

COUNCIL AGENDA

To:- The Members of the Staffordshire County Council

Notice is given that the meeting of the Staffordshire County Council will be held in the Council Chamber - County Buildings at 10:00 on Thursday 21 July 2022 to deal with the matters set out on the agenda.

John Henderson
Chief Executive
13 July 2022



AGENDA

(**Note:** The meeting will begin with prayers)

PART ONE

General Housekeeping and Declaring an Interest

1. **Apologies for absence (if any)**
2. **Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16**
3. **Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 May 2022** (Pages 5 - 30)

4. **Chairman's Correspondence**

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

5. **Statement of the Leader of the Council** (Pages 31 - 36)

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

6. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022** (Pages 37 - 68)
7. **Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021-22** (Pages 69 - 84)
8. **2021 Community Fund - 2021/22 Report and Next Steps** (Pages 85 - 98)
9. **Recommendations to the Council**
 - a) Procurement Regulations - Proposed Addition (Pages 99 - 100)
 - b) Health and Wellbeing Board - Changes to the Constitution (Pages 101 - 102)
10. **Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel** (Pages 103 - 106)

11. **Questions**

Questions to be asked by Members of the County Council of the Leader of the Council, a Cabinet Member, or a Chairman of a Committee. The question will be answered by the relevant Member and the Member asking the question may then ask a follow up question which will also be answered

12. **Petitions**

An opportunity for Members to present and speak on petitions submitted by their constituents

13. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman of the Council will move the following motion so that the County Council can consider confidential business in private:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

PART TWO

(All reports in this section are on pink paper)

Nil

Note for Members of the Press and Public

Filming of Meetings

Staffordshire County Council is defined as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. The County Council has agreed that Public meetings should be the subject of live web transmission 'webcasting'. Fixed cameras are located within meeting room for this purpose.

The webcast will be live on the County Council's website and recorded for subsequent play-back for 12 months. The recording will also be uploaded to YouTube. By entering the meeting room and using the seats around the meeting tables you are deemed to be consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for the purpose of webcasting.

If you have privacy concerns about the webcast or do not wish to have your image captured then please contact the Member and Democratic Services officer named at the top right of the agenda.

Recording by Press and Public

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

NOTICES FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Questions

- 1.1. Questions must be addressed to the Chairman, or to the Leader of the Council or to a Portfolio Holder or to the Chairman of a Committee. Notice in writing of any question must be emailed to the office of the Director of Corporate Services (michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk) by no later than 1:00 pm on the third working day preceding the Council Meeting i.e. **by not later than 1:00 pm on Monday, 18 July 2022**. All questions and answers will be circulated around the Chamber before the commencement of the meeting.
- 1.2. Questions may be addressed to the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council, any Cabinet Member or a Committee Chairman. The Leader of the Council may refer questions asked of them to the relevant Cabinet Member if they consider it appropriate.
- 1.3. Each Member may submit a maximum of one question each, however only the first 15 questions received by the Director of Corporate Services before the deadline will be dealt with at the meeting. All other questions will receive a written answer.
- 1.4. Questions and written responses will be circulated to all members at the start of each meeting and will be made available online to accompany the webcast but will not be read out at the meeting.
- 1.5. Each questioner will be entitled to ask one supplementary question on their question/answer and the time limit for supplementary questions and answers will be at the sole discretion of the Chairman.

2. Notices of Motion

- 2.1. A Notice of Motion must reach, by email, the Director for Corporate Services (michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk) nine clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council, i.e. **by not later than midnight on Monday, 11 July 2022**. Further information on Notices of Motion can be found in Paragraph 11 of Section 12 of the Constitution.
NB. Notices of Motion for the County Council meeting on 13 October 2022 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 3 October 2022.

RULES OF DEBATE

3. Speaking at Council Meetings

- 3.1. Councillors shall conduct debate politely and with due respect for others.
- 3.2. Councillors shall not use foul or offensive language.

3.3. As far as is possible, Members should use notes for reference where necessary but should avoid reading directly from a script. This will assist with engagement in debate and the ability of the microphones to pick up the sound.

4. Content and Length of Speeches

4.1. Subject to Paragraph 4.2 below, no Member may speak for more than five minutes during debates by the Council unless the Chairman gives an extension.

4.2. When the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members nominated by the Leader or Committee Chairmen propose reports to the Council they may speak for up to ten minutes. Members who have been nominated by the Leaders of minority political groups as spokesmen on a report discussed by the Council may also speak for up to ten minutes.

4.3. Members will confine their speeches to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or a point of order. No Member may question another Member's motives or use offensive expressions to any Member of the Council or Officer.

4.4. The Chairman may call the attention of the Council to continued irrelevancy and tedious repetition or any breach of order by a Member and may direct them to discontinue their speech. If the Member continues to disregard the authority of the Chairman, the Chairman may ask them to retire for the remainder of the sitting. Should a Member refuse to retire the Chairman may order their removal from the meeting.

4.5. The Council operates a 'traffic light' system for speeches. During any speech, the amber light will come on notifying the speaker that they have 60 seconds left.

4.6. Where a Local Member is presenting a petition, they may speak for a maximum of two minutes. The amber light will come on for the final 30 seconds.

4.7. If there is serious disorder or persistent disregard of the authority of the Chairman, the Chairman may, without prejudice to any other powers which they have, direct that the Meeting be suspended for such period as they consider desirable.

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AT MEETINGS - WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY

DEFINITION OF WHAT IS A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

A 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' is an interest of yourself or interest known to the Member of relatives and close associates within the following descriptions:

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Staffordshire County Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you or your partner in connection with you carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you or your partner (or a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest) and Staffordshire County Council- (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Staffordshire County Council
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Staffordshire County Council for a month or longer
Corporate Tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) (a) the landlord is Staffordshire County Council and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where- (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Staffordshire County Council; and (b) either- (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class

You are also required to declare a pecuniary interest if an issue being considered at a meeting where you're present affects your or your partner's personal well being or financial position to a greater extent than it affects that of a member of the general public.

WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY?

If you also have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you must notify the Chairman of that interest and withdraw from the room when the matter is being discussed.

An example of what you should say

"I have a disclosable pecuniary interest in item number..... on the agenda. The interest is I shall leave the room when that matter is being discussed"

DECLARING INTERESTS AT FULL COUNCIL

The Code of Conduct only requires that disclosable pecuniary interests are declared where the matter to which the interest relates is being considered. Some items will be mentioned in the papers for Full Council but are not actually being considered by Full Council. In particular, some items are mentioned in the Leader's Statement as having been dealt with in Cabinet but are not actually mentioned or discussed at full Council. In such circumstances the Monitoring Officer's advice to members is that there is no need to declare an interest unless the particular matter is mentioned or discussed. As a general rule, members only need to declare an interest at full Council in the following circumstances:

- Where a matter is before the Council for a decision and/or
- Where the matter in which the member has an interest is specifically mentioned or discussed at the Council meeting.

Minutes of the County Council Meeting held on 19 May 2022

Attendance

Jak Abrahams	Derrick Huckfield	Bob Spencer
Arshad Afsar	Philip Hudson	Mark Sutton
Charlotte Atkins	Syed Hussain	Stephen Sweeney
Philip Atkins, OBE	Graham Hutton	Simon Tagg
Gill Burnett	Thomas Jay	Samantha Thompson
Tina Clements	Julia Jessel	Carolyn Trowbridge
Richard Cox	Ian Lawson	Ross Ward
Mike Davies	Tom Loughbrough-Rudd	Jill Waring
Mark Deaville	Johnny McMahon	Alan White
Janet Eagland	Paul Northcott	Philip White
Ann Edgeller	Jeremy Oates	Mike Wilcox
Keith Flunder	Gillian Pardesi	Conor Wileman
Richard Ford	Ian Parry	Ian Wilkes
John Francis	Kath Perry, MBE	Bernard Williams
Colin Greatorex	Jonathan Price	David Williams
Philippa Haden	Robert Pritchard	Victoria Wilson
Gill Heath	Janice Silvester-Hall	Mark Winnington
Phil Hewitt	David Smith	Mike Worthington
Jill Hood	Paul Snape (Chairman)	

Apologies for absence: Peter Kruskonjic, Jeremy Pert, Bernard Peters and Mike Sutherland

PART ONE

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Cllr Spencer moved, and Cllr Edgeller seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED – That Cllr Paul Snape be elected Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

2. Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16

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

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Paul Snape	8	Personal	Former colleague of Eddie Barnett
Bob Spencer	8	Personal	Former colleague of Eddie Barnett
Mark Sutton	8	Personal	Former colleague of Eddie Barnett
Mark Winnington	5	Personal	Non-Executive Director of Nexxus

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 March 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 17 March 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Cllr Edgeller moved, and Cllr Wileman seconded, and it was:-

RESOLVED – That Cllr Phil Hewitt be appointed Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

5. Chairman's Correspondence

Nexxus LFT Testing Service

The Chairman informed the Council that, since the start of the pandemic, Local Authorities and their partners had played an extraordinary role in supporting the COVID-19 pandemic response. Nexxus Trading Services, on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, created its own Community Testing Team to deliver asymptomatic testing to the general population, whilst adapting at pace, throughout, making it possible to test disproportionately impacted and underserved members of Staffordshire's communities.

The service requirements continually varied, in line with changing guidance and demand. The community testing team grew week on week, peaking at approximately 180 staff members during the height of the pandemic. The teams on the ground grew with the project. Agile and willing to work in uncertain times to get the job done. Initially, the community teams started with supporting the education sector, delivering testing and training within secondary schools, whilst creating and developing venue-based testing teams across the county, in carefully considered locations to reach as many residents as possible.

As the project evolved, the teams were on the ground, delivering door to door, mobile testing using 4X4's and trailers, right through to supporting the PCR process and deliveries to where and when the tests were required the most, to the most vulnerable.

The commitment, resilience and support shown by the Community Testing Team had been fantastic, especially during periods of high demand. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman expressed thanks to those involved for their commitment and support throughout the pandemic and wished them well in their new ventures.

6. Petition - 20 MPH Speed Limit in Leek Town Centre

Members were informed that under the Council's Petition Scheme any petition that exceeded 5,000 valid signatures automatically triggered a debate at the next available Council meeting.

A petition had been received entitled: "20 MPH Speed Limit in Leek Town Centre". The petition consisted of a paper petition with a total number of valid signatures of 6,640.

Mr Roger Warrilow, on behalf of the petitioners, outlined the reasons for the petition including the following:

- The County Council's removal of a roundabout in the town centre had given rise to safety issues.
- Zebra crossings in the town centre were not located in the right places.
- Funding available under section 106 agreements for improvements to the highway network in the town centre has not been utilised.
- Rat-running has led to additional road safety issues.
- A reduction in the speed limit in the town centre would reduce pollution levels.
- A 20 MPH speed limit would save lives.

In response to the petition, Cllr David Williams indicated that he could not support the request for the 20 MPH speed limit for following reasons:

- The County Council took road safety issues very seriously.
- Staffordshire had one of the safest highway networks in the Country and targeted its resources at road safety interventions which had the greatest impact.
- The Council worked closely with local communities on road safety issues including community speedwatch.
- The use of 20 MPH speed limits was only advocated outside of schools.
- 20 MPH zones usually required additional traffic calming measures or repeated signing.

- A recent Department for Transport study has highlighted that 20 MPH speed limits had no impact on road safety and, on average, only resulted in a 0.7% reduction in a drivers' speeds.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins spoke in support of the petition and indicated that one in three towns in the UK already had, or were planning to implement, 20 MPH zones in areas with high pedestrian traffic. She added that the 2013 Department for Transport Circular stated that, where there was support from local communities, highway authorities should consider the implementation of 20 MPH speed limits; and that Mr Warrilow had clearly shown that there was widespread community support for such proposals this in Leek. Cllr Atkins also indicated that lower traffic speed would encourage more walking and cycling and would also reduce pollution; and that most 20 MPH zones were self-enforcing and would not require additional enforcement by the Police.

Cllrs Northcott, Parry, and Heath indicated that they could not support the petition for the reasons outlined by Cllr David Williams. Cllr Smith also spoke about the need to remove vehicles from town centres.

Cllr David Williams thanked Members for their comments and reiterated the need for local members to work with their community highway teams on local highway issues.

Following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED - That the petition be not supported.

7. Statement of the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work since the previous meeting of the Council.

Highways and Transport Capital Programme 2022/23 and Staffordshire Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (Paragraphs 1 and 9 of the Statement)

In response to questions from Cllr Pardesi and Cllr Hussain concerning the use of reserves to support highway maintenance activities, Cllr Parry stated the monies to which they referred were from a "carry forward" rather than from the Council's reserves.

Cllr Hussain also spoke about the need to lobby the Staffordshire MPs to secure more financial support for highway maintenance in the County.

Cllr Smith referred to the high cost of minor highway works such as re-locating a bus stop.

Cllr David Williams referred to the Council's investment in highways and added that the Authority regularly lobbied the Staffordshire MPs with a view to securing additional funding for the County's roads. He also referred to inflationary pressures on the budget such as the increases in the cost of bitumen; and changes to the ways of working to bring about increased efficiency.

Cllr Alan White also referred Members to the Highways Transformation Programme and how this was already bringing tangible benefits.

Economic Strategy and Rural Economic Strategy - Draft for Consultation

(Paragraphs 2 and 8 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Cllr Charlotte Atkins concerning how the Council was ensuring that, in the short-term, the Covid pandemic did not have an adverse impact on young people's learning, Cllr Price indicated that he shared Cllr Atkins' concerns about the impact of the Pandemic and added that schools were working hard to ensure that young people had the skills needed by business and that, for those pupils who had missed education, appropriate support was provided to enable them to "catch-up" in key subject areas.

With regard to the Rural Strategy, Cllr Winnington spoke about the importance of the Council's Digital Connectivity Strategy which included the vision for the county to achieve 100% gigabit connectivity access by 2030; and also the need for more housing for local people in rural areas.

Cllr Philip Atkins referred to the importance of the two strategies and also spoke about the rising cost of food production.

Cllr Philip White expressed his thanks to Members for their support for the two strategies and added that it was important that the Council worked with partners to secure better paid/more high skilled jobs, encourage start-up businesses and to regenerate town centres. He also encouraged people/businesses to take part in the consultation on the two strategies.

Cllr Alan White high-lighted some of the work the Council was doing to attract investment into the County including its attendance at the recent MIPIM real estate event in Leeds where the Council Officers, together with the Leader of the Council, had worked hard to promote Staffordshire.

Agreement for Mental Health Act (Section 117) Aftercare needs

(Paragraph 3 of the Statement)

Cllr Edgeller, Cllr Loughborough-Rudd, Cllr Northcott and Cllr Deaville expressed their support for the Cabinet's decision for the Council to enter

into an agreement with Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups in relation to a new funding arrangement for provision of aftercare services. Cllr Loughborough-Rudd did however express some concerns regarding transitional arrangements/aftercare needs. Cllr McMahon indicated that the new arrangements would not only help those exiting the system but also those entering the system.

Cllr Deaville, Cllr Jessel and Cllr Alan White expressed their thanks to Cllr Edgeller for the work she was doing in her role as the Council's Mental Health Champion.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins enquired as to why, up until now, the Council had been responsible for paying the "lion's share" of the cost of providing aftercare for people discharged from hospitals. She also enquired as to whether, firstly, the new agreement would be affected by the abolition of CCG's in the future; and, secondly, whether there was scope for more cost-sharing agreements with the health sector. In response, Cllr Jessel indicated that the new arrangements were an excellent example of how the local NHS and Council were working closer together and that she hoped that this was the first of many new working arrangements with the NHS for the benefit of service users.

Cllr Alan White referred to the challenges around the funding of Drug and Alcohol Treatment services and also spoke about the need for people to take personal responsibility and lead healthy lifestyles.

Capital Programme for Schools 2022/23

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

Cllr Smith spoke about the opportunities within the capital programme for schools to improve their carbon footprint through, for example, installing solar panels ground source heat pumps.

In response to a question from Cllr Pardesi concerning reductions in funding for school maintenance over the years, Cllr Price indicated that the Council was continuing to target its resources to those areas where it was most needed.

Children's Homes Block Contract

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Cllr Spencer indicated that he supported the proposals for a children's home block contract for 13 beds with an option to extend for a further 26 beds as part of a joint contract led by Dudley as it was vitally important that good quality accommodation was available. In response, Cllr Sutton thanked Cllr Spencer for his comments and indicated that the Council would like to work with more local authorities in the region on similar schemes.

Local Bus Concessionary Payment - Final Covid 19 Support Package (Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Cllr Greatorex welcomed the proposals for concessionary travel reimbursement to local bus operators to be maintained beyond March 2022 for a period of 6 months in line with the extension of government funding. He did, however, refer to the need to promote local bus services to encourage more people to use them. Cllr Cox also referred to the need to work with bus operators, parish councils and local communities to bring about improvements to bus services.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins spoke about the decline in bus service usage over a number of years which had been further impacted by the Covid Pandemic. She, together with Councillor Hood and Councillor Smith, highlighted the need for more innovation and better integration of services through, for example, ring and ride services in rural areas.

