assets, together with information on their scale, nature, and use, should be maintained. The nature and extent of inventory collected should be fit for purpose and meet business needs. Where data or information held is considered sensitive, this should be managed in a security- minded way.

The Highway Infrastructure Inventory Policy establishes a process for the recording, identification, and accountability of all County Council owned highway infrastructure assets.

The policy requires:

- All highway infrastructure assets shall be identified with unique asset reference, where appropriate this unique reference number shall be affixed to the asset.
- Asset records shall be maintained for each asset.
- The Asset Custodian to make an annual declaration of the accuracy, currency, and coverage of inventory. Commentary on any significant changes to the inventory shall be included in the declaration.
- The Asset Custodian to be administratively responsible for the asset assigned to them.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10 – ASSET DATA MANAGEMENT**

The quality, currency, appropriateness, and completeness of all data supporting asset management should be regularly reviewed. An asset register should be maintained that stores, manages, and reports all relevant asset data.

To provide effective asset management we require knowledge of an asset, its condition, and its use. This entails the collection and importantly management of asset inventory and condition data. A Highway Asset Data Management Strategy has been developed to assess whether the systems and information available to the authority are sufficient to ensure:

- Our approach to highway maintenance is consistent with the current recommendations of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP).

- Consistency with the code of practice for highway maintenance 'Well Managed Highways Infrastructure'.
- The Council is in a position to secure the full funds available through the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Incentive Fund award process.
- Development of a more analytical and evidence-based approach to managing its highway assets.
- The detailed direction and operational processes required to underpin delivery of the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy are available.

Stewardship of asset data is a clear strength of the County Council with named posts in the structure that are clearly responsible for certain sets of data.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11 – ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

Asset management systems should be sustainable and able to support the information required to enable asset management. Systems should be accessible to relevant staff and, where appropriate, support the provision of information for stakeholders.

For asset management to be effective it must be supported by quality data. A number of commercial off the shelf systems are available that provide a range of functionality to support the asset management process.

Given the diversity of Highway Services Assets and their individual maintenance requirements, the Council's current asset management systems comprise a number of separate systems that effectively manage asset groups, i.e., structures, carriageway and footway, street lighting, traffic signals. These individual systems are linked through common referencing of asset and association with a common highway network enabling an integrated approach.

Data relevant to the highway network and its Asset Register is held in the Confirm UKPMS Asset Management System used by many local councils to manage highway and transport assets, customer services, maintenance, and performance. Confirm and other performance management systems are used to manage and monitor performance across the Highway service.

### **3.7. FUNCTIONAL HIERARCHY**

### **RECOMMENDATION 12 – FUNCTIONAL HIERARCHY**

A network hierarchy, or a series of related hierarchies, should be defined which include all elements of the highway network, including carriageways, footways, cycle routes, structures, lighting, and rights of way. The hierarchy should take into account current and expected use, resilience, and local economic and social factors such as industry, schools, hospitals and similar, as well as the desirability of continuity and of a consistent approach for walking and cycling.

The network hierarchy recognises that maintenance and management of the Highway Services Assets based on the current classification of A, B, C, and non-classified roads fails to recognise:

- the volume of traffic using particular roads
- their importance in delivering the Council's aims and objectives
- the consequences of failure of certain routes or items of infrastructure
- the impact on the economy and communities

The Council has developed a Network Maintenance Hierarchy and Resilience Strategy based on both network usage and the importance and limitations of particular routes and assets across the network. It allows differing levels of service and maintenance strategies to be applied to the hierarchy of the network ensuring the most effective treatments are employed appropriate to the use and importance of the roads in question and allows for the integrity of routes used by greater volumes or goods vehicles to be maintained to ensure the long-term resilience of those parts of the network.

### **RECOMMENDATION 20 – RESILIENT NETWORK**

Within the highway network hierarchy, a 'Resilient Network' should be identified to which priority is given through maintenance and other measures to maintain economic activity and access to key services during extreme weather.

It is now recognised that climate change is affecting weather patterns. In the UK, this is reflected through greater incidence of prolonged rainfall, strong winds and heatwaves which can combine with other natural events to create adverse conditions for the Councils transport network. Where practical, there is a need to make the Councils transport networks more resilient to such events.

The increasing frequency, variety, and impact of these extreme weather events prompted the Department for Transport (DfT) to undertake a review of the resilience of the UK transport network to extreme weather events. This review recommended that local highway authorities should identify their resilient network and give it priority consideration in terms of maintenance and availability.

The resilient network will also be used as a tactical tool with which priority can be given to minimise the impacts of extreme weather. This could include the following –

- Additional maintenance interventions/inspections may be used to ensure the asset continues to function.
- Prioritise funding to mitigate the onset of deterioration of the asset.
- Prioritise work programme to reduce the risk of failure in the asset.
- Prioritise reactive maintenance in the case of extreme weather.
- Assisting in emergency planning events including recovering from an emergency event.

At its highest level the network maintenance hierarchy identifies a resilient network of key routes serving the businesses, communities, services and forming links both nationally and between adjoining authorities. These routes will be given priority in planned and reactive maintenance and will be maintained in the event of adverse weather or other emergent events. The resilient network includes a number of assets where failure would result in significant impact to the local economy, and these have been identified and prioritised in the Highway Services Asset Risk Strategy.

### 3.8. LIFECYCLE/DESIGNING FOR MAINTENANCE

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13 – WHOLE LIFE/DESIGNING FOR MAINTENANCE**

Authorities should take whole life costs into consideration when assessing options for maintenance, new and improved highway schemes. The future maintenance costs of such new infrastructure are therefore a prime consideration.

Whole life costing involves predicting the likely deterioration rate of assets based upon usage and material composition plus the treatment cost versus useful life calculations which give the most cost-effective medium and long-term asset maintenance plans.

Staffordshire works to design specifications contained in the 'Manual for Streets'<sup>14</sup>, the Staffordshire Residential Design Guide<sup>15</sup> and the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges<sup>16</sup>

Scheme designs are based, as far as is reasonably practicable, on the most sustainable whole life approach to design, specification of materials and construction methods. Such examples include the specification of durable materials and designs, recycling and re-using materials where possible, prioritising repairs and maintenance, undertaking treatments in a timely manner and using innovative techniques often developed through early contractor involvement.

A sustainable approach to maintaining Staffordshire's roads and pavements will assist in reducing whole life costs and ensure continued levels of serviceability of the highway network.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15 – COMPETENCIES AND TRAINING**

The appropriate competencies for all staff should be identified. Training should be provided where necessary for directly employed staff, and contractors should be required to provide evidence of the appropriate competencies of their staff.

To ensure our officers are competent in the principles and practices of asset management, a training and competency framework has been developed which provides the expected qualifications, training, and proficiencies for each prescribed role.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16 – INSPECTIONS**

A risk-based inspection regime, including regular safety inspections, should be developed, and implemented for all highway assets.

All features of the highway, including carriageways, footways, cycleways, and highway structures will be inspected regularly, at intervals depending on the hierarchy of the road and type of survey being carried out.

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<sup>14</sup> [Manual for the Streets](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Residential Design Guide - Staffordshire County Council](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Standards For Highways | Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\)](#)

The Council's Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice<sup>17</sup> details the safety inspection regime which forms a key part of the Council's strategy for managing risk. It comprises the following elements:

- Frequency (and mode) of inspections
- Items for inspection
- Degree of deficiency
- Nature of response

### **Risk based Inspection Frequency**

Where a road use changes or reports have been received regularly and/or reactive works have been carried out regularly, safety inspection frequency may be altered, (this may include the use of additional inspections). Similarly, surfacing schemes may trigger a review of the inspection frequency for a certain area due to the reduction in risk. Frequency changes will be determined via risk assessment that takes account of the above considerations and will be reviewed by Highway Services and recorded by the Highway Asset Manager (with the reason for doing so) annually or following a significant change.

A separate guidance document is provided for an inspector that sets out what and how the inspection should be undertaken. This provides guidance on the risk based approach detailed within this plan to establish a response time to defects identified.

### **Defect Investigation Levels**

When assessing the risk associated with defects consideration will be given to its location, the volume of traffic, the nature of such traffic, usage by children, elderly and disabled persons, and the extent of visibility at the site amongst other considerations. The code of practice, Well-managed Highway Infrastructure, does not set out specific intervention levels and refers to legal precedents.

### **Recording Defects**

All highway defects which are noted should be recorded on the mobile devices. To ensure the repair team can quickly identify the precise defect, it is essential that the information provided is simple and easily understood. In order to locate a defect effectively, the repair team records the following information:

- The location of the defect along the length of the highway.
- The position of the defect across the width of the highway

<sup>17</sup> [Highway Safety Inspections Code of Practice - Staffordshire County Council](#)

**Commented [WD(36):** Refer to the Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspections?

**Commented [PC(37):** Should we refer to reports, not complaints ?

**Commented [WD(38):** Annually or following a significant change?

- The size and type of defect

### Defect Response Times

The response times commence from the time that the County Council first become aware of the existence of a defect (i.e., if the Authority is notified via electronic mail, it first becomes aware of the defect when the electronic mail is opened). This is particularly important in relation to defects which require an urgent response. Because the 24-hour response time starts when the County Council is first informed of the defect by a member of the public, only Customer Enquiry reports that are attributed as emergencies will potentially become Category 1 defects. In relation to defects noted by the highway inspector the 24-hour response time commences from the point that the defect was noted.

### Out of Hours

Defects identified out of normal working hours are reported to the out of hours Duty Officer (Highways) via the call centre, who will respond based on the information provided by the reporter and in accordance with the risk table in the Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice. If insufficient information is available, then the defect will be considered very high risk and the appropriate response made. Provision is made for an appropriate response during non-working days via the out of hours team and/or the Duty Officer (Highways).

The Duty Officer has a guidance document to ensure that they are able to ensure appropriate responses are taken to ensure a safe network.

Timescales are designed to enable highway defects to be, wherever practicable, actioned by a permanent repair. This balances the immediate risk posed to highway users with the ongoing risk that will be posed as a consequence of a failed temporary repair. In some situations, it may be necessary to respond to certain defects as an emergency, responding as soon as possible (within 2 hours).

When action has been undertaken by the out of hours service that requires a follow up, such as a temporary repair, this will be recorded on the Confirm system for follow up by the normal working hours team.

Commented [PC(39)]: Mechanism for reporting defects/incidents OOH ?

Commented [TM(&S40R39)]: Via call centre – duty officer not team.

Commented [PC(41)]: Moving to real time confirm updates

### RECOMMENDATION 17 – CONDITION SURVEYS

An asset condition survey regime, based on asset management needs and any statutory reporting requirements, should be developed, and implemented.

The purpose of highway data collection is two-fold. Firstly, to provide up to date accurate and reliable data to inform operational decisions. Secondly, to co-ordinate the required data gathering to ensure that funding decisions are informed by appropriate, current, and reliable data.

The condition data collection strategy utilises a range of survey types that are either machine based or interpretive, based on a visual engineering observation of whole streets and routes either by high-definition video or on-site survey. The network hierarchy has a large part to play in the selection of survey method and the subsequent maintenance strategy.

Commented [WD(42)]: Refer to frequency for pavement condition surveys/SCRIM etc if not elsewhere in HIAM?

Commented [TM(8&S43R42)]: Will be covered in the individual asset volumes.

### 3.9. MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, RECORDING AND MONITORING OF INFORMATION

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18 – MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS AND CLAIMS**

Records should be kept of all activities, particularly safety and other inspections, including the time and nature of any response, and procedures established to ensure efficient management of claims whilst protecting the authority from unjustified or fraudulent claims.

Inspection information, maintenance activities and correspondence regarding enquiries are recorded in the Confirm asset management system. These records are utilised for performance monitoring and in the investigation of claims. The procedures for dealing with claims managed within the Council's Insurance Services team include activities to detect and prevent unjustified and fraudulent claims.

Oversight of the systems and processes is provided by the Insurance Claims Delivery Project Team (DPT) which consists of key staff from the county council's insurance, highways and claims teams and the infrastructure partner Amey.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 19 – DEFECT REPAIR**

A risk-based defect repair regime should be developed and implemented for all highway assets.

During a safety inspection, where a defect is observed that may be considered a risk, details are recorded, and a risk assessment undertaken. This information is recorded in the asset management computer programme system Confirm. The risk assessment will determine the time

scale for potential repair that is detailed in the risk matrix detailed in the SCC Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice.

All other issues identified are either added to the respective works programme or monitored at future inspections.

### 3.10. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

#### **RECOMMENDATION 21 – CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

The effects of extreme weather events on highway infrastructure assets should be risk assessed and ways to mitigate the impacts of the highest risks identified.

In July 2019 the Council declared a climate change emergency to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 across every aspect of our service provision and estate.

To demonstrate a commitment to taking action to reduce climate change impacts we have released a Climate Change Strategic Development Framework and climate change action plan outlining how we are to tackle the council's emissions now and in the future.

The climate change action plan includes a number of highway related actions including reviewing street lighting operation and energy, reviewing fleet operations, reviewing grass verge maintenance, flood management and increasing tree cover.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 22 – DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE**

Drainage assets should be maintained in good working order to reduce the threat and scale of flooding. Particular attention should be paid to locations known to be prone to problems, so that drainage systems operate close to their designed efficiency.

The highway drainage system in Staffordshire is designed to take water away from the road surface. We have a total gully asset level of in the region of 165,000 gullies, therefore, associated works are prioritised accordingly.

We operate a cleaning schedule to routinely clean the gullies throughout Staffordshire, using data collated in recent years the frequency of the cleansing is determined by the silt levels readings and road classification.

In addition to a routine cleaning schedule, ad-hoc cleansing operations take place 1 to 2 days a week in targeted locations based on risk assessed priority.

Other drainage asset such as trash screens are on designated cyclical inspection and cleansing regimes.

### **RECOMMENDATION 23 – CIVIL EMERGENCIES AND SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PLANS**

The role and responsibilities of the Highway Authority in responding to civil emergencies should be defined in the authority's Civil Emergency Plan. A Severe Weather Emergencies Plan should also be established in consultation with others, including emergency services, relevant authorities, and agencies. It should include operational, resource and contingency plans and procedures to enable timely and effective action by the Highway Authority to mitigate the effects of severe weather on the network and provide the best practicable service in the circumstances.

Detailed information on Staffordshire's approach to planning for and dealing with civil and severe weather emergencies can be found on the authority's website

Emergencies that may affect Staffordshire include flooding, severe weather, major transport accidents, industrial accidents, outbreaks of disease including flu pandemics and terrorist incidents.

To prepare for possible emergencies within the county the authority will:

- assess local risks in order to identify what needs to be planned for
- write and review emergency plans
- train and exercise with other key organisations to enhance the management of an emergency
- ensure that Staffordshire County Council has plans in place to deliver important services to the public during an emergency.

The County Council also helps to support the emergency services and other organisations with their emergency response in a number of ways:

- arranging emergency accommodation should members of the public be evacuated from their homes
- providing emergency transport to move members of the public from the scene of an emergency to a safe location

- co-ordinating services that the County Council provides which are required as part of the emergency response
- contributing to the running of assistance centres. Assistance centres will be set up in the aftermath of a major emergency to act as a focal point for information and assistance to families and friends of those missing, injured or killed, and to survivors
- providing information to the public
- providing advice and assistance to major sporting venues to ensure that they are prepared for emergencies
- providing guidance to Parish Councils and other community groups, to help communities prepare for emergencies
- providing emergency planning guidance to schools.
- Facilitating community self-help during flooding events- Marchington flood warden's scheme

The County Council provides this as a key partner of the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF)<sup>18</sup>, which is a partnership of local agencies engaged in resilience and response.

#### **Recommendation 24 – COMMUNICATIONS**

Severe Weather and Civil Emergencies Plans should incorporate a communications plan to ensure that information including weather and flood forecasts are received through agreed channels and that information is disseminated to highway users through a range of media.

The County Council uses its web pages, along with social media platforms, local radio, and television stations to communicate information updates and advice when disruptions occur. This takes the form of both self-service, whereby people can check for information themselves, or sign up for updates as required.

#### **Recommendation 25 – LEARNING FROM EVENTS**

Severe Weather and Civil Emergencies Plans should be regularly rehearsed and refined as necessary. The effectiveness of the Plans should be reviewed after actual events and the learning used to develop them as necessary.

The County Council is a key partner of the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF), The strategic aim of the Local Resilience Forum is to establish

<sup>18</sup> [Staffordshire Prepared - Staffordshire LRF](#)

and maintain effective multi-agency arrangements to respond to major emergencies, to minimise the impact of those emergencies on the public, property and environment of Staffordshire and to satisfy fully the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act<sup>19</sup>. Knowledge is shared across the forum, especially post event.

#### **Recommendation 26 – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

A performance management framework should be developed that is clear and accessible to stakeholders as appropriate and supports the asset management strategy.

#### **Recommendation 27 – PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The performance of the Asset Management Framework should be monitored and reported. It should be reviewed regularly by senior decision makers and when appropriate, improvement actions should be taken.

The County Council monitors its service levels through a range of performance indicators which are routinely reported to senior management for review. These indicators are managed through the Authority's performance management system with the associated data being produced from the asset management systems and external sources such as NHT.

Continual service reviews through monthly development project team meetings are an integral part of the strategic partnership with outturn performance Indicators reported to the Operational Commissioning Board on a monthly basis along with actions required and/or implemented as a result of any under-performance.

Operational Commissioning Board (OCB) comprises of Staffordshire County Council and Amey senior leadership team; its primary objective is to lead the performance of the services and contractual requirements involved in providing the services to enable the Partnership to meet the outcomes. It considers issues raised through the Delivery Project Teams (DPT) and disseminates decisions back. DPTs deliver the services and enable the partnership to meet the outcomes whilst achieving best value for the county council. The partnership is monitored at a number of board levels through a suite of key performance and operational performance indicators.

<sup>19</sup> [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

### 3.11. FINANCING OF HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE

#### **Recommendation 28 – FINANCIAL PLANS**

Financial plans should be prepared for all highway maintenance activities covering short, medium- and long-term time horizons.

Highway maintenance and services are developed, delivered, and measured through a Forward Programme and Annual Plan. These plans will both inform and be prepared in line with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy with the aim of delivering its long-term objectives.

This Plan sets out how the risk to highway users is managed in a robust and cost-effective way and the Council can demonstrate a thorough and reasonable system of inspection and repair, whilst delivering on the wider objectives across all assets, as expressed through this HIAMP and other related policies and plans.

Maintenance in local highway authorities is funded through a combination of capital and revenue funding. Capital funds come in part via the local highway's maintenance block funding from DfT while revenue comes from MHCLG. There is a consensus about the need to invest in infrastructure, including local highways maintenance with a long-term perspective. It is the uncertainty of future funding which hinders the authority in its medium to long term financial planning.

#### **Recommendation 29 – LIFECYCLE PLANS**

Lifecycle planning principles should be used to review the level of funding, support investment decisions and substantiate the need for appropriate and sustainable long-term investment.

Through our highway asset management planning we develop specific lifecycle plans for major assets that detail how we will collect information about condition and then utilise, when resources allow, a system of planned interventions designed to preserve, maintain and enhance our highway assets. This will take account of the following factors:

- Minimising whole-life cost and maximising cost/benefit
- Risk-based approach
- Network priorities and policies set out in the Local Transport Plan and service level plans.
- Agreed levels of service

- Carbon reduction measures

When allocating resources and the delivery of planned interventions across highway assets, we will use the standards and risk-based approach outlined in this plan to deliver, as a minimum, maintenance activities with the intention of maintaining the highway and maintaining highway safety in a reasonably practicable way. To ensure that the Council meets its duty towards the maintenance of the highway across its full extent it is essential that resources are directed towards the highest priorities and deploy the most effective ways to address these. This plan seeks to address this issue through a risk-based approach.

### 3.12. PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMING

#### **Recommendation 30 – CROSS ASSET PRIORITIES**

In developing priorities and programmes, consideration should be given to prioritising across asset groups as well as within them.

Staffordshire has a 'Whole Street Approach' strategy in place which aims to consider all assets in terms of lifecycle and condition and to pick the optimum time for works to be carried out whilst looking to consider other assets which may also be in or close to their respective maintenance 'window' and works on these can be brought forward in conjunction with the initial identified works to reduce the scale and frequency of disruption to the public.

We are developing an approach to cross-asset prioritisation which will be utilised to understand the budgetary and maintenance requirements of all highway assets holistically and how best to maintain the network in a safe, reliable and sustainable manner.

#### **Recommendation 31 – WORKS PROGRAMMING**

A prioritised forward works programme for a rolling period of three to five years should be developed and updated regularly.

All the key asset types have individual work programmes covering more than one year, with support for a 5-year outline programme. The individual asset type maintenance programmes are developed from asset condition data, priorities, and budgets, resulting in a single year detailed programme of work and indicative future programmes for further years.

Co-ordination of these programmes relies on reviews of work planned for the year, finalised after the Council budget setting process. The adoption of a longer-term work programme supports greater efficiencies in co-ordinating works on the highway. In addition, it facilitates the identification of more cost-effective solutions.

### 3.13. SUSTAINABILITY AND HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Recommendation 32 – CARBON**

The impact of highway infrastructure maintenance activities in terms of whole life carbon costs should be taken into account when determining appropriate interventions, materials, and treatments.

Sustainability is a key part of the Council's vision. A four-year plan to reduce the county council's carbon emissions to help tackle climate change and support the authority in achieving a net zero carbon target by 2050 has been launched.

The plan sets out a series of actions up to 2025 to cut carbon further, improve air quality, reduce waste, improve the natural environment, and support people in changing their behaviour to become more environmentally friendly.

The delivery of highway maintenance is undertaken in accordance with good environmental management procedures outlined in the plan so as to minimise environmental impact and sustain Staffordshire's biodiversity and character.

In the selection of materials, and treatment, the environmental impact is considered. We aim to maximise the environmental contribution and sustain the county's biodiversity, character, and heritage by the adoption of good environmental management procedures in highway maintenance works.

Whilst most works are undertaken in accordance with approved works specifications, it is recognised that this should not limit the Council's ability to promote Environmental Sustainability. We promote value and innovation to drive continuous improvement. In each case departures from the approved standards will only take place following an assessment of risk, and with approval of the Highway Asset Manager and Asset Management Delivery Project Team.

#### **Recommendation 33 – CONSISTENCY WITH CHARACTER**

Determination of materials, products and treatments for the highway network should take into account the character of the area as well as factoring in whole life costing and sustainability. The materials, products and treatments used for highway maintenance should meet requirements for effectiveness and durability.

The overall street characteristics in conservation and other areas is important to maintain the heritage of a local area and its visual appearance and character. This can be tied to local street attributes, types of asset and materials used. Wherever possible, materials are maintained like for like in such areas with any changes being highlighted though the project control measures. This may involve consultation and incorporating defined requirements from other bodies or local considerations.

The priority for Staffordshire is to have a safe system of roads for the travelling public to use. If there is a conflict between safety and conservation, safety will be given a higher importance.

**Recommendation 34 – HERITAGE ASSETS**

Authorities should identify a schedule of listed structures, ancient monuments and other relevant assets and work with relevant organisations to ensure that maintenance reflects planning requirements.

Staffordshire has a diverse range of historic landscapes, buildings, settlements, archaeological sites, and monuments which reflect the county's own distinct character. The historic environment provides a sense of identity and belonging for its communities, is a valuable resource for education and enjoyment and can also be seen as a force for regeneration in Staffordshire.

The County Council's Historic Environment service is responsible for providing advice and guidance on the management and conservation of Staffordshire's archaeology, its historic buildings and its historic landscape. It is also responsible for the management and development of the Historic Environment Record.

The Historic Environment Record<sup>20</sup> can be accessed online via the Heritage Gateway website. Some information is also available through these maps.

Commented [WD(44)]: Worth inserting a footnote with a link to the page on the website? [Historic Environment Record - Staffordshire County Council](#)

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<sup>20</sup> [Historic Environment Record - Staffordshire County Council](#)

SCC maintains an inventory of its 'structures' with particular attention to bridges that are either national monuments or are Grade listed.

**Recommendation 35 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, NATURE, CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY**

Materials, products, and treatments for highway infrastructure maintenance should be appraised for environmental impact and for wider issues of sustainability. Highway verges, trees and landscaped areas should be managed with regard to their nature conservation value and biodiversity principles as well as whole-life costing, highway safety and serviceability.

This HIAMP recognises the benefits of choosing appropriate materials and techniques to cause least impact to the environment, to be able to cater for increasingly adverse weather conditions as well as minimising whole life costs and improving safety and serviceability.

**Recommendation 36 – MINIMISING CLUTTER**

Opportunities to simplify signs and other street furniture and to remove redundant items should be taken into account when planning highway infrastructure maintenance activities.

Staffordshire work with local planning authorities and developers through the development process, to improve the layout and design of streets, and remove any unnecessary clutter both in connection with new development and publicly promoted projects.

Identifying and removing superfluous or redundant items of street furniture and encouraging the co-location of signs to reduce unnecessary street clutter is routinely undertaken through day-to-day inspection and maintenance activities.

Commented [WD(45)]: Do we need a short decluttering policy as an annexe to the HIAM – copy someone else's! [Surrey Highways Signs Policy - April 2020 \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

Commented [TM(&S46R45)]: Draft developed

## Part 4: Implementing Asset Management Principles in Highways

### 4.1. UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS WE MANAGE

The highway network is made up of a diverse range of assets including around 6,200 kilometres of roads, more than 1,000 structures, 150,000 roadside drains, 475,000 trees, 108,000 streetlights as well as 4,200 kilometres of footways and over 550 traffic signal sites. The replacement value of these assets is estimated to be in the region of £7.5 billion. We understand different assets have different characteristics and so need to be managed differently.

Figure 2 – SCC Key Highway Assets Overview

Our Key Highway Assets at a Glance					
					
<b>Carriageway</b>	<b>Footways &amp; Cycleways</b>	<b>Structures</b>	<b>Streetlights</b>	<b>Traffic Signals</b>	<b>Drainage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6,200km of roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,560km of footway and cycleway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,234 Bridges</li> <li>6 Reservoirs</li> <li>200km of Retaining walls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 115,000 streetlights and illuminated signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>553 Traffic Signal Sites</li> <li>261 Electronic warning signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 165,000 gullies, catchpits, headwalls</li> </ul>

Other assets such as unlit signs, road markings and street furniture are critical to the safe and expeditious movement of highway users around the county, but we have no reliable record of their location or number.

#### 4.1.1. Asset Information

Understanding both our assets and the effect they have on each other is central to effective asset management and informed decision making. We therefore do not consider the asset groups in isolation but as an integrated whole.

The information we need can be broken down into three categories:

- **Inventory and Condition Information**

Commented [PC(47)]: Is it worth saying why ?

Commented [TM(&S48R47)]: Addressed in the individual asset volumes

This data describes the full extent of an asset and can include location, age, size, construction, and details of previous maintenance. Examples of how we collect this data include digitalisation of historic records and data collection exercises included as part of routine maintenance works.

Inventory and condition information helps us to plan maintenance activities and communicate with the public. It also helps us to understand the cost of replacing our assets with equivalent new assets.

- **Performance Information**

This is the data we use to determine whether assets are doing what we need them to do to keep the highway safe, reliable, and meeting the needs of our residents, businesses, visitors, and local communities. Examples of how we collect this data include condition surveys, routine inspections and testing, customer enquiries, third party claims, records of damage to highway assets, traffic flows and energy bills.

This data helps us to understand where we need to carry out maintenance activities, where our assets are going to need replacing now or in the future and where we need to think about changing, adding, or removing assets. It also helps us to understand the cost of replacing an asset with its modern equivalent, less deductions for all physical deteriorations.

- **Financial Information**

This is the data we use to assess cost: for example, how much it will cost to maintain or replace an asset or how much it will cost to deliver a certain level of service.

#### 4.1.2. Collection of Asset Information

We continually collect information about our new, replacement and improved assets. It is important that the data we collect is accurate, reliable, and useful but data collection can be expensive. We therefore take a risk-based approach to the collection of information, prioritising high risk assets and information that will support our approach to asset management.

The quality, appropriateness and completeness of our asset data are reviewed regularly by our asset custodians, as part of the Asset

Information Plan, to ensure that it fully supports our approach to asset management.

#### 4.1.3. Storage of Asset Information

We store all collected asset data, for each asset group, in an appropriate asset management system in a cost effective and appropriate format to ensure it is readily available to those that need it. Effective asset management relies on systems that can be used to support decision making at all levels.

Our asset inventory, condition and defect data are currently stored and interpreted in a number of ways.

**Table 2 – Highway Asset Management Systems**

Asset Group	Systems Used
Carriageways and Footways	Confirm, WDM Manager, Horizons. Gaist AssetView
Drainage	Confirm
Bridges, Tunnels & Highway Structures	Confirm
Street Lighting	PFI provided
Intelligent Traffic Systems	Information Management for Traffic Control (IMTRAC)
Soft Landscape	We do not electronically record details of this asset
Safety Barriers	We do not record details of this asset
Unlit Signs, Lines & Cats' Eyes	We do not record details of this asset
Street furniture	We only record a very small proportion of this asset

The systems that we use are also regularly reviewed and monitored by Asset Custodians through the Asset Data Management Strategy. This enables us to ensure that they are providing reliable information in a format that can be used to inform the delivery of our highway maintenance, renewals, and improvements effectively.

#### 4.2. LIFECYCLE PLANNING

The objectives of lifecycle planning are stated by the UK Roads Liaison Group in the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance as:

- Identify long term investment for highway infrastructure assets and develop an appropriate maintenance strategy.
- Support decision making, the case for investing in maintenance activities and demonstrate the impact of different funding scenarios.
- Predict future performance of highway infrastructure assets for different levels of investment and different maintenance strategies

Lifecycle planning has been undertaken as part of the development of the Asset Management Strategy and provides an outline of the long-term plans and funding requirements for the key asset groups (carriageways, footways, structures, street lighting and signals) to maintain the required levels of service at the lowest whole life cost.

The County Council has undertaken considerable investment in systems and surveys to collect and manage inventory and condition information on the carriageway and this data is utilised to:

- Assess the long-term funding requirements for the maintenance of the network.
- Assess priorities for required maintenance.
- Develop the programme of maintenance schemes.
- Design detailed treatments for the H1 and H2 network.

SCC has reviewed and evaluated various options to assist with lifecycle planning. Following detailed evaluation of options, the county council decided to build upon its existing systems and processes for deterioration and budget modelling which are also utilised for scheme identification, evaluation, and prioritisation.

Building on past experience of in-house deterioration modelling and following the principles of the HMEP Toolkit and other lifecycle planning options, current and historic condition data is used to develop local deterioration curves for all carriageway classes.

Commented [WD(49): Is this current or aspiration?

### 4.3. FORWARD WORKS PROGRAMMES

Forward works programmes provide an effective and efficient way of delivering maintenance, repairs, and improvements. They enable prioritisation and optimisation of schemes to meet available budgets.

Developing a works programme is a seven-stage process:

Commented [WD(50): Need to add in Member /key stakeholder engagement to this process – this is key and will be even more so in future as a result of investment. It probably sits part of stage 3 & 4.

#### 4.3.1. Identification

Potential schemes may be identified from a range of sources including inspections, surveys, local knowledge, customer enquiries, complaints, risk

and wider transport or corporate objectives. These schemes are collated into an initial works programme for each asset group.

#### 4.3.2. Prioritisation

The following things are considered when prioritising schemes:

- the maintenance hierarchy of the road
- the safety of road users
- the impact on the movement of traffic if the asset fails
- value for money
- the cost of bringing forward or delaying works
- the lifecycle cost of our highway asset
- the impact on future use of the highway
- the environmental impact
- the impact on the community including damage to property or impacts on local businesses
- integrate all modes, especially active travel, and support modal shift
- local development plans
- planned and potential utility and third party works

**Commented [WD(51):** Perhaps strengthen the LTP link. Modal shift/sustainability and then check that this is adequately covered in the prioritisation process? This also provides opportunity to bring in local plans/developments etc or at least strengthen it.

#### 4.3.3. Selection

A candidate lists of schemes for each asset group are combined, costed, and listed in priority order. A notional "cut off" point is then determined by totalling up the cost to the point where the budget is fully utilised.

#### 4.3.4. Member Engagement

In order that local priorities are reflected in the planned maintenance programme the candidate list will be consulted on with Local Committees so that members have sight of current and future years work programmes and can prioritise schemes with a particular local importance.

#### 4.3.5. Programming & Optimisation

Selected schemes are optimised within the works programme, based on many factors including deliverability. This is done by coordinating or combining works to minimise both cost and disruption.

Utility companies are a key consultees to manage not only short term and mid-term co-ordination but to also determine where utility companies may have assets that are towards the end of their life but not programmed for replacement at that time.

#### 4.3.6. Approval

Cabinet members will be asked to approve the Highways Capital Programme each year.

**Commented [PC(52):** Might be worth checking scheme of delegation

#### 4.3.7. Delivery

Finally, a multi-year works programme is confirmed and delivered from the available budget.

We publish our programmes of work on our website, so that members of the public can see where and when we plan to do works.

The Forward Works Plan is currently focused on the carriageway asset group, with a developing footway, drainage, structures, and traffic signals programme. The remaining assets comprising asset such as vehicle restraint systems are being identified and the business case developed for them to be surveyed in time.

The Forward Works Plan will:

- Provide a work bank that can be prioritised in the Council's annual service/works plan within the available budget
- Show the individual asset group and collective works required over the 1, 3 and 5 years forward works plan
- Identify the levels of backlog present
- Show how the backlog will continue to grow if expenditure does not meet the plan requirements
- Enable the timescale of the plan to be adjusted to best tackle the maintenance required to reduce the backlog and provide the agreed Levels of Service.

The prioritisation of the schemes identified within the forward programme will be determined annually by available budget, condition, and risk.

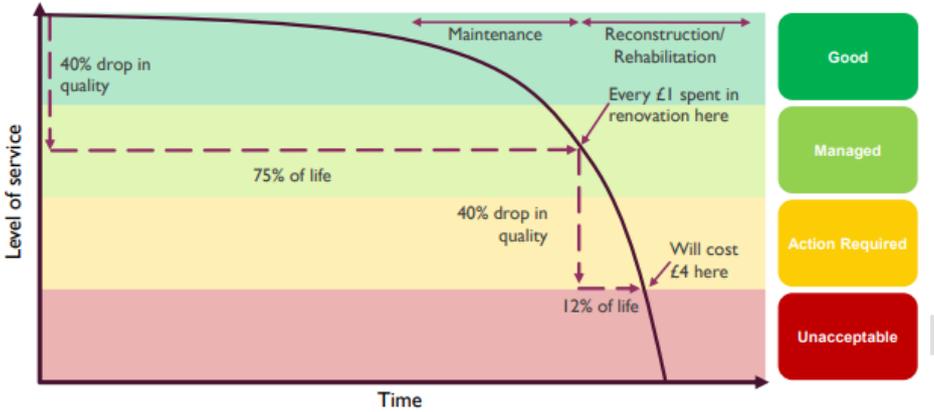
#### 4.4. The Right Intervention at the Right Time

In line with Staffordshire's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy, the authority is committed to an asset management approach encompassing the benefits of whole cost life cycle ensuring the most effective and efficient use of the available highway budget to ensure the appropriate treatment is utilised at the right time, focussed on preventative work and prioritising high risk safety defects for repair.

Preventative maintenance by surface treatments early in the life of a road is significantly more cost effective (typically £5-£10 sq./m) than allowing roads to deteriorate to the point where they require replacement (£40-£100/sq./m) or continuous repairs to potholes.

Figure xx below illustrates how effective asset management and early treatment can significantly extend the life of the asset and is a fundamental part of the County Councils Highway Infrastructure asset management.

**Figure 3 – Highway Asset Lifecycle**



The use of preventative maintenance such as surface dressing during the 'managed' life of the pavement, combined with subsequent further treatment can significantly extend the period of time until replacement is eventually required.

Leaving maintenance work until later in the pavements life results in the formation of defects and, replacement of the surface and/or underlying structure at significantly increased cost as noted above. For every £1 spent on preventative maintenance undertaken in the 'managed' stage of a pavements life it will cost £4 if maintenance is delayed until the asset becomes unacceptable.

**Commented [WD(53):** Insert reference to this as footnote – I think it was from the UKRLG paper but the source was DFT?

**4.5. SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL CHOICES**

**4.5.1. Re-use of Materials**

To facilitate the re-use of materials, specifications will be amended, where technically and financially feasible, to enable the incorporation of recycled material. Traditional materials will, wherever practicable, be re-used, in-situ, or taken up and re-used, or stored for re-use elsewhere.

Traditional materials include York stone, brick paviours, granite kerbs, setts, kidney stone cobbles amongst others.

**4.5.2. Materials Sympathetic to the Environment**

The selection of materials to be used in highway works in conservation areas, will take into consideration the adjacent buildings and surrounding environment.

During normal structural maintenance operations and design of new works, a choice of different types of material is frequently available. Examples:

- Kerbs – choice of colour and material.
- Paving – natural or artificial.
- Surfacing – choice of materials and colours.
- Street lighting – choice of lanterns, light source, column style.

#### **4.5.3. Maintainability**

When selecting materials and surface finishes, it is important to take account of the durability and maintainability of the work in question. The use of 'innovative' materials and surface treatments including coloured asphalt should be avoided where the ability to maintain them in a cost effective and straight forward manner, or the availability of replacement materials is in question.

#### **4.6. MEASURING SUCCESS**

We follow an asset management approach to deliver the following benefits:

- a service that is shaped by the needs of our residents, communities, visitors, and businesses now and in the future
- a service that makes best use of the available resources, maximising efficiency to meet with our legal obligations
- a service that is resilient and able to respond to changes and financial challenges.

It is important that we record and demonstrate that these benefits are being delivered. We can do so at a number of levels and in a number of ways:

##### **4.6.1. Monitoring Outcomes**

We ensure that our approach is being implemented as planned and is delivering the intended outcomes. For example, if our maintenance strategy for roads is to ensure that 85% of our main roads are in good or very good condition, we need to carry out condition assessments to determine whether or not this is being achieved.

By routinely monitoring outcomes and reporting on their delivery we can ensure that we remain focused on the needs of our residents, businesses, visitors and communities, meeting with our legal obligations and

responding to changes and financial challenges. Whilst our approach to highways asset management and our forward works programme should be considered multi-year activities, the delivery of outcomes is reviewed and reported on annually through a number of channels.

#### **4.6.2. Performance Measures and Targets**

We use a range of metrics and targets to monitor our performance against our levels of service and determine how well we are delivering the intended benefits.

Examples of these measures and targets include national indicators such as the Road Condition Indicators which measure the overall condition of our carriageway asset, the percentage of residents satisfied with the highway service, and the number of damage and personal injury claims upheld against us.

By reviewing performance, we can ensure that we are continuously improving the way we work. We routinely review the performance of the service, identify areas where performance is not where we would like it to be and understand why this is the case. Having recognised opportunities for improvement, options to address any issues are identified and implemented. Performance is reported on a regular basis to key decision makers, elected representatives and members of the public.

#### **4.6.3. Benchmarking**

By comparing our service with the services provided by others, we can identify better ways of working at all levels. For example, we might compare the outcomes we are achieving using asset management with the outcomes other councils are achieving. Equally we might compare two of our own services, for example residents might be more satisfied with the street lighting service than they are with the drainage service. By comparing the two, lessons can be learnt, and improvements can be implemented.

We regularly participate in the National Highway and Transport (NHT) Network, a performance improvement organisation that enables members to measure, share and compare performance in order to identify areas for improvement. This is done through a number of key benchmark indicators, divided between six highway and transport themes. Currently over a hundred councils are members of the NHT network.

As well as allowing us to make a year-on-year comparison of public satisfaction with the service we provide it also enables us to compare the levels of satisfaction with our services to those achieved by other councils.

The NHT Network has also developed a consistent way of measuring and comparing efficiency within and between highway authorities. This is achieved in a balanced and objective way by providing a basis for assessment of performance by combining views of customers, from the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey, with quality and cost data provided by each individual member. We can then identify and implement service improvements.

#### **4.7. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

SCC will discharge their maintenance activities within the following framework, aimed at safeguarding and sustaining the environment, and will:

- Work to enhance the quality of the environment by the use of appropriate materials and working practices.
- Maintain a balanced, disciplined and comprehensive approach, to judging the benefits to the community and adverse environmental impact of the maintenance work in question.
- Make systematic reviews of the impact of the County Council's maintenance activities on the environment.
- In considering the achievement of best value, maintenance managers will seek, to balance economic, environmental and social benefits.
- Seek to follow positive environmental policies in managing the County Council's maintenance operations.
- Ensure that, all concerned, are familiar with those aspects of environmental law which are relevant to their work.
- Keep up to date by seeking appropriate education and training in environmental matters.
- Encourage understanding of environmental issues, related to highway maintenance, amongst the communities of Staffordshire.

#### **4.8. COMPETENCE AND TRAINING**

The County Council recognises that competencies and training are critical to the delivery of this plan. Effective management of the highway network requires professional well-trained staff. A competency framework is used to identify the individual competency requirements. All staff will be assessed against this framework as part of the annual review process.

#### **4.9. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

Asset management of highway infrastructure in Staffordshire will continue to develop following publication of this plan. The HIAMP document and its supporting information should evolve as learning is gathered. The delivery of this HIAMP will be overseen by the Operation Commissioning Board (OCB). A report on progress and recommendations for changes to the HIAMP will be provided to the Executive. It is anticipated that the document be formally reviewed at least every three years.

#### **4.10. UNDERSTANDING DEMAND AND EXPECTATION**

##### **4.10.1. Asset Growth**

The quantity of highway infrastructure assets, managed by the council, continues to grow on an annual basis due in the main to the development of land for housing, resulting in the adoption of the highway infrastructure assets. As these are relatively new at the adoption stage, it is anticipated that this additional infrastructure will have little impact on short term funding requirements, but the impacts will increase as the assets age.

Between 2010 to 2020 the highway network grew by 65km's (6.5km's a year) or the equivalent of 700,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional highway maintainable at public expense (HMPE). This level of growth is reflected in other asset groups, for example an additional 1,600 streetlights and 1,500 gullies' have become the responsibility of the authority.

New assets create the need for maintenance, management, and associated funding in future years as these additional assets age.

Across the course of its life for every km of road that becomes maintainable at highways expense the council will have to find £25k. With around 6.5km's per a year becoming HMPE it means an average additional maintenance burden of £162k per year.

##### **4.10.2. User Expectations and Customer Contacts**

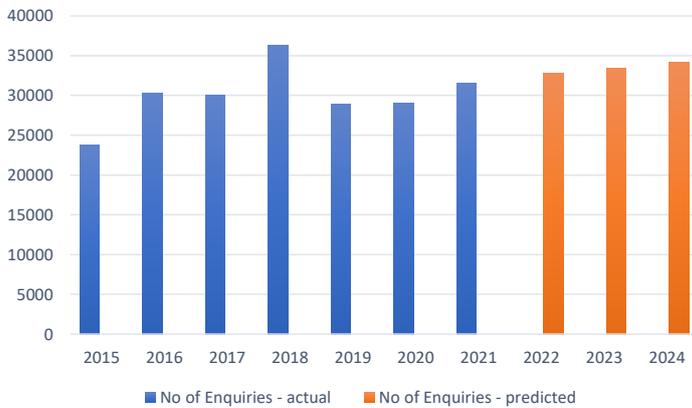
###### **4.10.2.1. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey**

###### **4.10.2.2. Customer Reports and Enquiries**

Users expect the county's highway network to be safe, available and fit for purpose. Customer contacts regarding the majority of enquiries about roads are recorded in the highway maintenance management . Reports and enquiries about street lighting and intelligent transport systems (signals) are separately recorded and are not included in the figures below.

Excluding lighting and signals, the Council received more than 31,500 customer enquiries in 2021 relating to highways operations and structures. Although not all enquiries relate to asset condition, the level of enquiries is indicative of the importance placed on the highway asset. This figure has generally been increasing year on year since 2015 and at the current rate of increase is likely to reach over 34,000 by 2024, an additional 2,500 enquiries compared to 2021 which will place additional demands on the inspection team to respond to what could be the equivalent of over 90 enquiries to respond to each calendar day.

