

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 13 October 2022 to deal with the matters set out on the agenda.

John Henderson
Chief Executive
5 October 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 21 July 2022** (Pages 5 - 26)

4. **Chairman's Correspondence**

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

5. **Statement of the Leader of the Council** (Pages 27 - 32)

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. **Staffordshire Electoral Review - Council Size Submission** (Pages 33 - 66)

7. **Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel** (Pages 67 - 72)

8. **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

9. **Petitions**

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

10. **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, 10 October 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, 3 October 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 8 December 2022 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 28 November 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 21 July 2022

Attendance:

- Jak Abrahams
- Arshad Afsar
- Charlotte Atkins
- Philip Atkins, OBE
- Tina Clements
- Richard Cox
- Mike Davies
- Janet Eagland
- Ann Edgeller
- Keith Flunder
- Richard Ford
- Colin Greatorex
- Philippa Haden
- Gill Heath
- Phil Hewitt
- Jill Hood
- Derrick Huckfield
- Graham Hutton
- Julia Jessel
- Jason Jones
- Peter Kruskonjic
- Ian Lawson
- Tom Loughbrough-Rudd
- Paul Northcott
- Jeremy Oates
- Gillian Pardesi
- Ian Parry
- Kath Perry, MBE
- Jeremy Pert
- Jonathan Price
- Robert Pritchard
- James Salisbury
- Janice Silvester-Hall
- David Smith
- Paul Snape
- Bob Spencer
- Mike Sutherland
- Mark Sutton
- Stephen Sweeney
- Simon Tagg
- Samantha Thompson
- Carolyn Trowbridge
- Ross Ward

- Jill Waring
- Alan White
- Philip White
- Mike Wilcox
- Conor Wileman
- Ian Wilkes
- Bernard Williams
- David Williams
- Victoria Wilson
- Mark Winnington
- Mike Worthington

Apologies for absence:

- Gill Burnett
- Mark Deaville
- John Francis
- Philip Hudson
- Syed Hussain
- Thomas Jay
- Bernard Peters

Part One

16. Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16

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

Philip White

Minute nos. – 19

Interest – personal

Reason – member of Newcastle under Lyme Town Deal Board

17. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 May 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 19 May 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

18. Chairman's Correspondence

Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman extended congratulations to Catherine Mann, the Council's interim Assistant Director for Culture, Rural and Safer Communities, in being awarded a MBE for her national work

promoting a literate, kinder society, as well as being the head of the county's library service for more than a decade.

The Chairman also informed the Council that other Staffordshire recipients of Honours included:

- OBE for Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal MBE DL, of Brocton, Regional Prevent Coordinator at the Department for Education, for services to social cohesion;
- OBE for Dr David Lawson Jacques, of Stafford, for services to garden history and conservation;
- MBE for Pamela Bostock, of Tamworth, Consultant Occupational Therapist at Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for services to adults with progressive neurological conditions;
- MBE for Glenn Gerald Parkes, of Stoke-on-Trent, for service to the homeless and rough sleepers of Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent;
- MBE for Douglas Robertson Wright DL, of Wood Lane, near Aldridge, for services to the economy and to charity in the West Midlands;
- BEM for Sheila Anne Cooper, of Cheadle, a First Aid trainer and instructor in the Cheadle division of St John Ambulance in Staffordshire;
- BEM for Daniel Mark Kinsey, of Wombourne, Chair of Wombourne Parish Council, for services to the community of Wombourne, particularly during Covid-19.

Honorary Alderman Derek Davis OBE

The Chairman informed the Council of the death, on the evening of Monday 11 July 2022, of former County Councillor Derek Davis. Mr Davis represented the Chadsmoor (Cannock Chase) County Electoral Division on the County Council from 1985 to 2021

Mr Davis served on a number of the Council's Committees including the Pensions Committee, Pensions Panel, Audit and Standards Committee, Staffordshire Health Scrutiny Committee, Corporate Review Committee and the Assets and Budget Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Davis was awarded an OBE in the 2010 for his services to local government and particularly his work as Chairman of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority from 2001 to 2009.

He was also appointed as an Honorary Alderman upon his retirement from the County Council in 2021.

Councillors Sutherland, Charlotte Atkins and Philip Atkins paid tribute to Mr Davis following which Members stood and observed a one minute silence in his memory.

19. 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.

Household Support Fund

(Paragraph 1 of the Statement)

Councillor Sutton informed Members that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had announced an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) Grant which would be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England. Staffordshire was to receive around £5.5m which would be split across three areas of activity to support those most in need this Summer.

Staffordshire Better Care Fund 2021-23

(Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

The Leader of the Council indicated that he wished to amend the paragraph to clarify that the Health and Well-being Board was required to approve the 2022/23 Staffordshire BCF Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Charlotte Atkins concerning the need to more effectively promote the Disabled Facilities Grant, Councillor Jessel indicated that there was variations in spend across the District/Borough Councils, with some Councils underspending. She added that the Leader of the Council was taking this matter forward through the Leaders' Board. Councillor Alan White added that Leaders of the Councils across Staffordshire were doing their utmost to get the money out to where it was needed.

Staffordshire Means Back to Business

(Paragraph 3 of the Statement)

Councillor Philip White outlined how the Council's Staffordshire jobs brokerage scheme "Staffordshire Jobs and Careers", Apprenticeship 500 programme and Ignite initiative were helping people to gain skills and find employment. He also encouraged Members to promote the initiatives.

In response to questions from Councillor Pardesi concerning the "vetting" of businesses taking on apprentices and how outcomes were monitored; how many people participating in the ignite initiative went on to set up their own business; and ensuring that graduates also had opportunities, Councillor Alan White indicated that he did not have the information to hand and would therefore ask the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to respond to her in writing.

Final Financial Outturn Report 2021/22

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Councillor Charlotte Atkins concerning the cost of social care reform and how the Council would meet these costs, Councillor Parry indicated that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 20 July 2022, received details of the latest revenue forecast outturn for Quarter 1 and noted that inflationary pressures were forecast to be in the region of £50-£70m in the current and future years and that the Council continued to monitor the situation carefully. He added that additional funding had been made available to address inflationary pressures and that, like many local authorities, the Council still faced financial challenges, but continued to keep its finances in as strong a position as possible. Councillor Parry and Councillor Alan White also indicated that the Council would continue to lobby Central Government in respect of the National Insurance Levy.

Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Councillor Greatorex spoke about the importance of the Corporate Plan in ensuring that the Council could monitor performance against its targets and remained on course.

Members noted that the Corporate Plan outlined the key priorities across the four directorates and Councillors Sutton, Jessel, Price, and Parry spoke about the priorities for their respective portfolio areas. They also encouraged all Members to read the Corporate Plan.

In response to comments by Councillor Pardesi concerning ambulance waiting times and low income families “not knowing where their next was coming from”, Councillor Alan White suggested that she speaks to Councillor Pert in respect of the work his Overview and Scrutiny Committee was doing with the West Midlands Ambulance Service and also to Councillor Sutton about the Household Support Fund and the Holiday, Activities and Food programme.

Councillor Alan White also expressed his thanks to staff for the calm and level-headed way in which they continued to deliver services across the county.

Digital Connectivity Strategy in Staffordshire

(Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Councillors Winnington, Heath and Philip Atkins spoke about the importance of the Council’s vision for the county to achieve 100% gigabit connectivity access by 2030, particularly for those living and working in rural areas.

Councillor Heath also raised the issue of poor mobile phone connectivity in rural areas.

Councillor Smith also raised the issue of social isolation, particularly through people working from home, and its impact on wellbeing and mental health, and suggested that this matter be discussed at the Leaders' Board. Councillor Greatorex spoke about how digital connectivity could play a positive role in reducing isolation where those persons living alone were able to get on-line and talk to friends and family. He also referred to the need to offer training to people on the use of technology to ensure that they were not "left behind".

Councillor Tagg thanked Members for their comments and indicated that the Council was on course to deliver the strategy which would include the roll-out of 5G which would address mobile phone connectivity in rural areas.

Newcastle Enterprise Centre Extension Scheme

(Paragraph 7 of the Statement)

Councillors Tagg, Sutherland and Huckfield welcomed the proposed extension to Newcastle Enterprise Centre at Knutton and referred to the positive impact it would have on the area. Councillor Philip White added that the extension to the Centre was being funded through the Newcastle Town Deal and also by the County Council.

Mobilisation of Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres

(Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

Councillor Huckfield indicated that he welcomed the Council's decision to bring the county's Household Waste Recycling Centres back in-house. He also spoke about the importance of recycling as part of the efforts to tackle climate change.

In response to a question from Councillor Hood concerning traders being turned away from the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Stone because of capacity issues and what could be done to help local traders, Councillor Tagg indicated that the Council was working with the District and Borough Councils to address cross-boundary issues. Councillor Alan White added that officers were working on a new policy to deal with cross-boundary issues and this would be submitted to the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn.

Staffordshire Sustainability Board – Vision and Council Commitments

(Paragraph 9 of the Statement)

Councillor Wileman expressed his support for the formation of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board and enquired as to why there were no

external organisations such as the NHS or business community representation on the Board and when would the "Vision and council commitments" document be reviewed. In response, Councillor Tagg indicated that the Board was in its infancy and the issue around external partners could be examined once the Board had been "up and running" for a while.

Councillor Smith indicated that the "Vision and council commitments" needed to go further to include self-sustaining services for the county's communities.

Staffordshire Leaders Board

(Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

Councillor Loughborough-Rudd welcomed the establishment of the Staffordshire Leader's Board in June and the benefits it would bring through the county council and the district and borough councils working together more closely to deliver priorities and benefits for all residents and businesses in the county. He also expressed the view that the current two-tier system of local government in the county was the right system for Staffordshire.

Ofsted Focused Inspection

(Paragraph 11 of the Statement)

Councillor Sutton informed Members that the findings of the Ofsted Focused Inspection in respect of the Council's support for vulnerable children were generally positive and that the areas identified where improvements needed to be made were being addressed. He added that he had requested the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine the progress being made in dealing with these issues and he also paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of the Council's social care teams.

Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) programme

(Paragraph 12 of the Statement)

Councillor Pardesi enquired as to whether, partly as a result of the increases in the cost of living, the number of children who needed the Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) programme was increasing and whether the funding available for the programme was keeping up with this increasing need. She also enquired about what support was available for secondary school children. In response, Councillor Sutton indicated that the HAF was available to all those in receipt of free school meals irrespective of age.

Councillor Hood expressed concern that some low income families could not access the programme as they fell short of meeting the criteria due to not being in receipt of Benefits. She also added that these families often could not access the summer play schemes as they could not afford the cost of the activities. In response, Councillor Sutton indicated he would speak to

officers to see if the Programme could be developed further, if the statutory guidance permitted.

Councillor Sutton also paid tribute to the officers who had developed and ran the HAF.

Investment in Staffordshire Roads

(Paragraph 13 of the Statement)

Councillor Price referred to the overnight closures on the M6 motorway and its impact on the residents living along the A34. He also welcomed the proposals for the reconstruction of the A34 which would start in early 2023.

Councillor Hood congratulated the Highways team for the work on the A34 in Stone and welcomed the proposals for the repair of the Walton Roundabout.

Councillor Hutton extended his thanks to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport for the recent improvements in grass cutting in urban areas. Councillor Tagg also welcomed the improvement in grass cutting in Newcastle. Councillor Huckfield added that grass cuttings were not collected and often ended-up in drains and gullies when it rained. He enquired as to whether the grass cuttings could be collected and recycled. In response, Councillor David Williams indicated that collecting grass cuttings would substantially increase costs.

Councillor Perry extended her thanks to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport for the investment being made in the highway network in her division.

Councillor Trowbridge referred to the need for maintenance works along the A449 in Stafford.

In response to comments from Councillor Philip Atkins concerning new technology in highway maintenance, Councillor David Williams and Councillor Alan White indicated the Council was investigating new technologies and innovations including JCBs "Pot Hole Pro". Councillor White added that the Council's proposed investment in its highway network this year was £67m.

Commonwealth Games

(Paragraph 14 of the Statement)

Councillors Loughborough-Rudd, Oates, McMahon, Trowbridge, Cox, Greatorex, Sweeney, Sutherland and Wilson paid tribute to the baton bearers for the contributions they had made to their local communities and they also highlighted some of the local events which were planned or had taken place in their respective areas as part of the lead-up to the games. Members also wished the athletes taking part in the Games the best of luck.

Councillor McMahon also spoke about the need to capture the legacy arising from the Games and that the Leaders' Board could play a role in this.

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

20. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022

Councillor Greatorex moved consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021 – 2022.

Councillor Greatorex outlined the vital role played by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and how there had been a return to the norm following the Covid pandemic. He also extended his thanks to the Members of the Council's Cabinet for engaging in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Councillors Greatorex, Clements, Spencer and Pert outlined some of the work their Committees had undertaken over the year including a joint review on sexual harassment in schools. They also expressed thanks to their fellow Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Scrutiny Officers and also to the other officers who supported them.

Councillor Tagg expressed his thanks to the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work in relation to the issues at Walley's Quarry. Councillor Alan White also paid tribute to the diligent work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and highlighted the valuable contribution they made to the work of the Council. He also asked the Committees to continue their good work.

Resolved – That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021 - 2022 be received.

21. Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021-22

Councillor Sutton moved consideration of the Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2021-22.

He informed Members that the way the Panel operated had changed so that it became more interactive and listened more to the views of the young people. He also extended his thanks to his fellow Panel Members and also to the officers who supported them.

Councillor Edgeller referred to how support for children in care had changed over the last decade and she, together with Councillor Hood, extended their thanks to Councillor Sutton for his dedication and leadership.

Councillor Sutton thanked Members for their comments and also paid tribute to the county's Foster Carers.

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

22. 2021 Community Fund - 2021/22 Report and Next Steps

Councillor Wilson indicated that around 160 different organisations across the County had been helped during the year with Covid recovery related projects.

Councillors Clements and Cox outlined projects which had been supported in their respective areas and how Members had worked together to pool their funding.

Councillor Alan White paid tribute to Members for the hard work they undertook in their respective divisions.

Resolved – That the report be received.

23. Recommendations to the Council

(a) Procurement Regulations - Proposed Addition

The Council's approval was sought 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.

Members were informed that the exemption was needed to enable the Council's Director for Corporate Services to follow due process when dealing with any employment disciplinary matter involving HR personnel. To date the Director had needed to call on the support of Senior officers from service areas sufficiently distanced from the HR function however, in some circumstances they had, understandably, not possessed the depth of knowledge and expertise required.

Resolved – That the proposed addition to the Procurement Regulations to exempt from their standard tendering/quotation process the engagement of an HR adviser in very specific circumstances be agreed and that the Procurement Regulations be amended accordingly.

(b) Health and Wellbeing Board - Changes to the Constitution

The Council's approval was sought to make changes to the arrangements for chairing the Staffordshire Health and Well-being Board. The proposed revised arrangements took into account the establishment of the Integrated Care System, that the Clinical Commissioning Groups had been abolished and

replaced by the NHS Integrated Care Board, and that Councillor Dr Johnny McMahan and Dr Alison Bradley had recently stood down as co-chairs.

Resolved - That the proposed changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board's Constitution, as set out in paragraphs 2(a), (b) (c) and (d) of the report, be approved.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Charlotte Atkins regarding Staffordshire Police being placed in Special Measures by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Councillor Cox indicated that the Panel was aware of the issues and would hold the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to account to ensure that the areas of concern were addressed.

Resolved – That the report be received.

25. Questions

Councillor Pritchard asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

Yesterday Tamworth hosted the Queens Baton Relay, with the baton ending its journey through Tamworth at a huge festival of sport and music in the town centre. Tamworth has also secured another honour, being the only Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Festival Site in Staffordshire. Over the next three weeks Tamworth will be showing Live footage of the games in the Castle Grounds, as well as putting on be a three-week summer festival of sports, entertainment, concerts and community events.

Will the Leader of the Council join me in congratulating Tamworth, and all those officers and volunteers, who have worked so hard in securing this amazing event?

Reply

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) congratulates all eight districts and boroughs for their involvement and co-ordination of events for The Queen's Baton Relay. SCC recognises the commitment made by Tamworth District Council to offer the Commonwealth Games Festival Site providing live footage of the games over the coming weeks of sport.

SCC has been committed to supporting all the districts with their plans for The Queen's Baton Relay. Co-ordinating a county-wide group to discuss and co-ordinate the events, offering support from relevant teams to ensure the events could be delivered efficiently, safely and were well promoted to Staffordshire residents. Comms have been actively involved in sharing the social media posts (on all platforms available) from all district councils. All the activities, routes and events were and will continue to be (where applicable) communicated via a dedicated webpage on SCC's website to ensure Staffordshire residents would know how and when to get involved with The Queen's Baton Relay and Commonwealth Games in the County.

SCC look forward to the start of the Commonwealth Games on 28 July and in particular the two events that will take place within our county: the Mountain Bike event which will be held on Cannock Chase on 3 August and the Cycling Time Trial on 4 August in South Staffordshire.

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

Question

Tamworth is in a unique situation being almost completely urban and without many rural roads, this means almost all roads have kerb stones.

Each year we see weeds growing up to 2ft high in these kerbs, not only are they unsightly but their roots will be creating gaps in between kerb stones and slabs which will fill with water then freeze and then become an expensive pothole or broken kerb stone/slab. These are our assets to maintain, so could the portfolio holder look to support more weed suppression in urban areas particularly Tamworth, in order to reduce future highways repair costs?

Reply

As part of the new vision and investment in highways we will be reviewing services that both improve the condition of our road network and have environmental benefits for our communities throughout Staffordshire.

Current weed control operations are undertaken to mitigate any structural damage to the highway infrastructure and improve visibility at key locations. However, there are number of factors that limit the effectiveness of this routine maintenance service.

To meet previous MTFS savings, the frequency of weed treatment was reduced to just once each growing season. Added to this, the chemicals used are environmentally regulated and the treatment is only effective on

growing plants. This effectiveness can also be reduced if it rains after treatment.

Several alternative treatment methods do exist, some being more expensive and less effective at killing the weed at source. However, we are currently investigating new technologies, their cost to benefit ratios and what schemes can be employed to support our climate emergency ambitions.

However, a particularly useful method of weed prevention is through regular road sweeping activity. Therefore, part of any future weed treatment solution will include looking for support from local councils to maintain, and in some cases possibly increase, the amount of local road sweeping activity.

Councillor Clements asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

Please can the Cabinet Member please tell me the costs to repair pavements specifically in Tamworth where people use them to park inconsiderately and make them unsafe for pedestrians and those with disabilities?

Reply

Parking on the footway can obstruct and seriously inconvenience pedestrians, people in wheelchairs or with visual impairments and people with prams or pushchairs.

Rule 244 of the Highway Code clearly states that drivers must not park partially or wholly on the pavement in London and should not elsewhere unless signs permit it.

In 2020, the Department for Transport carried out a consultation on managing pavement parking which outlined options to tackle pavement parking at a local authority or national level which included three options; improving the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, under which local authorities can already prohibit pavement parking; a legislative change to allow local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers to enforce against 'unnecessary obstruction of the pavement'; or a legislative change to introduce a London-style pavement parking prohibition throughout England.

The consultation closed in November 2020 and as of July 2022, the Department for Transport advice on the consultation page is that the feedback is being analysed.

Currently, if there are no parking restrictions and vehicles are parked in contravention of the rules of the Highway Code the matter can be reported to the police who have access to powers enabling them to identify vehicle owners and issue on the spot fines if necessary.

We repaired around 2,300 footway defects across the county in the past year at a cost of around quarter of a million pounds. However, but we don't collect the cause of defects so it's not possible to say how many of these were as a result of footway parking as opposed to other general ageing and deterioration.

