

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 23 March 2022

14:00

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live and may be viewed here:

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

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
15 March 2022

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of meeting held on 28 February 2022** (Pages 1 - 10)
4. **County Economic Strategy** (Pages 11 - 50)
Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Economy and Skills
5. **Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious
Education (SACRE) - 2020/21 Annual Report** (Pages 51 - 80)
Report of Chairman of SACRE
6. **Work Programme** (Pages 81 - 94)
7. **Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 14 April 2022 at 10.00
am, County Buildings, Stafford**
8. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

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

1972 indicated below".

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

Nil

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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Recording by Press and Public

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

Minutes of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 28 February 2022

Present: Tina Clements (Chairman)

Attendance

Keith Flunder (Vice-Chairman (Overview))
Philippa Haden
Graham Hutton

David Smith
Bernard Williams

Apologies: Philip Hudson, Syed Hussain, Ian Lawson and Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf

PART ONE

37. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interests made.

38. Minutes of meeting held on 13 January 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

39. Variation of Order of Business

RESOLVED – That the order of business on the Agenda be varied and that item No. 7, "Accessibility Strategy", be now considered.

40. Accessibility Strategy Committee Report

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) regarding the preparation of Staffordshire Accessibility Strategy 2021/24 under The Equality Act 2010 (schedule 4 to the signed minutes).

The County Council were required to prepare a Strategy for implementation within all their schools, in order to increase access to education by children and young people with disabilities so that they could benefit from the same provision as all children in the area.

According to the Authority's Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (2021-26), priorities for children and young people with SEND included:- (i) 'We communicate well with each other'; (ii) 'We work in partnership to meet the needs of children and young people'; (iii) We ensure that the right support is available at the right time' and; (iv) We encourage communities to be inclusive'.

The principles set out in the above-mentioned Strategy were:- (i) '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'; (ii) Children and young people can access their education setting, participate within it and feel included'; (iii) Children and young people with a disability can access and participate fully in family and community life to meet their needs'; (iv) Staffordshire County Council (SCC), its schools, other partners and stakeholders will work together to support the needs of children and young people with a disability within education'; (v) SCC will engage with children and young people with disabilities, their parents/carers to capture their views to inform service development and working practices'.

The key priorities included in the Accessibility Strategy were:- (i) Increase Access to the curriculum for children and young people with disabilities; (ii) Improve the physical environment to increase access for children and young people with disabilities and; (iii) Make information more accessible to children and young people with disabilities. Actions to be undertaken by the County Council were listed under each.

During the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the Accessibility Strategy, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising issues of concern as necessary, including:- (i) evidence of early implementation in local schools within in their areas; (ii) arrangements for monitoring and review to ensure consistency of application across the County; (iii) the results of consultation with stakeholders undertaken on the draft Strategy and how this informed the final version and; (iv) implementation of the Strategy's aims within schools' wider curriculum.

In conclusion Members welcomed the Strategy and acknowledged its importance in ensuring equality of access to education for all pupils. However, they were disappointed over the relatively low number of responses received to the consultation undertaken on the Strategy and urged the Cabinet Member to consider how this and other engagement measures might be improved in the future. In response, the Cabinet Member acknowledged their concern and re-assured them that appropriate action would be taken. In addition, he undertook to amend the Strategy's implementation period to bring it in line with that of the County Council's existing SEND Strategy.

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

(b) That the County Council’s Accessibility Strategy 2021/24 (to be amended to 2021/26) be supported.

(c) That appropriate action be taken to improve engagement with Stakeholders in the future having regard to the relatively low number of consultation responses received on the draft Strategy.

41. Staffordshire Community Learning Service Annual Self-Assessment (2020-2021)

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills regarding Staffordshire Community Learning Service Annual Self-Assessment for 2020/21 (schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

The Service provided a range of formal and informal education and training opportunities to meet the needs of learners (aged 19 years and over), the economy and wider community across Staffordshire. Their work was funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) through direct grant totalling £1,622,044 during 2020/21.

Learning programmes were delivered by both the Direct Delivery Unit and 23 Partner organisations who targeted and prioritised vulnerable adults with barriers to learning. The four main strands of delivery during the year were:- (i) Community Learning Framework 2019-2023; (ii) Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund; (iii) Wider Family Learning Grants and; (iv) Adult Skills, with courses being provided through a combination of classroom based, online and hybrid/blended learning owing to the national Covid-19 lockdown restrictions in place.

During the year participation on Digital Skills, Employability and Adult Skills courses had been low owing to difficulties in reaching low-skilled residents, without the means of classroom-based learning. However, a new range of courses had been delivered including:- (i) English to Speakers of Other Languages Progression for Work; (ii) English and Mathematics (Maths); (iii) Personal Development; (iv) Animal Care; (v) Video Calling; (vi) Getting Started with Blogging; (vii) Confidence with Social Media; (viii) Word Processing; (ix) Digital Cloud; (x) Web Design; (xi) Office Skills and; (xii) Essential Digital Skills qualifications.

The Service's Annual Self-Assessment was based on service-wide data and other evidence including: (i) learner feedback; (ii) information on learner destinations; (iii) course documentation and; (iv) quality monitoring reports. The process involved benchmarking against an internal Quality and Performance Framework together with Ofsted's Education and Inspection Framework (2019) which defined the criteria for high quality provision and continual improvement and monitoring.

Their most recent Ofsted inspection had been undertaken in 2017, following which they had been rated as 'Good' according to the four-point scale. The 2020/21 Self-Assessment had concluded that the Service remained 'Good' with the Behaviour and Attitudes component being rated as 'Outstanding'. In addition, performance against Key Performance Indicators set out in the Quality and Performance Framework was also encouraging with only Attendance (89.7%) falling below target (90%) owing to the difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the work of the Service and results of the annual Self-Assessment, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising issues of concern as necessary, including:- (i) further opportunities for joint working with universities and colleges to improve skills required by employers, in particular, large private sector businesses operating in the County eg HS2 etc; (ii) engagement undertaken with small businesses to learn of their requirements in respect of suitable candidates for vacant posts; (iii) the efforts being made to increase participation in courses following easing of Covid-19 restrictions eg 'comms' messaging, and (iv) the different media channels and provision of learning venues etc.

In conclusion, Members said they were satisfied with the performance of the Service during the year as highlighted by the 2020/21 Annual Self-Assessment and welcomed the additional investment which had been made to expand the curriculum. However, whilst they were disappointed to hear of the fall in participation rates during the Pandemic, they looked forward to seeing an increase in the numbers of residents coming forward for training in the 2021/22 Assessment. In addition, they requested the Cabinet Member look at what further measures could be adopted to encourage further education by those who had undertaken Community Learning courses.

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

(b) That the 'Good' performance of the Community Learning Service during 2020/21 be welcomed.

(c) That efforts continue to be made to increase participation rates in Community Learning during 2021/22.

(d) That additional measures be adopted to promote further education by those who had undertaken Community Learning courses, as necessary.

42. Countryside Estate Review

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture regarding a revised future vision for the County Council's Countryside Estate (schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

In March 2019, Cabinet agreed a two-stage approach for the Countryside Estate; firstly, a review of the countryside service operating model to achieve Medium Term Financial Strategy (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.

However, since Cabinet had agreed this approach, various key contextual changes had occurred including the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and urgent need to focus on environmental outcomes such as climate change and nature recovery had prompted a review of the decision. Accordingly, the draft revised vision was now:-

- (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 Rural Development Programme for England's Countryside Explorer project and existing Countryside Stewardship and Section 106 schemes (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), 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'.

In addition, the County Council intended to introduce car park charges on further countryside sites where it was financially viable to do so and for any surplus generated to be reinvested back into the sites.

Although there were no further MTFs savings required over and above those which had already been delivered (£500,000) through adoption of a revised operational model, the proposals sought to secure greater longer-term financial sustainability through cost recovery, income generation and external funding. However, some investment funding might be required to lever opportunities and subject to approval, further work would be undertaken in due course.

During the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the revised Vision asking questions, seeking clarification and raising issues of concern as necessary, including:- (i) the future role of volunteers in the operation of the service; (ii) the scope of the vision in relation to maintenance of the County Council's Public Rights of Way Network; (iii) secure provision of parking meters on remote sites and; (iv) potential funding opportunities arising from HS2's High Speed Rail development.

In conclusion, the Committee expressed their support for the revised Vision, in particularly (a) above. They stressed the need to have greater regard for the environment in the future management of the estate and cited potential opportunities for promoting less reliance on cars through the Country Parks offer. However, they noted a lack of specific reference to wildlife and habitats in the revised Vision and asked the Cabinet Member to consider including a suitable mention to re-enforce the work already undertaken by the Authority through the Staffordshire Nature Recovery Declaration.

The Committee also acknowledged the valuable contribution made by volunteers in managing the Countryside Estate and looked forward to an enhanced role for them under the new Vision, as appropriate.

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

(b) That the revised Future Vision for the County Council's Countryside Estate be supported.

(c) That consideration be given to the inclusion of reference to habitats and wildlife in the Vision to re-enforce the work already undertaken in the Staffordshire Nature Recovery Declaration.

(d) That a further report enabling pre-decision scrutiny of future investment proposals for Staffordshire's Country Parks be brought to the Committee for consideration, at the appropriate time.

43. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the draft revised Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) which had been prepared to ensure the County Council continued to meet their statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980 whilst making best use of the resources available (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes).

The format and content of the HIAP was based on national guidance and provided a link between the County Council's strategic objectives and operational activities. It set out in detail how they were to manage each highway asset in order to meet strategic goals whilst supporting delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In addition, it ensured Department for Transport Incentive Fund resources could be maximised, making the case for additional funding and enabling the Authority to better defend claims.

The revised document covered the three-year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

During the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the scope and content of the HIAMP seeking clarification and raising issues of concern as necessary, including:- (i) how its provisions would be applied to the County Council's existing strategic infrastructure Partner to ensure satisfactory performance; (ii) the significant shortfall in funding currently available for Highway maintenance work and the contribution the HIAMP would make towards bridging the gap and; (iii) the need for effective two-way communication with Local Members and the public on Highway matters.

In conclusion, the Committee expressed their support for the draft revised HIAMP and welcomed the amalgamation of information currently contained in separate documentation. They noted that the Plan did not constitute revisions to either policy or service standards but stressed the need to ensure implementation of its provisions under the existing contractual arrangements.

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

(b) That the draft revised Highways Asset Management Plan be supported.

(c) That additional efforts be made to ensure compliance with the various provisions set out in the Plan under the County Council's existing contractual arrangements including, where necessary, better communication channels with Local Members and the Public.

44. Work Programme

RESOLVED – That the updated Work Programme (schedule 5 to the signed minutes) be approved.

Chairman

Local Members Interest
N/A

Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 23 March 2022

Economic Strategy

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers and comments upon the draft Staffordshire County Council Economic Strategy in terms of the vision, ambitions, and priorities it sets out to continue to support the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and address the key challenges for the Staffordshire economy in the coming years.
- b. Considers and recommends interventions that the Committee believes would help to enable the successful delivery of the Strategy.
- c. Invites the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to bring an update on delivery of the Strategy to this Committee for scrutiny every 3 months.

Report of the 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 purpose of this report is to:
 - a. Provide the Select Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the draft of the County's Council's Economic Strategy. The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis meant that the County Council had to react quickly to support our businesses and residents. However, thanks to support measures put in place through the successful delivery of our Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy, alongside the

vaccine rollout, we are now in a much more positive position than most economic commentators thought we would be. It is therefore the right time for us to consider our plans for supporting the development of the local economy by tackling those issues that will be of most benefit to the future of the local economy and to ensure we are delivering upon those issues our residents want to see addressed. This is therefore an opportunity for the Committee to help to shape the Strategy and the County Council's plans for the local economy up to 2030, in line with the Government's missions for Levelling Up the UK.

- b. The successful delivery of the Strategy in achieving the vision, ambitions, and priorities that it sets out will be dependent on many factors, not least the identification and delivery of appropriate projects and programmes. A range of interventions are already underway and continue to be delivered within the county, as has been reported to the Committee through regular quarterly updates. Further projects and programmes will be needed, and there is therefore an opportunity for the Committee to consider further areas of focus that could help to successfully deliver the Strategy.
- c. Monitoring the County Council's performance in delivering the Strategy will be vital to ensuring we ultimately achieve its vision and ambitions. The Committee has an important role in scrutinising our performance over the duration of the Strategy.

