

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 September 2023

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

Cabinet Support Members in attendance: Paul Northcott and Robert Pritchard

Apologies: Philip White and Victoria Wilson

Part One

25. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

26. Decision notice of the meeting held on 19 July 2023

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 19 July 2023 be approved.

27. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the Council's extra investment in Staffordshire's roads with an extra £5m on pothole repairs this year, and an extra £30m in large repairs, resurfacing and junction upgrades over the next two years including improvement of the A5121 Claymills interchange and Derby Road in Burton, the new roundabout on the A34 outside Stafford for the Pets At Home facility, a scheme to resurface a busy junction, install new traffic lights and upgrade pedestrian crossings in Lichfield and new drainage on the A34 in Stone; securing £5m of Government funding earlier this month for electric vehicle charging points across Staffordshire; the Authority's rapid response to national issues with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, with every school that the county council is responsible for remaining open; the need for more foster carers to come forwards and provide stable homes for vulnerable children; and the emergence of a new variant of Covid-19 with all vulnerable residents being encouraged to get their Covid booster and flu jab; be noted.

28. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 September 2023

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 September 2023 be received.

29. Staffordshire Means Back to Business


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 a decline of 90 claimants in Staffordshire which contrasted with an increase seen nationally. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 14,955 or 2.8% of the working age population. The claimant count rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands and is far lower than the average for the region of 4.9%, and lower than the average for England of 3.8%.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 65 claimants to a total of 2,885 young people. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit now stands at 4.6%. This is lower than the national rate of 5.0% and far lower than the regional rate of 6.7%. The continued increase in the youth claimant count highlights the importance of continuing to engage with our younger residents and support them to find employment or continue in some form of education or training.
- Our Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Service has been focusing on results day recently for both GCSE’s and A-Level students, promoting the support the team can offer with advice and signposting. Our Employment Brokers have been supporting people across the county, whether they have received their grades in order to follow their favoured path, or maybe need some advice on where to turn next and consider other avenues such as employment, apprenticeships or alternative training.
- I am also pleased to report that two members of the Jobs and Careers Service team recently had a visit with the Minister for Social Mobility, Youth and Progression Mims Davis to discuss how they support candidates with challenges in accessing the employment market and our support for ex-service men and women. I’m pleased to say that the Minister was very impressed in our success to date and the companies we work in partnership with to support people into employment.
- In terms of job vacancies, there was a 15% increase in across Staffordshire compared to a 13% increase nationally between July

and August. Demand for labour and skills remains high, with there currently being 1.6 jobs available for every claimant within the county, and therefore our focus continues to be to support those who find themselves unemployed to secure one of those jobs.

- Unfortunately, we have recently heard the news of the Wilko insolvency, which is due to the continued impact of the shift in shopping habits across the country. We have convened a taskforce comprised of senior representatives of the County Council, Borough and District Councils, Department for Work & Pensions and the National Careers Service to exchange information and consider our support offer, including the deployment of our Jobs & Careers Services if and when appropriate. Positively, there are currently around 1,000 retail jobs being advertised within the county, and we will work with any former Wilko staff to help them secure one of these jobs or to move into a different area of work.
- The construction of the West Midlands Interchange development is expected to begin before the end of the year. A key aspect of the project will be supporting our residents to take advantage of employment opportunities through both the construction and operational phases, and we were successful in securing a significant amount of funding from the development for employment and skills programmes. Due to the scale of the development, we have a dedicated Employment Broker for the project who has now met with the first sub-contractor to begin recruitment for the first phase of the build.
- The upgrade of the A38 Branston Interchange is a key component of our successful £20m bid from round two of the Levelling Up Fund. This will provide Burtonians with safer and easier access to and from the A38. Legal agreements with the developer of the nearby Branston Locks development and National Highways are also close to being agreed and it is expected will be signed shortly. There is a three-month lead in before construction can start, and we're therefore expecting works on improving the junction to commence in early 2024. The Levelling Up Fund is also paying for the upgrade of several major roads in Cannock and Stafford and the purchase of a new fleet of low emission buses to improve our public transport network.
- The nominations for the Enjoy Staffordshire tourism awards closed last week, with judging taking place over the next few months and the awards ceremony set for March 2024. The awards give us the chance to celebrate our best tourism and hospitality business and the valuable contribution they make to the local economy.

30. SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do-Review Pathway, Strategy for Special Provision and the Staffordshire Children and Young People's Framework

	<p>"Our goal is to provide every child and young person in Staffordshire with the best start in life and the opportunity to achieve their full potential.</p> <p>These proposals mark a significant step towards achieving that vision. By increasing support within mainstream schools and creating additional provision in special schools, we are working to ensure that children with SEND receive the tailored support they need in their local communities.</p> <p>We carefully considered the valuable feedback received during the public consultation and are confident that these initiatives will result in positive outcomes for our children and their families."</p> <p>Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the proposed Strategy for Special Provision and the creation of a Staffordshire Children and Young People's Framework, two major strategies designed to deliver outcomes related to the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan.

Decision – (a) That the actions set out in the Accelerated Progress Plan continue to be endorsed.