Cllr Huckfield and Cllr Loughborough-Rudd referred to the importance of concessionary passes and how people, particularly pensioners, relied upon them to carry out daily activities such as shopping or attending health appointments. Cllr Huckfield and Cllr Hood also highlighted the importance of local bus services to enable people to get to their place of work and to school.

Cllr Deaville and Cllr Parry reminded Members that the proposals for concessionary travel reimbursement to local bus operators to be maintained beyond March 2022 was a temporary measure and it was important that bus operators used this time to bring about improvements to services in order to encourage additional patronage. Cllr Parry added that most rural counties were experiencing similar issues with bus patronage levels as was the case in Staffordshire.

Cllr Northcott referred to the need for bus operators to improve customer services including giving advance notice of changes to timetables.

Cllr David Williams thanked Members for their comments and reiterated that bus operators had been severely impacted by the Covid Pandemic. He added that operators were now also being impacted by rising fuel prices. Cllr Williams and Cllr Alan White indicated that the Council was working with bus operators to improve services and patronage levels but, at the end of the day, it was for the public to "use it or lose it".

Staffordshire Means Back to Business (Paragraph 7 of the Statement)

Members referred to the ongoing work to increase employment opportunities and highlighted a number of initiatives within their respective Divisions including the proposed expansion of Elks' Biscuits in Uttoxeter; the "Future High Street" deals and "levelling-up" fund in various town centres across the County; and the redevelopment of the Shirehall in Stafford.

Cllr Pardesi indicated that some sectors were still experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff and, in response, Cllr Philip White informed Members of the proposed launch of the Staffordshire job brokerage scheme, the objective of which was to support Staffordshire residents into work through the management and delivery of free recruitment and support services to businesses; achieved through a bespoke tailored service to match and screen potential candidates.

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2021/22

(Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

Cllr Greatorex spoke about the work of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in monitoring the Council's performance. In response, Cllr Alan White extended his thanks to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their dedication and hard work.

Formal Report by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

(Paragraph 11 of the Statement)

Cllr Hussain indicated that he welcomed the Ombudsman's judgement in relation to the Council's failure to fully consider a complaint about Children's social care. In response, Cllr Sutton indicated that the Council had taken on board the findings of the Ombudsman and had complied with his recommendations.

Summer Events

(Paragraph 13 of the Statement)

Several Members outlined some of the events and activities taking place in their Districts as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.

Supporting People in Their Local Communities

(Paragraph 14 of the Statement)

Cllr Edgeller outlined some of the main priorities of the Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included GP access, Ambulance waiting times, pressures within the NHS, delays in referrals for treatment and workforce recruitment. She also referred to how the Covid pandemic had led to improved communication between Councils and the health sector.

Cllr Alan White expressed his thanks to Cllr Edgeller for her work as the Council's Mental Health Champion.

Thousands Benefit from Extra Support

(Paragraph 15 of the Statement)

Cllr Tagg spoke about the support available through the Housing Support Fund to help thousands of people with their domestic bills. In response, Cllr Sutton added that this was a continuation of the funding made available to Councils during the Covid pandemic and that, to date, around £17m had been made available to support children and families in Staffordshire.

Helen Riley

(Paragraph 16 of the Statement)

Members paid tribute to Helen Riley who was shortly to retire from her role as Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities. They thanked Mrs Riley for her hard work and commitment during the 18 years she had served as a member of the Senior Leadership Team and, particularly, for pivotal role she had played in transforming the Children's System in Staffordshire.

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

8. Recommendation to the Council

Members were informed that the County Council was required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) of between three and five members to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel met each year to consider the recommendations to be made to the Council in respect of the level and nature of the forthcoming year's allowances.

At the County Council meeting held on 22 July 2021, it was agreed "That, if required, the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to carry out a recruitment exercise for IRP members in 2022". As of 1 April 2022, there were two members on the Panel and therefore a recruitment exercise was necessary. This process had recently been completed and the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee recommended that Ms Christina Robotham, Mr Eddie Barnett and Mr Adrian Bowen be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years ending 31 March 2026.

Members were also informed that the Council, at its meeting on 10 February 2022, agreed to instigate the recruitment process for the appointment of a Standards Independent Person(s) as required under the Localism Act 2011 and as part of the County Councils Procedures for dealing with complaints

against elected members. The recruitment process involved the same Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee as referred to above.

Of four expressions of interest received, two were considered suitable for interview. One of those applicants was Mr Eddie Barnett who had a background in Policing and conflict resolution. Mr Barnett had already been interviewed by the Panel in respect of his proposed appointment to the IRP and, therefore, Members views on his appointment as a Standards IP were sought without a further formal interview. Panel members gave their unanimous support.

The second suitable applicant was Mrs Sue Charles who had a background in Pharmacy/NHS. She was a long time serving, much respected voluntary member of the County Councils School Admission Appeal Panels. In view of the high regard in which Mrs Charles was held the Special Panel members were consulted on the proposal to appoint her as a Standards IP without interview. Again, Panel members gave their unanimous support.

The Standards IP appointments were for a four-year period. The appointment of Mr Barnett and Mrs Charles would give the County Council a strong pool of four Standards IPs with contrasting backgrounds and skills (Education, HR, Policing and NHS/Public Sector).

Cllr Trowbridge extended her thanks to Members of the Special Panel in respect of the work they had undertaken to select candidates and make recommendations on the appointment of Standards Independent Persons and to the IRP.

RESOLVED – (a) That the recommendation of the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee to appoint Ms Christina Robotham, Mr Eddie Barnett and Mr Adrian Bowen to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years ending 31 March 2026 be approved.

(b) That the Council's thanks be extended to retiring member, Mrs Annie Barrett, for her contribution on the Panel since 2018.

(c) That the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to carry out a recruitment exercise for IRP members in 2023.

(d) That the recommendation of the members of the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee to appoint Mr Eddie Barnett and Mrs Sue Charles as Standards Independent Persons for a period of four years to May 2026 be approved.

9. Access to Information Rules - Special Urgency Notices

The Council were informed that, in accordance with the Access to Information Rules contained within the County Council's Constitution, the

Leader of the Council was required to submit reports to the Council detailing those key decisions taken by the Cabinet where it had not been possible to give the requisite 28 days public notice of the intention to take such a decision and that, accordingly, a "General Exception" Notice had been published. The report should include the number of decisions so taken and a summary of the matters in respect of which those decisions were taken.

Similarly, where a decision being taken by or on behalf of the Cabinet was urgent and any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests or the interests of any person(s) to whom the decision relates, then the Leader of the Council may seek the approval of the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to that decision being exempt from call-in; (this is referred to in the Access to Information Rules as Special Urgency provisions). A report on the use of this procedure must also be submitted to Council.

The Council were informed of the details of the use of the "General Exception" and "Special Urgency" provisions as follows:

- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 20 October 2021, took a key decision relating to the Government's Household Support Fund Grant which was made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need over the Winter period. (General Exception).
- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 20 October 2021, took a key decision relating to the award of a Highways Construction Contract associated with the Pets at Home development at Redhill, Stafford. (General Exception).
- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 17 November 2021, took a key decision relating to winter funding for home care. (General Exception).
- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 16 March 2022, took a key decision relating to proposals to continue concessionary travel reimbursement to local bus operators in Staffordshire beyond March 2022 for a period of 6 months, in line with the extension of government funding. The approval of the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also sought to the decision being exempt from call-in. (General Exception and Special Urgency).
- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 6 April 2022, took a key decision relating to proposals for the Sale of Bilbrook House site, Codsall. (General Exception).

- The Cabinet, at their meeting on 20 April 2022, took a key decision regarding Indemnity Clauses and Decision Making for Looked After Children/Use of Regulated Placements. (General Exception).

RESOLVED - That the use of the General Exception and Special Urgency provisions contained in the Council's Constitution in respect of the Cabinet's decisions set out above, be noted.

10. Report of the Chairman of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Cllr Spencer commended the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on his focus to reduce offending and reoffending. He also indicated that he was pleased to see that there was a plan to address the findings of the interim Peels inspection report which had highlighted two areas of concern - effective investigations and appropriate ongoing support for victims. Cllr Spencer also spoke about the need to tackle issues such as burglary, vehicle theft and rural crime.

Cllr Huckfield and Cllr Edgeller also commended the work of the Commissioner. Cllr Edgeller also highlighted the ability for the public to submit written questions to the Commissioner.

Cllr Hutton referred to the need to improve 999 response time and asked that the Police, Fire and Crime Panel give consideration to this matter at a future meeting.

Cllr Alan White commended the Commissioner and the Panel on the appointment of Louise Clayton, a former County Council Officer, as the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire.

Cllr Cox thanked the Members for their comments and indicated that they would be taken on board and reported back to the Commissioner as appropriate.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

11. Committee Membership

Cllr Alan White moved, and Cllr Philip White seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Members indicated below serve on the Committees listed for the period up to the Annual Council meeting in 2023:-

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Charlotte Atkins	Jeremy Pert
Tina Clements	Bernard Peters
Mike Davies	Kath Perry
John Francis	Bob Spencer
Colin Greatorex	Samantha Thompson
Gill Heath	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Oates	

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Tina Clements	Peter Kruskonjic
Philippa Haden	Ian Lawson
Philip Hudson	David Smith
Syed Hussain	Ross Ward
Graham Hutton	Bernard Williams

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Gill Burnett	Johnny McMahon
Janet Eagland	Gillian Pardesi
Richard Ford	Kath Perry
Derrick Huckfield	Bob Spencer
Jason Jones	Mike Wilcox

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Jak Abrahams	Jill Hood
Charlotte Atkins	Thomas Jay
Philip Atkins	Jeremy Pert
Richard Cox	Bernard Peters
Ann Edgeller	Janice Silvester-Hall
Keith Flunder	Ian Wilkes
Phil Hewitt	

Planning Committee	
Jak Abrahams	Jeremy Oates
Arshad Asfar	Rob Pritchard
Richard Cox	David Smith
John Francis	Paul Snape
Phil Hudson	Mike Sutherland
Ian Lawson	Jill Waring
Tom Loughborough-Rudd	Mark Winnington
Johnny McMahon	

Pensions Committee	
Philip Atkins	Mike Sutherland
Mike Davies	Stephen Sweeney
Colin Greatorex	Samantha Thompson
Derrick Huckfield	Mike Wilcox
Bob Spencer	

Audit and Standards Committee	
Arshad Asfar	James Salisbury
Ann Edgeller	Janice Silvester-Hall
Keith Flunder	Carolyn Trowbridge
Richard Ford	Ross Ward
Philippa Haden	Ian Wilkes
Phil Hewitt	Bernard Williams
Graham Hutton	Mike Worthington
Bernard Peters	

Corporate Parenting Panel	
Gill Burnett	Phil Hudson
Janet Eagland	Syed Hussain
Ann Edgeller	Peter Kruskonjic
Keith Flunder	Mark Sutton
Richard Ford	Samantha Thompson
John Francis	Carolyn Trowbridge
Phil Hewitt	Victoria Wilson
Jill Hood	

Charities and Trusts Committee	
Thomas Jay	Paul Snape
Ian Lawson	Mark Winnington
David Smith	

Property Sub-Committee	
Mark Deaville	Alan White
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	

County Farms Tenancies Panel	
Gill Heath	Victoria Wilson
Carolyn Trowbridge	

Countryside and Rights of Way Panel (subject to the approval of the Planning Committee)	
Jak Abrahams	Paul Snape
Phil Hudson	Jill Waring
Rob Pritchard	Mark Winnington
David Smith	

Standards Panel (subject to the approval of the Audit and Standards Committee)	
Philippa Haden	Bernard Williams
Graham Hutton	Mike Worthington
Carolyn Trowbridge	

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	
Philip Atkins	Paul Snape
Paul Northcott	Mike Wilcox
Kath Perry	

12. Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Panels

Cllr Alan White moved, and Cllr Philip White seconded, the nominations for the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

RESOLVED – That the under-mentioned be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committees stated for the period up to the annual Council meeting in 2023:-

Committee

Chairman

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman - Overview
Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny

Colin Greatorex
Samantha Thompson
Gill Heath

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman - Overview
Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny

Jeremy Pert
Richard Cox
Ann Edgeller

Committee

Chairman

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman - Overview
Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny

Tina Clements
Peter Kruskonjic
Ross Ward

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman - Overview
Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny

Bob Spencer
Gill Burnett
Richard Ford

Planning Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mark Winnington
David Smith

Pensions Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mike Sutherland
Mike Davies

Audit and Standards Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mike Worthington
Carolyn Trowbridge

Corporate Parenting Meeting

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Mark Sutton
John Francis

Charities and Trusts Committee

Chairman

Paul Snape

Vice-Chairman

David Smith

13. Appointment of members to Outside Bodies 2022/23

Cllr Alan White moved, and Cllr Philip White seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED - That the nominations of the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, on the appointment of Members to Outside Bodies for 2022/23 be approved and that the Leader be authorised to make any changes to those appointments as may become necessary.

14. Questions

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

Question

Tamworth Borough Council is seeking to install the LitterCam system on lampposts in Tamworth that overlook roads that see significant litter deposited by motorists.

What can Staffordshire County Council do to ensure that the permission, installation and operation of the LitterCams system on Staffordshire County Council lampposts is as simple and efficient as possible for Staffordshire's district councils?

Reply

The County Council will of course support the Borough Council to safely roll-out the use of Litter-Cam systems in the right locations.

Please could you put your lead individual in contact with me and I will make sure they work with the relevant leads from the County Council and our Street Lighting PFI contractor E.on.

It will be important to understand the locations where the use of the Litter-Cam is planned so we can quickly assess whether the local streetlighting system is even capable of hosting such equipment, this should help speed up the process. Where it isn't possible, we will of course support you to find alternatives for the equipment installation both on and off the public highway.

Finally, it is worth noting that there are strict requirements for the temporary or permanent attachment of ancillary equipment and connection of electrical power supplies from lighting equipment on the public highway which will need to be met.

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

Question

How often is the condition of school buildings assessed and monitored and what has been the result of that assessment over the last 5 years? What remedial work is being carried out by SCC?

Reply

We only have a role in maintained schools which is now approximately a quarter of the school's estate by building number.

We inspect schools every three years and produce a programme of maintenance works based on priority for "safe, warm and dry" issues. Typically, the works are – windows, roofs, heating systems, electric's, lighting, external play areas and security.

The funding is specific grant from central government and over the last five years has been:

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

2022/23	£	8,529,329
2021/22	£	9,586,242
2020/21	£	4,187,906
2019/20	£	5,072,313
2018/19	£	5,994,906
Total	£	33,370,696

As can be seen from the funding, the government changed its allocation methodology from 2021 which increased the amount of funding we receive.

Whilst the figures above are only for maintained schools the same increase will apply for independently funded academies, correcting previous years allocation methodologies under which we got a smaller share.

We have also been successful in bidding for de-carbonisation funding and have delivered £3m of improvements to heating and lighting in schools which saves them money on bills and reduces carbon emissions.

The full details of our schools maintenance spending is in the Statement of Priorities and within the School Capital Programme.

Supplementary Question

Can I seek assurance that all our schools are safe, dry and warm so that our young people are learning in the best possible physical environment?

Reply

Yes, I can give you that assurance; and may I refer you to paragraph 4 of the Leader's Statement.

Cllr Afsar asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People whose reply is set out below the question: -

Question

Youth Clubs help street youngsters and young adults to become more responsible members of Society. Do you think the County Council should revisit the idea of youth clubs in order to provide children in our divisions with a better future?

Reply

In March 2014 the County Council moved away from the traditional direct delivery of youth clubs, in favour of working more collaborative with the thousands of groups that run across the county every week. We deliver this through our close collaboration between the County Council and the Voluntary, Charity & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to fulfil the potential and expectation of our Young People through an organisation called Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS).

While there is no 'one size fits all' model for providing positive activity, the VCSE sector across Staffordshire harnesses a range of grassroots organisations to support our Young People across:

- Universal services such as uniformed, sports/outdoors and creative groups.
- Targeted services - tailored for specific groups or characteristics – offering a range of more specialist activities.

Young People and families can access a directory of services in their local area via the Staffordshire Connects site.

It is important to acknowledge here that we regularly engage young people in their thoughts and views and the introduction of youth clubs is not what they ask for, instead they favour places to go and things to do and therefore that rich picture of activities is something we are keen to promote.

Promoting a diverse VCSE sector, the County Council is able to commission support for Young People requiring a more targeted approach via Youth Offending prevention and Early Help services. This was best demonstrated in the recent pilot of the Vulnerable Adolescence Support Programme, which provided a one-to-one mentor to support engagement of Young People where universal activities were not always appropriate. Our ambition for our communities and VCSE sector has been realised as we explore transforming this service from a pilot scheme to a future commissioned service.