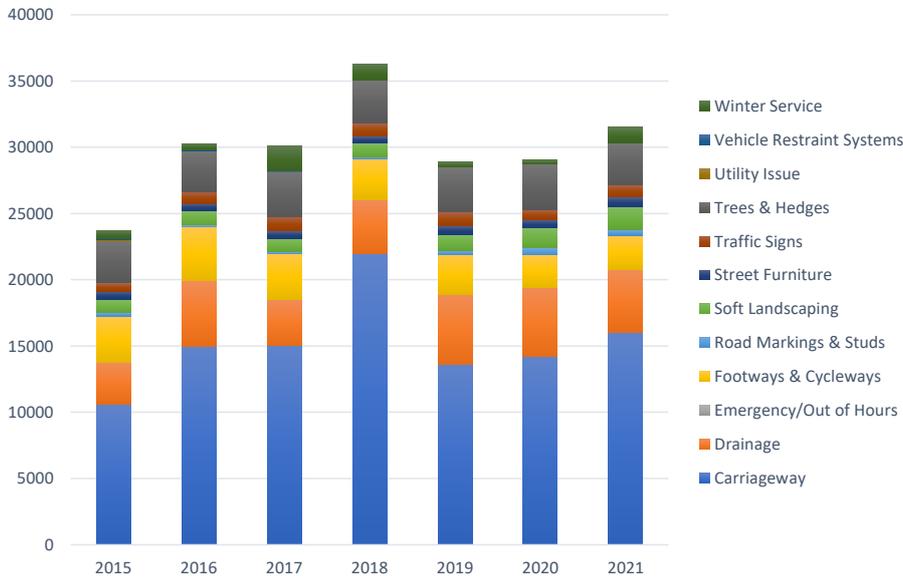
**Chart 1 – Highway Asset Customer Enquiries**



These enquiries provide an insight into the view and preferences of residents. The results of these enquiries have been reviewed as part of the preparation of this plan and a further breakdown is provided against each asset group in Volumes [1] to [13] where available. Further work will be carried out during the life of this plan to refine the reporting categories to improve the insight into each type of asset.

Analysis of results for the last three years indicate that almost eighty five percent of enquiries relate to four asset groups, 50% relate to the county’s carriageways, 14% to with drainage, 10% to footway & cycleway 10% to trees and hedges (10%).

**Chart 2 – Highway Asset Customer Enquiries by Asset Group**



**4.10.2.3. Complaints**

**4.10.3. Traffic Growth**

Traffic growth has placed increasing pressure on the highway network. The average number of cars per household increased by 9% between 2003 and 2019 in the West Midlands<sup>21</sup>.

Much of the Council’s highway infrastructure was not designed to accommodate increasing levels of traffic. This has created a growing need for increased investment in the resilience and maintenance of the network.

The impact of large infrastructure projects also exacerbates the issue, for example, the vehicle movements associated with HS2 in the coming years will increase the rate of deterioration of some of the county’s more vulnerable ‘evolved’ roads.

**4.10.4. Environmental Pressures**

The Council considers how various climate change variables such as intense or prolonged rainfall; hotter temperatures and higher wind speed will impact on the highway assets that we manage and the likelihood of these

<sup>21</sup> [Number of Cars in the UK 2022 | NimbleFins](#)

events occurring. By doing this the greatest generic risks to network closure or restriction can be identified. These are likely to be

- Flooding (pluvial, fluvial, groundwater and coastal)
- Snow
- Landslips
- Scour
- Wind damage
- Heat/water and frost damage

The latest UK Climate Projections, as developed by the Met Office and Environment Agency are used when assessing future risk and vulnerability. These projections for future changes to both average climatic conditions and also the frequency of extreme weather events, allow for an understanding of where risk levels may change, and the identification of new risks which may emerge as the climate changes. When applied alongside records of past incidents, and other information sources (such as flood maps), climate projections may also help to identify when and what action should be taken to adapt to the risks.

In order to ensure uninterrupted availability of the road network, measures need to be taken to increase the resilience of road transport infrastructure to weather extremes and climate change, which should address, in parallel, the other challenges the road maintenance industry is facing, such as challenges around the carbon-neutral strategy.

The main risks to the road surface associated with climate change are, depending on the climate zone, extreme heat and insolation, higher occurrence of heavy rain and temperature fluctuation around the freezing point.

To mitigate the effects of climate change the authority are having to improve our design specification which in turn increases costs. Some of the ways we are doing this are:

- Adjustment of bituminous mixture design which may include using binders with different characteristics to climatic conditions, including polymer modification of bitumen, and the selection of stronger aggregate matrix.
- Increased attention to all maintenance services, like cleaning and maintenance of drainage systems, removing of storm damage, sealing and dusting roads, pruning of brushes and snow and ice removal.
- Replacement of mature trees with more suitable species or with hedges and planting the vegetation at a sufficient distance from the road.

**4.10.5. Risk and Insurance**

2019/20 saw a 6% increase in Public Liability premium followed by a 30% increase in 2020/21, along with an increase with the excess from £250,000 to £500,000. While partially due to market conditions and insurers reviewing their entire Local Authority book, the primary driver is Highways claims.

2021/22 terms have been agreed with insurers with a further increase of 8% for the Public Liability risk. As we have not received any assurances from holding insurers regarding 2022 terms, the decision (with our brokers advice) has been made to go to tender for renewal 1/5/22.

The insurance premium for all SCC public liability related risks 2021/22 is circa £925,000.

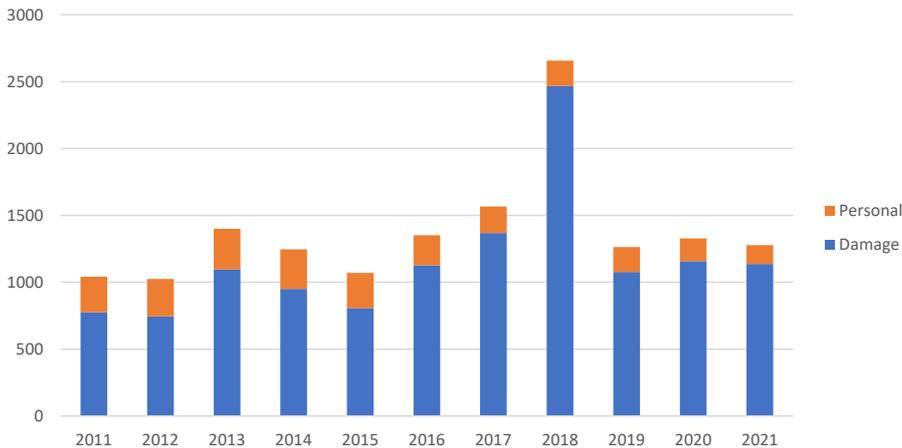
An analysis of claims over the past 5 years shows highways claims account for over 90% of all public liability claims made against the Council.

Claims for incidents on the carriageway account for the largest proportion of highway claims with nearly 90% recorded against this asset group.

Carriageway claims are generally for damage to vehicles caused by potholes. Other assets such as footways, cycleways and trees attract lower number of claims, but these are generally personal injury claims which can be significantly higher in liability value which makes the management of these assets equally as important.

Commented [PC(54): Add value of PD/PI per year ?

**Chart 3 – Highway Asset Claims – Damage vs Personal Injury**

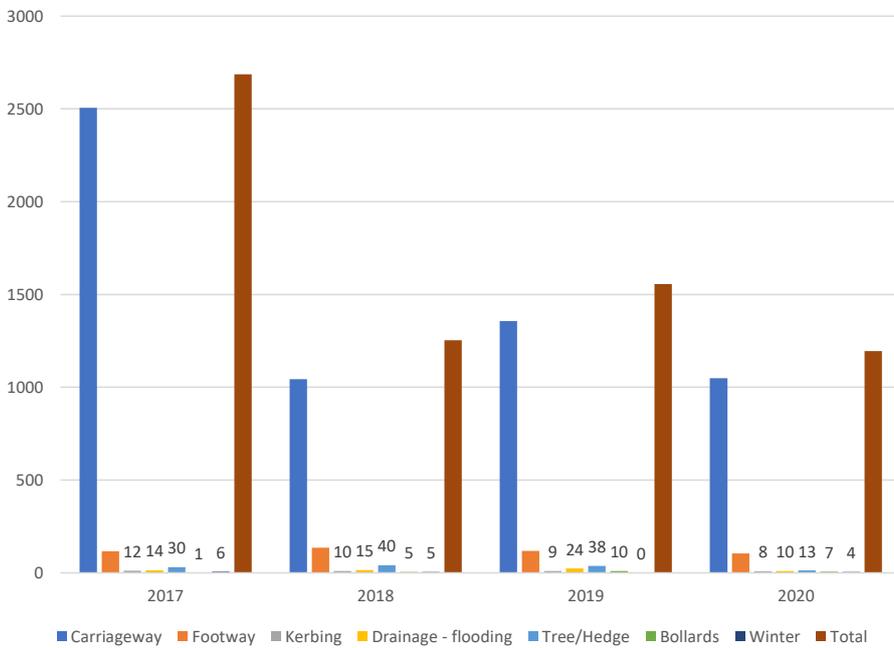


The average value of a personal injury claim is £4,945 whereas the average value of a damage claim is around £295.

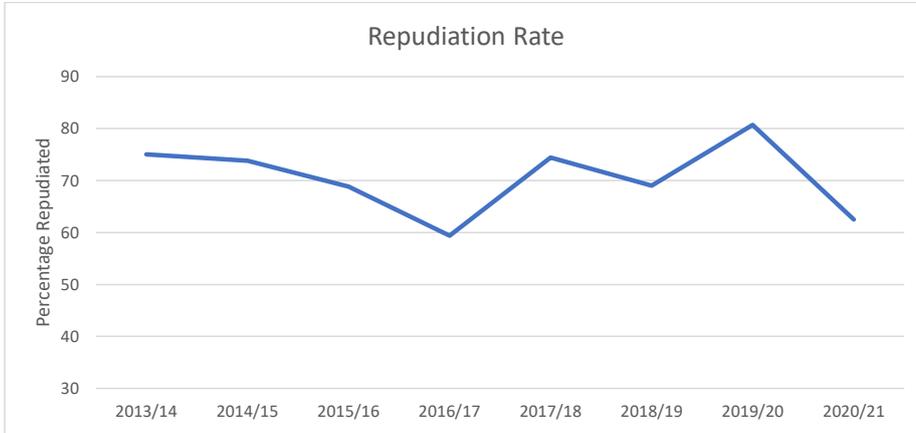
Prior to the Covid related lockdown in 2021/22, claims volumes were at a record high, volumes exceeding those experienced in 2018. Levels did however drop due to the reduction in traffic volumes, an increase in volume has now occurred.

Chart 4 shows the number of highway claims by asset type for each of the last four year.

**Chart 4 – Highway Asset Claims by Asset Group**



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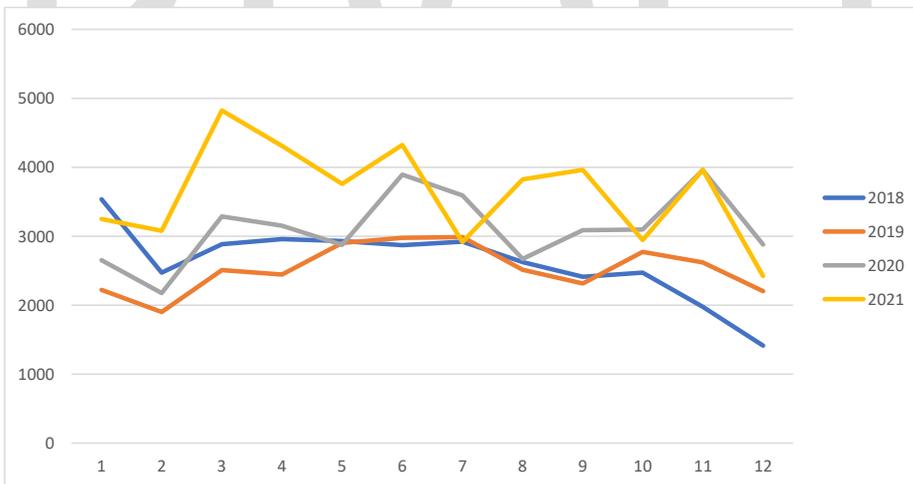


The authority is also seeing an increasing number of notices or potential notices served against it under Section 56 and 130 of the Highways Act 1980 for highways out of repair.

**4.10.6. Jobs**

Chart 5 shows the number of jobs being raised each year since 2018 by month and year.

**Chart 5 – Number of Highway Jobs Raised by Month and Year**

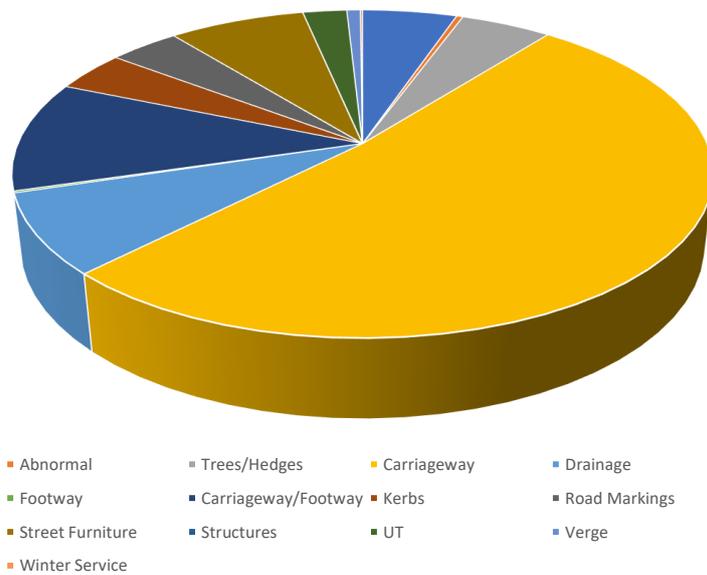


The graph shows that the number of jobs being raised is increasing year on year. The increasing number of jobs is reflective of the increasing

maintenance backlog and the deteriorating condition of highway infrastructure. 12,000 more jobs have been raised in 2021 than in 2019.

Chart 6 below shows that more than 60% of the jobs raised relate to carriageway works.

**Chart 6 – Highway Jobs by Asset Type 2021**



Many of the jobs will relate to reactive defect repairs rather than planned maintenance. In years gone by it was possible to address many of these defects from within existing highway budget, however, given the reduction in the highway maintenance funding such requests are now prioritised and where possible incorporated into the planned maintenance programme. The underfunding has resulted in a maintenance backlog of jobs work stack increasing

If the Council is to provide a service which meets the long-term needs and expectations of the county then a systematic, long-term approach to highways maintenance, needs to be adopted. Evidence suggests that investment should be focused on preventing potholes forming in the first place thereby reducing the number of reactive repairs and inefficiencies. Simply, allotting money in to reducing the 'work stack' of reactive repairs does little to arrest deterioration or improve the overall condition of the fabric of the highway network.

#### 4.11. CROSS ASSET PRIORITISATION

The Council recognise that the current budget allocation is insufficient to manage the existing and growing level of backlog and the demands of a lifecycle planned approach to the maintenance of the Highway Assets.

The existing classified network has been reviewed and a more manageable maintenance hierarchy has been created which reflects the importance of routes and their use and takes a risk-based approach to the allocation of Levels of Service and associated performance.

However, despite taking these actions it remains impractical to rely on individual asset group prioritisation which effectively delivers a bit of everything but not necessarily what is required. For example, the highway network may be better served by prioritising carriageway maintenance by reducing maintenance to structures where the need may be greater but the individual costs higher.

As a consequence, cross-asset prioritisation will be utilised to understand the budgetary and maintenance requirements of all highway assets and how best to maintain the network in a safe, reliable and sustainable manner.

Cross-asset prioritisation relies on each asset owner understanding the maintenance needs of their asset stock and planning how this can be managed as budgets rise and fall to meet the needs of other asset groups.

For e.g., whilst carriageway and footway maintenance accounts for the largest annual expenditure requirements, the replacement of bridge decks, bearings, parapets and supports often represents a significant single asset expenditure requirement in a year.

#### 4.12. THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

Funding for local road maintenance provides good to very good return on investment, with much lower risk than major projects to construct new infrastructure, and the ability to quickly gear up to spend money and generate benefits via "shovel ready" schemes.

Additionally, increased capital investment into the highway network is shown to reduce the revenue burden and increase public satisfaction.

##### 4.12.1. Historical expenditure and funding

Historically, capital maintenance grant falls someway short of the threshold required to achieve optimum whole-life-cost management of carriageways

Commented [TM(&S56)]: DV – Should we mention AM Capital being diverted to support revenue activities?

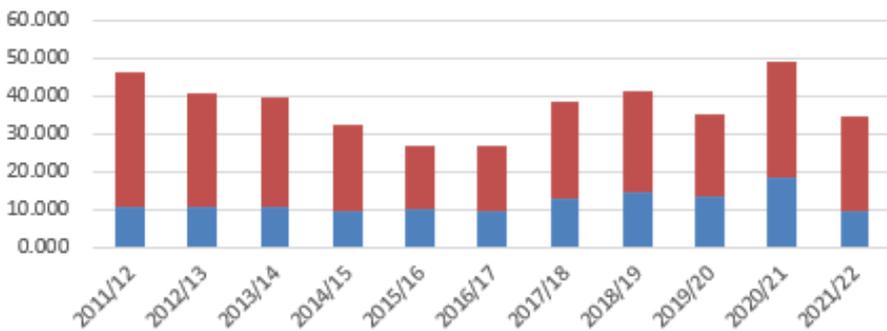
and footways. Since 2009/10 a number of actions have been taken to help address this:

- Between 2009/10 and 2013/14 an extra £50m capital was also invested from the Council’s own reserves
- Between 2017/18 and 2020/21 an extra £21.9m was similarly invested from the Council’s own funds.
- A limited amount of grant funding has been diverted each year from the Integrated Transport Block allocation

The impact of Staffordshire’s HIAMP together with the additional funding from the Council between 2009/10 and 2013/14 was significant. The condition of Staffordshire’s road network (proportion where maintenance should be considered) improved by more than 10% between 2009 and 2015, with the improved durability ensuring that the network was better able to withstand the increasing frequency of wet and cold weather that had a significant effect on road condition across the UK. Subsequent reductions in the level of funding available for asset renewal or preventative maintenance have since resulted in an increase in both the percentage of roads requiring treatment (red plus amber).

As noted above, the highway maintenance service is funded through a variety of sources including revenue, the DfT highway maintenance grant and, additional investment from the County Council. The chart below indicates the total value of the highway maintenance works programme each year (revenue and capital) from 2011/12 onwards. The variable nature of Government funding year on year impacts on the ability of the service and its supply chain to plan and invest in resources and the future workforce.

**Chart 7 – Total Highways Work Programme (£)**



The revenue budget for the highway service in 2021/22 is £29.7m which equates to approximately 5% of the Councils total annual revenue budget.

After commitments including the streetlighting PFI, School Crossing Patrols and a range of statutory functions approximately £11.7m (2% of the Council's total revenue budget) remains for highway maintenance operations. This provides the following functions:

- Winter Service (£3.4m)
- Routine Maintenance of Structures (£0.9m)
- Cyclical Maintenance (Grass Cutting and Weed Control) (£1.7m)
- Gully emptying (£1.4m)
- Reactive Maintenance including Tree Works (£3.3m)
- Safety and routine highway inspections (£0.7m)
- Inspection of Structures (£0.3m)

Carriageway asset modelling in 2019 carried out on behalf of the County Council by Yotta a company who specialise in highway asset modelling for local authorities, estimated that based on the carriageway condition at that time, a network the size of Staffordshire's, required a one-off investment of around £75m to bring it up to target condition followed by £42m/year ongoing to achieve 'steady-state' condition in carriageway condition alone.

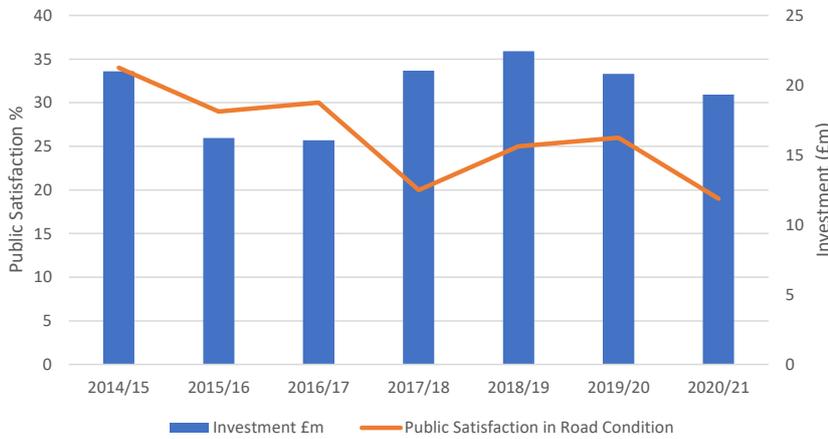
This figure rises to above £50m/year ongoing when taking account of other highway assets such as bridges and retaining walls. Similar condition modelling for structures estimates an average required annual spend on renewals of £6m per year compared to the circa. £2m per year currently allocated via the government grant. This figure excludes other key asset groups such as drainage and footways where other similar information is not currently available.

Clearly the funding provided to local authorities via Central Government grants falls below that required to maintain local roads which is why we make our own investments into Highways.

#### **4.12.2. The Effect of Investment on Public Satisfaction**

Chart 8 shows the correlation between the capital investment in the carriageway asset with the public's satisfaction with the condition of road surfaces as measured by the NHT Survey.

##### **Chart 8 – Capital Investment vs Public Satisfaction**

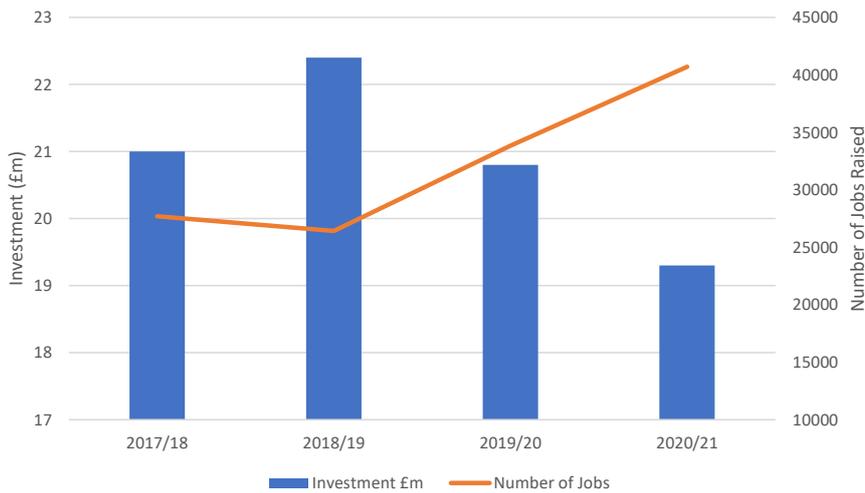


The graph shows a correlation between the level of investment and the level of public satisfaction. When investment increases public satisfaction appears to follow and similarly when investment is reduced public satisfaction decreases.

#### 4.12.3. The Effect of Investment on Reactive Maintenance

Chart 9 shows the correlation between reducing capital investment and an increase in the number of jobs raised, many of which will be reactive maintenance repairs such as potholes.

**Chart 9 – Capital Investment vs Number of Jobs Raised**



The graph shows that as capital funding reduces the amount of reactive type work required to keep the network in a safe and serviceable condition increases.

There are ongoing concerns about the general state of the road network, the backlog of repairs and the cost of bringing these defects up to standard. For example, only 20% of respondents to the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey were satisfied with how Staffordshire deals with potholes and damaged roads.

The public understandably focus on the formation of potholes (or rather what they call potholes) as these are particularly visible. There are numerous other defect types such as cracking, stone-loss, rutting, depressions, loss of texture/grip, etc. that are either indicative of approaching failure/end-of-life or present a more significant deterioration than potholes. These defects essentially make up the estimate of the road maintenance backlog.

**4.12.4. National Policy Objectives**

Contribution of the local road network towards national Government Policy objectives and socio-economic growth.

**Figure 4 – Contribution of the Highway Network to National Policy Objectives**

	Build Back	Decline	Steady State	Gradual Improvement	Accelerated Improvement
Better 					
Healthier 					
Fairer 					
Safer 					
Stronger 					
Greener 					

Key:

**Diminished contribution** to UK Government’s ‘Build Back’ Objectives:

- Significant unplanned service impacts and low level of network resilience
- Low levels of safety and customer satisfaction, causing increased injuries and claims

- Building a large renewals debt/backlog that will take years (5, 10 or more) to address ▪ Loss of experienced people and increase in the skills gap across the industry

**Maintained contribution** to UK Government's 'Build Back' Objectives:

- The service risks are managed through robust and defensible practices
- Reduced service resilience and reliability, with a focus on assets that support the economy such as carriageways and structures; less funding for assets such as footways, cycleways and street lighting
- Lower levels of customer satisfaction with limited focus on customer priorities

**Improved contribution** to UK Government's 'Build Back' Objectives:

- Adequate and acceptable service that is focused on safety, resilience and reliability, with risks being managed through mixture of planned and reactive works
- A broadly acceptable customer experience; reducing complaints and claims
- Increased level of investment in resources, to provide greater capability and capacity

**Enhanced contribution** to UK Government's 'Build Back' Objectives:

- A good/high-quality service that delivers parity across the regions
- High levels of safety, network service, sustainability and customer satisfaction
- Increased level of investment in people and equipment across the sector, supporting the development and adoption of innovations for future network usage, such as mass modal shifts to active travel, electric vehicles and Connected / Autonomous Vehicles

**4.12.5. Outputs and outcomes per asset of accelerated improvement**

Accelerated investment in an asset can provide the following benefits outlined in table xx.

**Table 3 – Benefits of Accelerated Investment**

Asset	What do we get (output)		Example
Carriageway & Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in Potholes</li> <li>Reduction in Injuries/Claims</li> <li>Reduction in CO2</li> <li>Quieter Road Surface</li> <li>Improved Safety</li> <li>Reduce reactive maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Drainage</li> <li>Improved Road Markings</li> <li>Improve Aesthetics</li> <li>Reduction in Backlog</li> <li>Improve network resilience</li> <li>Improved coordination of works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Midlands: £45m invested in carriageways with BCR of 6.51 [91]</li> <li>Norfolk: £10m invested in drainage with BCR of 6.6</li> </ul>
Footway & Cycleway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved condition</li> <li>Improved Aesthetics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in Backlog</li> <li>Reduction in Injuries/Claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commons Library Briefing estimates BCR of active travel investment of 5.6</li> </ul>
Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in unexpected structural failures</li> <li>Reduction in Backlog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in diversions and journey times</li> <li>Reduction in Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portsmouth: £12m invested in bridge replacement with BCR of 114</li> </ul>
Lighting/ITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in unexpected structural failures</li> <li>Increase EV Charging Infrastructure</li> <li>Increase Active Travel Infrastructure</li> <li>Improved safety and security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in LED's / Reduction in OpEX and CO2</li> <li>Connected Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lancashire: £20m invested in LED street lighting with BCR of 4.91</li> </ul>

#### 4.12.6. Investment certainty

The reduction in the highway maintenance grant and short-term settlements from Government causes short- and medium-term issues including, reductions in efficiency and effectiveness in programmes of work and the ability of the supply chain to plan and invest in both their workforce and equipment for the future.

National Highways for example receive a five-year settlement. With the amount of work for major projects such as HS2 in and around Staffordshire starting to increase, there is a risk that local suppliers seek other longer-

term arrangements which would impact on the ability of the service to scale back up following any additional investment.

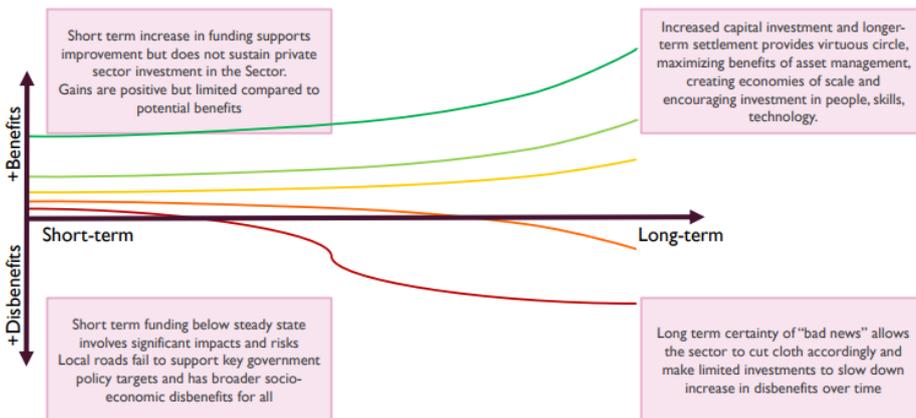
**4.12.7. Summary**

Each of the asset life cycle plans present the future budgets with a forecast of asset condition where available. The asset management approach set out in this plan requires that the demand for funding across all key assets is considered as one. Considering each of the life cycle plans the following observations can be formed:

- The condition of carriageways is forecast to decline over the period of this plan at the expected levels of funding. The carriageway asset represents the greatest value infrastructure asset as shown in Table xx; this presents a significant risk for the asset as a whole.
- The condition of other assets such as footways and traffic signals are also forecast to decline.

Overall, the current budget is insufficient to maintain the asset in its current condition. The majority of the deficit is attributable to the carriageway asset. If appropriate levels of investment in the asset are not made, the levels of service and other outcomes of this plan are at risk. The asset management approach will continue to be developed to update these funding aspirations and the Council will work to identify additional sources of funding to address any deficiencies or to revise its long-term service aspirations.

**Figure 5 – Effects of Long-term Funding**



## Part 5: Managing our Assets

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan covers specific issues and themes regarding highways themselves, and includes the following asset types:

Volume 1 – Carriageways

Volume 2 – Footway & Cycleways

Volume 3 – Drainage

Volume 4 – Structures

Volume 5 – Vehicle Restraint Systems

Volume 6 – Street Lighting and Illuminated Signs

Volume 7 – Intelligent Transport Systems

Volume 8 – Soft Landscapes

Volume 9 – Trees and Hedges

Volume 10 – Signs and Lines

Volume 11 – Heritage Assets

Volume 12 – Street Furniture

Volume 13 – Emergencies and Adverse Weather Events

Volume 14 – Mines, Tips and Quarries

Volume 15 – Land acquired for highway purposes

Volume 16 – General Highway Management

Commented [PC(57)]: VRS ?

Commented [PC(58)]: And lit signage ?

## Volume 1 – Carriageways

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of our 6,200km's of carriageway asset is to enable residents, businesses and visitors to make vehicular and cycle journeys safely and efficiently. To achieve this our road assets need to:

- Transfer vehicle weights from the road surface through to the underlying ground without unnecessary deformation of the road surface.
- Maintain an acceptable level of skid resistance.
- Maintain their structural integrity and maximise their lifespan to provide maximum value for money from investment.

#### 4.1.1. Stakeholder expectations

There are many stakeholders who interact with and are impacted by the condition of carriageways.

Much of the City Council's highway network has evolved over a very long period of time and therefore much of it was not designed or constructed to the standards that would be expected of a newly constructed highway today. As a consequence, many carriageways are less resilient to changing environments and adapt poorly to severe weather events.

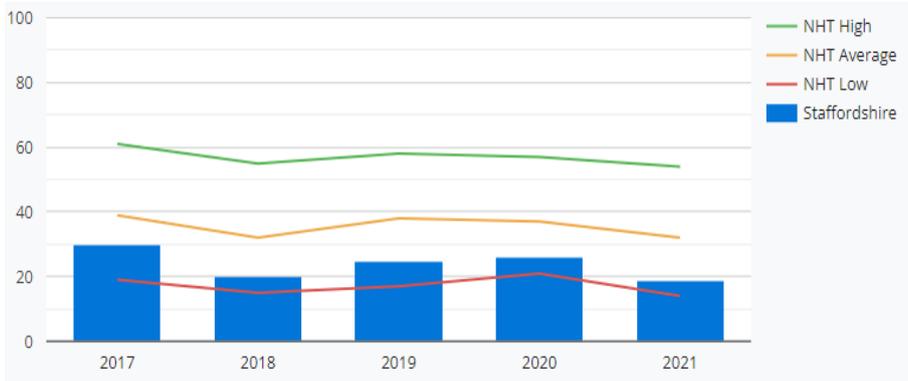
Potholes are one of the public's main local concerns, as they are highly visible defects. They perceive that the quality of local roads may be at risk of deteriorating, with potholes being one of the main causes, alongside the impact of potholes on cyclists and vehicles.

The key messages from the recommendations made in the Government's 'Pothole Review' (published by HMEP in April 2012) were:

- Prevention is better than cure – intervening at the right time will reduce the amount of potholes forming and prevent bigger problems later.
- Right first time – do it once and get it right, rather than face continuous bills. Guidance, knowledge and workmanship are the enablers to this.

#### 4.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

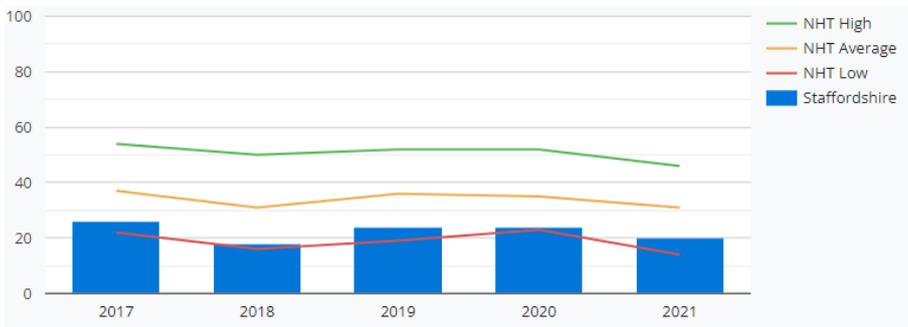
**Chart 10 – Public Satisfaction with the Condition of Road Surfaces**



The survey data shows that public satisfaction with the condition of Staffordshire’s roads is relatively low and well below the national average.

It is a similar picture with how the public perceive we deal with potholes and damaged roads. See Chart 11.

**Chart 11 – Public Satisfaction with how SCC Deals with Potholes and Damaged Roads**

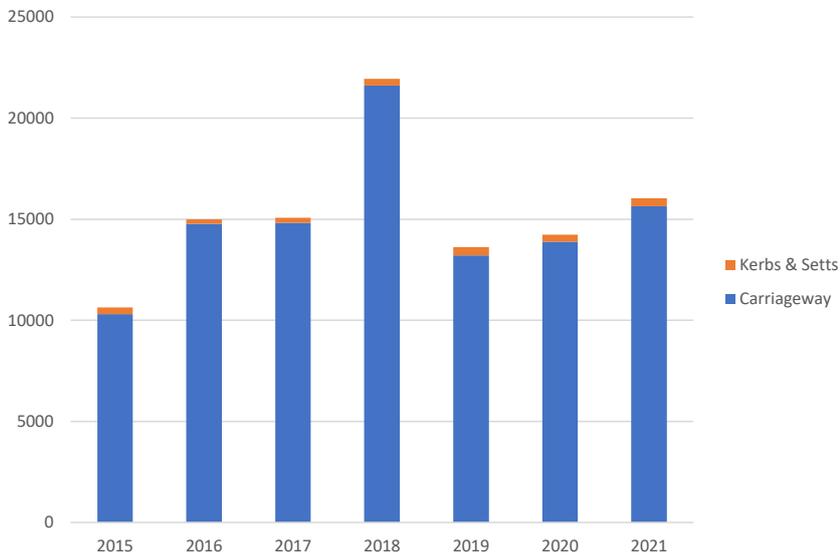


#### 4.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries

Customer enquiries made via 'Report It' are recorded in CONFIRM. On average, since 2015 around 50% of the total highway enquiries made relate to the carriageway including ironwork and kerbs.

Whilst still significantly lower than the peak in 2018, carriageway enquiries are steadily growing with circa. 2,500 more enquiries in 2021 compared to 2019 placing additional demand on the reactive inspection team resulting in an increasing response time.

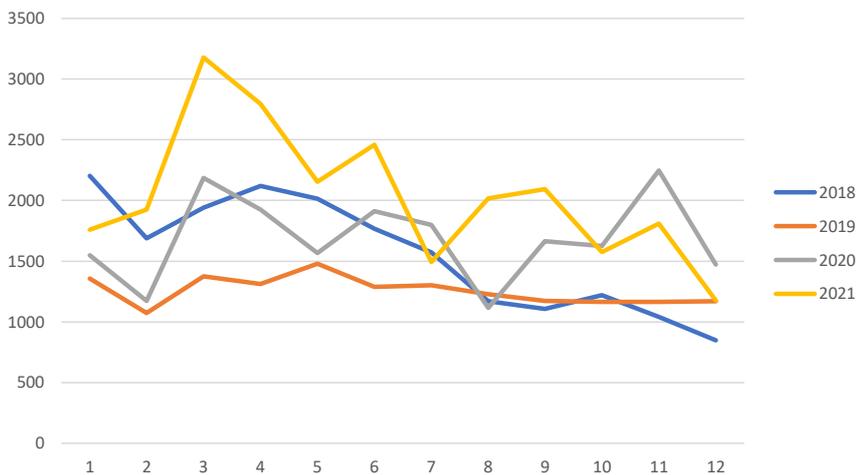
**Chart 12 – Carriageway Customer Enquiries**



#### 4.1.4. Defects

Chart 13 shows that the number of jobs being raised is increasing year on year.

**Chart 13 – Number of Carriageway Defect by Month and Year**



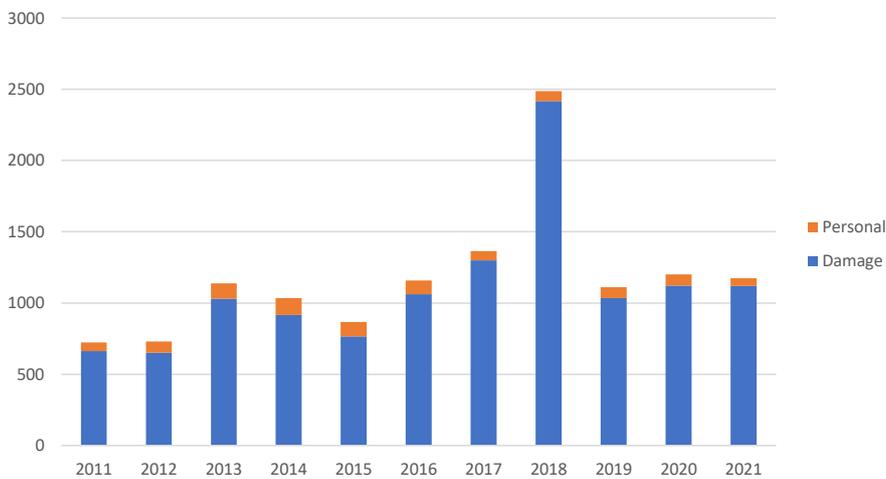
The increasing number of jobs is reflective of the increasing maintenance backlog and the deteriorating condition of the carriageway asset. 9,000

more carriageway maintenance jobs have been raised in 2021 than in 2019 and over 4,000 more than in 2020.

#### 4.1.5. Claims

This data illustrates the variation in the number of claims over the last 10 years. As a claim can be received up to 3 years after the date of the accident, the data will change as further claims may occur relating to previous years.

**Chart 14 – Number of Highway Claims**



## 4.2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

### 4.2.1. Network Hierarchy

Primarily, the carriageway asset network is categorised in terms of type or general purpose of the road as Hierarchies. The definition of the road classifications remains generally unchanged, although in practice the usage and importance of roads does change over time. In accordance with 'Well Managed Highways: A Code of Practice' (2016), SCC have developed a functional hierarchy.

### 4.2.2. Inventory Data

Accurate and up to date inventory of the asset is an important element to good asset management and this will be a continued focus to enhance modelling in future years, as inventory records continue to build and used to support the decision-making process.

SCC maintain inventory data collected through various condition surveys, which has been utilised in the lifecycle modelling process.

#### **4.2.3. Asset Condition**

The carriageway asset is our most significant highway asset and consequently we invest significant resource into understanding its condition and likely future deterioration.

Every year Staffordshire County Council commissions a County wide carriageway and footway condition survey assessment which allows a transparent and accountable data driven process to underpin the selection of schemes across the County.

This year the Council have employed Gaist Solutions Ltd to undertake a high-resolution video survey and processed by their surveyors to generate digital condition data.

The survey examines all adopted public carriageway on a County wide basis. It identifies the condition of the carriageway, the nature of the damage and type of defects which determines the treatment type required.

#### **4.2.4. Data Management**

Carriageway Asset data is held in the Horizons, Confirm, Gaist AssetView and WDM pavement management systems. Horizons is the analysis software aimed at preparing programs of work based on current condition and at forecasting the future condition of a road network by making use of condition projections that are modified by planned interventions. Taken together with assessed costs of interventions, the amount of work required is estimated firstly, to improve the network condition to the prescribed levels and secondly, to maintain the network at or below the prescribed condition threshold for next 10 years.

Confirm is where the day-to-day aspects of carriageway maintenance are recorded.

WDM pavement management system is the software used to manage the local street gazetteer (LSG).

Gaist AssetView is the software that holds the imagery-based condition assessment data.

#### **4.2.5. Applying Asset Management Principles to the Carriageway**

We have excellent condition data on our roads asset, and a good understanding of how the asset deteriorates, based to a large extent on past deterioration rates. The data has been collected over many years. Originally the primary driver for this data collection was to develop evidence-based maintenance programmes; however, due to its comprehensive nature, the data can also be used for lifecycle planning and for modelling the effects of different levels of investment.

Our current pavement management system is Yotta's Horizons. The software presents a significant improvement in our ability to accurately understand and forecast the condition of our road network.

This software enables us to assess the current condition of our road network, to develop works programmes, and to model the effects of various investment strategies on the future condition of our network. Future forecasting and the scheme identification models are intrinsically linked. This allows the outputs from one element to be checked against the other to increase accuracy and confidence in the results.

Horizons selects optimum treatments based on a range of user defined interventions and triggers. When the deterioration of a road, as measured by our condition surveys, reaches predetermined trigger levels, Horizons identifies the most appropriate treatment, and can be used to rank maintenance schemes on either a 'worst-first' or an economic basis. This list is sense-checked on site by our pavement engineers before being used to develop our forward works programme, which also takes into account local needs through liaison with the community highway team.

#### 4.2.6. Maintenance Treatment Options

##### Carriageway Patching and Minor Repairs

Patching and minor repairs will be undertaken to ensure that all highways are maintained in a safe condition, to arrest deterioration and in readiness of a surface treatment.

Commented [PC(1)]: Is this always true, aren't some repairs temporary or semi-permanent ?

##### Carriageway Surface Treatments

Surface treatment in the form of surface dressing with bitumen and chippings will be carried out to give an appropriate riding surface, to seal against water penetration and to reduce collisions caused by lack of adequate skidding resistance. Surface dressing is a cost-effective means by which the surface condition of the road can be maintained to a satisfactory standard whilst enabling the full structural service life of the carriageway to be utilised.

Commented [PC(2)]: Collisions ?

Micro surfacing (also referred to as 'micro asphalt') is a 'surface treatment' for roads. It is laid over the top of the existing surface to seal and protect it. It consists of a water-based mix of aggregate and bitumen which is spread over the existing surface. It can take out minor dips and bumps; restores grip and texture and creates a new, waterproof surface.

Commented [PC(3)]: Aggregate ?

Commented [PC(4)]: Mention structural micro ?

Commented [TM(&S5R4)]: Fina

Structural Micro asphalt is a stronger and more robust treatment and is usually used on busier low speed roads.

Recycling processes usually involve removing the top layers of the old road surface and remixing the material with fresh binder to be re-laid in the same location.

