

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 15 March 2023

Attendance

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

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Paul Northcott

PART ONE

116. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

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

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Julia Jessel	127	Personal	Trustee of the John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust

117. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including thanks to the gritting crews who were out round the clock to keep the County's main roads moving safely; the Government's announcement of a national plan and funding to improve support for children with special educational needs and disabilities which will enable the Council to recruit 10 more educational psychologists; more than 9 out of 10 parents in Staffordshire to receive a place for their child at their preferred secondary school next year; the help available to small businesses through the Council's Staffordshire Means Back to Business scheme; and the Leader and Chief Executive's recent meeting with the Home Secretary to discuss the placement of asylum seekers in Staffordshire including the case for greater support to accommodate asylum seekers and reduce the impact on those living nearby; be noted.

118. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 March 2023

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 March 2023 be received.

119. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Update

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

- This month saw an increase of 550 claimants, with the total number of claimants in the county now standing at 15,000. The claimant rate for Staffordshire increased from 2.7% to 2.8% over the last month. The rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest rates in the West Midlands and far lower than the average for the region 4.8% and, also lower than the average for England at 3.7% of the working age population.
- Contributing to this overall increase in claimants this month, the youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 135 to a total of 2,785 young people. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has increased this month from 4.2% to 4.4%, although this remains lower than the national rate of 4.8% which has increased from 4.7% this month.
- The launch of our new Rural Economic Strategy that sets out our rural economic priorities in the coming years. The strategy offers a framework for policy choices and investment decisions. The successful delivery of the strategy will depend on us continuing to work proactively with a wide range of stakeholders across the public, private, academic, voluntary and community and third sectors.
- The success of the Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism & Good Food Awards where there was opportunity to celebrate many of the fantastic tourism businesses we have within the county. Tourism and leisure businesses make up a significant part of the local economy, and we have an opportunity to build upon our many existing assets, including our renowned attractions that bring millions of visitors to the county every year. This is why we have supported the development of the Visitor Economy Action Plan, which was formally launched at last week’s event. This has been prepared in collaboration between local authority and private sector partners that make up our Destination Management Partnership and includes several key actions to boost our visitor economy including encouraging more people to work within the sector, addressing emerging skills challenges and supporting the development of the local accommodation offer. We have also recently applied to

Visit England to secure Local Visitor Economy Partnership status for Staffordshire and I hope to be able to update on this in future updates.

- The newly formed Staffordshire Jobs and Careers service which provides advice on jobs, careers, training and learning opportunities in the county, and working with local residents and businesses, ultimately connects people to jobs.

120. Capital Programme for Schools 2023/24

	<p>“It is essential that we keep our maintained schools in a good condition that allows children to thrive.</p> <p>This year will see more than £43 million spent on maintaining and improving Staffordshire schools to ensure Staffordshire children can learn in surroundings that enhance their education and give them the best possible start in life.</p> <p>The money will also see more schools benefitting from our decarbonisation programme by replacing inefficient systems, improving insulation and making it easier to monitor energy usage, that will directly contribute to our carbon net zero goal.”</p> <p>Jonathan Price, Cabinet member for Education (and SEND)</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Schools Capital Programme for 2023/24.

Decision – (a) That the Schools Capital Programme 2023/24 investment proposal, set out in the report and supporting appendices, be approved.

(b) That the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets monitors progress and makes any necessary in-year alterations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND).

(c) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services to enter into contracts for projects in the Capital Programme which have a value of £2,000,000 or above. Other contract awards and modifications will be in accordance with the Council’s Procurement Regulations.

121. Highways and Transport Programme 2023/24



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

Over the next two financial years the County Council is planning to invest an additional £30M to support our commitment to fix more roads. This year will see a total of over £50 million invested in a range of major projects, vital local improvements, and general road maintenance. The additional investment being made by the County Council will enable five major road reconstruction schemes at key locations into our towns, the resurfacing of nine junctions/roundabouts, an extra 275,000 sq. m of preventative surface treatments and £1M of additional work to repair highway drainage.

We were also successful in securing £19.8M through the Levelling Up Fund for improvements to roads and bus and cycling routes in Staffordshire that will see investment in environmentally friendly buses and active travel between Stafford and Cannock, as well as significant investment around the A38 Branston interchange in Burton upon Trent.

However, 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 ensure local communities and businesses can see the benefits of an improved highway network."