(b) That the proposed Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do-Review (EAPDR) Pathway and Strategy for Special Provision be endorsed.

(c) That delegated authority be given to the Director for Children and Families for allocating funding for the 8 Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Teams (SEDIS).

(d) That Authority be given to enter into contractual agreements with schools to deliver the SEDIS Model.

(e) That the proposal to develop a Children & Young People's Framework to enable Officer's to procure timely, value for money pre-statutory support where required, be endorsed:

- (i) Approval be given to conduct an open tender process in line with Staffordshire County Council's Procurement Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations.
- (ii) That the award of the Staffordshire Children and Young Peoples Framework be delegated to the Director for Children and Families and that the award of call-off contracts under the Framework be sub-delegated in line with the Council's procurement Regulations.
- (iii) If appropriate, delegated authority for alternative approval of 'high' volumes of call-off contracts will be sought as per D13.5 of the Council's Procurement Regulations.

31. Staffordshire Climate Change Adaptation Strategy



"Adapting to the impacts of climate change is just as important as reducing our carbon emissions and striving for net-zero.

Even if we cut our carbon emissions to zero overnight, the climate will continue to warm up and more extreme weather conditions will become commonplace. This means we need to start thinking widely and putting measures in place now that protect our communities, buildings, roads, environment, and economy.

The Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy is an important first step in this process. Now, the task is to work together to better prepare ourselves to respond and adapt to the changing climate in the future."

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

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy which will provide a suitable framework to allow individual councils to develop their own Adaptation delivery plans, encouraging consistency and partnership working across the councils and other partners in a collaborative nature.

Decision – (a) That the Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy be noted and approved.

(b) That the development of a Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan, that ensures all services and portfolios consider adaptation in their day-to-day work and decision making, be approved.

32. The Recommission of Shared Lives



"We want everyone in Staffordshire to lead the best and happiest lives they can.

For some adults requiring a helping hand, the Shared Lives service offers them the chance to get the care they need while sharing the home of specially trained carers and their families.

With the existing contract due for renewal, we want to recommission this important service to ensure people continue to receive the care they need and we continue to provide best value for the public purse."

Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the recommissioning of the Shared Lives service to provide continuity of care for individuals and ensure an ongoing good quality service that offers value for money.

Decision – (a) That the procurement of the Staffordshire Shared Lives service contract via a competitive tender, in order to appoint a suitable provider who can offer a good quality service and value for money, be approved.

(b) That approval for the contract to be awarded to the successful provider be delegated to the Director of Health and Care.

(c) That the extension of the current Shared Lives service contract for up to 12 months, in the event of an unsuccessful procurement, to enable the Council to consider alternative options, be approved.

33. Staffordshire Warmer Homes - Approval of the spend plans for the Home Upgrade Grant (Phase 2)



"Lifting people out of fuel poverty and helping households with energy bills is a public health priority in Staffordshire. We are proud of our success to date, saving £1.5m in total for thousands of households.

Our work in linking Government grants with those in need of support is a vital step towards improving health and well-being in the county. The Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 will benefit predominantly rural areas as eligibility is focused on off-grid homes with low energy performance ratings in the most deprived areas."

Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Health and Care



"We are on a mission to make Staffordshire more sustainable. A quarter of carbon emissions in our county come from residential homes.

Staffordshire Warmer Homes is helping cut carbon emissions by reducing the amount of energy needed to heat properties. The Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 will build on our success allowing another 530 homes to improve insulation and heating and creating local jobs."

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

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving expenditure of the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 and the subsequent procurements to secure providers for services to make thermal improvements to people's homes, in line with the conditions of the Grant.

Decision – (a) That the award to the Council of the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 of £10.5m be noted.

(b) That expenditure of the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report, be approved.

(c) That authority be delegated to the Director of Health and Care to complete a compliant procurement process and appoint providers to oversee and install thermal efficiency measures in people's homes, in-line with the Grant conditions and approved expenditure.

34. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Decision – That the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers be noted:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)	In approving the award of compensation following an investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman into a complaint against the County Council.
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)	In approving the award of compensation following an investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman into a complaint against the County Council.
Cabinet Member for Health and Care	In approving the grant award of £10.5m to be awarded by the Government Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), following their approval of the Council's outline (Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2) spend plan on 10 July 2023.
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)	In approving options to extend the current Independent Special School contract with amended contract value.

35. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 18 October 2023 to 20 March 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Nexus Care (Nexus Trading Services Limited) Annual Report 2022/23	Name: Richard Harling MBE, / John Tradewell Tel: (01785) 278700 / 276102
Unregulated Placement Update	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Climate Change Action Plan Review and Climate Change Annual Report	Name: Darryl Evers Tel: (01785) 854265
Strategic Vision for Early Years	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079

Half Yearly Treasury Management Report	Name: Rob Salmon Tel: (01785) 276354
Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Additional Nursing Capacity	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Provision of a Waste Transfer Facility	Name: Darryl Evers Tel: (01785) 854265
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Older People Commissioning Strategy	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Provision of Services for Children and Young People	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Unregulated Placements	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Burton Regeneration	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228

Alan White
Leader of the Council