### Resurfacing and Overlay

In areas where patching or surface treatment is not appropriate, resurfacing or overlay will be used to strengthen the carriageway, reduce surface irregularity and improve skid-resistance.

Commented [PC(6)]: Do we want to have theme of ride quality- customer satisfaction ?

Resurfacing or overlay can be carried out as a treatment to restore carriageway condition or as a preventative measure. Intervention at the right time can avoid much more costly reconstruction work having to be carried out later. In general terms, when the annual cost of patching work exceeds one twentieth of the cost of resurfacing or overlay work, then the latter treatments are justifiable. (N.B. This assumes a 20-year design life for the carriageway structure). If the repairs are confined to the surface course, then resurfacing may be sufficient, otherwise reconstruction may be necessary.

### Reconstruction

Reconstruction of the carriageway will be carried out where it would be uneconomic and/or unacceptably inconvenient to the road user to continually undertake repairs to the carriageway.

Maintenance engineers will scrutinise the nature and extent of the required work to determine if an appropriate recycling technique may be used. Wherever a recycling option is technically feasible and will have equivalent engineering properties; and will not cost more than conventional reconstruction techniques, then that option will be adopted.

Commented [PC(7)]: Carbon, do we need to highlight possible extra cost where carbon reduction measures are considered ?

When a carriageway has deteriorated beyond its useful life, the continued need to visit an area to patch the carriageway, is not cost effective and also leads to unnecessary inconvenience to the public. In these cases, partial or total reconstruction works will be carried out, as appropriate, subject to funds being available.

#### 4.2.7. Preventative Maintenance

Preventative maintenance treatments such as surface dressing and micro asphalt are used to preserve and extend the life of roads that are already in a reasonable to good condition.

It is crucial that these treatments are undertaken before serious deterioration has taken place rather than repairing inevitable deterioration through routine and reactive maintenance works and eventually, structural maintenance schemes which cause increased traffic congestion and are much more expensive and time consuming.

If roads did not benefit from preventative treatments, they would require replacement three or four times as often. Most preventative treatment applications are usually completed at each site within the same day although some preparation works might be required beforehand with subsequent lining and cat's eye replacement works following after.

The carriageway preventative maintenance season is from late March or April to September. Footway preventative treatments are carried out all year round and these may take place outside of normal working hours or on restricted working days. All preventative treatments are weather dependent which can affect the length of the working day or when they commence.

#### 4.2.8. Unsurfaced Roads

Although unsurfaced highways historically were used for transporting people and goods, it is widely accepted that they are now predominantly used for recreational purposes. They are also an important asset to the landscape, and often have a historic and wildlife interest.

The maintenance standards applied to the highway network in terms of the level of service and the frequency of cyclic operations are set out in each individual asset volume detailed in part 5 of this plan. However, the management of unsurfaced roads are covered in a specific strategy document as an annex to the HIAMP.

#### 4.2.9. Use of Coloured Surfacing

Coloured surfaces are useful for various traffic management purposes, but they should only be used where their need is demonstrable. Where coloured surfacing is used the future maintenance needs to be funded from the scheme costs or limited time installation agreed.

If it is necessary to provide a coloured surface there are a number of naturally occurring coloured aggregates in the UK that could be used and

**Commented [PC(8):** Commuted sums probably want mentioning for ALL such works and public realm schemes

these provide colours that are not bright and glaring and they could be incorporated in surfacing materials which would have long life and would maintain their colour throughout their lives.

### 4.3. ASSET CONDITION

#### 4.3.1. Asset Condition

The most significant financial investments in highway maintenance will be in repairing, reconditioning and reconstructing carriageways. Condition surveys identify the current condition of the network, and from this condition both long-term and short-term maintenance funding decisions can be made. Repeatable condition surveys allow trend analysis to be used to confirm the original decisions or allow for changes as a result of the changing network condition and inform lifecycle planning.

Frequencies of carriageways/footways/cycleways condition inspections are derived using the principles outlined in Part xxx, of this plan (categorising the network into an appropriate hierarchy) and Section 6 (covering risk-based approach for inspections).

There are a number of types of survey, each providing information from a differing perspective, and which in combination can provide a comprehensive picture of the condition of the asset. SCC undertakes a comprehensive regime of carriageway network level surveys at the following scope and frequencies to assist with:

- Maintenance Scheme Identification and Planning
- Performance Monitoring
- Detailed Scheme Design

The Asset Management Team are responsible for processing and analysing the results of SCANNER, SCRIM, and Gaist surveys to assist them to target and prioritise maintenance.

**Table 4 – Carriageway Condition Assessment Regime**

Survey method	Scope	Inspection Frequency
---------------	-------	----------------------

SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment of the National Network of Roads)	Traffic speed surveys that collect data on transverse and longitudinal profiles, texture and cracking of carriageways. SCANNER surveys are traditionally required for reporting of Data Topic 130-01, "Condition of principal roads" and Data Topic 130-02, "Condition of non-principal classified roads". These surveys are undertaken by a specialist vehicle at traffic speed.	100% of the A, B & C Roads in a single direction each year. 12.5% of the unclassified Network in a single direction each year.
SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine)	SCRIM results are used to identify lengths of road with poor skidding resistance. SCRIM surveys are carried out in accordance with national good practice.	100% of the 'A' road network annually.
Griptester	Griptester is used to identify lengths of 'C' road with poor skid resistance.	Proportion of the 'C' road network
Gaist		

Network surveys such as SCANNER provide regular whole network coverage and are used to target more detailed investigations of provisional treatments, using more detailed project level surveys.

The maintenance of adequate levels of skidding resistance on carriageways is an important aspect of highway maintenance, and one that contributes significantly to network safety.

The majority of our roads are of bituminous construction, of varying age and specification. Many of our unclassified roads have not been designed but have 'evolved' over many years of use, presenting us with particular maintenance challenges.

#### 4.3.2. Monitoring of Skid Resistance

The skid resistance of the highway network is monitored by SCRIM survey. The measurement, and management of the skid resistance of the

highway network is detailed in the County Highways Skid Resistance strategy.

#### **4.4. ASSET INSPECTION**

##### **4.4.1. Safety Inspections**

Our team of highway inspectors carry out visual checks to make sure highway assets are in a safe condition. This includes checking for defects in the road surface that present a safety concern. We carry out this kind of check at least once every twelve months.

The frequency of inspection on each hierarchy of carriageway is detailed in the SCC Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice

#### **4.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

##### **4.5.1. Prioritisation of Investment**

Investment decisions are made based on a robust understanding of their effect on the future condition of the asset and the whole-life cost of maintaining it. Within the funds available for planned road maintenance, we prioritise the works we do to ensure that they will have the greatest benefit, taking a whole-county approach. To do this we consider the condition of each road, the amount and type of traffic it carries, its importance to our economy, and any safety hazards that may be present, as well as the cost of the optimum treatment identified by our pavement management system and its effect on lifespan and the whole-life cost of maintaining the asset.

Where the need for treatment is identified a long list of proposed schemes for the whole of the adopted network is produced. The same process is applied to all schemes to provide an equal assessment across all submissions.

Once a list of schemes has been produced a series of defect data counts are applied. This includes the number of, reported potholes, customer complaints and other unplanned maintenance interventions. Factors which affect the strategic importance, such as gritting routes, bus routes are applied as well as potential risk factors such as footfall and to proximity schools and hospitals.

##### **4.5.2. Accountability**

Having a data driven approach allows any decisions to be made in the HMT to be transparent. The reason schemes have been included in a programme of works can be evidenced by the data used. The use of data

to justify the inclusion of schemes within the capital programme removes the risk of scheme selection through subjective decisions made by officers and stakeholders.

#### **4.5.3. A 'Whole of Network' Approach**

The Scheme Identifier software used by Gaist allows us to gain a much wider appreciation of where works need to be done, and at what scale. Despite best efforts by officers and members it is impractical to have a thorough knowledge of the condition of every carriageway and footway in the County. The use of the video survey and condition generated schemes supplementing stakeholder submissions allows an overview of all carriageways across the whole County.

#### **4.5.4. Carriageway prioritisation value management scoring**

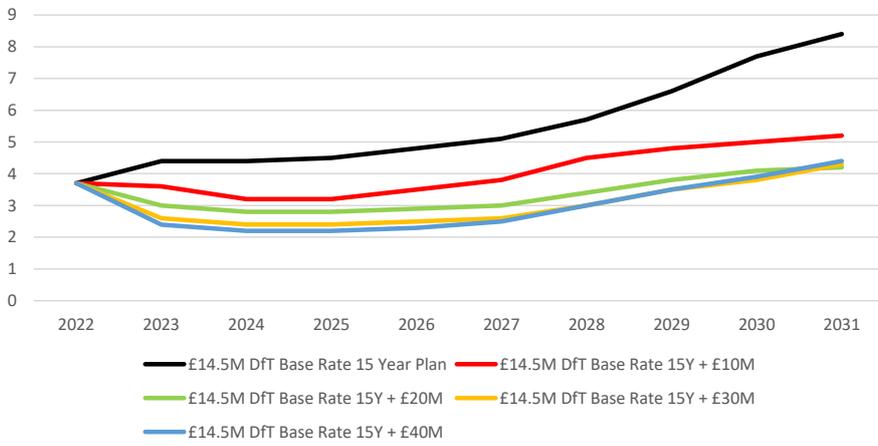
Budget will be split at a ratio determined through deterioration modelling for preventative maintenance schemes and needs based schemes in order to achieve a cost-effective balance of preserving roads that have not yet fully deteriorated and fixing those that have. A long-term programme of work 'Horizon' will be published giving opportunity to achieve efficiency through cross asset priority. Early contractor engagement can then seek to achieve innovative solutions for further cost savings.

Through programme coordination and visibility of future SCC schemes which may affect other key highway asset or major improvement scheme, we adjust its place in the programme so that we can combine activities in order to maximise financial efficiencies.

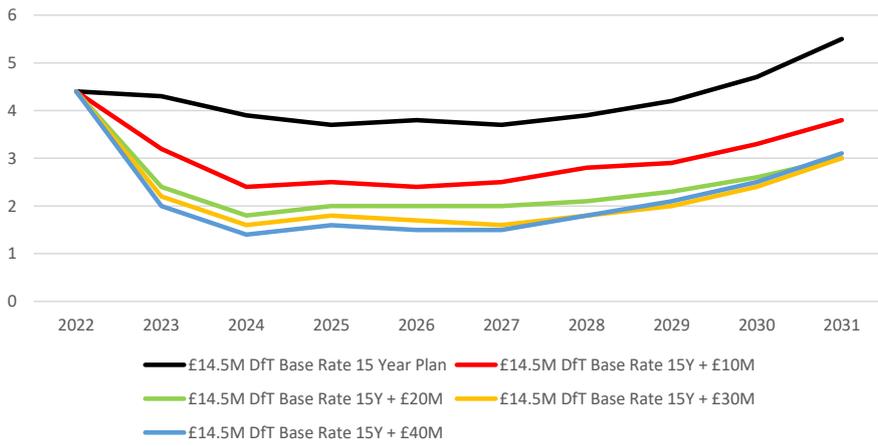
#### **4.5.5. Investment Scenarios**

Five investment scenarios have been analysed using Staffordshire's Asset Management System, Horizons. The below analysis projects the condition impact on the network based on the national indicators over a ten-year analysis period. The five investment scenarios have been presented using the accredited national indicators separately for the A roads (130-01), B and C roads (130-02) and the Unclassified roads (formerly Bv224b).

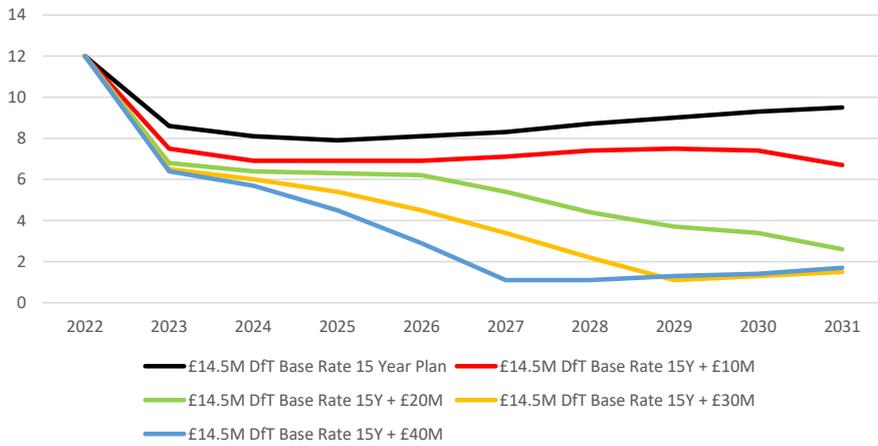
#### **Chart 15 – Investment Options – 'A' Class Roads**



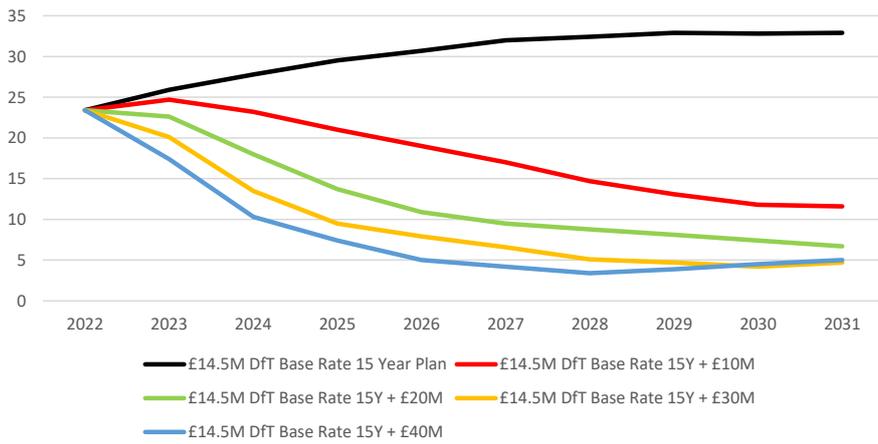
**Chart 16 – Investment Options – ‘B’ Class Roads**



**Chart 17 – Investment Options – ‘C’ Class Roads**

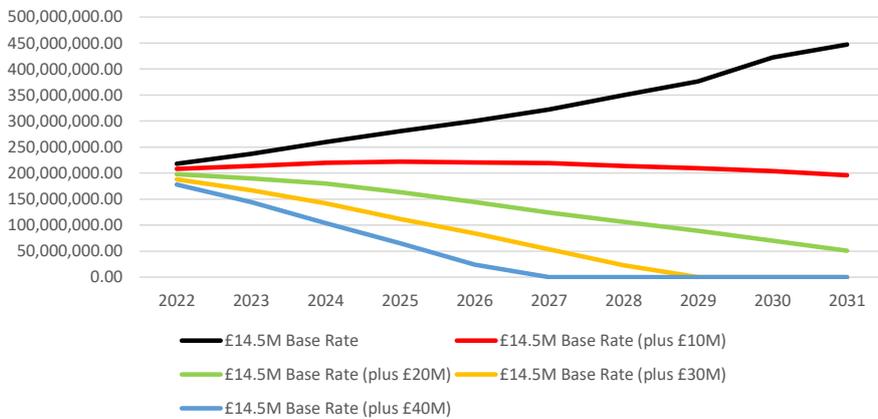


**Chart 18 – Investment Options – ‘U’ Class Roads**



The current estimated spending required to bring the most deteriorated road surfaces into good condition is over £200 million. The projections are based on current investment levels, inflation, deterioration and short-term funding strategies. Increase in backlog is based on ‘Annual Need’ calculations.

**Chart 19 – Investment Options – Carriageway Maintenance Backlog**



#### 4.5.6. Investment Scenarios Summary of Impacts and Benefits

Table 5 – Investment Scenarios Summary of Impacts and Benefits

Investment Scenario	DfT Funding Required (pa)	Other Funding (pa)	Description
<b>1. Decline</b> - investment levels remain at 2021/22 levels	£14.5m	£0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backlog unsustainable and growing by c.£20m per annum.</li> <li>Network condition will decline, will be evident through more defects, claims and a higher reactive maintenance burden.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Steady State</b> - Investment required to maintain a basic highway service	£14.5m	£10m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backlog holds at current level and prevents increase.</li> <li>Condition generally remains as is.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Gradual Improvement</b> - start to address backlog and gradually improve network	£14.5m	£20m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backlog reduces by c.£15m per annum.</li> <li>Reduces risk and starts to move to a more planned/proactive maintenance strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Accelerated Improvement</b> - Accelerate backlog reduction and improve condition	£14.5m	£30m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backlog reduces by c.£25m per annum, removed in 8 years.</li> <li>Evident improvement to asset condition and performance.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Rapid Acceleration</b> - maintenance backlog addressed	£14.5m	£40m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backlog reduces by c.£40m per annum.</li> <li>Rapid improvement in network condition, manageable reactive maintenance burden. Funding potentially available to other assets.</li> </ul>

Based on current funding allocation the deterioration will be managed for now, however this will accelerate in future years if current levels of underinvestment are not addressed imminently.

#### 4.5.7. Work Programme

Forward works programmes provide an effective and efficient way of delivering maintenance, repairs, and improvements. They enable prioritisation and optimisation of schemes to meet available budgets.

Developing a works programme is a seven-stage process:

##### Identification

Potential schemes may be identified from a range of sources including inspections, surveys, local knowledge, customer enquiries, complaints, risk and wider transport or corporate objectives. These schemes are collated into an initial works programme for each asset group.

##### Prioritisation

The following things are considered when prioritising schemes:

- the maintenance hierarchy of the road
- the safety of road users
- the impact on the movement of traffic if the asset fails
- value for money
- the cost of bringing forward or delaying works
- the lifecycle cost of our highway asset
- the impact on future use of the highway
- the environmental impact
- the impact on the community including damage to property or impacts on local businesses
- integrate all modes, especially active travel, and support modal shift
- local development plans
- planned and potential utility and third party works

##### Selection

A candidate lists of schemes is combined, costed, and listed in priority order. A notional "cut off" point is then determined by totalling up the cost to the point where the budget is fully utilised.

##### Member Engagement

**Commented [WD(9):** Need to add in Member /key stakeholder engagement to this process – this is key and will be even more so in future as a result of investment. It probably sits part of stage 3 & 4.

**Commented [WD(10):** Perhaps strengthen the LTP link. Modal shift/sustainability and then check that this is adequately covered in the prioritisation process? This also provides opportunity to bring in local plans/developments etc or at least strengthen it.

In order that local priorities are reflected in the planned maintenance programme the candidate list will be consulted on with Local Committees so that members have sight of current and future years work programmes and can prioritise schemes with a particular local importance.

### **Programming & Optimisation**

Selected schemes are optimised within the works programme, based on many factors including deliverability. This is done by coordinating or combining works to minimise both cost and disruption.

Utility companies are a key consultees to manage not only short term and mid-term co-ordination but to also determine where utility companies may have assets that are towards the end of their life but not programmed for replacement at that time.

### **Approval**

Cabinet members will be asked to approve the Highways Capital Programme each year.

**Commented [PC(11):** Might be worth checking scheme of delegation

### **Delivery**

Finally, a multi-year works programme is confirmed and delivered from the available budget.

We will publish our programmes of work on our website, so that members of the public can see where and when we plan to do works.

### **4.5.8. Other Significant Factors Affecting Carriageway Maintenance**

#### **Utility Works**

Road failures are often also caused or exacerbated by damaged or failed utility reinstatements.

**Commented [PC(12):** And footway ?

Utility companies have statutory rights to lay, maintain and improve their apparatus within our highway network in order to provide water, sewerage, gas, electricity, and telecommunications services to our residents, visitors, businesses and public services. Our role as highway authority is to ensure that these works are coordinated and managed in a way that minimises inconvenience and disruption. The permit scheme commenced in April 2020 and in the 18-month period following its introduction the authority has processed around 29,000 permit applications.

In line with national guidance we also carry out a substantial programme of inspections each year to ensure that our roads are properly reinstated after works have been completed in order to minimise damage to our network.

Notwithstanding our inspection and testing regime, any works which involve cutting into an unbroken and otherwise sound road surface, even if carried out to a high standard, will affect a road's structural integrity. This will accelerate its deterioration and shorten its life, resulting in the need for premature maintenance which increases the pressure on highway budgets. It should also be recognised that many of the highway maintenance issues linked to utility works relate to reinstatements carried out many years ago.

#### **4.5.9. Maintenance of Laybys**

All laybys on HMPE will be maintained to ensure a neat and tidy appearance.

Laybys on such roads are needed and used by the public as essential rest facilities.

Encouraging motorists to use these facilities is important for safety reasons, and the laybys should, therefore, be kept in a condition which will encourage use. The County Council is responsible for verge maintenance, and District Councils for litter bins, litter clearance and cleansing.

#### **4.5.10. HS2**

The construction of HS2 has the potential to have a significant impact on the road network serving the county. The capacity and structural make-up of sections of the road network may not be constructed to accommodate the extra heavy goods vehicular traffic associated with HS2. Work is required to understand the impact of HS2 on the County's road network and wider regional highway network.

Commented [PC(13)]: Use construction or HGV to further illustrate point ?

#### **4.5.11. Natural Environment**

Our Regeneration and Highways teams continue to enhance the County's prosperity through schemes including i54 and highways improvements, such as the Western relief road in Stafford. This year as part of these schemes, thousands of native trees were planted to form woodlands and hedgerows for the enhancement of local landscape and biodiversity habitats, along with enhancing wetlands/ponds. All of which will have a positive effect on reducing our carbon impact.

## Volume 2 – Footways and Cycleways

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This asset group includes footways and a number of cycle routes that are alongside a road or footway. It does not include Public Rights of Way (PRoW), which are managed separately.

The footway, footpath and cycleway asset in roads terms is one of the most valuable highway infrastructure asset groups. The Gross Replacement Cost (GRC) is calculated at £765m.

The footway, footpath and cycleway network in Staffordshire has been developed over many years. The majority of the asset has evolved over time and the increase in car ownership and the competition for car parking space means that many sections of the footway are subject to overriding. In addition, many are affected by root penetration and disruption from adjacent landscaped areas which have matured over the years.

The primary objectives of our footway and cycle track assets are to:

- enable our residents, businesses, and visitors to travel the county on foot, in wheelchairs and mobility scooters, or by cycle safely and efficiently, thereby contributing to improving outcomes and opportunities for our people and businesses.
- withstand normal usage by pedestrians and, where appropriate, cyclists and vehicles (via appropriately constructed vehicle crossings) by transferring loads through to underlying ground without deformation of the surface, maintaining safety and minimising nuisance.
- maintain their structural integrity and maximise their lifespan to provide maximum value for money from investment.

#### 4.1.1. Stakeholder expectations

As well as our statutory duty to ensure our footways are safe, we also need to maintain the confidence and positive perceptions of the travelling public using our asset. We also need to ensure our footway network is maintained to protect against insurance claims resulting from injuries or damage caused by incidents on our network.

To ensure the most benefit to our footway network we seek, where possible, to address sites of local need, and we do so via our value management criteria along with input from community liaison officers' knowledge who liaise closely with local elected representatives and other groups.

Nearly 1 in 3 older adults (aged 65+) are discouraged from walking more due to a concern regarding the condition of footways in their local area. The provision of good quality and safe footways is a significant contributor to the health and wellbeing benefits of residents and their ability to access essential goods and services.

#### 4.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

With the incomplete level of condition and inventory information available on footways and cycleways to date the NHT survey has been key to ensuring the Council prioritises services that local residents demand.

The Council value being part of the NHT survey and have found the resulting information extremely useful. The Council have participated in this survey for a number of years.

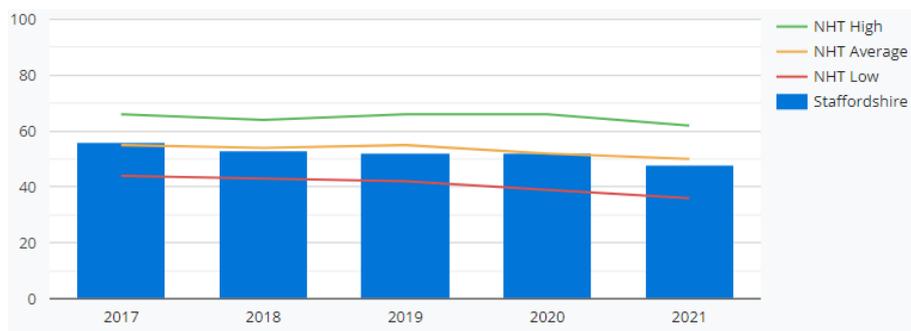
With regards to footway maintenance, the Staffordshire public consistently place most good pavements as one of the highest priorities, often only behind road condition and road safety.

Footways are also one of the key areas that the public would least find acceptable to reduce the level of service by spending less.

This would suggest that residents place great importance in the footway/path infrastructure and desire a higher quality provision.

Chart 20 shows that the level of satisfaction in the condition of SCC footways is below average and satisfaction is falling in line with the national trend.

**Chart 20 – Public Satisfaction with the Condition of Pavements**

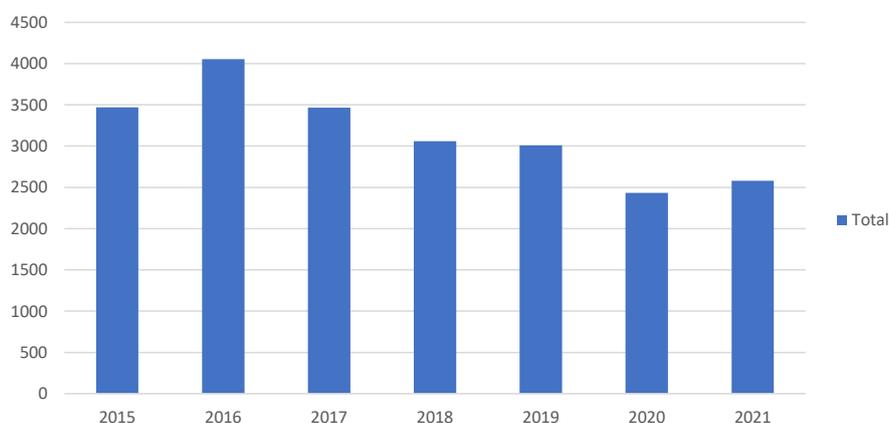


#### 4.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries

Customer enquiries made via 'Report It' are recorded in CONFIRM. On average, since 2015 around 13% of the total enquiries made relate to footways and cycleways including ironwork and kerbs/setts.

After a period of seeing a reducing number of enquiries about footways and cycleways from a peak of circa four thousand in 2016, there are early signs that the number of enquiries may be starting to grow again with an increase of around 150 in 2021 compared to 2020 albeit it is too early to see whether this trend will continue.

**Chart 21 – Number of Customer Enquiries Footways and Cycleways**



#### 4.1.4. Defects

It is difficult to forecast accurately how much we will need to spend on reactively fixing surface defects each year; however, we know that, as footways deteriorate given lack of investment, the number of defects will increase. This will lead to an increasing amount of resource being spent on such repairs. If that resource is taken from that used for planned maintenance, the problem would be exponentially exacerbated.

As a result of this, the condition of overall footway network is likely to deteriorate over the short, medium and long term.

Chart 22 shows the number of footway jobs is increasing year on year. This is reflective of the underinvestment in the footway asset, the increasing maintenance backlog and the deteriorating condition of the asset. 1,600 footway maintenance jobs have been raised in 2021 than in 2018 and over 1,000 more than in 2019.

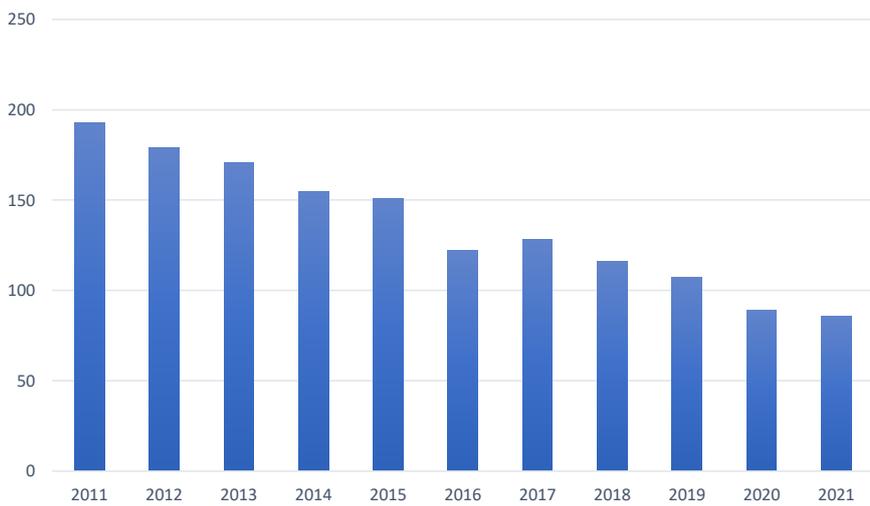
**Chart 22 – Number of Footway Defects Year on Year**



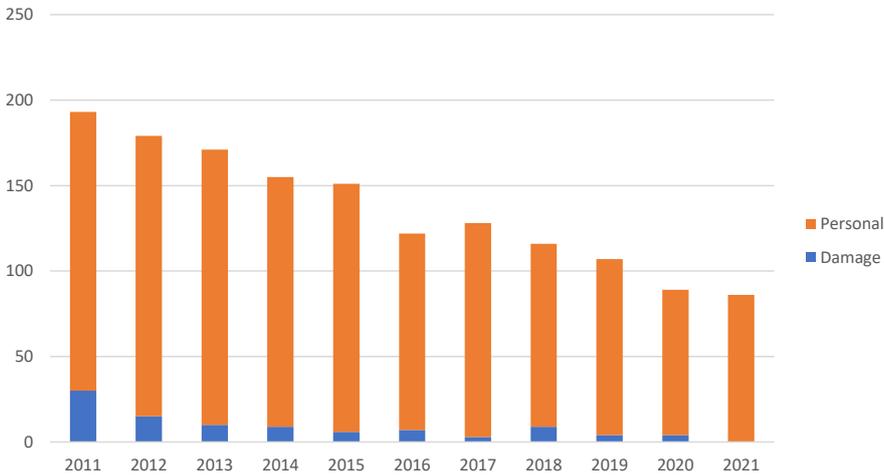
**4.1.5. Claims**

Whilst the number of defects and the maintenance backlog is increasing the number of claims is reducing.

**Chart 23 – Footway Claims Year on Year**



**Chart 24 – Footway Claims – Damage Only vs Personal Injury**



## 4.2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

### 4.2.1. Asset Condition

Our footway network is a substantial highway asset and consequently we invest significant resource into understanding its condition and likely future deterioration.

Historically, footway asset information was collected via Footway Network Survey (FNS). The Footway Network Survey (FNS) was intended to provide a cost effective, efficient and consistent approach to footway surveys, based on a linear basis. The survey was carried out by a single surveyor walking along the footway, referencing the network against four defect categories:

- As new
- Aesthetically impaired
- Functionally impaired
- Structurally impaired

The FNS survey was resource intensive and took minimum of 5 years to cover the network. This meant that we were modelling footway condition using an outdated view of the network.

Gaist Solutions Ltd have now been commissioned to perform a footway condition survey of the entire highway network. The survey includes providing the authority with HD quality 360-degree imagery of all the

highway network accessible by vehicle. The survey started in November 2021.

Gaist Solutions employ technical specialists to review the highway images and assess against 20 possible footway damage types.

The damaged areas are recorded in unique polygons rather than uniform lengths. In this way, the polygons define the areas with specific problems, e.g. major cracking. The imagery plus descriptions and scores are made available to the Council. This efficient approach provides a contemporaneous record of the authority's footway asset.

The footway and cycle track asset group is continually extended to include segregated cycle tracks that are publicly maintainable. These segregated cycle tracks have been generally constructed for use by cyclists and are not alongside a road or footway, though they may connect to them. We do not currently have detailed knowledge of the extent of segregated cycle tracks or their condition, though we are considering commissioning work to address this during the coming years.

The traffic flow on a 'A' class road is likely to be much greater to that on a unclassified road and the deterioration of the carriageway and the defect type will reflect this. The footway is different in that our data shows that road class or hierarchy does not necessarily reflect condition or rate of deterioration.

We are continuing to refine the quality and completeness of the condition and inventory data in order to produce reliable life cycle plans.

#### **4.2.2. Other Significant Factors affecting Footway Maintenance**

##### **Parking**

Generally, the condition of the footway deteriorates slowly and is more likely to be affected by external stresses, typically because of parking and vehicle over-run issues and tree root disruption. This particularly affects older residential urban areas that are tree lined or were not designed to accommodate the number of vehicles per household that is now typical. The narrow nature of many of these locations does lead to residents parking either wholly or partly on the footway.

These issues disproportionately affect people with visual or mobility impairments, those assisted by guide dogs, families with pushchairs and wheelchair and mobility scooter users.

The principal risk on footways is from trip hazards, particularly in high footfall locations. However, where vehicles do regularly park on or

traverse our footways even small defects can escalate quickly. This both increases the replacement costs and shortens the life of the asset.

### **4.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Bituminous footways make up the major proportion of the footway network and in general stand up well to traffic in all locations; however, regular preventative maintenance work is required to prevent long-term deterioration.

Preventative maintenance is not generally an option on our rigid footways. Rigid footways are also those most susceptible to external stresses such as tree root disruption or vehicle over riding. This makes it difficult to target maintenance as failure is usually rapid and necessitates some form of reactive repair.

#### **4.3.1. Maintenance Treatment Options**

Our approach to footway and cycle track asset management is a balance between asset renewal, where such assets have reached the end of their serviceable life, and asset preservation, where we apply a treatment to seal the surface and extend the life of footway assets that would otherwise need replacement at a considerably higher cost.

#### **4.3.2. Management strategy for minimising whole-life costs**

Whole life costs include the direct costs of works, design, supervision, surveys, and the indirect costs including inconvenience to users, environmental impacts and third-party claims. The main factors which will affect the whole life cost of an individual footway are:

- Type and quality of original construction.
- Degree and type of damage and degradation caused by environmental factors, traffic, and levels of utility work.
- Speed, quality and type of response to damage and degradation.
- Timing of intervention treatments.

At present, the links between these have not been fully quantified.

#### **4.3.3. Quality Health, Care and Support**

We recognise that the quality and condition of our footway and cycleway network impacts on the ability of people to travel to health and care services, to receive support in their homes, and to engage in leisure activities which promote good mental and physical health.

In particular, we are aware that the condition of footways can have a disproportionate impact on disabled and older people, a demographic continually increasing both in size and as a proportion of Staffordshire's population, and we intend to review the way we prioritise footway maintenance to take into account areas used by a higher proportion of older or disabled people.

Securing continuous improvement in the safety and serviceability of cycle routes, in particular network integrity, is a necessary component for encouraging cycling as an alternative to the car. Cycleways are included within the Gaist asset database to be surveyed at the same intervals. This only applies for combined footway/cycleway assets, which signifies the majority of the cycleway network.

#### **4.3.4. Pedestrian Crossing Facilities**

Dropped kerbs will be provided at all identified pedestrian crossing points where re-kerbing or new works are being carried out, and at other crossing points where a particular need has been identified.

The crossings shall be constructed in accordance with the County Council's standard detail drawings. Crossings will be provided with a corresponding crossing point on the opposite side of the road.

Coloured and tactile paving will be provided at all pelican and zebra crossings, and at all junctions with positive pedestrian control by traffic signals.

#### **4.3.5. Vehicular Crossings**

Wherever a footway or kerbing maintenance scheme is carried out, residents who currently cross the footway illegally will be offered the opportunity to contribute to the cost of providing a vehicular crossing at a cost equal to the extra cost of providing the facility over and above the normal cost of the footway works.

Where footway crossings are constructed at other times, then the full cost of the construction works will be payable by the frontage.

In cases where any crossing is required at an access to industrial works, petrol filling station, or other premises attracting heavy traffic, the specification to be employed shall be specifically designed for the site conditions.

The council has a number of formal options under Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 available to it to prevent unauthorised vehicular crossing of the footway. These include considering installing physical

Commented [PC(1)]: Should we be introducing remedies where this isn't taken up ?

barriers, such as guardrails or bollards to prevent access to the driveway where a crossing is not permitted. The council can also recover the cost of any damage caused to the footway as a result of unauthorised driving over it.

Constructing a crossing without the Council's consent is illegal. Where a footway crossing has been constructed without consent the council can rebuild the footway and recover the cost of the works from the resident.

### **Crossings over Highway Margins and Verges**

- The existing margin or verge shall be excavated to the formation level required and the whole excavation area sprayed with a total weedkiller.
- The crossing shall be constructed in accordance with SCC specifications.

### **Piping of a Ditch under Vehicular Access Crossing**

Where the access crosses a roadside ditch, this shall be piped with (glazed stoneware/concrete) pipes on a carefully prepared bed, free of large stones, which shall conform to the gradient of the existing ditch. The pipes shall be laid to approved levels and appropriate headwalls shall be provided.

The work shall not be commenced until the levels have been determined and pipes must not be covered until they have been inspected and approved by an SCC appointed engineer. For details of size of pipe, level and gradients, Staffordshire County Council must be contacted before any work is commenced, as the work involved may include a regrading of the ditch on each side of the access. All of the above shall conform to SCC specification

#### **4.3.6. Works on the Highway**

Where a temporary footway is provided, its surface will be of an adequate standard for use by elderly and disabled people.

Temporary footways will always be kept clear of mud and other loose material and pedestrian access to properties will be maintained.

### **4.4. ASSET INSPECTION**

#### **4.4.1. Safety and Service Inspections**

In addition to the condition surveys, we carry out safety inspections.

- Our team of highway inspectors carry out visual checks to make sure the highway assets are in a safe condition. This includes checking for defects in the footway surface that present a safety concern. We carry out this kind of check at various frequencies dependant on the nature of the section of footway concerned. These frequencies could be either monthly, quarterly or annually.
- Reactive inspections are carried out in response to enquiries from the public or other stakeholders and generate ad-hoc and emergency works, for example repairing footway potholes and other surface failures.

The frequency and process for undertaking inspections is detailed in the SCC Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice.

#### **4.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

##### **4.5.1. Prioritisation of Investment**

The application of asset management principles and the development of lifecycle planning provide the ideal opportunity for greater co-ordination of programmes over a longer period.

Prioritisation of the footway programme is a seven-stage process that mirrors that of the carriageway.

##### **4.5.2. Footway Detritus**

Detritus comprises of small, broken-down particles of synthetic and natural materials which arrive at the site through the same displacement effects associated with mechanical, human, animal and natural actions, most of which also determine the distribution of litter. Detritus includes dust, mud, soil, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials.

It is recommended but not a duty that detritus should be removed alongside litter and refuse by duty bodies from all other hard surfaces as well. Therefore, the district council will have a duty under s89(1) to remove detritus from metalled highways but it is only recommended and not a duty of the district council that detritus be removed from other hard surfaces.

## Volume 3 – Drainage

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

Drainage is provided to ensure that surface water is removed from carriageways, footways and cycleways as quickly as possible to avoid ponding and flooding which can be a danger to the public. This is achieved through a combination of preventative maintenance and action to deal with reported flooding where this occurs. Known problem sites will be the subject of regular inspections and preventative maintenance to minimise flooding problems. The highway drainage system in Staffordshire is designed to take water away from the road surface, but even with a well-maintained system, problems can arise during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall.

This asset comprises all highway drainage features including gullies, kerb offlets, grips, backdrains, soakaways, catchpits, associated pipework and outfalls.

The drainage asset's primary objectives are:

- removal of highway surface water (from our roads) to maintain road safety and minimise nuisance
- effective sub-surface drainage to prevent damage to the structural integrity of the highway and maximise its lifespan, and
- minimise the impact of highway surface water on the adjacent environment, including properties.

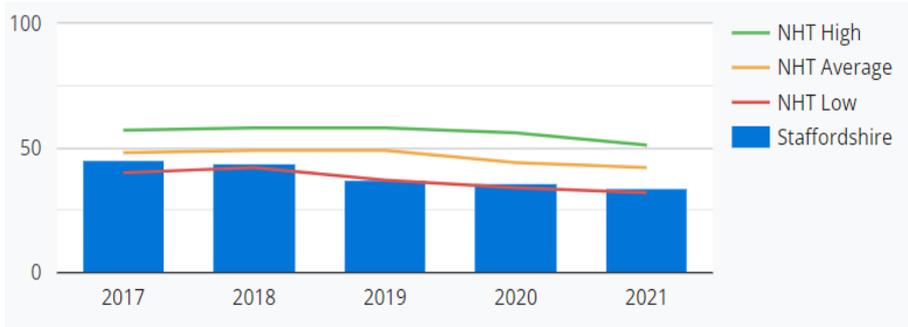
#### 4.1.1. Stakeholder expectations

Generally stakeholders expect a provision that ensures unobstructed and safe passage of the highway.

#### 4.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

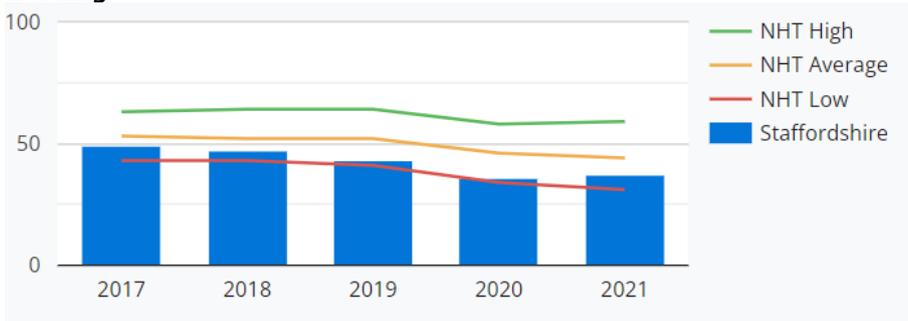
The headline conclusion for our drainage asset is that in terms of public satisfaction, the authority has generally followed national trends but is still currently below the National Average.

**Chart 25 – Public Satisfaction HMBI 12 – Deals with flooding on roads and pavements**



This is particularly evident in chart 26 which shows we have one of the lowest levels of satisfaction nationally with keeping drains clear and working. However, the downward trend in satisfaction was arrested in 2021 with satisfaction improving.

**Chart 26 – Public Satisfaction HMBI 12 - Keeping drains clear and working**



#### 4.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries

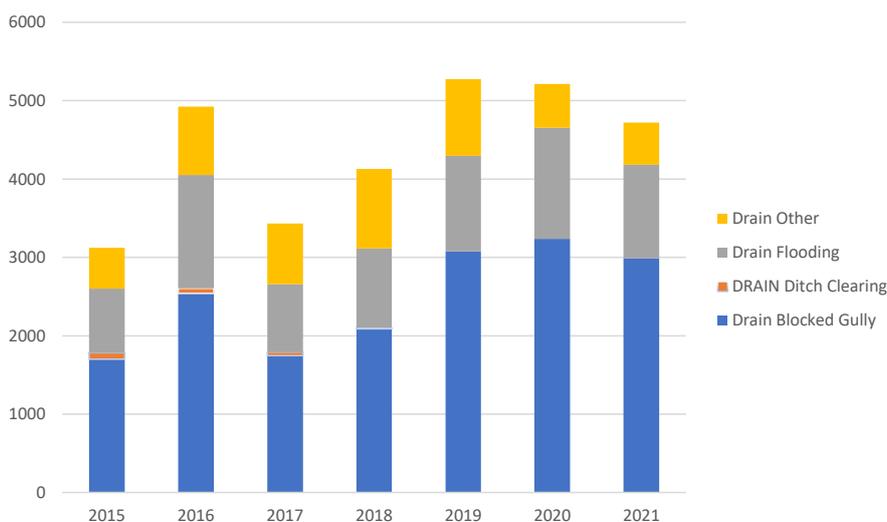
Customer reports and enquiries about drainage issues are second only to those about the carriageway with around 14% of the total volume. The majority of customer reports made relate to blocked gullies and the percentage has increased from around 50% before 2018 to over 60% in 2021. This could be due to improvements in reporting with 'drainage other' reducing as a percentage rather than an actual increase in issues with blocked gullies but does suggest an increasing issue with blocked gullies.