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Highways and Transport capital investment proposals for 2023/24

Decision – (a) That the Highways and Transport capital investment proposal, as set out in the report and supporting appendices, be approved and that it be noted that, at the time of writing, the allocations from the Department for Transport have not been provided.

(b) That the additional investment of £20M by the County Council into highway maintenance to be delivered over the next two financial years

(2023/24 and 2024/25), which when put together with the already approved £5M each year to support minor capital maintenance, makes a total investment of £30M over the next two financial years, be approved.

(c) That the progression of the programme of developer funded s.278/s111 highway improvement projects be approved and that authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills to agree the details of the works agreements and authorise the contracts for works to be entered into.

(d) The Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County monitors progress of the overall programme and be given delegated authority to make any in-year alterations and additions to the programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

122. Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028

	<p>“Having good mental health is important for everyone, and we need to build strong and resilient communities and individuals who are in control of their own mental well-being.</p> <p>This new strategy, which has been produced with the NHS, local communities, mental health professions and those who use the service and their carers, aims to help everyone improve and maintain their mental well-being, and help people of all ages with severe long-term mental health issues to live productive and fulfilling lives.”</p> <p>Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Health and Care</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the proposed joint Mental Health & Mental Wellbeing Strategy: ‘Good Mental Health in Staffordshire’ 2023-28.

Decision – (a) That the proposed joint Mental Health & Mental Wellbeing Strategy: ‘Good Mental Health in Staffordshire’ 2023-28, be approved.

(b) That the proposal for the Health and Wellbeing Board to monitor delivery of the associated action plan be endorsed.

123. Our People Strategy 2023 and Beyond



“Our People Strategy is key in helping us be an excellent employer with a welcoming culture, in which people are supported and have opportunities to develop their skills and experience with us.

Importantly, it supports our Strategic Plan, as it guides how we lead our people to deliver first class services and make a positive difference to the people of Staffordshire”.

Alan White, Leader of the Council

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the refreshed People Strategy for 2023 – 2027.

Decision – (a) That the key achievements from the previous People Strategy be acknowledged.

(b) That the evidence-based approach adopted in the development of the strategy be noted.

(c) That the “we will” commitments against the four pillars in the strategy be endorsed.

(d) That the strategy be approved.

124. Staffordshire County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy



“Since the last edition of the Strategy was approved, there have been nine significant flood events between 2018 and 2022. Each one carries a financial and emotional cost for individuals and businesses and the concern must be that climate change will make matters worse.

Working with communities and incorporating recent experience and innovative practice, the updated strategy will include ways of managing and reducing flood risks in Staffordshire, as well as considering how best we can recover quickly if the worst happens”.

Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Decision – (a) that the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be approved.

(b) That the accompanying documents: Habitats Risk Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, be approved.

(c) That the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change be authorised to sign-off any necessary changes and publish final versions of a) and b) assuming no significant changes necessary. (See point 11 in the reasons for recommendation).

(d) That the strategy be revised again, when implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 makes Staffordshire County Council a SuDS Approval Body responsible for the approval, adoption, maintenance and management of sustainable drainage systems, to take account of this. (See Point 12 in the reasons for recommendation).

125. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 19 April to 16 August 2023, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Staffordshire Better Care Fund 2022-2024	Name: Helen Trousdale Tel: (01785)
Staffordshire PSN Current Contract Exit Strategy and New Contract	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Corporate Delivery Plan 2023/4	Name: John Tradewell Tel: (01785) 276102
Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) Consultation Feedback, Policy Changes, Re-use and HWRC Network Improvements to Date	Name: Clive Thomson Tel: (01785) 276522
'Living My Best Life' - A Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent People in Staffordshire 2023-2028	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Integrated Performance - Outturn Report 2022/23	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Joint Coroners Service - Legal Framework and Financial Protocol	Name: Catherine Mann Tel: (01785) 278320
Maintenance and Minor Works Framework	Name: Ian Turner

126. Exclusion of the Public

"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)

127. Proposal for Delivery of the All Through School (ATS) at the Former Rugeley Power Station Site

Note by Clerk: In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (Regulation 16), the Leader of the Council has obtained the approval of the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the decision detailed below to be exempt from call-in as any delay caused by the call-in process would significantly risk the County Council's ability to seal multiple legal agreements to enable the County Council to elect by 31 March 2023 to deliver an All Through School

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals to secure secondary school places in Rugeley to meet demand, particularly through developing an All Through School (ATS) on the former power-station site.

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

Alan White
Leader of the Council