In addition, we commission Holiday Activities & Food Programme which offers targeted positive activity and a hot meal in the Easter, Summer & Winter school holidays to approximately 22,500 school-aged children across the County. To date, the VCSE sector has created the following capacity in the support of this programme:

Holiday Period	Available Places
Summer 21	40,705
Winter 21/22	10,846
Easter 22	19,187

As part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda, local VCSE sector partners have been supported to apply for grants of between £5k-£50k via the Youth Investment Fund in support of the expansion and improvement of local youth facilities in the 24 wards of Staffordshire categorised as ‘Left Behind’ areas.

In support of this more targeted approach to positive activity and ensuring the sustainability of the wider Support for Young People portfolio, the County Council has committed to producing a statement outlining the sufficiency of local services for Young People which will be a thorough mapping of services which identifies any gaps in provision. This statement will form a key part of how we facilitate meaningful conversations with people about how we meet the needs in the local community working with

SCVYS and others to ensure that local Young People have access to the right help and support.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member identify the universal and targeted services in my Division?

Reply

Yes, I will happily respond to your question in writing following this meeting.

Cllr Charlotte Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

What does the County Council do (a) to respond to residents who report the destruction of hedgerows on private land during the nesting season, and (b) to monitor the state of hedgerows and encourage their protection?

Reply

(a) There are two issues within this – firstly the destruction of the hedgerow and secondly the potential destruction of active bird nests. Some, but not all, hedgerows fall within the remit of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, and these would fall under the remit of the local planning authority i.e., the relevant district or borough council. As such, we would generally refer people to the relevant council to check whether any permission had been granted or whether an offence may have occurred and to follow this up via enforcement.

In relation to nesting birds, destruction of nests could constitute a wildlife crime and would be the remit of the police. However, it should be noted that any action would depend on good evidence that an offence had occurred, which is often difficult to provide.

Neither of these issues are the remit of the County Council and we generally sign post enquirers to the relevant body.

(b) The County Council supports protection of hedgerows in relation to its own planning function in line with policy / legislative requirements, and in the ecological and landscape advice it offers through arrangements with some district and borough councils to support their planning roles. We manage the hedgerows on our own countryside estate, for example our

recent work with local school children to plant hedgerow trees at Apedale Country Park – teaching children about climate change and nature recovery.

More proactive work to support hedgerows is generally through our environmental partnership initiatives, such as through the Cannock Chase AONB's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme, or through Lottery-funded initiatives such as Transforming the Trent Valley.

With regards to highways unless there are specific agreements to the contrary the maintenance of highway boundary hedges is usually the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. Where hedges are the responsibility of the Highway Authority trimming is carried out annually during late winter to avoid bird nesting and to support local ecology. If a hedge requires cutting between 1st April and 31st August, this will generally only be for safety reasons and following an ecological survey.

Supplementary Question

I hope that the County Council will continue to promote the importance of hedgerows and work with partners to ensure that they are protected?

Reply

Yes, we will. The County Council has signed a Nature Recovery Declaration which means that we are working not only with other local authorities on this issue but also with landowners.

Cllr Hussain asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Will the council consider assisting countywide community centres, food banks, and soup kitchens in their excellent efforts to combat poverty in our society?

Reply

The County Council are already supporting a number of initiatives including.

The Education Support Fund

This scheme provides approximately 26900 children with a £15.00 supermarket eVoucher per week out of term time. The eligibility criteria are as follows: -

1. Children in receipt of means tested benefit related free school meals.
2. Children in receipt of Think 2 funding
3. Children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium Funding
4. Children accessing alternative or independent education provision but identified in a household with financial exclusion
5. Staffordshire County Council Care Leavers

The eVoucher are sent direct to the education settings in Staffordshire for them to distribute to the families accordingly or we mail the families out direct asking for them to contact us to claim their eVoucher.

This scheme has been delivered every half term since October 2020 and will continue until Easter 2022, May 2022, Summer 2022.

Household Support Grant Food and Essential Supplies

This project is a short-term grant allocated to Staffordshire County Council through the Household Support Fund and will only be available whilst we have funds remaining or will terminate on the 31st September 2022.

Families facing substantial financial hardship are able to apply for an Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies. Grants will be made available to Families via an eVoucher. The eVoucher will be awarded by Text or Email, depending on preference. The eVoucher will be redeemable at Aldi, ASDA, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose or Marks & Spencer's.

Applicants will be required to be in receipt of means tested benefits to be considered for an Assistance Grant.

Home Heating – Fuel Vouchers

Individuals and families struggling to pay their fuel bills, could get up to £350 worth of financial help. Grants will be provided by pre-paid meter credit or paid directly to the resident's energy provider. The grants can be used to add credit to their account or to clear prior debt.

If they are in an emergency situation and you do not have heating, or their heating has broken, we can deliver electric oil filled heaters to their home. They will also receive a Winter Warmth Pack (which includes hats, gloves scarves and hot flasks) for each individual who resides within the house.

Residents' information is cross checked against the wider Staffordshire Warmer Homes offer, to see if help to get a long-term central heating solution fitted in the home, as well as insulation, or more energy efficient measures that can save them money.

We are also active partners in the network of community food banks and soup kitchens for example,

1. Children's Centre staff have access to the foodbank online systems, this enables them to make referrals for support direct when families contact us needed help.
2. Staffordshire Connects has details of any financial support or discounted food available for families to access.
3. Staffordshire Children's Centres receive food donations from local supermarkets, these are made available to the vulnerable families locally.
4. We continually promote the Staffordshire County Council benefits checkers throughout our online social media, face to face through our service provision and when accessing any food support.
5. Referrals are made into the Family Support Providers where required when families are identified to support them with their finances.
6. Staffordshire Children's Centres work in partnership with the VCSE sector enabling us to access food supplies for families in emergency situations. As such we have been able to provide tailored food supplies that have been delivered direct to family homes taking into account dietary requirements.
7. The Early Years Coordination Service created the Family Hub Cooking project, please see here for more information [Family Hub Cooking | Staffordshire Connects](#). Staffordshire County Council has worked in partnership with Family Action to produce very simple recipes for families to try and that are low cost to make as well as weekly Free School Meal ideas and shopping lists. We then worked in partnership with our district partners to create YouTube Videos showing how to create the meals.
8. For the annual year 2021/22 **923** children attending Cannock schools were gifted free school uniforms saving families **£46,150**. We are looking to extend this initiative to other libraries and are beginning work in Stafford.

Supplementary Question

Will the Cabinet Member please speak to local organisations and explore further how we can work in partnership with them to make a difference in Staffordshire?

Reply

I outlined earlier how the Household Support Fund was operating in Staffordshire, along with the other funds which have been distributed, and I will bear in mind your comments when working with officers on the distribution of any future funding.

15. Petitions

There were no petitions on this occasion.

Chairman

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Household Support Fund

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has announced an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) Grant which will be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this Summer. At least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on pensioners. Whilst the County Council is able to determine eligibility and the delivery of the HSF, it should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy, and water bills. Staffordshire is anticipated to receive £5,506,547.99 through the HSF.

The Cabinet have delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities, to decide the delivery and eligibility criteria for distribution of the HSF in Staffordshire, and to take all other subsequent decisions to ensure that this support gets to those who need it as quickly as possible. They have also agreed an extension of current commissioning arrangements with Beat the Cold and Community Foundation of Staffordshire for a further 6 months, with effect from 1st May 2022, on existing terms and conditions, to administer the Warmth Project.

(Cabinet – 18 May 2022)

2. Staffordshire Better Care Fund 2021-23

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced by Government in 2013, to support integration of health and adult social care. It requires Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Local Authorities to agree a joint Plan for achieving shared outcomes using pooled and aligned budgets to fund services. Plans are required to be approved by Health and Well-being Boards and then by NHS England (NHSE).

The Cabinet have received an update on the progress of the 2021/22 Staffordshire Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan and the associated funding; and have approved the 2022/23 BCF Plan. Authority has also been delegated to the Director of Health and Care to enter into legal agreements under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 in order to implement the respective BCF Plans.

(Cabinet – 18 May 2022)

3. Staffordshire Means Back to Business

The Cabinet have received an oral report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills giving an update on "Staffordshire Means Back to Business" activity including the following matters:

- Staffordshire job brokerage "*Staffordshire Jobs and Careers*" - The objective of the scheme is to support Staffordshire residents into work through the management and delivery of free recruitment and support services to businesses; achieved through a bespoke tailored service to match and screen potential candidates. A digital '*Staffordshire Jobs & Careers*' platform will form part of the service to provide a quick and easy way to find employment and/or training opportunities. This is currently being built and will be 'soft' launched with the wider brokerage service by mid-July.
- Apprenticeship 500 - This programme was developed with our partners in response to the impact of Covid 19 on new Apprenticeships, the numbers collapsed. As a direct result of SCC's actions, with the support of partners, to date 205 businesses have taken on over 400 Apprentices.
- Ignite - This is a brand new county-wide initiative designed to encourage young people in their final year at College, to understand the basics of entrepreneurialism and enterprise. Ignite aims to invest in the innovation, energy and entrepreneurial spirit that the next generation have, to enhance their ability to help themselves through giving them the know-how they need to have more options and lead the world of work. To date over 12,000 college students across Staffordshire have received focused training to set up their own business through the Ignite programme.
- The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has decreased further and now stands at 3.9%, or 2,505 young people which is only 90 more than the pre-pandemic level. This is reflective of the record number of job vacancies currently available across the full economy, with more young people finding employment in areas of demand to aid the recovery from the pandemic. There remain clear opportunities for more young people in a number of our priority and locally important sectors such as manufacturing, construction, logistics, health & social care and hospitality.
- This decline in young people claiming Universal Credit has contributed to an overall decline in our claimant rate which now stands at 2.8% of the working age population in May well below the regional rate of 5.0% and national rate of 3.9%.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

4. Final Financial Outturn Report 2021/22

The Cabinet have received details of the final financial outturn position of the county council for 2021/22 including delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. They noted that, at the end of the 2021/22 financial year, the final revenue position showed a saving of £3.984m across portfolio budgets (0.7%). This was within the Council's Financial Health target of 2% variation on revenue budgets. The Cabinet have agreed the contribution of the underspend of £3.984m into an earmarked reserve for inflationary pressures in future years. With regard to capital outturn, this showed a total spend of £103m which represented continued investment in schools, highways and economic regeneration.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

5. Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23

The Cabinet have received an update on the development of the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23 which outlines the key priorities across the four directorates which will contribute to delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26. The Plan would be closely monitored by Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy as part of the Integrated Performance Report, to make sure the organisation was performing and achieving what it had set out to achieve.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

6. Digital Connectivity Strategy in Staffordshire

The Cabinet have approved the Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework (DISF) for Staffordshire which includes the vision for the county to achieve 100% gigabit connectivity access by 2030. To achieve this vision there are five key objectives:

- To enable and accelerate delivery of gigabit capable technologies and infrastructure to provide full access.
- To maximise the opportunities and benefits of 5G across Staffordshire.
- To enable rural and digitally isolated communities where market intervention has failed.
- To enable the growth of the digital economy in Staffordshire.
- To demonstrate the benefits of gigabit technology to businesses and communities.

Authority has been delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change, to fund digital connectivity projects and programmes that market the opportunity improved digital connectivity brings, demonstrate and test new connectivity technologies and its advantages and pilot connectivity solutions using the gainshare funding.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

7. Newcastle Enterprise Centre Extension Scheme

The Cabinet have approved the acceptance of investment of circa £1,140,000 from the Newcastle Town Deal (Newcastle Borough Council) initiative to facilitate the delivery of an extension to Newcastle Enterprise Centre at Knutton. The Cabinet have also approved the investment of up to £440,000 of County Council borrowing to facilitate the delivery of the scheme. The proposed extension will create 4,500 square feet of new workshop space, and the borrowing costs will be repaid from the increased rental income generated on site and will be underwritten by the Business and Enterprise revenue budget.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

8. Mobilisation of Staffordshire’s Household Waste Recycling Centres

The Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC’s) in Staffordshire, together with the transfer station at Leek, were run and operated on behalf of the authority by Amey who were awarded a two-year emergency contract that ran until 29 March 2022 following the termination of the previous contract by mutual agreement. On 17 March 2021 Cabinet approved the insourcing of the HWRC’s from 30 March 2022.

The Cabinet have received details of the work that has been completed to deliver the successful insourcing of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) network including the TUPE transferring of circa 60 staff, deploying new systems and establishing new contractors. They also noted the need to review the current infrastructure and mobile plant across the network and invest where appropriate to maintain a modern, efficient network.

It is intended that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet in the Autumn on the HWRC network to consider a 5-year costed Maintenance Improvement Plan and reviewed and updated usage policy.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

9. Staffordshire Sustainability Board – Vision and Council Commitments

The Cabinet have received an update on the formation of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB). The formation of the SSB was one of the actions in the County Council's approved Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2), where the overarching aim of the Board is to facilitate collaborative working to enable successful transition to a Net Zero County, as defined within Staffordshire County Council's climate emergency declaration.

The SSB was formed by the Staffordshire Leaders Board and is made up of elected members from all of the councils within the geographical area of Staffordshire at County, District and Borough level. The first meeting of the SSB was in January 2022 and it was agreed that all of the councils should adopt a unified vision and that they should also commit to a fundamental pledge that identifies first, solid steps to set a strong foundation for continued positive climate action. As requested by the SSB, the Cabinet have approved the adoption of the Staffordshire Sustainability Boards – Vision and council commitments.

(Cabinet – 15 June 2022)

10 Staffordshire Leaders Board

It was great to hold the first public meeting of the Staffordshire Leader's Board in June.

This county council has a strong history of working closely with all the district and borough councils to deliver priorities and benefits for all residents and businesses in this county.

The Board allows us to build on this and talk to Government with one voice on our priorities from the Levelling Up Agenda and will set the foundations for exploring a County Deal when the time is right.

11 Ofsted Focused Inspection

Following a recent Ofsted visit, I am delighted that inspectors reported back that vulnerable children in Staffordshire continue to receive good support and protection.

This is despite the impacts of Covid-19. The main findings of the report this month show that the county council, along with partners, has continued to support the most vulnerable children and families and reduce risk effectively in the face of increased pressure on services.

Of course, there are always areas which can be improved such as caseloads and we are working to address this. The findings are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our social care teams and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their efforts to protect Staffordshire children.

12. Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) programme

Our summer HAF fund kicks off again next week as schools start their summer holiday.

This provides free healthy meals and access to a range of activities including swimming, for eligible children. This, together with our Housing Support Fund, is aimed at people and families already struggling with the cost-of-living increases.

Since the scheme launched in summer 2021, more than 70,000 free places have been made available, which is great news.

Eligible children include those who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals, at risk of financial exclusion or in Staffordshire County Council's care.

13. Investment in Staffordshire Roads

Maintaining and improving our roads remains a top priority for this county council and the people who live and work here. This year we have pledged to invest an extra £15.5m to bring targeted community benefits.

This is already seeing results with an extra 9,000 potholes due to be fixed and the announcement that seven key roads are to be resurfaced to bring long-term benefits.

14. Commonwealth Games

After years in the planning, the Commonwealth Games is almost with us.