An additional one-off targeted investment of £1.9M<sup>1</sup> on local highway priorities of which £0.95M was focussed on known gully hotspots affecting

<sup>1</sup> [Cabinet Meeting 16th September 2020 - Additional Investment in Community Highway Issues](#)

communities appears to have supported a reversal of the upward trend seen prior to 2019. Drain ditch clearing was removed as a category for collection of data in 2018 and its use will be reviewed during the period of this plan.

**Chart 27 – Drainage Related Customer Enquiries**



**4.1.4. Defects**

To be developed

**8.2. ASSET CONDITION**

We only have an inventory of features situated on the surface of the carriageway.

**8.2.1. Other Significant Factors affecting Drainage Maintenance**

**Damaged and Ageing Infrastructure**

Much of the County’s drainage infrastructure was installed when the roads were originally constructed, some of which date back to late 1800s/early 1900s. Over time settlement, ingress of tree roots and roadworks by third parties has caused widespread deterioration and damage. Years of under-investment have exacerbated this problem.

**Limited Capacity**

In recent years prolonged and heavy rainfall events appear to have become a more frequent occurrence. Development and changes in land use have also resulted in increased volumes of surface water being discharged into the drainage system which is designed to cope with moderate to heavy rainfall. In many places drainage systems are now running at capacity.

Where capacity is insufficient the only options are to divert the highway drainage elsewhere or install an entirely new, larger system. This requires significant investment and in the past cost had tended to make this kind of scheme unaffordable. Instead, the impact of flooding can be managed by installing permanent warning signs, increasing the height of kerbs and re-profiling the road to divert water elsewhere.

Commented [PC(1)]: Needs signage policy for this to happen.

In future years we expect that even drains that are fully functional may have some capacity issues due to the unprecedented but now regular high rainfall events where current drainage and sewer capacity cannot cope with the amount of surface water run-off.

### **Reliance on Third Party Infrastructure**

In many places the highway is drained into public sewers, which are owned and maintained by the sewerage authority, or privately-owned third-party assets such as ditches or ponds. In these instances, our influence over maintenance regimes and improvements is limited.

### **Land Drainage**

Water being discharged from adjacent land onto the road is also becoming an increasingly common cause of highway flooding. A more stringent enforcement process utilising our Highways Act powers has been developed. However, to date the vast majority of cases have been resolved via constructive discussion with the landowner.

### **Reductions in other services**

A frequent cause of highway flooding is debris obstructing drain covers, particularly during autumn and winter. The need for financial savings has necessitated reductions in services such as street sweeping, delivered by district and borough councils, and soft landscaping services. These have resulted in increased debris collecting on the highway and finding its way to the roadside drains.

## **8.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Effective drainage management includes the periodic removal of silt and debris from drainage systems including grips and ditches. This includes

the removal of any vegetation obstructing the flow of drainage. Also included is the testing of short lengths of piped drainage systems, and any rodding or jetting necessary to keep the system clear.

Drains are defined as pipes or culverts less than 1.5m. span or diameter, specifically provided for the drainage of the highway, or for watercourses crossing the highway. Generally, the Highway Authority is not responsible for the cleansing of ditches, unless they are on land which has been specifically acquired for highway purposes. However, grips (drainage channels cut through the verge to lead water off the carriageway) will usually be the Highway Authority's responsibility.

Drains which carry other water including foul water may be sewers or combined drains and are the responsibility of the water authority or the local District Council. Roadside gullies are maintained by Staffordshire County Council and are usually cleaned a minimum of once a year on a targeted approach.

It is evident that an increasing frequency of severe flooding events due to climate change is impacting upon our infrastructure. Highway drainage is a key factor to providing network resilience, and the safe movement of goods, people and services around the county.

Our major challenge is asset deterioration due to historical under-investment. In addition, the location and condition of this asset in roads, footways or third-party land has been poorly recorded.

As a result, we have a system which is outdated and that we hold very little information on. This has resulted in a lack of prioritised investment and has reduced our ability to target maintenance effectively. Our existing practice to maintaining this asset is mainly reactive, which is costly and does not address the issue of understanding where to invest to halt deterioration of the asset or reduce the risk of flooding from surface water.

A good understanding of the inventory and lifecycle of drainage assets informs risk based routine maintenance works. This will also aid us in complying with Recommendation 22 of Well Managed Highway Infrastructure:

*"Drainage assets should be maintained in good working order to reduce the threat and scale of flooding. Particular attention should be paid to locations known to be prone to problems, so that drainage systems operate close to their designed efficiency".*

Water soaking into the road foundation can cause structural damage. Water standing on carriageways, footways or cycleways can freeze and be

slippery and also causes considerable inconvenience to the public, because of damage to clothing and property, by splashing.

The number of drainage assets is currently increasing by roughly 150 each year due to new housing and business developments.

Material arising from all road drainage emptying and cleansing operations has potential implications for pollution and shall be disposed of correctly in accordance with Environment Agency, or equivalent authority, requirements.

Where despite effective maintenance operations, flooding of the highway occurs, with implications for safety or serviceability, relevant warning signs will be placed in position as quickly as possible, and users advised as per the highway asset communications strategy. The cause of the flooding shall be determined and addressed as appropriate.

The highway may flood if the surrounding land is in flood and there are limitations to the action that can be reasonably taken. If it is subsequently determined that the flooding is attributable to deficiencies in infrastructure or the maintenance regime, given the nature of the weather conditions under which it occurred, then action to permanently relieve the problem shall be considered which may involve consultation with other public bodies and/or third parties. If the event is attributable to the actions of a third party, the matter shall be taken up with them at the earliest opportunity.

Ironware comprising covers, gratings, frames and boxes set in carriageways, footways and cycle routes has the potential to compromise safety and serviceability, and in certain cases cause noise and disturbance to local residents. Responsibility for defective ironwork may lie with Utilities.

### **8.3.1. Gully Cleansing**

Gullies are cleaned on a frequency of at least once a year. Some gullies, which due to their location, are prone to silt up are cleansed on a more frequent basis, usually twice or three times a year. Such gullies should be included on a schedule which details the road number and the brief justification for the need for a second emptying. Typical justifications would include those gullies at the bottom of gradients, or at low spots, and gullies near quarry entrances.

We operate a cleaning schedule to routinely clean the gullies throughout Staffordshire, using data collated in recent years the frequency of the cleansing is determined by the silt levels readings and road classification.

Commented [PC(2)]: Biannual and triannual programme

#### Urban class A and B roads

- Generally, have higher silt levels and because of traffic speeds and volumes
- Require more frequent (annual) cleanses

#### Rural class A and B roads

- Feature high traffic volumes and accommodate higher speeds
- These will be cleansed on an annual basis

#### Rural class C class and unclassified routes (D and U)

- Typically have lower silt levels than Urban A and B class routes but higher silt levels than Urban C, D and U class routes
- These gullies will be cleansed once every two years

#### Urban class C and unclassified roads (D and U roads)

- Typically have lower silt levels due to lower traffic speeds and volumes
- These routes will be cleansed once every three years

In addition to a routine cleaning schedule, ad hoc cleansing operations take place 1 to 2 days a week in targeted locations based on risk assessed priority.

We are currently trialling recycling gully waste in to commercial grade top soil.

### **8.3.2. Flooding**

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, County Councils and Unitary Authorities are designated as Lead Local Flood Authorities. The County Council is the strategic leader for flood risk management within Staffordshire and our responsibilities include:

- Developing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- Ensuring that all organisations involved in flood risk management are aware of their responsibilities.
- Monitoring progress and activity by all parties involved in flood risk management.
- Coordinating communication, both with the public and between organisations.
- Preparing reports and plans to meet the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

- Carrying out flood investigations where appropriate and publishing reports.
- Keeping an asset register of structures and features which may have a significant effect on local flood risk.
- Designation of third-party assets where appropriate.
- Regulation of ordinary watercourses, including permissive powers to require landowners to maintain ordinary watercourses on their land / property.
- Providing technical advice to Local Planning Authorities on surface water drainage strategies for major developments.

We also have permissive powers which allow us to carry out works to manage flood risk from surface water and groundwater.

More information on our approach to managing flood risk can be found in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Flooding of the highway will be made safe and appropriate signing of diversion routes will be set up if necessary.

In cases of severe and widespread flooding, problems will be dealt with in accordance with the hierarchy of roads. The cause of the flooding will be investigated, and preventative action taken where practicable, to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Officers will maintain a register of known problem sites which are liable to flooding. This will enable maintenance resources to be directed in an effective manner.

### **8.3.3. Other parts of our drainage system**

We also look after ponds, lagoons, pumping stations, catchpits and soakaways which drain water from the road.

#### **Ditches and grips**

Ditches or watercourses are the responsibility of landowners (often called riparian owners). Roadside ditches normally belong to the adjoining landowner and not the highway authority, except where land has been acquired for new road building. The highway authority can discharge highway water to a roadside ditch and may maintain it but is under no obligation to do so.

Landowners may drain their land to any ditch or watercourse on the property. They have a duty to maintain their ditches or watercourses in such a way that nuisance is not caused to neighbours. The County

Council's Flood Risk Management Team and the Environment Agency will be able to provide further advice on land drainage issues.

Grips cut in verges are the responsibility of the highway authority, they are cut to assist with road drainage. Drainage grips are used to channel water away from the carriageway and into ditches, where there is an absence of or limited number of gullies or other positive systems that can drain the highway water away.

Grips are essentially dug or cut out of verges adjacent to the road and they can therefore be easily damaged if driven over at tight passing points on rural lanes. Improper grass cutting maintenance can also reduce their effectiveness as vegetation dies back and adds to the presence of earth.

The digging out or renewal of drainage grips does not generally form part of our routine drainage maintenance operations, since that usually involves jetting/gulley emptying machinery which is not required to resolve a problem with grips. Where locations require the attendance of a crew and manual equipment to dig out drainage grips, this has to be scheduled in accordance with a risk assessed category of priority. Unless the problem is posing an imminent risk to safety, this type of work will be carried out as resources permit.

#### Ditches and the law

The common law imposes a duty on the occupier of the land adjoining the highway to clean ditches, drains etc which are necessary for draining the highway.

There are two categories of ditches that run alongside the highway:

- Those provided and maintained by the Highway Authority for the sole purpose of draining the highway.
- Those existing for the purposes of land drainage and which are privately maintained.

Where a ditch is used jointly for highway water and land drainage then the law presumes that the adjoining landowner is responsible for the maintenance unless there is conclusive proof to the contrary.

#### Work on ditches

Ditches should be cleared, and the depth maintained as necessary to ensure that the efficiency of the system is not impaired. Any excavated material must be removed from the vicinity of the ditch so that it is not washed, or pushed back in.

### Piping ditches

No ditch adjacent to the highway should be piped until the local highway authority and adjacent / riparian landowner have been consulted. They will wish to ensure that the proposed pipes are of a sufficient size.

### Protection of the public and operatives

Works on ditches or other features adjacent to the public highway should be carried out in such a way that no operative or item of plant encroaches onto the carriageway unless appropriate and advance signage is used.

### **Ponds and lagoons**

Some highway drainage systems drain to roadside ponds and lagoons. These are inspected and maintained in response to reports of flooding.

### **Pumping stations**

We own 16 highway pumping stations. These are serviced every 6 months with additional maintenance done if needed.

### **Soakaways**

Soakaways are large underground tanks. Water drains from roadside drains, through pipes and into these chambers where it gradually soaks into the ground. If cleaning roadside drains doesn't clear the flooding, we investigate if nearby soakaways may also need cleansing.

### **Trash Screens**

A trash screen is a type of fencing used to filter out debris in the path of a waterway. Known trash screens are inspected and cleared on a monthly cycle.

### **Catchpits**

Catch pits are installed to collect silt before it discharges into more vulnerable parts of the drainage system

### **Swales**

A Swale is a shallow channel lined with vegetation, usually grass, used to convey stormwater.

The objective of a swale is to minimise the use of piped stormwater drainage system. It also functions to slow down stormwater flows and remove coarse to medium sediments.

#### **8.4. Asset Inspection**

There are two types of checks carried out on the drainage system: planned inspections and reactive inspections.

##### **8.4.1. Planned Inspections**

Planned inspections include highway safety inspections and condition checks carried out as part of our cyclical maintenance regime:

- Our team of highway inspectors carry out visual checks to make sure that highway assets are in a safe condition. This includes checking that drain covers are not blocked, broken or missing. We carry out this kind of check at least once every twelve months.
- Our drainage cleansing crews look at the condition of the drains on main roads and test each one by filling it with water and checking that it is able to flow away. We carry out these kinds of checks at least once every twelve months.
- Our pumping stations are serviced every 6 months to check they are working properly and ensure that any faults or damage are repaired quickly.
- Trash screens are inspected a minimum of once per month or at a greater frequency dependent on the likelihood of severe adverse weather conditions.

We do not undertake planned inspections on our other drainage assets (underground pipes, culverts, soakaways, ponds, lagoon and ditches). These are all checked on a reactive basis.

##### **8.4.2. Reactive Inspections**

Reactive inspections are carried out in response to enquiries and generate ad-hoc and emergency works, for example, cleaning blocked drains that are causing the road to flood and repairing collapsed road drains. They may also result in us serving notice under the Highways Act 1980 requesting the landowner maintain their ditch or prevent water flowing from their land onto the highway. Where this is not completed in the required time, we may undertake the work and seek to recover the costs from the landowner.

Although responsibility for defective ironwork may lie with Utilities, defects identified during inspection or from users will therefore be

formally notified to the Utility with a follow up procedure to ensure that dangerous defects are remedied within the prescribed timescale.

The standards outlined below can be varied where necessary to deal with problem locations where more frequent treatment may be required.

## **8.5. Asset Programming**

### **8.5.1. Prioritisation of Investment**

As with all our assets, we take a risk-based approach to deciding where to invest our funding and some of the things we consider for this asset group include:

What is the risk to road users if the road floods?

- Is the road a high-speed road or on the Resilient Network, a main road, an estate road or a country lane?
- Is the road used by high volumes of traffic?
- Does the road layout increase risk, for example, is the flooding on a blind bend?
- Does the speed of traffic increase risk?

How much disruption is caused if the road floods?

- Is the road a high-speed or on the Resilient Network, a main road, an estate road or a country lane?
- Is the road used by high volumes of traffic?
- Are there suitable alternative routes available to road users?
- Is access to critical infrastructure such as powers stations or hospitals affected?

How are homes and businesses affected by the flooding?

- Are buildings being internally flooded?
- Are businesses prevented from operating?

Investment is prioritised where the risk is highest. We then consider how to invest our budget.

Having assessed each site, we collate a prioritised list of works which are included in forward works programmes.

We do not undertake works to mitigate minor nuisance factors. We prioritise works at locations where highway surface water presents a risk to highway safety or a risk of internal flooding to inhabited areas of property.

Through programme coordination and visibility of future SCC schemes which may affect other key highway asset or major improvement scheme, we adjust its place in the programme so that we can combine activities in order to maximise financial efficiencies.

## Volume 4 – Structures

### 9.1. INTRODUCTION

Highway Structures comprise critical infrastructure that supports the safe passage of highway over rail, river and other features. The structures asset is widely varied in form and age, many of which go un-noticed by the travelling public. Structures asset also support essential utilities apparatus and the resilient network.

There are approximately 5000 assets identified on the structures database, with sub-asset types including bridges, tunnels, culverts, retaining walls, and Sign Gantries. The Highway Structures team also manage the County dam asset and support the maintenance of structures on the Public Right of Way Network.

In the context of this HIAMP, the structures asset includes larger bridges over 1.5m clear span, retaining walls with a retained height over 1.5m and some PRow structures with a clear span over 6.5m. Smaller culvert assets are maintained by Amey Highway Operations as part of the drainage asset.

The structures asset is currently valued at £1.401 billion annual depreciation of £15.5m, which supports the strategy of managed deterioration with a annual internal investment of approximately £3m. Opportunities for additional external funding are progressed where available.

The 2007 Guidance Document for Performance Measurement ranks the Staffordshire road bridge assets as in FAIR condition for critical load bearing elements with the commentary '*A number of critical load bearing elements may be in a severe condition. Some structures may represent a significant risk to public safety unless mitigation*'. This statement is supported by individual high-risk assets requiring urgent repairs as detailed in the recommended maintenance programme. See section 9.5.2 Investment Aspirations.

This asset group is particularly complex and varied in composition when compared with other asset groups, and this makes accurate modelling challenging. Unlike other asset groups the age range of the assets is vast, ranging from medieval bridges to modern day structures. Structures comprise numerous types and construction forms, from simple timber and masonry structures to complex steel and post-tensioned concrete multi-span structures.

Given limited funding available the asset strategy is to slow the rate of structural deterioration to prevent the closure of structures and their

associated routes. Unfortunately, we now have structures that have reached the end of their serviceable life and require replacement, or removal.

#### **9.1.1. Stakeholder expectations**

As Highway Authority the County Council has a duty of care to all road users who expect the network to be:

- Fit for purpose, good condition, well maintained and safe to use
- Accessible for reliable journey times with minimal disruption due to maintenance
- Maintained efficiently with minimum whole life costs

Structures are provided to support highway and travelling public over a wide range of scenarios and in differing environments which interface with many external stakeholders. For example:

- Canal and River Trust
- Internal Drainage Boards
- National Highways
- District Councils
- Parish Councils
- Network Rail
- Railway Trusts
- National Coal Board
- Utility Companies
- Abnormal load hauliers
- User groups
- Environment Agency
- Lead Local Drainage Authority
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Planning Authorities
- Housing developers
- Police

Internal Stakeholders:

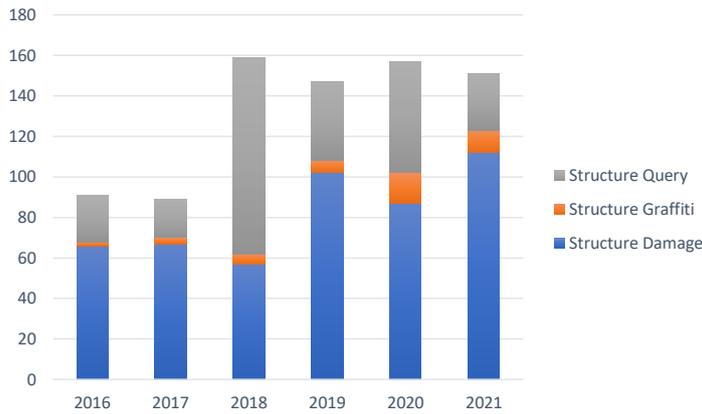
- Confidence in asset
- Financial performance
- Other asset custodians/network management
- Councillors

#### **9.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey**

NA?

**9.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries**

**Chart 28 – Number of Structures Enquiries**



Structures enquiries are increasing with damage being a clear upward trend.

**9.2. ASSET PERFORMANCE**

Structures asset systems are tailored to managing risk of structural failure, network disruption and optimisation of investment.

Visual condition is one of a range of tools to compare performance and is based on the ADEPT Bridge Condition Indicators for each asset type, where:

- BSCIave: measure of average condition of all structural components
- BSCICrit: measure of critical condition of high importance load bearing components

The trend of bridge condition score is shown below in Table XX

Condition Score/Year	2004		2022		Trend
	Score	Condition	Score	Condition	
Road Bridge Average	86.7	Good	83.5	Good	↓
Road Bridge Critical	76.5	Fair	70.2	Fair	↓↓
Footbridge Average	86.2	Good	79.9	Fair	↓↓↓
Footbridge Critical	80.5	Good	70.1	Fair	↓↓↓
Retaining Wall Average	x	x	x	x	x
Retaining Wall Critical	x	x	x	x	x

Notes:

- x – condition data not available due to lack of inventory
- Average condition indicator includes all structural features
- Critical condition indicator limited to high importance load bearing components

Table XX Comparison of Bridge Condition

All condition indicators have fallen over the recorded period. It is important to note the condition of critical load bearing elements is deteriorating at an increase rate when compared to other more visible items, for example painting. The replacement of critical components requires increased investment and advanced programming.

Highway structures are currently required to support the EC 40/44 tonne vehicle. There are currently over 50 sub-standard structures that do not meet this performance level and have interim protection measures.

Approximately 45% of the road bridge stock comprises masonry arches. This older form of construction includes some assets over 200 years old, do not meet current design specifications for vehicle containment.

Date: 10 December 2021

Overview		Risk Level			Outcome view		Risk Level			
Level	Number	Very High	High	Low	Outcome	Number	Very High	High	Low	
Portfolio	52	5	11	36	Feel safer, happier and more supported in their community	1	0	1	0	
Systems	37	1	6	30	Be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth	24	2	6	18	
Assets	15	4	5	6	Be healthier and more independent	27	3	6	18	

Top 5 System Risks				
Rank	Rating	System	Risk	Owner
1	Very High	Highway bridges	Lack of funding to manage condition in the long term	Structures Custodian
2	High	Vehicle Restraint Systems	The inspections of VRS is not being done to the Code	Highways Asset Manager
3	High	Funding	Short term funding rather than long-term	Highways Asset Manager
4	High	Operations	Quality issues with preparation for surface dressing. Insufficient specification and resource to adequately prepare sites	Highways Asset Manager
5	High	H52 Interaction	Risk of deviation away from SCC standard specification as H52/BBV consolidate specifications across neighbouring authority	Highways Asset Manager

Top 5 Asset Risks				
Rank	Rating	Asset	Risk	Owner
1	Very High	Structures - Moss Pit Footbridge	Structure requires replacement as parapets are becoming unstable and structure fails assessment	Structures Custodian
2	Very High	Structures - School Lane Footbridge	Structure at end of life and requires removal/replacement in two/three years	Structures Custodian
3	Very High	Structures - Chetwynd Bridge	Reduce structure capacity and rapidly deteriorating condition	Structures Custodian
4	Very High	Structures - Burnhulst Bridge	Poor highway alignment and carriageway width as resulted in frequent RTAs. (NB - Resilient Network)	Structures Custodian
5	High	Structures - Stafford Railway Bridge	Strengthening required due to inadequate structural capacity and rapidly deteriorating condition, supporting A449 over rail	Structures Custodian

Figure XX

As shown above, the Highway Asset Risk Register identified the lack of funding to the highway bridges asset as the top system risk as rated 'Very High'. Individual structures assets were also reported as the top five asset risks.

9.2.1. Maintenance Backlog

Based on the condition information collected at each inspection, continual structural reassessment, and performance review a work bank of repairs and maintenance works is held for each structure.

The total value of the work bank currently stands at approximately £90 million although this is considered to be a significant underestimate. An enhanced programme of reassessment, structural investigation and feasibility work is required to improve this assessment.

### **9.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

#### **9.3.1. Applying Asset Management Principles to the Structures Asset**

The structures asset is managed in accordance with the principles set out in ISO55000, the recognised standard for asset management, to manage risk and cost, whilst complying with legislation. An asset management framework is established to manage the inventory of structures through their serviceable life from construction, through maintenance to disposal. Health and safety files are held for each asset which contain a specific identification reference, ownership, capacity, condition and construction details. An electronic register of assets is held in the Confirm database, with other supporting electronic files and paper archive.

The Highway Structures Asset Project Quality Plan further describes the asset management processes and scheme delivery requirements in further detail, defining project gateways best practice scheme management and design guides.

The Confirm asset management software allows interaction of data and maintenance needs with other highway assets and network management functions. This allows efficiency in programming and reduction in collective scheme costs.

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges prescribes management and specification standards.

The Confirm asset management system allows cross functional integration between highways, network, inspection and structures disciplines to maximise utilisation of scheme programming and customer contacts.

Statutory Undertakers

Minimising whole life costs of asset ownership.

There is an extensive inventory database and well established, nationally recognised inspection regimes for structures. This has resulted in a wealth of information on this asset group held on the Confirm database, which is integrated with other highway assets to optimise cross-asset programming.

Assessment capacity, condition, strategy

Structures schemes take time to prepare given the diversity of stakeholders and consenting requirements. Need long term funded prioritised works programme to make efficiencies and confidence in delivery

Reactive maintenance. Lack on inventory for retaining walls given only 8% of the anticipate 200km asset has been recorded.

### **9.3.2. Future Management of the Structures Asset**

DRMB requirements

Types of work:

Asset management

Preventative

Replacement

Abnormal loads, Technical Approval

Assessment

Scour assessment

Following the procurement and migration of existing data to the new AMX database we are currently developing the software in conjunction with the supplier to implement new asset management processes. This will enable us to take advantage of the enhancements available within the AMX database.

During the AMX database implementation phase, a number of anomalies with the existing data have become apparent and it will be necessary to re-populate these data fields for each structure. This would require significant extra resources if this were carried out as a stand-alone exercise so it has been decided that data will be collected and input into the database over the next two-year cycle of general inspections.

Once the new structures management system has been updated to reflect our current processes and the data anomalies corrected, the AMX database should enable us to model budgetary requirements in greater detail to provide forecast condition outcomes and maintenance backlogs for a number of intervention and investment scenarios.

Access over Rail

Environmental consenting

Transition from unplanned reactive maintenance to more efficient planned preventative treatments. To achieve this requires confirmation of future funding levels to support a prioritised maintenance programme.

#### 9.4. ASSET INSPECTION

In line with the national guidance document Inspection Manual for Highway Structures published in May 2007, a pragmatic approach to structural inspections has been adopted.

##### 9.4.1. Structural Inspections

Structural inspections are a key source of information that feed into the asset management process such that up-to-date condition data can be obtained to evaluate maintenance needs. The frequency of structural inspections is shown in Table 3.1.

Type of Inspection	Inspection Frequency
Routine Safety Surveillance	Dependant on classification of route
General Inspection	2 years
Underwater Inspection	2/4 years <sup>(1)</sup>
Principal Inspection	Risk based programme
Special Inspection	As required
Inspection for Assessment	As required
Acceptance Inspection	As required

(1) River bridges 2 years, other watercourses 4 years

##### 9.4.2. Routine Surveillance

Undertaken by County Highway Inspectors who report any defects observed to the Structures Asset Team. This is a programmed inspection

generally undertaken from a slow-moving vehicle, therefore only a limited range of defects on structures are generally visible.

#### **9.4.3. General Inspections**

General Inspections are undertaken by inspectors who are supervised by a Chartered Engineer. This is a remote visual inspection that reports on the condition of all visible structural elements, notes obvious defects and suggests maintenance requirements. These inspections also report the Bridge Condition Indicator as developed by ADEPT, The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport, formerly known as the County Surveyors Society.

#### **9.4.4. Underwater Inspections**

Underwater inspections (including access to confined spaces) are undertaken by specialist access contractors who employ qualified divers.

#### **9.4.5. Principal Inspections**

Principal Inspections require close detailed examination of all structural components, often requiring specialist access to remote elements. Principal Inspections provide a detailed report of structural condition, recommend maintenance works and also report the Bridge Condition Indicator. Principal inspections are undertaken on structures which have an individual span of length 9.0m or over. The programme of inspections is risk based to consider known structural defects and element composition. These inspections are undertaken by experienced bridge engineers.

#### **9.4.6. Special Inspections**

Scheduled where a defect requires inspection at shorter intervals than facilitated by General or Principal Inspection, or in response to the report of a defect which may affect the safety or stability of a structure. Substandard structures are recorded and monitored on the BD79 schedule.

#### **9.4.7. Inspection for Assessment**

Comprising a thorough examination of a structure to determine structural condition and also confirm dimensions of elements such that quantitative structural calculations can be undertaken to determine loading capacity. It may also involve sampling and non-destructive testing of materials and components to determine material properties and condition.

#### **9.4.8. Acceptance Inspection**

Undertaken upon acquisition of an asset, either when a new structure is built and received from the constructor, or when an existing asset is transferred from a third party to the County Council for future maintenance. The Acceptance Inspection will review structural condition and quantify any maintenance liabilities and associated costs.

## 9.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING

### 9.5.1. Prioritisation of Investment

Commented [PC(1)]: Is it worth mentioning difficulties with bridges over railways, occupation etc ?

Investment is divided into workstream between consultancy fees and works delivery determined through risk-based prioritisation. Statutory inspections are prescribed in the DMRB

Consultation, environmental windows, network

40 tonne assessments in 1980 and need to review condition

New advice on MEXE assessments

Data inventory not complete, eg abnormal vehicles

Prioritisation of principle inspections is a departure from national guidance

SCC use the London Bridges Engineering Group prioritisation of bridge maintenance guidance as the principle prioritisation tool. The outputs are then viewed against strength/capacity factors, then finally against deliverable programme.

### Top 5 Asset Risks

## Summary

The top five highway risks currently identified for all asset risks are for bridge structures in poor condition. These are summarised below:

Route and crossing	Structure	Risk	Funding	Year
A513 over River Tame	Chetwynd Bridge, Alrewas	Unstable of Grade 2 listed structure	£3m	22/23
		Bypass Structure	£13m	24/25
A449 over West Coast Mainline (Railway)	Moss Pit Footbridge	Failed parapets connections and structural capacity	£2m	23/24
School Lane over railway	School Lane Footbridge	Fail structural capacity assessment and rapid deterioration of concrete deck	£1.5m	22/23
Burndhurst			£20m	

It is important to note that rapidly deteriorating structural assets cannot simply be closed to highway trafficking to remove risk and liability. Without highway loading structures are subjected to ongoing deterioration and climatic effects whereby failure can still occur.

### 1 Moss Pit Footbridge, Stafford (F2400)

#### Location

The footbridge was installed to carry pedestrians over the West Coast Railway line, given there is no footpath available on the adjacent road bridge due to limited carriageway width. This route supports the A449 Wolverhampton Road, south of Stafford, with connectivity to junction 13 of the M6. Network availability for maintenance is severely restricted due

to commuter demand. This route also forms part of the M6 emergency diversion and is of strategic importance for the movement of heavy abnormal load vehicles.



Figure XX Existing Arrangement

#### Asset Risk

The footbridge has now reached the end of its serviceable life and requires removal.

A recent structural assessment concluded the structure should not be accessed by pedestrians in conjunction with wind speeds greater than a 50mph gust due to exceeding its safe loading capacity.

The parapets have deteriorated rapidly over recent years and poses a high risk to highway and rail safety. Parapet replacement is further complicated due to the extensive presence of asbestos.

#### Required Intervention

The structure requires replacement. Site access is severely limited given the combined restricted access to railway and A449.

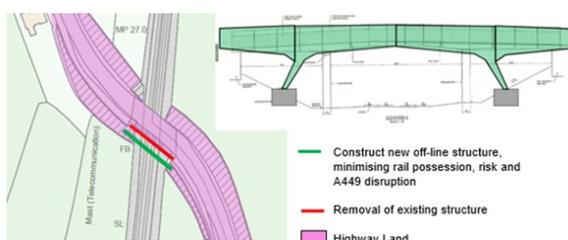


Figure XX Proposed Replacement

Constructing a replacement in highway land to the southwestern embankment will allow works advanced works to be programmed efficiently for the installation of foundations. A replacement superstructure can be installed overnight in a single rail possession. Following the diversion of utility equipment, the redundant structure can then be removed in a further railway possession.

### Proposed Solution

It is recommended that the scheme is completed with five years with an estimated total value of £2m. Advanced design work is currently progressing and estimated at £200k.

Network Rail have expressed their concern regarding the rapidly deteriorating condition of the parapets and we have worked with them to installed emergency bracing.

## **2 School Lane Footbridge, Stafford (F0163)**

### Location

The footbridge was constructed in 1964 to provide a pedestrian route along School Lane where it passes over West Coast Mainline railway. There is limited carriageway width for pedestrians on the adjacent road bridge, owned by Network Rail.



### Asset Risk

Components of the metallic superstructure have failed a structural assessment which concluded it is not capable of supporting its self-weight, therefore required factors of safety are not met and whilst the structure remains in place it is a substantial risk to both highway and rail.



Figure XX Soffit and bearing defects

As shown in Figure XX there has been extensive deterioration of the concrete deck panels such that loss of support is likely. This represents an additional risk to highway and rail.

Highway alignment is poor given the close proximity to the junction of School Lane and Gravel Lane, with a lack of forward visibility. There has been repeated damage to the adjacent road bridge resulting from vehicle collisions. The steps arrangement at the western approach are not DDA compliant and required vulnerable members of the public to avoid the footbridge and walk in the path of vehicles.

#### Required Solution

In the interests of public safety it is recommended to remove the bridge deck from service within 12 months. Required funding is estimated at £500k.

A temporary works proposed is currently being progressed, through discussion with Network Rail, to consider the stability of the bridge abutments once the deck has been removed. Whilst the bridge is out of service it is envisaged pedestrians will be diverted on the road bridge, with the protection of temporary traffic management.

Greater efficiency can be achieved by implementing a permanent solution including the installation of a new steel bridge deck, strengthening to the

existing abutments and footpath connectivity to the adjacent network. Both temporary and permanent solutions are estimated at £1.5m and recommended for completion within two years.

### 3 Chetwynd Bridge, Alrewas (B0153)

#### Location

The Grade 2\* Chetwynd Bridge was built in 1824 carrying the A513 Croxall Road over the River Tame. This route is a strategic link from the A38 to National Memorial Arboretum and Catton Park which host many significant public events. Access over Chetwynd bridge is essential during storms of high-water levels given other routes are impassable.



Figure XX

#### Asset Risk

As a Grade 2\* listed structure Historic England impose significant limitations on any modifications or maintenance interventions that may affect the original fabric or appearance. Further environmental restrictions are imposed on the site and surrounding area given the designation of Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The ornate cast iron parapet is primarily a decorative pedestrian handrail and does not provide the required level of containment for unrestricted highway traffic. There have been multiple occurrences of vehicle passing through the parapet with a repetitive maintenance cost and the potential for fatalities.



Figure XX

Loading due to increase vehicle weights have increased since construction such that the deck has been replaced twice. Following the introduction of the 40-tonne vehicle a concrete strengthening slab was also installed in 1997. Conservation limitations prevented any strengthening to the cast iron parapet and this impeded the effectiveness of the strengthening slab.



Figure XX

The cast iron parapet has continued to deteriorate through repeated collision damage. The cast iron arch work has become severely cracked and is now considered unstable. It is not possible to further strengthen the existing bridge deck.

Emergency concrete barriers were installed in December 2019 in conjunction with the carriageway being reduced from two lanes to one under traffic light control, with speed restrictions reduced from 60 mph to 40 mph.

Historic England have placed Chetwynd Bridge on their Heritage at Risk Register, reference 1038893.

#### Required Solution

A two-phase strategic plan has been developed for both immediate and medium-term implementation:

2022-23 Listed Building consent has been obtained to undertake urgent stabilisation and structural refurbishment of the existing Grade 2\* Listed structure, estimated at £3m. SCC has secured a contribution on £2.35m towards this scheme as part of a DfT

Challenge Fund bid. These works will stabilise the ornamental parapet suitable for pedestrian restraint, also bearing replacement, essential cast iron and masonry repairs. The metalwork will be repainted. This is a temporary solution and will continue to be managed as a sub-standard structure, requiring extensive regular inspections and stability checks. The original cast iron elements will continue to be over-stressed requiring the implementation of an 18-tonne restriction. The diversion route for heavier traffic is via Tamworth and incurs a considerable time delay and increased carbon emissions, severely disrupting access to local communities, farming, Catton Park and National Memorial Arboretum. Access for emergency services will be maintained.

- 2023-26 An outline scheme proposal has been agreed with Historic England and Lichfield District Council as Planning Authority for the construction of bypass structure to restore the network to full availability, with conversation of the Grade 2\* Listed structure to a pedestrian and cycle route.



Figure XX

The design phase can be progressed throughout 2022-23 in parallel to the immediate stabilisation works. The 18-tonne route restriction will remain with increase monitoring until completion of the pass structure, with a cost estimate of £11m, not including optimism bias.

#### 4 Burndhurst Bridge, Loxley (B0051/001)

##### Location

Grade 2 Listed structure supporting the A518 Stafford to Uttoxeter road and key utility equipment over the River Blithe. This route is part of the resilient network with a divisionary route of 35 miles.



### Asset Risk

Poor horizontal and vertical profiling of the carriageway, combined with restricted carriageway width appear to have contributed to 12 accidents since 2004, resulting in repeated demolition of the heritage parapets. The parapet has sub-standard parapet containment and width restrictions prevent the installation of safety barriers.

Fortunately impact damage has been confined to the parapets, however the frequency of significant damage to this vulnerable aged arch structure may worsen such that the structure and network is taken out of commission without notice for an extended period. This would severely impact the economy and access for emergency services.

### Required Solution

Land was acquired by Staffordshire County Council in December 1996 to construct a bypass structure as shown in Figure XX.



Figure XX

Further to the draft alignment and land purchase the scheme requires progression through detailed design and consultation. It is recommended to deliver this scheme reasonable within a 10-year period with a current estimated value of £20m.

## 6 Stafford Railway Bridge, Stafford, (B0738)

### Location

Supporting the de-trunked A449 Wolverhampton Road over West Coast Mainline railway near Stafford Station, this structure forms part of the M6 diversion, plus abnormal load and resilient networks.



Figure XX

### Asset Risk

Prior to the transfer of this structure from Highways England to Staffordshire County Council as part of the de-trunking programme, the present defects were previously identified. It appears original construction issues have resulted in the reduced capacity and poor condition of the service bay located beneath the verge. High containment kerbs have been installed to restrict access, however the condition of the concrete soffit continues to deteriorate with the risk of material falling onto the railway.



Figure XX

Reinforcement bars have been removed from vulnerable areas of the soffit to prevent contact with overhead electrification. Catenary supports now further complicate access for maintenance.

#### Required solution

An effective repair is currently difficult to accurately define given restricted access to the rail environment and variable condition of defects. Working time is limited to only several hours within a possession, which may be suspended by Network Rail without notice. Multiple possessions are required to undertake reinforcement and concrete repairs to the soffit. Further reinforcement within the highway verge is required to stabilise the parapet, protect utility equipment and increase loading capacity.

Throughout 2022-23 track possessions will be utilised for restoration of supporting steel trestles, also taking this availability to further plan soffit repairs for completion within five years. A scheme costs estimate is not currently.

### **Medium to Long Term Forecasting**

The authority is also looking to use the Structures Asset Valuation Investment Toolkit (SAVI). SAVI is a multi-functional, condition-based decision support tool. It can be used for:

It was developed for the UK Bridges Board through the /DfT/UKRLG research funding to assist local authorities and asset operators. It can be used to:

- carry out valuation of structures stock,
- develop prioritised short-term programmes of work, and
- develop long-term asset management plans

We take a risk-based approach to decide where to invest our money and use the asset information we have about the bridges and highway structures to do this. Some of the things we consider include the following:

- Where is the defect? Is a "critical element" (a part of the asset that is vital to its structural integrity) affected?
- What is the risk to highway users? Does the structure carry/support a Resilient Highway Network road, high-speed road, main road, minor road or footway? Does the structure span a high-speed road, main road, minor road or footway? Does the structure carry high volumes of traffic? Are there suitable alternative routes if the structure fails?

- What is the risk to third party assets? Does the structure support or span a railway, river, watercourse or other third-party asset? Is access to critical infrastructure such as powers stations or hospitals affected?

Investment is prioritised where the risk is highest.

We also consider how to invest our budget based on the condition of our assets. This enables us to determine how much work is needed to restore them and whether it is more cost effective to replace them completely. In many cases we can protect our bridges and highway structures and maximise their lifespan by undertaking minor maintenance, cleaning, painting and waterproofing them. This work requires a commitment to repeat investment but can significantly reduce costs in the longer term. Nevertheless, in some instances the asset has been damaged beyond repair or simply reached the end of its useful life. In these instances, renewal is the only option.

Investment is also directed by network availability. For example, where maintenance is necessary in the vicinity of a rail line we are required to apply for permission for occupation.

Finally, we need to consider our investment in the wider context of the highways service.

Having assessed each site, we are able to collate a prioritised list of works.

### 9.5.2. Investment aspirations

The delivery of bridge and other structural maintenance schemes can take several years to plan, given the extensive investigation, testing, design and consenting processes. Confidence in funding is required to delivery schemes efficiently, with greater certainty in network utilisation and to meet environmental requirements. It is often not possible to delivery quickly

#### Short term needs

<b>Capital Funding</b>	22/23	23/24	24/25
Asset Management	300	300	300
Capacity Assessment	65	65	65
Scour Assessment			
Forward Design Programme	250	250	250
Abnormal Load Management	95	95	95
Laboratory Testing	38	38	38
Low Headroom Signage	15	50	50

Essential Minor Maintenance	200	200	200
Principal Inspection	65	65	65
Coley Lane Parapet Strengthening			
Yoxall Trent Stabilisation			
Chetwynd Bridge 18T Limit / Stabilisation	3,000		
Chetwynd Bridge Bypass Structures	100	100	13,000
School Lane Footbridge Strengthening	300	1,200	
Moss Pit Footbridge Replacement	100	1,900	
Dunston Bridge Replacement	100	300	
Greensforge Bridge Strengthening	100	250	500
Swythamley Landslip Stabilisation	100	400	
Total			
External contributions (DfT)			
Net total			

<b>Revenue Funding</b>	22/23	23/24	24/25
Routine Maintenance	60	60	60
Preventative Maintenance	350	350	350
Reactive Maintenance	350	350	350
Subway Maintenance	20	20	20
Dam Management and Maintenance	110	110	110
Van Running Costs	32	32	32
Highway Bridge General Inspection	185	185	185
Underwater Inspection	100	100	100
Total			

Not included for inflation = 5%/YR

#### Medium term

Burndhurst bypass £20m

Retaining wall inventory

#### Long term forecast

The following forecasts of asset condition have been determined from the Confirm database and modelled using the Structures Asset Valuation and Investment (SAVI) Tool. It should be noted that these results are not directly comparable to those obtained previously using the HMEP ancillary assets toolkit populated with Staffordshire specific data. Therefore, the current condition provided below is not directly comparable with the comparison results provided for earlier years and should be regarded as a new baseline.

# Volume 5 – Vehicle Restraint Systems

## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS) is to prevent vehicles impacting hazards or leaving the highway on to critical third-party infrastructure. A high percentage of VRS is located within the central reserve and ensures segregation between traffic travelling in opposite directions, preventing high-speed head-on crashes.

Additionally, objects next to the road can present a significant hazard to the road user and there is a clear need to ensure that they are reasonably protected. Examples of such objects would be structures, large signs, lamp posts, or where there is a large difference in level near to the road edge.

## 9.2. ASSET CONDITION

### 9.2.1. Other Significant Factors affecting VRS Maintenance

#### **Proportion of asset at end of life**

VRS, like many assets, have not historically been asset managed and as a result, a significant proportion could be considered life-expired or not meeting current standards. There will be VRS assets on the network that could be in excess of 45 years of age, especially on the lower classification of roads. Work will be prioritised on a priority basis which considers the risk of failure.

All vehicle restraint systems was installed to comply with the standard specification of the time, we will not automatically replace VRS that no longer conforms.

#### **RTC damage and non-recoverable costs**

Damage by third parties accounts for the majority of reactive repairs. Significant efforts are made to recover costs from third parties where driver details are available. There are, however, collisions where the VRS keeps vehicles on the road and drivers are able to leave the site without police or our involvement.

#### **High Speed Roads**

The most critical VRS are on the high-speed strategic road network. This network is difficult to access without creating local congestion and therefore the majority of repair and upgrade works are undertaken at night, which has a cost implication.

### **9.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

This covers the maintenance of existing VRS and safety fences and includes the renewal of panels and posts.

Safety fences and VRS will be maintained in a sound structural condition and to the correct height, so that they fulfil their purpose and do not, in themselves, constitute a danger to road users or pedestrians.

Safety fences and VRS are provided for the protection of the travelling public both vehicular and pedestrian. Effective maintenance is essential to meet these requirements.

#### **9.3.1. Future Management of the VRS Asset**

We recognise that there has been limited asset management, including condition assessment of VRS. Funding is being sought to survey the VRS asset in 2022 which will enable us to determine the condition, extent and maintenance backlog of the asset.