Report

Background

2. Our Economic Recovery, Renewal & Transformation Strategy was considered by the Scrutiny Committee and agreed by Cabinet early in the COVID-19 crisis (June 2020), setting out our immediate response to support Staffordshire's businesses whilst also taking advantage of opportunities presented by the pandemic to support our plans for the renewal and long-term transformation of the local economy. The ultimate impacts of the pandemic were always and remain somewhat uncertain, although what is clear is that the delivery of local and national support measures, alongside the vaccine rollout, have been hugely successful in averting the severe economic downturn that had been predicted by many. We are now currently in a very different position to what many economic commentators thought we might be.

3. The much changed and more positive economic outlook means it is now a pertinent time to develop our new Economic Strategy, aligned to the relevant priorities agreed through the refresh of our Strategic Plan and cognisant of emerging national policy. The Strategy outlines how we will continue to support the Staffordshire economy to recover from the crisis and address some of the key challenges that we face that will provide the maximum benefit to the local economy and our residents.
4. It is essential the County Council has its own Strategy to complement and respond to national policy. We are uniquely placed to support a whole-system approach to continuing recovery and growth of our economy, due to our responsibilities for transport, infrastructure, environment, education, skills, and health.
5. The development of this Strategy will not only ensure our interventions are targeted on the right priorities, but it will also allow us to influence/shape the approach taken by the Midlands Engine, Government, and numerous other relevant bodies. It will aid with securing funding and powers to deliver our overall ambitions, including through the various Government policy agendas.
6. By outlining the County Council's priorities for the economy in the coming years, the Strategy will also guide any future work and discussions with our partners and Government on opportunities for further devolution to the local area. Any County Deal agreed with Government has the potential to provide further powers and resources that will allow us to deliver our economic priorities more quickly and effectively and is being considered through the Staffordshire Leaders Board.

Approach

7. The primary focus of our Economic Strategy are the overarching priorities agreed through the development of our Strategic Plan, namely town centres, start-ups & step-ups, higher skilled & higher paid workforce, the development of investment ready projects and strategic corridors. There are several other priorities and themes that are identified as important in supporting the future growth of the Staffordshire economy including innovation, supporting businesses on their journey to net zero and maximising the use of our investment and unlocking external funding.
8. We will of course strive to take full advantage of the many opportunities to support the development of the local economy, but these priorities represent those key challenges to face. This is not to say that other challenges do not exist, but these are the main issues we want to tackle as being of most benefit to the future of the local economy and to ensure

we are delivering upon those issues our residents most want to see addressed.

9. A significant amount of evidence continues to be compiled on the local economic picture, primarily through the County Council's Economic Bulletin. Along with additional evidence produced by economic 'think-tanks' and alike, this locally produced evidence has underpinned the development of the Strategy and will continue to form the basis of our supporting plans and strategies in the future.
10. We recognise that the County Council does not operate in isolation and there are numerous stakeholders with a vital role in supporting the growth of the Staffordshire economy, most notably our District and Borough Councils. We will therefore ensure that we are continuing to engage proactively with our Districts and Boroughs, businesses, residents, and partner organisations to provide an opportunity to help shape the final Strategy.

Delivery

11. Achieving our vision and ambitions set out within the Economic Strategy will require the delivery of appropriate projects and programmes, set out within existing and future supporting delivery plans. Many of these projects and programmes will require us to continue the strong joint working with local stakeholders and enhanced two-tier working that has proven so successful in recent years, including the delivery of the i54 South Staffordshire Enterprise Zone and recent completion of the Stafford Western Access Route to name just two examples of many. We recognise that the priorities we have set will require large scale investment, however the County Council alone does not have the level of resources that will be needed to deliver our ambitions in full. We will therefore continue to work with our partners, including Government, to unlock external funding for delivery in Staffordshire.
12. As detailed within the Strategy, the County Council will therefore '*Lead*' on direct delivery, '*Collaborate*' on delivery with partners and stakeholders, and '*Advocate*' for the delivery of projects and programmes by other organisations that meet our own ambitions as appropriate. Where this includes investment by the County Council, we will need to continue to ensure that this achieves the maximum possible benefits in the delivery of the Strategy, including leveraging funding from other organisations and the private sector.
13. We will continue to manage and monitor our progress in the delivery of the Strategy through our existing governance arrangements, including

regular Cabinet updates and quarterly reporting to and consideration by the Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Link to Strategic Plan

14. The Strategy primarily relates to the 'support Staffordshire's economy to grow, generating more and better-paid jobs' Strategic Plan priority and all the associated priorities. However, there are aspects of the Strategy that cut-across all the Strategic Plan priorities with the need to tackle climate change, support increased investment in our infrastructure and increased prosperity in the County having the potential to have positive impacts on resident's health, safety, and happiness.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

15. The Economy, Recovery and Renewal Strategy was considered by the Committee in June 2020, and regular quarterly updates have been considered by the Committee since then. The range of activity that the County Council has progressed and continues to progress over the last couple of years, as has been reported to the Committee, remains relevant and will be important to the delivery of the Strategy.

Community Impact

16. The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis continue to be felt by some industrial sectors and therefore residents more than others. The Levelling Up agenda is a key theme that cuts across all the strategy and the aim is therefore for all residents to benefit from its delivery. A 'live' evidence base continues to be updated on at least a monthly basis, reported through our Economy Bulletin, to monitor the ongoing state of the local economy, whilst the strategy allows us to remain agile to respond as necessary as and when required.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Consultation Draft of the Economic Strategy

Contact Details

Assistant Director: Anthony Hodge, Assistant Director for Business & Enterprise
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CONSULTATION DRAFT

Final design to be completed prior to publication

Staffordshire County Council

Economic Strategy

2022-2030



Foreword

We are ambitious for the economy of Staffordshire, our businesses, and people. The impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis will continue to be felt on the local, national, and global economies for some time and cannot be ignored. However, the support measures delivered throughout the pandemic by the County Council, Government, and our partners, alongside the hugely successful vaccine rollout, have resulted in us being in a far better position now than even the most optimistic of commentators thought we would be at the start of the pandemic.

Our work to support the growth of the Staffordshire economy over the last decade has ensured that we have remained resilient, whilst the successful delivery of our Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy through the pandemic means we are now able to accelerate our plans. We will of course strive to take full advantage of the many opportunities to support the development of the local economy, but we also recognise that there are challenges to address.

The role of the County Council is central to supporting everyone during these changing times, and indeed the recovery and growth of our economy is already underway. As well as continuing to invest in the conditions all businesses need to thrive, we can now set out those priorities that we will now face head on as being of most benefit to the future of the local economy in the coming months and years, delivering on those issues that matter most to the people of Staffordshire.

Our ambitious Economic Strategy is our roadmap to supporting a vibrant, productive local economy where our existing business are helped to grow, new businesses are established and thrive, our residents have the skills needed to access the jobs of the future and supporting the creation of places across all parts of the county that we can be proud of.

Philip White

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills

1. Vision and Ambitions

Our Strategic Plan outlines those outcomes that the County Council most wants to achieve, including that, *"Everyone in Staffordshire will have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth."* To realise this ambition, we will:

- Work with our partners to regenerate our town centres.
- Support people to start and grow their business.
- Develop those investment-ready projects that will be vital to the future of the county.
- Enable people to benefit from better paid, local jobs.
- Develop our A50 / A500 and A38 strategic corridors to enable businesses in Staffordshire to innovate and grow, as part of the wider West Midlands Region.

Our Economic Strategy sets out further those priorities that we will focus on in the coming months and years to deliver the ambitions set out within our Strategic Plan. The pandemic has shown that it is impossible to foresee everything that may happen in the future, and we therefore need to ensure that we remain agile and able to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Government has set out twelve missions to level up the UK by 2030 and our Economic Strategy therefore sets out our vision and ambitions for the Staffordshire economy over this period:

By 2030, the people of Staffordshire will be able to benefit from more and better paid jobs with the county being one of the primary locations for sustainable growth and investment in the UK, creating places that we can all be proud of, driven by innovation, new technologies and supporting the move towards carbon neutrality.

Ambitions

By 2030, we will:

1. Tackle the challenges faced by many of our town centres and strive to create places that we can be proud of.
2. Create the conditions to allow more people to start and grow their business within Staffordshire, thereby addressing our relatively low levels of business start-ups across large parts of the county.
3. Address the low levels of skills across some parts of the county and support more of our residents to gain the high-level skills needed to take advantage of many better paid job opportunities.
4. Play our part in supporting the substantial planned growth within the county through the development of investment ready projects and securing funding for our infrastructure and services.
5. Ensure we do not miss the substantial opportunities afforded by our location in the centre of the country by developing our key strategic A50 / A500 and A38 corridors, including securing increased investment in innovation activities.
6. Put climate change at the heart of all that we do, including supporting businesses on their journey to Net Zero.

We recognise that Staffordshire County Council will not be able to achieve these ambitions by working in isolation, and we will need to continue working with all our partners if we are to be successful. We have a strong track record of such partnership working, including the delivery of numerous hugely successful economic growth and infrastructure schemes with our District and Borough Councils and by securing substantial levels of investment into the county.

2. The current picture

Our economy, strengths, challenges, and opportunities

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 public health crisis and the resulting effects felt around the globe have left an indelible mark on the economy. However, interventions made both locally and nationally to help support and minimise the economic impact of the pandemic, alongside the vaccine rollout, were hugely successful in averting the severe economic downturn that had been predicted by many. This left us in a very different, much more positive position to the one many economic commentators thought we might be in at the start of the crisis.

Our businesses

The recovery of the UK economy has been strong although the pandemic, together with a range of other issues, has left us with challenges that will need to be addressed. Issues such as the shift in peoples shopping habits towards spending more online and a renewed focus on the health and care sector has led to large increases in the number of jobs in some sectors, although workers wanting to take these jobs are proving hard to find for many businesses. Whilst this is an opportunity for some businesses and sectors to thrive, there will also unfortunately be businesses that are unable to adapt and survive due to changes to the economy. The immediate priority will therefore remain supporting both our businesses and residents through the recovery of the local economy.

In the longer-term Staffordshire continues to have significant strengths and opportunities to prosper. The county boasts a diverse economy with significant strengths in automotive (Jaguar Land Rover, Gestamp), aerospace (Moog), energy (General Electric, ABB), medical technologies, (Cobra Biologics, Biocomposites), construction (JCB, KMF), logistics (Amazon, DHL), digital (Risual) and agri-tech to name a few. Our economy is a microcosm of the UK with dominance in service sectors, but our thriving and growing high-value manufacturing base puts us in an enviable position. Supporting such industries and their supply chains will play an important part in rebalancing our economy, moving away from the low-value, low-wage industries that have been a part of our economy in the recent past.

Whilst the county is home to many world-renowned brands, most of our businesses are small and medium enterprises. Supporting growth of our existing

businesses and enabling people to start and grow their own business in the county will be vital to achieving our ambition for a vibrant, dynamic Staffordshire economy. Whilst our survival rates for newly formed businesses are high, large parts of the county have lower rates of business start-ups compared to similar areas and is an issue to be addressed.

From a relatively low base, innovation within Staffordshire is also on the rise, both within businesses and through our universities. Ongoing and recent innovation projects within the county include the Smart Energy Network Demonstrator, the HyDeploy project to trial injecting hydrogen into the gas network, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport's (ADEPT) supported SMART transport 'live-lab' project at Keele University, as well as the planned Institute of Technology in Stafford that will focus on those high-level manufacturing and engineering skills needed by many local businesses. Staffordshire is home to numerous businesses that have been awarded the Queen's Award for innovation and continuing to support and nurture innovation activity within the county will be vital to achieving our ambitions for a clean, high-technology future economy.

Our people

No longer just the place for traditional skills, the county's residents are increasingly gaining higher levels of skills and qualifications, whilst there is a workforce of over 3 million people all within an hour of Staffordshire. As a county we continue to respond to business need for more advanced skills including manufacturing, engineering, and digital skills, and our three main universities will allow us to further develop those higher-level skills needed across many of our current and future industries. We have several high performing colleges across all parts of the county, providing us with a well-established and high-performing skills system.

However, there remain challenges with skills within the county that we need to address. Some areas continue to lag in the skills levels of residents, particularly within Cannock Chase, Tamworth, and parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme. These areas have had relatively low levels of skills amongst residents for many years and addressing this situation will have significant advantages in enabling our residents to take advantage of better paid job opportunities. We will need to ensure our residents are aspirational for their future, whilst also supporting people working in lower paid jobs to transition into higher paid employment and supporting affected businesses to be more productive and innovative through new technologies and digitisation. We recognise that not all our residents will want a highly skilled job, but everyone should at least have the opportunity to

get a good job that provides a high level of satisfaction and/or value to society, even if it remains lower paid.