Councillor Jay asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

Tamworth has recently seen some large and disruptive traveller encampments. Residents are concerned about the mess caused to open spaces and parks, as well as the anti-social behaviour that can take place while camps are there. There is also the not insignificant cost associated with cleaning the County Council owned space after the travellers have left. What is the County Council doing to ensure its open spaces in Tamworth are secured against encroachment by unauthorised travellers?

Reply

There has been very little impact on property under the control of the County Council in Tamworth. Since the beginning of 2021 there has only been one report of travellers, but they had moved on by the following day.

The vast majority of council owned open space in Tamworth is school land where access is controlled, whilst there is some highway land this is operational highway in all but one location. There is no county council-controlled park land.

Countywide, the majority of traveller encampments affecting council-controlled properties are on either country parks or highway. We are not generally allowed to restrict access to these areas; where we are able to do so, we balance legitimate access needs to the risk of encampments.

Councillor Ford asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

Sitting in the south-east of the county, Tamworth shares a significant length of border with Warwickshire. Given that political boundaries mean very little to most residents, what guidance can be given to ensure that cross-border issues are resolved in a satisfactory and timely manner?

Reply

The county council has a strong track record of working with partners regionally and nationally to deliver against our ambitions. We proactively engage in a range of regional strategic partnerships such as Midlands Connect and the Midlands Engine to support the delivery of our priorities. We also engage in a range of local government networks, such as the County Council Network and Local Government Association, that provide opportunities to continue to build strong strategic relationships with our neighbouring authorities and beyond.

At a service level, we have a range of different mechanisms and arrangements in place to address cross-border issues. A few examples include:

- The School Organisation Team works closely with all neighbouring authorities on school place planning matters. Recently the Team have worked to secure additional school places to mitigate the impact of proposed residential developments on the border.
- The Highways Team maintains good working relationships with all neighbouring councils. Staffordshire County Council is a founder member of the Midlands Highway Alliance Plus, 35 local highway authorities working together to share learning, best practice, and closer collaboration.
- Within Adult Social Care there are a range of operational arrangements in place to support cross-border arrangements, for example Staffordshire residents accessing social care services, such as a care home in another local authority area.
- In my own portfolio, we have some significant examples of cross border working. Warwickshire and Staffordshire Library colleagues regularly share best practice and initiatives such as the Community Managed Library Model, with volunteers from both areas sharing their experiences and learning.

We fully appreciate that residents do not recognise boundaries in terms of accessing public services, and we work well with our neighbouring authorities. Staffordshire County Council is committed to working with all relevant partners to deliver the best possible outcomes for Staffordshire.

Councillor Edgeller asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

The A34 in the South East Division is not mentioned in the extra funding that has been allocated to the County Council, I refer to the £3 plus million.

My concern is the state of the A34 leading into Stafford which is a major commuter Gateway into the town from the south. It is also a major principal road when an accident occurs between junctions 12 and 13 on the M6. This means this road is then subject to very heavy motorway diverted traffic on top of the existing traffic.

The Radford Bank Islands are currently in a dreadful state and a danger especially to cyclist and motorbikes. From the Radford Public House to the Queensville Island also needs immediate attention. I have raised this issue many many times previously and is still waiting for attention.

I might add also along the A34 Cannock Rd needs to be a 30 miles an hour area to the bottom of Holdcroft Rd.

When are we going to see some action on the above questions please?

Reply

A top priority for the county council is to fix more roads, which is why during 22/23 the council is investing an extra £15M in capital maintenance schemes and operations.

However, with many locations needing attention and government grant funding for highway maintenance reducing it is vital that we leave no stone unturned when it comes to identifying every other potential sources of funding opportunity.

Earlier this year the government announced a second round of its Levelling Up Fund (LUF2), inviting bids of up to £20M to achieve the Levelling up White Paper Missions, including Transport Infrastructure, Living Standards, Skills, Health, Well-being, and Pride in Place.

Many sections of the A34 through Stafford, which is part of the national Major Road Network (MRN), are key to the LUF2 aims locally and so are included in Staffordshire's bid. If successful, major structural maintenance works and sustainable transport improvements along this route will be carried out during 2023/24 and 2024/25.

To compliment the council's LUF2 bid and maximise the benefit of all the potential funding available the council's own investment during 22/23 is being targeted to other major key gateway locations across the county.

Supplementary Question

Is there any way that the work on the A34 can be brought forward please?

Reply

We will endeavour to look into it.

Councillor Pardesi asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Care whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

Residents are continually telling me they no longer even bother trying to get a GP appointment. They just go straight to A and E. With people also dying waiting for ambulances, what is the County Council doing to hold the local NHS to account for its failures during what has become a dangerous health service crisis?

Reply

It has been clear for a long time that the NHS, including access to GPs, is under considerable pressure. Demand is rising and the NHS is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff. This was evident before Covid and has been exacerbated by the pandemic. We have seen 'Major Incidents' called several times by the County's acute trusts over the past twelve months such has been the pressures on the system. It is important that we all work together to try and support the NHS to manage these pressures in an effective way.

Our Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding the NHS to account and includes colleagues from County as well as District and Borough councils. The Committee regularly calls on the NHS to provide assurance that their services are operating to the standards we expect.

The Committee scrutinised management of NHS pressures in December 2021 and access to GPs in July and December 2021 – and the webcast is available on the Council's website. The Committee's work programme for 2022/23 outlines planned scrutiny of the NHS – and the September meeting includes a further agenda item to scrutinise how system pressures will be managed. I would also draw attention to the Scrutiny

Annual Report 2021/22 (which forms part of today's Council agenda), whereby reference is given to the ongoing scrutiny of GP access.

Supplementary Question

Why is it, considering that this is a life and death situation, that I do not have an answer which says "you're quite right, we need to drop everything and sort this out and treat it like the emergency it is?"

Reply

As the response sets out quite clearly, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the role of holding the health care services to account; it is not a Cabinet Member role. However, I would add that, at the meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 July, Members considered a Primary Care GP Access plan update report which considered the key drivers regarding GP access in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. They also considered a report about the Integrated Care Board and System where members highlighted pressures, patient flow through hospitals and the need to scrutinise pressures across the whole system. Both reports, and the webcast, can be viewed on Mod.Gov. I can assure Councillor Pardesi that Councillor Pert and his Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly and thoroughly hold key members of the NHS to account.

Councillor Charlotte Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) whose reply is set out below the question:

Question

In the light of Ofsted's judgement that Leek High School is inadequate and requires special measures, what support will the County Council be offering the school? What are the wider implications for education within Leek of this Ofsted verdict?

Reply

Leek High School is part of The Talentum Learning Trust which is a Leek based academy trust. The local authority wants all children to receive the best education possible and wants all Staffordshire schools to be judged at least good. Where an academy school is judged as inadequate, it is the Regional Director (previously known as the Regional Schools Commissioner) who will make the decision about the future of the school. The WM Regional Director has issued a Termination Warning Notice to the academy trust. The trust are required to provide written evidence to demonstrate their capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the academy. If the Regional Director is not satisfied that this can be

achieved, he will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the academy to an alternative academy trust.

The LA continues to meet regularly with officers from the DfE regions group' office of the Regional Director to discuss schools and academies that are causing concern. Leek High School and The Talentum Learning Trust are part of these discussions. As a decision about Leek High School are made, the LA will want to ensure this does not impact negatively on education offer across Leek.

The local authority still has a statutory responsibility for safeguarding children and young people. As soon as the LA was aware of the safeguarding concerns raised within the report, contact was made with the Academy Trust and support offered. The LA education safeguarding lead has since visited the school to undertake a robust safeguarding audit and supported in the drafting of an action plan to address safeguarding issues. The safeguarding lead has arranged to revisit the school to review the impact of actions taken.

Supplementary Question

I hope that the Community will be fully involved in any discussions about the future of the school and any implications arising therefrom? I thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about my views.

Reply

Obviously, I am aware of the issues that are ongoing in Leek and there is also an alternative provision on site as well which is doing some really good work. I have offered to meet with yourself to discuss the wider issues and I shall set that meeting up as soon as possible.

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

Question

As a councillor, I often get disparaging remarks about Burton's road conditions, such as "potholes are so awful in Burton it's like driving over "craters on the moon." What can the cabinet member do to enhance Burton's roads?

Reply

Staffordshire's huge road network is vital for keeping our county connected and its residents and businesses on the move.

This year we are investing over £50 million in a range of major projects, vital local improvements, and general road maintenance, including an additional £15.5M funded directly by the County Council to fix more roads.

In Burton specifically over the last two years we've invested over £2M in mix of structural maintenance, surface treatments and reactive repairs to potholes.

And subject to confirmation of future funding we plan to invest a further £1M on preventative treatments between this year and 2024 and have identified a £4.1M of other high priority structural maintenance needs.

We recognise that there is always more to be done and we continue to lobby central Government for the money necessary to keep Staffordshire's roads in the condition we expect and is needed to ensure local communities and businesses are able to see the benefits of an improved highway network.

One example is within our LUF2 we are bidding for £6m to invest in improvements at Burton's southern intersection with the A38(T) and the connecting links on the A5121. The scheme includes carriageway maintenance, carriageway widening through the junction and on the approaches, new traffic signal controllers and improvements at the adjacent B5018/A5121 junction.

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

Question

What remedies will the council consider in response to the anticipated decrease in quality and quantity of school meals owing to inflation?

Reply

Individual schools and academy trusts are responsible for procuring their school meals. The government has set school food standards which are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they have the energy and nutrition they need to get the most from their whole school day.

When agreeing a contract, school leaders should ensure the contract specification includes the School Food Standards, Professional Standards, food quality and lunchtime experience.

Through the joint venture company Entrust, many schools have a schools meal contract with 'Chartwells'. This contract does include an expectation that the school food standards will be delivered.