When we have the data and tools in place, we will be carrying out similar analysis as other asset groups. This will enable us to determine more robustly the effect on asset condition of various funding scenarios and enable us to produce an evidence-based forward works programme.

### **9.4. ASSET INSPECTION**

There are two types of checks, planned inspections and reactive inspections.

#### **9.4.1. Planned Inspections**

Planned inspections include general highway safety inspections and are carried out as part of our cyclical maintenance regime:

- Our team of highway inspectors carry out visual safety checks to make sure the highway assets are in a safe condition. This includes visually checking that the VRS is not damaged or missing. We carry out this kind of check at least once every twelve months.
- Our Highway Structures Team carry out cyclic inspections of highway structures and inspect VRS which are adjacent to the structure, for the purpose of the protection of that structure.

#### **9.4.2. Reactive Inspections**

Reactive inspections are carried out in response to enquiries and generate ad-hoc and emergency works orders for repair. These enquiries may be initiated by colleagues within partner organisations such as the Police or National Highways and from members of the general public.

### **9.4.3. Condition Assessment**

The VRS asset has only been traditionally assessed through the planned safety inspection, usually from a moving vehicle. Assessment of defect and historic spend does not reflect the true demand placed on the asset.

## **9.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

### **9.5.1. Prioritisation of Investment**

When deciding where to spend our money we think about the risks posed to the road users, including:

- If the VRS fails, does it create a hazard to road users?
- If the VRS is breached, is there likely to be a secondary event, i.e. a structure, another road or railway?
- Serviceability of the VRS system.
- Compliance of the VRS system.

We also consider:

- The type of road, for example, the maintenance hierarchy, whether it is a high-speed or on the resilient network.
- The volume of traffic that uses the road, for example is it a main route in and out of a town or is it a minor road only used by a handful of drivers each day?
- The accident history of the road.

### **9.5.2. Value for Money**

A long-term programme of work will be developed giving opportunity to achieve efficiency through cross asset priority. Early contractor engagement can then seek to achieve innovative solutions for further cost savings.

Through programme coordination and visibility of future SCC schemes which may affect other key highway asset or major improvement scheme, we adjust its place in the programme so that we can combine activities in order to maximise financial efficiencies.

Whilst it is recognised that the vehicle restraint systems provide an additional protection historically a few vehicle restraint systems have

been erected that under current assessment would not meet with the criteria for new infrastructure. At these sites the works scheme may not replace a VRS as it may not be assessed to be required, or it may not be possible to install a new VRS compliant with standards at the location. Instead, the approach referred to in the UK Roads Boards Liaison Groups "Provision of Road Restraint Systems for Local Authorities" will be used and alternative measures may be installed if the level of risk justifies it. These alternative measures could include installing containment kerbing, bollards or additional signing/lining.

# Volume 6 – Street Lighting and Illuminated Signs

## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

In 2003 Lighting for Staffordshire were awarded a 25-year PFI (Private Finance Initiative) contract to carry out the renewal of life-expired road lighting and illuminated traffic sign equipment on the road and streets of Staffordshire (excluding unitary authority of Stoke on Trent and trunk roads passing through the county), together with the ongoing maintenance activities including routine and emergency fault attendance and rectification. Operational delivery is provided by E.ON Energy Solutions Limited. The contract currently covers 108,000 pieces of apparatus.

The types of illuminated apparatus maintained are:

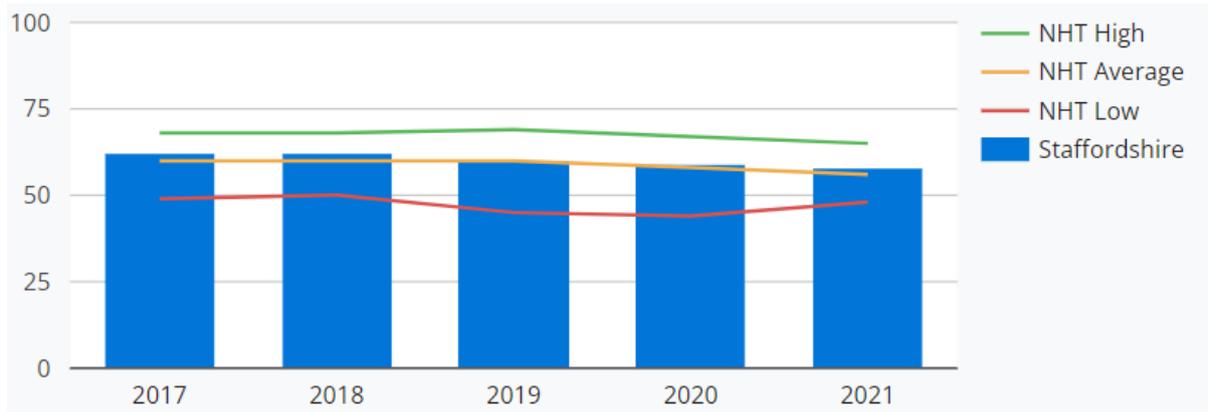
- Street lights / lampposts
- Lit road bollards
- Belisha beacons
- School Amber Flashing Units
- Lit traffic signs
- Subway lights

## 9.2. Stakeholder expectations

Street lighting provides a number of important benefits. It can be used to promote security in urban areas and to increase the quality of life by artificially extending the hours in which it is light so that activity can take place. Street lighting also improves safety for drivers, riders, and pedestrians.

## 9.3. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

**Chart 28 – Public Satisfaction with Speed of Repair to Street Lights**



Customer satisfaction with the response to street lighting repairs are above national average.

## 9.4. Asset Condition

### 9.4.1. Lighting Standards

When considering the provision of street lighting regard shall be given to the following aims:

- Increased safety for all users of the highway with special consideration being given to vulnerable groups such as pedestrians, cyclists, elderly, disabled and children. The reduction of night-time accidents is a principal aim.
- The convenience of all highway users and the enhancement of the night-time environment with special reference to lighting in sensitive areas.
- Increased personal security and the reduction of the fear of crime.
- Increased security to property including the deterrence of vandalism.
- The reduction of both night-time and day-time environmental intrusion.
- The provision of cost-effective lighting, which is energy efficient and takes account of whole-life costs.
- Choosing a design that is suitable for the context in question.
- Access, maintainability and longevity of the completed Lighting Scheme for the entire design life of the assets.
- New or replacement lighting shall be LED.

## **9.5. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

All illuminated assets are recorded in a dedicated Asset Management System.

### **9.5.1. Apparatus Renewal and programming**

All items of apparatus; street lights, illuminated signs and bollards, which exceed their anticipated lifespan or fail to meet structural standards, will be replaced.

The Asset Replacement programme is ongoing throughout the contract term.

For Conservation or special Interest Areas, consultation will be held with appropriate local authority conservation offices, where appropriate, before renewal is undertaken.

Residents will be notified a minimum of one month before planned renewal work commences under normal circumstances, and details will also be published on the internet and updated as required.

### **9.5.2. Routine Maintenance**

All apparatus will be inspected at least once every three years to ensure its' electrical safety, optical performance, structural condition and decorative condition are acceptable.

Any apparatus not meeting acceptable standards will be repaired or replaced.

Lamps will be renewed on a planned basis to maintain lighting standards.

Inspectors carry out night-time checks on all units once a month to check that they are correctly lit. Any faults will be logged for repair.

### **9.5.3. Faults and Emergencies**

We will endeavour to repair most faults within 5 working days of receiving notification.

Emergency faults, where there is a significant risk to the public or property will be attended with 2 hours of notification.

The site of any emergency will then be attended until the apparatus has been made safe. A full repair will normally be made within 25 working days.

Power failure faults relating to the electrical network will be referred to the relevant electricity supply company for repair within their respective standards of service.

# Volume 7 – Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

## 10.1. INTRODUCTION

The term Intelligent Transport System (ITS) refers to the application of information and communications technology to transport infrastructure, enabling data to be collected and shared to maximise the efficiency of the highway network.

ITS comprises a variety of technologies, ranging in their complexity and functionality. They include technologies designed to; monitor and capture data, manage and control systems.

Traffic signal installations form an important part of the highway network, and the effective operation and maintenance of these installations are pivotal for the safe movement of traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. Road networks are becoming more and more congested and therefore the need for maintaining the traffic signal installations and indeed other highway infrastructure is becoming increasingly important. Congestion causes increased delays to journeys and this impacts on the economy and the environment (raised levels of carbon dioxide).

## 10.2. STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATION

Traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and traffic signs are designed to control the flow of traffic on the roads and help keep motorists, pedestrians and cyclists safe when moving around our city.

## 10.3. ASSET CONDITION

SCC have an in-depth inventory of our ITS assets. Assets are managed through a product called IMTRAC. IMTRAC is a sophisticated system that can calculate asset power draw, determine current site value and replacement cost and support development of replacement/upgrade strategies.

An all-in Contract for maintenance to traffic Signals and pelican crossings is in operation. Dynniq UK are responsible for the fault attendance, planned maintenance and traffic signals upgrades and refurbishments.

The traffic signals lifecycle planning as a whole asset including the tactile paving, zig zag lines and the entire asset including the loop and the signal head

Dynniq has worked alongside Staffordshire County Council and Ian Routledge Consultancy Ltd to complete an in-depth asset data collection of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) assets.

### **10.3.1. Emergency Service**

A resourced answering service to receive and record faults notified in respect of the equipment. Cover is for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including all Public and Bank Holidays.

### **10.3.2. Response and Repair Times**

In respect of urgent faults, attendance on site is to be within 3 hours of receipt of the fault notification. Where necessary "first-aid" remedial repairs, to facilitate safe signal operation, are to be carried out within 8 hours of receipt of the fault notification.

In respect of the non-Urgent faults, attendance on site is to be within 24 hours of receipt of the fault notification. Full repair of these faults shall be affected within 24 hours of the receipt of the fault notification except for detector loops/feeders, for which an order has been placed.

### **10.3.3. Urgent Faults**

Urgent faults are attended to within 3 hours. The following shall comprise Urgent Faults:

- All signals unlit.
- Signals failing to change.
- Defective signals which, although not in accordance with the first two points, are likely to cause excessive queues and have caused abnormal traffic conditions which County Council/Agent Authority considers urgent.
- Signals damaged and in a dangerous condition.
- Any Red Lamp failure.
- Signals giving conflicting indications.
- Lanterns turned to give conflicting indication.
- Any fault in the control centre computers, or its peripherals, which can cause loss of control of the system, or cause excessive traffic congestion.

- Any data transmission fault involving loss of communication with one or more Outside Transmission Unit (OTUs).
- Remote monitoring installation defects.
- More than one lamp out on any approach.

### 10.3.4. Non-Urgent Faults

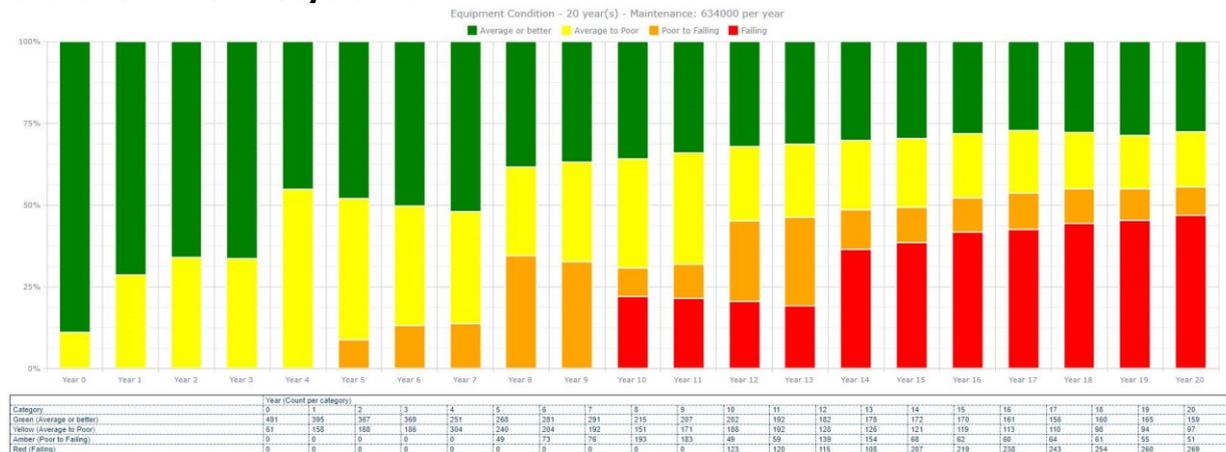
Non-urgent faults consist of all other faults not classed as urgent.

## 10.4. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Using the IMTRAC asset management system we have been able to predict the effect on asset condition of a range of maintenance strategies and budgets.

The current annual capital budget for ITS is £634k per annum. Chart 29 shows the projected condition of the asset when constrained by this budget and optimising our maintenance strategy.

**Chart 29 – ITS Lifecycle Plan**



Based on the current budget the asset will continue to deteriorate.

Using IMTRAC we have been able to determine that to keep the network in its current condition will require a base budget of £1.2m per year.

## 10.5. ASSET INSPECTION

Inspections are carried out annually on all traffic signal assets.

## 10.6. ASSET PROGRAMMING

Traffic signals typically deteriorate on a linear basis and have an expected useful life of between 15 and 20 years. However, newer technology is making parts last longer, for example LED.

IMRAC considers this lifecycle when prioritising sites for maintenance or upgrade. We also take into account customer contacts and the local knowledge of maintenance engineers when developing our prioritised candidate list of schemes.

# Volume 8 – Soft Landscapes

## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

The County’s soft landscape assets include more than 2.2 million square metres of urban grass, 5,800km of rural grass verges along with bushes shrubbery and wildlife and habitat sites. We also maintain some seasonal floral displays including hanging baskets and shrub and flower beds district wide.

The Council recognise that highway verges are a valuable resource for wildlife and biodiversity and, as such, they need to be managed with care and attention. As well as being a wildlife refuge, they also contribute greatly to the visual appeal of the street scene and are easily accessible to all.

If managed appropriately Staffordshire's soft landscape can provide interconnected wildlife corridors supporting a wealth of wildlife including plants, bees, butterflies and reptiles.

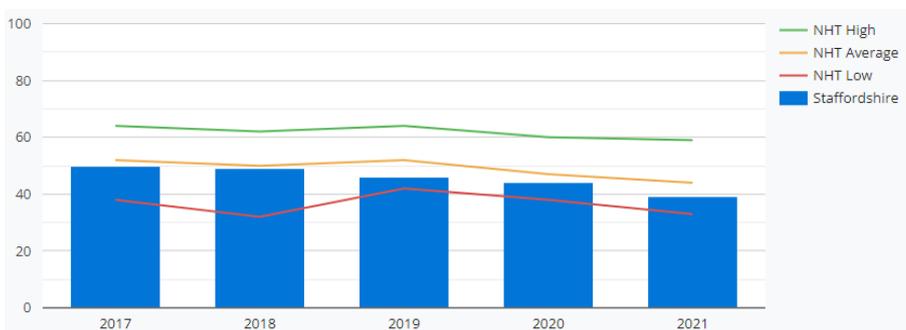
## 9.2. Stakeholder expectations

These are viewed as important assets that contribute both to the quality of Life in Staffordshire, its sustainability and its biodiversity and also help define the nature of its highway network.

## 9.3. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

Public satisfaction in the management of the SCC green estate is below the national average and is decreasing in line with the overall national trend.

**Chart 30 – Public Satisfaction in maintenance of highway verges/trees/shrub**



Commented [PC(1)]: Is it worth mentioning third party maintained planted areas within the highway ?

Commented [TM(&S2R1)]:

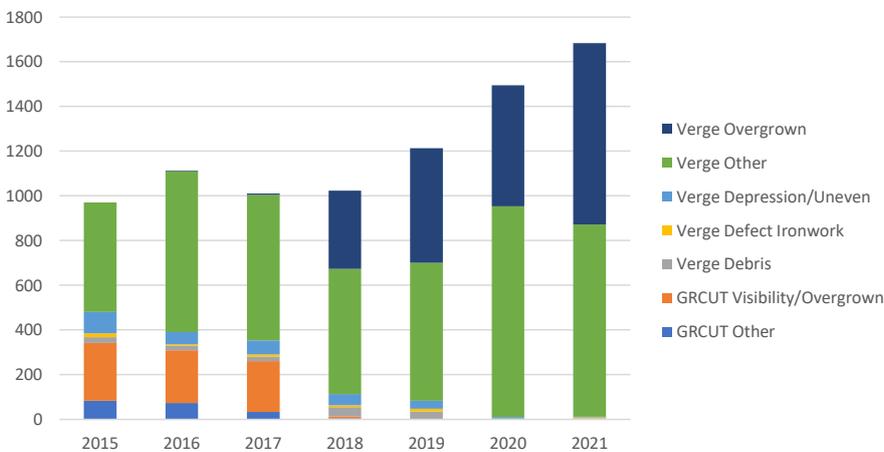
**Chart 31 – Public Satisfaction in how SCC cuts back overgrown hedges**



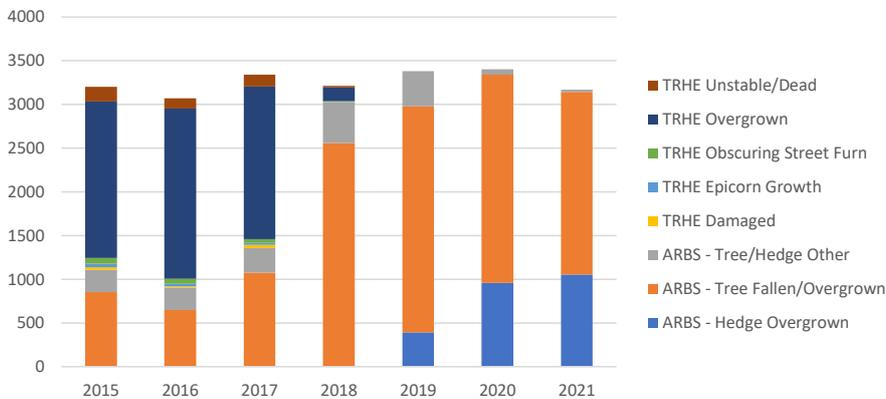
**9.4. Customer Reports and Enquiries**

Customer Enquiries and reports about soft landscaping have increased by over 50% from around 2018. Before 2018 the number was averaging around one thousand per year but in 2021 this has grown to almost 1700. Changes to reporting have reduced the options available but the majority of the increase appears to be due to reports about overgrown verges.

**Chart 32 – Soft Landscaping Customer Enquiries**



**Chart 33 – Trees and Hedges Customer Enquiries**



### 9.4.1. Complaints

We often receive enquiries and reports about parking on grass verges.

Parking on grass verges is a widespread issue nationally across all local authorities and can have a big impact on people. It causes conflict between those residents who wish to park on verges and those who would like to see verges protected in order to care for and enhance the appearance of the area. Uncontrolled verge parking can reduce verges to an unsightly state, present a hazard to pedestrians and other road users, make it difficult to maintain and cause damage to street trees.

It is not against the law to park on a grass verge. Exceptions to this are:

- heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) that weigh more than 7.5 tonnes (section 9 of the Road Traffic Act 1988)
- when there is a bylaw to stop parking on a grass verge
- when parking on a grass verge breaks a traffic regulation order (TRO)

Where there are no waiting restrictions on the road, enforcement can only be carried out by Staffordshire Police, but they are only likely to take action if the parking is causing an obstruction, such as a situation where pedestrians, pram or wheelchair users are being forced into a busy road as a result of parking blocking the verge or pavement. Such cases should be reported to the police on the non-emergency phone number 101.

#### What action can we take?

Where stones or similar objects are placed on the highway, in such a way as to prevent or obstruct public use of the highway, then the Highway Authority may serve notice that the objects should be removed. If the offence persists, the Highway Authority will seek a Magistrate's Removal and Disposal Order in respect of such objects.

Where boulders or similar objects are placed on the highway verge, in such a way as to prevent or obstruct safe public use of the highway, then the County Council, may serve notice on the offenders that the obstructions be removed. If this course of action has no effect, then the

County Council would seek assistance to obtain a Magistrate's Removal and Disposal Order, in respect of such obstructions. However, if they constitute an immediate safety hazard, the Council will arrange for their removal.

A boulder or similar object more than 100mm diameter is considered to be a potentially hazardous obstruction and any such item that has been placed on the highway verge to deter vehicles, or beautify a frontage, must be considered a hazard.

Where boulders or similar objects are placed to preserve the appearance of a well maintained verge or grassed area and where they are clearly visible, well set back from the edge of carriageway and do not constitute obstructions of a hazardous nature (e.g. village green features etc.), the policy will be one of "non-disapproval". This still means that the County Council cannot authorise their presence, as technically, they are still classed as obstructions, but no action will be taken to remove them. Sites where obstructions can be ignored must be at the discretion of the County Council.

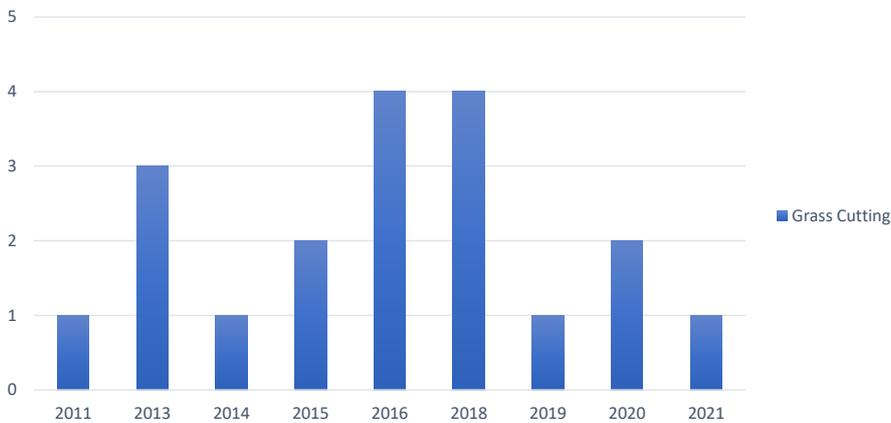
A more sustainable and resilient alternative, we may accept the planting of trees in the verge to deter parking. Small, young trees (suitable for the public highway) can be planted at the required spacing for the type of tree. However, overhead cables, nearby street lighting columns and other street furniture often prevent this.

Section 96 of the Highways Act 1980 empowers a District or Parish Council to plant and maintain trees in a highway maintainable at public expense, subject to the consent of the County Council. The District or Parish Council will be required to indemnify the highway authority against third party claims arising as a result of the tree being planted in the highway. The highway authority will not maintain such trees.

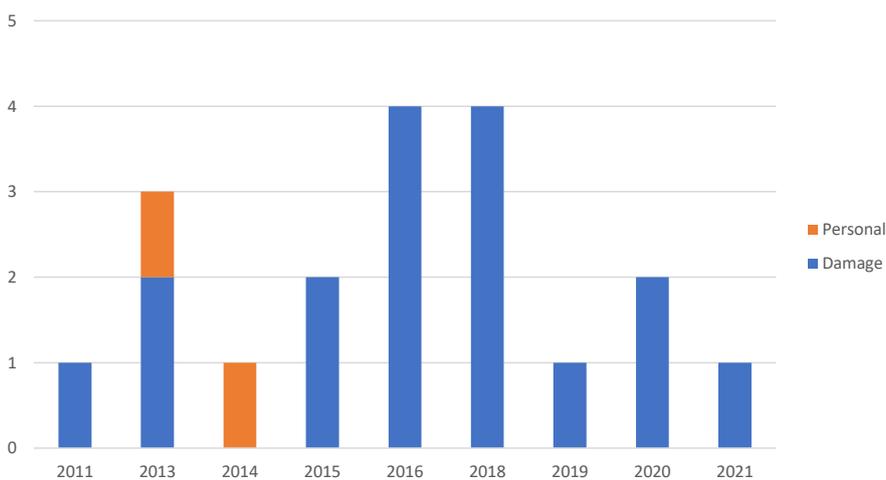
An adjacent property owner/occupier may plant trees in the highway subject to compliance with the terms and conditions specified in a licence granted by the highway authority under Section 142 of the Highways Act 1980. The Parish or District Council must be prepared to take on the maintenance of the trees.

#### **9.4.2. Claims**

##### **Chart 34 – Grass Cutting Claims**



**Chart 35 – Grass Cutting Claims by Type**



### 9.5. ASSET CONDITION

There is no defined condition collection regime for these assets. Records on soft landscape assets are currently ad hoc and information on existing assets will generally only be considered where this is required for example to enable the implementation of a different maintenance regime or delivery arrangement.

### 9.6. ASSET MANAGEMENT & LIFECYCLE PLANNING

**Commented [WD(3)]:** Perhaps add 'Life cycle planning' to each Volume to outline our intentions for each asset group?

The authority commits a significant amount of resources each year maintaining our soft landscape green infrastructure. The main focus of the maintenance regime is to ensure road safety, so for example we cut grass verges to ensure that vegetation does not restrict visibility for highway users and to provide a safe refuge for pedestrians.

We do not envisage developing life cycle plans for soft landscaping at the current time.

### **9.7. ASSET INSPECTION**

Our team of highway inspectors carry out driven and walked highway inspections. As part of their inspection they inspect grass, shrubs and vegetation for encroachment and obstruction which may affect visibility and safe use of the highway network. The frequency of inspections is dictated by road hierarchy.

We do not undertake planned detailed or condition inspections on our soft landscape assets as they are subject to cyclical maintenance activity which is then subject to a sample quality control inspection.

### **9.8. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

Various routine operations are required to keep the highway verge, central reserves, cuttings and embankment slopes in a safe condition. These include inspecting and removing obstructions and cutting grass and vegetation to maintain visibility.

#### **9.8.1. Siding of Verges**

Siding of verges should only be carried out where the encroachment of the verge onto the footway is likely to cause damage to a footway, or where encroachment is sufficient to cause a marked reduction in width. This work is usually only undertaken when there is planned footway works such as footway slurry or resurfacing.

Siding of kerbed roads should be carried out only when the encroachment of vegetation obscures the kerb. It is anticipated that, in most cases, this will be achieved by chemical treatments. On un-kerbed roads, siding should only be carried out in advance of surface dressing, and only where absolutely necessary.

#### **9.8.2. Grass Cutting**

We carry out grass cutting on public highway verges predominantly to maintain visibility and enhance the safety of highway users. We are not responsible for grass cutting on public open spaces, village greens, verges

which are not highway maintainable at public expense, or verges next to roads in Staffordshire which are maintained by other authorities - such as trunk roads.

Some housing associations also carry out this maintenance on areas of grass that form part of their land.

We separate our highway verge maintenance into two programmes; rural grass cutting and urban grass cutting and there are several delivery partners engaged in this work on our behalf.

Verges will be maintained in a safe condition with particular care being applied to ensuring that visibility is not impaired. Grass will be cut to standards designed to ensure that, in normal weather conditions, growth does not present a road safety hazard to any class of road user.

### **Urban Grass cutting**

Urban grass cutting is a routine maintenance operation, broadly carried out on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph or less and is sometimes undertaken on our behalf by the district, borough or parish council in whose area the road is located.

Since April 2020 urban grass is cut a minimum of six times throughout the growing season. Our duty is about maintaining safety and visibility and not about aesthetics or tidiness. We do not have the resources available to collect grass cuttings following this activity; instead this is left to mulch down into the verge areas.

Whilst this grass will be cut to a minimum standard of six cuts per year, some local councils may choose to deliver additional cuts to improve the general aesthetic feel of an area. Advice and guidance are available to local councils on how to undertake grass cutting and other forms of roadside maintenance should they wish to do so.

### **Rural Grass Cutting**

Our main priority for rural grass cutting is to maintain visibility and safety for road users. We do not have the resources available to collect grass cuttings afterwards, so these are left to mulch down into the verge areas.

The rural programme is generally undertaken on roads with a speed limit of 40mph and above and there are two regimes in operation depending whether they are classed as Priority 1 or Priority 2 in the grass cutting programme.

**Commented [WD(4)]:** Is it worth adding a table listing those areas i.e. districts and parishes that undertake grass cutting on our behalf – it adds to the document length but also demonstrates the local arrangements that are in place?

The rural grass cutting programme involves a 1m wide single swathe cut three times per year for Priority 1 routes and a 1m wide single swathe cut twice a year for Priority 2 routes. Generally the swath will be adjacent to the carriageway but, in some locations it may be set back due to the presence of a footway or cycleway.

In some parts of the county, due to arrangements to protect local wildlife, some locations are only cut once per year.

Areas that need to be cut back at junctions and bends for good visibility are generally cut to full width.

All grass is to be cleared around columns, safety fences, signposts and walls, and grass which cannot be cut by machine, is to be trimmed by other means.

No grass is collected for removal. However, grass which is deposited on footways will be swept up and deposited on the adjacent verges.

### **Verge Maintenance**

This item is to include the repair of verges in urban areas, only where the verge is a significant environmental feature, or to prevent damage to grass cutting machinery. Also included in this item is the siding of verges.

### **Roadside nature reserves**

Designated roadside nature reserves will have bespoke cutting regimes as agreed between Staffordshire County Council and XXXXX.

### **9.8.3. Weed Spraying**

Weed spraying is a routine maintenance operation undertaken to mitigate structural damage to highway infrastructure and/or for safety/visibility reasons. It is not necessarily carried out to improve the aesthetics of an area.

A single weed spraying treatment takes place between June and August. In rural areas, for roads with a speed limit of 40 mph and above, existing weeds along the kerb and channel will be treated. In urban areas for roads with a speed limit of 30 mph and below, we will spray the kerb, channel and the back of the footway (pavement) where a hard edge such as a fence or wall exists, if weeds are present. No provision is made in the

budgetary allocations for the treatment of weeds growing in flagged footways.

Due to regulations associated with the toxicity of weed spraying chemicals, the solution used by our contractors is very mild and is only effective on growing plants. Spraying is therefore only undertaken where weeds are present, and the solution's effectiveness can be drastically reduced if rainfall occurs after treatment. We do not have the resources to carry out additional weed spray visits.

**Commented [WD(5):** Should we specify the type of weedkiller to be used or, is it in the specification?

Some district/borough councils undertake weed spraying operations in advance of their urban grass cutting programmes particularly around street furniture, to avoid the need for strimming operations.

In recent years the frequency of weed spraying has reduced from 3 times per year to once.

The growth of weeds in footways and cycleways, central reserves and along kerb lines, may cause structural damage, and the general perception of such growth is that it is untidy.

Weed treatment typically costs £75k per year. To increase this service to two treatments would require an additional £75k per year investment.

Weed growth attracts 1,086 customer enquiries per year.

#### **9.8.4. Injurious Weed Control**

The Noxious Weeds Act 1959 places a responsibility on the Highway Authority to take action to inhibit the growth and spread of injurious weeds growing within the highway.

In Staffordshire, injurious weeds are treated in accordance with a programme. Our control methods for injurious weeds are used to address known locations where there are accumulations of Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam or Giant Hogweed.

Japanese Knotweed will receive one treatment a year. Common Ragwort is very important for wildlife in the UK. It is a major source of nectar for many insects. However, all parts of the plant are poisonous and are a hazard to grazing livestock. SCC will only treat Common Ragwort where there is a clear hazard to grazing livestock.

Concerns about significant accumulations of injurious weeds on Staffordshire's highway network can be reported directly using the myStaffs app OR Report It. In most cases however it is likely that we are already aware of the site and already have a regime in place to treat the location.

### **9.8.5. Service Strips**

A 'service strip' is an area of public highway grass verge, typically but not always the same width as a pavement, between the road and the private boundary. This is usually demarcated by a row of edging kerb or blocks.

The service strip can be used by the public utility companies (such as gas and water companies) to install and access their equipment. It also acts as a pedestrian refuge and, if necessary, vision splay (allowing a clear view of the road).

It is unlawful to alter the existing surface or erect any structure on it and this includes hedges or shrubs.

### **9.8.6. Other Significant Factors affecting the Soft Landscape Asset**

#### **Pest and Disease**

Soft Landscape assets are natural living organisms in their own right. As such, they grow and are subject to disease or even death. Where this occurs on a large scale there can be unforeseen impacts on maintenance budgets.

### **9.8.7. Environmental matters**

Climate change has meant that more flooding is seen through Autumn to Spring with hotter dryer summers. This impacts the ability of native species to grow and thrive in the local environment as well as increasing growth rates for grass and other vegetation.

Imbalance in this regard has the potential to impact on landscape "safe useful life expectancy" and "lifecycle planning" when installing new landscape assets such as wildflower verges and shrubs. The above factors all need to be balanced with available funding when planning future schemes, services and frequency of maintenance.

### **9.8.8. Conservation**

When undertaking any works to the highway, the likely effects on landscape and nature conservation will be taken into account. In particular, works in the vicinity of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) be carried out in a manner that is not detrimental to the site. In all cases of doubt, the advice of an Ecologist will be sought.

### **9.8.9. Environmental Focus**

With the recognition of climate change there has been an increased focus on the highway soft landscape asset and how this can deliver the environmental benefits necessary to reach both the council's and government's targets regarding biodiversity.

As part of our approach to managing this asset we will do the following:

- Provide verge management regimes that actively encourage and enhance biodiversity for pollinators and wildlife.

## Volume 9 – Trees and Hedges

### 10.1. INTRODUCTION

There are over 3,800 miles of road which are the responsibility of Staffordshire Council, and many of these roads have trees or woodlands close to the carriageway. There are estimated to be 475,000 trees on the highway with a further 128,000 on adjoining land but which could affect the highway, for example either due to the canopy overhanging or, the tree being within falling distance of the highway.

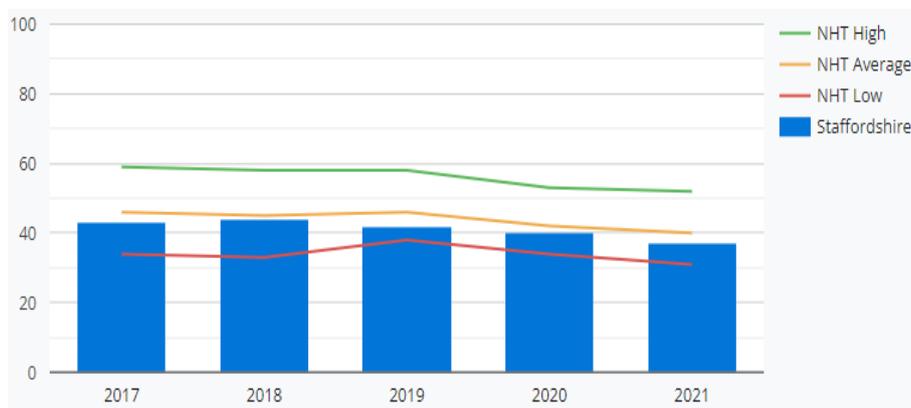
Trees in Staffordshire are an important asset that provides amenity value, carbon storage and sequestration, natural flood risk management and removal of pollution.

#### 10.1.1. Stakeholder expectations

Stakeholders expect an amenity that is safe as far a reasonably practicable that also delivers the environmental and conservation benefits that are associated with trees.

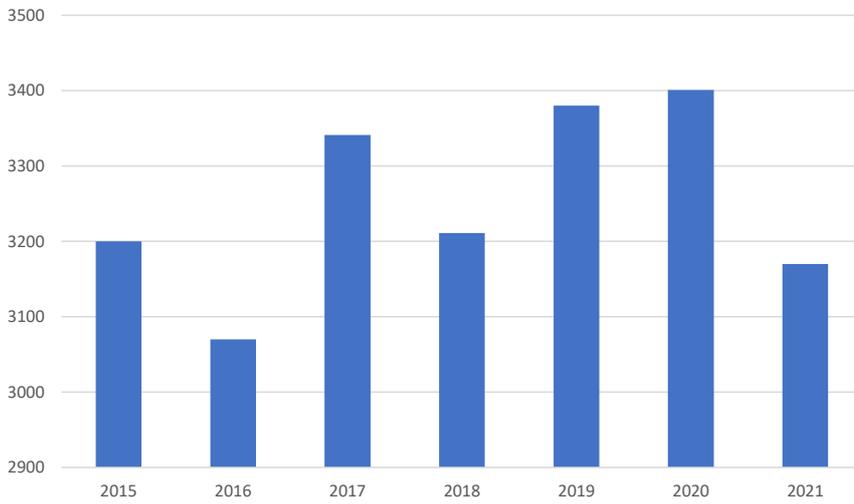
#### 10.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

**Chart 36 – Public Satisfaction in maintenance of highway verges/trees/shrub**



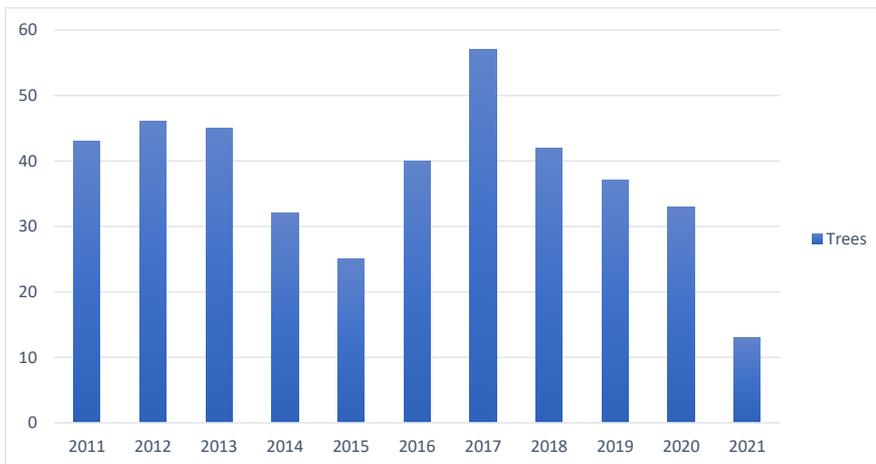
#### 10.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries

**Chart 37 – Customer Enquiries Trees and Hedges**

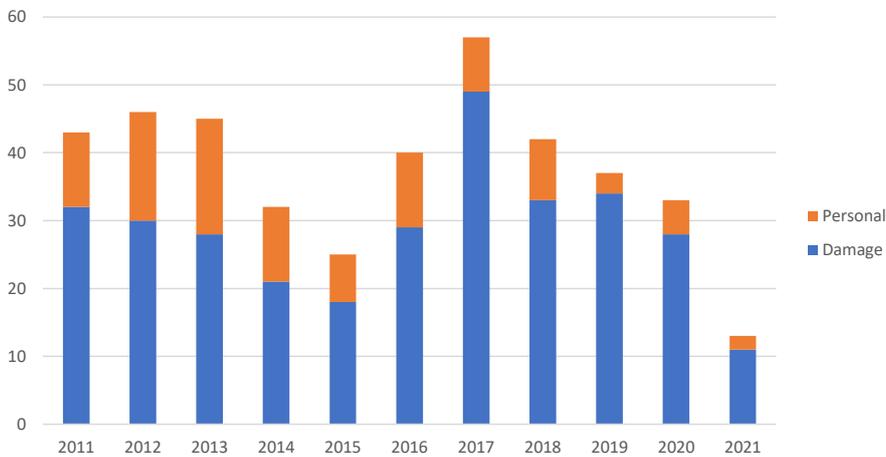


#### 10.1.4. Claims

**Chart 38 – Tree Claims Year on Year**



**Chart 39 – Tree Claims Damage Only vs Personal Injury**



## 10.2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

### 10.2.1. Asset Identification

1.1.1. Trees situated within the boundaries of the Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) are generally the responsibility of the highway authority unless they were planted under licence or by another authority such as a District or Parish Council.

Highway boundary trees and hedges will normally have been planted by, or on behalf of, the adjoining landowner, to define the boundary of his land with the public highway, and to contain his property. It is accepted by SCC that, unless there are specific agreements to the contrary, the maintenance of highway boundary hedges is the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, if a tree lies within the hedge line, then it is a non-highway tree that is considered to be an integral part of the hedge line and is therefore the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. For a tree to be deemed to be a highway tree, the tree trunk must lie, in its entirety, within the highway boundary (which is taken as the centre line of the hedge), or, in cases where part of the trunk has grown onto the adjacent landowners side of the highway boundary, it must clearly be seen that the tree had originally grown/been planted inside the highway boundary.

### 10.2.2. Managing Risk

Tree risk management involves the process of inspecting and assessing trees for their potential to cause personal injury or damage to property.

HSE guidance on the management of risk from falling trees and branches refers to guidance produced by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) entitled Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (CSRMT).

The guidance in CSRMT advises a reasonable and balanced approach forms the basis for sensible tree safety management and should cover three essential aspects:

- Zoning: appreciating trees in relation to people or property.
- Tree inspection; assessing obvious tree defects.
- Managing risk at an acceptable level: identifying, prioritising and undertaking safety work according to level of risk.

Details of this approach are included in the Management of Trees Policy which is included as an annex to this HIAMP.

### **10.3. ASSET INSPECTION**

All trees within the highway should be inspected annually for potentially dangerous conditions, or the likelihood of causing disruption or damage to adjacent property, during routine safety inspections. More frequent inspections may be necessary where individual trees give rise to concern regarding their structural integrity. If any necessary corrective measures need be carried out on trees, on highway land, they should be affected as soon as reasonably practicable.

SCC prioritise detailed inspections based on risk in an approach known as zoning. This methodology prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focussing resources where most effective. It is about appreciating tree stock in relation to proximity of people or property. Zoning contributes to sensible risk management.

### **10.4. ASSET CONDITION**

The condition of the tree asset is determined by detailed inspections undertaken by an arboriculturist appointed by or acting on behalf of the authority. The detailed inspections will consider the overall condition of the tree and not just defects in relation to the likelihood of failure.

### **10.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

#### **10.5.1. Trees**

The priority programme of future tree works is based on the outcomes of inspections and the assessment of condition and risk of those defects identified.

If a tree is situated on private land, then landowners or occupiers will be warned of dangerous trees and given notice to take the appropriate action, when these are brought to the attention of, or observed by, the County Council. Where it becomes necessary for work to be carried out on behalf of a landowner or occupier, costs will be recharged to owners, where practicable.

Trees on private property adjoining the public highway are the responsibility of the owner/occupier BUT the Highway Authority has a duty, and powers of enforcement, to ensure that such trees do not endanger the Highway or its users under Section 154 of the Highways Act.

### 10.5.2. Hedges

We are not responsible for the maintenance of the majority of hedges alongside the highway. Unless there are specific agreements to the contrary, the maintenance of highway boundary hedges will be assumed to be the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. Any work carried out on such hedges to maintain visibility, or to remove obstructions to footways, will, wherever practicable, be recharged to the adjoining landowner. A small number of hedges are cut for amenity value.

Commented [PC(6)]: Some hedges are cut for 'amenity' value

Where hedges are the responsibility of the Highway Authority, trimming of seasonal growth for visibility purposes should be carried out annually (or more frequently, if required) on rural and urban roads. Trimming of other lengths of hedges are not cyclical and will be identified through the routine safety inspection process or customer enquiries (always providing that visibility sight lines, and road signs are not obscured). Significant nature conservation benefits will result from this practice. Such trimming should, as far as possible, be done in late winter, to avoid the bird-nesting season and to allow birds and mammals the maximum opportunity to take advantage of any fruits or seed present.

Where a hedge requires cutting between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August, this will generally only be for safety reasons and following and ecological survey.

Shrubberies which are the responsibility of the Highway Authority should be pruned and trimmed for visibility purposes when the safety of road users is at risk. Work over and above this is deemed to be amenity work and is, therefore, the responsibility of the District Council.

The RSBP provides advice on the best time of year to carry out any trimming to avoid the nesting season. Any hedge cuttings that fall into ditches or grips should be removed as soon as possible. Cuttings that fall

onto the carriageway should be removed immediately since they cause a nuisance to highway users.

The Highways Act 1980 Section 161 states:

"...If a person without lawful authority or excuse, deposits anything whatsoever on a highway in consequence of which a user of the highway is injured or endangered, that person is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine..."

"...If a person, without lawful authority or excuse, allows any filth, dirt, lime or other offensive matter or thing to run or flow on to a highway from any adjoining premises, he is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine..."