Existing programmes and potential flexibilities provide the opportunity to address skills issues to some degree, but there is an opportunity to be more transformative and start to deliver programmes that address longer-term skills issues such as digital, leadership and management, business improvement, lean, agile and automation programmes. Many of these types of skills are vital for business growth and enabling people to successfully start and grow a business.

The shift to greater levels of remote working continues to change the dynamic of the labour market, with far larger numbers of people not needing to work as close as previously to their work location. We are already seeing this in effect with large numbers of people over the last couple of years choosing to move out of the major cities, especially London. Many industries, and particularly those that are office based, are now able to recruit from far further afield than previously was the case, presenting opportunities for businesses to draw from a far greater pool of talent, whilst having less restrictions on location is likely to mean more people will want to live in areas such as Staffordshire that offer unparalleled standards of living and amenities.

More widely than office-based sectors, many other industries affected by the crisis, both positively and negatively, will continue to change and evolve in the coming months and years. The logistics sector continues to prosper, and we have a thriving care market which has never been so revered as a career as it is now. Addressing skills gaps and hard-to-fill vacancies in growing industries will be important and is a challenge for everyone, including skills providers and the businesses themselves.

Our places

Our location at the heart of the country remains one of our key assets and makes Staffordshire a hugely attractive place to live, work and invest. This has made Staffordshire particularly attractive to the logistics industry which continues to grow, including through the development of the rail connected West Midlands Interchange site over the next decade, and presents significant opportunities for the future as the sector moves towards greater use of technology and cleaner ways to move goods around the country and beyond.

Our Strategic Infrastructure Plan outlines the level of growth planned within the county over the next 20 years, amounting to over 80,000 houses and significant levels of employment land. Our success in creating the conditions to support

growth has led to many large-scale investments made by companies indigenous to the county and from beyond. The continued development of employment sites will undoubtedly be important in continuing to support growth within the county. Delivery of the level of growth expected will require substantial investment in all our infrastructure, whilst we will always need to consider how this growth can be delivered sustainably and in support of climate change targets.

Staffordshire will be surrounded by new full-HS2 stations and benefit from classic-compatible HS2 services at Stafford. Ensuring the best connectivity possible to these stations throughout the county will provide significant future opportunities for growth whilst further investment in the country's rail network will provide better journey options and allow greater numbers of people to travel sustainably.

Digital connectivity has become increasingly important in recent years, with ever increasing levels of business activity, service delivery and consumer spending now taking place online. This was particularly evident through the pandemic with huge increases in office-based employees working remotely, which will persist to at least some extent. This presents an opportunity for Staffordshire to speed up its plans for high-quality digital infrastructure across the county through the delivery of gigabit capable broadband and supporting technologies, including 5G.

The county town of Stafford and larger towns throughout the county including Burton upon Trent, Uttoxeter, Cannock, Rugeley, Lichfield, Tamworth, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle remain the primary hubs of economic activity and where most of our residents live and work. The changing nature of retail has presented challenges for almost all town centres, at least somewhat compounded by the pandemic, with work to reshape and repurpose town centres being an increasingly important issue.

Whilst our urban centres are the primary residential and business locations, much of the county is rural and there has been significant development of our rural economy in recent years. Our natural assets such as the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Peak District National Park, alongside numerous attractions including Alton Towers and Drayton Manor theme parks, has supported sustained growth of our tourism sector. Farming also remains a vital part of the Staffordshire landscape and supports many local industries, not least the food and drink sector and our burgeoning restaurant scene with the county now proudly boasting its first Michelin star, recently awarded to Upstairs by Tom Shepherd in Lichfield. The brewing industry in Burton upon Trent is one of most historic and notable local assets.

We know that Staffordshire is a great place to live, work and invest but we recognise that we need to shout about all the benefits of the county. Through our We Are Staffordshire and supporting ambassadors programme, we are ensuring that the County Council and our partners are promoting the county with one voice, thereby communicating those attributes that make Staffordshire special, competitive, and distinct.

Our track record speaks for itself. Staffordshire delivers. We have seen results that have created more, better jobs. Results to inspire trust that Staffordshire County Council and local leaders have developed the right local solution. That is why we firmly believe our Economic Strategy will make a difference; it will support our economy to recover from the public health crisis and then tackle those key challenges to enable it to transform and grow through clean, digital, highly productive industries.

3. Policy context

Policy decisions of national, regional, and local partners have an influence on what we do and how we operate. This section considers some of the most significant policy agendas relevant to our Economic Strategy, with a focus on national government policy as being a particularly important consideration to the delivery of our own priorities.

Levelling Up

The Government's levelling up agenda is both a response to many areas failing to fully experience the benefits of economic growth in recent years and a recognition that there has been underinvestment in areas outside of the South East by successive Governments.

Our Strategic Infrastructure Plan shows that there is evidence of underinvestment in Staffordshire whilst changes to the Treasury Green Book appraisal process and planned substantial increases in public sector investment mean Staffordshire is well placed to fully implement the Government's levelling up agenda.

The Government's Levelling Up White Paper sets out 12 missions to level up all parts of the UK. Improving economic prosperity and spreading opportunity will be vital in achieving all the missions, and the delivery of our Economic Strategy will therefore play a vital role in levelling up in Staffordshire.

The 12 missions fall under four overarching 'pillars', namely:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.

As one of the Government's flagship policy agendas, this will have significant implications for responsibilities and resources moving forwards. We will strive to take full advantage of Government's levelling up ambitions in the county to help support the delivery of our Economic Strategy.

Building Back Better

The Build Back Better Plan for Growth sets out plans for how the Government intends to support the UK economy to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan sets out several priorities, namely:

- Infrastructure
- Skills
- Innovation
- Levelling up
- Net zero
- Global Britain

The plan is essentially Government's high-level industrial strategy, setting the overall framework and overarching priorities. Further detail is provided within supporting strategies, of which several of those of most relevance to us are outlined below.

Plan for Jobs

The Government launched its Plan for Jobs in July 2020, setting out plans to support people back into work and develop the skills needed as we recover from the impacts of the pandemic. Through the crisis Government support focused upon those people and businesses impacted by lockdown measures, primarily through vast increases in spending on programmes including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

The economic support measures put in place proved to be hugely successful in averting the economic disaster predicted by many commentators. This has allowed the focus to shift to supporting people into employment, including through schemes such as Kickstart and Restart. Such programmes are important to enabling people to take advantage of job vacancies and allow local businesses to find the workers they need.

Devolution

The devolution of powers and funding has been a major national policy agenda for many years. Much of this stems from Lord Heseltine's No Stone Unturned report, a review into supporting economic growth across the country. So far, the primary beneficiaries of devolution have been those areas that have a Mayoral Combined Authority, with the devolved powers and funding differing somewhat for each area.

Government's ambitions for further devolution to local areas is set out within the Levelling Up White Paper. There is recognition that many parts of the country have so far not benefited from devolution, and the Government has set out a new devolution framework in response. The County Council will be considering our response to this and how it could help us to deliver this and our other strategies in due course.

Skills for Jobs

The Skills for Jobs White Paper sets out how Government intends to reform further education, with a particular focus on supporting people to get the skills needed by businesses throughout their lives. The White Paper sets out several priorities including putting employers at the heart of the system, investing in higher-level technical qualifications, providing greater access to lifelong learning, reforming funding and accountability for providers, and supporting excellent teaching.

The skills system is vital in supporting people to get the skills they require to find employment and supporting our businesses to grow. Reforms to the system are therefore an important consideration in being able to achieve our ambitions for the local economy and supporting the growth of those sectors that will form an important part of our future.

Climate change

The need to consider our impacts on the environment and targets set both nationally and locally will be an important consideration in all that we do, including how we continue to support the growth and development of the Staffordshire economy whilst moving towards Net Zero. Government has released several strategies to set out plans and priorities for meeting our climate change targets, including the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Further strategies of relevance include the Net Zero, Heat & Buildings, Hydrogen, and Industrial Decarbonisation strategies, as well as the Energy White Paper and Transport Decarbonisation Plan. All these documents and the policies within them will have at least some relevance to Staffordshire and will be considered as part of the projects and programmes to deliver our Economic Strategy.

Funding

National programmes continue to be an important source of funding for project delivery. Recently Government has provided the opportunity to bid for funding for local projects through programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund, and the Future High Streets Fund. Such programmes will continue to form an important part of the funding available to deliver local priorities, including the forthcoming Shared Prosperity Fund which is set to replace funding previously secured through the European Union.

The Fair Funding Review, begun in early 2016, will affect how funding is allocated and redistributed between local authorities. There has been a clear recognition that the way local authorities are funded is no longer sensible, with any reforms likely to have an impact on local resources and an important consideration as to how we will fund future projects and programmes.

Planning reforms / housing

Government published its Housing White Paper for tackling problems in the housing market at the beginning of 2017. This recognises that if more new housing is to be built, at a faster rate, it will have to be accompanied by investment in new infrastructure. Government has already committed to new investment in housing, industry, and infrastructure in Staffordshire through various funding programmes, including those of Homes England. The Levelling Up White Paper also sets out Government's intention to support greater investment in housing in the Midlands and North and therefore further investment opportunities are likely in the coming years.

Whilst the Housing White Paper is now 5 years old, housing clearly remains a top priority. The paper recognises the importance of strategic planning for long-term growth, and this is being considered through reforms to the planning system which will impact not only housing delivery but also far wider planning matters. The impact of these changes on growth within the county and the issues set out within our Economic Strategy will need to be considered.

National Infrastructure Strategy

The National Infrastructure Commission published the first-ever National Infrastructure Assessment for the UK in July 2018, making recommendations for how the identified infrastructure needs and priorities of the country should be addressed. The Government responded to this assessment through the publication of its National Infrastructure Strategy in November 2020, setting out its plans to transform the UK's infrastructure by 2050.

The Strategy takes a long-term view for most infrastructure themes and is an important consideration as to what and how infrastructure may need to change in the future, such as the rollout of gigabit-capable digital connectivity and the move towards electric and autonomous vehicles. Further detail will be announced through supporting strategies, some of which have already been released such as the Integrated Rail Plan. As detailed within our Economic Strategy, infrastructure will be vital in supporting the expected levels of growth within the county over the next twenty years and national investment in our infrastructure will be required.

UK Innovation Strategy

The UK Innovation Strategy sets out the Government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035. The Strategy outlines four priorities, namely:

- Supporting businesses that want to innovate including increased public investment in research & development.
- Attracting, retaining, and developing innovation talent.
- Ensuring innovation institutions serve the needs of businesses and places across the UK.
- Stimulating innovation activity to tackle major challenges and drive our capability in key technologies.

The Levelling Up White Paper also commits to greater levels of public innovation spending outside of the Greater South East. Innovation is an important driver of economic growth and supporting greater levels of innovation has the potential to play a key role in achieving our ambitions for the Staffordshire economy.

4. Our priorities

This Strategy outlines our ambitious and achievable plans as to how we will support the Staffordshire economy to continue to recover from the crisis and tackle those challenges that will bring the greatest benefits to the local economy, whilst delivering on those issues that matter most to the people of Staffordshire. Here we set out the key priorities that we will strive to deliver, with our sights on achieving our long-term vision and ambitions for the Staffordshire economy.

These priorities do not represent all that we do and will do over the lifetime of the Strategy but show those areas of work that will be our focus and what we most want to achieve.

Priority: Town centre / high street regeneration

Our town centres are the places where most people live and work within the county. Many high streets face challenges as people's shopping habits continue to change, whilst the use of online retail increased substantially during the pandemic. The ultimate impact of the shift away from physical to online retail will only become apparent in the coming months and years, although retail will be a far less important driver of footfall in many town centres.

However, high streets remain vital as places for people to live, meet, access services, enjoy themselves, and for many other reasons. The County Council therefore recognises the importance of reshaping and reimagining our high streets to create places that people value and have pride in. Retail space will shrink on many of our high streets, but other uses have the potential to grow, including hospitality, housing, education, and front-line services. As now, our high streets will have differing roles in the future with some high streets primarily serving the needs of residents of the town itself, whilst others meet a wider need such as providing employment opportunities for the wider population.

We of course recognise the important linkages between our urban and rural areas and the opportunities and challenges faced by the rural parts of the county which we will continue to address through our Rural Economic Strategy.