Across the country school meal providers will be facing the same challenges. It is for schools to ensure that standards are maintained.

26. Petitions

Management of HGVs on Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle

Councillor Tagg submitted a petition from local residents seeking the introduction of measures to manage HGVs on Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle.

Chairman

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Staffordshire Means Back to Business – Oral Update

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:

- Increases in fuel and energy prices were continuing to present a number of challenges to the local economy and, working with our Districts and Boroughs and other partners, the Councils’ continued support for businesses locally.
- The continuation of the Council’s Staffordshire Means Business programme which had delivered assistance to hundreds of Staffordshire businesses and supported the creation of 400 new Apprenticeships.
- Proposals for the Council’s new Start Up and Step-Up Business support package aimed at helping those wanting to start and grow their own business which has a strong focus on making those businesses resilient.
- Staffordshire’s Universal Credit figures which showed that the claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 200 claimants between July and August 2022, although the claimant rate remained at 2.7% of the working age population.
- The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that were claiming work-related Universal Credit currently stands at 4.0%, an increase of 120 young people.
- Despite these increases in the claimant count, during the same period, Staffordshire saw a 5% rise in job vacancies equivalent to just over 900 more job vacancies to a total of over 20,200, which is more than work related benefit claimants.
- The role of the Council’s new Job Brokerage Service to match those seeking work with the jobs Staffordshire businesses are so successful in creating.
- The agreement of terms with the Harworth Group, using County Council funding together with funding from Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council, through its Town Deal, to enable the development of the Chatterley Valley business park site.
- The new Pets at Home HQ in Stafford was nearing completion (which will generate over 800 jobs); and the exceptionally strong interest in the Council’s serviced employment land at i54.

(Cabinet – 21 September 2022)

2. Approval of Staffordshire County Council’s Community Learning Procurement Arrangements 2023 to 2027

The Community Learning Service delivers non-accredited community learning and accredited Adult Skills provision. The provision contributes to the Councils strategic priorities for economic growth and health and wellbeing. Provision is focused on meeting priority needs in Staffordshire and engages with approximately 3,000 learners each year. The Service supports and develops individuals and groups for whom formal learning may have been a barrier in the past and works with them to build confidence and realise their true potential in a competitive world. The curriculum offer establishes learning pathways to help residents develop wellbeing and confidence, and core skills such as English, maths and digital, together with opportunities to upskill and retrain in vocational areas to support their career ambitions and family aspirations.

The current Community Learning Framework Agreement is due to expire on 31 July 2023 and Cabinet have therefore approved proposals to conduct an Open tender process in line with Staffordshire County Council's Procurement Regulations and the Public Contract Regulation to put in place a Community Learning Framework, to secure a four-year Framework Agreement (2023-2027) between the appointed sub-contractors and the Council, to supply Services on an annual call-off basis.

(Cabinet – 20 July 2022)

3. Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 1, 2022/23

The Cabinet have received an update on Quarter 1 activities for each service area: Health and Care; Families and Communities; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; and Corporate Services. They noted that significant progress had been made across the organisation during Quarter 1, however inflationary pressures across the organisation were having a significant impact. In addition, workforce capacity and recruitment, and demand challenges remained, particularly within Health and Care and Families and Communities. There also continued to be areas of financial risk in Adult Social Care and Families and Communities.

The latest revenue forecast outturn showed an overspend of £14.693m (2.76%). Following the allocation of one-off funding this reduced to an overspend of £3.643m (0.61%). Inflationary pressures were forecast to be in the region of £50-70m in the current and future years and the situation was being monitored carefully and would be updated in future quarterly reports.

The Cabinet have approved the allocation of £6m from the Contingency budget to mitigate the pressures in Children's Services and the allocation of £5.050m from the inflation reserve to mitigate pressures caused by increasing prices. They have also agreed that, further to the investment in Highways agreed in February as part of the MTFS, an additional £1m be

allocated to the service on an ongoing basis, to be funded from interest earned.

(Cabinet – 20 July 2022)

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

The Cabinet have received details of the Council's investment and borrowing activity during 2021/22 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time. They noted that the Council's treasury management activities were carried out prudently during the year and the policy of funding new borrowing from internal cash balances continued to generate significant savings.

As well as being prudent, the County Council's low-risk investment strategy, which focused on lending to low-risk institutions and the need for liquidity and diversification, had ensured the Council had been strategically placed to deal with market challenges arising from global events such as the Covid 19 pandemic.

(Cabinet – 20 July 2022)

5. Review of the Agreement for the provision of Adult Social Care Assessment and Case Management and Occupational Therapy in Staffordshire

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT), and its progenitor organisations South Staffordshire and Shropshire Foundation NHS Trust and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust, have provided an assessment and case management and occupational therapy services for older people and people with physical disabilities on behalf of the Council since 2012, and for people living with mental health conditions in South Staffordshire since 2009.

The Council's current Section 75 Agreement for these services commenced on 1 April 2020, for three years, with the option to extend for a further two years.

The Cabinet have agreed that the Council should extend the current Section 75 Agreement with MPFT to 31 March 2025.

(Cabinet – 21 September 2022)

6. Contract for the Supply of Electricity and Associated Services (Call off from YPO Framework 791)

Current Energy market trading conditions are extremely volatile, prices have already increased by around 300 – 400% and there is no noticeable trend for this ceasing or reducing.

The Cabinet have given approval for the procurement direction and award for the time period 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2027 for the Electricity and Associated Services contract, by utilising the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation energy framework and their flexible purchasing model to gain the best value for the purchase of electricity, from the supplier Npower Business Solutions.

(Cabinet – 21 September 2022)

7. Multiply - National Numeracy programme

The £570m Multiply Programme aims to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population across the UK. Local Authorities have the flexibility to determine what provision is needed to deliver high quality, innovative numeracy interventions that meet the needs of local people and the national aims of Multiply.

The Council has undertaken constructive engagement with local partners, including public, private and third sector organisations. There has been a positive response with a range of local organisations submitting expressions of interests and engaging in an open and competitive application process.

The Cabinet have given delegated authority to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills, in consultation, with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, to mobilise the Multiply project, with provision to formally commence in October 2022.

(Cabinet – 21 September 2022)

8. Staying Well

As the lead on public health, we want to do everything we can to encourage people to take steps to look after their health. During this month for example, we are supporting people to quit smoking as part of Stoptober.

Getting the flu jab and covid booster as soon as you are eligible is another good way to help protect both yourself and the more vulnerable in our communities this winter.

9. Enhanced Homecare Service

Supporting people to stay well, but also to stay independent for as long as possible, not only eases the pressures on the council and the NHS in the

long run, but is also better for people too. That's why we are always looking at new ways to encourage and foster independence.

The Enhanced Homecare Service is just one example of this. The aim is to create a preventative service that helps people at risk from being admitted to hospital or a care home by offering them reablement support. The team will also offer extra care for those with more complex needs.

In Staffordshire, we are committed to shaping care not only to provide the right support where it is needed, but to attract and retain the right staff. So, if anyone is thinking about working in care, then there has never been a better time to join us in making a real difference to people's lives

10. Hearing Aid Rule Changes

It is important to this council that everyone has fair and equal access to the support they need, wherever they live in this county.

For many years this has not been the case in the north of the county, when it came to the eligibility for hearing aids. I was therefore delighted when the newly formed Integrated Care Board agreed to offer hearing aids to all people with mild hearing loss, rather than just some.

I know our own health scrutiny committee has fought hard to achieve this result and will now be working closely with the ICB to ensure the implementation of this fairer policy.

11. War in Ukraine

It has now been more than 250 days since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the human cost has been huge.

In Staffordshire, we have a proud history of welcoming those fleeing persecution and war.

It will have surprised none of us therefore, that families across Staffordshire have opened their hearts and their homes to people from Ukraine.

We now have around 400 sponsors and we are hugely grateful to the people of Staffordshire for offering their help and support.

This hasn't been without some difficulties and challenges of course, but the response from our own team and our partners in managing this has been a credit to the way in which we in Staffordshire work together well.

12. Cost of Living

The current cost of living pressures is one subject which is never out of the news headlines these days and, as a county council, we are acutely aware of the difficulties many families are facing, especially as we head into winter.

Our Household Support Fund has been key to directly helping those on low incomes, including offering shopping vouchers to eligible pensioners who receive a council tax reduction.

We have also launched our Here to Help Campaign to make it easier for people to access support and advice which may help them or someone they know.

This includes checking benefit help, advice for saving money, tips on keeping warm and staying well this winter. So please do share details which can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/heretohelp

Local Members Interest
N/A

County Council – Thursday 13 October 2022

Staffordshire Electoral Review - Council Size Submission

Recommendations of the Leader of the Council

I recommend that County Council:

- a) Agree to the proposals within the Council Size Submission that the County Council:
 - i) Retains the current council size of 62 Elected Members
 - ii) Requests a single member per division review

- b) Agree that the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services be authorised to finalise the details of the Council Size Submission prior to submitting to the Boundary Commission

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services

Background

1. In March 2022, the Local Government Boundary Commission initiated an Electoral Review of Staffordshire. The rationale for undertaking an Electoral Review is both due to our changing population which has led to electoral inequality, and the length of time since our last review.
2. The last Electoral Review was undertaken between 2010-12 and resulted in Staffordshire maintaining the existing council size of 62 Members, with division boundaries being altered to address voter inequality and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.
3. There are two key stages to an Electoral Review:
 - a) Stage 1 – which considers the Council Size
 - b) Stage 2 – which considers division arrangements
4. Stage 1 commenced in June 2022. The County Council is required to submit its Council Size submission to the Boundary Commission by 11 November 2022.

5. Stage 2 will commence in January 2023, when the Boundary Commission publishes its in-principle decision on council size. There will then be a 12-week consultation period for any interested organisation or individual to submit their proposals for division arrangements.
6. It is expected that the Commission will publish its final division arrangements recommendations in November 2023. The new division arrangements will be elected to in 2025.