If the hedge is to be cut from the field side and there is little to no verge, then signs advising the highway user that work is in progress should be used even if the carriageway is not going to be obstructed.

If the hedge is to be cut from the highway side and the tractor must run wholly or partly on the carriageway then relevant signs should be used to advise the motorist that the carriageway may be restricted.

Any warning signs used should be placed at either end of the length to be cut but they must not be more than 1 mile apart. If the working length exceeds this then the signs must be moved as the work proceeds.

For further detail regarding the management of highway trees please refer to the Highway Tree Management Strategy included as an annex to the HIAMP.

## Volume 10 – Signs and Lines

### 9.1. INTRODUCTION

This asset group comprises unlit traffic signs (lit signs are managed as part of the street lighting asset group), road markings and road studs.

Traffic Signs are categorised into four types; warning, regulatory, direction and information, and are provided to convey messages to highway users including equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians. The message must be clear and at the right time for users travelling at the normal speed for the road, footway or cycle track facility. They are therefore sited at appropriate distances for the speed of the road and the message they convey and should be reflective or lit as required.

Road markings are used to define boundaries for pedestrians and vehicles and guide them when using our public highway.

The implementation of all traffic orders, including the positing of notices, the provision and erection of new signs any carriageway markings, services, unmasking of new signs and removal of obsolete signs together with major resigning schemes is not to be included under this heading.

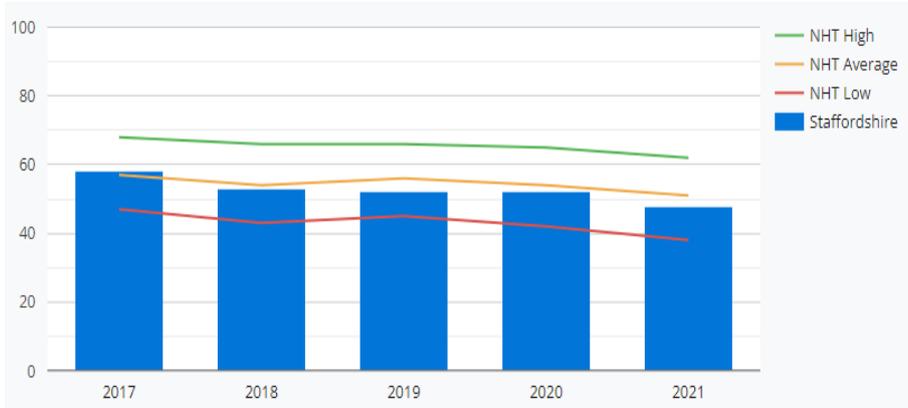
Partner agencies are also responsible for some signing on our highway network, and we liaise closely with National Highways, district and borough councils to influence a consistent approach within the county.

#### 9.1.1. Stakeholder expectations

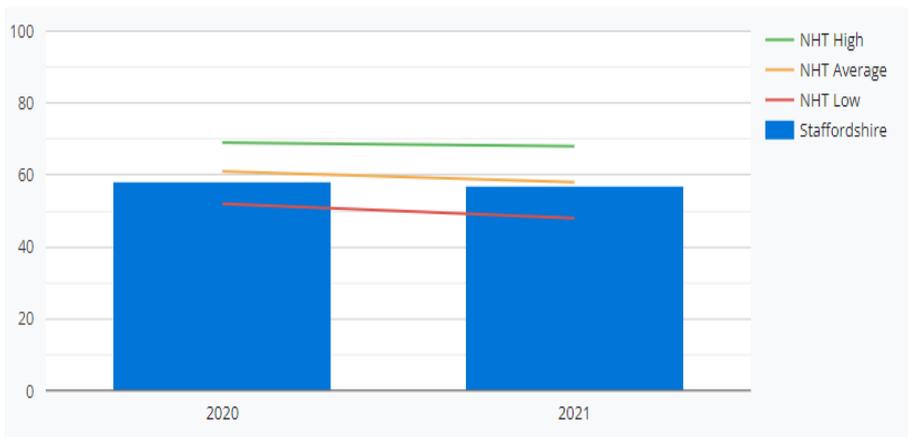
Road markings and signs on our roads are an essential aid to assist in road safety, providing directions and other information. Stakeholders expect this to be clear, concise and informative.

#### 9.1.2. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

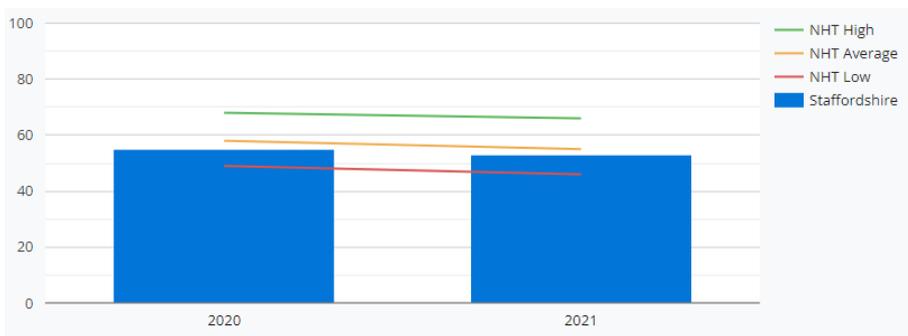
**Chart 40 – Public Satisfaction Condition of road markings**



**Chart 41 – Public Satisfaction Condition of road signs**



**Chart 42 – Public Satisfaction Cleanliness of road signs**



### 9.1.3. Customer Reports and Enquiries

Customer Enquiries are increasing rapidly with a further 450 enquires received in 2021 compared to 2015.

**Chart 43 – Customer Enquiries Signs and Lines**



## 9.2. ASSET CONDITION

Road signs and carriageway markings and studs will be provided and maintained in such a condition as to ensure that they provide clearly visible guidance to motorists at all times.

It is important to maintain carriageway markings and road studs in good condition, so that road users can be encouraged and helped to use the carriageway safely by day and night. They have a very important function in conveying information and requirements to road users, which might not otherwise be possible by roadside signs.

Road markings and signs are a very visible asset and contribute significantly to customer perception of the condition of the whole highway network and not just that of this asset group. The authority typically receives around 1,300 enquiries each year regarding missing or worn road markings or road studs. Non-illuminated signs that are worn, missing, dirty or damaged receive around 3,500 enquiries each year.

## 9.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Like many councils, we do not hold any inventory or condition data for road markings, with repairs undertaken using general reactive revenue funds.

The collection of road sign inventory is a key dataset that can provide information around the co-ordination and management of the entire highway network. For example, the road sign inventory would provide us with the detail of where weight limits, height restrictions, one-way streets, traffic moving restrictions are. Collecting this asset is currently under consideration and will cost in the region of £90k.

#### **9.4. ASSET INSPECTION**

Defects associated with road markings, road studs and non-illuminated signage are identified through the routine highway safety inspections. There is no designated condition survey for this asset group. This includes there not being any assessment for reflectivity of signs. There is also no programmed sign cleansing regime.

This is contrary to the recommendations in the Well Managed Highway Code of Practice which states 'The condition of non-illuminated road signs should be inspected in daylight, and also at night for degradation of colour, retro-reflectivity, deteriorating fittings, legibility distance, and average surface luminance, after cleaning. The frequency of cleaning required will be influenced by the risk of soiling in local areas'.

#### **9.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

On roads in Traffic Groups 1-4, and at known accident sites, markings will be renewed when more than 30% of their area becomes defective or is worn away. Where markings or studs have become obscured by mud or detritus, and this constitutes an immediate safety hazard, then it should be cleared off the carriageway. In other cases, the matter should be referred to the District Council.

Carriageway studs which are missing or defective should be replaced, individually, or by bulk change, depending on the individual highway circumstances. The aim is for 90% of the studs to be effectively reflective. A reflecting road stud is considered to be reflective up to a point where there is a loss of 25% of reflectivity.

##### **9.5.1. Access Protection Marking**

An access protection marking (APM) also known as an 'H bar' is an advisory road marking. APMs are marked out with white lines and are used to identify a vehicle access and make motorists aware that the access is required at all times of day.

Although they have no legal status it is an offence on the grounds of obstruction to park across a vehicle access.

Vehicles causing an obstruction to access/driveways with a dropped kerb can be reported to our clear streets team or the police.

A fee is charged for application for an access protection marking which applies for new and the repainting of existing.

### **Eligibility criteria**

You can only apply for an APM if you meet the following eligibility criteria:

- You must live in Staffordshire on a public highway. We cannot install APM on private roads.
- You must have a dropped kerb to either a garage or driveway.
- APMs can only be considered where the vehicle access kerbing is noticeably lower than the surrounding kerb line and where the upstand on the kerb face is 50mm or less, otherwise it is difficult to differentiate between the raised and dropped kerbs.
- We will not approve an individual APM where the vehicle access extends over a number of properties. This could look as if we were condoning parking over the adjacent vehicle accesses.
- Where a vehicle access is shared by two properties both properties will need to give consent, but this can be submitted on one application.
- APMs will only be considered if there is sufficient space to park a vehicle off the public highway in line with our vehicle access crossing guidance. An absolute minimum of 4.8m from the boundary of the property is required although 6m is preferred. This is to ensure that any vehicles do not obstruct the footway.
- The applicant must clearly demonstrate that the location is in close proximity to an establishment that generates a sufficient amount of on street parking such as a shop, church or place of worship or a school etc. APMs will not be considered where parking issues are a result of neighbours or local residents parking.
- If there are waiting restrictions already in place these are already enforceable by civil enforcement officers and so APMs would generally be deemed unnecessary in these locations.
- APMs will only cover the extent of the dropped crossing from the start of one dropped kerb to the end of the other; they will not deter vehicles from parking adjacent to your vehicle access and cannot be extended to incorporate this.
- APMs will not be supplied to prevent parking on the opposite side of the road from your vehicle access.
- APMs cannot be used to reserve on street parking.

- APMs will not be considered for newly constructed or extended vehicle access crossings (under 3 months) as the applicant is unable to predetermine if issues will arise.

### 9.5.2. Disabled persons parking bay

Disabled persons parking bays are markings to try and stop vehicles parking without displaying a blue badge.

#### Application criteria

To apply for a disabled persons parking bay, you need to meet the following criteria:

- No off-street parking is available on the property, and it would not be possible for this to exist.
- You should be unlikely to be able to park in a suitable location, close to your property, for most of the day.
- You should usually be the driver of the vehicle. Sometimes this may be widened to include others if you have a permanent disability that places you at risk if left unattended for any length of time. In this case, the driver of the vehicle must also live at the address where the parking bay is to be provided.
- Walking any distance, from your car to your property is unacceptable. This will need to be assessed.
- You must provide a copy of a notice of entitlement/letter of confirmation of the required level of allowance. This is to ensure the marking is necessary and that you have a severe mobility problem.
- There should be no existing waiting restrictions near your home.
- A marking in the 'turning head' of a cul-de-sac is not appropriate.

### 9.5.3. Specification for Thermoplastic Road Markings

The basis of this specification is a requirement to achieve prescribed standards of performance, during a two-year maintenance period.

The formulation of the line marking materials and its application on the site, will be the responsibility of the Contractor and any material composition or techniques may be utilised, providing the performance requirements are achieved. Thermoplastic road marking paints must adhere to the current standards – EN1871:2000.

The marking shall be white or yellow continuous or intermittent lines, words, figures, arrows or symbols. All marking shall conform with the requirements of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and any subsequent amendments thereto.

Commented [PC(1)]: Encouraging, and using cold MMA on difficult sites.

Superimposed white stripes at pedestrian crossings shall conform with the requirements of the "Zebra" Pedestrian Crossing Regulations 1997, and any subsequent amendment thereto.

MMA (Methyl Methacrylate) Cold Plastic is to be considered for application in high volume/stress locations like roundabouts, junctions, and roads that receive heavy traffic. While the initial cost for MMA may be higher than conventional marking materials, MMA Cold Plastic is likely to provide better whole life costs if applied in the correct locations.

#### **9.5.4. Specification for Reflecting Road Studs**

Studs shall comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. All reflecting road studs shall comply with BS 873 Part 4 and shall have received statutory type approval. Non-reflecting road studs shall be stainless steel, manufactured in accordance with BS 873 Part 4.

#### **9.5.5. Programming and Priorities**

The maintenance of signs and lines is not undertaken on a cyclical basis, instead any issues with these assets are identified through the routine highway safety inspection process, via customer enquiries or they are refreshed as part of planned works such as preventative maintenance programme.

Lining work is weather-dependent and both this and resource levels can affect our ability to reinstall road markings as quickly as we may prefer.

All road markings on the public highway in Staffordshire are installed in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions TSRGD 2016.

Commented [PC(2)]: Worth mentioning how much gets refreshed as part of preventative programme ?

# Volume 11 – Heritage Assets

## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

Over 400 milestones and other historic monuments are situated on the within the highway in Staffordshire. A register is being developed with a view to mapping these assets on the corporate GIS platform.

## 9.2. ASSET CONDITION

The County Council will maintain all monuments and historic structures within the highway where the ownership or maintenance responsibility has been established as being the County Council's.

## 9.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT

The choice of treatment and materials within this broad area takes their character into account whilst also considering the robustness of proposed materials and the whole life cost of potential options.

## 9.4. ASSET INSPECTION

These assets are inspected as part of the routine highway safety inspection process.

## 9.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING

Whilst the various milestones located at various points on the County Road Network are not currently included on this register, they will be maintained in a clean and legible condition.

Where a Parish Council has elected to maintain the road signs within the parish then the maintenance of mile posts and milestones would normally be included in that agreement.

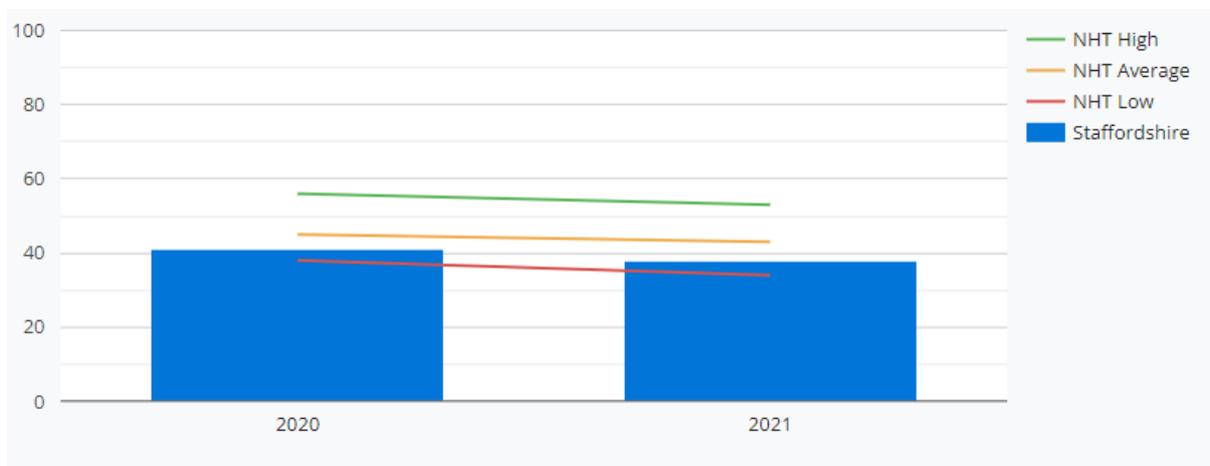
# Volume 12 – Street Furniture

## 10.1. INTRODUCTION

This asset group represents the highway street furniture which covers a wide variety of components such as pedestrian guard rail, non-illuminated bollards, cycle stands and weather stations.

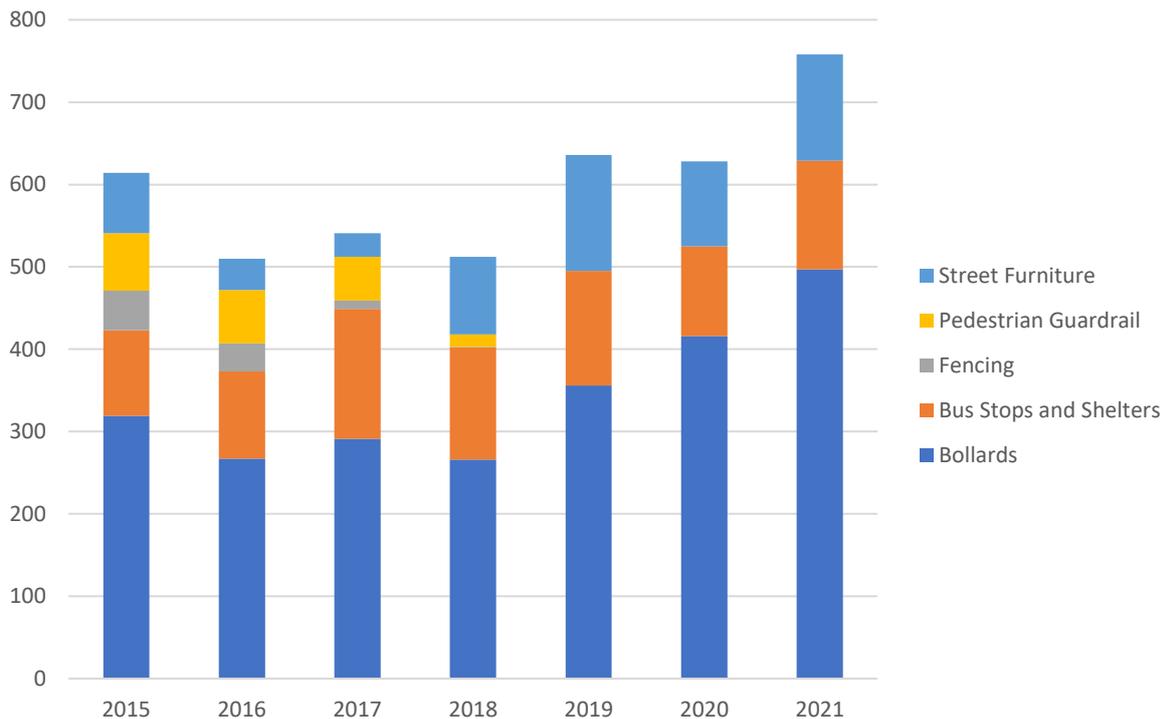
### 10.1.1. National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey

**Chart 44 – Public Satisfaction Highway enforcement/obstructions**



### 10.1.2. Customer Reports and Enquiries

**Chart 45 – Customer Enquiries Street Furniture**



## 10.2. ASSET CONDITION

Currently the Council do not have adequate asset registers for a number of these component groups.

Defects in street furniture that cause an accident or third-party claim against the Council are rare. However, damage to street furniture by a third party is common and reclaimed where possible. Those that cannot be recovered reduce the available budget for routine maintenance.

## 10.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT

The current asset management strategy for these components tends to rely on allocated revenue budgets. There are, however, elements of the Capital Plan associated with road safety and the provision of new street furniture assets.

Clearly the variety of elements within this asset group results in their use being equally varied. Most of the elements will be used indirectly by road users however weather stations, for instance, are used solely by highway officers.

A number of elements within this asset group are vitally important in providing a safe road network. The location and design of bollards and pedestrian barriers for instance, are governed by national design standards and codes of practice. A number of these elements are often subject to technical innovation and change.

The responsibility for the various categories of street furniture is generally as follows:-

Street furniture	Who is responsible?
Bollards, pedestrian guard rails, cycle stands, grit bins, weather stations	Staffordshire County Council
Street name plates, litter and dog waste bins, benches, information boards and flowerbeds.	District and borough councils
Seats and benches, planters and baskets, noticeboards, monuments, and village signs.	Parish councils
Telephone poles, phone boxes, mobile phone masts, manholes and fire hydrants.	Utility companies are usually responsible for their apparatus on the highway but if ownership is unclear or the problem poses an imminent risk to safety then the matter can be reported to Staffordshire County Council.
Bus stops and shelters	These might be maintained by Staffordshire County Council or the local district/borough or parish council, reports can be made online, and we will establish who is responsible.

### 10.3.1. Boundary Fences and Walls

Highway boundary fences are normally the responsibility of the fronting owner. Exceptionally, where they are the responsibility of the highway authority, maintenance will be limited to maintaining them in a sound structural condition to serve their function, and not be dangerous to road users or pedestrians.

Walls in the ownership of the County Council which are above 1.2m in height are regarded as highway structures and shall be referred to the County Structures Team.

### 10.3.2. Visibility Fences

Visibility fencing which has been placed at a road junction to improve visibility for pedestrians and motorists passing through the junction, will

be maintained in a sound condition and clear of vegetation which will impede the intended sight lines.

Visibility fencing, which has been placed at a road junction for visibility purposes, will normally be the subject of an agreement between the County Council and the adjoining landowner, such that the County Council agrees to maintain the fence in perpetuity. Maintenance works will normally consist of clearance of vegetation and re-painting.

Where the layout or road marking system at a junction is altered, the need for visibility fencing may be rendered obsolete, in which case, consideration should be given to replacing the fencing with conventional hedging etc., which would revert to the ownership of the adjoining landowner, thereby obviating the County Council's maintenance liability.

### **10.3.3. Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) and Vehicular Activated Signs (VAS)**

In an area where speeding can be a problem, Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) remind drivers of the speed limit and stand out from permanent roadside signs. They could help to break the habit of motorists who consistently drive too fast. SID's are usually installed by the County on the Parish Council's behalf.

### **10.3.4. Speed Enforcement Cameras**

Installed by SCC, operated and maintained by Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership. There are approximately 260 camera housings across the county and many of them are life expired and no longer used (due to technological advances and the age of some of the apparatus).

### **10.3.5. Rising Bollards**

Rising bollards are installed to protect the pedestrian area and ensure the town centres which they are deployed are attractive and safe places to visit. Rising bollards are currently located in Tamworth, Stafford and Uttoxeter.

## **10.4. ASSET INSPECTION**

Most elements of this asset group are inspected as part of the general highway safety inspection of the road network. Obvious defects are reported back to the relevant section for action. Ad-hoc inspections are carried as necessary following any reports of defects or damage.

## **10.5. ASSET PROGRAMMING**

### **10.5.1. Planned Maintenance**

There is limited planned maintenance carried out on street furniture.

### **10.5.2. Environmental Considerations**

A conscious effort is made to avoid overuse of street furniture particularly in environmentally sensitive areas. Most bollards are stainless steel or recycled plastic. Where cast iron bollards are in use they are restored and re-erected where possible. This usually involves cleaning and hand painting to retain the local character. The installation of concrete bollards is avoided where possible.

### **10.5.3. Historical Investment**

Historically a number of the minor street furniture components have had no dedicated budget and consequently the historical investment in these is often on a “care and maintenance only” basis.

### **10.5.4. Existing Programmes**

The maintenance and renewal of elements within this asset group is covered by the revenue programme.

### **10.5.5. Future Strategies**

Future strategies can only be developed when better asset inventory and condition is gathered.

## **Volume 13 – Emergencies and Adverse Weather Events**

### **11.1. INTRODUCTION**

Many emergencies that the UK has faced have been related to severe weather conditions. This has included:

- flooding
- gales
- snow
- freezing conditions
- heat waves

These incidents have resulted in people being evacuated from their homes, being stranded in freezing conditions and more deaths due to heat waves. Weather is therefore something for us all to take seriously as we go about our daily business.

### **11.2. SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS**

When severe weather warnings are received, appropriate resources will be mobilised in readiness to ensure a prompt and efficient response is achieved when required.

### **11.3. WINTER MAINTENANCE**

The purpose of winter maintenance is to ensure the safety of road users and maintain traffic movements in a cost-effective and efficient manner, whilst minimising the impact of the maintenance operations on the environment.

Winter maintenance activities are governed by a separate Winter Maintenance Operational Plan which is updated annually. The general principles contained in the Code are set out below.

#### **11.3.1. Precautionary Salting**

Where forecast weather conditions dictate, precautionary salting will be carried out to prevent ice forming or light falls of snow settling.

A hierarchy of salting routes will be maintained and reviewed annually.

The reasons for any exception to the Winter Maintenance Operational Plan shall be recorded on file.

### **11.3.2. Treatment of Persistent Ice and Hard Packed Snow**

Treatment of ice and hard packed snow on carriageways will be carried out where conditions require. Priority will be given in accordance with the road hierarchy.

Treatment to footways and cycleways will be undertaken in periods of persistent ice or snow and carried out in priority order according to the Footway Hierarchy. Treatment of footways will only occur when resources allow.

Salt bins and salt piles will be provided at appropriate locations. This latter facility will be placed well away from trees so that leached salt will not contaminate the roots.

### **11.3.3. Salt**

In order to minimise adverse effects on the environment, the amount of salt used will be the minimum possible consistent with achieving adequate treatment. Salt use for winter service purposes is not seriously restricted; it is far too essential in snow and ice control, and there are no readily available substitutes. Alternative materials generally are prohibitive in cost and may have much worse environmental effects than salt.

### **11.3.4. Winter Related Assets**

SCC have 9 weather stations in key areas that provide real-time information and assist in producing accurate forecasts to ensure gritters are sent out at the right time. The stations are maintained annually by Vaisala.

The authority stocks 20,000 tonnes of salt at the start of a winter season and manages stocks according to the forecast weather conditions and the point of time of the winter season.

The authority services around 3,500 grit bins and strategic salt piles located right across the county. Bins can be provided on routes that do not form part of the treated network. Locations which qualify have been risk assessed against a set of criteria that includes but is not limited to:

- steep gradients
- severe bends
- junctions onto major routes

The preference where possible is to store self-help salt supplies in grit bins. There are many potential issues with storing salt in uncovered stockpiles. These include salt quality, usability, effectiveness of

treatments and environmental impacts. If exposed to rain, rock salt can leach and can cause environmental problems for flora, fauna and nearby water courses.

It typically takes between 3 to 4 weeks to replenish the grit bins and salt piles when resource is available. Quite often in periods of extended adverse weather resource is deployed undertaking tasks such as snow clearance, gritting or on repairing consequential damage such as potholes so resource is not always available for the task of grit bin refills.

**Commented [PC(1):** Some only filled once per season, the rest as crews become available, not sure I would give a timescale.

### **11.3.5. Emergency Planning**

Staffordshire County Council are members of the West Midlands Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Local resilience forums (LRFs) are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act.

LRFs are supported by organisations, known as Category 2 responders, such as the Highways Agency and public utility companies. They have a responsibility to co-operate with Category 1 organisations and to share relevant information with the LRF. The geographical area the forums cover is based on police areas.

LRFs also work with other partners in the military and voluntary sectors who provide a valuable contribution to LRF work in emergency preparedness.

The LRFs aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities.

## Volume 14 – Mines, Tips and Quarries

Commented [TM&S2]: Mark Chapman to provide a narrative

### 12.1. SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS

Each local authority has a duty under the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969 to ensure that disused tips do not, by reason of instability, constitute a danger to members of the public. SCC's approach to understanding and managing this risk has been to engage Amey Consulting as part of SCCs partnership with AMEY (Infrastructure+) to review all known sites in the county as a desktop review, assigning a level of risk.

There is now a rolling programme of inspection whereby sites are inspected by qualified engineers at a frequency determined by their assigned risk status. Any sites where it is believed that the risk status needs to be amended following an inspection are highlighted immediately to SCC, and there is a monthly update report, followed by an annual summary.

## **Volume 15 – Land Acquired for Highway Purposes**

### **13.1. INTRODUCTION**

The highway authority can acquire land by agreement or compulsory acquisition for highway purposes.

The approach to managing and acquired for highway use requires development.

## Volume 16 – General Highway Management

### 14.1. INTRODUCTION

Alongside the management of key highway assets there are also a large number of other services and functions that we provide as the local highway authority.

### 14.2. PERMITS AND LICENCES

Under the Highways Act 1980 it is necessary for anyone wishing to carry out certain functions on the highway to first get written permission to do so.

The area of the Highway is as defined on the plans held by us but usually includes the road, the adjacent footway and verges and sometimes other grassed areas nearby.

In order to get permission to carry out activities on the Highway, it is usually necessary to obtain some form of licence, permit or consent form and in some cases pay a fee. Written permission must be obtained before any work can be carried out.

The following are the various types of licences and permits available:

#### 14.2.1. Vehicle Access Crossings

A vehicle access crossing (or a dropped kerb) allows vehicles to safely cross the pavement and enter a driveway from the road.

##### **Type of road**

If the proposed crossing is to be situated on a classified road (A road, B road or C road) then planning permission will be required from the local borough/district council. The application will not be processed until permission has been granted.

The classification of the road can be found on the road status map.

##### **Accredited contractor**

An accredited contractor that meets the requirements to carry out works on the highway must be appointed. The contractor must obtain a permit to dig before works on the highway can commence.

##### **Property owner**

An application for a vehicle access crossing will only normally be considered when applied by the landowner. A tenant will require the permission from the relevant landlord.

**Room required within the property**

Sufficient room on the property for a vehicle to be parked without overhanging the highway must be available. Desirable distance from the highway is 6 metres and the absolute minimum is 4.8 metres. The above distances must be achieved in a transverse direction, i.e. perpendicular to the line of the road. Lateral parking (e.g. in line with the road) is not acceptable.

**Width**

A crossing will not be approved, or an existing access widened, so that it will cover the width of the property. Standard width of a dropped kerb is 2.75 metres. A request for an access to be widened may be considered but must state on application the reason.

**Visibility**

When applying for a vehicle access crossing consideration of adequate visibility must be considered. Depending on the speed limit the driver leaving the access must be able to see approaching vehicles travelling along the roadway from both directions at a minimum distance of 2 metres back from the edge of the carriageway.

A driver's view of the roadway must be unobstructed and not restricted by objects such as hedges or walls. The distance that the driver is required to see along the roadway will depend on the speed limit of the road.

<b>Speed limit of a road and length of visibility that is required</b>	
<b>Speed limit of road (mph)</b>	<b>Length of visibility (metres)</b>
20	33
30	70
40	120
50	160
60	215

### **Pedestrian visibility**

Pedestrian visibility is also another factor that needs to be considered when applying for a dropped kerb. Visibility for pedestrians are required to allow drivers to see pedestrians as they emerge from their access road, driveways or parking area and to allow pedestrians to see the vehicle.

### **Multiple access crossings**

Only one crossing into a property will be approved. Separate 'in and out' crossings are not normally permitted.

If a second access is required and there is specific justification, these details will be recorded in the relevant section of the application form.

If a property has a vehicle access to the front and rear of the property, crossings at each frontage may also be allowed, provided it is not possible to drive from one to the other through the property.

### **Reasons for refusal**

A dropped kerb will generally not be approved if it's:

- Within 15 metres of a road junction, or traffic signals crossing.
- Where an existing bus stop could be in the way of the proposed dropped kerb. The highway authority may consider relocating the stop as long as there is a suitable alternative available. The alternative location must be within 50 metres, in either direction of the existing stop.
- From a layby or other designated parking areas.

A non-refundable fee is required upon application for an inspector to give an assessment of the site. A charge for a permit to dig will be required which the contractor will apply for.

#### **14.2.2. Placing items and skips on the highway**

For skips and building materials on the highway, an application for a permit to place items on the highway is required.

Permission to place a skip on the public highway must be obtained from Staffordshire County Council in each instance. Permission will only be granted to the skip owner and although a licence to operate as a skip company is not required from us, the owner must be registered with the authority before an application can be processed.

Registration is required for any organisation that wishes to obtain a permit from the highway authority and a completed registration form is returned with:

- Copy of Public Liability Insurance valid for the full duration of the proposed permit with a minimum cover of £5,000,000

And where applicable for each type of organisation, one or more of the following:

- Copy of NRSWA 1991 (Street Works) accreditation
- Copy of Waste Management/Transfer Licence
- Copy of Scaffold accreditation
- Any others relevant to the type of application

There are legal requirements that a skip operator must adhere to when transferring and managing waste.

If a permit application is approved it will allow large or bulky items to be placed on the public highway, such as:

- skips used for non-hazardous waste
- 'hippo' bags or other bags for non-hazardous waste
- builders' materials if appropriately secured in bags or wrapped materials on pallets
- unfixed temporary items specifically agreed by the authority

If bricks or other materials are just being unloaded and then moved off the highway onto private land a permit will not be required.

Permits are capped to 7 calendar days maximum on a classified (A, B, C) road and capped to 14 calendar days maximum elsewhere (or part thereof). We will aim to get your permit to you within 5 working days.

A fee is payable for a permit or an extension thereof, details of which can be found on the Council's website.

### **14.2.3. Parking bay suspensions**

When working in the highway, it may be necessary for parking bays to be suspended.

Parking bay suspension signs must be erected in line with the specifications set out by the Department for Transport in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Section 64 and Section 65.

Parking bay suspension signs should be in line with the specifications set out by the DfT.

#### **14.2.4. Projections over the Highway**

A projection licence covers temporary projections over a highway, such as the boom of a crane and permanent projections, such as overhanging buildings or structures.

The owner of the proposed projection and/or the land on which the projection will be must apply for a licence. These licences are valid for as long as the projections remains in place.

Oversail licences relate to any temporary projection over the highway. This includes windows, advertising boards, shop signs or banners as well as cranes whose jib extends across the highway, seasonal decorations, bunting etc. Permanent licence price on application.

For a licence to permanently oversail the highway, a written application detailing the nature of the oversail along with a drawing of the oversail and location plan must be provided. A price will be given on application.

#### **14.2.5. Scaffold or Hoarding**

A permit is needed for any scaffolding or hoarding that needs to be placed on the highway, it does not control the standard in which the scaffold or hoarding is put up, this remains the responsibility of the applicant. Wherever possible, a scaffold or hoarding must be placed on private property. Where applications are received and it is clear on inspection that sufficient room is available on private land, the application will be refused but is still chargeable. Sufficient room on private land is determined by the authority and is not negotiable.

Applications must be made by the company who is placing scaffolding or hoarding. The company must be registered with the council to apply for a scaffolding or hoarding permit.

In the case of scaffolds, the company working on the scaffold must also be insured in the same way as the applicant. If approved, the item owner carries all of the responsibilities in adhering with regulations, standard conditions and any special conditions that may be applied to the permission.

General conditions for application and fees can be found on the Council's website

#### **14.2.6. Seasonal Decorations**

This process covers the installation, maintenance and removal of seasonal decorations on or above the highway which requires notification to the highway authority under S178 of the Highways Act 1980. This process provides the mechanism and framework that allows organisations to provide the required notification.

Seasonal decorations give great pleasure and enjoyment to the public and this policy does not intend to prevent seasonal decorations from being used, but to ensure they are installed, operated and removed safely. There is an obligation on everyone for their own safety and the safety of others.

Applications are available on the Council's website by completing the on-line form. Notifications can only be made to the authority by completing this online application.

#### **14.2.7. Sign Applications**

There are two different types of signs that can be applied for, tourism and amenity signs.

A tourist attraction must be a permanent area or building which is open to the public without needing to book during its normal opening hours. Tourism signs (white on brown) are for directions only and not for advertising purposes.

Amenities must have:

- a minimum visitor level of 5,000 visitors every year
- be open at least 50 days per year
- only be signposted from the nearest A or B road or town or village

The following amenities can apply for a sign:

- retail facilities
- recreational and sport facilities
- schools and children's nurseries
- churches and places of worship

Tourism and Amenity Sign policies are available on the Council's website.

A non-returnable fee is required which is payable upon application.

#### **14.2.8. Guidelines for the use of 'A' Boards and Merchandising Displays on the Highways**

The Local Highway Authority also has a legal duty to keep the streets free of dangers and potential risks. This needs to be balanced against protecting the commercial dynamic of the street environment. It is all about helping make the town centre both attractive and safe for retailers, shoppers and visitors alike.

It is also about protecting vulnerable sections of the community. The disabled and visually impaired, the elderly and parents with young children, all have a real problem negotiating their way around obstructions and this can be a real danger. Under the Equality Act 2010 we have to consider the disabled community when organising the street scene, and so do local shops and businesses. It's not just the law, it is a matter of common sense and respect for others.

To place an advertising display on public land, consultation with local planning authority must be carried out. The planning authority may require a fee to be payable or a formal application made under local planning regulations.

A copy of the SCC Policy on the Management of Commercial Obstructions and Guidance for use of 'A' Boards and merchandising Displays on the Highway in Staffordshire is available on the Council's website.

### **14.3. Obstructions on the Highway**

The highway will be made safe, either by immediate removal of the obstruction or by signing, barriers and lighting.

Where significant expenditure is incurred in the removal of the obstruction from the highway, and where it is practical to obtain reimbursement, then the originator of the obstruction will be recharged for the cost of effecting the removal.

#### **14.3.1. Spillages**

All hazardous spillages will be made safe, either by immediate clearing or by signing and barriers.

Hazardous spillages require specialist equipment and expertise to effect their removal and therefore the initial response will consist of arranging for the County Council's Highways Contractor to assist the Police and Fire and Rescue Service to prevent immediate danger to road users and pedestrians, following which, the services of a specialist waste disposal company will be sought.

Where the identity of the cause of the spillage can be discerned every effort should be made to recover the cost of the clear up.

### **14.3.2. Removal of Mud**

If there is mud on the road which constitutes a danger to users of the highway, action will be taken as follows:

- Immediate danger: if the amount of mud and the speed of the traffic indicate that there may be an accident, the operation will be stopped forthwith. If the operator refuses, the Police will be contacted and asked for immediate assistance. The operator will be instructed to put out appropriate signs and to remove the mud. If the operator is unable or unwilling to do this, the County Council's Term Maintenance Contractor will be asked to do so on a rechargeable basis.
- Potential danger: County Council staff will point out to the operator that they are creating a potential danger and instruct them to put out proper signs. If they are unable or unwilling to do this, the County Council's maintenance contractor will be asked to do so on a rechargeable basis. If appropriate, the operator will be instructed to remove the mud at the end of their operation or at the end of the day, whichever is sooner.
- Nuisance: the problem will be reported to the District Council with a request for them to deal with the problem. In this context, nuisance would apply to situations such as long-term or repeated deposition of mud on the highway which whilst not constituting a danger or hazard, makes the road unsightly and leads to an increased maintenance liability in respect of additional sweeping and gully cleansing.

### **14.3.3. Stones or Similar Objects**

Where stones or similar objects are placed on the highway, in such a way as to prevent or obstruct public use of the highway, then the Highway Authority may serve notice that the objects should be removed. If the offence persists, the Highway Authority will seek a Magistrate's Removal and Disposal Order in respect of such objects.

Where boulders or similar objects are placed on the highway verge, in such a way as to prevent or obstruct safe public use of the highway, then the County Council, may serve notice on the offenders that the obstructions be removed. If this course of action has no effect, then the Council may obtain a Magistrate's Removal and Disposal Order, in respect of such obstructions. However, if they constitute an immediate safety hazard, then we will arrange for their removal.

A boulder or similar object more than 100mm diameter is considered to be a potentially hazardous obstruction and any such item that has been placed on the highway verge to deter vehicles, or beautify a frontage, must be considered a hazard.

Where boulders or similar objects are placed to preserve the appearance of a well maintained verge or grassed area and where they are clearly visible, well set back from the edge of carriageway and do not constitute obstructions of a hazardous nature (e.g. village green features etc.), the policy will be one of "non-disapproval". This still means that the County Council cannot authorise their presence, as technically, they are still classed as obstructions, but no action will be taken to remove them. Sites where obstructions can be ignored must be at the discretion of the Community Highways Team.

#### **14.3.4. Portable Signs on Footways**

SCC have developed a Management of Commercial Obstructions Policy that is designed as a high-level framework document, setting out the conditions under which SCC will accept the placement of commercial displays on the highway.

These signs, normally associated with advertising goods and services, will be removed without notice if there is no person responsible for the sign at the sign's location. Otherwise the responsible person will be requested to remove the sign. Where the person responsible for the sign fails to remove it, they will be notified that the sign will be removed to the nearest area depot. The signs will be retained in the area depot for a period of 28 days and thereafter disposed of.

Signs indicating 'Traffic Signals Not Working', signs associated with roadworks, or signs needed for other reasons, will be sited carefully where they need to be displayed and will be removed as soon as possible, in order to reduce the danger or inconvenience to pedestrians.

Signs of this type can cause a potentially dangerous obstruction to the footway, particularly for visually handicapped or disabled people. Signs left in place after serving their purpose also detract from their future effectiveness, since road users may be led to assume that roadworks are not always in progress.

#### **14.3.5. Road Traffic Collisions**

After a road traffic collision, the highway will be made safe for traffic to pass freely as soon as practicable.

#### **14.4. Parking on the Highway**

Commented [PC(1): Refer to SCC's commercial obstruction policy

#### 14.4.1. Where can vehicles park/wait on the public highway?

The county council cannot legally prevent anyone from parking their vehicle on the public highway if there are no existing parking restrictions.

The Highway Code provides extensive detail on where vehicles can and cannot park on the public highway and advises:

'You must not wait or park on yellow lines during the times of operation shown on nearby time plates. Double yellow lines indicate a prohibition of waiting at any time even if there are no upright signs. You must not wait or park, or stop to set down and pick up passengers, on school entrance markings when upright signs indicate a prohibition of stopping.'

##### **Vehicles must not stop or park on:**

- a pedestrian crossing, including the area marked by the zig-zag lines
- a clearway (see '[traffic signs](#)')
- taxi bays as indicated by upright signs and markings
- an urban clearway within its hours of operation, except to pick up or set down passengers (see '[traffic signs](#)')
- a road marked with double white lines, even when a broken white line is on your side of the road, except to pick up or set down passengers, or to load or unload goods
- a tram or cycle lane during its period of operation
- a cycle track

##### **Do not stop or park:**

- near a school entrance
- anywhere you would prevent access for emergency services
- at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank
- on the approach to a level crossing/tramway crossing
- opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space
- near the brow of a hill or hump bridge
- opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle
- where you would force other traffic to enter a tram lane
- where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles
- in front of an entrance to a property
- on a bend
- where you would obstruct cyclists' use of cycle facilities.

Except when forced to do so by stationary traffic.

**If you do have to park/stop on the roadside:**

- do not park facing against the traffic flow
- stop as close as you can to the side
- do not stop too close to a vehicle displaying a Blue Badge - remember, the occupant may need more room to get in or out
- you must switch off the engine, headlights and fog lights
- you must apply the handbrake before leaving the vehicle
- you must ensure you do not hit anyone when you open your door. Check for cyclists or other traffic
- it is safer for passengers (especially children) to get out of the vehicle on the side next to the kerb

**14.4.2. Footway (pavement) parking**

Rule 244 of the Highway Code states that drivers must not park partially or wholly on the pavement in London and should not elsewhere unless signs permit it.

Parking on the pavement can obstruct and seriously inconvenience pedestrians, people in wheelchairs or with visual impairments and people with prams or pushchairs.

If there are no parking restrictions and vehicles are parked in contravention of the rules of the Highway Code the matter can be reported to the police who have access to powers enabling them to identify vehicle owners and issue on the spot fines if necessary.

**14.4.3. Parking outside your house**

Homeowners or residents living next to public highways have no legal right to the road and/or footway fronting their property boundaries. If there are no parking restrictions and vehicles are parked in contravention of the rules of the Highway Code the matter can be reported to the police who have access to powers enabling them to identify vehicle owners and issue on the spot fines if necessary.

**14.4.4. Grass verge parking**

Grass verges can often become damaged because of parked vehicles, delivery vehicles or other similar reasons. We will where possible seek to put right damaged verges, but generally remedial works are prioritised in accordance with the risk the problem poses to the public.

**14.4.5. Blocking access / driveway**

Vehicles causing an obstruction to access/driveways with a dropped kerb can be reported to the police.

#### **14.4.6. Parking on Yellow Lines**

Commented [PC(2)]: Restricted parking areas ?

Double yellow lines are used to define the start and end of an area where parking is prohibited at all times.

Single yellow lines are used to define the start and end of an area where parking is prohibited during certain times. These markings are accompanied by non-illuminated traffic signs which indicate what times parking is prohibited.

If vehicles are parked on double yellow lines, they may be doing so in contravention of the traffic regulation order and they could receive a penalty charge notice.