What we will do

- Planning for regeneration will be vital in reshaping and reimagining the future use of each of our town centres. The County Council will work with our District and Borough Council partners in developing plans for how we will support the transformation of our towns, as and when appropriate. Each plan will need to be bespoke for each place given the role of each town centre will differ, as will the required support and interventions.
- To support the creation of plans for our towns, the County Council will develop a town centre prospectus to clearly articulate our ambitions, our existing assets and our potential role and offer. This will include a clear set of criteria to identify the projects and programmes that will be the focus of the County Council and ensure the benefits of our investment in any town centre scheme are maximised.
- The Government has already invested substantially in a few of our town centres in recent years and the expectation is that this investment will continue. We will also continue to intervene and invest in our town centres, where this is agreed within the plan for each town. It is our expectation that our intervention will leverage additional investment into the town centres, including from Government and the private sector.
- The County Council has many assets within our town centres and high streets including offices, libraries, registration offices and land interests. We will therefore ensure we are maximising the use of our existing assets to support the redevelopment of our town centres and high streets.
- Through our responsibilities for highways, the County Council has a vital role in enabling people to access our town centres safely and reliably. We will continue to invest in our highway network to support the redevelopment of our towns. We have invested substantially in the sustainable transport infrastructure of the county in recent years and will continue to do so to ensure people can access our town centres using clean, green forms of transport, including consideration of how we can support the rollout of electric vehicle charging points.

Priority: Higher skilled, higher paid workforce

Whilst skills levels across many parts of the county are good and this paints a relatively positive overall picture, this hides the fact that skills levels in some parts of the county are low, and this is impacting on our resident's ability to take advantage of better paid opportunities. We recognise that not everyone will

want highly paid, highly skilled employment but even where this is the case, we want to aim to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to at least get a good job that provides them with high levels of satisfaction and/or provides a great deal of value to society.

Low levels of skills are particularly entrenched within Cannock Chase, Tamworth, and parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Addressing this issue by supporting our residents to gain higher levels of skills will have significant advantages in enabling our residents to get a better paid job, not only by increasing people's prosperity but also improving health and wellbeing.

The impacts of the pandemic, the UK's exit from the European Union and longer-term socio-demographic issues including the country's ageing workforce present skills challenges both now and in the future. Whilst the true impact of some of these issues remains unclear and will be for some time, they have already resulted in a mismatch between the skills required by businesses and those of the workforce, particularly within certain industries. Addressing this mismatch will be vital, with the Institute for Fiscal Studies describing the labour market as the *"lynchpin of the recovery."* Enhancing our partnership approach will provide greater resilience to future economic shocks and facilitate the development and implementation of both local and national interventions in a more co-ordinated and effective way.

What we will do

- The County Council will continue to support residents into, or to remain in, sustainable employment including through services and programmes to better connect people to jobs, providing services to navigate the complexities of employability and skills training and helping employers to recruit. This will enable the county to have a consistent approach to promoting jobs and skills which is clear for business, residents, and education and skills providers on where to go and what service to expect.
- The Council will support skills providers in creating rapid-retraining programmes, by building on its collaborative partnership approach across the county, to support people to find employment in those sectors where there are the greatest numbers of job vacancies.
- The vast majority of the county's workforce has already been through the school, further and higher education system and it will therefore be important that there are opportunities for greater levels of lifelong learning and support to upskill and reskill people throughout their working lives. This will enable people to access future employment opportunities including higher skilled, higher paid jobs.

- To have a higher skilled, higher paid workforce we will need to retain and attract skilled workers, including graduates, by ensuring that Staffordshire is an attractive place to live and work. Through our services and placemaking responsibilities, the County Council will continue to ensure that we are achieving this ambition, whilst enabling the creation of those jobs within the county that will form an important part of our future economy.
- We will support the development of further vocational education and training provision within Staffordshire to support our key sectors that require technical skills. This will include maximising the benefits of the apprenticeship levy by encouraging a greater number of higher-level apprenticeship opportunities within the county, enabling larger employers to take greater ownership of their future skills requirements.
- Through our own responsibilities or by working with our partners, the County Council will work to address any wider issues that are either discouraging or stopping residents from being able to take advantage of good employment opportunities. This may include generational factors, health issues, poor educational attainment, a lack of appropriate and affordable childcare, transport to suitable job opportunities, access to adequate broadband, and a lack of affordable housing in areas where there are good employment opportunities.

Priority: Supporting start-up and step-up businesses

Encouraging a greater number of business start-ups and supporting these to grow will play an important role in increasing productivity levels and creating employment opportunities within the county. Start-ups are already a vital source of jobs, not only in terms of self-employment but also creating those future businesses that grow and take on employees.

However, within Staffordshire we currently do not have the level of business start-ups of many similar areas, and therefore encouraging and supporting more people to start their own business has the potential to bring significant benefits. Creating a more dynamic, entrepreneurial local economy with greater levels of start-ups and self-employment brings the increased likelihood of creating those businesses that go on to be future employers and generate jobs and wealth within Staffordshire.

Achieving this will require a focus on several issues. We will need to ensure that the county has the right infrastructure in place, including high-quality premises, broadband and transport connectivity. Business and innovation support also remains key, including increasing innovation activity within the county, the

provision of good-quality advice, and access to finance when appropriate. There is also an important role for the education and skills system in ensuring people recognise that starting their own business is a viable career option and equipping them with the skills needed to start and grow a business.

What we will do

- We will ensure that we have suitable sites and premises ready and available to enable people to start and grow their business within the county, as well as continue to take advantage of future business investment opportunities. This includes the provision of incubator space and the delivery of new and expansions of existing Enterprise Centres where there is a clear case to do so.
- The County Council will continue to ensure that there is good quality business support provision for people who are looking to start and grow their business within Staffordshire. This includes the direct delivery of advice and funding programmes that are needed and are not already being delivered by other providers.
- Through the Levelling Up White Paper, Government has committed to substantial increases in investment in research & development outside of the Greater South East. As a key driver of business and therefore economic growth, we will consider how we can support increased levels of innovation activity in the county, both through innovation institutions in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics and energy, and within businesses themselves.
- We will work with education, skills, and careers advice providers to ensure that people recognise that starting their own business is a good career option and providing them with the skills needed to start and grow a business. This includes those leadership, management and digital skills that are so important to businesses surviving and having the greatest opportunity to innovate and grow.

Priority: Developing investment ready projects

There is planned to be substantial growth in housing and jobs within Staffordshire in the coming years, as set out within our District and Borough Council partners local plans who have the responsibility for setting the overall level and location of development within their area, in line with national guidance.

The County Council has a key role in supporting this growth through the delivery of projects that help to ensure that development is sustainable, supported by those local services that people really value and ensuring the benefit of development is maximised.

We have delivered numerous projects to support growth within Staffordshire recently, including school expansions and the opening of the first new secondary school within the county for 25 years. We have delivered the rollout of superfast broadband across the county and made significant transport improvements, including the delivery of the Staffordshire Western Access Route and Lichfield Southern Bypass schemes to unlock development sites and mitigate their impacts. We continue to invest in our green transport infrastructure to allow people to travel around the county sustainably.

However, we now need to plan for the longer-term growth of the county. Our Strategic Infrastructure Plan outlines the scale of the challenge, with tens of thousands of homes and job generating schemes to be delivered over the next twenty years. Supporting this growth will mean vast investment in the county's infrastructure, with an estimated cost of over £4 billion. This investment will come not only from the County Council but also private developers, infrastructure providers and Government, including through nationally significant infrastructure projects such as HS2.

For projects and programmes which the County Council is responsible, we will continue to plan proactively to deliver those schemes to support development and fully realise its benefits. The County Council continues to have significant assets within the county, and we will develop projects to ensure that we are maximising the value of these assets to deliver our ambitions for the future of Staffordshire and its economy.

What we will do

- We will develop a pipeline of future County Council projects to ensure that the substantial levels of growth planned within the county can be accommodated without being detrimental to levels of accessibility, connectivity, and services. This will allow us to leverage investment, forms part of the delivery of our Strategic Infrastructure Plan and supports our District and Borough Council partners in the delivery of their local plans.
- We will also continue to plan for and deliver those improvement projects that support the County Council's wider ambitions and priorities, including for the health and wellbeing of our residents, the local economy and climate change. This includes supporting the rollout of gigabit capable broadband across the

county which is vital to both businesses and residents, and the continued delivery and support of sustainable transport infrastructure and electric vehicle charging points as we move towards Net Zero.

Priority: Strategic corridors

Our location at the heart of the country and between Manchester and Birmingham provides us with vast opportunities to develop the strategic corridors that connect places across Staffordshire and beyond. The A50 / A500 and A38 corridors are two of the most important locations for economic activity within the county and are vital in connecting residents to jobs. However, the full potential of these corridors has yet to be fully exploited and therefore a substantial opportunity remains.

There has already been a significant amount of investment across the corridors in recent years with a great deal of further investment planned. The corridors connect numerous towns and places, whilst planned investment in road and rail, including HS2, will only improve connectivity across the sub-region and provide the potential to deliver significant infrastructure-led sustainable growth in the future.

The corridors play a central role in the Midlands and UK economy and are home to several renowned national and global brands including AstraZeneca, Bombardier, Bentley, JCB, Nestle and Rolls Royce. These and other major employers are engaged in highly innovative activity, such as JCB's recent development of the first hydrogen motor in the industry. Supporting existing and new businesses to innovate and grow remains a priority, whilst wider ambitions such as the provision of good homes and green infrastructure will be vital in creating places where people want to live, work, and invest.

What we will do

- The County Council will drive forward plans for those aspirational, transformational projects that will form a vital part of the county's future, including the A50 / A500 and A38 corridors.
- As part of this, we will support and unlock investment in road, rail, and digital connectivity across the corridors, including the restoration and reopening of rail stations and delivery of sustainable transport improvements between transport hubs and places where people live and work. We will also continue to support and work to maximise the local economic benefits of the nationally

significant infrastructure projects that will be delivered in the county over the coming years.

- We will work with our partners, in education, local authorities but above all the private sector, to bring together corridors of true innovation and employment growth. We will develop plans for increased levels of innovation and enterprise across the corridors, including as part of becoming a Smart Energy region and driven by existing energy assets and innovations such as hydrogen.
- We will continue to support and unlock the delivery of high-quality housing and employment sites across the corridors in support of the delivery of local plans.

5. How we'll do it

Achieving our vision and ambitions for the Staffordshire economy will require the delivery of appropriate projects and programmes, set out within existing and future supporting delivery plans. Many of these projects and programmes will require us to continue strong joint working with local stakeholders, an approach that has proven hugely successful in recent years.

We therefore recognise that many of the schemes that will be vital in delivering this Strategy will be delivered by others, and the County Council will 'lead', 'collaborate' and 'advocate' as appropriate:

- **'Lead'** on direct delivery.
- **'Collaborate'** on delivery with partners and stakeholders.
- **'Advocate'** for the delivery of projects and programmes by other organisations that meet our own ambitions as.

Delivery of the priorities

The priorities set out within this Strategy will not be considered in isolation. Through delivery plans and the development of future projects and programmes, we will consider how schemes can support the delivery of several of our priorities. As an example, the delivery of new start-up space within a town centre could help to achieve our ambitions for both town centre regeneration and greater numbers of people starting a business within the county.

Whilst the priorities set out within this Strategy will be our primary focus for the Staffordshire economy, it is also important to consider that we have several other relevant strategies that we will need to consider when developing delivery plans and supporting projects and programmes. Climate change and continuing to support our rural economy are key priorities for instance, with further detail set out within our Climate Change Action Plan and Rural Economic Strategy.

We are not starting from scratch but very much building upon our recent successes, including:

- The unlocking of strategic employment sites such as the i54 South Staffordshire Enterprise Zone, Redhill, and Lichfield Park.
- Planning and delivering major infrastructure schemes to support growth including the Stafford Western Access Route and Lichfield Southern Bypass.
- The delivery of business support programmes including start-up support, support to reduce environmental impacts, and support for businesses through the pandemic including the Staffordshire Means Back to Business programme.
- Creation of new high-quality business premises including the expansion of our enterprise centres and development of the Innovation Centres at Keele University's Science and Innovation Park.
- Investment in skills & employability programmes that have helped to halve the number of adults with no qualifications and dramatically reduce the number of people Not in Employment, Education or Training.

These schemes have delivered huge benefits for the local economy and people of Staffordshire, and we will continue to work tirelessly to achieve our ambitions.

Investing to deliver the strategy

The County Council continues to invest significant sums of money in the Staffordshire economy. Where our delivery plans include investment by the County Council, we will need to continue to ensure that this achieves the maximum possible benefits in the achieving the vision, ambitions, and priorities set out within this Strategy. This includes consideration of how our investment can unlock funding from other organisations and the private sector.