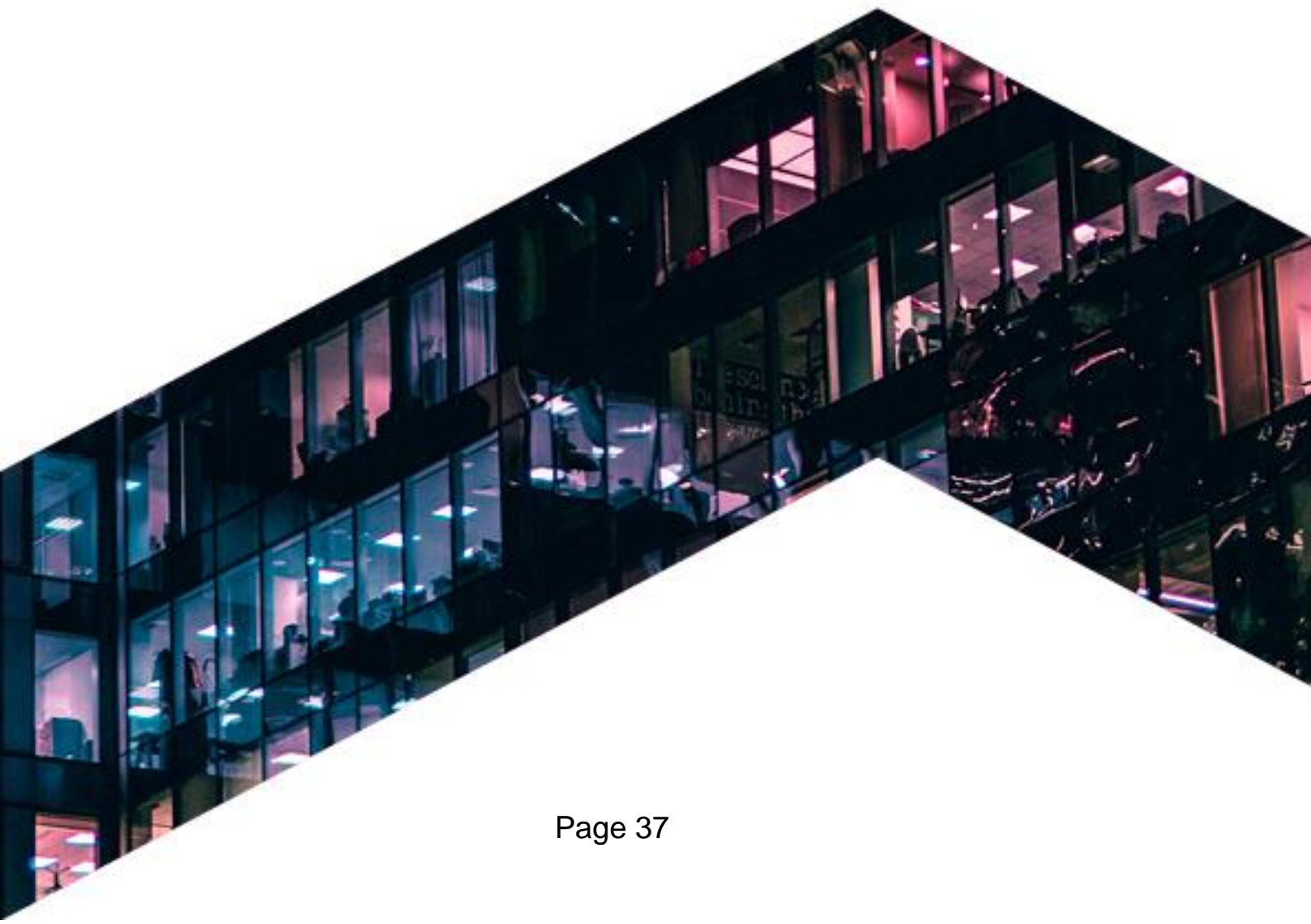
The baton relay arrived in the North of Staffordshire this week and will be making its way through the county before reaching its final day here when it visits South Staffordshire and Cannock on Saturday.

The games get underway next week with Tamworth chosen as a Commonwealth Games festival site and Cannock Chase the setting for the mountain bike event the following week.

I am sure you will join me in offering best of luck messages to all those involved and especially to all the Staffordshire athletes taking part.

Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report

2021-2022



Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to Staffordshire County Council's Annual Scrutiny Report. I am delighted to present this report describing the work of Overview and Scrutiny during 2021-22. It includes a wide range of information about the work elected members have undertaken over the past year; and most importantly the impact this has had. Overview and Scrutiny continues to play a vital role in Staffordshire County Council by holding decision makers to account; developing and reviewing policy; as well as considering how the Council is delivering on its commitments to the residents of Staffordshire. Over the past year, all Overview and Scrutiny Committees have welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the Cabinet and Senior Officers as they lead the Council.

The Committees have sought to focus on the critical issues for the Council and provide constructive input in finding ways to improve outcomes for residents. A warm thank you goes to the Chairs and Vice Chairs as they continue to bring energy and enthusiasm to their roles.

I would also like to note my thanks to the wide range of officers who support all the Committees with particular thanks to our excellent team of Scrutiny and Support Officers. I look forward to another year of working through Overview and Scrutiny to help ensure improved outcomes for all customers, residents, and businesses within Staffordshire.



Councillor Colin Greatorex

Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs



Councillor Colin Greatorex

Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Jeremy Pert

Chairman of the Healthy Staffordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Tina Clements

Chairman of the Prosperous Staffordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Bob Spencer

Chairman of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Introduction

Following the lockdowns caused by the pandemic, this year saw a return to 'normal' in the way Overview &v Scrutiny was carried out. The reduction in social distancing restrictions allowed for much more collaborative and interactive activities - something which was definitely missed by elected members and officers alike during the previous two years.

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

The following report takes a look back at what has been delivered by Overview and Scrutiny over the past 12 months as well as looking forward to what is planned for 2022/23.

What is Overview and Scrutiny

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

What is an Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

Staffordshire County Council's (SCC) Constitution allows for four Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees investigate issues affecting the communities of Staffordshire. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has its own area of responsibility which is themed around SCC directorates and reflect the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

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

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

Corporate Committee

This is the Council's Principal Scrutiny Committee, responsible for the overall management and coordination of Overview and Scrutiny Committees as well as; overall performance; Strategic Corporate Planning; improvement and transformation; the Local Enterprise Partnership; and the Council's support services. It also deals with any Executive decisions that have been called in.

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This Committee is responsible for scrutiny of matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Authority's area, including public health and adult social care, in accordance with regulations made under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and subsequent guidance.

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of achievement against the Council's strategic ambitions for promoting prosperity and economic growth including highways infrastructure and connectivity and flood and water management, education, learning and skills.

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee is responsible for scrutiny of safeguarding vulnerable people, community safety and localism.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are designed to support and enhance the decision-making process, they aim to make a positive impact by supporting the development of policy, monitoring performance and making important recommendations that will lead to improvements in services and make best use of resource in everything the Council does.

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

How Does Scrutiny Work

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committees can invite people to attend meetings or inquiry sessions to provide information, explain structures and situations and respond to questions. Committee meetings take place regularly, they are open for the public to attend (either in-person or on-line), and they are broadcast live on the Staffordshire Web.

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

How Does Scrutiny Make a Difference?

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



Alignment to the Strategic Plan

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








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

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

Outcomes Everyone in Staffordshire will:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee remit
Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth	Prosperous
Be healthier and independent for longer	Health and Care
Feel safer, happier and more supported in their community	Safeguarding Communities

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

What Did Scrutiny Do In 2021-22?

	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Activity	2021-22
	Number of Formal Committee Meetings	37
	Number of Final Reports	92
	External Partners at Meetings	35
	Call ins	1
	Working Groups and Inquiry Days (Completed)	4
	Working Groups and Inquiry Days (Ongoing)	2
	Informal planning meetings (including previews)	34

This table provides a snapshot of scrutiny activity this year. Later in this report, tables are provided to list all of the topics considered in Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in 2021-22 (see appendix 1).

How Has Scrutiny Added Value in 2021-22?

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

During the municipal year the Committee has concentrated on the following key pieces of work:

Climate Change Annual report (2021) and the Draft Climate Change Action Plan. These documents summarised the Councils priority themes and the work undertaken to address climate change to date. The Committee established a small working group chaired by the Vice Chair to look at the Climate Change agenda and share their views and recommendations with Cabinet, this remains ongoing.



The Committee considered regular **Integrated Performance** quarterly updates. In an attempt to fully understand and get the most out of the updates, Members held a workshop with officers and made suggestions for developing the reports to provide a greater level of detail and to enable more thorough scrutiny. These suggestions were accepted and have helped to evolve the data into a more useful format.

The Chair and Chief Executive of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) were invited to attend the Committee at their meeting on 6 January 2022 where they were held to account for delivery of the various outcomes included in their Annual Delivery Plan. Both Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Districts and Borough Councils were also invited to attend as observers and raise questions on the LEP's work. During the meeting, Central Government's review of LEPs and likely outcomes for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent were discussed. It was hoped that whatever the results, City and District/Boroughs Councils would continue to work together in partnership to promote economic growth and prosperity for all residents in the area.

Call-In: The Corporate Review Committee also considers 'Call-In' of Cabinet Decisions. Following a Cabinet decision, scrutiny has five working days to call-in a decision. The Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee called in a decision concerning the proposed relocation of Burton Library. A meeting was convened on 6 January 2022 to consider the decision taken by Cabinet and the detailed reasons for the call-in prior to implementation. Members questioned the Cabinet Members on the detail

and their concerns in relation to the decision. Following detailed discussion, the Committee agreed for the decision to be implemented as set out in the original decision notice. This was agreed by a majority.

Pre-decision scrutiny:

1. The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plan was considered by the Committee as pre decision scrutiny. The Committee commented on the Principles; Objectives of the plan and the initial action plan which they intend to monitor through the quarterly performance reports.

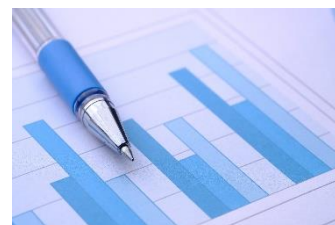


2. Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) capacity building recommission the committee added areas which they would like to see included in the contract.

3. Proposed New Coroners service – the panel made a number of comments on the proposed merger which needed to be considered prior to referring the proposal to the Chief Coroner and Ministry of Justice.

4. Strategic Plan – This key Corporate document was scrutinised and commented on prior to decision. The Committee made a number of recommendations relating to action plans and delivery documents which need to be established in order to deliver the vision and aims of the Local authority.

5. Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 - setting out the deliverable performance priorities and targets for each service area. The committee felt there was a need for specific targets against which performance could be scrutinised and that there was a need to mention in the plan the commitment to working with Council colleagues across Staffordshire to maximise the benefits of joint working. The committee also recommended that there was a need to include full details of Town Deals across Staffordshire.



The Committee, through their **annual Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) working group**, had spent some considerable time scrutinising the Budget and making recommendations to the Cabinet. The Group had spoken to outer local authorities and looked for national examples of good practise prior to making recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Committee also produced a **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) working group** final report. The working group had been set up to monitor the development and implementation of the 'Written Statement of Action' which was produced to address concerns raised by the

Joint Local Area SEND inspection produced by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission following their inspection in November 2018.

Reports and minutes

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

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=871>

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee focus is to ensure scrutiny of the planning, provision and operation of health, public health, and care services in the Authority's area, to consider the risks to residents' health and to seek assurance that what is being done is appropriate for all residents of Staffordshire now and in the future. The meetings continued to be broadcast live to ensure openness and transparency.

Covid-19 pandemic and vaccination programme:

The Committee maintained overview and scrutiny on all aspects of the Covid-19 pandemic this year. The updates provided data, information and raised awareness about Covid rates, variants and vaccinations across Staffordshire. Public received clear messages about reducing risks, keeping safe (hands, face, place, outside space) and emerging



issues were communicated. The committee considered the impact on services and staff, it provided trusted information for members and residents about guidance, restrictions and getting vaccinated. The emergence of the Omicron variant in December 2021, initiated a high level roll out of the vaccination programme, committee considered plans, pressures and partnership working.

Members brought forward local residents concerns and scrutiny was a powerful tool in ensuring the public voice was heard, that checks, and balances were in place when change was required, that residents received factual data about their local areas infection rates, roll out of vaccine and any changes to guidance on restrictions. County, District and Borough Members on the Committee relayed information and made sure that the furthest communities were also aware at each stage.

The pandemic has significantly affected people coming forward with concerns that they have and to receive diagnosis and treatment and the plan to recover diagnoses and treatment will need ongoing scrutiny to

ensure waiting times are brought down as much as possible and every opportunity is taken to be as efficient and effective as possible in addressing the backlog, by any means.

GP Access: Getting a face-to-face GP appointment and long telephone waits were some of the frustrations highlighted by residents and members from across the eight Districts and Boroughs of Staffordshire. Committee has looked in depth at the issue and is keeping overview of the performance data and the Primary Care Access Plan which details 6 stages to improve GP access. They understood frustrations but were assured that measures were in place to tackle concerns raised, timelines set to move forward and the number of in person appointments increasing once services had re-opened post lock down. The plan highlighted lessons learned through the pandemic and alternative ways to access primary care such as seeing a different health professional, making use of digital appointments and technology. Committee will continue to monitor the Primary Care Access Plan and associated actions, notwithstanding the general shortage of staff within primary care and the need to migrate to a new model for residents to access health services medium term.

System Pressures in the NHS: Committee held a special meeting on 13 December 2021 with partners from across the NHS system, ambulance service and County Council to focus on pressures in the system with a focus on the risk to residents' health. Members raised residents' frustrations about ambulance handover delays, access to services, waiting times and discharge from hospital rates. Committee considered the many and varied reasons for pressure on different parts of the system, and the impact that a problem in any part of the system had on the whole system. In home care, legislation to mandate care worker vaccinations had created additional pressure on workforce and there was a shortage of carers in the community to support people in their homes for people to leave hospital safely – which had an impact throughout the system.



All partners stressed that increased demand on services, reduced service levels due to restrictions in place, Covid sickness levels in staff and shortage of trained workers to recruit (which reduced capacity) had increased pressure on each part of the system and put the whole NHS System in crisis.

The system pressures had impacted and continue to have impact on other workstreams, including consultations on major service changes and restructure, digitalisation of frontline services and addressing the backlog of procedures. The session considered risks and was open and transparent. Committee understood collaborative working across the system was good

and were assured that plans were in place but they will continue to monitor the situation due to the risk to residents' health.

Walleys Quarry: Scrutiny of health implications and monitoring the impact of measures in place to mediate the risks of Hydrogen Sulphide omissions from Walleys Quarry Landfill Site. The special meeting took place at Newcastle under Lyme District Council with members of the scrutiny committee invited to participate. A wide range of professionals attended the meeting to provide evidence relating to air quality and health implications and about the mitigations planned to reduce the risk to residents' health. The committee were concerned about the long-term impact on health and mental wellbeing of residents and agreed to write to Government to express its concerns. Two further meetings were held to monitor progress. On 25 October 2021 improvements in the data were found to be encouraging and public complaints had reduced, however by December 2021 data indicated an increase in omissions which were reported to a meeting on 15 March 2022. Committee highlighted the data was of concern and due to the 18-month period this situation had spanned it was agreed to write to Government again. NuLBC and the Leader were advised at each stage of the scrutiny process.

There needs to be a solution to this issue found either by Walleys Quarry Ltd. or by the Environment Agency – the regulator – based on the sheer length of time that this issue has been ongoing. If this cannot be found, then government needs to step in and resolve the issue based on the potential long-term impact to both physical and mental health.

Integrated Care System (ICS) for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent: the Committee has maintained overview of the reconfiguration the County's current clinical commissioning arrangements into a single strategic unit and development to the Integrated Care System. Due to commence in April 2022 the Government delayed the start date to 1 July 2022. The next stage will be for the ICS to draft and approve an ICS strategy and develop an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) by April 2023. Scrutiny will continue overview and scrutinise the draft ICS strategy in 2023.

Mental Health Awareness: Committee Awareness Day on 21 October 2021 gave Members an understanding of the breadth of services available to residents in Staffordshire and to consider parity of esteem between mental and physical health of residents. The Committee understood that actions to improve mental health in the wider population would require a sustained system-wide, multi-agency approach. Mental health strategy and delivery mechanisms such as Mental Health Support Teams in Schools has been the focus for



Vice-Chair Overview and Vice Chair Scrutiny this year, they will report back to committee in 2022-23.

Social Care: the impact of the pandemic on residential and nursing homes was reviewed a number of times to identify if the pandemic had impacted residents demand for care home beds due to the various lockdowns and physical isolation. As well as the overall financial viability of the sector. Staff shortages in general recruitment remain a key concern and retaining staff has been a longstanding ongoing issue. Homecare is affected by the same pressures and further work will be undertaken to focus more on staff recruitment, retention and the creation of long-term career pathways to make the sector as a whole more attractive for people to work in.



Rolling programme: Issues raised through scrutiny this year will be carried forward in 2022-23 as a rolling work programme. Committee plan to prioritise overview of key topics identified including the backlogs in the system, primary care and GP access, the sustainability of the care homes market, performance of NHS Hospital Trusts and workforce issues across the system.

The Vice Chair Scrutiny and the Vice Chair Overview have led work on the Mental Health workshop, researched and met with key stakeholders in relation to scrutiny of mental health teams in schools and developing healthier communities – wider determinants of health. These work streams will report at the start of the new municipal year.

More information on the work of the Committee can be found at

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=871>

Prosperous Staffordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills updated the Committee on progress towards Staffordshire's **Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation** following the 2020-22 Covid 19 Pandemic, as set out in the Strategy adopted in June 2020. They heard of the continuing challenges facing the economy but noted that support for and links to the business community were being maintained so that sector Partners could be actively involved in shaping the recovery. During their scrutiny, Members highlighted the critical importance of revitalising high streets/town centres, attracting high skilled, well-paid jobs and raised serious concerns regarding the negative impact of imposing further 'lockdowns'.



In addition, they gave detailed pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's draft **Economic Strategy 2022-2030** and made comment, following approval of a consultation draft by Cabinet at their meeting on 16 March 2022.

They also discussed **the economic impact of HS2 in Staffordshire** and scrutinised the action being taken to secure the best deal for the County in terms of mitigation measures, compensation for residents, improved connectivity and economic growth.