Blue badge holders are permitted to park on double yellow lines for a period of no more than 3 hours provided it is safe to do so.

#### **14.4.7. Parking that Obstructs Visibility**

If there are no existing parking restrictions, then there is very little we can do to respond positively to this problem. We would suggest that neighbour disputes associated with parking should be resolved through amicable or mediated discussions, but we do not have resources available to facilitate or accommodate these discussions.

If it is not possible to resolve the problem in this way, you could consider requesting that we implement a traffic regulation order (TRO) such as double yellow lines, but these schemes have to be firstly prioritised over other similar community requests, they take a long time to introduce, they have a significant cost attached to them and; they must have the full support of the potentially affected community.

If you live near a retail outlet, school, church or other local amenity which generates a lot of on-street non-resident parking, you may be eligible to apply for an access protection marking.

#### **14.4.8. Lorry parking**

The government conducted a comprehensive study undertaken in 2017 of the capacity and utilisation rates of overnight lorry parking facilities in England. Their report includes analysis of the welfare standards of formal facilities and of the extent of overnight parking in informal locations.

There are a number of locations in and around Staffordshire that provide dedicated parking areas for lorries (heavy commercial vehicles).

It is good practice for a local authority to ensure that suitable off-street HGV parking facilities are available in or near areas covered by an overnight ban - but it is not a legal requirement and it is often not provided.

It is illegal for lorries to park partially or wholly on the footway (pavement) and instances of this should be reported to the local police.

Lorries parked on yellow lines are potentially doing so in breach of the relevant traffic regulation order and risk receiving a fine.

#### **14.5. Ironworks**

Utilities who supply services such as gas, electricity, water, drainage and telecommunications understandably have a legal right to place equipment under, on, or over the public highway in order to serve commercial, social and residential properties.

Utilities use various types of apparatus on the highway such as poles, cabinets, footway covers and road covers (manhole covers).

##### **14.5.1. Who owns the equipment?**

Most of the equipment placed on the highway will be marked with the initials of the utility which is responsible for the maintenance, e.g. BT, STW, however this is not always the case and it is not always safe to try to identify this information.

##### **14.5.2. How to report issues with ironwork and apparatus?**

In the first instance you should always contact the responsible utility company to make them aware of an issue with their equipment, if this is identifiable. Utility providers receive government scores on how well they deal with public complaints, therefore, complaints about noisy/rocking manhole covers and roadworks should also be directed to the owner.

Unless the equipment is posing an imminent risk to safety, utility companies do not have to repair the equipment within a set timescale. For example, noisy/rocking manhole covers can cause a nuisance, but they can be completely safe to road users.

If you are unsure who the owner of the equipment is, or it is posing an imminent risk to highway users, please report this online.

### **14.5.3. What can Staffordshire County Council do about faulty third-party equipment on the public highway?**

Our role is to investigate reports and notify the correct utility company as soon as possible, providing them with as much evidence as we can. If necessary, we can make a temporary repair to make the location safe, but the owner is responsible for permanent repairs.

Under Section 81 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 legislation, we can take no further action and you should contact the utility company with any other enquiries, such as chasing up the permanent repair.

Whilst the onus to repair this problem rests with apparatus owner, we will continue to monitor the problem during our routine safety inspections which take place either monthly, quarterly or annually depending on the road classification.

### **14.6. Network Management**

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) as Highway Authority is responsible for ensuring the safe passage of all highway users on adopted highways and rights of way within Staffordshire. It is accepted that at times works and activities will be required upon, or affect, the highway such as alterations to its structure/layout, installation and maintenance of underground apparatus or occupation of the highway required in connection with works and activities where no alternative is available. There are various licences and permissions available that govern these works and activities ensuring that the highway authority can fulfil its statutory duties.

More detail is provided in the Network Management Plan which forms part of the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) which is available on the Council's website.

The following are examples of the various types of licences and permits available:

#### **14.6.1. Agreements**

- Major Works Agreement (Section 278 and Section 111 of the Highways Act 1980)
- Minor Works Agreement (Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 and Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980)
- New Roads Agreement - Construction of Adoptable Highway (Section 38 Highways Act 1980)

#### **14.6.2. Licences**

- Installation of private apparatus (Section 50 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991)
- Vehicle Access Crossing (dropped kerbs)(Section 184 Highways Act 1980)
- Licence to plant or cultivate in the highway (Section 142 Highways Act 1980)

#### **14.6.3. Activity Permits**

- Placement of a builder's skip (Section 139 Highways Act 1980) or placement of builders' materials or other items on the highway (Section 171 Highways Act 1980).
- Erection of scaffolding (Section 169 Highways Act 1980) and erection of hoarding (Section 172 Highways Act 1980).
- Temporary excavations in the highway (Section 171 Highways Act 1980)

#### **14.6.4. Traffic Management Permits**

- Application to Place Temporary Signals on the Highway (Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, and Traffic Signs Manual: Chapter 8).
- Application for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (road closures, etc.) (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984),
- Notification of Other Traffic Management (e.g. lane closures)

#### **14.6.5. Other Permissions NOT Managed by the Network Management Unit**

The following permissions affecting the highway are operated by District Authorities:

- On street trading / street cafes
- Advertising boards

#### **14.7. Road Closures**

##### **14.7.1. Emergency Road Closures and Diversions**

Where roads have to be closed as a result of an emergency, diversionary routes will be established as soon as possible, taking the needs of both through traffic, and local communities into account.

Where the police are not already involved in the incident, they should be informed of the nature and likely duration of the diversion.

Wherever possible, details of the person or company giving rise to the need for the closure or diversion should be obtained, and the cost to the Highway Authority, of attending to the incident and organising the closure or diversion, should be recharged.

#### 14.7.2. Temporary Road Closures

Temporary road closures are implemented via the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991. For public events such as processions or street parties the district authority may use their own powers contained in the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847. The use of the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 is considered the most effective manner to formalise temporary road closures in connection with public parades and other civic events such as Remembrance Day, St Georges Day parades.

There are two procedures: depending on the urgency of the works.

- Emergency Road Closures

Where the Highway Authority is satisfied that urgent action is needed, no prior notice need be given, but only a short-term closure or restriction is possible. If there is a danger to the public (e.g. a gas leak) the notice is limited to 21 days, which can be extended by one further notice. In cases not involving risk of danger, the notice may only last 5 days.

- Temporary Restrictions(Road Closure)

The applicant must inform the Highway Authority as soon as practicable if a closure is needed and the Highway Authority must issue a notice stating the reason for the order, its effect, the alternative route, and the date and duration of the closure. The Highway Authority must give prior notice to the police, fire and any other traffic authority whose roads will be affected.

#### 14.8. Involving Parish and Town Councils in Highway Maintenance

It is traditional for Parish and Town Councils to have a strong interest in highway maintenance affecting their locality. In recognition of Parish and Town Council's pride and interest in their locality, the County Council is able to arrange for certain categories of maintenance work to be undertaken in several ways:

- by a village or town lengthsman.

Commented [PC(3)]: Worth mentioning Town Police Clauses Act ?

Commented [WD(4)]: I don't think we currently operate a lengthsman scheme but it may get reinstated in some form as part of the highway investment hence suggest we leave this section in but to be reviewed.

- by a local contractor with appropriate skills, as and when required.
- by voluntary labour, using County Council funds to purchase materials, tools and equipment.

Delegation of the County Council's maintenance duties takes place under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The types of work involved are:-

#### **14.8.1. Drainage**

- Clear leaves/debris from tops of gully grids and drainage grips.
- Clear vegetation at the entrance and exit of culverts under the highway.

#### **14.8.2. Traffic Signs**

- straighten up and clean traffic signs and reflecting bollards.
- clean and repaint finger posts and mile posts.
- remove tree and hedge growth obscuring traffic signs.

#### **14.8.3. Grass Cutting**

- Grass cutting to at least the County Council's minimum standards.

#### **14.8.4. General Maintenance**

- Tidy up and strim small grassed areas which are not included in the grass mowing programme.
- Control of weeds at rear of footways and around lamp columns and signs.
- Cut grass and weeds at base of visibility fences at bends and junctions.
- Carry out periodic painting of visibility fences.
- Carry out sweeping and clearing of debris discharged onto the highway after storms.

#### **14.8.5. Specific Maintenance**

- Minor works, such as resetting a kerb or tidying verge damage.

#### **14.8.6. General**

- It is essential that appropriate public liability insurance (£5m) is carried by the parish or town councils, or their contractors.
- All work needs to be carried out in compliance with relevant legislation and with health and safety requirements and the County Council must be satisfied that those undertaking the work have received the necessary training in respect of health and safety matters.

Close co-ordination needs to be maintained between SCC and the Parish or Town Council concerned both to avoid duplication of effort, and to avoid conflict between their respective maintenance programmes.

#### **14.9. Illegal Signs**

##### **14.9.1. Illegal Signs**

Illegal signs that are a safety hazard will be removed as obstructions to the highway, but the County Council may also remove any illegal sign at its discretion.

Any sign which is a danger or potential danger to the public must be removed.

A sign is a danger to the public if:

- It obstructs visibility.
- All or part of it is on the carriageway.
- It obstructs the footway. The width of the footway should be taken into consideration i.e. if a footway is three metres wide, a sign placed at the back of the footway may not form an obstruction, conversely, a narrow footway is almost bound to be obstructed by such a sign.
- It is attached to street furniture.
- It obscures an authorised sign.
- It may be blown onto the carriageway by a strong wind.
- It constitutes an unnecessary distraction to road users.

If the sign is an immediate danger to the public, it must be removed straight away.

If it constitutes a potential danger to the public, notice will be served either verbally or in writing.

Signs advertising local voluntary fund-raising activities, and election posters, may be tolerated for up to one week before the event.

The owners of illegal signs should be advised in writing of the County Council's intention to remove the sign and that if the sign is not removed by the owner, the sign will be removed to a County Council depot, and the owner will be advised of when and where it can be collected within 28 days, following which, it is liable to be destroyed.

Where permission is sought to display such signs, the organisation concerned will be advised that the signs must comply with the above criteria and must be removed as soon as practicable after the event. Companies or organisations wishing to display signs, will be asked to supply a schedule detailing the locations of all such signs.

#### **14.9.2. Election Posters**

The County Council, as Highway Authority, does not give any permission to any person or body to place election posters, or other election material within highway limits, or on street lighting columns, traffic signs and other street furniture. Anyone doing so, does so at their own risk.

Election Agents should be advised that any election poster or material should not be sited or displayed in a manner which obscures any highway sign or creates a safety risk or hazard to the use of the highway. Any sign or poster erected in contravention of these requirements is liable to be removed and the Election Agent charged with a removal fee currently set at £2.00 per item.

Any signs placed within the highway which are not removed shortly after the election will be removed by the Highway Authority and the £2.00 charge will apply.

#### **14.10. Roadworks in the vicinity of Level Crossings**

Roadworks in the vicinity of railway level crossings constitute a special hazard, and all such works will be carried out in consultation with Railtrack and in accordance with HAUC Red Book Part 2 'Guidance Note for Undertakers' Works at Railtrack Level Crossings.

Roadworks carried out in the vicinity of railway level crossings require special precautions. SCC Highway engineers should utilise the HAUC Guidance referred to above. Whilst this note essentially applies to the work of statutory undertakers in the vicinity of level crossings, the necessary precautions with regard to traffic control, guarding, and signing, apply equally to highway authority roadworks. It is essential that consultations with Railtrack regarding the proposed roadworks are held at an early stage.

#### **14.11. Sweeping**

District Councils are responsible for sweeping the highway and collecting litter. Where the safety of road users is at risk due to debris on the highway, the Highway Authority will take steps to remove the risk by implementing appropriate traffic control or by removing the debris to a safe location.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 makes District Councils responsible for the routine cleansing of all roads in the County. The Act does not, however, amend the County Council's duty under the Highways Act 1980, to assist and protect the rights of the public in the use and enjoyment of highways, and to make the highway safe by implementing traffic control, or by removing dangerous items from those highways.

Leaves are classified by the Environmental Protection Act as litter, and District Councils must remove them. It is possible there may be instances where leaves become a safety hazard, and the Highway Authority may have to take action, but due regard must be given to the District Council's responsibilities outlined above.

Fly tipping will not normally be considered a safety hazard and is for the District Council to clear. Section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act permits Highway Authorities to issue direction in respect of traffic management and periods when cleaning shall not be undertaken. These requirements need to be considered particularly in respect of heavily trafficked routes and areas of high pedestrian usage.

There is currently no duty for the highway authority under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure that highways are clear of moss, algae, lichen or similar vegetation as they have not become part of the fabric of the road, pavement or pathway.

Where dead animals, clinical or animal waste, are encountered on the highway, then the Highway Authority's responsibility consists of taking steps to make the highway safe for pedestrians and road users and does not extend to the removal of the animal or waste from the site. In most cases, the presence of a dead animal does not constitute a safety hazard,

but in all cases, the services of the relevant District Council's specialist environmental protection teams will be sought to affect its removal from the site.

#### **14.12. STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS WORKS ON THE HIGHWAY**

To minimise any disruption caused to the public, the proper co-ordination of works carried out by the Highway Authority and the Statutory Undertakers is most important. The Council's Network Management Team work closely with Statutory Undertakers to ensure this co-ordination is effective.

All reinstatement of County Roads, following works by Statutory Undertakers, must conform to the HAUC 'Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in Highways'.

All notifications and registrations of works must comply with the HAUC Code of Practice for the Co-ordination of Street works and works for Road Purposes and Related Matters.

All inspections of Statutory Undertakers' work must comply with the HAUC Code of Practice for Inspections.

Any trenches that are found to be defective in accordance with Clause S2 of the Specification for Reinstatement, must be rectified in accordance with the West Midlands Regional HAUC Agreement for Defective Reinstatements.

Investigatory inspections will be undertaken by the Highway Authority on Undertakers' trenches as required.

Details of the processes around management of Statutory Undertakers are included in the Network Management Plan which is available on the Council's website.

#### **14.13. TEMPORARY SIGNING FOR EVENTS**

Temporary traffic signs to special events may be erected for a limited period to guide traffic going to special events, such as major sporting events, shows or other public gatherings that are expected to attract large volumes of traffic to assist road safety and reduce congestion by giving clear directions to road users seeking the best route to an event.

They are not commercial advertisements intended to attract custom.

Regulation 53 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002<sup>1</sup> (TSRGD) provides for temporary signs to be erected to guide traffic to sporting events, exhibitions or other public gatherings which are expected to attract a considerable volume of traffic. Regulation 53 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. Fixed signs must be one of the following: black on white; black on yellow; white on blue or blue on white. Under direction 38 of TSRGD1 they may only be displayed for the duration of the event, and not longer than 6 months without the approval of the Secretary of State.

They are usually erected by road user organisations with the consent of the traffic authority. For safety reasons, it is seldom appropriate for private individuals to erect signs on public roads.

In all cases, traffic management must be sited, maintained and removed by qualified personnel and if unqualified, permit applicants should contract out this duty to organisations qualified and resourced to do so. The following legislation applies in the use of traffic management:

Consent<sup>1</sup> from the traffic authority should be sought via application to the Network Management Unit.

#### **14.14. Playing of Ball Games on the Highway**

The highway authority occasionally receives requests to place 'No Ball Games' signs (or similar) on landscaped areas within the highway.

The problems are often related to anti-social behaviour and nuisance. Under Section 161(3) of the Highways Act 1980 'if a person plays at football or any other game on a highway to the annoyance of a user of the highway he is guilty of an offence'. The Traffic Signs and General Directions explains which signs can be used by highway authorities within the highway. 'No Ball Game' signs are not available for use in the highway.

Where the problem relates to anti-social behaviour, the district council has powers to consider the use of a Public Space Protection Order and these are considered a more appropriate way of responding to such issues.

#### **14.15. No Waiting at Any Time Plates**

The requirement to have 'At Any Time' plates with double yellow lines where prohibition applies at any time throughout the year was removed when the Traffic Signs, Regulations and Directions 2002 came into force.

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<sup>1</sup> [Permission to temporarily manage traffic on the public highway - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Whilst the majority of these 'At Any Time' plates and posts will have been removed, where other maintenance activities such as footway preventative maintenance or resurfacing are taking place any remaining posts and signs should be removed.

**Annex (to be confirmed)**

Agreements, Licensing and Permission Policy  
Tree Policy  
Unsurfaced Highway Policy  
Tourism sign policy  
Amenity sign policy  
Management of Commercial Obstruction Policy  
Skid Resistance Strategy  
'A' Board Guidelines  
Disabled Parking Bay Policy  
Decluttering Policy



# STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## HIGHWAYS AND BUILT COUNTY

## MANAGEMENT OF HIGHWAY TREES

Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County  
Staffordshire County Council  
No.1 Staffordshire Place  
Tipping Street,  
Stafford  
ST16 2LP

Revised: February 2022



**Revisions**

<b>Version Number</b>	
<b>Owner</b>	
<b>Date Produced</b>	
<b>Next Review Date</b>	
<b>Approved by OCB</b>	
<b>Approved by Director</b>	
<b>Approved by Scrutiny</b>	
<b>Approved by Cabinet</b>	

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## FOREWORD

The UK Government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Staffordshire County Council (SCC) followed suit by declaring a climate emergency and committing to work with partners to agree Staffordshire's collective response.

Climate change presents the County Council and the Staffordshire public with both challenges and opportunities. By acting now and working together as a county, we can tackle the impacts that could arise, and at the same time benefit from initiatives that save money and protect the environment.

To this end, SCC have worked to develop an ambitious and forward-thinking Climate Change Action Plan for the county, which identifies actions across several key areas that will ultimately contribute to achieving a net zero carbon target for the county by 2050, in line with the national target.

Within that strategy, the role of land and specifically, green infrastructure, is identified as having significant potential to capture and store carbon emissions, as well as helping the county to adapt to a changing climate.

The Strategy introduces a policy of encouraging tree planting, especially along main roads, outside schools and areas of poor air quality.

Highway trees have the potential to contribute greatly to tackling the climate crisis. They help in adapting our communities to the effects of climate change and to reducing the risks of flooding. They enhance the biodiversity of the county, have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing, and help filter air pollution and noise. These benefits link trees to the vision set out in the Council Strategic Plan for greener living.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. There are over 3,800 miles of road which are the responsibility of Staffordshire Council, and many of these roads have trees or woodlands close to the carriageway. There are estimated<sup>1</sup> to be 475,000 trees on the highway with a further 128,000 on adjoining land but which could affect the highway for example either due to the canopy overhanging or, the tree being within falling distance of the highway.
- 1.1.2. Trees in Staffordshire are an important asset that provides amenity value; carbon storage and sequestration; natural flood risk management and removal of pollution.
- 1.1.3. We also recognise that although trees are a positive feature, they can cause a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death. As a tree owner, we have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are managed appropriately.
- 1.1.4. This policy sets out a tree management strategy for controlling risk, responding to tree related incidents and service requests and for preserving and enhancing the Council's highway tree stock.
- 1.1.5. Implementation of this policy is supported by the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice, Residential Design Guide and the Highway Training and Competency Framework.
- 1.1.6. This policy considers published guidance such as the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Sector Information Minutes and, other national guidance such as those published by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) entitled Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (CSRMT).

### 1.2. Aims

- 1.2.1. This guidance is intended to set out the approach of the highway authority to the management of trees within the highway including:
- Ensure public safety so far as is reasonably practicable and minimise damage to property due to highway trees.
  - Establish an inspection regime using a risk-based approach for all highway trees.
  - Deliver the Council's environmental, carbon and planting targets
  - Conserve, protect, maintain, and enhance the County's highway tree resources; and
  - Meet our statutory and legal obligations.

<sup>1</sup> Based on BlueSky National Tree Map data October 2020



### 1.3. Responsibility

- 1.3.1. Trees situated within the boundaries of the Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) are generally the responsibility of the highway authority unless they were planted under licence or by another authority such as a District or Parish Council.
- 1.3.2. Trees on private roads and other private rights of way are the responsibility of the landowner/occupier.
- 1.3.3. Trees on private property adjoining the public highway are the responsibility of the owner/occupier BUT the Highway Authority has a duty, and powers of enforcement, to ensure that such trees do not endanger the Highway or its users under Section 154 of the Highways Act<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3.4. Highway boundary trees and hedges will normally have been planted by, or on behalf of, the adjoining landowner, to define the boundary of his land with the public highway, and to contain his property. It is accepted by SCC that, unless there are specific agreements to the contrary, the maintenance of highway boundary hedges is the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, if a tree lies within the hedge line, then it is a non-highway tree that is considered to be an integral part of the hedge line and is therefore the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. For a tree to be deemed to be a highway tree, the tree trunk must lie, in its entirety, within the highway boundary (which is taken as the centre line of the hedge), or, in cases where part of the trunk has grown onto the adjacent landowner's side of the highway boundary, it must clearly be seen that the tree had originally grown/been planted inside the highway boundary.

### 1.4. Legislation

- 1.4.1. As the Highways Authority the County Council is responsible for the trees growing along the public highways which it has a duty to maintain. This duty arises from Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980<sup>3</sup> but is mitigated by Section 58<sup>4</sup> which allows the defence that the Highways Authority has taken such care as is required to ensure that the highway remains safe.
- 1.4.2. This policy has been created with due consideration to current national, regional, and corporate guidance and legislation. Through adopting a strategic approach, and aligning the approach of the Council, this policy will ensure the Council fulfils its legal and policy requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 154 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 41 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 58 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)



## 2. RISK MANAGEMENT

### 2.1. Managing Risk at an Acceptable Level

- 2.1.1. Tree risk management involves the process of inspecting and assessing trees for their potential to cause personal injury or damage to property.
- 2.1.2. With an extensive highway network and countless trees, it is not feasible to carry out frequent detailed inspections and assessments of every tree. The Council therefore carries out a programme of routine highway safety inspections and targeted detailed tree inspections, taking a risk-based approach.
- 2.1.3. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2007)<sup>5</sup>, each year between 5 and 6 people in the UK are killed when trees or branches fall off them. Around half of all fatalities due to falling trees or branches occur in public spaces, such as a park or beside roads. Whilst the risk of being struck whilst in a public place is extremely low, (in the order for one in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use), the law requires that where reasonably practicable measures are available, in individual cases, they should be taken.
- 2.1.4. HSE guidance on the management of risk from falling trees and branches refers to guidance produced by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) entitled Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (CSRMT).<sup>6</sup> HSE was consulted in the production of these publications and endorses the sensible, reasonable and balanced advice to owners on managing the risk from trees set out in the guidance. The advice in this guidance has been used in the development of the approach to the management of highway trees in Staffordshire.
- 2.1.5. The guidance in CSRMT advises a reasonable and balanced approach forms the basis for sensible tree safety management and should cover three essential aspects:
- Zoning; appreciating trees in relation to people or property.
  - Tree inspection; assessing obvious tree defects.
  - Managing risk at an acceptable level: identifying, prioritising and undertaking safety work according to level of risk.

### 2.2. Quantifying Risk

- 2.2.1. A purely reactive approach to risk management is vulnerable as being difficult to defend in the event of an incident. In order to address this Staffordshire County Council has adopted a position for managing tree failure risk by which the condition of individual trees is not seen to be the primary

<sup>5</sup> HSE Management of the risk from falling trees or branches [SIM 01/2007/05](#)

<sup>6</sup> National Tree Safety Group – [Common sense risk management of trees](#)



consideration. The Council's approach is to firstly consider the extent of usage of the land on which the trees stand, and then to use that information to inform the process of tree assessment.

- 2.2.2. This policy adopts an approach to assess and mitigate the risk of harm from trees primarily through a process of cyclical routine safety inspections and planned detailed inspections. This approach will provide a basis by which the Council can demonstrate that it has done what is 'reasonably practicable' to reduce the risk of harm resulting from its trees.
- 2.2.3. The methodology evaluates risk in terms of the potential likelihood for both people and property, situated underneath or within falling distance of trees. This assessment places individual, or groups, of trees into 'zones' which are characterised by usage.
- 2.2.4. CSRMT notes that annually, among the relatively few accidents from falling trees, the greatest risk to public safety has proved to be from trees within falling distance of where people move at speed in vehicles. It is both the high usage of roads and the speed at which people travel along them that makes this the most likely way that people will be killed by trees.
- 2.2.5. CSRMT further advises that not all roads are busy roads and not all roadside trees are large enough to kill or injure if they fall. It is nonetheless reasonable that certain roadside trees, particularly those alongside busy public roads, should be inspected. This approach is known as zoning.

### 2.3. Zoning

- 2.3.1. This methodology prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focussing resources where most effective. It is about appreciating tree stock in relation to proximity of people or property. Zoning contributes to sensible risk management.
- 2.3.2. HSE Management of the risk from falling trees advises that there are several approaches to managing the risks from trees that involve 'zoning' trees according to the risk of them falling and causing injury or death. As a minimum, trees should be divided into two zones.
  - Zone 1 – where there is frequent public access to trees (e.g., parks/ recreation grounds, in and around picnic areas, schools, children's playgrounds, popular foot paths, car parks, or at the side of busy roads). As a rough guide trees in Zone 1 are those that are closely approached by many people every day.
  - Zone 2 – where trees are not subject to frequent public access.
- 2.3.3. Detailed inspections will be undertaken by an arboriculturist appointed or acting on behalf of SCC. The initial sequence of detailed inspection work has been established on a risk management basis so that locations with the

greatest concentrations of people and trees are tackled first. The busiest routes and those carrying high speed traffic will be prioritised in the programme.

- 2.3.4. Staffordshire County Council will focus initially on Class 'A' and 'B' roads and town centre footways as Zone 1 with a view to transitioning to an approach based on network hierarchy.

## **2.4. Perception of Risk**

- 2.4.1. Unlike man-made structures, it is entirely normal and natural for parts to break and fall from trees. Leaves and twigs are regularly shed. Branches die and live branches may become wind damaged or overextended, occasionally falling to the ground. On rare occasions, roots can snap under wind load causing the entire tree to collapse.
- 2.4.2. These types of structural tree failures are natural and, in rare instances, can cause damage to property, injury or death. While the actual likelihood of these rare instance's occurring is very low, the perception of many members of the public is that they are much more common than they really are.
- 2.4.3. However, the individual risk of death attributable to trees is 10 times less than the threshold of one death in one million per year that the Health and Safety Executive says people regard as insignificant or trivial in their daily lives.
- 2.4.4. The Health and Safety Executive refers to the role of perception in its guidance as follows: 'The risk, per tree, of causing fatality is of the order of one in 150 million for all trees in Britain or one in 10 million for those trees in, or adjacent to areas of public use. However, the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident.' The reality is that an individual is 12 times more likely to suffer a fatal accident by slipping in the shower than succumbing to a tree, or part of it, falling on them.
- 2.4.5. As with other serious incidents involving loss of life or injury, people can become more worried by falling trees after someone has just been killed by one and it has been widely reported in the media. This is because unusual events, such as tree-related deaths, are more likely to be newsworthy than commonplace accidents, even though the latter pose a far greater risk and cause much more harm overall.
- 2.4.6. By carefully considering how trees fit into a particular local context, the Council can better identify those areas and situations requiring action. It will also help ensure that any management is proportionate and strikes an appropriate balance between the real risks and benefits.



### 3. INSPECTION REGIME

#### 3.1. Safety Inspection

- 3.1.1. Trees are important for amenity and nature conservation reasons and should be preserved but they can present risks if they are allowed to become unstable, cause obstruction or create visibility issues.
- 3.1.2. Well Managed Highway Infrastructure (WMHI) Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> provides guidance to Highway Authorities relating to all aspects of highway maintenance and management, including trees. Although it is not a statutory requirement to comply with this code, it is recommended that it is adopted to demonstrate best practice and to provide a more efficient and effective service.
- 3.1.3. Staffordshire County Council have developed a risk-based approach to tree inspection in accordance with the principles set out in WMHI. Routine inspections will be undertaken by SCC Highway Inspectors as part of the highway safety inspection process, with the frequency of these inspections' dependent upon the hierarchical standing of the respective carriageways, as detailed in the SCC 'Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice'<sup>8</sup>.
- 3.1.4. All trees on or within falling distance of the Highway will be inspected by a Highway Safety Inspector in in line with the SCC 'Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice'. These inspections will comprise scanning the trees for obvious hazards.
- 3.1.5. Tree defects likely to cause a hazard are identified. In the case of trees on land owned or adopted by the Council the authority is responsible for organising and undertaking any remedial works. In the case of trees on land owned by other parties, the landowner is contacted. Regardless of with whom the responsibility lies, identified hazards will be endeavoured to be rectified or made safe within specified time scales dependent on the severity and location of the defect.

#### 3.2. Detailed Inspection

- 3.2.1. The focus of detailed inspections will be in dealing with trees in zone 1. The rationale for this order of assessments is therefore primarily around dealing with the most frequented areas where the potential for harm is greatest. Such 'zoning' of people and property is the first step recommended in CSRMT.
- 3.2.2. Detailed inspections will be undertaken by an arboriculturist appointed or acting on behalf of SCC on the roads described in paragraph 2.3.4. These detailed inspections will be carried out at least once every 5 years, or whenever triggered by the findings of a routine inspection or information from

<sup>7</sup> Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice [Code of Practice | CIHT](#)

<sup>8</sup> SCC Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice [SCC Highway Safety Inspections Code of Practice 2019](#)



an additional source. Some trees will require a detailed inspection at intervals of less than 5 years dependent upon species, age, condition & location.

- 3.2.3. The detailed inspections will consider the overall condition of the tree and not just defects in relation to the likelihood of failure.
- 3.2.4. Carrying out this activity on the 'A' and 'B' road network and the town centres over a five-year period requires asset collection/condition inspection of around 36,000 trees per year.
- 3.2.5. After the initial inspection cycle is complete, it will be possible to review the approach and schedule re-inspections, and allocate resources, according to objectively assessed risks. Inspections may also be rescheduled during the inspection cycle for those trees where a further assessment needs to be undertaken before the completion of the inspection cycle.

### **3.3. Asset Data Collection**

- 3.3.1. The intention is to inspect and catalogue all zone 1 highway trees on a rolling 5-year programme. The survey data will be stored in an electronic map-based system that registers inventory data, and timescales for future cyclic tree maintenance and inspection.
- 3.3.2. As the programme gains momentum, a detailed inventory of the highway-tree stock will be collected. Standard inventory data will comprise of the data captured in the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA).

## **4. DEFECT RESPONSE**

### **4.1. Emergency Tree Work**

- 4.1.1. If the highway is obstructed by fallen trees or other debris, the Council will normally clear the obstruction. If there is an immediate threat, work will be carried out as quickly as practicable. If necessary, the road may be temporarily closed in the interests of public safety until the danger is averted or problem resolved, which in the case of a tree on private land may mean requesting that the tree is removed by the third party. Less urgent matters will be prioritised according to the assessed level of risk.
- 4.1.2. Less urgent matters will be prioritised according to the assessed level of risk. Council response times are those that apply to highway defects generally, as set out in current Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice.

### **4.2. Routine Tree Work**

- 4.2.1. With the exception of fallen and damaged trees that obstruct the highway and/or endanger highway users, non-specialist officers shall always obtain advice from an arboriculturalist, or approved consultants or contractors, regarding any work on trees which need specialist attention, or which have advanced signs of disease, damage or injury.

- 4.2.2. Where trees are in Conservation Areas or are subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or are apparently in need of removal, advice must always be sought from an arboriculturalist. Specialist, approved contractors will be used for all non-routine tree works on the public highway.

### **4.3. Approved Contractors**

- 4.3.1. Contractors/sub-contractors must be appropriately trained and qualified for the type of tree work to be undertaken. For example, they must be certified in the use of mechanical cutting, sawing and lifting equipment and also in the implementation of traffic management measures if a specialist company is not being employed.
- 4.3.2. Contractors must have adequate public liability insurance (currently £5 million).
- 4.3.3. Contractors undertaking planned specialist tree surgery work must provide evidence of their competence to carry out such work, supported by generic and site-specific risk assessments.

## **5. DEFECTIVE TREES**

### **5.1. General/Minor Nuisance**

- 5.1.1. We will not fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of our control.
- 5.1.2. There are a variety of potential nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor or seasonal and considered to be normal and acceptable consequences of living near trees. Examples of such problems are:
- Falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings.
  - Germinating seedlings in gardens.
  - Leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs.
  - The build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.
  - Trees affecting tv or radio signal reception
- 5.1.3. Clearing of leaves from guttering and pathways and weeding of set seeds are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out.
- 5.1.4. There is no legal right to good tv or radio equipment reception, and in many cases, it is possible to resolve issues of poor reception involving trees by finding a technical solution.
- 5.1.5. There is no duty imposed on a local authority to remove moss or algae from the footway unless the presence of vegetation has damaged the fabric of the



highway itself. To remove moss or algae from every road, footway and footpath would not be practical or sensible let alone affordable.

## **5.2. Highway Obstruction**

- 5.2.1. We will undertake work, based on an assessment of risk, to trees situated on the HMPE to maintain a minimum (where reasonably feasible) 2.5 metres height clearance over a footpath associated with a public street, road, or highway.
- 5.2.2. We will undertake work, based on an assessment of risk, to a tree situated on the HMPE to maintain a minimum (where reasonably feasible) 5.5 metres height clearance over the carriageway (associated with a public street, road, or highway).
- 5.2.3. We will undertake work, based on an assessment of risk, to a tree situated on the HMPE to maintain clear sight lines at junctions and access points and to ensure road signs, traffic signals and streetlights can perform to their design specification

## **5.3. Problem Trees near the Highway**

- 5.3.1. Wherever possible, the Council will advise adjoining landowners/occupiers of any problems relating to their trees and will seek to negotiate a remedy. Where this is not possible, formal notice to rectify the problem may be served on the owner or occupier of the land on which the tree is growing. If necessary, the Council may undertake the necessary work and reclaim costs back.
- 5.3.2. If the highway is obstructed by fallen trees or other debris from private land causing an immediate threat, the Council will usually clear the obstruction as soon as reasonably practicable without contacting the tree owner. If necessary, the road may be temporarily closed in the interests of public safety until the danger is averted or problem resolved.
- 5.3.3. Less urgent matters will be prioritised according to the assessed level of risk. This may mean that the Council may choose to leave the obstruction for the private landowner to remove.

## **5.4. Ash Dieback**

- 5.4.1. Ash Dieback was first reported in Southeast England in 2012. It has rapidly spread across the UK with only a small fraction of Ash trees proving resistant.
- 5.4.2. The disease is caused by the fungi which attacks vessels carrying water and nutrients around the tree. The disease initially causes wilting foliage, bark lesions, sparse crown and dead branches and results in the death of the whole tree.



- 5.4.3. There is an estimated 90% fatality rate, with only 10% showing some resistance of which approximately 2% are completely resistant.
- 5.4.4. From highway tree asset collection and condition surveys on the A class road network in Staffordshire it is estimated that around ten per cent are ash trees. Using the figures from the National Tree Map, this suggests around 43,000 ash trees on the highway network which are likely to require removal should they be subject to Ash Dieback.
- 5.4.5. This dataset will continue to be refined throughout the first cycle of detailed inspection.

## **6. COUNCIL TREES AFFECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY**

### **6.1. Overhanging Branches**

- 6.1.1. We will not fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of our control.
- 6.1.2. Private landowners have a legal right under Common Law to deal with the nuisance associated with trees overhanging their property. This would be the case whether the trees are Council owned or in private ownership.
- 6.1.3. If branches from a Council tree are overhanging private property, the landowner can cut them back, unless the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or is situated in a conservation area. Where works are likely to impact upon trees in a conservation area or protected by a TPO, permission must be sought from the district or borough council conservation officer.
- 6.1.4. Branches can be cut back to the boundary of the private property but no further. The work must be carried out from the grounds of the private property. Any cuttings must be disposed of, do not leave them on Council land.
- 6.1.5. Any work undertaken by private individuals must not affect the structural integrity of the tree.

### **6.2. Tree Roots**

- 6.2.1. The same principles around the maintenance of overhanging branches are applied to tree roots. However, greater care needs to be applied as severing structural roots may cause the tree to become unstable and potentially fall. If a root is damaged and a tree dies or falls as a result of the work undertaken by the landowner, they could be held responsible in court for any damage or personal injury caused as a result. Private landowners are strongly advised to consult with the Council and appoint a professional tree surgeon.

### **6.3. Tree Root Damage and Subsidence**



- 6.3.1. Many tree conflicts arise on account of the presence of tree roots and the perception that they are causing damage. Where damage is alleged, each complaint will be investigated on an individual basis. Damage incurred to the public highway by tree roots will be assessed during highway safety inspections and remedial work planned accordingly.
- 6.3.2. Trees situated close to property do not normally cause subsidence problems. However, each site is different, and the reasons for subsidence damage may be complex. The Council will carefully consider any relevant claims for subsidence damage but does not accept as a matter of course that nearby highway trees are likely to cause or contribute to a subsidence problem. Early investigation is recommended since early action can limit the potential for damage.
- 6.3.3. Subsidence claims relating to highway trees are administered by the Council's highway claims team. The claimant must provide positive evidence to demonstrate that highway trees have caused the subsidence. The onus is on the landowner to prove any perceived damage has been caused by the highway tree.
- 6.3.4. Where appropriate, the Council will obtain an independent third-party opinion.

## **6.4. Enforcement**

- 6.4.1. SCC will enforce and prosecute where appropriate, in accordance with the Highways Act 1980, tree related contraventions and where appropriate the maximum penalty will be sought. SCC will also seek compensation from any external organisation responsible for significant damage to or removal of any SCC owned tree(s).

## **7. FELLING OF TREES**

### **7.1. When Will Trees be Felled**

- 7.1.1. The Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary for the following reasons:
- A dead or diseased tree that is a danger to the public.
  - A tree which is lifting at the roots and failure is imminent.
  - A tree obstructing or endangering a public highway, right of way, where the obstruction can't be overcome by pruning or other reasonable measures.
  - A tree on Council owned land causing an actionable nuisance to an adjoining property, where actual damage to property has been proved to have been caused by the tree, or clearly if no action is taken, damage will imminently be caused. This does not include general encroachment of branches and roots onto adjoining land where physical contact with buildings or structures is unlikely.
  - A tree that is proven to be a contributor to soil shrinkage and serious structural damage, where pruning alone would not provide a solution.

Damage to light structures such as garden walls, paving, etc. is relatively minor and removal of the tree would not normally be acceptable.

- Trees which, in the judgment of the Council's appointed arboriculturist, are clearly of a size and species inappropriate for their location.
- Thinning of trees to prevent overcrowding or removal for habitat improvement and landscape restoration in accordance with a management plan.
- Removal to allow authorised development. It may sometimes be necessary to remove trees to permit a development to take place.

7.1.2. Staffordshire County Council will avoid felling trees unless it is considered necessary. Each case will be carefully judged on its own merits following an inspection. If a tree must be felled 3 replacement trees will be planted, though not necessarily in the same place as the felled tree or the same species. Trees with high amenity value will be replaced as close to the location as possible.

7.1.3. Where trees are in Conservation Areas or are subject to Tree Preservation Order designation (TPO) and are considered in need of removal, advice must always be sought from the relevant Planning authority.

## **7.2. Consultation Relating to Tree Felling Work**

7.2.1. If a tree is causing a serious safety risk the authority will fell the tree as an emergency measure without prior consultation. All other instances of tree felling will be judged on individual merit.

## **8. PLANTING AND REPLACEMENT OF TREES**

### **8.1. Planting of New Highway Trees**

8.1.1. To enhance tree cover across the county we encourage the planting of new trees on HMPE when suitable opportunities arise.

8.1.2. Section 96 of the Highways Act 1980<sup>9</sup> empowers a District or Parish Council to plant and maintain trees in a highway maintainable at public expense, subject to the consent of the County Council. The District or Parish Council will be required to indemnify the highway authority against third party claims arising as a result of the tree being planted in the highway. The highway authority will not maintain such trees.

8.1.3. An adjacent property owner/occupier may plant trees in the highway subject to compliance with the terms and conditions specified in a licence granted by the highway authority under Section 142<sup>10</sup> of the Highways Act 1980. The highway authority will not maintain such trees. When planting new highway trees, it is vital to follow the principle of the right tree in the right location.

<sup>9</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 96 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>10</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 142 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)



- 8.1.4. When immature, certain species may seem appealing in urban or rural locations, however, inappropriate planting of the wrong species in the wrong environment or planting too many trees close together can cause a number of unnecessary issues such as invasive root infrastructure damage, high prevalence to wind damage, reduced visibility on the highway, restricted access on pavements and regular pollarding or felling. All these result in increased maintenance costs.
- 8.1.5. Having too many of the same type of tree in a locality is a concern because of the increased risk of a devastating loss of one or more species of tree due to pests/diseases or other environmental factors. The resilience of our trees will increase by planting species mixes rather than monocultures and single species avenues.
- 8.1.6. A provisional list of trees which will be considered by the County Council to plant on the highway will be developed as an appendix to this strategy. The list will help improve sustainable planting, prevent ongoing costly maintenance burden to the taxpayer and minimise potential damage to highway land or private property.

## **8.2. Replacement of Felled Trees**

- 8.2.1. Provided the site is suitable, 3 replacement trees will usually be planted in place of any tree that has been removed. The replacements will normally be young trees of appropriate species. Replacements will normally be planted as close to the original(s) as possible but other locations, including other Council amenities such as parks and open spaces may be considered. If space is restricted the Council may accept replacement of one semi mature tree. In rural locations replacements should comprise native, ecologically appropriate species that enhance local landscape character.
- 8.2.2. Staffordshire County Council will approve the choice of species, location and planting specification and this may differ from that of the felled tree.
- 8.2.3. Examples of sites that may be unsuited to re-planting include those with ongoing safety, visibility or clearance issues, or a history of nuisance-related complaints. Decisions not to re-plant, or to provide alternative species or locations, rest with the Council.

## **9. TREES AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

### **9.1. Trees in Relation to New Development Sites**

- 9.1.1. Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that

existing trees are retained wherever possible. However, site layout must allow sufficient space for trees to mature, including space for tree rooting zones and canopy spread. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

- 9.1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate.
- 9.1.3. Long term, many trees introduced or retained for their attributes within new development projects are adopted by the Highway Authority and thus become the responsibility of the County Council. However, adequate resources are required from the developer to ensure the long-term maintenance of adopted trees through a commuted sum.
- 9.1.4. The definition for the term 'commuted sum' in relation to the adoption of new infrastructure is 'A payment of a capital sum by an individual, authority or company to the highway authority, local authority or other body, as a contribution towards the future maintenance and replacement of the asset to be provided, adopted or transferred'.
- 9.1.5. For highway infrastructure, commuted sums are secured by way of agreements made under the Highways Act 1980, using Section 38<sup>11</sup> for new roads constructed on private land and Section 278<sup>12</sup> for alterations made to existing publicly maintained highways and are paid to the highway authority.
- 9.1.6. In considering the acceptability of tree planting on new developments, or existing adopted highways, the County Council will have regard to the following criteria:
  - Tree planting should be an integral component of the overall site layout and design. Highway trees should be given adequate space to mature and thereby contribute to the sense of place, green infrastructure and climate change mitigation. In general planting larger trees will deliver more effective climate change mitigation than small trees, due to the combination of providing shade, reducing storm water runoff, carbon storage and sequestration etc., therefore proposals should create space for ultimately larger trees.
  - There should be no compromise on achieving desirable visibility standards.
  - There should be no compromise regarding the positioning of trees to minimise risk of vehicle impact.
  - There should be no compromise on achieving acceptable systems of street lighting.