Through supporting plans to deliver the Economic Strategy, projects and programmes will therefore need to be considered against the following key principles:

1. Delivery of the Economic Strategy's vision, aims and priorities
2. Alignment to one or more of the strategic priorities
3. Outputs
4. Deliverability
5. Funding (including our own investment and the amount of leverage)

6. Risk

In the development of delivery plans and the consideration of existing and new schemes, it will also be important to consider what needs to stop, what needs to continue, what needs to start and where there may be gaps in interventions against the strategic priorities that need to be filled.

In the longer-term, funding to deliver the Strategy is more uncertain and will be dependent on several factors. We have an opportunity to explore different approaches to funding growth as a County Council as well as influencing how the Government progresses its various policy agendas including Fair-Funding for local government, levelling up and County Deals. We will continue to work with our partners, including Government, to shape and access funding to deliver the Strategy as appropriate.

Working with others to get the job done

There are many stakeholders that we will need to work proactively with to successfully deliver this Strategy. Outlined below are several of our main partners who we will be working with to deliver our plans for the local economy in the coming years.

Staffordshire's District & Borough Councils

Staffordshire County Council has a strong track record of working proactively with our Staffordshire District / Borough Councils, including on many schemes that have had a substantial positive impact on the local economy such as our Staffordshire Means Back to Business programme. We will continue to work closely with our District and Borough Councils as many, if not all, of our economic programmes require a multi-disciplinary approach with the County and District / Borough Councils having different but complementary relevant responsibilities.

This Strategy recognises the importance of Staffordshire as a place to the future of the local economy. Alongside planning policy responsibilities, the Districts / Boroughs responsibilities to reshape town centres, in tandem with the County Council's roles particularly regarding infrastructure delivery, will play a vital role in achieving the aims of the Strategy.

Government

The County Council works directly with many Government departments. In recent years this has included the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on several skills projects, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and particularly Homes England on housing schemes, the Department for Transport on a number of major road schemes, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the delivery of the superfast broadband project and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on a number of funding schemes for rural areas and businesses.

Whilst devolution should provide greater autonomy for local areas and this is something we will support, it will be clearly be vital for us to continue to work closely with Government to deliver our vision and ambitions.

Midlands Engine

The Midlands Engine partnership brings together public sector partners and businesses to complement the activity of other local organisations. The Midlands Engine Strategy sets out a collective ambition for economic growth and prosperity across the East and West Midlands. It highlights how the region can build upon existing business sectors and areas of opportunity, including many of our key industries, universities, and employment areas as places of national and global significance.

The Midlands Engine priorities are all vital to the future economic growth of the Midlands and Staffordshire and we will continue to proactively engage in the Midlands Engine to support investment in the area.

Midlands Connect

Midlands Connect researches, develops, and recommends transport projects which will provide the biggest possible economic and social benefits for the Midlands and the rest of the UK. Through Midlands Connect we are considering the wider future requirements for investment in the strategic road and rail network. We view this as being a key mechanism for the development of connectivity improvements, particularly investments by National Highways and National Rail.

The partnership is currently conducting a range of studies into how we can alleviate congestion and support growth across several strategic transport corridors that are within or affect Staffordshire, particularly the A50 / A500 and

A38 corridors. We are actively engaged in these studies and future transport investment will remain vital to supporting the future growth of Staffordshire.

Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) brings businesses and local authorities together to support economic growth, create jobs and raise skills levels. Since its inception, the County Council has secured a significant amount of investment through the LEP for many projects across the county including several roads, employment sites, housing, and business premises projects. The LEP also has responsibility for the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub which provides support services for our local businesses.

The role and responsibilities of LEPs has recently been under review, whilst the Government has confirmed through the Levelling Up White Paper that having a strong business voice within each part of England remains important. We will continue to consider the implications of the changing role for LEPs in delivering our economic ambitions for Staffordshire.

In addition to the LEP, the County Council also proactively works with our business representative organisations, particularly the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and Federation for Small Businesses. These organisations have a vital role in having direct contact and working with our business community.

Infrastructure Delivery Organisations

The County Council works proactively with all organisations with responsibility for the county's infrastructure. This includes both National Highways and Network Rail who have responsibility for Staffordshire's trunk road network and rail infrastructure.

In recent years we have worked with Government and Openreach to rollout superfast broadband across Staffordshire, whilst we also continue to work with utility providers to successfully deliver employment and housing schemes.

Relationships with these organisations, and many others, will therefore be critical to the successful delivery of the priorities set out within our Economic Strategy and our ability to sustainably deliver the levels of planned growth expected in the county in the coming years.

Community Impact Assessment Checklist and Executive Summary

Name of Proposal:

Economic Strategy

Project Sponsor:

Darryl Evers, Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills

Project Manager:

Matt Shufflebotham, Senior Economic Development Officer

Date Completed:

27/01/22

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	
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 potential impacts are clearly identified and mitigated for (where possible).	Yes	
The aims, objectives and outcomes of the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	Yes	
The groups who will be affected by the policy, service or project have been clearly identified.	Yes	The current economic situation means that this is evolving and is being monitored closely through an evidence base that is being updated regularly.
The communities that are likely to be more adversely impacted than others have been clearly identified.	Yes	As above
Engagement / consultation has been undertaken and is representative of the residents most likely to be affected.	No	Levelling up is a theme that cuts across all the Strategy and the aim is therefore for all residents to benefit from its delivery. Agreeing to a 4-week public consultation period is also one of the recommendations in the Cabinet report.
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	

Checklist	Action Completed	Comments/Actions
The CIA evidences how the Council has considered its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and how it has considered the impacts of any change on people with protected characteristics.	Yes	
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.

	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>PSED</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 impact of the COVID-19 crisis has impacted some industrial sectors and therefore demographic groups more than others, particularly those working within hospitality and non-essential retail. How this will be affected by the ongoing economic recovery remains somewhat unclear.</p>	<p>Levelling up is a key strand throughout the strategy and its delivery will help to reduce inequality.</p>	<p>The nature of the crisis has the potential to continue to adversely impact some groups more than others.</p>	<p>The Economic Strategy aims to support the economy to recover quickly, thereby minimising any long-term impacts of the crisis. An evidence base is being updated on at least a monthly basis to monitor the impact, whilst the Strategy allows us to remain agile and respond to changing circumstances accordingly.</p>
<p>Health and Care</p> <p>How will the proposal impact on residents' health? How will the proposal impact on demand for or access to social care or health services?</p>	<p>Any ongoing economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis has the potential to negatively affect health outcomes of all residents.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to support the recovery of the economy and return to growth as quickly as possible, thereby reducing the impacts on. The delivery of projects that both support</p>	<p>A key concern is that residents become long-term unemployed with associated scarring effects. Without consideration of health, future investment in</p>	<p>The Strategy sets out how we will minimise such effects by supporting people to return to work as soon as possible and be able to find good quality employment. A key aspect of the Strategy is the delivery of infrastructure to support growth. We have successfully delivered numerous sustainable transport</p>

	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
		economic growth and active lifestyles can also help to enable people to make positive healthy lifestyle choices.	economic projects could have a negative impact on people's health.	projects in recent years, and this will continue to support active travel choices.
Economy How will the proposal impact on the economy of Staffordshire or impact on the income of Staffordshire's residents?	Levelling up cuts across all priorities within the strategy, with the aim being that growth will benefit all residents.	The Strategy sets out how we will create a more prosperous Staffordshire to the benefit of all our residents.	Not delivering the Strategy has the potential to adversely affect our resident's economic wellbeing, including for specific groups.	Whilst setting our overall priorities, the Strategy allows us to remain agile and respond accordingly to changing conditions to ensure we are continuing to have a positive impact on the development of the local economy.
Environment How will the proposal impact on the physical environment of Staffordshire? Does this proposal have any Climate Change implications?	Specific projects are already being developed and delivered as part of delivery plans for the Strategy. However, inclusive growth and levelling-up is a 'golden-thread' throughout the Strategy and therefore the impact on specific groups will be considered as part of projects development.	Supporting growth is a key part of the strategy, i.e., providing residents with good employment and homes and all the benefits this brings. Climate change and the need to support the transition to a low carbon economy is a key priority that cuts across all strategic priorities within the Strategy.	Development needs to be delivered sustainably to ensure any adverse impact on the environment is mitigated against.	Any impact of the delivery of the Strategy on the environment will be considered as part of the development of specific projects / programmes and delivery plans.

	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Localities / Communities</p> <p>How will the proposal impact on Staffordshire's communities?</p>	All residents	The impact on specific communities / locations is a cross-cutting theme throughout the strategy to ensure all residents can benefit from future growth. This includes town centre development and the need for positive education and skills outcomes.	The benefit of growth being isolated to specific residents and locations has the potential for some residents to be left behind.	Levelling up and the impact on specific residents / locations are key strands throughout the Strategy and will be considered further through project / programme development.

Local Members Interest
Nil

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 23 March 2022

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) - Annual Report 2020/21

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that:

- a. To formally receive Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council's on Religious Education's (SACRE) Annual Report for 2020/21.
- b. To raise any questions and/or make particular observations on the work of SACRE, as set out in their Annual Report 2020/21.

Report of Chairman of SACRE

Report

Background

1. Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory committee of the County Council. Its membership consists of representatives from four constituencies: the County Council itself, the Church of England, other faiths and denominations, and teacher organisations. The County Council has the right to appoint the SACRE Chair. If the Council does not exercise this right, the SACRE elects a Chair annually from among its own members.
2. To record a formal vote, each of the four groups contributes a single block vote. The Chair has a casting vote if the vote is tied, but in practice SACRE works by consensus and would avoid moving to take a formal vote if it was known or suspected that there was serious disagreement over a proposed action or motion.
3. The role of SACRE is to inform and advise the County Council on all matters relating to Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship in maintained schools within the County. To this end, it gathers information from schools through a variety of channels: annual surveys and questionnaires, Ofsted inspection reports, external exam results, and anecdotally.

4. By statute, SACREs must meet at least once each term, and must produce an Annual Report on their activities. The Annual Report is primarily a report to the County Council. It is also sent for information to all maintained schools in the County, to the Department for Education, and to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).
5. The work of SACRE is supported by a full range of clerking and venue services provided by the County Council, and by the appointment of a part-time Adviser in RE via Entrust. A ring-fenced budget allows for up to 12 days' work a year from the Adviser to service SACRE meetings and develop SACRE initiatives. The Adviser also offers in-service courses for teachers which schools buy into, and which fund additional Adviser time.
6. The County Council's support for Staffordshire SACRE stands up well compared with the support given by other local authorities to their SACREs and approximates quite closely to the 2% of the aggregate central education grant recommended by NASACRE.

The "Agreed Syllabus" in Religious Education

7. An important responsibility of the SACRE is to ensure that its local authority locally agreed RE syllabus is in place, and to support and monitor the implementation of that syllabus. The syllabus must be followed by all maintained community schools and by Church of England Voluntary Controlled Schools within the County. While Academies and Free Schools are not obliged to use this syllabus, they are encouraged to do so for the sake of continuity and planned progression, and for ease of transition between schools.
8. In order to create or revise an Agreed Syllabus, the local authority must set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference. Since the required composition of such a Conference is effectively identical to that of the SACRE, in practice members of the SACRE can serve also as members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference, and meetings of the two bodies can be held in tandem.
9. The 1988 Education Act set out the fundamental principles which should apply in drawing up an Agreed Syllabus: any such Syllabus must *reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain*. These principles still apply in law and underlie Staffordshire's current Agreed Syllabus.

10. Local authorities must revise their Agreed Syllabus every five years. Any proposed new or revised version of an Agreed Syllabus requires a vote in favour from each of the four stakeholder groups, followed by the agreement of the County Council via the appropriate Cabinet Member. The current Agreed Syllabus was adopted in 2016. An Agreed Syllabus Conference was duly convened in 2021 and has been engaged in carrying out a review of the existing Syllabus, including feedback from schools and general up-dating, with a view to launching a revised Syllabus in September 2022.
11. Staffordshire's 2016 Agreed Syllabus was at the forefront of RE Syllabus development nationally and has been popular with schools and RE specialists. The revised Syllabus will build on this, while taking note of current debate about a fuller inclusion of non-religious world views in RE syllabuses and referencing the latest Ofsted buzz words for shaping the curriculum in general: Intent, Implementation and Impact.

The Westhill/NASACRE Award Project

12. In 2017 Staffordshire SACRE successfully bid for a £4,000 Award to fund a project to develop the 2016 Agreed Syllabus's three core themes Explore, Engage, Reflect. The project enabled groups of Key Stage 2/Key Stage 3 pupils to have side-by-side interactive encounters with a Christian presentation and a Muslim presentation, and to reflect on this experience. The Christian presentation was provided by the Stafford Churches' organisation Youthnet, and the Muslim presentation by Muslims on the school support staff of Entrust.
13. Pupils and schools responded very enthusiastically to the interactive encounters. SACRE has therefore sought to continue the project with more schools, as far as funds will allow, and to build up a powerful legacy from the project. This work necessarily had to cease for the best part of two years during lockdown but has now resumed. It should be noted that both Entrust staff and Youthnet charge a fee for their involvement in this initiative.