The Cabinet Members for Environment and Infrastructure and Climate Change and Commercial Matters updated them on the progress made with regard to insourcing elements of the Authority's **future Household Waste Recycling Centres** (HWRC) operations with effect from 2022/23 Financial Year, following the decision by Cabinet at their meeting on 17 March 2021.

During their Scrutiny, Members were pleased to note that significant progress had already been made towards implementing the new arrangements across all 14 sites. However, they reviewed and made comment on various options being considered for the collection and sale of 're-use items' in order to optimise Staffordshire's performance in terms of quantity and value of material collected. They also highlighted the importance of greater consistency in service provision in order to minimise 'carbon miles' but undertook to keep all the changes under close review during the implementation phase, holding the Cabinet Members to account, where necessary.

The Committee were addressed by Messrs M. Barr and P. Jones of the 20s Plenty for Staffordshire (20PS) campaign group who had submitted a Staffordshire County Council Proposal for a Scrutiny Review Form in March 2021 suggesting the following subject for scrutiny:-

“Normalise 20 mph speed limits in built-up areas and villages for safety, public health, sustainability, the climate and because its what residents want”.

The representatives of 20PS provided evidence in support of their request including various statistics, photographs and by reference to practice in other Highway Authority areas, nationwide all of which suggested that the wide-spread implementation of 20 mph speed limits should be adopted in the County.

Members gave preliminary scrutiny to the issues raised. However, they noted Staffordshire’s good performance with regard to accident casualty statistics together with the significant costs associated with implementing additional 20 mph speed restrictions and therefore, respectfully declined the request to undertake further scrutiny at this time.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport gave them details of the Authority’s **new vision and ambitions for the County’s Highway network** over the five-year period to 2027 having regard to the Authority’s current contract with their Highways Partner ending in 2024.

The Committee learned that and Cabinet Member’s ambition was for the new service to be more customer focused. Therefore, they raised various areas of initial concern eg the need to ensure greater quality and consistency of road repairs in the future and the importance of routine maintenance such as gulley emptying for him to have regard to during his reconfiguration of the service.

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

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee’s focus is on safeguarding vulnerable people, community safety and localism.

Joint Spotlight Review on Sexual Harassment in Schools: At the beginning of the new municipal year the Safeguarding, Prosperous and Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committees all raised sexual harassment in schools as an area for further scrutiny, with each separate Committee including this issue on their work programme. To avoid duplication the Committees agreed to undertake a joint spotlight review with one member from each committee taking part.

Sexual harassment in schools is an issue of concern nationally. The “Everyone’s Invited” on-line platform raised the profile of this issue and

highlighted concerns around the levels of abuse and harassment in education. The Government asked Ofsted to complete a rapid review to identify the extent of any problems and give recommendations for addressing these. This joint spotlight review considered the issues highlighted nationally and scrutinised whether these were reflected in Staffordshire Schools, to what extent, and how/whether the issues identified were being address. The Spotlight Review was held on 14 January 2022. Representatives attended with a range of expertise, including educationalists and safeguarding professionals. Further information was gathered after the review to address remaining queries. The findings from this investigation give a current picture of the work to identify and address sexual harassment and abuse within schools, with the report also setting out the Review Group's conclusions and seven recommendations to support the considerable work already in place.

As this was a joint review, with representation from three separate Overview and Scrutiny Committees, each Committee considered the report and recommendations, endorsing and commenting on it. The final report, together with accompanying submissions from the three Committees, have been submitted to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and for Education (and SEND) for their Executive Response.

At the beginning of the municipal year my Vice Chairmen and I met with the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture. This was to agree a way forward that avoided duplication between the Police, Fire and Crime Panel's role, that of the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee's role as the **designated crime and disorder panel** and of the eight district/borough Community Safety Partnerships with their overarching Community Safety Agreement that is monitored by the County wide Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group (SSCSG), chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture. Our agreed way forward from that meeting is for the Vice Chairmen and I to receive a briefing from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture after each of the SSCSG meetings. Issues highlighted from those briefing that we feel require further scrutiny will then be included on our work programme.

The Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny on proposed changes to **Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) and 1-1 intensive support for Children with Disabilities**. This considered the Council's duty to ensure Children's Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) provision is in place to support children and young people with a range of disabilities who are eligible for a personal care service within the family home and local community. A further legal obligation for the Council is to offer a range of commissioned community short break opportunities for Children with Disabilities under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children regulations 2011. Staffordshire's "Aiming High for Children with

disabilities” programme has been developed to support these duties, augmenting the in-house and commissioned Overnight Short Breaks Unit, and the support of Short Breaks Foster Carers in providing the range of short breaks for children to give parents and carers a meaningful break from their caring responsibilities. The Council also commissions a range of providers from across Staffordshire to deliver Children’s Community Support and Short Breaks. These have been commissioned and contracted as two separate support programmes but are brought together under one commission to provide a more flexible and responsive support. The Committee included a progress report on this item at the end municipal year to scrutinise developments and timescales achieved and were reassured by progress made, particularly with the increase in provider numbers and in the recognition of potential problems with Direct Payment reductions and the proactive work to address this.

The Committee scrutinised **Domestic Abuse and the impact of the Pandemic on this Service**, being reassured by the mitigating actions put in place during the pandemic lockdowns. Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) jointly commissioned Domestic Abuse (DA) services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the SCO acting as lead commissioner. Services include the provision for victims, perpetrators, children and young people. The service contract for victims’ services had been awarded to Victim Support, with services for perpetrators awarded to the Reducing Reoffending Partnership. Both these services are provided under New Era.

Pre-decision scrutiny was undertaken on the **development of Family Hubs**, considering the emerging vision for development, demonstrating how ambitions for Family Hubs would contribute to the delivery of the Families Strategic Partnership, Children, Young People and Families Strategy, the Early Help Strategy and the development of the Place Based Approach for Children and Families.



The Committee supported these changes and the aim to develop a Staffordshire Family Hub model which:

- a. brings together a range of provision into a coherent, connected and accessible offer to families around a local place, supporting them to achieve and maintain positive outcomes and seek to prevent needs from escalating;
- b. places a focus on early help and prevention;
- c. takes a whole-family approach and is available to families with children aged 0- 19 (and up to 25 for those with SEND);
- d. has a physical presence within a community as well as an online offer and maximises the use of existing resources within a locality, as part of the Place Based Approach; and

- e. adopts a Restorative Practice Model, which seeks to build and maintain healthy relationships and a sense of community.

The Committee are keeping abreast of progress with the regional **Together4Children Permanency Partnership** which, since going live on 28 September 2020, has delivered the regional adoption service for Staffordshire County Council, Shropshire Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. Partnership development activity had started in 2018 in response to the Government's 'Regionalising Adoption' agenda and brought together four Partner Council's to plan the delivery of adoption services regionally. Through the development phase the vision had been beyond the delivery of Adoption Services and focused on a broader range of activities to ensure that children entering care achieved permanency and improved outcomes, enabling:

- a. best use of collective resources to recruit, assess and support prospective adopters across the region;
- b. improved quality and speed of matching for children through better planning and by having a wider choice of adopters;
- c. high quality support to children and their families delivered through a combination of direct provision and effective partnerships;
- d. all children and their families being provided with the right support at the right time through a consistent permanency support offer across the region.

Each year the Committee consider the **Customer Feedback and Complaints Service Annual reports for both Children's and Adults Social Services**. Members were pleased to see that for the 2020/21 report the number of adult complaints had reduced. The Authority has a statutory duty to publish details of adult complaints made under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and Local Authority Act 1970. The Children's report had also seen a reduction in complaints, particularly around SEND. There was also a 17% increase in the number of compliments reported in the Children's Annual Report.

Staffordshire County Council had seen a year-on-year increase in the number of adult safeguarding concerns received, equating to a 63% rise since 2017. The **Adult Safeguarding Transformation Project** had been developed to help address the issues concerned with this increase. The Project started in February 2020 and aimed to ensure the correct processes and resource were in place to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. A timeline of Transformation activity was developed, with all changes expected to be in place by December 2021, including three additional full time senior practitioner posts being filled. The Committee requested an update on progress with this project, which came to our January meeting and included detail of key performance indicators and quality assurance measures.

The Committee are aware that in some instances adults within the community do not meet the requirement for a statutory safeguarding response but may come to the attention of partner agencies where there are high risks to them or the wider community. Currently there is no formal forum to help address such situations and agencies have reported feeling isolated in managing these risks. The Committee looked at **safeguarding adults on the cusp of care** and noting the variety of different approaches to support these adults, including the system used in Stoke-on-Trent, which was led by a charitable organisation, suggesting that having a lead organisation other than the local council helped in fostering a more open forum where all felt on an even footing. The Committee considered the virtue of creating a similar forum in Staffordshire, including looking at the work of partner organisation and specifically disruptive practice techniques and the disruptive practice toolkit developed by the Police.

Another of the reports that the Committee considers annually is the **Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report**. The 2020/21 Report focused on differences made rather than activities undertaken, detailing the impact of Covid19 on children and young people in Staffordshire, the consequent changes to services and the challenges this brought. These included:

- a reduced opportunity for face-to-face meetings and concerns that potentially this would prevent early signs of neglect being identified. However, Early Help referrals overall had increased which may signify that agencies were now more adept at spotting the early signs;
- the emotional impact of partners being unable to attend births and the development of Maternity Voices Partnership champions;
- the loss of face-to-face education and the resultant impact on wellbeing of children and young people, particularly where on-line learning was not accessible to them;
- face-to-face training opportunities reduced, however on-line provision had been provided and proved very successful; and
- significant delays in judicial services.

The Board will be focusing on two priorities during 2021/22, neglect and exploitation. Part of the work of the SSCB included ensuring learning was identified, improvements embedded at both individual and multi-agency levels, as well as an alertness to emerging risks and understanding systemic issues which policy and practice changes could address. To implement and monitor these a structure of five sub-groups have been established on:

- scrutiny and assurance
- child safeguarding practice review

- joint child death overview
- review of restraint
- learning in practice

We were pleased to note that these sub-groups have delegated powers to deliver against their specific responsibilities.

The Committee also considers annually the **Report of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB)**. Key findings for the 2020/21 SSASPB Annual Report showed that:

- there had been 12,176 occasions of concerns reported where adults with care and support needs had been, or were at risk of being, abused or neglected, a significant rise from the previous year which may have been reflected in changes to reporting;
- 62% of Section 42 enquiries involved females which was disproportionately above the average for females in Staffordshire (50.3%);
- the most prevalent types of abuse were broadly similar to those reported in the previous year: 36% neglect and acts of omission; 18% physical harm; 15% financial abuse;
- 98% of adults involved in a Section 42 enquiry confirmed their desired outcomes had been fully or partially met, higher than the national figure of 95%.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) provides protection for the most vulnerable people living in residential homes, nursing homes or hospital environments. DoLS are the statutory requirement to ensure that care will always be provided in a way that is consistent with the human rights of people lacking capacity, who are not otherwise protected or safeguarded through Mental Health legislation. Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPSs) will be introduced through the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 to replace the DoLS system. The associated codes of practice have not yet been published and the department for Health and Social Care have extended the timescales, with no date currently given for implementation. However, the Committee are reassured by the activity undertaken to prepare for its eventual introduction.

Services to support **Young Carers** were explored by the Committee, considering the new all age carers strategy developed with the five Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) "All Together for Carers (2019-2023)". Engagement activities whilst developing the strategy had shown that pathways and processes for carers were at times unclear, with no single point for initial contact. We explored the rationale for the new strategy and noted the delay in its implementation due to the Pandemic. The Service finally went live in April 2021 and is an all-age carers service with one lead commissioned provider, n-compass, allowing a more straightforward and clearer contractual arrangement. The initial support

and assessment has been brought in-house to enable a one-stop-shop for initial contact with a service pathway that aims to provide:

- high quality and easily accessible information, advice and guidance that explains when and how to find support and who is likely to be eligible, including an initial assessment on need and active referral on to preventative support and beyond as necessary;
- an enhanced range of preventative support for carers of all ages in the community to prevent, reduce or delay the need for additional and higher cost support;
- further assessment and support planning where necessary and access to formal support to meet assessed eligible needs on a basis that was transparent and equitable.

Performance data from the three-quarter reports gave an indication of progress made but we welcomed the further developed of data collected to enable a greater clarity in reporting, with more depth behind the figures given and some reported figures sub-divided to give a more accurate reflection of the caring activity undertaken.

We are in the process of facilitating face to face meetings with Young Carers so we can reassure ourselves that the new service is working well in its support offer.

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

What's Coming Up In 2022/23?

To find out more about Overview and Scrutiny work for 2022-23 visit:

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

Scrutiny Committee	Date of Meeting	Topic	Details / Background
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Corporate Overview	21/06/22	Work Programme Planning	planning of the 2022/23 work programme at the beginning of the new municipal year
Corporate Overview	21/06/22	Appointment of MTFs working Group members	Annual task and finish group
Corporate Overview	21/06/22	Boundary Commission update	Update
Corporate Overview	21/06/22	Climate Change Working Group Update	Appointment of a new Chairman
Corporate Overview	02/08/22	Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 1	Quarterly report. To include information on the Household support fund.
Corporate Overview	02/08/22	Boundary Commission update	Update
Corporate Overview	13/09/22	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes	To ensure communication between the committees and no duplication
Corporate Overview	13/09/22	Boundary Commission update	Update
Corporate Overview	13/09/22	Governance of outside partnerships	
Corporate Overview	25/10/22	Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2021/22	Annual report - to enable members to identify areas which need more scrutiny
Corporate Overview	25/10/22	LGSCO Annual Report	Annual report - to enable members to identify areas which need more scrutiny
Corporate Overview	25/10/22	Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 2	Quarterly report.
Corporate Overview	25/10/22	Entrust - review of changes	scrutiny of changes to contract
Corporate Overview	12/12/22	Diversity and Inclusion - Principles, Objectives and Action Plan	Requested by members - action plan is monitored by Cabinet annually

Scrutiny Committee	Date of Meeting	Topic	Details / Background
Corporate Overview	12/12/22	Equality Update – (to include recruitment and retention)	Pre decision scrutiny - Also goes to Audit and Standards committee to monitor implementations of audit reviews. Goes to Cabinet in December reporting annual progress. Peoples strategy every 4 years
Corporate Overview	17/01/23	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes	To ensure communication between the committees and no duplication
Corporate Overview	17/01/23	MFTS 2022-2027 Working Group Report	final report of the MFTS working group. For approval by the committee prior to Cabinet
Corporate Overview	27/02/23	Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 3	Quarterly report.
Corporate Overview	27/02/23	Peoples Strategy update	Pre decision scrutiny – goes to Cabinet in March
Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Health and Care	TBC	Draft Mental Health Strategy	Policy and transformation
Health and Care	TBC	Public Health Outcomes and Services - Children's	Public Health overview
Health and Care	TBC	Mental Health Support Teams in Schools	scrutiny of mental health support - partnership working
Health and Care	30/05/22	Elective Recovery	Risk and Performance
Health and Care	30/05/22	Changes to Healthy Communities Service from April 2023	Public Health service change
Health and Care	30/05/22	Work Programme Planning	Planning and prioritisation
Health and Care	21/06/22	Healthier Communities Work Shop	Public Health -Wider determinants of health
Health and Care	11/07/22	Staffordshire Healthwatch	Partnership
Health and Care	11/07/22	The Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service	Public Health pre-decision (Private)
Health and Care	11/07/22	ICS & ICB Update	ICS Risk and Performance
Health and Care	11/07/22	Primary Care Access Plan Update	ICS Risk and public concern

Scrutiny Committee	Date of Meeting	Topic	Details / Background
Health and Care	11/07/22	Transformation Programme - Maternity Update	ICS Transformation
Health and Care	01/08/22	ICS Transformation Programme - George Bryan Centre	Service transformation
Health and Care	19/09/22	The Future Supported Living Services in Staffordshire	Social Care pre-decision
Health and Care	19/09/22	Health and Care Performance Updates	Performance scrutiny
Health and Care	19/09/22	West Midlands Ambulance Service Performance Update	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	19/09/22	Adult Social Care Reform Implementation	Social Care policy & service development
Health and Care	19/09/22	Care Home Update	Social care provision future services
Health and Care	22/09/22	Joint meeting with Wolverhampton RWT Acute Hospital QA Performance	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	17/10/22	UHDB Acute Trust QA Performance	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	17/10/22	Ockenden Report Implications	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	17/10/22	Workforce Planning - Health and Care / Acute Trusts	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	28/11/22	NSCHT QA Performance	Risk and performance scrutiny
Health and Care	30/01/23	MPFT QA Performance	Risk and Performance scrutiny
Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Prosperous Overview	26/05/22	Rural Economic Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny of draft 2022-2030 Strategy
Prosperous Overview	15/06/22	Highways Transformation - Update	Scheduled update in Programme progress with opportunity to shape reconfigured service
Prosperous Overview	15/06/22	SEND Green Paper	Pre-decision scrutiny of Staffordshire's formal response
Prosperous Overview	07/07/22	Highways Transformation Programme - Three Strands Review Progress	Scheduled update in Programme progress with opportunity to shape reconfigured service
Prosperous Overview	07/07/22	HS2 Connectivity with existing 'Classic' Network	Engagement with HS2 and Avanti West Midlands with a view to maximising benefits for Staffordshire