Developing our Council Size Submission

7. Even though this is a County Council Electoral Review, we are dependent on a significant amount of information from Staffordshire Districts and Boroughs to inform both our Council Size Submission and the Review in general, for example electoral registers. We have been working closely with our District and Borough colleagues since June 2022 to gain access to the required data and information, and to work with them to review and quality assure the information.
8. A cross-organisation Project Team has been established to oversee the County Council's input into the Electoral Review, with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services as the SLT lead. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee are providing scrutiny and oversight to the Electoral Review process.
9. The Boundary Commission consider three key aspects when considering Council Size:
 - a) Strategic Leadership – how many Elected Members are required to give strategic leadership and direction to the authority?
 - b) Accountability – how many Elected Members are required to provide scrutiny to the authority? How many Elected Members are required to meet the regulatory requirements of the authority?
 - c) Community Leadership – how the representation role of Elected members in the local community is discharged and how they engage with people and conduct casework.
10. The Boundary Commission recognise that there is considerable variation in council size across England, not only between different types of authority, but also between authorities of the same type. As such they aim to recommend a council size which is appropriate for the individual local authority.

Electoral Forecasts

11. A key element of the Review is considering how the electorate is likely to change over the coming years. As such electoral forecasts up to 2028 have been produced for all polling districts, existing divisions and District and Boroughs.
12. The recommended Boundary Commission methodology has been used to calculate the electoral forecasts. This methodology reviews electorate figures for the past 3 years and then uses Office for National Statistics population data and forecasts to project forward electorate numbers. This produces a standard forecast; an adjustment is then made to reflect confirmed housing developments that will impact the electorate in particular areas between 2022 and 2028. This then produces a final electorate forecast for 2028.
13. The table below summaries the current 2022 electorate by District/Borough and how the electorate is projected to change by 2028. Appendix 2 presents summarised data for all existing divisions.

District	2022 Electorate	Electorate per Member	Variance from Staffs Average	Projected 2028 Electorate	Electorate per Member	Variance from Staffs Average	Electorate Increase
Cannock Chase	76,335	10,905	1.5%	82,339	11,763	0.2%	6,004
East Staffordshire	89,636	11,205	4.3%	102,913	12,864	9.5%	13,277
Lichfield	83,085	10,386	-3.3%	93,799	11,725	-0.2%	10,714
Newcastle	91,985	10,221	-4.9%	99,288	11,032	-6.1%	7,303
South Staffordshire	85,060	10,633	-1.0%	89,601	11,200	-4.6%	4,541
Stafford	103,538	11,504	7.1%	113,659	12,629	7.5%	10,121
Staffordshire Moorlands	77,104	11,015	2.5%	82,950	11,850	0.9%	5,846
Tamworth	59,280	9,880	-8.0%	63,583	10,597	-9.8%	4,303
Staffordshire	666,023	10,742	0.0%	728,132	11,744	0.0%	62,109

Council Size Submission - Summary

14. The draft Council Size Submission is attached as Appendix 1. This uses the Boundary Commission's preferred template and pulls together key evidence to support the proposed council size.
15. The Submission proposes that the County Council:
- Retains the current council size of 62 Elected Members
 - Requests a single Member per division review
16. The evidence outlined in the Submission demonstrates that the current council size of 62 Elected Members supports the Council to efficiently and effectively undertake the three key aspects outlined in paragraph 9.

17. The County Council's current electoral arrangements include two Divisions with two Elected Members. The Submission outlines that these arrangements do not provide the most efficient conditions for community representation. Representing a larger electorate presents difficulties, and it is acknowledged that it can be difficult to split casework, and for electors to easily identify who 'their Councillor' is.
18. As such, it is proposed that that County Council requests a single member per division review. However, it should be noted that single member divisions may not be achievable. The same request was made in 2010, however two dual divisions remained.
19. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Council Submission on 13 September 2022. The Committee agreed with the proposals within the Submission and feedback from the Committee has been incorporated into the Submission document.
20. Cabinet considered the draft Council Size Submission on 21st September and have approved the Council Size proposals.

Stage 2 - Division Arrangements

21. Once the County Council has submitted its Council Size Submission on 11 November, the Boundary Commission will then have five weeks to review the submission and decide on an in-principle council size. We expect the Boundary Commission to announce this on 10 January 2023.
22. The County Council, and other interested parties including members of the public, have 12 weeks to submit their initial proposals for new division arrangements. These proposals will need to include where the boundaries lie between divisions, the number of Members for each division, and the names of divisions.
23. In formulating our division proposals, we will need to consider the Boundary Commission's three main criteria for considering new patterns of electoral divisions:
 - a) Electoral equality
 - b) Community interests and identities
 - c) Promotion of effective and convenient local government
24. Our division proposals need to be submitted to the Boundary Commission by 20 March 2023. The Commission will then have a further 12 weeks to analyse all the representations made and produce their draft recommendations. We expect their draft recommendations

to be published on 27 June 2023. The Council will then have eight weeks to respond to the draft recommendations, prior to final recommendations being produced in November 2023.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Council Size Submission

Appendix 2 – Electoral Forecast Division Summary

Contact Details

Assistant Director: Kerry Dove
Assistant Director for Strategy and Transformation

Report Author: Katie Marshall
Job Title: Senior Change Manager – Electoral Review
Telephone No.: 07773791631
E-Mail Address: katie.marshall@staffordshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire County Council

Council Size Submission: Template

[Staffordshire County Council

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How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e., those that are most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual.

This submission is made by Staffordshire County Council and is due to be approved and signed off by Full Council on 13th October 2022

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

N/A

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

In 2002 Staffordshire County Council adopted a Strong Leader Cabinet Model, the Council's "Executive" for the purpose of the Local Government Act 2000. These arrangements are reflected in the Constitution. Since that time, we have continued to refine our governance arrangements to ensure that our arrangements are effective. Over the past 22 years we have regularly reviewed that structure: the Cabinet Portfolios and the remits of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to best reflect our vision and strategy. We demonstrate the commitment to Overview and Scrutiny by having a dedicated support to help non-executive members develop expertise in policy making and service provision.

Due to the nature and success of our governance and decision making, no petition for change has ever been proposed, demonstrating the confidence in which the community, businesses and public sector partners have in us.

Staffordshire recently had an Internal Audit Report on Delivering Good Governance - Corporate Decision-Making Arrangements. The purpose of the audit was to review compliance with the Council's corporate decision-making arrangements. The audit reviewed both Key Decisions taken by Cabinet and Delegated Decisions taken by Cabinet Members and Executive Officers. In addition, the audit reviewed processes in place for the appropriate completion of Community Impact Assessments (CIAs). Internal Audit were able to offer substantial assurance as the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Internal controls were in place and operating effectively and risks against the achievement of objectives were well managed.

Given the impact that our strong and consistent decision making has on our effectiveness, our proposal is that we retain 62 Elected Members, we believe that this will allow the Council to remain effective, and for Councillors to be able to deliver the three aspects to their role – strategic leadership, accountability, and community leadership.

If we were to reduce our council size, there would be a significant negative impact on our decision-making process and Members would not be able to effectively represent their communities due to having to attend more meetings and prepare for them. Our current size of 62 allows for an even distribution of meeting attendance, and good community representation. If we were to increase our council size, there are risks that this could cause additional challenges to our decision-making processes and greater inefficiencies.

The Council elects a Leader for a four-year term who then appoints Members to form a Cabinet. Under the Constitution the Cabinet may consist of up to 10 members, including a Leader and Deputy Leader. The 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 the County Council's Directorates and reflect the priorities in the Strategic Plan.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics, and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant, or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues, or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload, and community engagement?

Staffordshire is large, predominately rural county, with several urban centres, located in the centre of the UK. Whilst 80% of the County is classified as rural, 75% of our population live in towns and large villages. The County covers an area of 1,012sqm (2,623KM²) and has

an estimated population of 876,100 people and it is estimated that the population will rise to approximately 912,500 people by 2028. Overall, the County is relatively affluent, however there are pockets of multiple deprivation, particularly in some of our towns, including Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent (East Staffordshire), Newcastle-under-Lyme and Cannock.

Recent data from the 2021 Census shows that the trend of population ageing continues across the county, with the highest population growth among older adults. Those aged 65+ increased by 24% from 2011 to 2021, from just under 157,000 to just over 194,000 respectively, whilst the ratio of working age adults to pension age adults has declined considerably between 2011 and 2021; from 3.2 to 1 in 2011 to 2.6 to 1 in 2021. Additionally, the number of children and young people (0-19) decreased by 4%, with a particular decline of 14% in those aged 15-19. However, the population growth and age profile does vary across our districts and boroughs, with a higher proportion of older people (65+) in Staffordshire Moorlands and South Staffordshire, a higher proportion of children and young people (aged 0-19) in East Staffordshire and Tamworth, and faster population growth across East Staffordshire, Lichfield, and Stafford.

Our central location is one of our many economic strengths. The county boasts a diverse economy with significant strengths in automotive, aerospace, energy, medical technologies, construction, logistics, digital and Agri-Tech to name a few. While the county is home to many world-renowned businesses, most of our businesses are small and medium enterprises. Supporting growth of our existing businesses and enabling people to start and grow their own businesses in the county is key to ensuring our economy remains vibrant and dynamic. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the percentage of our working age population with higher levels of skills, however challenges remain. Some areas of the county lag in terms of skills level, particularly within Cannock Chase, Tamworth, and parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Patterns of representation in a large, rural county area, with the above characteristics presents challenges and differences between Divisions. This directly impacts on how our Elected Members engage with their residents, and on the types of casework that they encounter. We cover this issue in more detail later in the submission.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.**

Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority.

Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		
Page 45 Governance Model	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g., Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ➤ <i>If the authority runs a committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i> ➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What demands will this make of them?</i> ➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i>
	Analysis	<p>Staffordshire County Council operates a Strong Leader Cabinet model; the Council's "Executive" for the purpose of the Local Government Act 2000. These arrangements are reflected in the Constitution. Section 6 details the Cabinet. The Council elects a Leader for a four-year term who then appoints Members to form a Cabinet. The Cabinet is responsible in setting the strategic direction of the Council, leading the preparation of the Council's policies and budget, it leads the community planning process, and attainment of best value. This model is expected to continue.</p>

Under the Constitution the Cabinet may consist of up to 10 members, including a Leader and Deputy Leader. The Leader of the Council allocates each Cabinet Member responsibilities relating to the executive functions of the Council. The current Leader has appointed 9 Members to serve on the Cabinet, each with a portfolio. There is also one Cabinet Support Member with the portfolio of Public Health and Integrated Care. There are no plans to amend the number of members who sit on the Cabinet.

The table below identifies the number of members who are in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). This is further detailed in Section 3 of the Constitution. The most recent Independent Remuneration Panel Report was presented to Council in March 2022 and can be viewed here.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)	No. of elected members
Leader	1
Deputy Leader	1
Cabinet Member	9
Cabinet Support Member	1
Chairman of Council	1
Vice-Chairman of Council	1
Leader of the Principal Opposition	1
Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition	1
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	4
Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8
Chairs and Vice-Chairs of:	8
Planning Committee	
Audit & Standards Committee	
Pensions Committee	

		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Charities & Trusts Committee</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice-Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chair of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of SRAs</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </table>	Charities & Trusts Committee		Vice-Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel	1	Chair of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel	1	Total number of SRAs	38
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Page 47 Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many portfolios will there be? ➤ What will the role of a portfolio holder be? ➤ Will this be a full-time position? ➤ Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions? 								
	Analysis	<p>Portfolios</p> <p>The portfolios of the current Cabinet are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leader 2. Deputy Leader and Economy & Skills 3. Health & Care 4. Infrastructure & Climate Change 5. Commercial Matters 6. Highways & Transport 7. Finance & Resources 8. Communities & Culture 9. Children & Young People 10. Education (& SEND) <p>There is currently one Cabinet Support Member with the portfolio of Public Health and Integrated Care.</p>								

		<p>Descriptions of Cabinet Member Portfolios are provided at Appendix 1 of Section 6 of the Constitution. Cabinet portfolio holders are responsible for making the day-to-day executive decisions concerning the strategy of the Council as set out in Part 6 of the Constitution. The Constitution does allow for delegated decision by individual portfolio holders.</p> <p>Cabinet portfolio holders are not full-time positions. Many of the current Cabinet have external employment and 8 of them are also District/Borough Councillors.</p> <p>Considering the above evidence any reduction in Council size would pose a significant risk in being able to maintain the current Governance arrangements that work well for Staffordshire. Whilst an increase could potentially provide greater resilience in being able to fill positions in our governance arrangements, it would also lead to inefficiency in our operation.</p>
<p>Page 48</p> <p>Delegated Responsibilities</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The power for Senior Leadership Team Members to take decisions on the day-to-day provision/administration of the Council's services are set in the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers.</p> <p>Each Directorate has its own sub-delegation scheme in which the relevant Senior Leadership Team member delegates authority to other officers within their directorate to take decisions on day-to-day operational issues. Where officer decision making is concerned, only individuals can make decisions. There is no officer group, panel or board that collectively makes decisions – this includes SLT (Senior Leadership Team).</p> <p>Cabinet Members have individual executive decision-making powers within their portfolios and act as the Council's main representative and spokesperson for their nominated areas of responsibility. The Cabinet</p>

carries out all the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority. Some of these decisions / plans / policies / strategies require the approval of Full Council e.g., Strategic Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Council Tax setting. There are approximately 12 formal meetings of the Cabinet per year and monthly informal briefings.

The Cabinet may collectively take any decision on any matter delegated to the Cabinet by the Leader or has been referred to the Cabinet by a Cabinet Member, the Chief Executive or any Chief Officer or is one which the Cabinet have specifically reserved for decision to them. Key Decisions can only be taken by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet have no power to take decisions on matters reserved to the full Council or matters which may not, by law, be determined by the Cabinet or change the delegation of any Local Choice Function.

Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.

<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
<p>Page 50 Analysis</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The 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 (Staffordshire County Council) directorates and reflect the priorities in the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The terms of reference are approved by Council and are set out in Section 7 of the Constitution.</p> <p>The County Council members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be appointed, in accordance with the relevant political balance provisions, at the Annual meeting of the County Council as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (13 members) • Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (13 members + 8 District and Borough Members)

- Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 members)
- Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 members)

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 expertise. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to meet 7 times per year and at other times as may be appropriate.

Each Committee develops a draft work programme of matters that fall within their Terms of Reference. Work programmes are reviewed at each Committee meeting to account of new information and emerging priorities, to ensure they remain relevant and timely. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs hold regular triangulation meetings with Executive Members and senior officers to discuss emerging matters and priorities that might impact on the work programme. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the overarching scrutiny body with responsibility for developing and agreeing the combined work programme for the Council's overview and scrutiny function. In September 2022 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on the [Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23](#), contained within this report are links to the individual 2022-23 work programmes for each Committee.

The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny 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, in accordance with regulations made under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and subsequent guidance including the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013. In accordance with these Regulations the County Council has agreed for these regulations to be discharged through the designated Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to make reports and recommendations to NHS bodies conferred by the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

	<p>The Annual Overview & Scrutiny Report 2021/22 was presented to Council in July 2022. The webcast for the agenda item can be viewed here: The Annual Overview & Scrutiny Report 2021/22</p> <p>As evidenced above, each committee is well represented and provides room for challenge. A reduction in Council Size would have a significant detrimental impact on the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny and being able to fill all the positions.</p>				
<p>Statutory Function</p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing, and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>				
<p>Page 52</p> <p>Planning</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="501 762 692 951"> <p>Key lines of explanation</p> </td> <td data-bbox="692 762 2152 951"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="501 951 692 1283"> <p>Analysis</p> </td> <td data-bbox="692 951 2152 1283"> <p>The Terms of Reference for Planning Committee can be found at Section 8 of the Constitution.</p> <p>The Planning Committee currently has 15 members and operates as a single council-wide committee.</p> <p>The Committee is scheduled to meet once a month – dependent on business need.</p> <p>In addition, the Planning Committee has established a Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Panel of seven members of the Planning Committee with full delegated powers to deal with matters</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> 	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The Terms of Reference for Planning Committee can be found at Section 8 of the Constitution.</p> <p>The Planning Committee currently has 15 members and operates as a single council-wide committee.</p> <p>The Committee is scheduled to meet once a month – dependent on business need.</p> <p>In addition, the Planning Committee has established a Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Panel of seven members of the Planning Committee with full delegated powers to deal with matters</p>
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		<p>detailed in Section 8 of the Constitution. The membership of the CROW panel was increased from 5 to 7 in March 2022.</p> <p>In addition, the Planning Committee has an established Licensing Panel (convened when required) of five members of the Planning Committee with full delegated powers to deal with the matters detailed Section 8 of the Constitution.</p>
Licensing Page 53	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year? ➤ And what will be the time commitment for members? ➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc? ➤ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?
	Analysis	<p>A Licensing Panel will be appointed by Planning Committee when necessary to deal with matters. The last licencing panel was over 5 years ago. Should a Licencing Panel be required the preparation for it would be done at the Planning Committee who would select members to serve on the Panel.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i> ➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has several other Committees. These are listed below and detailed in Section 8 of the Constitution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit & Standards Committee (15 members) • Charities & Trusts Committee (5 members) • Pensions Committee (10 members plus 4 co-opted) <p>In terms of committee mapping analysis, each member serves on average, approximately 2.4 committees. An average of 4-5 hours of time is needed per meeting attendance, this includes any</p>

		<p>time to prepare and read papers. In addition, there are also working groups which take a lot of time commitment from Members, more so than the Committees themselves at times. Chairs of each Committee will have an additional amount of time spent preparing for each meeting also.</p> <p>The evidence above further supports earlier analysis that any reduction in Council Size would have a detrimental impact on being able to fill committee positions. Members would be required to sit on more committees, increasing their workloads. Members would have to distribute their time across more committees. Whilst an increase in Council Size could potentially provide greater resilience in being able to fill committee positions, it would also lead to inefficiency in our operation.</p>
External Partnerships		<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>
Page 54 Key lines of explanation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional, or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i>
Analysis		<p>The County Council currently has 42 out of the 62 members appointed to outside bodies, equating to over two thirds of all members. The total of the workload and responsibility varies from appointment to appointment dependent on the remit of the Outside Body and its contribution towards the Council's strategic priorities. Some bodies are small and locally based, which value from having input from local Elected Members, others are highly significant locally, regionally, or nationally. We also know that many of our Elected Members also serve on various organisations that support their local communities as part of their community leadership role, e.g., school governors and local community groups.</p>

Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in diverse ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Page 55 Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings, or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i> ➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i>
	Analysis	The responsibilities of Elected Members are set out clearly in Section 3 of the constitution. Practice will vary between Elected Members; Members are expected to actively and positively engage with their communities and act as a community leader for their areas.

Elected Members use a range of different methods to engage with electors including face-to-face meetings, phone, email, social media, and newsletters. In a recent survey, 57% of Elected Members who responded stated that they held resident surgeries, and 70% stated they had a social media presence.

Elected Members also have strong links with the District, Boroughs, Parish, and Town Councils in their areas, however not all parts of the county have Parish and Town Councils. As of August 2022, 47 of our Elected Members are also District/Borough Councillors, which brings additional value and insight into their role at the County Council. They also have strong links with a range of different local community groups.

The COVID 19 pandemic brought to the fore the benefits and advantages of all tiers of local government in Staffordshire working together. We are building on those solid foundations to further our two-tier working. Staffordshire needs stability and consistency in its governance arrangements to be able to realise the full benefits of the collaboration taking place.