Link to Strategic Plan

14. The County Council's Strategic Plan sets out their ambitions and priorities for the years ahead. It outlines what they want to achieve and how they intend to achieve it over the next four years (2022 to 2026).

15. The Plan's Vision is that Staffordshire is an innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.
16. As a result of this vision the Plan outlines three priority outcomes which the Authority will keep at the heart of what they do and how they aim to achieve them.
17. The County Council's second priority outcome is:- "Staffordshire people will live in thriving and sustainable communities" and the work of SACRE contributes to achieving this ambition by promoting, through education of young people, faith, goodwill and respect for others amongst residents.

Community Impact

18. None from consideration of SACRE's Annual Report 2020/21.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Report of Michael Metcalf (Rev Prebendary), Co-opted Member Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee, dated 10 March 2022

Contact Details

Report Commissioner: Jonathan Lindop

Job Title: Scrutiny Support Officer

Telephone No.: Telephone No. 01785 376147

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Appendix 1

Note on the Constitution and Terms of Reference of Staffordshire SACRE

1. While the broad parameters of a SACRE's constitution are set out in statute, the local authority in question has the responsibility to put flesh on the framework of statutory parameters by specifying, after consultation and due consideration, which groups and organisations should be invited to appoint representatives to their SACRE, and how many representatives each group or organisation may appoint.
2. A SACRE's constitution is not static or fixed in stone; at the discretion of the County Council, additional groups may be identified who could be invited to appoint representatives. It is also possible for SACRE to allow groups to appoint representatives who may attend SACRE meetings as observers or co-optees, but who will not be able to participate in formal voting as substantive members of one of the four constituent stakeholder groups.
3. Members of Staffordshire SACRE are required to subscribe to a formal Code of Conduct which governs all the SACRE's activities. The Code of Conduct is designed to elicit mutual respect and inclusiveness, to forestall any possibly disruptive action, and to emphasise that SACRE members are there to collaborate in promoting good religious education in Staffordshire schools, rather than to be advocates for a particular cause or faith.
4. Meetings are deemed to be quorate if at least three of the four constituent groups are quorate. A constituent group is deemed to be quorate if at least one of its members is present. Quoracy levels have been set deliberately at this low level; in practice constituent groups habitually have more than one member present, and SACRE itself has never been inquorate. County Councillors on Staffordshire SACRE conspicuously support SACRE by their regular attendance.

5. The groups with members appointed respectively by the County Council, the Church of England, and teacher organisations have a clear and cohesive character. The fourth group, with members appointed by other denominations and religious bodies, is very diverse by comparison. There is significant support and participation from several free church representatives, and from Muslim and Baha'i representatives. It has been difficult to attract sustained participation from other religious groups. The Hebrew Congregation (Synagogue) in Newcastle-under-Lyme no longer has the capacity to be represented on our SACRE. A place for a representative of Humanists UK has not been filled for several years.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
17th November 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
Draft SACRE Annual Report 2020-21

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present to members of SACRE the Draft SACRE Annual Report 2020-21

2 Summary

2.1 This draft report covers the work of SACRE from September 2020- September 2021

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE consider the report and offer advice on any omissions or errors so that a final report can be published and electronically distributed to schools.

4 Background

4.1 SACREs are required to produce an annual report on its work to provide information for schools.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

Contact Officer :

Mary Gale 07816374873



**Staffordshire
Standing Advisory Council
on Religious Education-
DRAFT**

**30th Annual Report
September 2020 - September 2021**

From the Chair of SACRE

Staffordshire SACRE Annual Report for 2020-21 – Chair's Foreword



In writing this Foreword, introducing Staffordshire SACRE's Annual Report for 2020-21, I am deeply aware that we have all just passed through the most strange and disconcerting school year we have ever experienced. Schools continued in lockdown; pupils' education had to be radically restructured to enable home learning and online tuition; social distancing and other measures had a profound impact on relationships, personal development and mental health. School management teams and subject leaders, and indeed all teachers, wrestled daily with the challenge of sustaining pupils' engagement and progress across the whole curriculum.

Inevitably, the delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship in Staffordshire schools was likewise disrupted by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Staffordshire SACRE therefore warmly thanks and commends RE teachers across the county, who strove faithfully to ensure pupils received their statutory entitlement. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools may even have been prompted to overhaul and refresh their RE or Collective Worship programmes, with pupils' activity and work materials being more immediately "visible" to parents!

Meetings of Staffordshire SACRE customarily include some interactive element, both to promote good relationships among SACRE members and also to engage in practical training or development. This element was lacking this year, with two SACRE meetings being held online, and the third taking place in the rather unsympathetic venue of the Council Chamber itself. Meetings sought to cover all relevant business, the most significant being the setting up of an Agreed Syllabus Conference to carry out the five-yearly review of the county's Agreed Syllabus in RE.

SACRE welcomed a new group of County Councill members in July, following the municipal elections in May, and continues to be appreciative of the support it receives both directly from the Council and indirectly through the Council's partnership with Entrust. Staffordshire in fact came out well in a National Association of SACREs survey, noted by the government, of how adequately local authorities were resourcing their SACREs, for which they have a statutory responsibility.

Staffordshire SACRE heartily applauds the county's RE Consultant and Advisor, Mary Gale, for the excellent support and encouragement she has been able to give to schools during lockdown. Necessarily there has been very limited contact in person with schools and teachers, but she has responded creatively and energetically to many online requests for resources and guidance and has ensured that SACRE itself has been furnished with as much data and documentation as could be collated, together with her invaluable advice and expertise.

I commend this Annual Report to the County Council and to all our county's schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Metcalf".

Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf Chair Staffs SACRE

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1. Introduction

This report covers the work of the Staffordshire SACRE during the academic year from September 2020 to July 2021. Three meetings were held during the period covered by the report. Due to Covid-19 restrictions two meetings were held virtually and one meeting was face to face as Covid-19 restrictions started to lift.

This report is sent to the headteachers of all schools in the County, to the teachers' associations, to the local faith communities and NASACRE.

Further copies are available from:

The Clerk to SACRE,
Democratic Services,
Martin Street,
Stafford ST16 2LH.

The report is also available on the Entrust Religious Education website at <https://www.entrust-ed.co.uk>

The statutory duties of the SACRE are given in Appendix 1 Page 16

The membership of the SACRE is given in Appendix 2 Page 17

2. A summary of the work of the SACRE September 2020-2021

- Monitoring of Staffordshire primary school RE provision is normally carried out in late Spring but due to the COVID-19 pandemic this did not occur.
- Monitoring of Staffordshire Secondary school RE provision is normally carried out in late Spring but due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was did not occur
- The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus recommends that students at KS4 study an approved examination syllabus. It was not easy for the SACRE to monitor provision and attainment in externally accredited courses in Religious Studies in 2020 due to the pandemic, the only information available states the following.

The aggregated national results of state funded schools in 2019 for Grade 9-4 in RE are at 72.4% compared to Staffordshire's 2019 Grade 9-4 at 64.7%

In 2020 Staffordshire results improved to 74% for Grade 9-4 compared to the National of 78%. (We know these results must be treated with some caution due to the anomaly over the awarding of grades). Staffordshire LA have been unable to provide a break down school by school of the RE grades. Scrutiny of school websites also does not provide these results. The results that are available are still the 2019 results.

- Historically the Westhill Engage project in conjunction with Youth Net and the Entrust MEAS team supported over 400 pupils across Staffordshire to gain a greater understanding of Christianity and Islam and of living with diversity. This work was suspended from March 2020 onwards due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Originally Entrust offered a programme of CPD to support RE teachers across the year, but due to the pandemic this did not go ahead.

Bespoke support therefore was provided in response to individual school requests, this was mostly addressed through email correspondence and virtual Teams meetings.

- Staffordshire SACRE continues to be represented at the NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) AGM, NATRE Conference and AREIAC meetings. Some of these meetings have been held in the virtual environment.
- The partnership with NASACRE remains strong. Members of SACRE are also representatives on other SACREs and on bodies such as Stafford and District Friends.
- No determinations have been requested during this academic year.

3. Standards and quality of RE and CW provision

3.1 Monitoring

Monitoring for this academic year took place via email conversations, online conversations and face to face conversations where deemed safe due to Covid-19.

Where SACRE is concerned about the provision offered by schools then a formal procedure is followed. See Appendix 3.

General comments

- The syllabus is used in most schools that provided information, those who do not use the syllabus are Catholic or Church Aided schools, or in an Multi Academy Trusts.
- Schools are currently exploring best practices, to ensure consistency across the school.
- Schools are exploring ways to assess learning of RE but feel the syllabus provides support in this area.
- Local faith leaders contribute to CW in some areas of the county through the virtual environment, particularly where there were youth leaders to support this.
- Staff confidence in delivering collective worship is developing but dipped in community schools during Covid-19.
- Leader confidence in Church of England schools regarding the delivery of CW improved with the help of resources from SACRE. Some leaders stated that the delivery of CW improved because it was more consistent in its approach and well planned as they were observed by pupils and parents and staff through online platforms.
- Worship teams (pupils) organise worship occasionally but due to Covid-19 opportunities were limited.
- Varied weekly timetables of collective worship were the norm during Covid-19
- RE has become less effective in the sample of schools evaluated during Covid-19.
- Allocation of resources to RE has decreased in some schools since last year.
- RE makes a positive contribution to SMSC in most schools especially during online support for learners.

Primary and Secondary Monitoring headlines:

- Collective worship is led by a variety of staff. Online worship and assemblies were led mostly members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The variety regarding the provision for collective worship varies from school to school with schools operating CW in their bubbles or online for the class or whole school.
- Collective worship continues to take many forms including thought for the day, Relationship and Health Education, and well-being aspects.

- Withdrawal from CW was not an issue due to Covid-19
- Schools have reviewed their collective worship provision in the past 2 years, especially during Covid-19.
- Schools agreed that the Agreed Syllabus clearly presents what is required by their school in RE.
- Provision of RE for pupils has decreased due to Covid-19 lockdown as schools concentrated on Maths and English
- The majority of schools contacted stated that they had reviewed their RE provision during lock down as they had time to do this.

3.2 Standards

Staffordshire SACRE reviews and discusses standards and achievement in RE during meetings as appropriate. There were no external examination results from the summer of 2020 due to the pandemic.

Throughout 2020-21 Religious Education network meetings which schools can choose to attend would have included moderation of standards across year groups and schools to support schools with the judgements they make against the revised 2016 Agreed Syllabus Age Related Expectations. There were no face-to-face courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The advisor offered to provide support information through an online virtual webinar, but no schools took up this offer.

a) Public examination entries in Religious Education (RE) and Religious Studies (RS)

In the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, legal requirements state that RE should be provided as part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils attending a maintained school, this includes High schools.

Background

At Key Stage 4 all pupils should fulfil their entitlement by following as a basis an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies. Schools should provide reasonable time for pupils to complete this and if appropriate, to attain an external qualification.

At KS5 pupils may follow the programme of study provided within the Agreed Syllabus or an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies. Schools that do not offer this opportunity to their students are requested to apply to the SACRE for a variation of practice. This academic year no schools have applied for, or been granted, a variation.

Staffordshire SACRE recognises the independence of Academies and Free Schools. However, it commends the Agreed Syllabus to them as a constructive and collaborative way to meet their legal requirements in Religious Education.

Staffordshire SACRE recognises the independence of Academies and Free Schools. However, it commends the Agreed Syllabus to them as a constructive and collaborative way to meet their legal requirements in Religious Education.

Update

During lock down due to the Covid-19 pandemic this was a not a priority for schools, although schools made reasonable adjustments to adhere to the requirement. In the majority of schools RE was not a priority. In summer 2021 there were improvements to the delivery of RE and RS. Schools are now in the autumn term offering their normal RE and RS delivery.

They spent the time during Covid-19 evaluating their planning and as a result some schools are reporting that their delivery is now improving.

b) Overall GCSE results 2020-21 not just for RE

The GCSE system continues to use the new grading of 9-1, with 9 being the exceptional grade. There were no external public examinations in 2020-21.

Grades were awarded following different processes in 2020 and 2021 after public exams were cancelled for all schools in the UK. This led to a large increase in the share of top grades.

c) Religious Studies GCSE 2020

Background information

The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies in England has remained stable in 2020 despite ongoing challenges, reflecting the relevance of the subject and its popularity among young people.