Scrutiny Committee	Date of Meeting	Topic	Details / Background
Prosperous Overview	07/07/22	Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021/27 Outcome Measures	Scrutiny of specific targeted measures identified through the operation of the Plan
Prosperous Overview	29/09/22	North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan	
Prosperous Overview	29/09/22	Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly Update	Scheduled update in Programme progress with performance monitoring of existing arrangements
Prosperous Overview	29/09/22	Schools White Paper	Pre-decision scrutiny of the County Council's formal response
Prosperous Overview	19/10/22	Countryside Review - Update	
Prosperous Overview	19/10/22	Staffordshire history Centre-Update	
Prosperous Overview	19/10/22	Libraries and Arts - Update	
Prosperous Overview	19/10/22	Chasewater Vision	Scrutiny of the County Council's proposed new Chasewater offer
Prosperous Overview	19/10/22	Economic Recovery Renewal and Transformation (Economic and Rural Strategies) - Six monthly update	Scheduled update in Plan progress and delivery
Prosperous Overview	10/11/22	Household Waste Recycling Centres	New service performance against key performance indicators
Prosperous Overview	10/11/22	Digital Infrastructure - Update	Monitoring performance against the Update Plan considered by the Committee in April 2022
Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Safeguarding Overview	16/06/22	Low Level Neglect	suggested by Cabinet Member at triangulation to look at the impact of low level neglect, the current changes to ways of working and remaining challenges.
Safeguarding Overview	16/06/22	Work Programme Planning	planning of the 2022/23 work programme at the beginning of the new municipal year
Safeguarding Overview	19/07/22	Customer Feedback & Complaints Annual report - Children's Social Care	report brought annually

Scrutiny Committee	Date of Meeting	Topic	Details / Background
Safeguarding Overview	19/07/22	Customer Feedback & Complaints Annual report - Adult Social Care	report brought annually
Safeguarding Overview	19/07/22	Draft Early Help Strategy	pre-decision scrutiny
Safeguarding Overview	19/07/22	Family Hub	pre-decision scrutiny
Safeguarding Overview	01/09/22	Children's Services Transformation	the new Children's Transformation went live on 1 October 2021. Six months on this is an opportunity for Members to seek reassurance that it is delivering as intended, including on SEND.
Safeguarding Overview	24/10/22	Community safety and the outcome of the Fishmonger's Hall investigation	Findings from the Fishmonger Hall incident showed there had been inadequate management of Usman Khan. Members want to satisfy themselves that changes have been made to prevent further such incidents. This also impacts on the Committee's role as the designated crime and disorder panel.
Safeguarding Overview	24/11/22	Staffordshire safeguarding Children's Board Annual report	report brought annually
Safeguarding Overview	05/01/23	Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Adult safeguarding Partnership Board Annual report	report brought annually

Appendix 1: Items considered during the year 2021-22

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- SEND working group – final report
- Customer feedback and complaints annual report 2020/21
- Impact of Covid-19 on Communities, Economy and organisation and recovery progress.
- Climate Change Annual report (2021) and the Draft Climate Change Action Plan.
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plan
- Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) capacity building recommission
- Proposed New Coroners service
- Strategic Plan
- Quarterly Integrated Performance Reports
- Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Call – in: Proposed relocation of Burton Library

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Covid-19 Vaccination, Phase 3 Vaccinations Programme and Covid-19 updates
- NHS Restoration and Recovery
- Access to General Practices and Primary Care
- Future Delivery of Residential Replacement Care Services (Learning Disabilities)
- Walley's Quarry Landfill Site – Health Implications
- George Bryan Centre
- Maternity Services
- Urgent and Emergency Care Programme
- Difficult Decisions
- Introduction to Mental Health Workshop
- Mental Health Hospitals in Staffordshire
- NHS Transformation Programme Updates
- Integrated Care Strategy Performance Overview
- Public Health Outcomes and Services
- NHS System Pressures
- Home Care Services Update and Pressures
- Integrated Care System
- Care Home Services
- Integrated Care Hubs
- Mental Health Support Teams in Schools
- Healthier Communities – the wider Determinants of Health
- Draft Mental Health Strategy
- Post Covid Lessons Learned
- Green NHS Agenda

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Community Support (including Domiciliary Care) and 1-1 intensive support for Children with Disabilities
- Domestic Abuse and the impact from the Pandemic
- Developing Family Hubs in Staffordshire
- Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership Update Briefing Children & Families System Transformation
- Customer Feedback & Complaints Service – Adult Social Services Annual Report 2020-21
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Service – Children's Social Services Annual Report 2020-2021
- Safeguarding Adults on the Cusp of Care
- Adult Safeguarding Transformation Project Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Report 2019/20
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Annual report
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Young Carers

Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel

Annual Report 2021-22

Chairman's Foreword

For children who are in Our Care, the council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children. We should all do our utmost to make sure that all children in our care get a good start in life, and this remains the primary driver behind the Corporate Parenting Panel's work.

This is the fourth year that the Corporate Parenting Panel has produced an annual report, and this is the sixth year that I have had the pleasure to have chaired the panel.

The panel has continued to develop the way in which it carries out its responsibility of improving the lives of our children. We have made alterations to the way members engage with, and consider the views of, children and carers to ensure that they are at the forefront of every decision we make.

We have had several new members join the panel this year following the May 2021 elections. They, along with our returning members, have continued to provide an invaluable service to our children, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them, and our support officers, for their hard work over the past 12 months.



County Councillor Mark Sutton
Chairman of Corporate Parenting Panel
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

1. The Corporate Parenting Role

- 1.1. Children and young people in our care should be cared about and not just cared for; they have a unique place in society. They have a special relationship with the State because they have been taken into our care either by a court order or by voluntary agreement with their birth parents. Central Government, local authorities, partner agencies, individual professionals and carers all share responsibility for ensuring the best for these children and young people – as they would for their own children.
- 1.2. We, as the corporate parent of children in care, have a special responsibility for their well-being and to put them first.
- 1.3. These children and young people's circumstances will have already placed them at a disadvantage. Therefore, we should be their champions in the fight to get what they need and to make sure they are safe. That also means being a powerful advocate to ensure they receive the best of everything and helping them make a success of their lives.
- 1.4. Corporate parenting is most effective when everyone involved in the lives of those in our care by the County Council work together to improve their experiences and outcomes. By becoming interested in the issue of corporate parenting and promoting the welfare of children in our Care and care leavers as part of all of our various roles, we will be helping to discharge the overall responsibility of ensuring the best outcomes for all children and young people in the county.

2. Purpose of Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel is how the Council discharges its responsibility as a corporate parent and brings together councillors, senior officers in children's services and partner agencies to consider key issues which affect children in our care and care leavers.
- 2.2. The panel actively engages with and challenges key partners to provide good support and is ambitious for the children in its care.
- 2.3. The panel works closely with our Children in Care Council and Care Leaver forums to ensure all children in our care have the best possible care, are safe, healthy, happy and achieve. To achieve this, we have an annual thematic work programme in which all partners are called to account.

3. Governance and membership

- 3.1. The panel provides a key role in supporting members to play their role in ensuring accountability for children in our care. Whilst all members of the County Council are corporate parents, members of the Corporate Parenting Panel champion and challenge on behalf of Children in our Care and Care Leavers. The panel is proactive in challenging service delivery and advocates for children in our care and for strong governance principles.

- 3.2. The panel looks to see that the voice of the child is imbedded in all bodies and informs decision-making.
- 3.3. The Work Programme is a working document and as such the panel have requested supplementary reports to further explore any areas of concern or challenge. The current Work Programme can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4. The panel comprises 15 elected members of the County Council, including the Chair who is the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Members are appointed annually at the Council meeting in May.
- 3.5. The 2021-22 members were:

Gill Burnett	Peter Kruskonjic	Samantha Thompson
Janet Eagland	Philip Hudson	Victoria Wilson
Ann Edgeller	Carolyn Trowbridge	Syed Hussain
Keith Flunder	Jill Hood	John Francis (vice-chair)
Richard Ford	Tom Loughbrough-Rudd	Mark Sutton (chair)

- 3.6. Members of Staffordshire’s District/ Borough Councils are co-opted onto the panel as champions for children in our care particularly in areas of housing and leisure facilities. The 2021-22 co-opted members were:

Bryan Jones	Michelle Cook	Gillian Heesom
Janice Silvester-Hall	Jenny Barron	Barbara Hughes
Wendy Sutton		

- 3.7. Representing Foster Carers, Alan Hudson was appointed to the panel in November 2020 and continues to provide invaluable insight.
- 3.8. The panel is supported by the Assistant Director - Children's Social Care, the Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Partnerships and the Head of Children in Care and Care Leavers. The Head of Performance, QA & Engagement attends every meeting to ensure the voice of the child feeds into the panel’s agendas.
- 3.9. The panel calls on professional advice and assistance/holds to account:
- The Headteacher of the Virtual School.
 - Designated Doctor and Nurse for Children in our Care.
 - County Managers for Fostering, Leaving Care and Adoption.
 - Independent Reviewing Officers.
 - Senior practitioner colleagues.
- 3.10. The panel regularly receives first-hand experience accounts from:
- Children in Care and Care Leavers.
 - Care Leaver Ambassadors.
 - Foster Carers.
- 3.11. The panel’s Terms of reference were originally approved by the panel in 2017. These were refreshed in 2022, the updated version is attached as **Appendix 2**.

3.12. All panel members are required to complete Level 1 Child Protection Training as a minimum.

4. Meetings

4.1. The panel met Eight times over the year as outlined below.

- Four Business meetings – which focussed on quality and performance and held in county buildings (all members to attend).
- Four Discussion/Hot Topic meetings – focussed on specific priority themes identified by young people. These were attended by panel members who had been separated into groups on a rota basis.
- Working Group Meetings – Members, in their allocated groups, also attended working group meetings which focussed on specific outcomes for children and young people. The results of these meetings were fed back to the wider panel at the main Business meeting.

5. Future Meeting Arrangements

5.1. Panel members and officers felt that the sporadic approach to the original meeting format didn't allow an in-depth understanding of subject matter to be developed, neither did it allow for continuity of involvement from members

5.2. To that end a new process has been developed to solidify the future work programme of the Corporate Parenting meetings, thus ensuring a continuity of subject theme and consistent involvement of specified panel members throughout the process from the initial working group meetings, "Hot Topic" Discussion meetings and the final Business Meetings where Topics are discussed in detail by all panel members.

5.3. **Table 1** shows the dates and times for each of the meetings throughout the 2022-23 period, the Topic that will be focussed upon and the specific membership group that will be asked to attend the various meetings.

Cycle No	Cycle Topic	Working Group Voice Project	Hot Topic/Discussion Voice Project	Business Meeting
1	Understand their past	15 March 22 - 5pm Taken Place	25 April 22 - 4:45pm Taken Place	17 May 22 – 10am Taken Place
2	Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	11 May 22 - 10am Taken Place	20 Jun 22 - 4:45pm Taken Place	12 July 22 – 1:30pm Taken Place
3	Delegated Authority	13 July 22 - 5pm Group 1	19 Sept 22 - 4:45pm Group 1	18 Oct 22 - 10am All members
4	TBC	12 Oct 22 - 5pm Group 2	7 Nov 22 - 4:45pm Group 2	6 Dec 22 - 10am All members
5	Future Themes – Planning & Review	NA	Date TBC by Voice Project – no members to attend	14 Mar 23 - 10am All members

Table 1

5.4. **Table 2** shows the members that have been allocated to each member group.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
County Members	Gill Burnett Janet Eagland Ann Edgeller Keith Flunder	Richard Ford Peter Kruskonjic Phil Hudson Carolyn Trowbridge Jill Hood	Tom Loughbrough-Rudd Samantha Thompson Victoria Wilson Syed Hussain John Francis
Co-opted Members	Bryan Jones Janice Silvester-Hall Wendi Sutton Alan Hudson	Jenny Barron Michelle Cook Alan Hudson Gillian Heesom	Barbara Hughes Bryan Jones Alan Hudson

Table 2

6. Corporate Parenting Strategy

6.1. The challenge and scrutiny role of the panel remains to be focussed on driving the overarching Corporate Parenting Strategy of 2016-19. The Strategy is currently going through a refresh; however, the key objectives remain relevant:

- Keeping You Safe.
- Where I live.
- Your Education and learning.
- Your wishes, views and feelings.
- Becoming a Care Leaver.
- Your Health and Wellbeing.

7. The Impact of Covid-19

7.1. Whilst Covid-19 has continued to have an impact on the way in which meetings have been held, they have continued to take place. Initial meetings were held virtually, until the relaxation of social distancing rules in July 2021 when the meetings resumed in a face-to-face environment.

7.2. Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to accompany the 'independent visitor' in Regulation 44 visits to our in-house children's homes. These management visits continued to be carried out under the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 by independent visitors alone to provide an opportunity for independent scrutiny of a home. Following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, panel members will, following training, once again, begin to accompany the independent visitor at future Regulation 44 visits.

8. Meeting Topics

8.1. Children's Transformation

8.1.1. The panel has considered the ambitious Children's Transformation programme. The aim of the programme is to improve the lives of children and young people by placing them at the centre of a whole system approach delivered on a district footprint.

8.1.2. The Transformation programme means that Bureaucracy is reduced, and the workforce restructured to deliver services locally, whilst redeveloping central functions and specialisms to enhance the service offer. SEND, early help, social care and education is integrated on a district basis.

8.1.3. Recognised best practice in other authorities has been adopted and the aim is to empower and build resilience in children, families and communities. New staff structures have been outlined, and it was explained how these impacted specifically on children and young people. Leadership has been streamlined and will promote consistency and quality of practice.

8.2. **Safeguarding – Preventing Children coming into Care**

8.2.1. The panel has considered the Safeguarding of children and the prevention of them entering care by considering the various initiatives and processes aimed at keeping children with their families.

8.2.2. Early Help was an intervention/prevention service which sought to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and their families to prevent escalation of need. In these cases, referrals often came through the Front Door/First Response; but they could also come from colleagues in Education or even self-referral.

8.2.3. Under the Transformation Programme, the 18 Safeguarding teams have been replaced by eight Districts with a combination of Assessment and Staying Together and Children in Care and Care Leavers which are District based. They continue to work collaboratively with other agencies and professionals to safeguard children, and the team works inclusively and restoratively with a child centred focus.

8.3. **Young Parents**

8.3.1. The panel has been involved in a discussion meeting, focussed on Young Parents, their experiences, the challenges facing them, the support currently available and potential future support. This led to the development of an Action Plan that focusses primarily on the importance of support networks, and preparation for adulthood and parenting in view of the common absence of family role models/mentors.

8.3.2. Issues revolve around identifying suitable, affordable accommodation for young parents, with particular concern at the potential effect of the bedroom tax on a young parent's ability to establish a permanent home.

8.3.3. An additional area highlighted as needing attention was the number of male care leavers who have become young parents, and who might benefit from more support services.

8.4. Care Leavers

8.4.1. Members received two presentations on Care Leavers. The first was from representatives of the Voice Project and Children in Care and Care Leavers Team, and the second was from a Care Leaver.

8.4.2. Officers detailed:

- The Councils statutory role and responsibilities.
- The four categories of Leaving Care status and the Councils' duties to the young; people in each category and their entitlements.
- The Councils statutory obligations in terms of financial support for Care Leavers and the additional optional, local offer.
- Benchmarking statistics against comparable neighbouring Councils.
- An illustrative typical journey for a Care Leaver.
- Challenges facing PAs in providing support for Care Leavers.

8.4.3. The Care Leaver's presentation summarised issues raised at a recent Forum. Due to capacity issues, Leavers experienced difficulty having direct and immediate contact with their PA's, which could sometimes result in a feeling of isolation. The introduction of a hotline to help during a particular 'low point' was suggested.

8.4.4. Whilst members had voiced support for young care leavers, the leavers themselves only had limited awareness of the Corporate Parenting role of members or of how to access their support. Additionally, as members had suggested a wealth of community support was available, accessing that support was a challenge for Care Leavers. The importance of developing the District Champion roles and strengthening links between Care Leavers and their communities was acknowledged. Early community involvement by young people in care, such as volunteering, could help pave the way for community support over the longer term.

9. Service Annual Reports

9.1. Independent Reviewing Officers

9.1.1. Independent Reviewing Officers explained how the service was transitioning to a digital practice and championed Restorative Practice throughout. The service planned to grow children's participation in their looked after reviews and Child Protection Conferences as a priority.

9.1.2. Officers explained how the service had managed through the pandemic. Independent Chairs had responsibility for overseeing Child Protection Conferences, Looked after Review activity, care planning and reviewing arrangements for children looked after by the Local Authority.