Staffordshire's geography, population, and context, all have a significant impact on how our Elected Members carry out their representational role with electors, and the casework issues they are responding to. As an example, one of our more rural divisions, Leek Rural (Staffordshire Moorlands), has a current electorate of 11,480 spread over an area of 328 km². The division primarily consists of a number of small villages. Representing and engaging electors in this Division, and the types of casework that Elected Members receive, presents different challenges to some of our more urban divisions such as May Bank and Cross Heath (Newcastle-under-Lyme). This has a similar size electorate of 10,904 but in a much smaller geography of just 4 km². There are also some divisions which have both urban and rural elements within them, which also presents different challenges for Elected Members to deal with the distinct challenges of the differing places within their division.

Whilst we note that the Commission recommends that responses focus on the structure of the Council when considering council size, and not on comparisons with other local authorities, it is evidence that we have considered in formulating our proposal. The table below demonstrates the CIPFA stats neighbours:

Local Authority	Electorate for Financial Year ending in 2023	Total Councillors	Electorate per Councillor
Cumbria	387,489	84	4,613
Suffolk	569,261	75	7,590
Warwickshire	443,920	57	7,788
Somerset	434,384	55	7,898
Worcestershire	455,560	57	7,992
Lincolnshire	566,353	70	8,091
Norfolk	693,144	84	8,252
Gloucestershire	396,825	43	9,228
Nottinghamshire	617,973	66	9,363
West Sussex	659,680	70	9,424
Derbyshire	618,815	64	9,669
Leicestershire	539,750	55	9,814
Staffordshire	663,673	62	10,704
Lancashire	911,852	84	10,855
Essex	1,117,011	75	14,893

This table demonstrates our number of electors per Member is higher than the median, therefore there is no evidence to suggest a reduction in the number of elected members.

Upper Quintile	9,992
Lower Quintile	7,876
Median	9,228

The Council's current electoral arrangements include two divisions with two Elected Members. The Council's view, based on feedback from the relevant Elected Members, is these arrangements do not provide the most efficient conditions for community representation. Representing a larger electorate presents difficulties, and although the Elected Members representing these Divisions have been able to establish effective working arrangements between themselves, it is acknowledged that it can be difficult to equitably divide casework. Having two Elected Members can also make it difficult for electors to easily identify who 'their Councillor' is. As such, the County Council is formally requesting a single-member division review.

Our Elected Members have funding available to support a vast range of community activities via our Members Fund. Each county councillor has up to £2,500 to allocate for supporting projects which help our communities to look after their own health and wellbeing, support vulnerable people within their own communities, and help groups to look after the neighbourhood spaces where they live.

This funding has a significant impact across Staffordshire. Because our communities are so varied, having flexible funding for councillors to use however it's needed locally makes a huge difference. The funding is vital for helping new community provision to get off the ground, and for helping existing projects to expand what they do or get back on a sustainable footing after Covid-19. It helps to energise and inspire more activity locally, and already this year we are seeing £3 raised by the community to match every £1 the fund has spent.

The Climate Action Fund is open for the third time after supporting 217 projects to combat climate change so far. Every county councillor has £1,500 to award to projects in their area. Councillors must give £500 minimum

		<p>per project, but organisations can approach more than one councillor to receive up to £3,000. The grant can be used to fund new projects that can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce carbon impact • Improve air quality • Reduce waste • Improve natural environment • The fund is open to non-for-profit groups such as community groups, charities, parish councils and schools.
Page 59	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</p> <p>➤ What support do members receive?</p> <p>➤ How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</p> <p>➤ In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</p>
	Casework	<p>Analysis</p> <p>Elected Members are required to undertake their own casework. Where there is a difficult or complex issue an Elected Member may request support or guidance from an officer. Member and Democratic Services provide support to Members when needed. Members also have contact with the relevant officers in each department to ensure members can remain as efficient as possible.</p> <p>The County Council is a 'Digital First' local authority, due to our commitment to digital ways of working, we were able to swiftly respond when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Elected Members are supported to make the most of the benefits that digital technology offers to both engage with the electorate and respond to casework. This is key to ensuring that casework is manageable for the size of electorate in Staffordshire.</p>

Earlier in 2022, the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out the ninth Census of Local Authority Councillors in England. Staffordshire Members were encouraged to take part, with 15 completing the survey. Of those who took part, 5 were Cabinet Members.

One of the questions asked Members about the time they spent on Council business. The results for Staffordshire are provided below. As can be seen, the average total number of hours is 34.1 – slightly under what would be considered a full-time working week. Of the 34.1 hours, a little under a third of that time (10.7) is spent attending meetings. The largest amount of time spent by councillors is engaging with constituents (12.1).

Time spent on council business	
Total (average weekly hours)	34.1
Attendance at council meetings	10.7
Engaging with constituents	12.1
Working with community groups	5.9
Other	5.5

Any reduction in Council Size would lead to Members having to spend more time on Council business, and potentially more time in council meetings, due to there being less Members to fill committee positions. Any increase in Council Size could cause a reduction in the number of hours that Members spend on Council business.

Elected Members receive a comprehensive induction programme. After the last elections in 2021, a programme of induction was developed to give members everything they needed to know in the first few weeks and months of the political term. A range of different topics were covered, including Member Code of Conduct, social media

training and equality, diversity, and inclusion. Towards the end of 2021, the Member Development Forum was established. This is a cross party group of members who come together to:

- Review and consider the support and facilities required by elected members to enhance their ability to perform their role effectively.
- Underpin Staffordshire County Council's continuing commitment to developing its elected members and encourage individual members' commitment to learning and development.
- Oversee and evaluate Member Development activity.
- Act as Member Development Champions within political groups and introduce accountability in relation to Member Development Activity.
- Explore ways to encourage, engage and involve all members in matters relating to the County Council and their wider representative role.

Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

N/A

Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

It is the Council's view that the evidence set out demonstrates that the current size of 62 Elected Members supports efficient and effective governance arrangements and supports Elected Members to effectively deliver Strategic Leadership, Accountability and Community Leadership.

The Council also requests that a single-member division review is undertaken, to address the difficulties of dual-member division as outlined in this submission.

We recognise that the size of the Council needs to be appropriate not just for now, but for the future. In formulating our proposal, we have carefully considered three options – reducing the council size, retaining the current council size, and increasing the current council size. A summary of each option is provided below:

Reducing

Any reduction in the number of Elected Members would lead to Members representing an electorate more than the current average of 10,704 which is already well above the average for other similar local authorities. A reduction would have a significant increase on the workload of Elected Members across all three aspects of their role – Strategic Leadership, Accountability and Community Leadership – and potentially reduce the effectiveness of the Council.

Retaining

The evidence outlined in this submission shows that the Council is operating effectively with the current council size of 62 Elected Members. We feel that the council size will support the forecasted growth in electorate, with the support provided to Elected Members and the further adoption of digital technology. Our current council size fits the governance model we have, with sufficient representation of committees to ensure that

debate is informed by a wide range of opinions. Our governance model is not subject to significant change. Staffordshire continues to develop and find new ways of working, to ensure that we continue to represent our communities, whilst reducing bureaucracy.

Increase

There is some evidence to suggest that an increase in Council Size could lead to improved community representation, due to our higher-than-average electors per Elected Member. However, to have a meaningful impact on how Staffordshire's communities were represented, and therefore the casework that Elected Members are required to manage, a significant reduction in the elector to Member ratio could only be achieved by increasing the council size to between 70-80 Elected Members. This would result in a significant increase in the 'cost of democracy' There would also be significant challenges in developing division arrangements that effectively represented community identifies for such a significant increase in divisions.

The proposal to retain our 62 councillors provides the best fit for how Staffordshire operates now and for the future, taking a balanced approach across the three key areas of strategic leadership, accountability, and community leadership.