In England, RS GCSE entries for the full course fell by less than 1% to 225,719 compared to 227,913 in 2019. Overall entries in England, including both full and short courses, fell by 2.3% to 243,786, compared with 249,443 in 2019.

Full course entries in 2020 were still almost one third higher than in 2010.

Full and short course entries reached a high of 461,795 in 2011 but declined rapidly as schools in England opted not to enter pupils into the short course following Government policy changes, despite a requirement among all schools, including Academies, to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England at Key Stage 4 in 2020 are as follows:

There were 225,719 entries in England, a fall of less than 1% from 2019 (227,913 England). Despite a decline since the peak in entries, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies in England in 2020 (225,719) is still 32% greater than in 2010 (170,767).

Staffordshire information

We cannot yet report to SACRE precisely the data for our schools regarding RE and RS however the following information provided by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education gives the national picture for A-level and GCSE entries this year.

Staffordshire LA have been unable to provide a break down school by school of the RE/RS grades. This request is being investigated. However, there are some overall figures to report.

Key outcomes

Staffordshire % entries for the full RS course in 2020= 46%.

England % entries for the full RS course in 2020 = 39%

Therefore, Staffordshire entered 5% more than England.

Staffordshire % achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2020= 74%

England % achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2020= 78%

Therefore Staffordshire % of students achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2020 was 4% lower than the England average.

Historically

2019 National Average 9 to 4= 72.4%

2019 Staffordshire Average 9 to 4= 64.7%

Therefore Staffordshire % of students achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2020 improved by 9% compared to the England results which improved by 6%.
Caution- grades were awarded following different processes in 2020 and 2021 after public exams were cancelled for all schools in the UK. This led to a large increase in the share of top grades.

d) Religious Studies A-level

The number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries has declined at a lower rate than other humanities in 2020, performing better than some subjects despite a backdrop of overall declining entries and changes to the examination system.

15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded in England and Wales this year, compared with 17,490 in 2019. This represents a decline of 10.3%.

The overall number of A-Level entries in England and Wales fell in 2020 year 2.6% from 768,217 in 2019 to 748,905 in 2020. The reduction reflects both a smaller cohort of 18-year-olds (599,393 in 2020 compared with 618,873 in 2019 [Office for National Statistics]) and changes to the assessment of A level and AS examinations that had an impact in 2018, when most schools changed their policies to recommending three A-levels, versus four in previous years.

The number of AS exam entries also declined by 24.6% following AS and A-level reforms. The demographic shift and changes to the examination system mean that it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions from comparisons with previous years.

The key outcomes of the 2020 A level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded, a decrease of 10.3% on 2019.

Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 41% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).

The relative stability of entries suggests that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as a valuable life skill. It has not been possible to access the 2020 A level results for Staffordshire schools to date.

3.3 Quality of teaching, quality of leadership and management

Informal monitoring revealed a picture in the primary schools that responded with a high number of schools engaging in regular reviews of their RE provision. This was due to Covid-19, as schools used time to review their RE provision so that on return to full time education, the curriculum would be fit for purpose. The picture was equally positive for provision in the secondary sector with the majority of schools demonstrating that they reviewed their provision.

Schools have the option to purchase further bespoke support and evaluation of their leadership of RE from Entrust. This is a voluntary option. One school in 2020 requested face to face support, and email support was provided for twelve schools following requests.

There has also been a programme of CPD available for schools. Schools did not book on this programme of CPD. Schools preferred to access support through email.

3.4 Teacher recruitment and retention, level of specialist provision

Information regarding monitoring, recruitment and retention continues to be reliant on the collation of evidence from advertisements in the educational press. There is no established method of gathering data within the LA.

Information gleaned from the national press indicated that there was a relatively low turnover of subject leaders at the end of the academic year with few changes taking place. This could be attributed to Covid-19.

Looking forward newly qualified teachers will be referred to as Early Career Teachers- ECTs

3.5 Resources

The work of the Entrust consultant for RE was carried out virtually due to Covid-19. This involved support for Religious Education planning and Collective worship. Resources were sent to schools to support online RE and CW. These were well received by schools.

4 Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other stakeholders

4.1 SACRE meetings

Two virtual meetings were held on November 18th, 2020, and February 3rd 2021. The final meeting of the year on July 1st, 2021, was held as face to face at the Council Chambers in the County Buildings Stafford, ST16 3AD. All meetings were held at 2.00 p.m.

At the Autumn term 2020 meeting the Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf was elected as chair for the following year.

4.2 Membership

There was a review of membership in the previous year. It was noted at that time that there were several vacancies which the SACRE tried to fill over the year. Covid-19 halted aspects of this.

Several changes to the membership of the SACRE were noted during the year. See Appendix 2 for full details.

All new members are required to sign the SACRE Code of Conduct on appointment.

4.3 Training

During 2020-2021 professional development activities were offered virtually to teachers, due to the pandemic these activities centred around email support for planning and advice regarding the Agreed Syllabus planning and collective worship. Governors were updated three times by way of a general update webinar over the year to support their link governor roles- this was well received.

Reverend Preb. M.R. Metcalf and M Gale (Advisor to SACRE) attended the 2021 virtual NASACRE conference on 24th May 2021.

M Gale Advisor to SACRE attended two of AREIACs regional meetings in 2020-21. She also attended the virtual two-day AREIAC conference in July 2021

Members scrutinised an Ofsted research report into Religious Education in July 2021

4.4 SACRE developments

Development Projects

The Explore- Engage -Reflect pupil workshops provided for pupils across Stafford, Stone and Newcastle were all cancelled due to Covid-19.

The proposed High school conferences in conjunction with Youth Net entitled Sacred Spaces were also postponed until Autumn 2021.

Additional Support

The advisor to SACRE provided support on remote learning for schools during the pandemic.

In addition, advice was provided on Collective Worship and planning for RE including short term and long-term planning.

4.5 LA support for the SACRE

The LA continues to commission its support for Religious Education from Entrust. Support for SACRE 2020/21 was provided by Mary Gale, director of Mary Gale Consultancy. She was commissioned to provide support and advice to SACRE and schools for 2020/21 This commission continues into 2021-22.

4.6 Financial support

£6,180 was made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2020-2021 as approved by the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) between Staffordshire County Council and Entrust. Continuing priorities for the year 2020-21 were identified as supporting schools to be aware of their statutory responsibilities and to provide support in relation to fulfilling the statutory functions for SACRE, including but not limited to:

- (i) provision of advice and guidance on teaching and learning on the Religious Education syllabus.
- (ii) providing updates to maintained school RE teachers with a refresh on the requirements to the RE Syllabus.
- (iii) Support for specific projects in a small selection of schools ranging from support for resources for CW and RE to enhancing global links.

The budget was a standing item on the agenda at each meeting see Appendix 4. Looking forward to 2021-22 the SACRE hopes to realise its plans to support the

- Westhill Legacy project (continuation of project)
- Commencement of Sacred Spaces projects (delayed due to Covid-19)

SACRE provided information to NASACRE regarding their funding from the LA This resulted in a report of all LA support for SACREs. It is pleasing to note that our funding is average for SACRES around the country receiving approximately 2%.

The results from various SACREs was varied but showed that most SACREs did not receive the share of the Combined Schools Support Block Grant (CSSBG) that they should in order to support SACRE. The report had provided useful evidence in NASCREs discussions with Government.

4.7 Information and advice

During the period covered by this report, the SACRE received information on the impact of Covid-19 on schools within the county and the steps being taken to ensure RE and CW remained in the curriculum of schools. Members were advised of the national picture with regard to RE. SACRE has used this information effectively to advise the LA on the range of issues covered elsewhere in this report.

4.8 Partnerships with other Key Stakeholders

NASACRE

The Chair of Staffordshire SACRE, Michael Metcalf, is also treasurer of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). A report from NASACRE is a standing agenda item at each meeting. At each meeting, the Chair gave a brief update on key issues raised by the National Association of SACREs. Matters for 2020-21 are included in the minutes from each meeting. SACRE subscribes to NASACRE receiving updates as appropriate. The SACRE received a number of reports including: -

- Supporting a pilot project about developing local RE and further exploration of the publication 'RE and World Views' Work had started to develop thinking around this and the implications of delivering RE in schools.
- A substantial paper was being prepared by the Religious Education Council (REC) looking at mapping out the future of school collective worship.

AREIAC (Association for Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NATRE (National Association for the Teaching of RE)

SACRE subscribes to these organisations, receiving updates as appropriate. The consultant adviser also attends meetings and conferences with members of these organisations ensuring SACRE receives regular information which supports them in carrying out their core duties. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 all communication has been through online platforms. It is hoped that face to face meetings will resume as and when it is deemed safe to do so.

NATRE

Chris Giles, regional ambassador for the NATRE joined the November meeting to discuss the development of a West Midlands Hub for Teachers/SACRE's and professionals. The Hub would provide information and advice on, amongst other things:

- Information on places of worship in Staffordshire
- National/local and regional events
- Local group meetings and university resource centres

Local Authority

In September 2016, the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was introduced into schools. Schools receive a reminder regarding the statutory status of this syllabus. As the key curriculum document for pupils in Staffordshire's maintained schools the local authority is responsible for ensuring that guidance is in place. The Advisor to

Staffordshire SACRE and the County Commissioner for School Quality Assurance and Intervention have continued to remain in regular contact and work together to ensure that schools are clear about their statutory responsibilities for Religious Education. The review of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus commenced in July 2021 in line with legislation which advises that the AS is reviewed every 5 years. It is hoped that the revised syllabus will be ready for September 2022

5 The effectiveness of the local agreed syllabus

5.1 Additional guidance/monitoring and evaluation of the agreed syllabus

In September 2016, the revised Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was formally adopted by Staffordshire County Council and introduced into Staffordshire's schools. As writers of the syllabus, Staffordshire SACRE worked to ensure a sharply focused syllabus to support high standards of Religious Education in Staffordshire schools.

Additional guidance was provided in the following formats:

- RE news was provided through the headteacher E Bag Governor Information Pack and emailed to schools to support them with aspects of teaching and learning.
- Home school learning information for RE was provided for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was also provided via Radio Stoke when Mary Gale was asked to provide a broadcast to that effect.
- Schools have been invited to phone/email the commissioned consultant for Religious Education at Entrust for advice and support on all aspects of their RE provision- there have been a number of queries.
- Long and medium-term plans have been made available to schools to support high quality Religious Education.

5.2 The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

This took place in July 2021 where each of the four SACRE Committees with the support of the Staffordshire Local Authority, agreed to the Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Review and the work to be undertaken

Rev Metcalf was appointed as the Chair of the Conference.

The review stages were outlined including feedback from schools and stakeholders on how the current syllabus was being used. The second stage of the review would take into account any developments or changes in RE since the previous syllabus was written.

6 Collective worship

6.1 Practice and provision for collective worship

An advice booklet was made available to Staffordshire schools to support their statutory duties regarding collective worship.

Schools can also email the commissioned consultant advisor for Religious Education at Entrust for additional support. This academic year there have been no specific training courses for collective worship although email advice has been provided. Several schools

have requested face to face meeting with the commissioned consultant to discuss these aspects, it is hoped that this support will resume in 2021-2022

6.2 Monitoring determinations for collective worship

There are no existing determinations in Staffordshire.
No determinations have been applied for or granted in this academic year.

7 Contribution of the SACRE to the wider community

7.1 Representative nature of the SACRE

The membership of the SACRE indicates that it is representative in nature.
There are currently vacancies which the SACRE are seeking to fill.

7.2 Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic minority

A number of the SACRE members are also representatives on the Stafford Friends of Faith Forum, a local interfaith network. Where opportunities arise SACRE members and members of Stafford Friends of Faith Forum support each other's events to promote positive community relations. This has been difficult during Covid-19. This relationship supports SACRE members knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic minority.

The commissioned consultant/advisor for RE works alongside the MEAS (Minority Ethnic Support Team) employed by Entrust and the local Youth Net team.
There are several Inter faith/cultural experiences available for schools to book as Covid allows, which aim to enhance RE in Staffordshire schools.
These offer the opportunity for an interactive experience for pupils where they meet with members of a faith and learn about what that faith means to them. The MEAS team support the Westhill Legacy project. The SACRE are pleased to be associated with the work of the MEAS team.

Support for schools, particularly around diversity and race relations had been provided through information on Black History month, on the Holocaust Educational Trust learning support tool and Interfaith support. Emphasis had been put on the schools embedding all such aspects in all that they do, not just during the national awareness periods.

7.3 Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social, racial and religious harmony and to the wider community

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education affirms that the role of RE is to foster in each pupil a growing level of religious literacy, through three complementary aims, encapsulated as Exploring, Engaging, Reflecting.
These three aims call for pupils to "acquire a growing range of the social, spiritual and emotional skills and dispositions appropriate to living well in a religiously plural and open society, by reflecting on the reality of religious diversity and on the issues raised by living in a diverse world".

Pupils studying RE are now specifically required to reflect on the issues raised by living in a diverse world. These three aims namely highlight the key role played by Religious Education in developing, supporting and promoting a knowledgeable society with respect for and sensitivity towards the beliefs and life choices of others. The current syllabus emphasises that, in a civilised society, difference can be celebrated when we also seek out and build on shared values and experiences.

The SACRE is committed to the syllabus and to the role it plays in building a cohesive community. Further virtual guidance was provided to schools experiencing difficulties fulfilling the third syllabus aim in 2020-21

The SACRE considered the research paper produced by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues from the University of Birmingham which was published in Autumn 2020. The report focused on pupil character development as defined by Ofsted and the influence a teacher of RE could have on character development of pupils' dependent on their own views.

The report found that:

- Personal worldviews informed RE teachers approaches in the classroom.
- RE teachers were found to have fair and tolerant views of other religions and worldviews.
- There was strong agreement among RE teachers that RE contributes to pupils' character development.
- RE teachers that have a religious faith were more likely to think religions promote good character.

Appendices



30th Annual Report September 2020-September 2021

The Statutory Duties of a SACRE

All LAs are required to establish a SACRE.

A SACRE's main function, as set out in the 1996 Education Act is:

"to advise the local education authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit". [s.391(1)(a)]

Such matters include:-

"methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers".

A SACRE also:

- can require the local authority to review its current agreed syllabus [s.391(3)]
- must consider applications made by a headteacher, that the requirement for collective worship in county schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils in a particular school ('determinations'). [s.394(1)]

Every SACRE must, by law, produce an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the local authority, broadly describe the nature of that advice and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the local authority. [s.391 (6) and (7)]

A copy of the report should be sent to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

Appendix 2

Membership

SACRE Membership

Attendance at Meetings and Vacancies 2020 / 2021

- ✓ = Attended
 A = Apologies Submitted
 Blank = No Response
 NA = Not a member at the time of the meeting

	18 November 2020	3 February 2021	1 July 2021
Committee A			
Christian and other religious denominations			
Free Churches (4)			
Vacancy			
Sam Phillips	✓	A	✓
Maddie Bell		A	A
Vacancy			
Hindu (2)			
Vacancy			
Mr. G. Devadason			
Jewish (1)			
Vacancy			
Muslim (2)			
Mohamed Sedky	✓	✓	
Mohamed Parekh	✓	✓	✓
Quakers - (1)			
Gabi Oldfield	A	A	A
Roman Catholic (2)			
Vacancy			
Vacancy			
Sikh (2)			
Mr Tajinder Singh	✓		A
Vacancy			
Salvation Army (1)			
Lydia Bartlett	A	✓	A
Buddhist (1)			
Ven. Dr Phramaha Laow Panyasiri		A	
Humanist			
Ian Horsewell	NA	NA	A
Baha'i			
Julie Thompson	✓	✓	A
Committee B			
Church of England (5)			
Vickie Longson	✓	✓	✓
Vicky Priestley	NA	NA	✓
Lauren Nicholson Ward	✓	✓	A
Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf	✓	✓	✓

Zoe Cahalan	NA	NA	A
Committee C Teacher Associations (5)			
Samantha Kirwan (NEU)	✓	✓	A
Judy Wyman (ASCL)	✓	✓	A
Shaun Miles (NAHT) (Appointed end Nov 2018)	✓	✓	A
Linda Goodwin (NEU)	✓	✓	✓
Harold Gurden (NAHT)	NA	NA	A

Committee D Local Education Authority (5) (Membership change in May 2021)			
Ian Lawson, replaced by Philip Atkins in May	✓	✓	✓
Syed Hussain replaced by Paul Northcott in May	✓	✓	✓
Mark Sutton replaced by Kath Parry in July 2021	✓	✓	NA
Bob Spencer replaced by Samantha Thompson in May	✓	✓	✓
Kyle Robinson replaced by Mike Wilcox in May	✓		✓
Co-opted			
Spiritualist National Union			
Vacancy			
Clerk to SACRE:			
Mandy Pattinson	✓	✓	✓
Officers:			
Mary Gale	✓	✓	✓

Procedures for schools causing concern

Where, in carrying out its statutory duty to monitor the provision of Religious Education as appropriate within the Local Authority, the SACRE has identified a cause for concern:

1. The SACRE or a sub-committee will request that a letter be sent from the Consultant Adviser for RE or an appropriate LA officer to outline concerns to the school and offer support.
2. Any responses will be referred to the SACRE or a sub-committee for consideration.
3. Where no reply is received, a further letter will be sent by the chair of SACRE reiterating concerns and offering the support of the Senior Adviser or appropriate LA officer.
4. Any responses will be referred to the SACRE or a sub-committee for consideration.
5. Where no reply is received, the SACRE, through the chair, will send a further letter to the school reiterating concerns and alerting the school to further action:
 - a) Concerns to be raised with relevant LA officers with a request that the SACRE be informed of the outcome of any ensuing discussion.
 - b) A note of concern be sent to the Senior LA officer with responsibility for SACRE.
 - c) The SACRE to hold a note of concern on its records

Appendix 4

Budget for 2020-21 Total available to spend £6160

NML400

Total allocation
£6160

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/***** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2020/21

<u>GL Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget (v2)</u>	<u>Actual + Grni</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)</u>
EM110010002	Grants/contingency	1003.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110041008	SACRE Catering Provisions	0.00			
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice	4600.00			
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00			
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General	210			
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency				
					346.50 underspend

0.00

0.00

Screen Data Export - SACRE (2021-22)

Total allocation
 £6220 an
 increase of £40

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/*** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2020/21**

<u>GL Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget (v2)</u>	<u>Actual + Grni</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)</u>
EM110010002	Grants/contingency	00000	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110041008	SACRE Catering Provisions	00000			
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice				
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	40.000			
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General				
	SACRE Contingency				
EM110048342	£6220				

£6180
to
spend

WORK PROGRAMME – 23 March 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

Work Programme 2021/22

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Information/Action/Outcome from meeting
Friday 23 July 2021 am	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	Raised at 15 January 2021 Committee meeting.	(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.
	Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Quarterly Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting.	(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.
	HS2 Quarterly Update Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Sarah Mallen	Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting.	(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.
Thursday 16 September 2021 am	Household Waste Recycling Centres Mobilisation Update and Intended Changes Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Clive Thomson/Carole Smith	Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.	(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

			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>	<p>Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.</p>	<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>RECOMMEND 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>	<p>Requested at 2 July 2021 Pre-Agenda preview.</p>	<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>Climate Change Annual Report and draft Climate Change Action Plan 2 Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg</p>	<p>Requested by email from Clive Thomson 21 July 2021</p>	

	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. RECOMMEND Cabinet - That the following priorities be reflected in the County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP):- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to be made to Roadside Information and Infrastructure including bus shelters, bus stops, timetable information and real time information etc. • Passenger information provided to be consistent and accurate at all locations. • Improvements to be made to the timing and reliability of local bus services. • Links to be made to other strategic agendas and policy areas, including climate change and access to education. • 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. • Residents to be encouraged to use local bus services in order to improve the financial viability and sustainability of services.
Thursday 11 November 2021 am <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>Local Industrial Strategy/Strategic Infrastructure Plan Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Anthony Hodge/Mark Parkinson</p>	<p>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.</p>	
	<p>Bus Transport Inquiry Day (Friday 21 January 2022) Information Sharing Session</p>	<p>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>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(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).</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>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the continued signs of economic recovery following the re-opening of the Staffordshire economy be welcomed.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(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.</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>(a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(c) That a further update be brought to the Committee in July 2022.</p> <p>(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</p>

			Staffordshire residents from the construction of the line, where possible.
	Highways High Level Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested by email 14 December 2021 (James Bailey on behalf of Cabinet Member).	(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.
Friday 21 January 2022 at 10.00 am Monday 21 February 2022 at 10.00 am (Inquiry Day)	Community Transport and the Supported Bus Network Inquiry Day Cabinet Members: David Williams and Mark Deaville Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	“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.	
Friday 25 February 2022 am <i>NB. Cabinet Member (PW) unavailable</i> Monday 28 February 2022 pm	Staffordshire Community Learning Service’s Annual Self-Assessment Report Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Amanda Darlington	Requested by email 19 November 2021 (Amanda Darlington on behalf of Cabinet Member).	
	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. requested by email 1 February 2022 (Anthony Hodge on behalf of Cabinet Member).	
	Countryside Review – Update Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officers: Helen Riley/Sarah Bentley	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.	

	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested by email 14 December 2021 (James Bailey on behalf of Cabinet Member).	
	'Bus Back Better' – Enhanced Partnership for Staffordshire 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. Postponement until Settlement known, requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.	
	Accessibility Strategy Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Helen Riley/Carolyn Knight	Requested by email 29 January 2022 (Carolyn Knight on behalf of Cabinet Member)	
Additional meeting Friday 18 March 2022 am (Cabinet Member's availability confirmed)	Highways Infrastructure Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 12 November 2021 pre-Agenda Preview. Postponed until 14 April 2022 Committee meeting with the approval of the Chairman at Pre-Agenda Preview on 8 March 2022.	
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).	
	'Bus Back Better' – Enhanced Partnership for Staffordshire Report/Recommendations from Inquiry Day on 21 February 2022.	Requested by email 5 January 2022 (Louise Clayton on behalf of Cabinet Member) Postponed following delay in announcing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement by Central Government.	

		Postponed until Settlement known, requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.	
	Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education's Annual Report 2021/22 Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Helen Riley	Requested at Committee meeting on 24 February 2022	
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. Postponed until reconfigured service operational requested by email 8 March 2022 (Clive Thomson on behalf of Cabinet Member)	
	Bus Service Improvement Plan Progress/Settlement Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thomson	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting. Postponed following delay in announcing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement by Central Government.	
	Skills, Jobs and Business Development - Update Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodge	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting. Item to be incorporated into County Economic Strategy report to 23 March 2022 Committee meeting requested at 3 February 2022 Triangulation meeting.	
	Digital Infrastructure Update Plan Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officer: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 29 November 2021 Triangulation Meeting.	
	Highways Infrastructure Transformation Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 12 November 2021 pre-Agenda Preview. Postponed until 14 April 2022 Committee meeting with the approval of the Chairman at	

Pre-Agenda Preview on 8
March 2022

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 Evers/Clive Thomson	Requested at Committee meeting on 16 September 2021.	
To be advised	Safer Roads Partnership Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/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 Evers/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 Evers/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 Evers/Jamie Cooper	Requested at Committee meeting on 29 November 2021.	

July 2022 (provisional)	Highways Transformation Programme – Three Strands Progress Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at Committee meeting on 13 January 2022.	
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. Further delay in announcing Settlement received (email from Louise Clayton 8 March 2022). Postponed until further notice.	
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).	
	Countryside Review – Update Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officers: Helen Riley/Sarah Bentley	Requested at Committee Meeting on 24 February 2022.	
July 2022 (provisional)	HS2 Connectivity with existing 'classic' Network Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Clive Thompson	Raised at Committee meeting on 13 January 2022; offer of engagement with Avanti West Coast received 28 February 2022 (email from Jason Pacey, HS2); provisionally accepted by Chairman 4 March 2022.	

November 2022 (provisional)	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. Postponed until reconfigured service operational requested by email 8 March 2022 (Clive Thomson on behalf of Cabinet Member)	
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Provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval shown in green.

Standing Items (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			
Date of Meeting	Item	Details	Background/outcomes
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.

Provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval shown in green

<p>Membership</p> <p>Tina Clements (Chairman) Ross Ward (Vice-Chairman – Scrutiny) Keith Flunder (Vice-Chairman – Overview) Philippa Hadden Philip Hudson Syed Hussain Graham Hutton Ian Lawson David Smith Bernard Williams Mike Deakin (Co-optee) Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf (Co-optee) Jessica Shulman (Co-optee)</p>	<p>Calendar of Committee Meetings – Venues to be notified.</p> <p>Thursday 11 June 2021 am; Friday 23 July 2021 am; Thursday 16 September 2021 am; Thursday 4-29 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 Friday 18 March Wednesday 23 March 2022 pm (additional meeting); Thursday 14 April 2022 am</p>
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