9.1.3. The aim is to ensure the Child's Plan remained focussed and relevant, and reflected a child's needs. The Hub model adopted was helping the service manage workload. The service had continued to develop whilst maintaining its focus as championing the voice of the child.

9.2. **Virtual School**

9.2.1. The Virtual School Head Teacher outlined the roles of the team as being responsible for the education of children in our care and for children previously in our care, and to support children who had a social work care plan.

9.2.2. In response to the new responsibilities the virtual team structure has been increased. One member of staff is now allocated to every 70 statutory school aged children. There are 1317 children in care.

9.2.3. The team currently consists of 19 members including the VHT and there is a vacancy for educational psychologist. In addition, there are two practitioners supporting the implantation of the new duties and restorative practice pilot.

9.2.4. The Virtual School is currently focussing on the following five priorities:

- Early years, primary school, high school, and post-16 attendance,
- exclusions and admissions,
- the children's voice,
- evidence informed practice,
- new duties.

10. **Key achievements**

10.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel continues to play a key role in promoting, monitoring and challenging service improvement and achievements.

10.2. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the members have maintained a watching brief, raised concerns and continued to be ambitious about the future of children in our care.

County Councillor Mark Sutton
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Implications

1. **Equalities implications:** it will be an ongoing responsibility for the panel to promote, support and respect the identity of children in our care and care leavers.
2. **Legal implications:** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
3. **Resource and Value for money implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this annual report. Financial performance, namely resources, budget and spend in relation to discharging the panel's responsibilities is regularly reported through the Council's budgetary procedures.
4. **Risk implications:** The key issue facing the panel in its oversight and challenge function is the capacity and financial pressures posed by the increase of the children in our care population on all service areas supporting children in our care, and ensuring that as effective corporate parents, this does not hinder the care, support, aspirations or continued improvement in outcomes for our children in care.
5. **Climate change:** There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.
6. **Health Impact Assessment screening:** There are no health impact assessment implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

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Appendix 1



Corporate Parents Meeting Forward Plan March 2022 – March 2023

Corporate Parenting is the means by which the County Council fulfils its responsibilities as a corporate parent and brings together councillors, senior officers in children’s social care and partner agencies.

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please get in touch with Julie Plant, Governance and Support Manager, 01785 276135 or julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk or Simon Humble, Governance and Democracy Officer, 01785 276961 or simon.humble@staffordshire.gov.uk

Cycle No	Cycle Topic	Working Group Voice Project	Hot Topic/Discussion Voice Project	Business Meeting Oak Room County Building
1	Understand their past	15 March 22 - 5pm Group 2 (Taken place)	25 April 22 - 4:45pm Group 2 (Taken place)	17 May 22 – 10am All members (Taken place)
2	Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	11 May 22 - 10am Group 3 (Taken place)	20 June 22 - 4:45pm Group 3 (Taken place)	12 July 22 – 1:30pm All members (Taken place)
-	CPP Induction / refresher training	NA	NA	13 June 22 – 10am All members (Taken place)
3	Delegated Authority	13 July 22 - 5pm Group 1 (Taken place)	19 September 22 - 4:45pm Group 1	18 October 22 - 10am All members
4	TBC	12 October 22 - 5pm Group 2	7 November 22 - 4:45pm Group 2	6 December 22 - 10am All members
5	Future Themes – Planning and Review	NA	Date TBC by Voice Project – no members to attend	14 March 23 - 10am All members

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Other activities	Provider	Date and Location
Summer Funday	Voice Project	17 August 22

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
County Members	Gill Burnett Janet Eagland Ann Edgeller Keith Flunder	Richard Ford Peter Kruskonjic Philip Hudson Carolyn Trowbridge Jill Hood	Tom Loughbrough-Rudd Samantha Thompson Victoria Wilson Syed Hussain John Francis
Co-optee Members	Bryan Jones Janice Silvester-Hall Wendy Sutton Alan Hudson	Jenny Barron Michelle Cook Alan Hudson Gillian Heesom	Barbara Hughes Bryan Jones Alan Hudson

Item		
Monday 13 th June 2022 – Induction / refresher training - Voice Project/Member and Democratic Services. To include Regulation 44 visit training		
Item and lead Officer	Detail	Action/Outcome
Tuesday 12 th July 2022 – 1:30pm		
Children’s Voice Project and Children in Care Council update – Jenny Herbert		
Fostering Service Report – Brian Johnson		
Adoption Service Annual Report – Nicola Hope		
Performance Data – Jenny Herbert		
Work Programme – Simon Humble		

Item and lead Officer	Detail	Action/Outcome
Tuesday 18 th October 2022 – 10:00am		
Children’s Voice Project and Children in Care Council update – Jenny Herbert		
Virtual School Annual Report – Sarah Rivers		
Complaints Annual Report – Kate Bullivant		
Independent Review Officer – Anita Williams / Angela Banks		
Performance Data – Jenny Herbert		
Work Programme – Simon Humble		

Item and lead Officer	Detail	Action/Outcome
Tuesday 6 th December 2022 – 10:00am		
Children’s Voice Project and Children in Care Council update – Jenny Herbert		
Health and Wellbeing of Children in our Care (12-month update) – Hazel Edwards		
Performance Data – Jenny Herbert		
Work Programme – Simon Humble		

Item and lead Officer	Detail	Action/Outcome
Tuesday 14 th March 2023 - 10:00am		
Review of year and Plan of future themes – Jenny Herbert		
Strategy Development – Review & update		
Performance Data – Jenny Herbert		
Work Programme – Simon Humble		

Item and lead Officer	Detail	Action/Outcome
Tuesday XX May 2023 - 10:00am		
Children’s Voice Project and Children in Care Council update – Jenny Herbert		
Corporate Parenting Strategy Development – Review & update		
Corporate Parenting Panel – Annual Report – panel		
Virtual School Update – Sarah Rivers		
Terms of Reference update – Simon Humble		
Performance Data – Jenny Herbert		
Work Programme – Simon Humble		

Appendix 2



Corporate Parenting Panel - Terms of Reference (2022 refresh)

Context

Corporate parenting is the collective responsibility of the Council to prioritise the needs of children in care and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children. The Corporate Parenting Panel is designed to provide the necessary leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers by raising aspirations, building stronger relationships and taking time to listen to the voice of the child.

The panel is a non-political advisory body to the Children's Executive and is chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families. The panel does not take executive decisions but provides leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting in order to drive forward outcomes for children in our care and care leavers.

Objectives of the panel

- To provide strategic leadership and hold partners to account for performance against strategies to improve all outcomes for children in our care and young people.
- To act as advocates for children in our care and young people and to ensure that the commitments to children in our care and young people set out in the panel's Strategy are delivered.
- To act as champions for corporate parenting influencing other councillors, officers and partners.
- To ensure that children in our care are protected and supported to develop as healthy citizens, able to participate in their community.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Virtual School in improving the educational attainment of children in our care and young people, to narrow the gap of achievement between them and their peers and to maximise opportunities for training and career placements.

These objectives will be delivered by the panel in the following ways:

- Make sure the whole Council and partner agencies commit to the principles of excellent corporate parenting and to hold partners to account for their role in the delivery of services to children in our care and care leavers.
- Ensure children and young people in care, leaving care and their carers are getting the support they need.

- Lead on the development, review and promotion of the Corporate Parenting Strategy across the Council and involve partners in order to improve services and respond to changing need.
- Be well informed on Government legislation, guidance and policy concerning children and young people in care and receive assurance that the local authority is fulfilling its statutory duties for children in care, leaving care and their carers.
- Ensure a dialogue with the Children in Care Council to enable participation of children in our care and care leavers in the corporate parenting agenda and in influencing service re-design.
- Receive regular reports, as appropriate, on the level and quality of services and scrutinising performance management information to ensure that any shortfalls are properly addressed.
- Attend any training needed to support the role (minimum of two per year).
- In accordance with regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 accompanying the independent visitor on their visits to children's homes each month to facilitate communication between children in our care, front line staff and councillors.
- Meet children placed in foster homes and hear from their carers and to monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high-quality care.
- Celebrate the achievements of children in our care and care leavers.
- Link as appropriate with the Safe and Strong Select Committee and develop a relationship with the Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Encourage all partners whether health, education or social care services or the voluntary sector to work in an integrated way in the best interests of children in our care and care leavers.

Membership

The panel shall comprise **15 County Councillors** and may include any member of the County Council representing a county-wide spread and be appointed at the annual meeting of the Council. Representatives from partner organisations may be co-opted onto the panel as appropriate. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families is chairman of the panel.

Co-opted membership is invited from:

- the eight District/ Borough Councils;
- a foster carer.

The panel will be supported by:

- the Assistant Director - Children's Social Care;
- the Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Partnerships;
- the Head of Children in Care and Care Leavers;
- The Head of Performance, QA & Engagement;
- a Voice Project staff member;
- a representative from commissioning and partnerships;
- one Independent Reviewing Officer;
- a representative from the NHS Integrated Care Board.

Arrangements for Meetings:

The panel shall meet eight times per year as set out below, agree a work programme annually and review it at each meeting. The meetings of the panel are held in private session.

- Four Business meetings – to focus on quality and performance and held in county buildings (all members to attend).
- Four Discussion meetings - these meetings to be held from 4.30pm-6.30pm to discuss priority items identified by young people (panel members will attend on a rota basis).
- Members will attend working focus groups on a rota basis which will focus on outcomes for children and young people and barriers and will feedback to the wider panel.
- Members will be expected to attend a minimum of one engagement activity per quarter to directly hear the views of children, young people or carers (shadowing staff; 1-2-1 meetings with foster carers/families; attending a Voice Project event; or a Foster Carer Support Group).

Meetings of the panel shall be conducted in accordance with the Procedural Standing Orders in Section 11, of the Councils Constitution although meetings may comprise a range of different formats and locations.

The Corporate Parenting Panel will report to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board as necessary.

2021 Community Fund

2021/22 Report and Next Steps

Introduction – County Councillor Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Staffordshire county councillors have a key role in their divisions. We are here to listen to and support residents, to help local knowledge shape the county council's work, and to strengthen the communities in which we live.

One of the tools we have to help our communities is a small grant fund which we can use to invest in initiatives and projects for the benefit of local people across Staffordshire.

In 2020 we saw a huge challenge and a situation we had never experienced with the Covid-19 pandemic. Our county councillors' grant fund was quickly refocused so that it could support the wave of volunteering which sprang up, as Staffordshire people did everything they could to look after one another. I was, and remain, extremely proud of our communities for how they responded.

As we got used to the effects of Covid-19 on our lives, we looked at how the funding should be focused for the 2021/22 financial year. We saw that while we were definitely 'recovering' as a county, there was still a long way to go; many groups had still not been able to meet back up, and many projects which had been planned prior to the pandemic had still not been able to go ahead.

This fund was aimed at helping our voluntary and community sector think about 'where next'. While we adapted to a new normal, the 2021 Community Fund was about supporting groups to think about their future offer, how they will fundraise, and how they will return to ideas which they were going to pursue before the pandemic began.

We set broad criteria for funding applications, but the theme of all of them is around Covid-19 recovery, and getting our incredible voluntary, community and social enterprise sector back to being able to do all that it wants to.

This report gathers only some of the examples from the huge range of projects and organisations that the funding supported, but I hope that it gives you a sense of how our members continue to support communities in ways that make a real difference.

Background

The 2021 Community Fund launched on 24 June 2021, once our new cohort of county councillors had time to settle into their roles after the May 2021 county council election.

It saw £2500 allocated to each County Councillor. Councillors were able to use as much or as little of this £2500 as they wanted to support projects which needed it, or to work together with other councillors and jointly support bigger projects.

Funding was available for the following three things, with a theme of Covid-19 recovery:

1. Projects to get Staffordshire's voluntary and community sector back to thriving, including initiatives that will help groups to develop or restart their own fundraising; or
2. Projects to help paused community activities get going again in a safe way; or
3. Projects looking to build on the community energy of the past year and keep it going, e.g. by transitioning new community networks into more formal community groups or Good Neighbour schemes

Success of the Fund

This funding has been a direct part of supporting the communities of Staffordshire to get back up to full speed and recover from the pandemic.

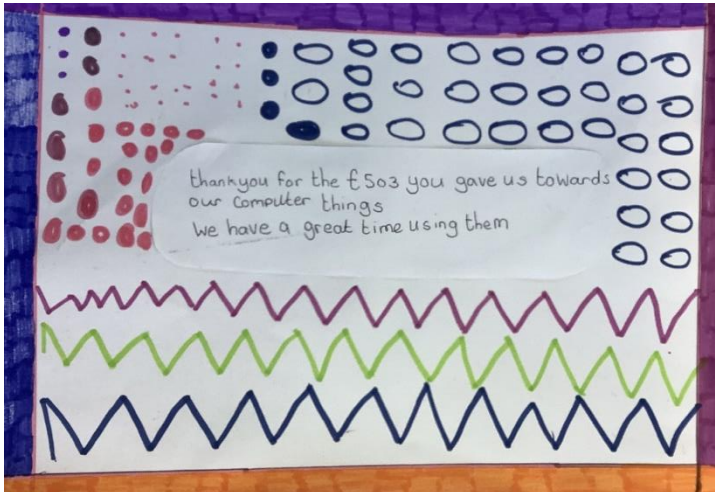
We saw a huge range of projects being applied for and approved. It was clear that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were still being felt, and some of the applications we saw were about continuing that great support which was felt during the early lockdowns. But we also saw projects which had been on hold, and groups who hadn't been able to achieve their core purpose for several years. We also saw many applications from groups looking to put themselves back on a stable footing after the devastating impacts that Covid-19 caused to their fundraising and planning.

County Councillors played a huge role in promoting and encouraging applicants, and have made a huge difference with the funding, with a final total of £115,066 allocated for supporting 158 different groups and organisations.

There was no financial minimum match funding for applications to the 2021 Community Fund, other than in applications made from Parish Councils or businesses. Staffordshire's communities needed flexible support and had already been doing their bit, and the fund allowed county councillors to use their investment to help.

Below are some examples of the types of projects that have received funding through this year's fund.

Projects to get Staffordshire's voluntary and community sector back to thriving, including initiatives that will help groups to develop or restart their own fundraising



- **High Flyers South Staffordshire** used a £504 grant from the Fund to invest in new computers and printers, so that more of their 70 attendees able to benefit from the access.

- A £500 grant to Rising Brook Baptist Church for their **Welcome Space** project supported the costs of new furniture to help with Developing a welcoming, hospitable space for the local community. With hundreds of people visiting this space per week, this grant has helped the church to deliver its services to the community.
- **1st Fazeley Scout Group** were able to get back to what they love – enjoying a thrilling weekend of activities in the outdoors. A weekend residential experience at Kingswood helped the children to build independence and confidence, and was impossible during the Covid-19 pandemic.



- **Orchard Close Residents' Association** used a £300 grant to support a community visit to the Garrick Theatre, Lichfield, for their residents' association to get together and enjoy a trip to the pantomime, supporting their local theatre along the way. This was something that couldn't happen during Covid-19 and was sorely missed.

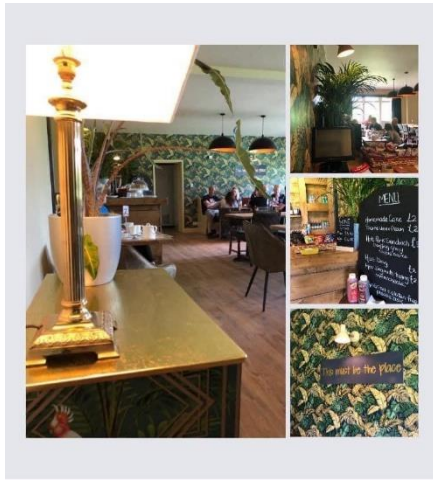


- The **Chase Grandparents and Grandchildren Group** received a small grant of £140, but that allowed them to invest in a better vacuum cleaner to ensure that after their intergenerational activity sessions, they can clean up in time to avoid incurring late rent charges. It's an example of a small grant that can help a vital community group to keep doing what they do.
- The **Putting You First** project by You 1st Emotional Support CIC received funding that allowed them to provide free activities, day trips and events, to any member of their community in need of mental health and wellbeing support, including vulnerable and lonely residents. They took members of the community to Trentham Gardens, including one client of their foodbank who had not left their house since the start of the pandemic, and for whom this was the first time they were comfortable leaving their home and socialising.
- The **Sewing for Everyone** project at West Chadsmoor Family Centre used member funding to deliver a face to face sewing course for participants, building on an online course already delivered, and with a plan to make the activity permanent so that it could be a continual learning journey with a social aspect to improve mental health and wellbeing.