Appendix 2 – Electoral Forecast – Division Summary

Division	District	2022 Electorate	Standard 2028 Projection	Housing Adjust-ments	Projected 2028 Electorate	Variance from Staffs Average	Electorate Increase
Brereton and Ravenhill	Cannock Chase	9,605	9,928	2,095	12,023	2.4%	2,418
Cannock Town Centre	Cannock Chase	11,725	12,093	259	12,352	5.2%	627
Cannock Villages	Cannock Chase	11,225	11,295	473	11,768	0.2%	543
Chadsmoor	Cannock Chase	10,613	10,991	61	11,052	-5.9%	439
Etchinghill and Heath	Cannock Chase	9,248	9,542	0	9,542	-18.8%	294
Hednesford and Rawsley*	Cannock Chase	23,919	24,447	1,154	25,601	9.0%	1,682
Burton Tower	East Staffordshire	10,382	10,765	0	10,765	-8.3%	383
Burton Town	East Staffordshire	13,055	13,444	2,132	15,576	32.6%	2,521
Burton Trent	East Staffordshire	10,261	10,652	115	10,767	-8.3%	506
Dove	East Staffordshire	11,754	12,009	2,779	14,788	25.9%	3,034
Horninglow & Stretton	East Staffordshire	11,260	11,676	342	12,018	2.3%	758
Needwood Forest	East Staffordshire	12,208	12,584	1,590	14,174	20.7%	1,966
Uttoxeter Rural	East Staffordshire	10,148	10,486	1,081	11,567	-1.5%	1,419
Uttoxeter Town	East Staffordshire	10,568	10,916	2,342	13,258	12.9%	2,690
Burntwood North	Lichfield	9,753	10,161	0	10,161	-13.5%	408
Burntwood South	Lichfield	10,295	10,523	171	10,694	-8.9%	399
Lichfield City North	Lichfield	10,405	10,880	601	11,481	-2.2%	1,076
Lichfield City South	Lichfield	11,137	11,346	2,389	13,735	17.0%	2,598
Lichfield Rural East	Lichfield	10,060	10,438	1,633	12,071	2.8%	2,011
Lichfield Rural North	Lichfield	10,850	10,807	2,456	13,263	12.9%	2,413
Lichfield Rural South	Lichfield	9,698	10,062	129	10,191	-13.2%	493
Lichfield Rural West	Lichfield	10,887	11,345	859	12,204	3.9%	1,317
Audley and Chesterton	Newcastle	11,103	11,641	162	11,803	0.5%	700
Bradwell, Porthill and Wolstanton	Newcastle	10,793	11,379	306	11,685	-0.5%	892
Keele, Knutton and Silverdale	Newcastle	7,384	8,022	260	8,282	-29.5%	898
Kidsgrove	Newcastle	10,601	11,164	0	11,164	-4.9%	563
May Bank and Cross Heath	Newcastle	10,904	11,475	192	11,667	-0.7%	763
Newcastle Rural	Newcastle	10,082	10,446	608	11,054	-5.9%	972
Newcastle South	Newcastle	10,468	11,028	401	11,429	-2.7%	961
Talke and Red Street	Newcastle	11,076	11,581	162	11,743	0.0%	667
Westlands and Thistleberry	Newcastle	9,574	10,089	372	10,461	-10.9%	887
Brewood	South Staffordshire	10,141	10564	0	10,564	-10.1%	423
Cheslyn Hay, Essington & Great Wyrley*	South Staffordshire	22,301	23251	327	23,578	0.4%	1,277
Codsall	South Staffordshire	9,951	10268	217	10,485	-10.7%	534
Kinver	South Staffordshire	10,615	11034	72	11,106	-5.4%	491
Penkridge	South Staffordshire	11,163	11499	135	11,634	-0.9%	471
Perton	South Staffordshire	9,691	10117	479	10,596	-9.8%	905
Wombourne	South Staffordshire	11,198	11573	66	11,639	-0.9%	441
Eccleshall	Stafford	11,627	11,935	1,178	13,113	11.7%	1,486
Gnosall and Doxey	Stafford	12,980	13,401	1,909	15,310	30.4%	2,330
Stafford Central	Stafford	11,396	11,938	1,339	13,277	13.1%	1,881
Stafford North	Stafford	10,311	10,770	71	10,841	-7.7%	530
Stafford South East	Stafford	11,155	11,652	0	11,652	-0.8%	497
Stafford Trent Valley	Stafford	11,610	12,073	805	12,878	9.7%	1,268
Stafford West	Stafford	11,507	12,107	92	12,199	3.9%	692
Stone Rural	Stafford	11,675	12,033	472	12,505	6.5%	830
Stone Urban	Stafford	11,277	11,797	87	11,884	1.2%	607
Biddulph North	Staffordshire Moorlands	9,851	10,281	0	10,281	-12.5%	430
Biddulph South & Endon	Staffordshire Moorlands	11,019	11,526	38	11,564	-1.5%	545
Caverswall	Staffordshire Moorlands	10,792	11,133	544	11,677	-0.6%	885
Cheadle & Checkley	Staffordshire Moorlands	11,311	11,743	967	12,710	8.2%	1,399
Churnet Valley	Staffordshire Moorlands	11,677	12,127	750	12,877	9.6%	1,200
Leek Rural	Staffordshire Moorlands	11,385	11,859	0	11,859	1.0%	474
Leek South	Staffordshire Moorlands	11,069	11,531	451	11,982	2.0%	913
Amington	Tamworth	9,968	10,228	1,029	11,257	-4.1%	1,289
Bolebridge	Tamworth	9,966	10,077	1,065	11,142	-5.1%	1,176
Perrycrofts	Tamworth	10,312	10,506	487	10,993	-6.4%	681
Stonydelph	Tamworth	9,565	9,958	0	9,958	-15.2%	393
Watling North	Tamworth	9,757	10,184	1	10,185	-13.3%	428
Watling South	Tamworth	9,712	10,048	0	10,048	-14.4%	336
Staffordshire		666,023	690,427	37,705	728,132	0	62,109

*Two Member Division - variance from Staffs Average is therefore shown per Member.

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 26 September 2022.

The main items considered were:

Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel considered the questions ask by a member of the public and the Commissioners written response. With the consent of the Chairman, Ms Mallender was allowed to ask a supplementary question which was “when was Policing going to improve in the local area?” The Commissioner responded that it was difficult sometimes to achieve the right balance and satisfy the hopes of the community. Contact would continue with the community and the Police would remain fully engaged. The Commissioner agreed to meet with the local community at a suitable forum.

Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

Details were submitted of decisions published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting.

Decision 002 Public confidence surveys

- Decision 003 – Crest Support to LCJB performance framework: year 3
- Decision Note – Armed Police Training Facility Decision

The Panel were reminded that there would be an informal meeting to discuss the armed police training facility in November.

Police and Crime Plan Update

The Police and Crime update report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic priorities. He reminded Members that detailed performance management and action against targets was also considered at his public Performance meetings held with the Chief Constable. [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk) The next was due to be held on 4 October and members were invited to attend or watch on the webcast.

As a result of the Commissioners presentation and questions from the Panel, the following information was gained. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- Regarding the new Local Policing Model; early indications showed that it had provided extra capacity to respond to and investigate

crime and support victims. It was reported that officers felt that local knowledge was now being used more effectively.

- Extra investment in the Contact Centre included training more people to deal with calls. It was hoped that this would help to reduce response times. It was felt that the performance of the Contact Centre remained a priority. The training of recruits was key to improvement. However, it was found that as people become fully trained they were moving on to become Police Officers. Whilst this was welcomed, it did affect contact centre performance.
- Local and responsive services were responding to calls at the same pace, despite a 20% increase in calls both locally and nationally against pre covid levels.
- Members felt that better communication with the public was needed, particularly around expected contact or response times.
- £750,00 extra funding for Safer streets projects had been received for Stoke on Trent, Stafford, Newcastle and Burton areas. The detail on how it could be used would be available soon.
- The Illegal trespass protocol was a partnership approach and involved developing a policy which was then subject to consultation. This inevitably took time but this was progressing.
- Public 'Bleed Kits' were a response to knife crime. There was a desire to expand this initiative and possibly attract government funding.
- There was a perception that Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) was increasing. The Commissioner informed the Panel that ASB was actually reducing in Staffordshire overall, but it had increased in certain localised areas and on Public Open Space, but less so in Communities. Again, this was an area of shared responsibility but when hot spots and causes had been identified, this could be addressed quite quickly.
- With regard to the inspection report, the Panel recognised that the Chief Constable had recently been appointed and had inherited the failings identified in the service. The action plan to address the issues was being monitored by the Commissioner.
- The Panel were concerned that whilst the Inspection report had raised a number of areas which needed improvement, these were areas which had been highlighted as areas of concern in the past and little improvement could be demonstrated. The Commissioner felt that there were a number of key themes which ran through the report which needed to be picked up, such as communication; capacity; leadership; and use of technology. There had been a number of new officers over recent years and this was an opportunity to change culture; make improvement; and take ownership of the problems.

The Commissioner was thanked for his update report. The Panel remained concerned that the issues raised in the HMICFRS Inspection

report needed to be addressed and that the public should be able to access the information and gain reassurance that issues were being tackled. Whilst it was acknowledged that performance against improvements would be measured and made public through the Performance meetings held with the Chief Constable, the Panel asked the Commissioner to attend a special meeting of the Panel to discuss in more detail. The Chairman reminded members that the County Councils Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee covered Community Safety issues. He felt that to enable transparency and avoid duplication, it would be appropriate to invite the Safeguarding O&S Committee members to the Panel meeting to take part in the discussion.

The Panel resolved to invite the Commissioner to a further meeting of the Panel to discuss the recent HMICFRS Inspection report.

Fire and Rescue Service - Safety Plan 2020-2024 Update

The Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan update report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic priorities.

It was acknowledged that since the last meeting of the Panel a HMICFRS Inspection report had been published which had rated the service overall as 'good' but had highlighted a number of areas which needed some improvement. Work had started on this and Members were again reminded that detailed performance management and action against targets was considered at the Commissioners public Performance meetings held with the Chief Fire Officer. [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk) The next was due to be held on 20 October and members were invited to attend or watch on the webcast. The Commissioner felt confident that the new leadership and change in culture would lead to improvements in the areas highlighted as needing attention.

Members asked for confirmation that should industrial action take place, the Fire and Rescue service would be sufficiently staffed to manage any emergency's. It was confirmed that any action would be after bonfire night and discussions were taking place with other services to try to continue with emergency cover over the strike period. Following a suggestion by a Panel member, the use of volunteers or retired officers would be considered.

Options around a number of operational sites which had previously been agreed to relocate, were being reconsidered and a number of opportunities were being explored for example relocating other services to share sites.

Following the recent house fire in Lichfield, where a number of fire engines had been pulled-in from neighbouring towns, it was confirmed that the service balanced risk and prioritised responses to ensure that resources were normally in the right place when needed.

Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership

The Deputy Commissioner introduced the report which provided an update on the Safer Roads Partnership and its current priorities and activity. It was noted that the Police were a partner and that the Commissioner and/or Deputy chaired the Board meetings.

Following the presentation of the report and the subsequent Panel questions, the following information was gained. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- The report contained the Partnerships objectives. Under each priority would be a set of targets which would be measured and reported to the Board.
- Some targets were beyond the partnerships control for example; heart attacks whilst driving were unavoidable, as opposed to Drug driving which could be influence by media awareness, police stops etc.
- Designated parks which could be used to teach children road safety were a good idea but space was not always available. Schools used a number of other resources and safe areas.
- Sources of data was improving but was limited at the moment (2020). Data was collected to respond to government bodies but the 2021/22 was not yet formalised. This information would be available for the Police Performance meeting on 4 October.
- Drug driving figures were higher than drink driving. The Deputy Commissioner would raise with the partnership to see if there were opportunities to train or increase support after conviction to stop repeat offending.
- Off road bikes were a problem in some areas. This would be raised at the partnership meeting, but members were encouraged to report incidents to local police.

Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Panel agreed to move the Police Misconduct and complaints regulation 2020 – annual report to February 2023.

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