<sup>11</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 38 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>12</sup> Highways Act 1980 – Section 278 - [Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)



- Trees should not be positioned such that tree canopies and/or root systems will obstruct users of the highway or future maintenance operations including maintenance of highway drainage systems and statutory undertakers' plant.
  - Consideration will be given to historic road accident collision information. The siting of trees may be refused at sites considered to be unsuitable on road safety grounds.
  - Horizontal clearances and / or provision of protective measures shall be sufficient to avoid direct damage to drains, underground services, flexible surfaces, and adjacent private structures.
- 9.1.7. Conflicts arise between trees and utility services, both overhead cables and underground pipes and infrastructure. When planning to install or maintain utility services in close proximity to trees precautionary measures must be taken to prevent root damage. When considering these issues, guidance should be sought from National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) Publication 10 'Guidelines for the planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees'<sup>13</sup> and BS5837 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction<sup>14</sup>.
- 9.1.8. It is the responsibility of developers to minimise the impact of new developments on all highway tree assets, especially those of high amenity value. Staffordshire County Council as the Highway Authority in Staffordshire will require compensation for the loss of highway tree assets under the road agreements process.
- 9.1.9. Full detail on the opportunities and restraints for the establishment of trees on new developments can be found in the Staffordshire Residential Design Guide<sup>15</sup>.
- 9.1.10. Appendix 01 contains a provisional list of trees which will be considered by the County Council to plant on the highway.

## **9.2. Asset Protection**

- 9.2.1. Whenever possible trees should be located in an area of soft dig such as a verge or SUDS swale alongside the highway. Planting trees on the footway or other paved surface, requires a tree pit to be installed to prevent the footway collapsing into the tree hole and to protect private properties and utility apparatus from consequential damage.
- 9.2.2. Tree pits will be suitable for the species of tree identified. An SCC landscape architect can provide advice if requested. When considering installing a tree pit, it is important that the footway width is not reduced to below 1.6m to allow full access along the footway.

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<sup>13</sup> NJUG Publication 10 - [National Joint Utilities Group \(streetworks.org.uk\)](http://streetworks.org.uk)

<sup>14</sup> BSI5837 - [Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction](#)

<sup>15</sup> SCC Residential design guide - [Residential Design Guide - Staffordshire County Council](#)



- 9.2.3. Paved surfaces and utility pipe and cables are vulnerable to root damage. It is important to not plant trees too close to existing known utilities. In proximity to underground services protection measures such as root directors will be required. Tree roots should also be guided downwards, for a minimum of 300mm to remove the possibility of either the road or footway suffering from root heave.

### 9.3. Mitigation Planting

- 9.3.1. Where possible existing site features such as trees and hedgerows should be incorporated into the design of the layout. However, on occasions there will be justification to remove trees for new development or schemes. In this situation mitigation planting is expected. Replacement planting of three trees for every one lost is required, unless the applicant wishes to carry out planting with larger tree stock (semi-mature trees) and has limited space, in which case two trees would be expected.
- 9.3.2. This should be a consideration at design stage as the planning boundary must include enough room to carry out these landscaping proposals.
- 9.3.3. Detail on the planting of replacement trees can be found in the Staffordshire Residential Design Guide.

## 10. LICENSING AND CONSENTS

### 10.1. Vehicle Access Crossing Applications Involving Trees

- 10.1.1. Where Staffordshire County Council receives an application for a vehicular access crossing or an extension to an existing crossing and there is a tree in the footway or verge, considerations will be made as follows.
- Does the property already have the right of access satisfied by another access for example at the rear? If yes, the application will be turned down and the tree will remain. If not, the tree may be removed to allow construction of the footway crossing providing all other criteria set out in the vehicular access crossing specification are satisfied.
  - Does the excavation needed to construct the proposed crossing, impinge on the Root Protection Area as defined in British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations?<sup>16</sup> If yes, then the individual situation is to be considered by the Council to establish the extent of potential damage to roots. If no, the footway crossing application can proceed.
- 10.1.2. All costs associated with the removal of the tree and the planting of a replacement tree in a suitable location must be met by the applicant.

<sup>16</sup> British Standard 5837:2012 - [BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.](#)



10.1.3. Where trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) they will not be considered for removal.

## **10.2. Pay for Service**

10.2.1. Where tree work is not justifiable as the result of a request for service from a resident, some residents may wish to pay for the work themselves. This will often be in relation to minor seasonal nuisance issues.

10.2.2. The Council will not currently enter into any arrangements where members of the public pay for or contribute towards the cost of tree works.

10.2.3. We will not allow tree surgeons engaged by members of the public, access to climb trees under our stewardship.

10.2.4. Except in the case of branches overhanging private property any unauthorised works to Council owned trees carried out by any person would be treated as criminal damage.

10.2.5. However, the Council are currently reviewing arrangements for a pay for service as part of a cross-service review.

## **11. TREE HABITATS, ECOLOGY & PRESERVATION**

### **11.1. Habitat and Ecology**

#### **11.2.**

11.3. Ancient woodland and Ancient and Veteran trees should be regarded as irreplaceable habitat (NPPF 180) so any removal of these trees should be resisted unless absolutely essential. Alternative advice on how to deal with very old trees should be taken from an arboriculturalist with a Vet Tree certificate. Where removal does occur, felled timber should be left in situ if possible, and habitat mitigation should be required.

11.4. Areas of Staffordshire with parkland and wood pasture may have veteran trees and their dependant species and nearby highway trees may provide habitat for these species even if not veteran themselves.

11.4.1. Non-emergency/non-urgent tree works will be deferred until the end of the nesting season (April to September inclusive).

11.4.2. In hazardous circumstances where work cannot be deferred, it may be possible to survey the trees to identify whether or not there are birds nesting in that tree or to reduce the impact on the nesting birds by undertaking the minimum work necessary to mitigate the hazard. Public safety is only a reason that an offence is avoided for birds not on schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

11.4.3. Trees displaying evidence of roosting bats or evidence of badger sets within the proximity will be referred to an ecologist before work commences. Any

trees confirmed to be supporting roosting bats or live badger sets will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted.

- 11.4.4. Ivy on trees should not be removed or severed. It generally does not present a threat to the tree and can be supporting bats or nesting birds.

## **11.5. Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)**

11.5.1. A tree preservation order (TPO) is an order made by a Local Planning Authority (LPA) in respect of trees. A TPO is used to protect trees (including areas of woodland) where they provide significant local amenity benefits. The order makes it an offence to cut down, uproot, prune, damage or destroy the tree or trees without permission from the LPA who made the order. The Council endorses the use of TPO's to protect trees of high amenity, cultural or environmental value.

11.5.2. To find out if a tree has a TPO it is necessary to contact the LPAs within the County. Each District and Borough Council hold their own complete datasets of trees with a TPO.

## **11.6. Trees in Conservation Areas**

11.6.1. Where works are likely to impact upon trees in a conservation area that are not protected by a TPO permission must be sought from the district or borough council conservation officer.

11.6.2. Where works are likely to impact upon trees in a conservation area the district or borough council will require a minimum of 6 weeks notification. Notice must be provided in writing (by letter or email) giving detail of the proposed work. This allows opportunity to consider whether an order should be made to protect the trees.

11.6.3. To find out if a tree has a TPO it is necessary to contact the Local Planning Authority. Each District and Borough Council hold their own complete datasets of trees with a TPO.

## **12. COMPETENCE**

### **12.1. Competence**

12.1.1. The competence of tree inspectors appointed arboriculturists and contractors undertaking planned specialist tree surgery work is of key importance to maintain the HMPE. The level of skill, and hence training, required to identify and remedy signs of mechanical weakness in trees should be appropriate for the role of the person concerned.

## **APPENDIX 0 – APPROVED TREE SPECIES**



**An approved tree species list for planting on highway maintainable at public expense is under development.**

DRAFT



# **Community Impact Assessment Checklist and Executive Summary**

## **Name of Proposal:**

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP)

## **Project Sponsor:**

James Bailey, Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County

## **Project Manager:**

David Walters, Strategic Asset and Network Manager

## **Date Completed:**

**14/01/22**

## Final Checklist

Prior to submitting your Community Impact Assessment (CIA), please ensure that the actions on the checklist below have been completed, to reassure yourself / SLT / Cabinet that the CIA process has been undertaken appropriately.

Checklist	Action Completed	Comments/Actions
The project supports the Council's Business Plan, priorities and MTFS.	Yes	Good quality infrastructure is proven to promote inward investment, support community cohesion and promotes residents to be healthier, more independent and feel safer and more supported with access to more jobs which benefit economic growth. Key to the solution is the efficient management of infrastructure and effective communication and engagement with residents and stakeholders to agree investment strategies and innovative preventative solutions.
It is clear what the decision is or what decision is being requested.	Yes	
For decisions going to Cabinet, the CIA findings are reflected in the Cabinet Report and <b>potential impacts are clearly identified and mitigated for</b> (where possible).	Yes	
The <b>aims, objectives and outcomes</b> of the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	Yes	
The <b>groups</b> who will be affected by the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	Yes	
The <b>communities</b> that are likely to be more adversely impacted than others have been clearly identified.	Yes	
Engagement / consultation has been undertaken and is representative of the residents most likely to be affected.	Yes	
A range of people with the appropriate knowledge and expertise have contributed to the CIA.	Yes	
Appropriate evidence has been provided and used to inform the development and design of the policy, service or project. This includes data, research, engagement/consultation, case studies and local knowledge.	Yes	
The CIA <b>evidences</b> how the Council has considered its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and how it	Yes	

<b>Checklist</b>	<b>Action Completed</b>	<b>Comments/Actions</b>
has considered the impacts of any change on people with protected characteristics.		
The next steps to deliver the project have been identified.	Yes	

## Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is intended to be a collation of the key issues and findings from the CIA and other research undertaken. This should be completed after the CIA and research has been completed. Please structure the summary using the headings on the left that relate to the sections in the CIA template. Where no major impacts have been identified, please state N/A.

	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
<p><b>PSED</b></p> <p>What are the impacts on residents with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010? Highlight any concerns that have emerged as a result of the equality analysis on any of the protected groups and how these will be mitigated. It is important that Elected Members are fully aware of the equality duties so that they can make an informed decision, and this can be supported with robust evidence.</p>	<p>The main issue for infrastructure is related to disability access</p>	<p>Well managed highway infrastructure makes sure people with a protected characteristic have the same opportunities as other people and provides a framework within which actions can be prioritised.</p>		<p>This is covered by the adherence to national standards on design that take account of people with disabilities, together with local groups during design phases e.g. Staffordshire Public Access Network.</p>
<p><b>Health and Care</b></p> <p>How will the proposal impact on residents' health? How will the proposal impact on demand for or access to</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
social care or health services?				
<b>Economy</b> How will the proposal impact on the economy of Staffordshire or impact on the income of Staffordshire's residents?	All Staffordshire residents	The robustness of the HIAMP is fundamental in managing value for money for investment in the network. The implications are set out in the report and the HIAMP.	If we fail to properly manage the network, there are huge risk implications on business and the ability of people to move around the county.	The Infrastructure+ contract and HIAMP both have risk registers to minimise and manage the risks to the highway network and its users.
<b>Environment</b> How will the proposal impact on the physical environment of Staffordshire? Does this proposal have any Climate Change implications?	All Staffordshire residents	The benefits are set out in the report and the HIAMP	Without an approved HIAMP the policies and initiatives that promote sustainability and carbon management issues may not be considered and adopted.	The recommendations are set out in the report and the HIAMP
<b>Localities / Communities</b> How will the proposal impact on Staffordshire's communities?	All Staffordshire residents	The benefits are set out in the report and the HIAMP	A well maintained and managed network that is safe, serviceable, and sustainable supports local communities.	The recommendations are set out in the report and the HIAMP

	<b>Which groups will be affected?</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations / Recommendations</b>
			<p>It makes an important contribution to social inclusion, community safety, and education and health. The appearance of our streets helps to shape the character and quality of the local environment in which people live.</p>	

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Monday 28 February 2022**

### **Accessibility Strategy**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers the Accessibility Strategy and supports its approval for sign off and adoption by Staffordshire County Council and schools.

### **Summary**

#### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. The Equality Act (2010) states local authorities must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare an Accessibility Strategy.
2. A revised version of the current Accessibility Strategy has been developed for Staffordshire County Council (SCC) to ensure the Strategy reflects current legislation and local practice.
3. It is requested that the Accessibility Strategy is considered and supported for adoption by Staffordshire County Council and across Staffordshire schools.

### **Report**

#### **Background**

4. The Equality Act (2010) states local authorities must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare an Accessibility Strategy.
5. An Accessibility Strategy should:
  - a. Increase the extent to which children and young people with disabilities can participate in the schools' curriculums.
  - b. Improve the physical environment of schools and increasing the extent to which children and young people with disabilities can take

advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools.

- c. Improve the delivery of information to children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

6. Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential ( Strategic Plan 2022-2026).

### **Development of the Accessibility Strategy**

7. A working group was formed to develop Staffordshire County Council's (SCC) Accessibility Strategy. The strategy was drafted considering the legislative requirements, good practice from other authorities, current practice and key areas for development within Staffordshire and feedback from a consultation. The revised Accessibility Strategy sets out the approach SCC will take to increase and improve access to education for children and young people with disabilities, so that they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent all children can.
8. An initial draft strategy was developed, input on this invited from a group of experts in this field and parents and carers. Comments received were used to develop an updated draft version.

### **Consultation**

9. A consultation on the draft strategy was completed. This included an opportunity for people to complete a short online survey. In addition to the survey, other stakeholders were invited to comment on the draft strategy including local authority officers, partner agencies, schools, SENCos, parents and carers.
10. The consultation ran from 17 Dec 2020- 19 Feb 2021 with 42 responses received. The majority of feedback received (over 80%) was in support of the content of the Strategy for both schools and the local authority; stating it focused on the right priorities (81%). All feedback was considered and used to inform the final version.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Staffordshire Accessibility Strategy 2021 – 2024

Appendix 2 – Summary of Consultation Feedback

## **Contact Details**

**Assistant Director:** Tim Moss, Assistant Director for Education Strategy and Improvement

**Report Author:** Carolyn Knight  
**Job Title:** Senior Partnerships and Commissioning Manager  
**Telephone No.:** 07989 386540  
**E-Mail Address:** [carolyn.knight@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.knight@staffordshire.gov.uk)



# Staffordshire Accessibility Strategy 2021-2024

Supporting Accessibility in Staffordshire Schools

February 2022



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Staffordshire County Council ('SCC') believe all children and young people, irrespective of background or needs, are entitled to a good education that enables them to fulfil their potential. Improving access to education and participation in the school curriculum for children and young people with disabilities is vital, to ensure equality of opportunity, to support children and young people to reach their educational potential and improve their future outcomes.
- 1.2 Our ambition is that "All children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities ('SEND') SEND are given the opportunity to achieve everything that they can. They engage with the right support at the right time from their parents/carers, the community and the professionals that work with them to make this happen." (SEND Strategy 2021-26)
- 1.3 Our [Whole Life Disability Strategy 2018-23](#) sets out the vision for how we want 'all people who have a disability to be able to live their lives, ensuring we respond to their individual circumstances, their support networks and the communities in which they live'.
- 1.4 The [Equality Act 2010](#) ('the Act') requires all providers to make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantaging children and young people with disabilities. Schools have an additional duty to plan for better access for children and young people with disabilities. This planning duty does not apply to settings which provide only Early Years provision and are not maintained nurseries, or which provide only Further / Higher Education provision.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 The strategy sets out the approach SCC are taking to increase access to education for children and young people with disabilities, so they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent as all children can.

- 2.2 The strategy is for all Staffordshire schools for which SCC has responsibility.
- 2.3 It complies with the requirement in the Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 10) that all local authorities must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare and publish an **Accessibility Strategy**.
- 2.4 All schools and academies must develop and publish an **Accessibility Plan** on their website which must comply with the statutory duties as detailed in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.5 The school Accessibility Plan should be based on the same principles as local authority Accessibility Strategy and outline how the school will improve access to education for children and young people with disabilities over time. There should be a link between the school's SEN Information Report and their Accessibility Plan.
- 2.6 To support schools in the production of an Accessibility Plan, SCC has produced an Accessibility Plan template (See Appendix 1).
- 2.7 Under the Act, a person is defined as disabled if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term substantially adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This definition includes learning difficulties, mental health needs, sensory impairments, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.
- 2.8 The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years (2014) states 'Children and young people with these conditions do not necessarily have special educational needs, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people, and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision to be made, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.'

### 3. Our Duties

- 3.1 In addition to meeting the specific requirement set out in Schedule 10, the Accessibility Strategy contributes to the requirements under section 149 of the Act to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty ('PSED') with specific regard to children and young people with a disability.
- 3.2 The PSED consists of a general (equality) duty which requires public bodies, in exercising of its functions, including SCC and schools for which SCC are responsible for to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.3 The Act requires schools and SCC to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage and are enabled to participate in education and associated services. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment is a form of discrimination under the Act.
- 3.4 An Accessibility Strategy should be over a prescribed period:
- (a) Increasing the extent to which children and young people with disabilities can participate in the schools' curriculums.
  - (b) Improving the physical environment of schools and increasing the extent to which children and young people with disabilities can take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools.
  - (c) Improving the delivery of information to children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers.

## **NB: Medical Needs:**

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to support children and young people with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will specify the type and level of support required to meet the children and young people's needs. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, and schools should have regard to statutory guidance

[`Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK](#)

## **4. Local Context**

- 4.1 Staffordshire is a large county with over 400 schools and academies providing education for around 120,000 primary, middle and secondary school children and young people. Approximately 2,500 children and young people attend 23 special schools and six Pupil Referral Units. At July 2021, there were 6,048 children and young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), with 12,758 children and young people with SEND attending mainstream settings.
- 4.2 There is a strong relationship between SCC and its community of schools and academies. A full list of all schools, including those that are accessible, can be found on Staffordshire's [SEND Local Offer](#)

## **5. Our Priorities and Principles**

- 5.1 The SEND Strategy (2021-26) sets out the local area's priorities for children and young people with SEND and their families.
1. We communicate well with each other.
  2. We work in partnership to meet the needs of children and young people.
  3. We ensure that the right support is available at the right time.
  4. We encourage communities to be inclusive.

## **Our Principles:**

- 5.2 All children and young people have a right to have their needs met, which will normally be within their local mainstream school, in their community.
- 5.3 Children and young people can access their education setting, participate within it and feel included.
- 5.4 Children and young people with a disability can access and participate fully in family and community life to meet their needs.
- 5.5 SCC, its schools, other partners and stakeholders will work together to support the needs of children and young people with a disability within education.
- 5.6 SCC will engage with children and young people with disabilities, and their parents/carers to capture their views to inform service development and working practices.

## **6. Implementing the Strategy**

Through the work detailed in this strategy, SCC will support those schools it is responsible for to ensure that the following key priorities are met:

1. Increase access to the curriculum for children and young people with disabilities.
2. Improve the physical environment to increase access for children and young people with disabilities.
3. Make information more accessible to children and young people with disabilities.

**1. Increasing access to the school curriculum** – ‘schools must use their best endeavours to provide high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to meet the individual needs of children and young people’.

To achieve this, **Schools** will:

- Make SEND a priority by ensuring there is a member of the Governing Body, or sub-committee, with oversight for SEND.
- Write an Accessibility Plan in partnership with stakeholders, outlining how it will provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all its children and young people.
- Use a range of inclusive teaching strategies.
- Ensure effective support for the transition of children and young people with SEND.
- Recognise the potential of children and young people with SEND, reduce barriers to their achievement and inclusion, and develop a strong culture for success.
- Use a graduated response when meeting children and young people’s needs using the ‘assess, plan, do, review’ cycle to inform this.
- Provide staff with the opportunity for regular training on SEND.
- Use a range of resources and auxiliary aids to ensure children can be included in the curriculum.
- Ensure children with SEND are included in social activities.
- Involve children and young people and their parents/carers in the review of individual plans regarding curriculum access.
- Ensure all children and young people with SEND have a voice and are listened to.
- Help children and young people to [access exams and assessments](#) -
- Work with relevant professionals to ensure a children and young people’s medical and physical needs’ are met.

**Staffordshire County Council** will:

- Provide the right help for children, young people and their parents/carers, at the right time, helping to empower families and build resilience.
- Work in partnership with schools, colleges, early years' settings and providers, to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people in the County, ensuring that every child/young person does well from the earliest years, until they enter employment.
- Promote the inclusion of children and young people with SEND within schools and early years settings.
- Listen to the views of children and young people with SEND, parents/carers and practitioners in the review and development of services for children and young people with SEND.
- Provide access to NASEN Whole-School SEND Review training for schools.
- Provide specialist services (as outlined below) to support children and young people, schools and staff.

**Support** to achieve this will be available from:

- **Graduated Response:**

Schools will provide special educational needs (SEN) support for a child /young person if their educational needs mean that they require additional or different support to that generally given to most children and young people of the same age. This is referred to as the graduated response.

SEN support has a clear cycle of assessment of progress, planning and putting in place the appropriate support; then reviewing a child/young person's progress - this is known as 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review'.

For a small number of children and young people, they may require a higher level of specialist resourcing, additional to that which is usually provided in school and which may require the completion of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment in order to determine whether it is necessary for provision to be made through an EHC Plan.

- **Specialist Support Service:**

The **Hearing and Visual Impairment Teams** support children and young people with a hearing impairment (HI) or visual impairment (VI) aged 0-25 years at home, in early years settings, and in mainstream and special schools.

**ASSIST** can provide support for young people over 16 years who have HI or VI, are deafblind, or who have an autism spectrum condition.

The **Autism Outreach Team (AOT)** work with children and young people up to 25 years with a diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition, the team includes a further education specialist. The service offers advice and training to mainstream settings who are supporting children and young people with an autism spectrum condition.

When a child is referred to the AOT and HI/VI Teams an environmental audit is completed of the education settings. The audit provides recommendations to the setting, based around a child's access needs.

- **Educational Psychology Service:**

The **Educational Psychology Service** supports schools, other educational settings and SCC in meeting the needs of children and young people with severe and complex special educational needs and disabilities.

- **Early Years' Forum:**

The **Early Years** Forums are monthly multi-agency meetings that monitor whether the right services are involved to support pre-school children. Those attending represent a the range of services that provide help and support to children and early years settings.

- **Speech and Language Service – Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust:**

The **Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service** works with babies, children and young people who have speech, language, communication, and eating/drinking needs. The team includes speech and language therapists who work in the community in a wide range of settings including family homes, schools, hospitals, and children's centres.

- **SEND Hub Locality Model:**

**SEND Hubs** support school staff in their district to provide the right support to children and young people at the right time. The hubs are a group of professionals including headteachers, health and social care professionals and support services. Meeting every half term, they discuss children and young people going through the graduated approach, who need additional support, and put agreed actions into place to support them.

As part of the hubs, a Specialist Outreach Service is being developed. This will involve specialist providers delivering training and support to staff in mainstream schools so that they are better able to help children and young people with SEND.

## **2. Improving the physical environment of schools to increase access for children and young people with a disability**

Education providers have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make sure children and young people with disabilities are not discriminated against (Equality Act, 2010).

To achieve this, **Schools** will:

- Ensure the physical environment is accessible. This includes the use of physical space to reduce noise and distractions, ensuring lighting is appropriate and providing quiet spaces for time out.
- Use suitable resources to meet a child/young person's individual needs. This may include auxiliary aids, braille and visual timetables.
- Make use of the Disability Access Fund in early years' settings.
- Facilitate the access of children and young people with sensory impairments, where required.
- Follow the pathway for accessing funding for specialist equipment.

**Staffordshire County Council** will:

- Ensure all new build/extension projects completed on schools are designed and built in accordance with DfE guidance/standards and Building Regulations (Part M), regarding accessibility.
  - While SCC will do its best to support all children and young people with SEND, it does not receive any funding to pay for adaptations/improvements that may be required to make buildings accessible. This responsibility lies with the school.
- Provide schools with information on supporting the needs of [children and young people with physical disabilities](#).
- Support schools and educational settings to meet the needs of children and young people with sensory impairments.
- Work with schools to assist with issues regarding individual placements.
- Ensure EHC Plans are specific about the accessibility needs of children and young people, assisted through the implementation of joint multi-agency standards for both EHC Plans and annual reviews.
- Work collaboratively with schools to ensure smooth transition arrangements for children and young people starting schools for the first time and those moving to other schools/colleges.

### **3. Make information more accessible to children and young people with disabilities by providing information in a range of different ways.**

To achieve this, **Schools** will:

- Write an Accessibility Plan, and publish it on their school website.
- Have a SEND Information Report, published on their school website.
- Have a link to the [SEND Local Offer](#) on their school website.
- Provide accessible information for children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers, to meet their individual needs, including braille and large font, where required.
- Use alternative forms of communication with individual children and young people, where required.
- Provide interpreters, including sign language interpreters, where required.
- Use the Graduated Response when meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, using the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle to inform this.

**Staffordshire County Council** will:

- Provide information via [Staffordshire Connects](#) including the Family Information Service (FIS).
- Ensure information about services available for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 and their parents/carers, is up to date and easily accessible on the [SEND Local Offer](#)
- Continue to develop and regularly review the SEND Local Offer, involving children and young people with SEND, their parents/carers and practitioners.
- Provide advice and support to parents, children and young people through the [SEND Information Advice and Support Service](#).
- Provide guidance for schools in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND through the [Graduated Response Toolkit](#).
- Involve children, young people and parents/carers in the development and review of local strategies.

- Provide accessible information for children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers; where necessary providing interpreters, including sign language interpreters, and information in other formats including braille and large font.
- Provide free internet access in Staffordshire Libraries with SEND champions to support children and young people and parents/carers to access the SEND Local Offer and other information.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1 It is the duty of SCC, all those working in Staffordshire schools and academies and specialist services supporting schools, to promote accessibility and to ensure this strategy is implemented and adhered to.
- 7.2 SCC will support schools in implementing the strategy and will continue to work with children and young people and parents/carers and our key partners in the context of our overall SEND Strategy (2021-26).
- 7.3 The SEND Inclusion and Partnership Group will oversee the delivery of the strategy, as part of their overall strategic role and review the document annually. This group includes representation from education, social care, health, the voluntary sector and parents/carers.

## Appendix 1 – Accessibility Plan Template

All schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan and this checklist is designed to provide guidance when writing and reviewing them.

What to cover	Tips
<p>Accessibility Plans must set out how the school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to increase the extent to which children and young people with disabilities can participate in the curriculum</li> <li>• Improve its physical environment to enable children and young people with disabilities to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided</li> <li>• Improve the availability of accessible information for children and young people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>An audit could help you to identify potential barriers to access and what you could do about them. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are all the shelves in the library accessible to all?</li> <li>▪ Is there adequate lighting in all areas?</li> <li>▪ Is information provided in large print, Braille, etc.?</li> <li>▪ Do the curriculum and resources include examples of children and young people with disabilities?</li> <li>▪ To what extent do teachers consider the individual needs of children and young people in their lessons?</li> <li>▪ Consider involving children and young people with disabilities in the development of this Plan to gain their feedback and identify areas for action.</li> </ul>
<p>Details of <b>how</b> you will make the school’s curriculum, physical environment and information more accessible for children and young people with disabilities</p>	<p>This section could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targets and Success criteria</li> <li>▪ Actions to meet these targets</li> <li>▪ Timescales</li> <li>▪ Who is responsible for targets and actions?</li> </ul>

Monitoring and evaluating the plan	Date the Plan approved? When it will be reviewed? By whom?
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## **Appendix 2 – School Checklist** – To assist schools to identify barriers to accessibility.

### **Accessibility**

- Disabled parking signposted at car park entrance and disabled parking space(s)
- Dropped kerb to pavement with appropriate textured paving
- High contrast signage to the entrance
- Adequate lighting along pathway
- Walkways are evenly paved and in good condition
- Clear of overhanging trees or windows opening onto the pathways
- All stepped areas are accessible by ramp with tactile surface at top and bottom
- Appropriate handrails starting before the first step and finishing after the last.
- Edges of steps/stairs are highlighted
- Toilet/changing areas are accessible
- School assemblies are accessible

### **Entrance**

- Height of entrance bell clearly visible and contrasting with surrounding areas
- Entrance mats are flush with floor, no tripping hazard
- Area is well lit and has clear signage

### **Reception**

- Provision of a Lighting Transition Zone out of the main traffic area
- Clear of obstacles or clutter/appropriate seating
- Glazing is clearly marked by banding or frosting to indicate its presence

### **Corridors**

- Plain non-glare, non-slippery flooring
- Adequate lighting, not pooling
- Corridors are free of clutter, both floors and walls

- Doors are painted in a colour that contrasts with their frame and surroundings
- Clear and tactile signage to classrooms are fitted to the outside wall, not the door
- Displays are at eye level, tactile if possible.
- Raised areas/steps, which protrude into an open space are highlighted

### **Cloakrooms**

- Coat hooks a good size and contrasting colour.



# Accessibility Strategy

## Summary of Consultation Feedback

Number of Responses	Stakeholder
13	SEND Professionals
11	Parents and Carers
4	Head teachers
8	Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo's)
1	SEN teaching assistants
1	Other (Joint Advisory Committee)
1	Young person
1	Public sector partner
2	Unknown
<b>42</b>	<b>Total</b>

The consultation asked four questions. Responses are outlined below:

### 1. Do you agree with the responsibilities for schools outlined in the Accessibility Strategy?

86% stated Yes (36 respondents)

Responses of No included: wording needing to be clearer, better communication between the SCC; schools and health; information on the provision available to schools as part of the graduated response.

**2. Do you agree with the responsibilities for the Local Authority?**

83% stated Yes (35 respondents)

Responses of No included: a need for more collaboration between schools and the SEND team; a need for financial support to schools to address barriers to access; a need for specialist services to support SEN inclusion within schools.

**3. Do you think we have focussed on the right priorities?**

81% stated Yes (34 respondents)

Responses of No included: A need to promote early intervention; more support for children with SEND; SCC to provide practical advice, resources; acknowledgement in the strategy of hidden disabilities; a suggestion for. SCC to audit schools and gain parent view more often.

**4. Are the accessibility plan template and checklist in the appendices helpful?**

90% stated Yes (38 respondents)

Responses of No included: Too much focus on physical impairments and a need to reflect Autism

## **WORK PROGRAMME – 28 February 2022**

### **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This document sets out the work programme for the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee for 2021/22.

The Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for scrutiny of highways infrastructure and connectivity, flood and water management, education, learning and skills. As such the statutory education co-optees will sit on this committee. The Work Programme is linked to the Vision, Outcomes and Priorities detailed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22.

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

#### **County Councillor Tina Clements**

Chairman of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please contact Jonathan Lindop - Scrutiny and Support Officer by emailing [jonathan.lindop@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.lindop@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## Work Programme 2021/22

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Information/Action/Outcome from meeting
Friday 23 July 2021 am	<p>All Party Member Working Group (APMWG) Report - Future Economy and Enterprise Cabinet Member: Alan White Chairman APMWG: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: John Tradewell/Peter Barker</p>	<p>Raised at 15 January 2021 Committee meeting.</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.  (b) That the Executive's response to the Aspiration, Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Work Group and the progress which had already been made to date, be welcomed.  (c) That a further update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations/Action Plan be brought to the Committee at their January 2022 meeting or following consideration by Cabinet, whichever is the later.</p>
	<p>Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Quarterly Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge</p>	<p>Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting.</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.  (b) That the early signs of economic recovery following the re-opening of the Staffordshire economy be welcomed.  (c) That a further update be brought to the Committee January 2022.</p>
	<p>HS2 Quarterly Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Sarah Mallen</p>	<p>Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting.</p>	<p>(a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.  (b) That arrangements be made for the Committee to visit HS2's Operator Skills/Apprentice Hub at Dunton Warf, Tamworth to see something of the work being undertaken to safeguard/promote prosperity in the County.  (c) That a further update be brought to the Committee in January 2022.</p>
Thursday 16 September 2021 am	<p>Household Waste Recycling Centres Mobilisation Update and Intended Changes Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Clive Thomson/Carole Smith</p>	<p>Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.  (b) That a further update report be brought to the Committee at their meeting in April 2022.  (c) That a further report be brought to the Committee setting out performance of the</p>

			new service against relevant Key Performance Indicators, in due course.
	<p>Proposal for Scrutiny Review - 20 mph Speed Limits by Mike Barr Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.	<p>(a) That the report and Proposal for Scrutiny Review Form be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) Not to undertake further scrutiny of the introduction of 20 mph limits/zones at this time but to keep the matter under review and consider undertaking further work at the appropriate time as necessary.</p> <p><b>RECOMMEND</b> Cabinet – (a) That the introduction of additional 20 mph limits/zones within local neighbourhoods should continue as identified in the County Council’s Strategic Programme of Work and as local community priorities established through the Members’ Divisional Highways Programme.</p> <p>(b) That residents of Staffordshire be encouraged to engage with their local County Councillors on matters relating to excessive vehicle speeds and traffic calming with a view to seeking local resolution of issues for the benefit of the communities concerned.</p>
	<p>Safer Roads Partnership Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Road Safety Partnership in reducing road accident casualties be welcomed.</p> <p>(c) That the governance structure and operating model of the Partnership, as outlined in the report, be supported.</p> <p>(d) That the on-going performance of the Partnership be monitored closely and further updates be brought to the Committee, as required.</p>
	<p><del>Climate Change Annual Report and draft Climate Change Action Plan 2</del> Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg</p>	Requested by email from Clive Thomson 21 July 2021	

	Lead Officer: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Now to be considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the agreement of the Chairmen.	
	National Bus Strategy Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officer: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Added with the agreement of the Chairman, in leu of Climate Change Annual report (above).	That the report be received and noted.  <b>RECOMMEND</b> Cabinet - That the following priorities be reflected in the County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP):-  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to be made to Roadside Information and Infrastructure including bus shelters, bus stops, timetable information and real time information etc.</li> <li>• Passenger information provided to be consistent and accurate at all locations.</li> <li>• Improvements to be made to the timing and reliability of local bus services.</li> <li>• Links to be made to other strategic agendas and policy areas, including climate change and access to education.</li> <li>• Engagement to be maintained with bus users and local communities as the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership are developed, particularly in the most rural areas of the County.</li> <li>• Residents to be encouraged to use local bus services in order to improve the financial viability and sustainability of services.</li> </ul>
<del>Thursday 11 November 2021 am</del> <i>NB Chairman on Jury Service</i>  Monday 29 November 2021 pm	Highways Partner Contract Performance and Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.	(a) That the report be received and noted.  (b) That the performance achieved by the County Council's Infrastructure+ and lighting contracts, since their commencement, be noted and the efforts being made to improve customer satisfaction in the future be welcomed.  (c) That the feasibility of providing Members with additional information, via the County Council's electronic mapping system, on highway structures/assets within their

			<p>Divisions, included in the above-mentioned lighting contract, be investigated.</p> <p>(d) That on-going performance against the above-mentioned contracts be monitored closely.</p> <p>(e) That further reports on the County Council's Highways Infrastructure Transformation Programme, in light of its revised priority status, be brought to future meetings for consideration/scrutiny, as required.</p>
	<p>Flood Risk Management Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Jamie Cooper</p>	<p>Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the concerns of Eccleshall Flood Action Group regarding flooding in Staffordshire, be noted.</p> <p>(c) That the County Council's Flood Risk Management Team's priorities for 2021/22 be supported.</p> <p>(e) That the proposed process and timescales for the Flood Risk Management Strategy refresh be supported.</p> <p>(f) That progress against the County Council's proposed Outcome Measures for the 2021/27 Flood Risk Management Strategy be brought to the Committee for scrutiny in six-months' time.</p>
	<p><del>Local Industrial Strategy/Strategic Infrastructure Plan Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/Mark Parkinson</del></p>	<p><del>Item agreed at 30 October 2019 Triangulation Meeting. Added at request of Chairman at 31 August 2021 Pre-Agenda preview. Cabinet Member advised scrutiny premature at this stage.</del></p>	
	<p>Bus Transport Inquiry Day (Friday 21 January 2022) Information Sharing Session</p>	<p>Item requested by Chairman at 29 October 2021 Inquiry day Planning Session.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Friday 14 January 2022 am NB. Cabinet Member (PW) unavailable</p> <p>Thursday 13 January 2022 pm</p>	<p>All Party Member Working Group (APMWG) Report - Future Economy and Enterprise - Update Cabinet Member: Alan White Chairman APMWG: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/John Tradewell/Peter Barker</p>	<p>Raised at 15 January 2021 Committee meeting; Update requested at 23 July 2021 meeting.</p>	
	<p>Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation quarterly six month Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge</p>	<p>Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 meeting).</p>	
	<p>HS2 quarterly six month Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Sarah Mallen</p>	<p>Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 meeting).</p>	
	<p>Highways High Level Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested by email 14 December 2021 (James Bailey on behalf of Cabinet Member).</p>	
<p>Friday 21 January 2022 at 10.00 am Monday 21 February 2022 at 10.00 am (Inquiry Day)</p>	<p><del>Community Transport and the Supported Bus Network Inquiry Day</del> <del>Cabinet Members: David Williams and Mark Deaville</del> <del>Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson</del></p>	<p>“The Committee agreed to monitor the impact of the removal of bus subsidies going forward. The Leader of the Opposition also requested that a report come back to the Committee on benchmarking with other local authorities. To include issues in respect of public transport and changes to the Your Staffordshire Card Scheme.” Work Programme April 2021. Postponed until Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Settlement known.</p>	
<p>Friday 25 February 2022 am</p>	<p>Staffordshire Community Learning Service’s Annual Self-Assessment Report</p>	<p>Requested by email 19 November 2021 (Amanda</p>	

<p>NB. Cabinet Member (PW) unavailable</p> <p>Monday 28 February 2022 pm</p>	<p>Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Amanda Darlington</p>	<p>Darlington on behalf of Cabinet Member).</p>	
	<p><del>Town Centre Regeneration Programmes – Update</del> <del>Cabinet Member: Phillip White</del> <del>Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge</del></p>	<p>Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting. Postponment until late summer. requested by email 1 February 2022 (Anthony Hodge on behalf of Cabinet Member).</p>	
	<p>Countryside Review – Update Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officers: Helen Riley/Sarah Bentley</p>	<p>Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.</p>	
	<p>Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested by email 14 December 2021 (James Bailey on behalf of Cabinet Member).</p>	
	<p><del>'Bus Back Better' – Enhanced Partnership for Staffordshire</del> <del>Cabinet Member: David Williams</del> <del>Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson</del></p>	<p>Requested by email 5 January 2022 (Louise Clayton on behalf of Cabinet Member) <del>Postponed until March meeting following delay in announcing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement by Central Government.</del> Postponement until Settlement known, requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.</p>	
	<p><del>Accessibility Strategy</del> <del>Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price</del> <del>Lead Officers: Helen Riley/Carolyn Knight</del></p>	<p>Requested by email 29 January 2022 (Carolyn Knight on behalf of Cabinet Member)</p>	
<p>Additional meeting Friday 18 March 2022 am (Cabinet Member's availability confirmed)</p>	<p>Highways Infrastructure Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested at 12 November 2021 pre-Agenda Preview.</p>	

Additional meeting Wednesday 23 March 2022 pm (Re- arranged at request of Cabinet Member, Cabinet Members' availability confirmed)	County Economic Strategy (Pre-decision Scrutiny) Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Matthew Shufflebotham	Requested by email 8 December 2021 (Matthew Shufflebotham on behalf of Cabinet Member).	
	<del>'Bus Back Better' – Enhanced Partnership for Staffordshire Report/Recommendations from Inquiry Day on 21 February 2022.</del>	Requested by email 5 January 2022 (Louise Clayton on behalf of Cabinet Member) Postponed until March meeting following delay in announcing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement by Central Government. <del>Postponement until Settlement known, requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.</del>	
Thursday 14 April 2022 am	Household Waste Recycling Centres New Service Mobilisation - Update Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Clive Thomson/Carole Smith	Requested at Committee meeting on 16 September 2021.	
	Bus Service Improvement Plan Progress/Settlement Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.	
	<del>Skills, Jobs and Business Development – Update Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge</del>	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting. <del>Item to be incorporated into County Economic Strategy report to 23 March 2022 Committee meeting requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.</del>	
	Digital Infrastructure Update Plan Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officer: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.	

Provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval shown in green.

**Additional Items for Discussion/Programme**

To be advised	Delivering Housing in Staffordshire Cabinet Member: Mark Deaville Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/ Mark Parkinson/Matthew Shufflebotham	Aspire Housing and Homes England.	Programmed for consideration at November 2020 Committee Meeting but Agenda full. However, nothing further to report at present.
To be advised	Live Labs Cabinet Member: Julia Jessel/Jonathan Price/David Williams Lead Officers: Clive Thomson/Louise Clayton/Nick Dawson		
To be advised	Household Waste Recycling Centres – New Service Performance against Key Performance Indicators Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested at Committee meeting on 16 September 2021.	
To be advised	Safer Roads Partnership Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at Committee meeting on 16 September 2021.	
	Home to School Transport Vacant Seats Pre-decision Scrutiny (prior to Cabinet decision on 15 December 2021) Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Considered for inclusion at Pre-Agenda Preview on 12 November 2021.	No further action required owing to other Work Programme priorities with potentially greater financial impact.
To be confirmed	Bus Transport for Young People Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.	
May 2022 (provisional)	Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021/27 Outcome Measures – Progress Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Jamie Cooper	Requested at Committee meeting on 29 November 2021.	
July 2022 (provisional)	Highways Transformation Programme – Three Strands Progress	Requested at Committee meeting on 13 January 2022.	

	Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey		
September 2022 (provisional)	North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested by email 4 February 2022 (Joanne Keay on behalf of Cabinet Member).	
To be confirmed	'Bus Back Better' – Enhanced Partnership for Staffordshire Report/Recommendations from Inquiry Day on 21 February 2022. Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested by email 5 January 2022 (Louise Clayton on behalf of Cabinet Member). Postponed until March meeting following delay in announcing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement by Central Government. Postponed until Settlement known.	
July 2022 (provisional)	Town Centre Regeneration Programmes - Update Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting. Postponed until late summer at the request of Cabinet Member (via email from Anthony Hodge 1 February 2022).	

Provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval shown in green.

<b>Standing Items</b> (see above for programmed dates)			
Standing Item	HS2 quarterly six Monthly Update - Impact on Staffordshire Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Sarah Mallen	Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 meeting).	
Standing Item	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation quarterly six monthly Update and APMG Report - Future Economy and Enterprise – Update (combined item) Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 and 13 January 2022 meetings). Further update incorporated into County Economic Strategy Report to 23 March 2022	

meeting. Next update due at September 2022 meeting.

**Working Groups/Inquiry Days etc**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Background/outcomes</b>
Friday 21 January 2021 at 10.00 am Monday 21 February 2022	Community Transport and the Supported Bus Network Inquiry Day Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officer: Clive Thomson	Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview. Postponed following delay in announcing settlement by Central Government.	<i>"The Committee agreed to monitor the impact of the removal of bus subsidies going forward. The Leader of the Opposition also requested that a report come back to the Committee on benchmarking with other local authorities. To include issues in respect of public transport and changes to the Your Staffordshire Card Scheme."</i> Work Programme April 2021.
To be confirmed	Sexual Harassment in Staffordshire Schools	Participation requested by Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Michael Metcalf (Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee representative).	
Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 11.00 am on site	Site Visit to HS2 Apprentice Hub, Dunston Island, Curdworth, Warwickshire	Requested at Committee meeting on 23 July 2021.	Site visit undertaken. Discussion held into what the Committee can do to assist Balfour Beatty Flanary in bridging the skills/labour gap. Signposted contractor to JCB Academy, undertook photo opportunity for wider dissemination.

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Provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval shown in green

<p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>Tina Clements (Chairman)          Ross Ward (Vice-Chairman – Scrutiny)          Keith Flunder (Vice-Chairman – Overview)          Philippa Hadden          Philip Hudson          Syed Hussain          Graham Hutton</p>	<p><b>Calendar of Committee Meetings – Venues to be notified.</b></p> <p>Thursday 11 June 2021 am;          Friday 23 July 2021 am;          Thursday 16 September 2021 am;          Thursday 11-29 November 2021 am;          Friday 14 Thursday 13 January 2022 am-pm;          Friday 21 January-February 2022 am (Inquiry Day) (Postponed)          Friday 25 Monday 28 February 2022 am-pm</p>
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Ian Lawson  
David Smith  
Bernard Williams  
Mike Deakin (Co-optee)  
Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf (Co-optee)  
Jessica Shulman (Co-optee)

~~Friday 18 March~~ Wednesday 23 March 2022 pm (additional meeting);  
Thursday 14 April 2022 am