- Several small grants helped the Katharine House Hospice to refurbish its **In-patient Family Room**, which has made a huge difference to the wellbeing and comfort of families visiting loved ones on the in-patient unit, who are coming to the end of their life. This could benefit up to 3000 people over the next 5 years. With Covid-19 still impacting on the Hospice's fundraising at the time, this small amount of funding helped the project to go ahead.
- Approach Dementia Support used free **Dementia Training Sessions** held in Burton, to increase awareness and change perceptions of dementia. They used £450 in funding to put on sessions which helped others to understand how the disease affects those who have been diagnosed, their carers and their families. Participants gained access to dementia awareness support and were able to draw on advice from Approach's staff.
- **Pickwood Forest Community Trust** combined member funding with a major crowdfunding effort in a project to undertake major land works and create a new wheelchair-friendly access track to the grounds and reinstate a former wetland pond, benefitting all the different groups who use the facilities and wildlife free of charge.
- Dizzy Heights Staffs CIC used member funding to invest in new equipment for their kitchen, allowing them to provide hot food to the young people attending **Stapenhill Short Street Cafe Youth Club**. Because their existing funding could not cover this, the Community Fund was able to support the further growth of their offer.



- The Community Café** at the Edward Marsh Centre is a new facility set up within a self-funding community centre for the Village of Kinver and the local area. Member funding supported the final piece of refurbishment required for getting the café off the ground. The café has proved extremely successful and its popularity has increased tremendously. The café are now able to offer placements for several young people with special needs, which has been a real source of inspiration for them in driving the centre forward.



Projects to help paused community activities get going again in a safe way



- The Brewood Singers' **Come and Sing!** project helped to kickstart their activities post-Covid by supporting the additional costs of things like moving to a larger hall. It encouraged participation and discovery of singing as a community activity which improves wellbeing and confidence, and member funding also helped to put on the successful Come and Sing event in March.
- £500 helped **St Mary's Friendship Club** to continue meeting, carry on with its work helping overcome loneliness and isolation in the Cannock Chase area. Member funding helped sessions to go ahead while fundraising efforts were still impacted, meaning that provision of hot meals, and trips out to theatre events, could take place again once it was safe to do so.

- **Cannock Chase Shed** are a local branch of the national 'Shed' movement of self-help community groups who bring people together to connect by making and repairing things together. £140 from county councillors allowed for purchase of new tools to deliver a special project.



- The **Friends of Hednesford Park / Cannock Chase Mental Health Hub / Time to Change Cannock** made a joint application for £500 funding for a project on reducing isolation after the Covid-19 pandemic, using a project in Hednesford Park to achieve this, and bringing in the expertise of Forest of Mercia CIC too. Young volunteers from Futures at SSC and others worked together in the park, and vulnerable volunteers were recognised and rewarded with certificates and medals for the important work they contributed to the parks and open spaces.

- MHA Communities South Staffordshire received £500 for their project around **supported re-engagement to community based activities**.



They had provided remote services such as telephone befriending, shopping support etc but found that confidence in participation in community activities was low after Covid-19, so ran a project about promoting independence through befriending, supporting people on a short-term basis to feel more confident in getting themselves back to face-to-face activity. With the organisation already facing increased costs of restarting activity safely, this funding supported people in getting back out by helping the

organisation to offset some of their costs while this short-term intervention took off.

- **Lunch Bunch** at the Cherished Coffee Shop used £500 to set up a community lunch (named 'The Lunch Bunch') catering for up to thirty-six people, to be held every Tuesday at the Cherished Community Café. This is a weekly event providing a healthy hot meal, pudding, drink and an activity, for people in the community to come. The community lunch event has become very popular with between 25 to 30 people regularly attending each week, and is receiving positive feedback especially from those people who are on their own and those who find it challenging to integrate back into the community after the lifting of the Covid pandemic restrictions.



- £250 helped **History Live** to go ahead with two coach trips in a Covid-safe way, bringing their activities back to in-person visits. The funding also helped with Covid adaptations such as increased sanitiser, and helped the group to go ahead with this kind of project when they had already had to spend more on other adaptations such as a bigger venue for safety.

- **Abbots Bromley Sports Association (ABSA)** used funding to support the continued development of their sports ground, which has seen the charity raise and make a huge investment totalling more than £760,000 to this point. Member funding of £500 allowed for support around preparing a junior football pitch, purchasing new essential machinery and providing temporary facilities and secure storage, with the long term aim of making the site a safe environment for all to have recreation, activity and reflection.



Projects looking to build on the community energy of the past year and keep it going, e.g. by transitioning new community networks into more formal community groups or Good Neighbour schemes

- **Sustainability in Colwich & The Haywoods** and **Aston and Weymouth Village Hall** both received funding towards the costs of setting up a new online presence, building on the social connections that have been made over the past few years and the Covid-19 pandemic in particular. These are about formalising approaches that have developed (for example allowing Aston and Weymouth Village Hall to take cashless payments) but are also about communicating and sharing information to help the community activity of recent times to continue.

- Cherry Orchard Garden Services CIC's **IT for the Future** project allowed them to invest in ICT equipment which enables them to deliver projects over the coming years. The first is around helping beneficiaries of the organisation with learning disabilities around how to use IT equipment such as laptops and tablets and learning the importance of internet safety when communicating online, avoiding scams, and how to use online banking.



- **Rugeley Youth Council** used £163 member funding to maintain their website and take forward plans with expansion. This has seen a 44% increase in the number of visits to the website and as a result the membership of the group has almost doubled. This website and the group's social media platforms are their biggest and most important form of communication, and are vital in helping them complete the mission of empowering the young people of Rugeley, and giving them a say in the future of their town.

- **Hidden Warriors CIC**, who were active in providing community support and packs to keep people active during the Covid-19 pandemic, used member funding for a project in an assisted living complex, to ensure that those left feeling more isolated after Covid were still supported, through activities to celebrate the birthdays of those people with limited family connections, and provide activities to tackle anxiety.



These are just some of the examples, and the rest can be viewed on the Staffordshire County Council website at

<https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/WEB/PHPFund/details.aspx?PageIndex=1&Councillor=0&FundPeriod=4>

Next steps

While the impacts of Covid-19 have not yet gone away, we continue to adapt and Staffordshire continues to recover. There remains a need for county councillors to be able to support communities around dealing with these impacts, but with a broad remit so that the funding can be used as it is needed locally. What we are seeing now is a huge variety of projects coming forward across the breadth of our whole community sector and our whole county. Many no longer relate to direct Covid-19 support, but instead are about getting back to the things we want to do, within our new context.

This is why the member fund for 2022/23 financial year, called the 2022 Community Fund, is targeted at an even broader range of criteria. In particular, we saw applications starting to appear through the 2021 Community Fund which related to taking care of the community environment and improving local assets. This has been specifically added as a fund criterion for the 2022 Community Fund, which covers:

1. Community projects about looking after ourselves

For example:

- Projects which will support and enhance personal physical health
- Projects which will support the improvement of wellbeing, resilience and independence

2. Community projects about looking after those around us

For example:

- Projects to connect people in communities to support, or to each other
- Projects to give children and young people the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential
- Projects which will support those who need additional help

3. Community projects about looking after your place

For example:

- Projects which will enhance the places where we live
- Projects which will further develop our community spaces
- Projects that will bring people together to increase community spirit including celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

In future when the timing is right, we will consider the benefits of moving back to a more targeted focus for the funding, but for now it is recognised that there is value in keeping the use of the fund broad for communities to draw on as they need.

Conclusion

The 2021 Community Fund has been a successful part of Staffordshire's communities moving beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, helping them to restart activity and get back to planning for the future. In 2022/23 we are building on that success with a focus on community activity flourishing, with councillors using their fund to help groups and activity across Staffordshire thrive.

County Council – Thursday 21 July 2022

Procurement Regulations – Proposed Addition.

Purpose

To seek Members' approval to a proposed addition to the Procurement Regulations to exempt from their standard tendering/quotation process the engagement of an HR adviser in very specific circumstances; and to recommend to Full Council that the Procurement Regulations be amended accordingly.

Report of the Director for Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer)

Background

1. The Procurement Regulations are included in the County Council's Constitution (Section 14 of the Constitution) and therefore any significant change to those Regulations requires the approval of Full Council.
2. The Procurement Regulations set out clear guidance on the processes to be followed when buying Works, Supplies or Services for the Council. They stipulate when quotations or tenders are required, spending thresholds and approval levels. Those Regulations require that contracts entered into by the County Council comply with the Public Contract Regulations. The following types of Contract are currently exempt from that requirement:
 - Contracts of employment;
 - Contracts relating to interest in land (also known as property) (Procurement Advisor to be consulted)
 - Contracts entered into by schools using delegated budgets as they have their own Regulations to follow;
 - Investment transactions placed by the Director for Corporate Services for treasury management activities;
 - Contracts placed by the Director for Corporate Services investing money or assets of the Staffordshire County Pension Fund;
 - Grants which the Council make Grants should not be used as a Contract for Services;
 - When buying from within the Council;
 - In instances where Officers are buying works of art, museum artefacts, manuscripts or archive collection items;
 - Where instructing external legal advisers in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and as authorised by the Director of Corporate Services

Proposed Additional Exemption

3. I am requesting an update to the Exemptions list to cover circumstances when, for reasons of potential conflict and confidence, external professional/technical support and advice is required in relation to an employment disciplinary matters.
4. This exemption is needed to enable me to follow due process when dealing with any employment disciplinary matter involving HR personnel. To date I have needed to call on the support of Senior officers from service areas sufficiently distanced from the HR function however in some circumstances they have, understandably, not possessed the depth of knowledge and expertise required.

Legal/Risk Implications

5. This report serves to ensure that Staffordshire County Council has access to the necessary advice and expertise the deal with complex employment matters at, sometimes, relatively short notice.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

6. The proposal would involve costs on an as and when basis which are predicted to be infrequent.

Climate Change Implications

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

Contact Details

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E-Mail Address:	Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk

Recommendations to the Council

21 July 2022

Health and Well-being Board – Changes to the Constitution

1. The Council wishes to make changes to the arrangements for chairing the Staffordshire Health and Well-being Board. These take into account that the establishment of the Integrated Care System, that the Clinical Commissioning Groups have been abolished and replaced by the NHS Integrated Care Board, and that Cllr Dr Johnny McMahan and Dr Alison Bradley have recently stood down as co-chairs.
2. The changes are to amend the terms of reference as set out in Section 9 of the constitution as follows:
 - (a) Paragraph 6.3.3.

Membership

Staffordshire County Council (X5)

Cabinet Member for Health & Care

Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Cabinet Support Member for Public Health & Integrated Care

Director of Health and Care (statutory member – DASS plus DPH)

Director of Children’s Services (statutory member)

Integrated Care Board (statutory member) (X2)

Chair or Non-executive

Chief Executive or Director

Healthwatch representative (statutory member) (X1)

Chief Executive

Other organisations

District and Borough Councils representatives (X3)

○ Elected member x2

○ Chief Executive x1

Voluntary sector representatives (X2)

○ Chief Executive of SCYVS

○ Chief Executive of Support Staffordshire

Police representative (X1)

○ Chief Constable or nominee

Fire representative (X1)

○ Chief Fire Officer or nominee

(b) Paragraph 6.3.11. The Health and Wellbeing Board Chair and vice Chair will be selected from the Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Members, and chosen and appointed by the Leader of the Council.

Paragraph 6.3.12. This position does not attract an additional special responsibility allowance.

(c) Throughout - Replace 'Co-chair' with 'Chair'.

(d) The terms of reference will be reviewed as the Integrated Care System develops.

3. **Recommend** – That the proposed changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board's Constitution, as set out in paragraphs 2(a), (b) (c) and (d) above be approved.

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

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

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice, I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on 27 June 2022.

The main items considered were:

Appointment of Chairman - Councillor Bernard Peters was appointed Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman - Councillor Richard Cox was appointed Vice Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) - The following decisions had been published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting:

1. Fire and Rescue - 001 Purchase of Fire applications – enhanced rescue pumps.
2. Police and Crime – 001 Additional capital vehicle funding.

The decision to purchase additional vehicles was not questioned but members asked if there had been an increase in cost due to inflation and if so had this meant that funding had been diverted from other budgets to pay for them? In response, the Commissioner explained that the capital reserve was reasonably strong and had covered the cost. There would be an MTFs update report to the Panel in October which would go into more detail on budgets and reserves.

Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public - The Panel considered the questions ask by members of the public and the Commissioners written response. Neither of the members of the public were able to attend the meeting.

Commissioners Annual Report - Concern was raised firstly that the final version of the Annual report had not been received by the panel until the morning of the meeting and secondly, on the Panels ability to monitor the recent inspection report developments/ progress when the information was not published on the Commissioners web site to enable them to see progress. It was acknowledged that Chief Constables performance and action plans were normally on the website, but this had not been available to view for a number of weeks.

The Commissioner apologised for the lateness of the report. A draft had been emailed to members prior to the meeting but was not on the panels

public website. He explained that performance information would normally be available on his web site, and he would investigate the issue.

The Annual report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic plans. The recent HMICFRS inspections which had highlighted some failings in the system, had been included in the report and performance against improvements was being measured and was being made public through the Performance meetings held with the Chief Constable. [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/public-meetings)

The Commissioner highlighted the following from the report:

- The operating models and transformation programme would be monitored, and results evidenced. Update reports and the next Annual report would show the progress.
- Additional funds had been secured for Safer Streets and Safer Women at Night Funds.
- Clear commitment had been made through funding for Community Safety Partnerships; Victim Support Services; and services to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour; and Hate Crime Services.
- All commissioning arrangements were being reviewed.

The Commissioner thanked the Fire and Rescue and Police Services, his staff and his Deputy for their support over the past months and helping to provide services and to prepare strategies and documents such as the Annual report.

Following the Commissioners presentation and questions from the Panel, the following information was shared with the Panel. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- The Panel wanted to see performance against other Police authorities and Key Performance Indicators available on the Commissioners web site. The Chairman informed the Panel that unfortunately this was not currently available, and this problem needed to be addressed.
- It was hoped that the new Local Policing Model, which went live on the day of this meeting, should help to increase crime prevention as officers would have less distance to travel to attend incidents. It was acknowledged that it may take up to 12 months to gather data to demonstrate effectiveness.
- Following a question on how the effectiveness of the extra funding for Safer streets would be measured, the Commissioner explained that he expected to see an increase in the night economy; an improved feeling of safety and less street crime. The Government collected data on how the funding had been spent and set targets to demonstrate how effective it had been.

- Road Safety was an important issue which affected all areas of the county. The Deputy Commissioner gave a brief update on activities under way to improve car and road safety. Helen Fisher was invited to attend the next meeting to brief the Panel on what work was taking place.
- It was felt that the performance of the Contact Centre remains a priority but didn't seem to be improving. In response, the Commissioner stated that it remained a top priority, but it was taking time to train officers; a new Chief Superintendent experienced in contact services had been appointed; the service had undergone a recent peer review; and other force areas had visited to assist with best practise among other initiatives. Improvement needed to be seen and would be reported to the Chief Constable Performance meetings and would be included in all performance reports to this Panel.
- Thanks were expressed to the Speed Watch team, for all the work they do.
- Communicating with the Commissioner's office via email had been an issue for one member and needed to be addressed.
- The panel felt that the statistics and data in the report were interesting, but they were not set in any context, so it was difficult to know if they were impressive compared to other forces or set against targets. This was comment was acknowledged.

Members of the Panel felt strongly that the public needed to be able to see the effects of the any changes made and information needed to be available on the web site.

The Panel agreed to respond formally to the Annual report including the feedback provided during the meeting, particularly relating to the Commissioners public web pages and information available to the public. The Deputy Commissioner was also invited to the next meeting to give an update on the Safer Roads scheme.

Home Office Grant 2021/22 - The Panel received the annual report which provided information on the Home Office grant allocated to the Host authority which was intended to meet the costs of the administrative support and management services of the panel. The Grant allocation for 2022/23 had not yet been received.

Annual Report on the Handling of Complaints against the Commissioner 2021/22 - The Panel received the annual report which provided information on the number of complaints referred to the panel which relate to the personal conduct of the Commissioner and/or his Deputy.

Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members - Members of the Panel questioned/sought the views of the Commissioner on the following issues and received the responses indicated:

Question	Response
Would strikes by Barristers and or Court staff have an effect of the service?	The Commissioner felt that it would probably increase the backlog of cases waiting to be dealt with.
The Fire and Rescue service carry out inspections of high-rise flats. How was this being monitored to ensure they are taking place.	The results of a recent HMICFRS inspection report was due to be published within the next few weeks and this was one of the things looked at. This information would be included in the Commissioners Performance meetings with the Chief Fire Officer and would be provided to the Panel for information.

Webcast can be found at [Browse meetings - Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel - Staffordshire County Council](#)

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Mandy Pattinson e mail mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

Details of Panel meetings are issued to contact officers in each of the District/Borough Councils in the County and Stoke-on-Trent City Council for posting on their own web sites.

Councillor Bernard Peters, Chairman
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel