

Cabinet

Wednesday 15 November 2023

10:00

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live and archived for 12 months. It can be viewed at the following link: <https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell
Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services
7 November 2023

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16**
3. **Decision notice of the meeting held on 18 October 2023** (Pages 1 - 8)
4. **Leader's Update**

Oral report of the Leader of the Council
5. **Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023** (Pages 9 - 10)
6. **Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Report** (Verbal Report)

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
7. **Strategic Vision for Early Years** (Pages 11 - 46)

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

8. **Climate Change Annual Report (2023) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 (November 2023)** (Pages 47 - 120)

Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

9. **Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030** (Pages 121 - 232)

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Employment and Skills

10. **Treasury Management Report for the half-year ended 30 September 2023** (Pages 233 - 252)

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

11. **Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers** (Pages 253 - 254)

12. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions** (Pages 255 - 260)

13. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:

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

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

14. **Development of Additional Nursing Home Capacity for Older People** (Pages 261 - 308)

(Exemption paragraph 3)

Cabinet Member for Health and Care

15. **Provision of a Waste Transfer Facility**

(Pages 309 - 326)

(Exemption Paragraph 3)

Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

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

Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording by Press and Public

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

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18 October 2023

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Alan White (Chairman)
Julia Jessel	Philip White
Ian Parry	David Williams
Jonathan Price	Victoria Wilson
Mark Sutton	

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Paul Northcott

Apologies: Simon Tagg

Part One

36. 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
Mark Deaville	44	Personal	Non-Executive Director of Nexxus

37. Decision notice of the meeting held on 20 September 2023

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 be approved.

38. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the terrorist attack on Israel earlier this month and the Council's call on everyone in Staffordshire, whatever their views, to express those views with toleration and respect, and to stand firmly against the antisemitism and islamophobia; the Government's decision to scrap the HS2 project between Birmingham and Manchester and the need to complete Phase One as planned which is crucial to fulfil the wider growth plans for Stafford; the Council continuing to argue for investment in the A50/A500 corridor, stretching from Cheshire, through Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire into the East Midlands; the Council's on-going work to fix potholes, resurface and improve roads across the county including the completion of work on two busy junctions on Eastern Avenue

in Lichfield, the resurfacing of the A34 Stone Road in Stafford, a further £500,000 improvement to the A38 Claymills Junction in Burton and work to resurface the road and footpaths on Broad Street in Leek; the Prime Minister's plans to create a smokefree generation, stopping the sales of tobacco to under 14s; and the on-going work to reduce the county's carbon emissions to net zero including the 10th anniversary of the Energy Recovery Facility at Four Ashes; be noted.

39. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 4 October 2023

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 4 October 2023 be received.

40. 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:

- It is important that we acknowledge the localised difficulties the delivery of our Economic Strategy sometimes creates for communities who live near that investment activity. The Chatterley Valley employment site being one such scheme where the ongoing closure of Peacock Hay Road is causing difficulties for local road users. I would like to reassure Cabinet and of course the local population, that Officers are working hard with the developer Harworths, following their contractor Buckingham's going into administration, to find an urgent solution to this issue so that we can get the road back open. A further update will be brought to the next Cabinet meeting. In the meantime, it is perhaps worth remembering that the scheme will unlock a 43-hectare employment site which will generate around 1,700 jobs, Gross Value-Added Benefits of £67 million per annum and £60 million of private sector investment. It will make a big impact but of course this doesn't lessen the inconvenience currently being felt by the local road users.
- The Council is committed to not only creating opportunities for business start-up and growth activity, but also supporting our major employers by securing the right infrastructure for Staffordshire's needs while balancing the interests of businesses and local people
- We have always objected in principle to the impact that HS2 would have had on our rural communities and beautiful landscape. Following the Government's announcement not to

build the route north of Birmingham, we were pleased to see, through the Network North announcement, that funding will be provided for improvements to the A50/500 corridor between Stoke and Derby through Staffordshire, cutting congestion for the 90,000 drivers who use the road each day and ensuring smoother journeys for drivers and freight. We are awaiting the detail around this announcement.

- We have gathered a coalition of like-minded authorities along the A50 A500 corridor and have secured their support to press hard for further investment activity along his route to support our major manufacturers. The development of this programme will centre around deliverable decarbonisation and energy use including smart clusters considering new hydrogen applications, innovation, skills and enhanced technologies. This initiative represents perhaps the most ambitious economic opportunity in the Midlands and the North and will secure significant additional benefits for our County, in conjunction with delivering the promised route improvements.
- The Network North announcement also included investment in upgrading J15 of the M6 in Newcastle-under-Lyme, improvements to the A5 between Hinckley and Tamworth, the reopening of the Leek to Stoke railways line and the opening of the Ivanhoe Line between Burton and Leicester, currently only for freight, to passenger services. In addition to these announcements, we will be pushing government to provide further improvements to our infrastructure to support Staffordshire businesses, to attract further private sector investment and jobs to the county and to offset the impact the construction of Phase One of Hs2 has already had on the lives of local people and businesses.
- The National Memorial Arboretum has been named the Best UK Attraction at the 2023 Group Leisure & Travel Awards for the third consecutive year. These awards recognise the best providers, attractions and destinations for groups, with the winners voted for by readers of Group Leisure & Travel magazine. In gaining the Best UK Attraction award, the Arboretum triumphed over impressive competition from other major visitor destinations, including Windsor Castle, Longleat and Buckingham Palace. We are of course extremely proud to have the NMA which represents everything we know Staffordshire is.

41. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2023/24



"We continue to deliver on our priorities and to do what is necessary to support our most vulnerable residents who need us most, while creating the right conditions for our economy to thrive.


Our work by the 'We Are Staffordshire' team to promote the county as a top location to live, work, invest in and visit continues. During the quarter, the team showcased the county at a national online conference with 600+ attendees and are now busy planning for next year's UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiif). This remains a priority, while also growing our economy by supporting local businesses and helping attract new ones with better quality jobs.

We continue to support vulnerable families through the Household Support Fund and over the summer almost 28,000 families of children in receipt of Free School Meals were issued with supermarket vouchers. Alongside this, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme which also ran over the summer holidays offered more than 49,000 places and targeted some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Work to tackle climate change is ongoing. The Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme and an extra £10.5m funding will bring eco-friendly heating solutions to rural properties that stand away from the gas network. A new permit scheme introduced at our Household Waste Recycling Centres is also helping promote sustainable waste disposal, while improving services for customers.

The council continues to face challenges within Children's services including the rising cost, higher than anticipated numbers and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures, however additional recruitment is helping ease this. We are also seeing increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs, however, additional key workers are now in post.

Demand for adult social care also remains high with additional capacity being sourced and further

	<p>options to streamline processes being explored. Despite the many pressures we face, we will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents.”</p> <p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>“All council departments continue to deliver against their priorities, and we continue to manage our finances effectively.</p> <p>We continue to keep finances in as strong a position as possible and to ensure that we provide good value for money for local taxpayers. Well managed finances also mean we can invest in our future and continue to grow our economy.</p> <p>Like many other councils, we do face rising costs across the organisation and high inflation which puts additional pressures on finances. We also continue to face challenges around demand and capacity within Children’s services, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities teams and in adult social care.</p> <p>The latest revenue forecast outturn for the council shows a forecast overspend of £7.7m (1.1), compared to the quarter 1 forecast overspend of £9.5m (1.39%).”</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider an overview of the progress in relation to delivering the council’s priorities and pledge as set out within the council’s Strategic Plan.

Decision – That the report be received.

42. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 15 November 2023 to 20 March 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
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
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
Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Drug and Alcohol Services	Name: Anthony Bullock Tel: (01785) 276649
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
Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079

43. 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

44. Nexus Care (Nexus Trading Services Limited) Annual Report 2022/23 (Exemption paragraph 3)

Note by Clerk: Councillor Deaville declared an interest as a Director of Nexxus and left the room during the consideration of this item.

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Nexxus Care (Nexxus Trading Services Limited) Annual Report 2022/23.

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

45. Unregulated Placements - Update
(Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider details of the use of unregulated placements.

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

Alan White
Leader of the Council

Minutes of the Property Sub-Committee Meeting held on 1 November 2023

Present:

Attendance	
Mark Deaville Jonathan Price	Philip White (Vice-Chair)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Ian Parry and Alan White

Part One

39. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

40. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th October

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

41. Dunstall Park Primary - Proposed Academy Lease

The Sub-Committee were presented with proposals to grant an Agreement for Lease and a 125-year Academy Lease of The Dunstall Park Primary School to The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership. The final details of the transactions to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets.

Resolved - That approval be given to grant an Agreement for Lease and a 125-year Academy Lease as indicated in the report; the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets be authorised to agree the final terms for the lease.

42. Leycett Cricket Club - Proposed new 5-year Lease

Details were submitted of proposals to grant a new 5 years' lease from 17th October 2023 at a rent of £1 per annum to Leycett Cricket Club and waiver rent due from previous lease. Agreement of the final details of the proposed new lease to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets.

Resolved - That approval be given to grant a new 5-year Lease as indicated in the report; the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets be authorised to agree the final terms for the lease.

43. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated below.

Chair

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023

Strategic Vision for Early Years



Councillor Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said,

“Childcare in Staffordshire is excellent, with 97 per cent of settings rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

The Government’s move to extend the provision of funded childcare is an opportunity for young children to enjoy high-quality play and learning to pave the way for later life.

We are developing how we back childcare providers across the county and help young families, particularly with early identification of support for delayed development and SEND.”

Report Summary:

This report provides an update on National and local changes that are planned or have changed the way we work in Staffordshire. It seeks to explain how these changes require a new approach and as such proposes to review the structure of the Early Years Service within Staffordshire County Council following the transfer of the team from Entrust.

The proposal will improve outcomes for children and families through a more efficient, joined up and holistic services for our youngest children and their families so that they can:

- a. maximise their take up of provision
- b. have timely access to high quality early education and childcare provision

We will do this by ensuring that the team design and delivery is integrated into the Family Hub model so that we continue to build on this as the integrated access to Early Help services and support.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Endorse the strategic vision for the early years' service and acknowledge the contribution this will make to Staffordshire's Strategic Plan.
- b. Endorse the principles for the proposed reorganisation of the Early Years Service delivery model detailed within this report and agree support for Officers to further develop this model with staff and stakeholders.
- c. Delegate authority to the Director for Children's Services in consultation with the lead member for Children and Young People and lead member for Education and SEND to approve the final staffing structure for the service.
- d. Endorse the planned budget profile for the Early Years Service and investment in new areas of delivery.

Cabinet – Wednesday 15 November 2023

Strategic Vision for Early Years

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Endorse the strategic vision for the Early Years Service and acknowledge the contribution this will make to Staffordshire's Strategic Plan.
- b. Endorse the principles for the proposed reorganisation of the Early Years Service delivery model detailed within this report and agree support for Officers to further develop this model with staff and stakeholders.
- c. Delegate authority to the Director for Children's Services in consultation with the lead member for Children and Young People and lead member for Education and SEND to approve the final staffing structure for the service.
- d. Endorse the planned budget profile for the Early Years Service and investment in new areas of delivery.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Children and Families

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. We are a hugely ambitious county. We know that investing in the child's earliest years can pave the way for their future. A good start in life is likely to lead to better outcomes into adulthood. In recent years developments nationally have focussed on supporting parents with affordable childcare to enable more people to work, yet this is also an opportunity to ensure that children in their earliest years have access to high quality play and learning experiences that pave the way for later life. This paper sets out how we plan to achieve this.

National Context

Extended Childcare Entitlements:

2. In the spring budget, the Chancellor announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children and the economy. This investment will provide additional funded hours for childcare, helping working families with their childcare costs and empowering them to progress their careers and support their families.
3. The new entitlements will be introduced in phases. The Government will soon be funding up to 80% of all childcare places in England, up from 50% before the spring budget. The biggest change is the extension of the subsidised 30-hours entitlement from 3-and 4-year-olds down to 9-month-olds. (Appendix A)
4. In March 2023 the Chancellor also announced a national wraparound childcare scheme providing schools and local authorities with funding to support the set-up of wraparound provision for primary school children from September 2024. (Appendix B)
5. In July 2023, the Government launched a funding consultation on the approach to funding 2-year-olds and under from 2024-25. This consultation sets out the proposed new funding formula for calculating local authority hourly funding rates for the entitlements for 2-year-olds and under from April 2024. It also details the local funding rules proposed for local authorities to follow when passing on this funding to providers. The outcome of this consultation will not be known until the autumn term 2023. (Appendix C)
6. Whilst these announcements are welcome, they are on the backdrop of a market that was already struggling to be sustainable. This is due a variety of reasons including:
 - a. National changes to pensions and the living wage
 - b. Funding rates
 - c. Rising costs of running businesses, including rent, energy costs and consumables
 - d. Staff shortages
 - e. Increasing costs for childcare and parents working more flexibly

Some providers have needed to subsidise the overall costs with fees and top up fees for privately paying children.
7. Nationally, numbers of Ofsted registered providers have fallen by 7% during the period March 2022 to March 2023. (Appendix D)

Education Recovery in Early Years:

8. Ofsted's 2022 report on Education Recovery in Early Years Provision found that the pandemic continues to affect young children's communication, social, emotional and physical development, as well as reducing independence and self-care skills. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have been particularly affected by this. (Appendix E)
9. The number of children diagnosed with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has continued to rise in recent years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of children diagnosed with developmental delays and speech and language difficulties continues to rise. (Appendix F)

1001 Critical Days:

10. The Best Start for Life Review: vision for the 1,001 Critical Days has outlined a programme of work to ensure the best support during these crucial first 1001 days, setting the foundation for babies to maximise their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing. (Appendix G)

Local Context

Staffordshire Strategic Plan:

11. Our Staffordshire Strategic Plan for 2022-26 outlines our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead.



Vision: An innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy

Outcomes	Priorities	How we work
<p>Everyone in Staffordshire will:</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Live in thriving and sustainable communities</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Be healthier and independent for longer</p> </div> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Support Staffordshire's economy to grow, generating more and better-paid jobs</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential</p> </div> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Encourage our communities to help themselves and each other</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Lead our workforce to be ambitious, courageous and empowered</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Use digital technology and data to connect, inform and support the people of Staffordshire</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Engage and listen to our communities, partners and business, working together to improve our county</p> </div> </div> </div>

Pledge: Live within our means and deliver value for money

12. Figure 1 – Outcomes and Priorities: SCC Strategic Plan

13. Our ambition is for every child in Staffordshire, whatever their background, to have the opportunity to have the best start in life. High quality early education is proven to have a positive impact on children's outcomes in both the short and long term. We will continue to work in partnership with our early years settings to make positive differences for all children and families.

14. To deliver this vision and respond to changing national and local agendas we need to fundamentally review how we deliver our services. This includes our priorities, the ways we work collaboratively and our team functions, values and systems so that we are able to:

- a. Directly contribute to related local authority strategies such as safeguarding, inclusion, health and well-being and education through a preventative approach.
- b. Connect to other service priorities through the Family Hub model and support the first 1001 days of life, ensuring children are school ready and able to thrive and that any emerging issues are identified, and appropriate support is put in place at the earliest opportunity.
- c. Provide more connected support, including advice and information to parents about the ways in which the early years offers are changing and signposting to services within communities that will support them in managing the complex early years of their child's life.
- d. Ensure the transformative reforms announced in the Spring budget are realised through the successful implementation of the extended entitlements, balancing the need to create additional childcare places with ensuring children get high quality experiences by attending settings that are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- e. Carry out a significant range of market management activities, including data analysis, consultant support for individual and groups of settings, business modelling and premises suitability to maximise sufficiency and sustainability across all sector types including childminders. This will enable eligible working families to access the right childcare provision, in the right place at the right time.
- f. Provide support and challenge to early years settings, ensuring they continue to strive to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children across all areas of learning, through a range of early intervention strategies, programmes and projects that raise expertise across the sector workforce and lead to closing gaps in performance.
- g. We support our service families by regularly attending the Ministry of Defence Local Authority Partnership group which helps keep us informed of national priorities. We have established links at the two barracks in Staffordshire with Community Development Officers and

intend to strengthen these links, ensuring all families are well informed about the newly announced childcare entitlements.

- h. Play a crucial role in the implementation and embedding of the new early help plan and the identification and support for children with development delay and SEND.

Delivery Model:

15. The Early Years Service is newly formed with 14 members of staff moving from Entrust via TUPE transfer to join the existing Early Education and Childcare Team.
16. The existing Entrust team structure is 'flat' with broadly defined roles for line management responsibility and significantly reduced resilience at a time when the need for these services has increased.
17. Job roles, responsibilities and accountabilities do not reflect the national and local context in which the team needs to operate. There is an opportunity to integrate the two teams to provide an overarching Early Years Team.
18. There is a need to review the purpose for the newly formed team, its functions, accountabilities, values and systems and how it fully supports the outcomes and priorities in the Staffordshire Strategic Plan.
19. We want to make a commitment to change the way we currently deliver services to early years settings, families and children. We can provide a more connected more place-based approach, through greater partnership working so that our support for settings, children and families is more streamlined and effective.
20. We recognise the important role we play in supporting early years settings to be inclusive, identifying any additional need and making provision effective for children at the earliest point. We know that more children and families could benefit, and long-term outcomes could be improved if we have more opportunities and capacity to support early years settings to develop inclusive practices and ensure families are provided with the right help, at the right time, in the right place.
21. We understand the significant expansion of the recently announced early years entitlements and the vital role childcare plays in enabling parents to work or take on new opportunities; it is more important than ever that we get the delivery model right. We know there will be more families requiring childcare places and therefore ensuring we plan effectively and develop team capacity to create sufficient high-quality places is central to our purpose and the success of the extended new offer for families.

Our Values

22. Staffordshire County Councils People Strategy puts at its heart the values we want for our organisation. These values are central to the way in which we want staff within the Early Years Service to work.
23. We recognise this will require personal ambition, courage and empowerment to deliver this for the youngest children in our county who need us to be ambitious about their futures, have the courage to take action to diminish the differences they experience and provide opportunities for them to play and learn in their earliest years and for their parents to also access more and better jobs knowing that their children have high quality childcare.

Our Principles

24. Our principles underpin those already identified in Staffordshire's Children and Families system:
- a. A child centred service that is committed to doing what works best for our children and settings and is informed by their views.
 - b. Restorative approaches that help create a positive team culture and mirror the types of interactions staff should have with colleagues, partners, settings, children and families.
 - c. Strong team leadership, which supports our Councils aim to be an 'excellent employer with a welcoming culture, in which people live and breathe our values'. A strengths-based attitude by leaders who prioritise quality of practice and outcomes and who have ambitions to help the team develop, alongside a genuine interest in their work and practice.
 - d. A skilled, flexible and agile team who have clear accountabilities and responsibilities and are able to rapidly adjust to changing needs.
 - e. A commitment to continuous service improvement through the identification of team plans and indicators with clear reporting mechanisms that support the priorities of the Early Years Advisory Board who also oversee and monitor progress of agreed priorities.

Our Response

25. We have worked rapidly to plan and prepare for the expansion of the funded entitlements and wrap around provision. The short time frame from announcement to implementation has required people to work at pace to mobilise this. The council is already working quickly to prepare and plan for the extended entitlements through the use of short-term

arrangements but recognises the need to build future capacity to ensure the ambitions of the project are realised.

26. Ofsted commended Staffordshire, who have not seen the rate of setting closures of other Local Authorities in the region. We know that we provide good support to the market, however we need to maintain this aspect and grow it to ensure that we can mitigate and respond to the rising number of closures due to the challenging market locally. (Appendix H)
27. We have developed a range of support for the sector through quality support, professional development opportunities and partnership working with The Careers Hub and colleges to promote early years as a career of choice and encourage students to access relevant courses. The Early Years Service continues to provide high-quality support, training and mentoring to an increasing number of settings who have new or inexperienced teams and leaders, ensuring high quality practice is maintained so that Staffordshire children can benefit.
28. We plan to maintain and develop this offer through the revised structure and support settings and families to provide high quality early learning experiences that provide the foundations for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.
29. Settings have reported an increase in numbers of children with developmental delay and SEN. This is reflected in the significant increase in the number of children who are referred to Early Years Forum, rising from 600 children in 2019 to 1020 children in 2023. To meet this increasing demand, the team have developed a risk management plan.
30. We now need to build capacity, enabling the team to be proactive and focus on early intervention more broadly, ensuring strategies and projects are maximised to ensure all children get the early support they need to prepare for happy and healthy adulthoods.
31. Referrals to Speech and Language Therapy services continue to rise. Midlands Partnership Trust have identified that currently there are 6398 children within the service and that many of these children need access to socialisation and language stimulating environments, rather than specialist services. To address these emerging patterns, we need to continue to prioritise and build on the highly our highly successful speech and language projects.
32. Staffordshire were one of 14 local authorities who delivered a pilot scheme on behalf of the DfE called 'The Early Outcomes Fund', this sought to invest in early childhood development. Two investment areas for this project were 'Hungry Little Minds' and 'Early Communication

Screening’ both of which have been incredibly successful having won national awards and featured in Nursery World and Children and Young People Now publications. (Appendix J) We plan to maintain and develop these two schemes using the current funding allocation so that the benefits can be maximised across the county.

- a. Hungry Little Minds is digital campaign for parents of children aged 0-2 supporting parents to chat, read and play with their babies. The take up for the campaign has exceeded all planned targets and feedback from families is extremely positive. As a result, this project will be sustained through the planned budget profile and the content will be updated to reflect feedback from families, the aims of the 1001 critical days and changing local contexts and priorities.
 - b. Early Communication Screening is a tool provided by Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The tool supports early years practitioners to identify speech, language and communication needs at the earliest opportunity. This programme has been highly successful; our impact analysis data shows the significant progress that children make following early identification and intervention (figure 2). As a result, this project will be sustained through the planned budget profile enabling the delivery of training and provision of practitioner resources to sustain the longevity of this evidence-based programme.
33. This investment will help us to reduce referrals to speech and language services and improve outcomes for children with development delay and SEND.
34. The Family Hubs are delivering against the Early Help Strategy to provide families with the support they need. The Early Years Service needs to be central to this delivery and is committed to playing a key role in supporting the many ways in which early help can be provided for families.

Our Engagement

35. The Early Years Team have been engaged in the development of this proposed model. The main themes from the engagement are that staff:
- a. Recognise the need to review the Early Years Service delivery model to support the shared vision and priorities outlined in the Staffordshire Strategic Plan, to achieve better outcomes for children and families.
 - b. Recognise there has been a consistent reduction in team capacity over the last five years while the team have been within Entrust. A key priority is to now align and build team capacity to address the current

- requirements from Government and to support the challenges faced by the early years sector.
- c. Acknowledge that working towards a more holistic, place-based approach is key to ensure connection with other service and understanding the local needs of our settings and families.
 - d. Identify that the development of a service with new and challenging priorities will require opportunities for greater peer support, training and professional development.
36. Our Early Years Reference Group, which includes owners and managers from early years settings across Staffordshire have identified that there are:
- a. Higher numbers of children who have speech and language delay
 - b. Higher numbers of children with SEND needs who need support and referrals to early years forum
37. Our plans to develop team capacity, longevity of successful projects and our collaborative work through the Family Hubs will ensure a more timely, holistic approach to support.

Our Performance

38. We are proud of our work in the Early Years Service and know we are in a good position to review the way that we deliver services to realise our ambition to be the best that we can be. We have built and sustained effective relationships with our early years sector, the Department for Education and Ofsted and use these to respond more effectively to need and to strengthen the quality of our practice.
39. We lead Staffordshire's Best Start Plan, building relationships and working towards goals to help all Staffordshire children to be happy and healthy, feel safe and belong and enjoy and achieve.
40. We have a range of data collections within the service that are used to measure the impact of our work and to identify service priorities. However, we intend to continually improve our data and intelligence and reporting by developing a service dashboard which will more accurately illustrate the impact of our work, identify areas of strength and those areas that require further development.
41. We use data and intelligence to prioritise support for our early years settings, this ensures our support is targeted and prioritised according to need.

Early Years Performance



97% of settings are rated
Good or Outstanding by Ofsted



100% of settings rated Requires
Improvement or Inadequate by Ofsted
improved in their next inspection



67.5% of children reached a
good level of development at the
end of Reception - higher than the
national average



99% return rate from providers
of sufficiency survey allows

Our **speech and language programme** has been recognised by the Department for Education and Ofsted as a successful model with impressive impact data.



Children who had language within normal range 50% in September 2021 to 67% in July 2022



Children who had moderate delay 36% in September 2021 to 26% in July 2022



Children who had significant delay 14% in September 2021 to 8% in July 2022

42. Figure 2 Early Years Performance, August 2023

Legal Implications

43. The Early Years Service has statutory responsibilities aligned to the Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and are specific to:

- a. providing information, advice and guidance for families including supporting them to access high quality childcare places.
- b. monitoring the early years childcare market to ensure sufficient childcare places are available for families.
- c. ensuring eligible families have access to the funded entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year and are provided with information on childcare costs.
- d. establishing the Early Years Foundation Stage framework through high quality information, advice and guidance to the early years sector.
- e. ensuring that all providers have regard to the SEN Code of Practice to meet the needs of children with disabilities or SEN.

44. In the event this requires additional legal input this will be requested as soon as possible to enable any additional legal resourcing and support to be considered.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

45. To ensure our statutory duties are discharged effectively the Local Authority centrally retains expenditure from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), this is limited to 5% of 3- and 4-year-old funding and is agreed by Schools Forum annually. This 5% is planned to be extended to include the newly announced childcare entitlements for two-year-olds and under in line with the planned roll out dates. (Appendix K)

46. This grant funds all support services for settings who receive early education funding. The Early Years Service is funded through the DSG, including £300,000 from the high needs block. The amount available is: £1,827,350.

47. There is no additional financial input requested as part of this report.

48. The proposal will be delivered within the existing financial envelope and developed further as funding from the Department for Education increases. Details of the initial proposal have been costed (subject to change) within the existing budget.

49. The Department for Education are currently consulting on the way entitlement funding will be distributed from April 2024. As a result, any recommendations in this report assume that the early years budget for 24/25 remains in line with current allocations and if this increases, we will profile the resources in line with this paper.

	Staffing £	Non Staffing £	Total £
Management & Administration	167,000	3,000	170,000
Funding, Sufficiency and Market Development	537,000	52,000	589,000
Safeguarding, Quality and Workforce Development	449,000	52,000	501,000
SEND, Inclusion and Early Intervention	468,000	52,000	520,000
Early Years Outcomes Fund	-	20,000	20,000
Hungry Little Minds Campaign	-	27,000	27,000
	1,621,000	206,000	1,827,000

50. Any additional grants received from the Department for Education for local authority resource allocation will be used to scale up developments that ensure the ambitions in this report are realised.

Risks and Issues

51. For 24/25 the Early Years Supplementary Grant will be rolled into the DSG funding. However, for 2-year-olds as the formula is due to change for how LAs receive their allocation (10.5% driven by Additional Needs Factors), this has reduced how much funding Staffordshire receive. The proposed new rate for Staffordshire is £7.55; this is what Staffordshire currently pay to providers, therefore, to create an additional centrally retained fund from this rate would require a cut to the provider rate, meaning it would be extremely challenging to retain any additional, centrally retained funding from our 2-year-old budget.
52. The time frame from the extended entitlement budget announcements to implementation is very short, meaning the team is currently required to work at pace without the release of Government funding for additional capacity.
53. The low funding rate Staffordshire receives exacerbates the national picture of setting sustainability, recruitment and retention (Appendix I). We try to mitigate this by the high-quality consultancy support we provide. However, these challenges continue it makes our sufficiency duties more difficult to fulfil.
54. In 23/24 for 3- and 4-year-old funding Staffordshire remained on the funding floor before the allocation of early years supplementary grant (EYSG).
55. The illustrative modelling published as part of the most recent Government consultation suggests that Staffordshire is one of the 40 local authorities who are likely to see a lower 2-year-old rate in 2024-25, if this rate is compared with our effective combined 2-year-old rate from September 2023, which included the additional funding being provided to local authorities through the early years supplementary grant (EYSG).

Climate Change Implications

56. Although there are no direct climate change implications because of the recommendations set out within this report, it is recognised that there will be indirect impacts, for example, travel to early years settings. Where possible Team Managers will work to reduce these impacts as part of the wider commitment to tackling Climate Change by:
 - a. A more placed based approach and integration with the Family Hubs to limit the travelling distance for consultants. Minimising the need to travel long distances, when possible, will contribute to Staffordshire's transport carbon impact.

- b. Raising provider awareness of the advantages of using premises with high energy efficiency
- c. Promote the advantages of EV travel where possible.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Early Education Entitlements and Funding Update: March 2023: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-entitlements-and-funding/early-education-entitlements-and-funding-update-march-2023>

Appendix 2 - Chancellor unveils a Budget for growth
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-unveils-a-budget-for-growth>

Appendix 3 - Early Years Funding – Extension of the Entitlements
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/early-years-funding-extension-of-the-entitlements/>

Appendix 4 - [Main findings: Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 5 - [Education recovery in early years providers: summer 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 6 - [Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 7 - The Best Start in Life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>

Appendix 8 - Setting Closures in Staffordshire

Appendix 9 - Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Staffordshire

Appendix 10 - <http://www.comms2point0unawards.co.uk/the-winners>

Appendix 11 - <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/best%20practice/article/digital-campaign-boosts-language-outcomes>

Appendix 12 - Extended Entitlements roll out dates

Community Impact Assessment

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Appendix 8 – Setting Closures

August 2022 to July 2023

21 group-based providers closed without another provider opening on site.

	Closed without another provider opening	Ofsted rating at the time of closure					Loss of places
		Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not inspected	
Page 27 Cannock Chase	3	0	2	0	0	1	66
East Staffordshire	2	0	1	0	1	0	54
Lichfeld	2	0	0	1	1	0	77
Newcastle-under-Lyme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Staffordshire	5	0	4	0	0	1	192
Stafford	6	1	4	0	0	1	213
Staffordshire Moorlands	3	0	3	0	0	0	111
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	1	14	1	2	3	713

Appendix 9 – Recruitment

Providers with current staff vacancies

	No	Yes	Total number	Percentage with vacancies
Cannock Chase	43	11	54	20%
East Staffordshire	50	19	69	28%
Lichfield	43	19	62	31%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	66	12	78	15%
South Staffordshire	46	11	57	19%
Stafford	51	26	77	34%
Staffordshire Moorlands	52	12	64	19%
Tamworth	25	9	34	26%
Staffordshire	376	119	495	24%

24% of providers currently have staff vacancies with the highest levels in Lichfield and Stafford.

44% of private providers have vacancies compared with just 7% of schools.

Providers who have had to reduce the number of children they can take due to staffing issues

	No	Not yet but may have to in future	Yes, permanently	Yes, temporarily
Cannock Chase	87%	8%	2%	4%
East Staffordshire	80%	9%	0%	12%
Lichfield	73%	17%	2%	8%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	78%	6%	1%	14%
South Staffordshire	82%	4%	2%	12%
Stafford	74%	9%	4%	13%
Staffordshire Moorlands	82%	11%	0%	8%
Tamworth	73%	9%	0%	18%
Staffordshire	79%	9%	1%	11%

More than one in ten providers have had to reduce the number of children they can take due to staffing issues. Most of these are on a temporary basis.

Tamworth has the highest percentage that have reduced numbers of children with Cannock Chase the lowest.

Reasons reported for recruitment and retention difficulties

	Not enough experience	Not turning up for interview	Accepting a job and then changing mind	New starters leaving within 6 months	Not enough qualifications
Cannock Chase	31%	33%	26%	15%	37%
East Staffordshire	35%	39%	23%	14%	45%
Stoke-on-Trent	42%	45%	35%	23%	52%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	24%	33%	14%	15%	37%
South Staffordshire	30%	25%	21%	14%	30%
Stafford	35%	31%	17%	13%	39%
Staffordshire Moorlands	26%	27%	21%	8%	30%
Tamworth	32%	47%	29%	12%	44%
Staffordshire	32%	34%	23%	14%	39%

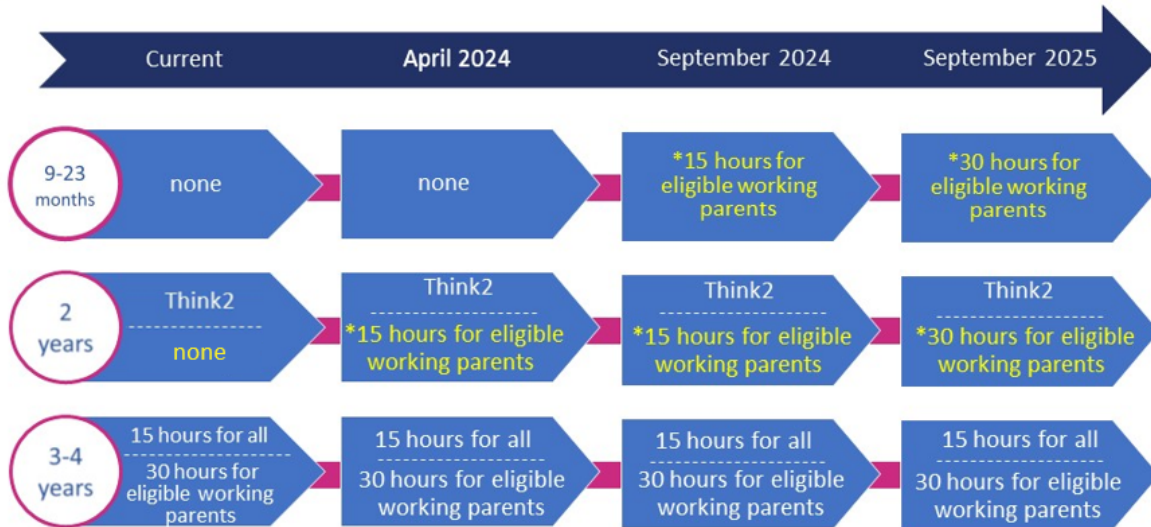
In addition to not having enough applicants, many providers are finding the quality of applicants is below requirements.

62% of private providers indicated that they had had candidates not turn up for interview compared to 7% of school-based provision.

64% of private providers said candidates did not have the right qualifications compared to 14% of school-based provision.

The highest problems were within private providers with the lowest across schools.

Budget Announcement Entitlement Changes 2023-2025



*new offers for working parents

Community Impact Assessment

Proposal Title: Early Years Strategic Vision

Author: Helen Gibson

Date: 7-9-23

➤ **Equality Assessment**

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Age - older and younger people	Through the relationship we have through The Family Hubs, locality meetings and partnership working, we can promote and launch the Governments extended childcare announcements and the benefits for families. This means we can work with partners who already have established relationships with families and know the unique characteristics of our different communities.	Partners may have limited capacity to engage with the launch events and promote the new childcare entitlements for families.	Communication strategy developed with Comms team and partners to ensure the new childcare entitlements are promoted in diverse, effective ways to engage as many partners as possible. Partner pack produced to ensure a variety of communication assets are available for a variety of audiences.
Disability - people who are living with different conditions and disabilities, such as: mental illnesses, long term conditions, Autism and other neurodiverse conditions, learning disabilities, sensory impairment and physical disabilities.			
Gender reassignment - those people in the process of transitioning from one sex to another	The benefits of childcare may be understood or valued differently across communities and individual families.	Some families may choose not to take up their childcare entitlements.	The benefits of childcare for children and families will be promoted by partners and early years settings through the Comms strategy. However, individual preferences and choices will always be respected.
Marriage & Civil Partnership - people who are married or in a civil partnership should not be treated differently at work			
Pregnancy & Maternity - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers	All families (subject to eligibility for some childcare offers) will be able to access the new childcare entitlements. This will mean more two-year-olds and under twos who have a disability will be able to access childcare places.	Due to the current recruitment challenges across the early years sector settings may have more less experienced/qualified staff and find difficulty offering the number of places required or have staff who are able to meet varied needs of children.	A successful bid has enabled the LA to be part of the evidenced based Dingley's Promise, Comic Relief Project. This will enable all early years practitioners and the children's workforce to access high quality training and support to embed high quality, inclusive practices across the County.
Race - people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins			
Religion or Belief - people with any religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of belief. A belief should affect a person's life choices or the way they live for it to be considered	See also section below Health, Well-being and Social Care section below		The EEAC team offer a brokerage service for families who may find difficulty finding a childcare place to meet their needs.
Sex - men or women			
Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes			

➤ **Workforce Assessment**

Who will be affected – consider the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Endorsing a new strategic vision for early years and the principles for a proposed reorganisation will have a potential impact on members of the newly formed Early Years Team.</p>	<p>Coproducing a new strategic vision for the team will support the team to realise the ambitions within the Staffordshire Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The team organisation, including planning for additional capacity will ensure the team can successfully respond to local and national policy, projects and initiatives.</p>	<p>The process of change may impact positively or negatively on team well-being, resilience, motivation and enthusiasm.</p> <p>The team may feel any changes have/are being designed and thought about without their input.</p>	<p>The Staffordshire strategic plan has been used as a key part of team development days to identify how our unique team supports the priorities in the plan.</p> <p>The strategic vision for early years has been co-produced with the early years team using a variety of strategies to ensure their contributions to the vision and future needs of the service are heard and valued. Feedback from the sessions has been extremely positive so far.</p> <p>Feedback from team sessions has been reflected on and responded to. A whole team resilience training day has been planned and will be delivered by the Health and Well-Being Team.</p> <p>Three team sessions have been led by the Practice Excellence Team to develop our team values and develop a team charter.</p> <p>An electronic survey has been sent to all team members to support the completion of the team stress risk assessment. The results will be</p>

Who will be affected – consider the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
			<p>collated and strategies developed with the team to support any areas identified.</p> <p>Training for all Managers on resources available to support individual and team well-being is being delivered by the Health and Well-Being Team.</p> <p>We Talk sessions are planned for all team members monthly. However, Team Leaders are available for unplanned meetings and discussions when necessary.</p> <p>The team plan which identifies current priorities is being led and developed by the team, creating a sense of ownership and inclusion.</p> <p>Continue to ensure timely and clear communication to teams.</p>

Who will be affected – consider the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 40</p>			
	<p>Increased capacity and development and design of team roles ensures the LA can meet their statutory duties.</p>	<p>If team capacity is not addressed, the LA may find it more challenging to meet the statutory duties.</p>	<p>Within current budget there are opportunities to increase capacity in some teams, but this will be a staged approach according to government funding. There may be ring-fenced one-off budgets from government to enhance capacity which will be utilised in line with requirements in the grant.</p>
	<p>There will be additional training opportunities and development for staff to support the team priorities and the team as a whole</p>	<p>Team members may not feel training or development opportunities are required</p>	<p>The benefits of engaging in training and developmental opportunities will be shared through team days and We Talk sessions.</p> <p>The team have been offered the opportunity to identify individual and team training needs. A CPD plan will be developed by the team in collaboration with team leaders.</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>A more connected service following a more place-based approach.</p>	<p>Enables the team to reach more diverse communities, ensuring all families and partners understand the newly announced childcare entitlements (subject to eligibility) are able to support and signpost families, enabling them to access work which will support economic recovery.</p> <p>For children of families subject to income eligibility criteria early access to high quality childcare provision and links to support services in districts will provide pathways to improved outcomes.</p>	<p>Relationships and connections in two newly formed services are not securely embedded.</p> <p>Families may not recognise the benefits of childcare or choose to make alternative arrangements.</p>	<p>Family Hub Lead and Early Years Lead already work closely together and will develop a secure plan to ensure relationships become quickly embedded. An Early Years Team member already attends the Family Improvement Board for each district.</p> <p>Focussed work is being completed to ensure a range of communication strategies are utilised and the benefits of taking up places are shared with families and partners.</p>
<p>Successful roll out and promotion of the new entitlements will mean children (subject to eligibility) are in childcare earlier, which will lead to earlier identification of any emerging needs such as health and/or SEND concerns.</p>	<p>Signposting to earlier appropriate support impacting on better outcomes for children. Awareness of support service within a community through the integral role the team will need to play in the Family Hub model.</p>	<p>Greater focus on the under twos, may require additional training for early years practitioners and the early years team.</p> <p>Increased number of under twos in settings who require earlier intervention may result in additional workload.</p>	<p>Support to the sector and engagement of the Early Years Team is already planned for emotion coaching, trauma and attachment training and the large-scale Dingley's Promise workforce Development Training.</p> <p>Specific Training will be provided as part of the new CPD plan for the Early Years Consultants that focusses on the needs of the under twos, early intervention and speech and language.</p> <p>Opportunities to increase capacity in a staged approach and to share knowledge and skills across teams will be planned</p>

➤ **Communities Assessment**

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Continuity and expansion of a high-quality service for early years settings in communities across the County.	Increased capacity enables the team to respond more rapidly to need.	Team activity linked with short time frames for the delivery of Government agendas for the extended entitlements may dominate the capacity of the team.	Clearly identified team delivery map, team plans and work allocations that are overseen by Team Managers and discussed through the We Talk system. Priorities are reviewed regularly by Managers.
More connected service to align with family hub model and strengthen setting capacity to provide the right support, in the right place at the right time.	Knowledge of local communities and alignment of support for settings, children and families.	Lack of engagement for some settings in the proposed place-based approach and engagement with wider partnerships.	<p>Engagement sessions with early years settings, partners, and families. Launch and team engagement sessions with Family Hub Managers to empower and inform the team.</p> <p>Clear systems for information, advice and guidance are shared and communicated to communities.</p> <p>Comms strategy is developed with key dates and engagement activities.</p> <p>Setting survey is communicated and results analysed to inform future planning.</p>
Deploy the team to enable a more place-based approach to work allocation.	Strengthened relationships with the sector. Greater depth of place-based knowledge.	Consultant expertise across the County may not be fairly distributed and existing relationships across the whole	Flexibility of approach and utilisation of the teams skills and capacity to ensure that no community is disadvantaged.

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	Consistency in the delivery of support.	County may be less developed.	Reflective approaches and survey to settings to ensure the Early Years Service continues to meet setting needs, relationships are maintained and the service is high quality.
Childcare and wrap around provision available to meet the needs of families.	Provision enables parents to work and support economic recovery.	Childcare and Wrap Around Provision may not be available in all locations.	In depth knowledge of the childcare sector through provision mapping and sufficiency audit and plans is carried out by the team. Sector support is provided by the team to set up new or expand existing childcare or Wrap Around provision. Sustainability support is also provided by the Early Years team free of charge to the early years sector.

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➤ Economic Assessment

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Successful roll out and promotion of the new entitlements will likely require an expanded early years workforce.	More opportunities to establish and develop careers in early years.	The sector is already struggling with recruitment and retention. May lead to setting closures, reduced places offered, reduction in quality.	Promotion of early years careers, job fairs, national careers service, job centre sessions, recruitment and retention work with the sector. Support to the sector to ensure consistent high-quality in settings. Continual feedback to DfE through regular LA meetings and working groups.
Successful roll out and promotion of the new entitlements will allow more parents to move into or increase work opportunities.	Thriving job market to support economic recovery.	There may be more demand for places than availability in some locations. This is due to increased challenges	Detailed sufficiency plans are maintained by the Early Years Team. These outline areas of

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
		nationally being faced in terms of sustainability and recruitment of qualified staff.	<p>concern and possible opportunities for development or expansion.</p> <p>Government are looking at building recruitment campaigns. The Early Years Team have been developing strategies to support settings with recruitment.</p>

➤ **Climate Change Assessment**

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Increased travel to early years settings.	Support for the sector.	Increased travel, pollution.	<p>Team Managers will work to reduce these impacts as part of the Council's wider commitment to tackling Climate Change by: Limiting travelling distance for consultants wherever possible. However, this is dependent on the level of demand in different localities for our services, the differing expertise of consultants and their home addresses. Minimising the need to travel long distances, where possible, will contribute to Staffordshire's transport carbon impact.</p> <p>Signpost team members to Climate Change website pages, specifically noting the sections on what we can do as employees.</p>

➤ **Environment Assessment – No impacts identified**

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023

Climate Change Annual Report (2023) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 (November 2023)



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

"As a county council, we're driven by a powerful mission—to make Staffordshire Sustainable.

We've set our sights on an ambitious goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions as an organisation by 2050.

Back in 2019, we declared a climate change emergency. I am pleased to share that we have reduced our carbon emissions by 50%.

This achievement is a testament to our dedication and hard work. It's also a stark

reminder that our journey is far from over.

We've devised a comprehensive 'Climate Change Action Plan. This blueprint outlines our strategy for tackling the remaining half of our carbon emissions. It's a roadmap that signifies our determination to continue this vital work and pave the way toward a sustainable future."

Report Summary:

Mitigating and adapting to Climate Change and becoming a net zero organisation by 2050 is a key priority for Staffordshire County Council and is a "green thread" throughout our Strategic Plan, we will tackle climate change, enhance our environment and make Staffordshire more sustainable.

The Annual Report records the significant 50% reduction in the councils carbon emissions that has been made since declaring a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019, with continued success in our fourth year. Demonstrating the pragmatic, action focussed approach by the Council.

Finally, the report seeks approval of the Climate Change Action Plan revision 3, November 2023 (CCAP) which contains specific actions to be undertaken by the Council prior to 2025 which will assist in our journey to become net carbon zero by 2050.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the Council's Climate Change 2022/2023 Annual Report which records the positive progress that has been made on our target to become net carbon zero by 2050.
- b. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan revision 3, November 2023 which lists our key climate change mitigating actions over the next 2 years.

Cabinet – Wednesday 15 November 2023

Climate Change Annual Report (2022/2023) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 (November 2023)

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the Council's Climate Change 2022/2023 Annual Report which records the positive progress that has been made on our target to become net carbon zero by 2050.
- b. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 which lists our key climate change mitigating actions over the next 2 years.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background and Progress

1. The Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (CCAP) containing 50 specific actions was approved and launched at the end of November 2022 and the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework was approved by Cabinet in February 2021.
2. Strong progress is being made on the 50 specific actions contained in CCAP and it should be noted that some actions have a timeframe of more than one year and are still present in this revision.
3. An internal project group, with officer representatives from all appropriate teams, has been meeting regularly since December 2020 and this group has been used to develop the initial Climate Change Action Plan revision in 2023. The CCAP is envisaged to be a plan which will be current until 2025, although it will be reviewed yearly to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose.
4. It is clear that carbon sequestration will be key to the Council meeting its legal obligations. A study "Zero by Nature" has been commissioned

and shall highlight areas where there is potential for carbon sequestration on the SCC property portfolio.

5. The member led Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) has also explored the opportunities that land use change can offer the County with respect to carbon sequestration. These findings have been fed back to Scrutiny.
6. Collaboration and exploration of opportunities continues with the District and Borough Councils through the Staffordshire Sustainability Board, to jointly tackle climate change on a Countywide basis.
7. The County Council recognises it has a wider leadership role to play in collaborating with public and private partners in supporting the county of Staffordshire become net zero.

Annual Climate Change Report

8. The annual climate change report is attached as **Appendix 1**.
9. The report notes a significant reduction in carbon emissions of c 2,611 tCo₂e from 2021/22 to 2022/23, a reduction of some 9%. This reduction in emissions comes from a number of areas such as, reduction in gas use in corporate buildings, reduction in gas use in maintained school, reduction in electricity use within Waste Management and the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) within some of our heavy fleet vehicles. It should be noted that this significant reduction in annual emissions is unlikely to be replicated going forward and future reporting is likely to show slower progress due to the nature of the challenge before the authority.
10. The report provides an indication of the carbon emissions by area of operation following an audit of the 2022/23 data. The format is consistent with the refresh of the 2018/19 carbon baseline carried out for Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.
11. The report also provides an overview of achievements around the five core themes contained in the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework which link to the actions in earlier versions of the CCAP.
12. The report provides details on the Climate Change Member Fund that continued into its third year, last year. As set out in the report, 290 grants were awarded and a total of £201,690 was given out in grants to community groups, schools, charities and Parish Councils over the past three years.

13. The Council's third Annual Climate Change Report was reviewed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 6 November 2023. The report was welcomed by the Committee.

Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP)

14. The CCAP is a corporate action plan owned and delivered by the whole organisation. The Sustainability Team, based in the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Directorate has a role to co-ordinate and support the delivery of net zero, but it will only be achieved by the whole organisation. As both the annual review and the CCAP demonstrate, tackling Climate Change is everyone's responsibility.
15. The draft CCAP revision 3 was reviewed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 6 November 2023. The final version of draft CCAP revision 3 is attached as **Appendix 2**.
16. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members did not suggest any changes or additions to the actions contained in the plan.
17. As mentioned previously the CCAP includes actions until 2025 although it is intended that the plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.
18. As mentioned previously, the rate of progress towards net zero going forward is likely to be slower than in the last few years and this is reflected in the Programme Roadmap contained within the CCAP.
19. It is intended that progress on specific actions contained in the plan will be reviewed and recorded in subsequent climate change annual reports.
20. This will ensure that progress is tracked, and Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked that the Climate Change Annual Report is presented on a yearly basis along with any intended changes to specific actions contained in the CCAP.

Timescale

21. The Council has made a commitment to become net carbon zero by 2050. The developing roadmap shows this to be possible, but it is likely to be a major challenge which will require significant carbon sequestration to avoid carbon emissions that we cannot reduce.
22. The actions contained in the CCAP will in some cases take longer than one year to fully action, but it is hoped that all will be completed by 2025.

23. It is proposed that the future Climate Change Annual Reports and any changes to the draft CCAP will be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.
24. The Climate Change Members Action Fund (round 4) was launched in July 2023.

Legal Implications

25. The Council has made a commitment to become net carbon zero by 2050.
26. The measures outlined in this report will assist the Council in reaching net zero targets aligning with the governments legal obligation to achieve net zero by 2050.

Risks Identified

27. The task of achieving net carbon zero for the authority by 2050 is going to be challenging and is likely to require significant carbon offsetting. The road map to achieve net zero is set out in the back of the CCAP and the Zero by Nature study that is currently in progress will identify opportunities for carbon sequestration on SCC owned land.
28. The aim of achieving net carbon zero for Staffordshire is a much bigger task as the Council emits less than 1% of the c.5.8m tonnes of carbon produced in Staffordshire annually. Action on that will need to be co-ordinated at a national, regional, and local level if this is to be achieved.
29. Financial provision has been made in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which spans a period of five years. Future iterations of the MTFS will consider any long-term financial support requirements. Individual projects (such as sequestration) that require funding will have individual business cases.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

30. Budget provision has been made in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to support climate change activities.
31. The budget available in 2023/24 is being used to support actions in CCAP and will be used to support CCAP revision activities once approved.

Climate Change Implications

32. To reach net zero everyone within the organisation will have to play their role in reducing carbon emissions that lie within the financial boundary of the Council. Although this CCAP will continue the organisation on a

positive downward trend with our emissions, some technologies are yet to be developed at scale to allow us to consider them as feasible.

33. We should also bear in mind that some technologies are prohibitively expensive at this current time, to facilitate a rapid reduction in emissions across all sectors. We must therefore consider our target date to achieve Net zero with this in mind.

Summary

34. Positive progress has been made on the Climate Change agenda since our declaration.

35. The 2023 Annual Report outlines the main achievements made and records a significant reduction in the Council's carbon emissions from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

36. The attached CCAP is a considered list of actions which will assist the Council in reaching its ambition to become net carbon zero by 2050. The plan contains activities which will be relevant until 2025 although it is proposed to review annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Annual Report (2023)

Appendix 2 – Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3

Appendix 3 – Draft comments Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
06nov23

Community Impact Assessment

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Climate Change

Annual Report 2022/23



Foreword

Climate change has regularly made headlines in the past year. In 2022 the UK witnessed temperatures exceeding 40 degrees for the first time, along with extended periods of drought and storms. Scientific evidence shows that unless we take substantial steps to decrease emissions, these extreme events will become more frequent.

Combating climate change continues to be a high priority for the Council. We ensure that the full effects of climate change are considered in all Cabinet decisions, enabling positive outcomes continually be delivered for our communities.

The dedicated efforts of our staff in designing and delivering projects and programs with climate change in mind have led to a consistent decrease in the Council's carbon emissions each year, since our climate change declaration in 2019. While this is a significant accomplishment, we recognise that there's always more to do.

If greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to zero by 2050 or before, our local climate will still change. We need to prepare for this change. Over the next year, our main focus will be developing a plan to make our services more resilient in adapting to a changing climate. This plan will run alongside our efforts in our Climate Change Action Plan to decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

By building on our current work and looking ahead to our future plans, we can make a significant contribution to creating a stronger, more resilient future for our local environment, community, and economy.



Simon Tagg

Staffordshire County Council
*Cabinet Member for Environment,
Infrastructure and Climate Change*



Introduction

Staffordshire County Council has committed to transform our corporate estate and services to be net zero by 2050. To achieve this, we are taking a wide range of actions outlined in the **Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025** to reduce carbon emissions.

This report reviews our achievements during 2022 and 2023. It also refers to the difficulties we have faced and what we're planning to accomplish over the next few years. Previously, our annual report provided information on emissions from the preceding year, which was due to the methods we used for data collection and analysis. Now, we've changed it so we can share achievements and emissions for the same timeframe in one report. So, this report talks about the carbon emissions for both 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The Council's Climate Change Action Plan was reviewed and published in September 2022. This review allowed us to take stock of progress and identify areas where more targeted monitoring would be beneficial. Eleven actions were marked as complete and new actions were introduced to maintain our journey to net zero.

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Emissions

Calculating our carbon footprint

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SCC greenhouse gas emissions

The carbon footprint contains information on our energy, fuel and transport emissions for buildings and assets within the council's reporting boundary. The methodology for calculating the Council's carbon footprint is outlined in Appendix 2.

Greenhouse gas emissions for 2021/22 and 2022/23 are presented in this report. We have continued to reduce emissions, achieving a reduction of **916 tonnes**, taking our carbon footprint to **28,152** in 2021/22. Emissions fell by a further **2,611 tonnes** in 2022/23 to **25,541 tonnes**. This represents a **12% reduction** in emissions since 2020/21 and a **50% reduction** since 2018/19, see Figure 1.

Figure 1 Staffordshire County Council Carbon emissions

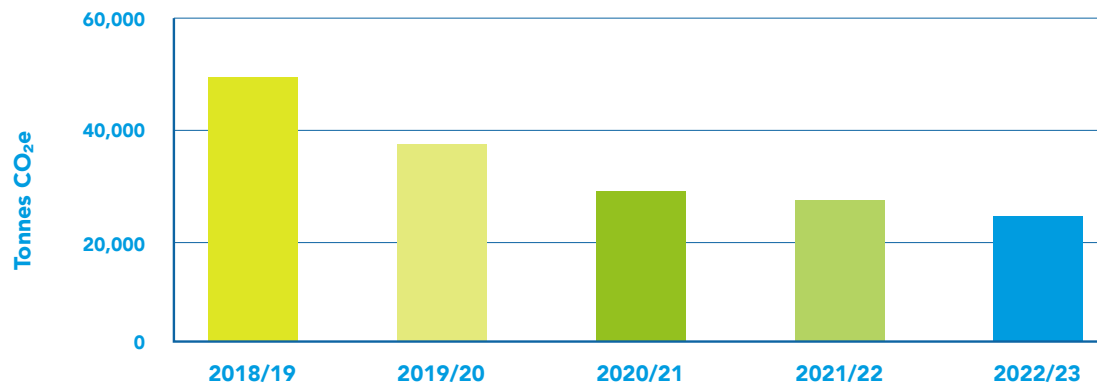


Figure 2 tracks the emissions by generation type. The most notable decline in emissions are from Electricity use and Waste Management. For Waste Management this change is largely because we modified the way we calculate the Council's portion of the waste. This new method gives us a better reflection of the Council's emissions from processing waste.

The total amount of general waste being sent for energy recovery has remained relatively constant over recent years, rising slightly in 2021/22 before falling back to levels of previous years.

A new waste emissions calculation tool is being developed for use by local authorities to calculate emissions from waste operations incorporating incineration emissions. This data has previously been unavailable for local authority use and has the potential to substantially increase the recorded emissions from next year. Reducing the amount of waste produced is essential if we are to tackle the emissions related to managing Staffordshire's household waste. This is one of the key priorities in the **Climate Change Action Plan**.

Electricity use has decreased 15-20% since 2018 for street lighting and corporate properties. Electricity use in schools has decreased by 42% over the same period. The significant fall in schools is largely due to a reduction in some maintained schools becoming Academies and therefore no

longer included in the Council's footprint. The substantial drop in carbon emissions illustrated in Figure 2 reflects the reduction in energy use as well as the council changing to a renewable electricity energy tariff in 2019 which considerably reduces emissions compared to a non-renewable tariff.

Energy efficiency works have also been completed in some schools. It has been difficult to directly attribute the energy savings to the recent works completed since most schools showed a significant reduction in energy use due to the rising energy costs in 2022.

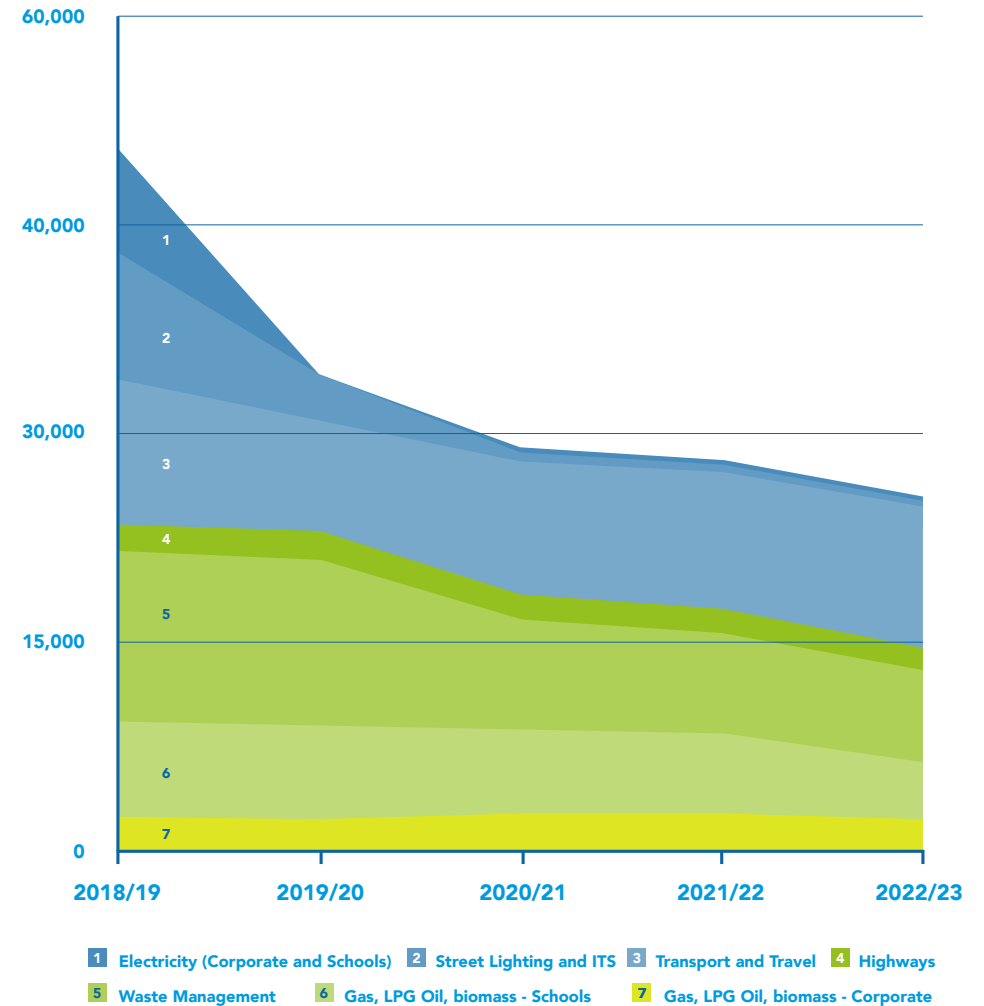
The average reduction of gas usage in council maintained schools from 2021/22 to 2022/23 was 22%. Similarly gas use in corporate properties reduced by an average of 10%.

As we started to recover from the Covid pandemic and lockdown restrictions lifted, emissions from business travel increased slightly in 2021/22. Although business travel emissions rose again in 2022/23 this has remained much lower than pre-pandemic emissions as staff have widely adopted online meetings, significantly reducing the need for travel.

Staffordshire County Council highways, introduced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to the gritting fleet and forklifts in December 2022, which saved 60 tonnes of carbon emissions in just 3 months.

In 2021/22 travel emissions from our home care service were included for the first time. This data had previously been unavailable and now forms part of the core baseline emissions data.

Figure 2 Carbon emissions by type





Staffordshire Sustainability Board

influencing change
across Staffordshire

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Staffordshire Sustainability Board

The Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB) is made up of elected members and supported by council directors and officers from all the local authorities within Staffordshire.

The Board facilitates a collaborative forum to influence change and encourage organisations and individuals across Staffordshire to join forces to combat climate change.

January 2023 the Joint Waste Management Board successfully integrated with the SSB leading to a clearer focus on waste reduction as part of the Board's overall sustainability goals.

Notable achievements for the Board last year included:

- **Producing a Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.** This document creates a framework to allow coordination and facilitation of safe and reliable access to chargepoints across the county. The Strategy supports all modes of sustainable transport to ensure improvements enhance the full transport offered within Staffordshire to meet the anticipated increase in demand.
- **Developing a joint countywide communications plan** outlining how councils will work collaboratively to advise and encourage residents to make positive climate change choices. The Strategy identifies activities and targeted information that will be delivered throughout the year, including the 'carbon bubble roadshow' with events in each District and Borough Council during the summer of 2023.
- **Building resilience to climate change** is recognised as a priority and Staffordshire Councils came together to develop a joint Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The Strategy includes a range of objectives to reduce exposure to climate change risk and to capitalise on new opportunities to provide people with a safe, comfortable place to live and work. The Strategy is just the beginning of an ongoing process for identifying the most important actions to adapt to climate change.



Achievements

**Bettering the county for present
and future residents**

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Summary of Achievements during 2022/23

Reporting has been provided against the five key themes of the action plan:

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Carbon Reduction

Highways introduce a more sustainable fuel

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) biofuel is a more sustainable, renewable and low-carbon fuel alternative to conventional diesel. Amey, the principal contractor for Staffordshire highways introduced a pilot project and trialled HVO in the gritting fleet and forklifts. The transition provided savings of 60 tonnes of carbon compared to the use of conventional diesel. HVO also produces less pollution than conventional diesel, reducing particulate matter by up to 84% and improving local air quality too.

Investment continues to upgrade street lighting and signalling

The County is working on upgrading the existing streetlights to modern LED equivalents. This four year project is due for completion by 2024 and should achieve a reduction in energy use by 43%. Investment made in 2022/23 will save the council £7,000 per year and result in an annual reduction in energy use of 18,400 kWh. That's an energy-saving equivalent of watching the TV constantly for 42 years!

Energy efficient Staffordshire History Centre

The Staffordshire History Centre decided that when they were building their new extension, they wanted to make sure that it was better than national building standards. They did this to create a centre that would be fit for the future. The four story archive storage extension will be designed to provide passive conditions including a high level of insulation, high air-tightness and heavy thermal mass. The new design provides a secure and stable environment for storing the historic records as well as minimising operational costs for heating and cooling. Energy use saved from this higher specification is estimated to save 2.5 tonnes of carbon a year.





Carbon Reduction Cont...

Retrofit to Tamworth library

Tamworth library underwent significant renovation work and improvements. This allowed for additional work to be completed to make the property more energy-efficient, including improved insulation in the walls and more energy efficient windows. A new Building Management system was installed to allow better control and monitoring of energy use and heating. It is estimated this work will save around 4 tonnes of carbon a year.

Conversion of Kingston Centre to a Primary school

The Kingston Centre building was originally a school built in the 1940s, it was extended and converted to offices in the 1990s until recently where it has been used as a Covid vaccination centre. A £4 million refurbishment project on the site is almost complete to build a new school to allow St Leonard's Primary to relocate to a larger property. Funding of £795,000 was secured from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation fund to allow for higher specification energy efficiency technologies to be included in the retrofit. Six air source heat pumps have been installed for heating which will create a considerable carbon saving over conventional gas boilers. In addition, high levels of insulation and Solar PV are to be installed. In total, it is estimated adopting lower carbon technologies and greater insulation will save the school 150 tonnes of carbon each year.

Lifting people from fuel poverty with Warmer Homes Scheme

Helping people with rocketing energy bills and lifting them out of fuel poverty is a priority in Staffordshire. The Warmer Home Scheme helps residents in fuel poverty better insulate their homes and install more efficient heating systems so they can heat their home for less. The scheme has been running for a number of years and has delivered outstanding results. Last year, £5.75 million was awarded to 427 properties in Staffordshire, installing a total of 540 energy efficiency measures. This resulted in a reduction in the amount of energy needed to heat homes, lowering carbon emissions and saving residents money on home heating. Much of the success is down to a unique partnership, which includes all district and borough councils alongside delivery partners such as E.ON, Broad Oaks and Beat the Cold. The model and approach are recognised as an exemplar of good practice, having recently been commended in the Regional Energy Efficiency Awards and Finalists for both MJ and LGC Awards.

**150 tonnes
of carbon
saved**





Natural Environment

Native tree planting

Lymedale Business Park had 1,140 native trees and shrubs planted on just half a hectare of land. When these trees mature, this densely planted area will capture 2 tonnes of carbon per year.

Reducing flooding at Hyssop Close – Cannock

In 2021, flooding of local businesses on Hyssop Close resulted in damages of over £300,000. Working with Cannock Chase District Council and a local specialist, a trash screen to prevent the culvert blocking during heavy rainfall events was designed. Funding of £7,000 from the Environment Agency and £3,000 from the District Council allowed the new trash screen to be installed. Just two weeks after installation a flash flood occurred, and the trash screen saved the businesses from suffering further flooding. This is a great piece of collaborative work between Staffordshire County Council and Cannock Chase District Council.

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Waste

Community Volunteer waste ambassadors

The 'waste savvy' volunteer programme managed through our contractor Garden Organic came to the end of its contract period. This programme has reached people of all ages and interests to help to increase awareness of the importance of reducing waste and how to recycle correctly. The volunteers have delivered at least 71 talks, provided information at over 150 events and reached in excess of 5000 people, what an achievement. The enthusiasm and hard work of the volunteers over the last few years to provide information at events and talks to schools and community groups has been very much appreciated. If you are interested in being involved in the new volunteer waste reduction programme, please contact:

wastesavvy@staffordshire.gov.uk

Reduction in waste to landfill

We have reviewed the way we manage the total waste stream when our Energy recovery plants are undergoing maintenance. By decreasing the waste from external sources during maintenance periods, this increases capacity for our own household waste, thus mitigating the need to send over 1800 tonnes of waste to landfill this year. This drastically reduces the climate change impact of this waste and is a positive step for the environment.





Air Quality

Highway and Transport Capital Programme

Delivery of the 2022/23 highway and transport capital programme included an investment of over £4.5 million towards the development and construction of schemes that will improve the environment for walking and cycling in Staffordshire. In 2022/23, the Council secured a further £6 million through successful bids for active travel schemes that will contribute towards the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Planning for the expansion of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The Staffordshire County Council Public EV Charging Strategy was agreed by the council in January 2023 and is now in the process of being agreed and adopted across the district and borough councils.

A collaborative Staffordshire EV officer working group has been established to share best practice and local updates.

Staffordshire County Council have been notified that Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) capability funding is available up to an indicative value of £613,000 and LEVI capital funding is available up to an indicative value of £4.5 million. It has been agreed in principle that Staffordshire County Council will work in partnership with neighbouring authorities (Derby City Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council) and Midlands Connect to create a consortium to secure the LEVI funding. Expressions of interest for the capability and consortium capital funding have been submitted to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and Energy Saving Trust.

Following initial work to develop and create the Staffordshire County Council Public Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy and in preparation for the upcoming LEVI funding it was recommended that a new role be established for an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Delivery Manager. This post was fulfilled in December 2022.





Air Quality Cont...

Levelling Up Fund Award – Investing in Mid Staffordshire’s Major Road Network

In 2022/23, Staffordshire County Council was awarded Levelling Up Funding which included:

- **£3.6 million towards access for all improvements focusing on the walking and cycling environment along the A34 Cannock town centre and A34 Stafford (Lichfield Road, town centre and Gaol Square).**
- **£4.3 million towards kickstarting Staffordshire’s zero emission bus agenda in Cannock, Stafford and Burton.**

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These projects are expected to be completed by March 2026. As well as contributing to the goal of reducing carbon emissions in transportation, promoting more active modes of travel will help tackle long-term health challenges. Additionally, it will make it easier for people to get to work and training opportunities, boosting economic well-being and community pride.

By giving buses priority on the road, it will make sure that public transport is more reliable and will keep travel times more consistent. Introducing zero emission buses on the busy A511 Burton and A34 Cannock to Stafford corridors will reduce carbon emissions and local air pollution.

Air Aware Staffordshire Summary

This year we once again promoted the Countywide Anti-Idling Campaign to schools, businesses and community organisations. The uptake was good with over 100 settings receiving a pack containing a railing banner, posters and signpost boards to raise awareness and remind visitors of their anti-idling commitments.

In schools we ran a total of 12 pupil-led anti-idling campaigns in key areas around the county, targeting parents who are picking up or dropping off at school. We also ran a series of campaigns targeting all schools throughout the year on key dates such as Walk to School Week and Walk to School Month to promote sustainable and active travel.

One school in Leek ran a term-long project to learn about and raise awareness of air pollution. The sixth form pupils at the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school performed outdoor studies within the town of Leek to measure levels of air pollution, to examine where the problem was greatest and ran campaigns to help reduce air pollution. They delivered a whole school assembly and ran a campaign to target visitors, parents and school transport operators to ensure they were switching off their engines when visiting the site.





Behavioural Change

The library service encourages people to make a difference

The library service received £2,500 of funding from the Green Libraries partnership grant fund to support environmental activity in libraries. Library staff were invited to become climate change champions and take a lead on developing small scale climate change projects. The champions developed creative displays and activities, such as delivering craft reuse workshops, to show that small behavioural changes can make a difference. Over 900 Staffordshire residents engaged with the project and positive feedback was received.

Libraires I.T reuse scheme

Staffordshire libraries service teamed up with the Community Foundation for Staffordshire to allow people to donate used IT equipment for distribution to the people in our communities who need it most. **The scheme** received over 260 public donations of used IT equipment and 123 laptop donations from organisations. Following refurbishment (where possible) 254 of these items have been gifted to individuals or families who are financially vulnerable, adults with disabilities, children with SEND, Ukrainian refugees, and care leavers.

Carbon literacy training for SMEs

Members of Staffordshire Business Environment Network (Sben) were invited to attend accredited carbon literacy training, funded by Staffordshire County Council. The training helped to raise awareness of climate change and how it can impact our lives and business. 47 businesses completed the training, with 41 going on to complete the assessment to achieve carbon literacy accreditation. Positive feedback was received from the course, with participants confirming they now have the confidence to identify climate change actions at work.





Behavioural Change Cont...

Climate Change Action Fund

Round three of the Climate Change Action fund was successfully delivered from September-December 2022. The Councillor led fund invited applications for funding between £500 - £3,000 from not-for-profit organisations, parish councils and schools. There was a high demand for the funds, with several of the County Councillor Divisions being oversubscribed. 92 applications were received, and 73 projects were awarded funding totalling £85,546 across the County. Successful projects included the conversion of lighting to energy-efficient LED, increasing insulation in properties, installing bike sheds in schools to encourage active travel, tree planting and awareness raising initiatives. Round 4 of the Climate Change Action Fund launched in July 2023.

Climate Change Conference

September 2022, Staffordshire County Council organised its inaugural climate change conference, bringing together representatives from community groups, schools, and parish councils. The conference aimed to educate participants about climate change, increase awareness of critical factors, and motivate them to establish carbon reduction projects in their respective areas. The event saw 44 in-person attendees and 25 virtual participants. 85% expressed inspiration drawn from the conference and 90% indicated an intention to apply to the Council's Climate Change Action Fund scheme.

Climate change training for staff

Climate change is one of the Council's corporate priorities, and all staff are encouraged to take responsibility to tackle climate change. An online training module to raise awareness and empower staff to tackle change in their role was launched in 21/22 and is available for all staff to complete. The target to achieve 1000 staff members to complete the module has been achieved. Staff continue to be encouraged to complete the module.



Future

The next steps to achieving our new goals
and the twists and turns associated

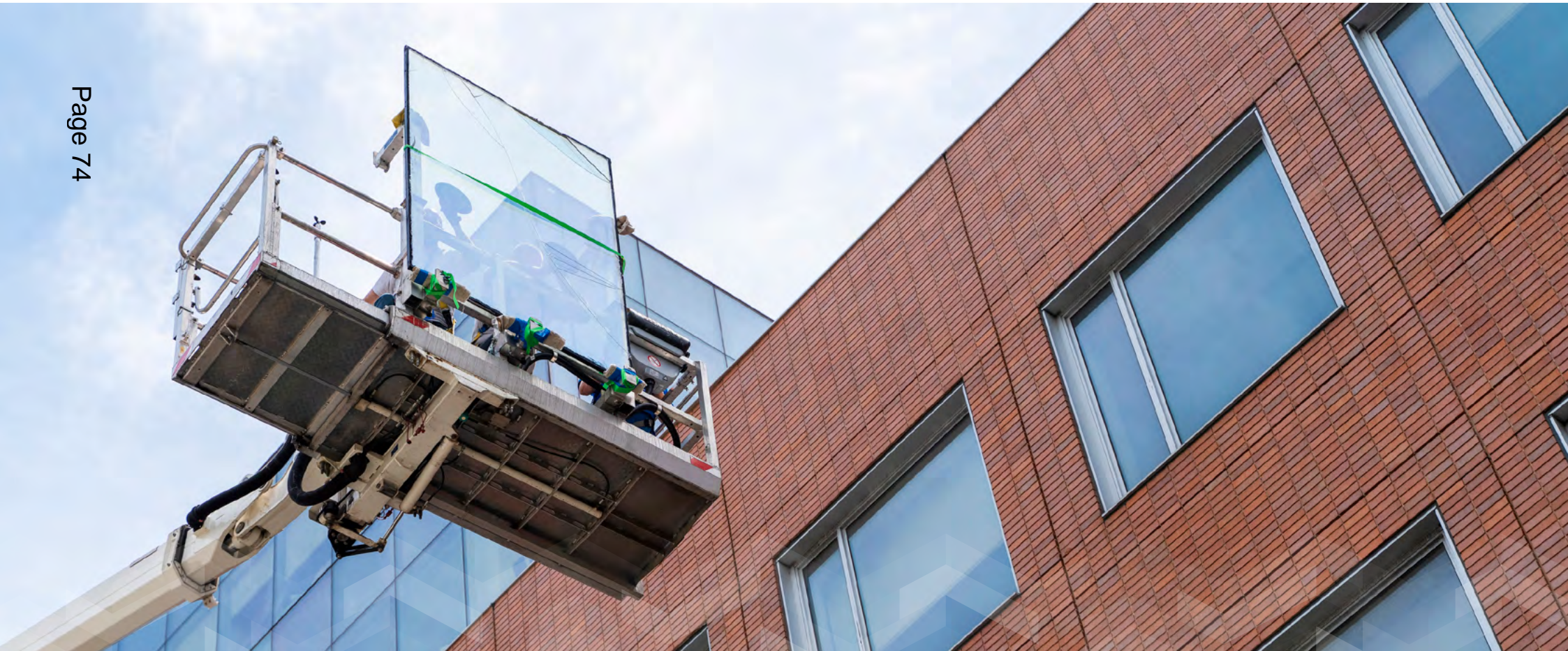
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Risks and Issues

Local policy and decisions often rely on national policies and legislation. Without a strong direction to guide or mandate decisions, this can make decision-making at a local level challenging. For example, delays in the publication of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England have resulted in a hold up of potential changes to local waste and recycling services until national requirements are confirmed.

Achieving net zero requires considerable investment to retrofit properties and decarbonise our services, requiring all our services to make a positive change. Securing external funding is critical to achieving our targets and we are committed to seeking new funding opportunities. Over the year, we have been successful with some bids and unsuccessful with others. We will learn from these experiences to provide the best possible chance of success in future bids.



Next Steps

Building Climate change resilience across Staffordshire

Since declaring a climate change emergency, the Council has prioritised developing and delivering action against the carbon reduction plans. We recognise the potential consequences the changing climate can have on our services and residents. The joint Adaptation Strategy with the District and Boroughs is in the process of being approved. The focus over the next year will be to develop a Staffordshire County Council Adaptation plan in combination with a refresh to the 'Climate Change Mitigation Action Plan'. We also aim to identify how we can strengthen our partnership by working with other public sector bodies such as the NHS, Police and Fire Service to work together on Climate change initiatives.

Launch public EV site survey

Staffordshire County Council will continue to work with partners (including the district and borough councils) to develop EV infrastructure site lists and the LEVI business case. Upon the succession of LEVI capability funding, a new EV team will be created.

Staffordshire's new Local Transport Plan

Staffordshire County Council is preparing its fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP is a statutory document that sets out the Council's vision for the transport

network, together with the policies, plans and programmes needed to deliver that vision. It includes walking, wheeling, public transport, car-based travel and freight, together with the management and maintenance of local roads and footways.

Transport decarbonisation will be a key theme in the new LTP, which will cover the period up to 2050, aligning with the Government's target to decarbonise the entire transport network. Details of how this will be achieved will be set out in a Transport Decarbonisation Strategy, which will bring together a holistic approach to delivering a decarbonised transport network while connecting the county and growing its economy. The Plan will set out how the Council will put the environment at the forefront of every decision it makes. It will identify key actions that need to be taken across operations, maintenance, and renewals to build resilience, ensuring the transport network can continue to deliver the expected level of service for residents and businesses. The Strategy will also define the environmental outcomes the Council wants to achieve and chart its course in delivering them.

Increasing the rollout of HVO fuel

Following the successful trial using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) biofuel in the gritting fleet and highways forklifts, preparations to rollout for compatible vehicles at the recycling centres have been put in place. This will not only substantially reduce the carbon emissions from these vehicles, but pollution will also be reduced, improving the air quality for staff and users of the sites. HVO should be in use by summer 2023.



Planning to reduce flooding events

Norton Canes Community Library

Norton Canes library has suffered several surface flood events over recent years. Flood Mitigation Measures are proposed through the FCRIP Fair Project. An investment of £58,000 will incorporate Natural Aquifer solutions – the first of its kind to be installed in Staffordshire. Being underground allows the opportunity to support planting to be done above ground, improving the local biodiversity of the area and improving groundwater quality.

Dunston Village

Dunston village can often be cut off from nearby facilities by flooding. School children from nearby St Leonard's first school can have up to a 20-mile diversion to get to the school when the village floods. Funding from the Environment Agency of £68,000 and further investment by the Council of £300,000 will allow a new highway bridge in the village to be built and reduce the risk of the village being cut off during flood events. It is intended this project will be delivered in the early winter of 2023.

Bishops Wood

Bishops Wood has historically suffered from flooding, causing widespread damage to residential properties. Working in collaboration with the local community, Local Parish, and private landowners an innovative project has been developed with funding of £142,000 from the Environment Agency. The project includes a ditch around the west side of the village and a flower plugged embankment wall, which will assist overland flows to be directed to a nearby watercourse. The self-growing wall will transform a current grassed area and encourage greater biodiversity. The programme for delivery will start in early 2024.

Wyrley Brook Mitigation Scheme

Staffordshire County Council is working in partnership with Severn Trent to design the Wyrley Brook Mitigation Scheme. To date £50,000 has been secured to assist Severn Trent to investigate and scope options to discuss with the wider community. This project will not only reduce the impact of flooding but, will hopefully with agreement, incorporate new wetland habitats and new public open spaces. This is a long term project and will not be fully delivered until 2029 with delivery of certain phases starting in 2025. This project is expected to achieve £2.5 million in Flood Grant Aid and £6.5 million in Severn Trent Funding.

Festival Court Cannock

The thriving local community hub of Pye Green Road, Cannock, has flooded consistently for the past 5 years. To address this problem, a Flood Grant of £8,000 has been obtained to look into the local drainage system. The plan includes creating two new tree pits that can hold excess floodwater. These pits will use a natural underground water storage solution beneath the parking areas. This approach aims to manage flooding and water buildup more effectively in the area. This scheme is now on the National Environment Agency pipeline programme and will attract £74,000 in grant aid and will be delivered in 2024/2025.





Appendices

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Appendix 1

Staffordshire County Council approach to Climate change

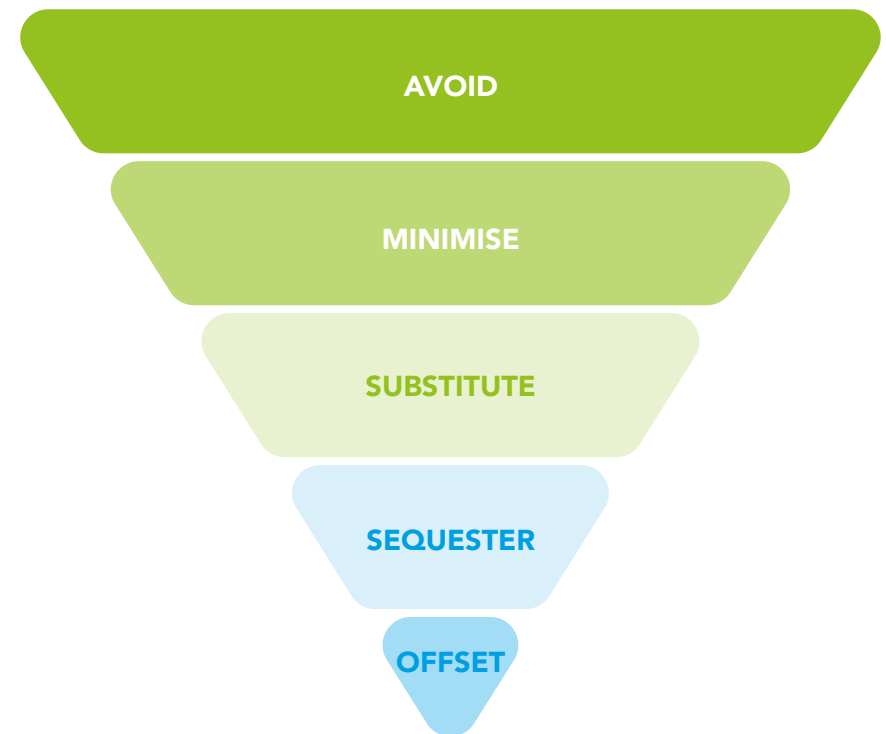
The County Council has championed the climate change agenda for many years and our carbon reduction strategy, Green Shoots, published in 2011 built on previous commitments to this agenda. Staffordshire County Council recognises that climate change is the biggest environmental challenge facing the world today and has reflected this by identifying climate change as one of the four key principles in the Council's Strategic Plan.

With the setting of new legislation in May 2019, through an amendment to the Climate Change Act 2008, the UK became the first major economy to pass a law requiring the country to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. This means that the country needs to remove as much carbon from the atmosphere as it emits.

Following the publication of this new legislation, the County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency in July 2019 to also achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This replaced the previous commitment to reduce carbon emissions to 80% of the 1990 baseline.

We have seen a considerable reduction in our carbon emissions from the initial 1990 baseline of 200,000 tonnes. This is partially attributed to many of our schools converting to academies which, once converted are not included as Council emissions. A number of carbon reduction measures have been implemented since this time which has reduced the carbon impact of our services.

The County Council recognises that a range of actions are needed to reduce the Council carbon emissions. We adhere to the carbon hierarchy principles of avoiding and reducing emissions as a priority, where emissions cannot be reasonably reduced any further we consider sequestering.



We also recognise that we need to put in measures so we can adapt to our changing climate.

Appendix 2

How we measure our carbon emissions

Each year Staffordshire County Council monitors its carbon emissions although it has no statutory duty to report these emissions. Due to the complex structure of the Council's operations, with many services operated under contract or lease, SCC has selected to report on emission sources which it has operational control over, i.e. those services which the Council has the full authority to introduce and implement its operating policies.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) carbon conversion factors provided for use by UK and international organisations to report greenhouse gas emissions have been used for the calculations. Emissions are reported as CO₂e to account for other greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide in addition to carbon dioxide. We measure carbon emissions each year from April to March. The DEFRA conversion factors, which provide the data to allow emissions to be calculated are provided by calendar year. To calculate the Council's annual emissions we use the emissions factors which correspond with April to December as most of the reporting falls within this period and apply this to the full reporting period of April to March.

In 2018/19 we reviewed what we reported against and established a new baseline incorporating a wider range of activities, including services previously unrecorded in the baseline such as home school transport and waste disposal/recycling.

A renewable energy tariff is in place for all corporate properties, schools and street lighting. Carbon emissions for electricity use is split into two categories, generation use which is counted as zero emissions for renewable energy and transmission and distribution. The transmission and distribution element is included in the emissions footprint to demonstrate carbon emissions related to purchased renewables. Schools which have converted to academies are no longer included as a Council emission. Academy schools are in total control of their operations and Staffordshire County Council receive no income for their operation or management. The Council is however committed to sharing information with the academies to encourage adoption of the key strategies and so reduce their energy consumption and emissions too.



Greenhouse gas emissions are recorded against the three standard scopes for reporting.

Scope 1 – All direct emissions – these emissions arise as a direct result of our activities under our control. For Staffordshire County Council this includes:

- gas consumption from all maintained schools and corporate buildings
- liquified petroleum gas (LPG) usage from corporate buildings
- heating oil consumption from maintained schools
- fuel used for fleet vehicles

Scope 2 – Indirect emissions – these emissions are our emissions associated with the consumption of electricity purchased for maintained schools and corporate buildings. Where the electricity is 100% sourced from a registered renewable supplier, only transmission and distribution emissions are included.

Scope 3 – All other indirect emissions – this includes a much wider remit and includes the activities which we do not own or directly control, for example services under contract. This includes:

- business miles associated with staff travel
- passenger kilometres associated with staff travel via train
- water consumption (supply and treatment) from all maintained schools and corporate buildings
- contracted waste operations and processes
- electricity consumption associated with street lighting and ITS equipment
- fuel consumption associates with Amey (Highways) operation
- home to school transport.



Climate Change

Annual Report 2022/23



Climate Change

Action Plan
2021 - 2025

Revision 3 - November 2023

Doing our Bit to make
Staffordshire Sustainable

Introduction

Staffordshire County Council recognises that climate change is the biggest environmental challenge facing the world today and has reflected this by identifying climate change as one of five key priorities in the council's Strategic Plan.

Staffordshire County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency in July 2019 to also achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Strategic Development Framework released in February 2021 sets out how the authority will work towards achieving its carbon emissions target.



The county council has identified a range of actions to stop or significantly reduce the council's carbon emissions. These actions also recognise we need to develop ways to remove carbon that is already in the atmosphere (sequestration). In achieving these actions, the authority will play its part in the global effort to reduce the impact of climate change and meet its net carbon zero target. The council will monitor its carbon emissions each year, to track the success of these actions. Between 2018 and 2022 we have reduced our carbon emissions by 50%.

This is the third revision of the 2021-2025 action plan. This plan shows the completed actions over the last two years, presents reviewed actions and timescales and introduces a few new actions. Next year we will start work on a new action plan in combination with developing a climate change Adaptation Plan.

Simon Tagg - Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Key Themes

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Theme 1: Carbon Reduction

Theme 2: Air Quality

Theme 3: Natural Environment

Theme 4: Waste

Theme 5: Behavioural Change

Carbon Reduction

The Carbon Reduction theme has the most amount of actions within the plan. These actions cover internal staff training, resource use and efficient operation of services as well as starting to change the way that we work. The actions also look to include climate change thinking in policy and Governance processes.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-01	Ensure climate change and sustainability impacts are considered in decision making, including land disposals and budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorates to ensure that impacts on climate change will be considered and incorporated into business plan templates • Obtain corporate commitment for procurement processes to include considerations on climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr 24 • Oct 24
CR-02	Continued liaison with Districts and Boroughs to discuss how planning considerations can include climate change mitigation and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to encourage Local Plan policies to have high regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
CR-03	Review the Staffordshire County Council Policy Position to encourage renewable technologies in appropriate locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Staffordshire County Council policy position on renewable generation and identify renewable opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept 24

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-04	Make better use of Home to School transport by maximising use of every seat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out monitoring app to allow Smart Pass monitoring for contracted services • Evaluate results of Smart Pass use and consider if any service changes can be made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jun 25 • Jun 25
CR-05	Maximise efficiency of the home to school and Special Education needs transport (SEN) services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate options for reducing the number of vehicles and the mileage travelled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr 24
CR-06	Increase the number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a 2 year countywide EV charging implementation plan • Complete a feasibility study to better understand Staffordshire County Councils EV demand and capacity for charge points • Work with Amey to roll out EV charging across highways depots where spare electrical capacity is available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 23 • Aug 24 • Nov 24

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR -07	Transition fleet to alternative fuels or more carbon efficient where appropriate by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement HVO fuelling to all suitable Highways vehicles, plant, machinery and equipment • Develop a costed plan for full EV transition within Staffordshire County Council fleet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr 24 • Nov 24
CR-08	Prioritise sites to have Building Energy Management systems (BEMS) installed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 7 BEMS installations per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually
CR-09	Identify opportunities for carbon reduction of the corporate estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Strategic Property to identify priority properties for decarbonisation plans • Quantify carbon savings achieved through maintenance work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jun 24 • Oct 24

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-10	Improve energy efficiency of highway infrastructure and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivery of Street Lighting LED retrofit programme Deliver annual Traffic Signals refurbishment/LED upgrade programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mar 25 Annual
CR-11	Improve understanding of embedded carbon in Highways activities to enable carbon reduction or mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in pilot project with FHRG to develop a standardised carbon reporting tool for highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apr 24
CR-12	Emissions monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor and report the council's annual carbon emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual
CR-13	Identify and understand Staffordshire's net zero skills gaps and explore the levers and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a short to medium term roadmap for the transitioning of the Staffordshire supply chain to net zero Complete a Staffordshire green skills academy feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 24 Oct 24
CR-14	Better understand emissions relating to the staff commute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a survey of the staff commute to work, to evaluate potential for modal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mar 24

Air Quality

The council aims to improve air quality by encouraging active travel and working with vehicle operators within the county to introduce efficient engines and use of low carbon fuels.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
AQ-01	Investigate the impact of introducing a standard requirement for Euro5 or better for home to school transport contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market test feasibility (cost & availability) of including Euro5 as a standard requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 24
AQ-02	Agree Bus Service Improvement Plan with interested local bus operators with an agreed transition path to low emission buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding to work with local bus operators to improve the energy efficiency of public transport in Staffordshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 24
AQ-03	Deliver against objectives of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver and review active travel schemes in Stafford, Burton, Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle and Tamworth Work with the District and Boroughs to support bids for sustainable travel delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 24 Ongoing

Natural Environment

The natural environment is key to removing carbon out of the atmosphere, through carbon sequestration. The focus of this theme is to maximise the benefit the council's land holding has on the climate. New land management opportunities will be identified to further enhance the positive carbon impact of county land with additional benefits of enhanced biodiversity.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
NE-01	Deliver Zero By Nature Project proposal to sequester carbon through tree planting and land management modifications on Staffordshire County Council land based on completed carbon study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree principles and approach through democratic process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mar 24
NE-02	Review policies that impact on our management of habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review land management policies and consider options to lower carbon intensity and/or improve biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jan 24

Waste

Waste management forms a significant part of the council's footprint. This section considers how we can reduce the amount of waste being generated and how we can change our waste management processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed
W-01	Plateau growth in waste to 0% by 2025, using 2019 pre-pandemic tonnage as the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 4 campaigns to target reduce, reuse, recycle and home composting. Aim for 1000 residents to purchase discounted compost bins and 5% increase in donations for reuse at the HWRCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 24
W-02	Evaluate the potential for transitioning to alternative and low carbon fuels for the Recycling centres service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete HVO trial and transition HWRC plant and outsourced vehicles to low carbon alternatives where feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 23
W-03	Develop a Staffordshire Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to reduce haulage requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin development of Strategic business case for long term management of dry mixed recycling in Staffordshire with support of local waste partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 24
W-04	Investigate options for using closed landfill sites for climate change mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable technologies or changes to land management on closed landfill sites which could assist with climate change objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 24

Behavioural Change

Climate change is a problem that is facing everyone. To tackle the issues it will need everyone to make changes to their daily lives. The council plan to work with business and other councils within Staffordshire to produce a joined-up approach to tackling climate change that reaches beyond just the actions of the Authority.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-01	Offer community funding for small scale climate change related projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer an annual fund for climate change projects for schools, parish councils and the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual
BC-02	Raise awareness of climate change and encourage behavioural change through communication campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim for 100% of Members and 1500 staff to complete the internal climate change training Increase climate change awareness of Staffordshire residents. Direct 5000 people to work out carbon footprint and run 2 campaigns or events to help residents understand and reduce carbon footprint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jul 24 Aug 24
BC-03	Engage with communities to raise awareness and highlight opportunities for local action for waste and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a Climate Change & Waste Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual
BC-04	Consider implications and how the changing climate of Staffordshire can be managed and mitigated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 24
BC-05	Work with businesses to raise awareness and reduce their carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 businesses to complete carbon literacy training 30 businesses to complete the Carbon Tracker tool per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 24 Ongoing

Behavioural Change

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-06	Reduce the number of pupils travelling to school in private vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish 15 new regular walking bus routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dec 25

Completed Actions

Action

Date completed

Carbon Reduction

- Revise the Cabinet Report standard template to include a section on climate change
- Identify the resources required to progress the climate change agenda across the council
- Climate change team to provide expertise and support to business areas to develop ideas and to deliver innovation
- Consider the outcome of the Renewable Energy Audit
- Outline options and make recommendations for offset projects
- Ensure climate change is a standing agenda item for Staffordshire Development Officers Group
- Monitor driver behaviour and provide efficient driving information to staff
- Issue all school children with a Smart Pass to monitor usage to identify any inefficiencies in the system
- Develop an EV charging infrastructure strategy in partnership with the Districts and Boroughs
- Investigate the potential to upgrade electricity supply in SCC building stock to facilitate EV charging in retained property portfolio and identify sites requiring upgrade.
- Develop a Highways AMEY fleet plan for phasing in of EVs where suitable vehicles are available
- Take a phased approach to complete a review of all SCC owned or leased buildings
- Identify opportunities for change through the development of Business Asset Plans

- 21/22
- 22/23
- Ongoing
- 21/22
- Incorporated within Natural Environment action for land management
- 21/22
- Monitoring ongoing
- 21/22
- 22/23
- Incorporated within action for EV feasibility study development
- 22/23
- 22/23
- 22/23

Completed Actions

Action

Date completed

Carbon Reduction

- Collate data on running costs, energy usage, type and condition of lighting, boilers and insulation
- Develop a programme of work incorporating lower carbon and energy efficiency considerations as part of capital maintenance programs
- Review SCC owned equipment and usage and replace with battery operated plant and tools where possible
- Establish potential for battery operated tools to be specified in future ground maintenance contracts and apply if possible

- 22/23
- 22/23
- 21/22
- 21/22

Natural Environment

- Engage with consultants to produce a review of land/habitats in Staffordshire (including carbon impact, carbon storage benefits, potential opportunities, other benefits ie social and GIS data)
- Develop guidance and instructions for staff on GIS

- 21/22
- 21/22

Waste

- Present an options appraisal for cabinet approval
- Investigate options for a single food waste procurement contract to encourage the Districts and Boroughs to introduce separate food waste collections ahead of proposed legislative changes
- Complete procurement for a countywide food waste treatment contract
- Where feasible transition site and supervisor vehicles from diesel to a lower carbon alternative

- 22/23
- 21/22
- 22/23
- Supervisor vehicles now fall under fleet management. Site vehicles incorporated within HVO trial action

Completed Actions

Action

Date completed

Behaviour change

- Develop a Countywide Adaptation Strategy
- Staffordshire Business Environment Network (sben) to encourage and provide assistance to install 25 solar PV on businesses
- sben to roll out carbon calculator for businesses
- Board to set a countywide strategic direction in ways of working to support the transition to Net Zero

- 22/23
- 22/23
- 21/22
- 21/22

Discontinued actions

Reason

- Deliver DfT/ADEPT Live Labs 2 project (subject to funding approval) to consider opportunities for reducing carbon emissions in certain highways tasks
- sben to work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to promote small scale funded tree planting projects with a total of 120 trees across 20 businesses

- Funding unsuccessful
- Not proceeding on business land

Programme Funding

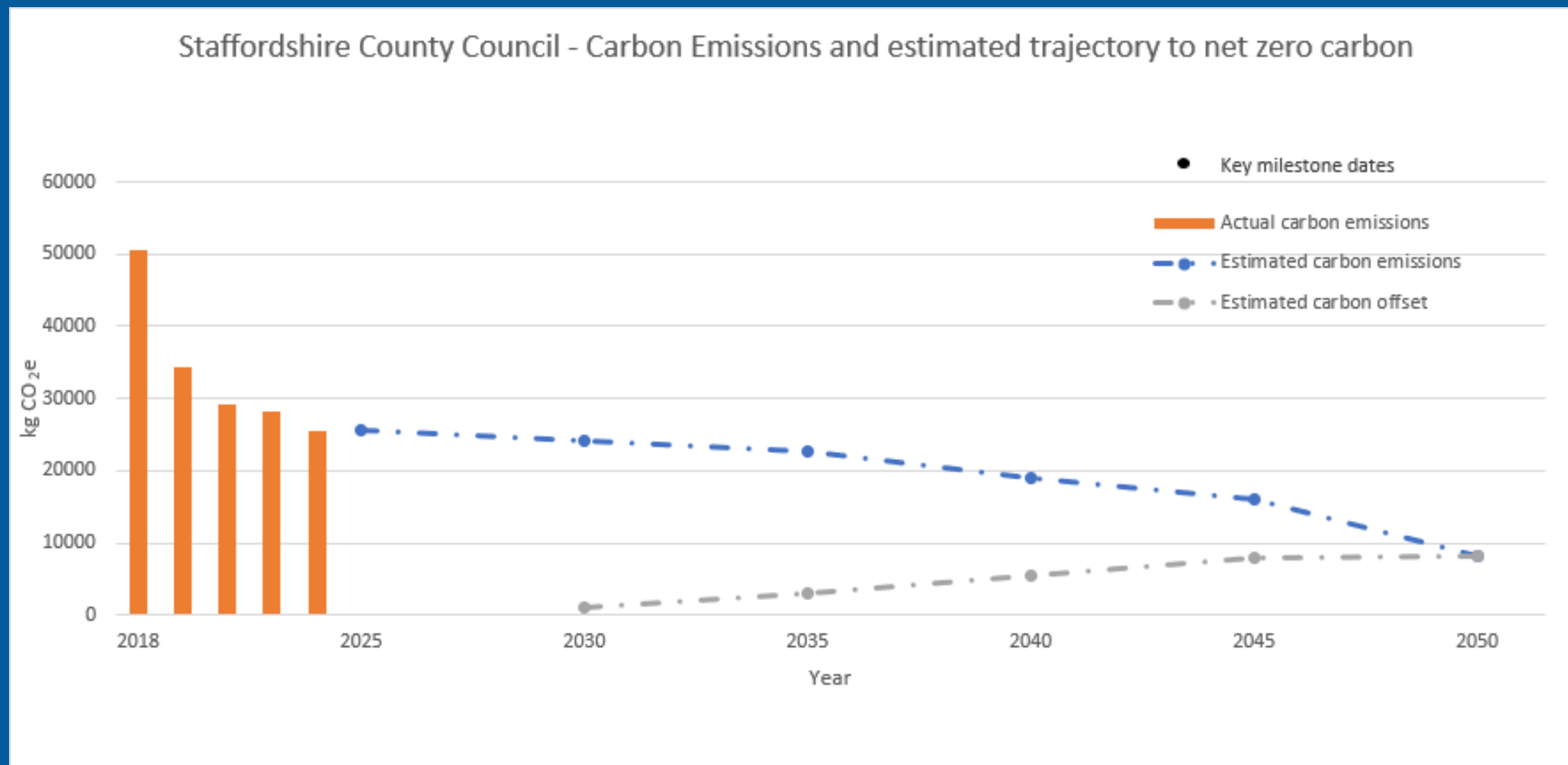
- £3.5 million over 6 years has been made available, specifically for sustainability projects to support the climate change agenda from the council funds.
- Each year the council applies for, and is successful in achieving external funding. This has secured several million pounds to boost our own internal funding. Some projects have climate change as the core aims while others include it as an element alongside other important service delivery objectives. Some of these funding awards are highlighted in the climate change annual report each year.

County Council Climate Change Investment	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total investment
MTFS Budget - Internal Funding	£ 690,000	£ 585,580	£ 596,700	£ 571,160	£590,070	£ 546,700	£ 3,584,21

Programme Roadmap

The council has declared a commitment to be net carbon zero by 2050. Whilst our aspirations are high to reduce this as much as possible we acknowledge we can not reach net zero without some carbon sequestration or offsetting. This also forms a key role within the plan.

The Roadmap shows the projected reduction in Staffordshire County Council's operational emissions. The reduction is based around targets and legislative changes that have already been or will soon to be set by Central Government through consultations, industry developments and economic drivers. The authority understands that there will potentially be further changes to mechanisms the drive decarbonisation across the energy and transport sectors.



Draft notes Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 06 November 2023

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Climate Change Annual Report (2023) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 at their meeting on 06 November 2023. Members at that meeting did not suggest any specific changes or additions to the actions contained in the plan, however, the following comments were made:

- The plan showed ambition and built on last year's plan. It demonstrated vision and direction of travel.
- There was a need for the council to bring together partners and develop guidance and approaches to help standardize delivery. It was felt that this was one of our key roles in tackling climate change. Examples where this would be beneficial were given as:
 - planning legislation/guidance on solar panel farms and housing developments.
 - Influencing policy so that housing developers invest in properties prior to sale, requiring the buyer to then retrofit new technologies.
 - EV charging in both remote and urban settings.
 - Centralise knowledge and best practice.
 - drainage; and
 - waste collection.
- HVO and hydrogen as fuels for fleet vehicles needed more development.
- The council needed to act as a consortium with partners to achieve greater savings and benefits through sharing infrastructure and services.
- The Members Climate Action Fund was valued by some members and increasing the fund was suggested.
- There needed to be a mechanism for ensuring that all of the Members Climate Action Fund is spent, and that District and Borough councils be encouraged to identify similar funding could really show commitment to local communities who want to develop schemes.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee look forward to reviewing progress in the 2023/24 Climate Change Annual Report along with the action plan and reviewing the results of the recent Climate Change Consultation at a future meeting.

Community Impact Assessment

Climate change action plan

Author: James Cartwright – Sustainability Manager

Date: 31st July 2023

➤ **Equality Assessment**

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Age - older and younger people</p>	<p>People of all ages will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.</p>	<p>No specific risks relating to different genders have been identified at this stage.</p>	<p>When engaging with communities to encourage and drive forward the climate change agenda, endeavor to do this in an accessible way to residents who are elderly, particularly those who are digitally excluded. Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as the action plan is reviewed each year.</p>
<p>Disability - people who are living with different conditions and disabilities, such as: mental illnesses, long term conditions, Autism and other neurodiverse conditions, learning disabilities, sensory impairment and physical disabilities.</p>	<p>People with disabilities will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being for everyone through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment</p>	<p>No specific risks relating to people with disabilities.</p>	<p>When engaging with communities to encourage and drive forward the climate change agenda, endeavour to make it accessible to all, including those with disabilities such as visual impairment or learning disabilities. Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as the action plan is completed and then reviewed each year.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment - those people in the process of transitioning from one sex to another</p>	<p>People who have undergone gender reassignment or are transitioning will benefit from the</p>	<p>No specific risks relating to gender reassignment have</p>	<p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.	been identified at this stage.	
<p>Page 105</p> <p>Marriage & Civil Partnership - people who are married or in a civil partnership should not be treated differently at work</p>	N/a	No specific risks relating to gender reassignment have been identified at this stage.	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.
<p>Pregnancy & Maternity - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers</p>	Pregnant women will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.	No specific risks relating to gender reassignment have been identified at this stage.	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.
<p>Race - people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins</p>	People of all ethnicities will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life	No specific risks relating to race have been identified at this stage.	When engaging with communities to encourage and drive forward the climate change agenda, endeavour to do this in an accessible way to residents who do

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.		not have English as their first language. Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.
<p>Religion or Belief - people with any religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of belief. A belief should affect a person's life choices or the way they live for it to be considered</p>	People of all religions and beliefs will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.	No specific risks relating to religion or belief has been identified at this stage.	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.
<p>Sex – men/women/all</p>	People of all genders will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.	No specific risks relating to different genders have been identified at this stage.	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes</p>	<p>People of all sexual orientations will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being through a cleaner, greener and more resilient local environment.</p>	<p>No specific risks relating to gender reassignment have been identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.</p>

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Workforce Assessment

Who will be affected – consider the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>All staff</p>	<p>Empowering staff to have the knowledge and skills to deliver and suggest solutions which contribute to the delivery of the net zero target will enable creativity and lead to greater motivation and trust in the organisation.</p>	<p>No specific risks to SCC staff</p>	<p>It is recommended that all staff take part in the climate change training module available on the Learning Hub.</p> <p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is</p>

Who will be affected – consider the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	<p>Staff who live/work in Staffordshire will benefit from the County Council adapting to climate change through enhanced quality of life and well-being. through a cleaner, greener, and more resilient local environment.</p> <p>SMART/Agile working will result in increased flexibility for staff, especially during periods of adverse weather.</p>		<p>developed and then reviewed each year.</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>A changing climate and weather extremes will affect citizens of Staffordshire in different ways</p>	<p>By adapting to climate change and considering the impacts of a changing climate in the services that we deliver, residents and businesses will benefit from our resilience planning</p>	<p>Without proper planning with a changing climate in mind, there could be increased demand on our services at critical times that will stretch resources and capacity to deliver our services</p>	<p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.</p>
<p>69 68 67 66 65 64 63 62 61 60 59 58 57 56 55 54 53 52 51 50 49 48 47 46 45 44 43 42 41 40 39 38 37 36 35 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing: Will the proposal impact on the mental health and wellbeing of residents or services that support those with Mental Health issues?</p> <p>Active participants of low carbon impact travel.</p>	<p>Greener travel such as cycling and walking which requires individuals to spend more time outside is proven to have positive benefits on mental health and wellbeing</p>		<p>Communications around the availability of green travel options to be widely promoted</p>
<p>Health and lifestyles:</p> <p>Will the proposal promote independence and personal responsibility, helping people to make positive choices around physical activity, healthy food and nutrition, smoking,</p>	<p>Greener travel such as cycling and walking which requires individuals to spend more time outside is proven to have positive benefits on mental health and wellbeing</p>		<p>Communications around the availability of green travel options to be widely promoted</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>problematic alcohol and substance use, and sexual health?</p> <p>Active participants of low carbon impact travel.</p>			
<p>Accidents and Falls Prevention:</p> <p>Does the proposal reduce or increase the risk of: falls in older people, childhood accidents, road accidents, or workplace accidents?</p> <p>Active participants of low carbon impact travel</p>		<p>Increased public use of roads and pathways may lead to increased, slips, trips and falls, due to these activities.</p>	<p>Staffordshire County Council is already actively engaged with walking and cycling, with the continued development and maintenance of cycleways and public footpaths.</p> <p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as the action plan is reviewed each year.</p>
<p>Access to social care:</p> <p>Will the proposal enable people to access appropriate interventions at the right time?</p>			
<p>Independent living:</p> <p>Will the proposal impact on people's ability to live</p>			

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
independently in their own home, with care and support from family, friends, and the community?			
Safeguarding: Will the proposal ensure effective safeguarding for the most vulnerable in our communities?			

➤ **Communities Assessment**

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
A changing climate and weather extremes will affect citizens of Staffordshire in different ways	By adapting to climate change and considering the impacts of a changing climate in the services that we deliver, residents and businesses will benefit from our resilience planning	Without proper planning with a changing climate in mind, there could be increased demand on our services at critical times that will stretch resources and capacity to deliver our services	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Community Development / Capacity: Engaged community groups. Individuals interested in supporting their local community?	Community groups that engage with our proposals can help to encourage positive behavioral change within their sphere of influence.		Communities are being engaged through the Waste Savvy Staffs project and Making Staffordshire Sustainable communications.
Crime / Community Safety:			
Educational Attainment and Training: Enhanced education of Staffordshire children	Although climate change is part of the curriculum for primary and secondary schools' projects such as bikeability and the Air Aware campaign in targeted schools will enhance the learning.		We shall be engaging with maintained schools as part of delivering the action plan, during these interactions we shall communicate effectively and positively with the leaders within the school community. If benefit can be drawn from our activities, to enhance the delivery of a "broad and balanced curriculum", then this shall be implemented.
Leisure and Culture: Staff and engaged community members	Travel by cycling/walking is proven to have	Risk to safety	Promote safe cycling / walking as part of comms campaigns

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	positive health outcomes		
Volunteering: Individuals interested in waste and recycling volunteer through the Waste Savvy programme	Recruited trained volunteers have the ability to reach a wider audience than SCC communications in isolation		Recruitment of volunteers needs to be ongoing and ensure they have the resources and support needed.
Best Start:			
Rural communities: All rural residents		It will be harder for residents of rural communities to engage with low carbon impact travel, due to their geographic locality and access to resources.	It is hard to justify infrastructure improvements in the wider rural community, such as cycleways. However, where links can be made to existing resources, these will be identified and capitalised on. Comms campaigns will be inclusive to rural communities where practicable.

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>A changing climate and a higher probability of weather extremes in both heat incidence and the frequency of flooding events needs to be considered from an economic perspective.</p>	<p>By adapting to climate change and considering the impacts of a changing climate in the services that we deliver, residents and businesses will benefit from our resilience planning</p>	<p>Without proper planning with a changing climate in mind, there could be increased demand on our services at critical times that will stretch resources and capacity to deliver our services and may impact in vital infrastructure.</p>	<p>Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.</p>
<p>Economic growth:</p> <p>Will the proposal promote the county as a "go to" location for business, and make it easy for businesses to start up, innovate and expand?</p>			
<p>Poverty and Income:</p> <p>Will the proposal have an impact on income? Will it reduce the gap between high and low earners?</p>			
<p>Workplace health and environments:</p>	<p>Low carbon upgrades can make the work</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Will the proposal impact on working conditions and the health of Staffordshire's workforce?	environment more comfortable (cold and extreme heat)		
Access to job / good quality jobs: Will the proposal create the right conditions for increased employment in more and better jobs?	With the increased uptake of green technologies, this will lead to the growth and development of higher skilled jobs.	These jobs are created outside of Staffordshire or the West midlands	It is recommended that as green technologies are adopted on a larger scale, that the necessary resource is identified and implemented to capture the potential for growth and enhanced jobs within the reach of Staffordshire residents. Tenders for work to seek local suppliers where possible.

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➤ Climate Change Assessment

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Our climate is changing and over the coming years we shall all feel the effects of climatic extremes which will impact on our lives and businesses.	Working collaboratively together with other Council across Staffordshire will enable policy to be implemented to tackle climate change	If we do nothing, then the changing climate will effect the services that Councils deliver.	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	adaptation on a local level for the benefit of Staffordshire residents and businesses.		

➤ **Environment Assessment**

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Page 116</p> <p>Land-owners, tenants and users of rural open spaces are starting to have their use of the environment compromised due to climate change</p>	By working with the rural sector the council can have a positive effect on adapting to climate change and helping other adapt to a changing climate.	Not to plan for the future could impact on many sectors within the environment	Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as an action plan is developed and then reviewed each year.
<p>Built Environment/Land Use:</p> <p>All building users and highways</p>	By limiting the mean temperature rise of the climate. It is hoped that the impact of extremes in weather condition is kept to a minimum on land and buildings	If we do not reduce our carbon emissions, then average climate temperature will rise above recognised maximums, which will result in more	It is recommended that we adopt all measures possible to achieve "net zero" carbon emissions. Working with the wider community is also a priority to reduce the counties wider emissions, for example through the Making Staffordshire sustainable campaign branding.

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
		<p>extreme weather events, with the potential to have negative impacts on land and buildings</p>	
<p>Rural Environment: Landowners, tenants and users of rural open spaces</p>	<p>By limiting the mean temperature rise of the climate. It is hoped that the impact of extremes in weather condition is kept to a minimum on the rural environment.</p>	<p>If we do not reduce our carbon emissions, then average climate temperature will rise above recognised maximums, which will result in more extreme weather events and which may result in a negative impact on the rural environment</p>	<p>Land management should consider how to maximise climate change resilience. Flooding has become an ever more frequent event recently and the increased occurrence of flooding can be attributed to climate change. Reducing our carbon emissions in line with national recommendations will minimise the potential for future environmental impact, which will impact on livelihoods and habitats. It is therefore recommended that we adopt all measures possible to achieve "net zero" carbon emissions. Working with the wider community is also a priority to reduce the counties wider emissions, for example through</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
			the Making Staffordshire sustainable campaign branding.
Air, Water and Land Quality: All impacted.	Some actions relate to improving the air quality from vehicles and optimising travel routes. This will lead to a lower impact on air quality locally.	With no intervention then air quality will not be improved	We should seek to lessen our impact on air quality and carbon emissions through more sustainable travel. Working with the wider community is also a priority to reduce the counties wider emissions, for example through the Making Staffordshire sustainable campaign branding.
Waste and recycling: All impacted.	Reduced waste production from SCC activities and residents in combination with the introduction of more carbon efficient SCC waste processes will result in lowered carbon emissions locally	With no intervention waste will not be reduced and processes may not be amended and hence carbon emissions from this activity will stay the same.	Waste reduction of SCC processes should be prioritised and residents encouraged to reduce waste through targeted communications campaigns via Waste Savvy and Making Staffordshire Sustainable.
Agriculture and food production: All people farmer/food producers.	By limiting the mean temperature rise of the climate. It is hoped that the impact of extremes in	If we do not reduce our carbon emissions, then average climate	Working alongside flood prevention measures, the fulfilment of "net zero" carbon emissions will minimise the

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	<p>weather condition is kept to a minimum resulting in lower impact on agriculture and food.</p>	<p>temperature will rise above recognised maximums, which will result in more extreme weather events and potentially more negative effect on agriculture and food.</p>	<p>affect of impact on the agricultural sector.</p>
<p>Transport: People in Staffordshire who need to travel for work or pleasure</p>	<p>Health benefits for people who choose to walk or cycle instead of using high carbon transportation. Also health benefits from increasing and encouraging the use of lower emission vehicles</p>	<p>No risks have yet been identified that may impact people's ability to travel.</p>	<p>Staff will be encouraged to consider whether travel is essential and to undertake journeys by sustainable methods. Mitigations/recommendations will be developed as impacts are identified as the action plan is reviewed each year.</p>
<p>Noise:</p>			
<p>Climate Change:</p>	<p>Help to deliver against the Climate Change Strategic Plan key principle and net</p>	<p>If we do not reduce global temperatures attributed to carbon</p>	<p>The IPCC has highlighted the impacts of climate change</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The plan aims to reduce carbon emissions to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p>	<p>carbon emissions target by 2050.</p> <p>By reducing our carbon emissions, we will also be contributing to reducing global emission required to minimise the level mean global temperature increase.</p>	<p>emissions, then the impact on our environment and economy will be severe</p>	<p>which are widely understood to be scientifically correct. To do nothing is not an option, we need to change our activities in such a way as to achieve “net zero” carbon emissions’.</p> <p>Recommendations and mitigations to achieve negative impacts will therefore be developed and the action plan amended as the climate change agenda progresses.</p>

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023

Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030



Councillor Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills said,

"Staffordshire already has an enterprising, resilient, and inclusive economy. But for the county to continue to thrive, and for residents and businesses to fully experience the benefits, it's vital to recognise the importance of skills for employment and the need to support people of all ages into work, to progress or change careers, so businesses can access the skills and talent they need to diversify and grow.

That's why stakeholders from across the county have come together to create our Employment and Skills Strategy, putting in place the vision and priorities to deliver our united economic vision for Staffordshire. And it will make sure our workforce is equipped not only to weather economic shocks such as global pandemics, but also to thrive and grow, with the digital skills to embrace technological transformation and the green skills to achieve net zero by 2050.

What makes this strategy different is that it's built on partnership and shared endeavour. Those contributing to it are committed to making our ambitions a reality. We want people from all backgrounds and abilities to fulfil their potential and as devolution plans develop, we look forward to working with partners across Staffordshire and beyond to capitalise on the talent and highly skilled workforce that already exists here.

But above all, we're committed to making sure Staffordshire is a place where everyone can thrive; harnessing and growing our skills base to enable residents and businesses to maximise future opportunities and make prosperity a reality for all."

Report Summary:

Our new Employment and Skills Strategy outlines the County Council's vision and priorities for developing the skills of our residents to create the workforce needed to deliver our Economic Strategy and Strategic Plan. Our work to improve local skills over the last decade has seen significant improvement in skill levels and more local people working in higher value, better paid jobs. This has ensured that our economy continues to grow through a more productive and economically active working population.

To further build on this success we have developed the Employment and Skills Strategy. Although the Strategy is a County Council strategy, we have worked closely with key stakeholders to put in place the vision and priorities to deliver our united economic vision for Staffordshire. We have also conducted a 4-week public consultation to provide the opportunity for wider partners, local stakeholders, residents, and businesses to help shape the Strategy.

We will of course strive to take full advantage of the many opportunities to support the continued improvement in employment and skills, but we also recognise that there are challenges to address. Fundamental to our Strategy are the cross-cutting priorities of developing digital and green skills, to help adopt new technologies and to transition our economy to net zero. While we also recognise the need to ensure that more residents are economically active and in-work, provide access to inspirational careers advice, develop technical skills to drive productivity and growth and respond to business needs now and, in the future, support entrepreneurialism and business growth, and create a culture of life-long learning.

Our Employment and Skills Strategy has a clear focus on improving the skills of local residents to be able to access the more and better paid jobs being created but also supports the delivery of wider priorities including increased productivity, inward investment, innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve greater economic growth. This in turn can lead to improved prosperity, health and wellbeing of our residents across Staffordshire.

The timescales for the Strategy are up to 2030 to align with our Economic Strategy and the Government's missions for Levelling Up the UK, as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper (LUWP). The Strategy also recognises the importance of the Skills for Jobs White Paper and underpinning Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022. New Government policy announcement continue to emerge from these White Papers, and we will therefore keep the Strategy under review to consider any issues and opportunities that arise as and when necessary.

A final full designed version has been produced and will be published following any necessary changes being made and agreed with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills and Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills. A summary version has also been produced, highlighting key aspects of the Strategy to sit alongside our Investment Prospectus.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Cabinet approves the Employment and Skills Strategy.
- b. Working with those Cabinet members with associated responsibilities, the Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills be authorised to progress the development of supporting delivery plans, working with our partners as appropriate.

Cabinet – Wednesday 15 November 2023

Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030

Recommendations of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Cabinet approves the Employment and Skills Strategy.
- b. Working with those Cabinet members with associated responsibilities, the Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills be authorised to progress the development of supporting delivery plans, working with our partners as appropriate.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background

1. Our [Economic Strategy](#) was considered by the Scrutiny Committee and agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 and outlines the County Council's vision, ambitions, and priorities for the Staffordshire economy up to 2030, aligned to our Strategic Plan and national Government policy such as the Skills for Jobs White Paper and underpinning Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.
2. Our Strategic Plan outlines those outcomes that the county council most wants to achieve, including that, "Everyone in Staffordshire will have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth."
3. The Economic Strategy recognises that in order to achieve this we are uniquely placed to support a whole-system approach to continuing recovery and growth of our economy, due to our responsibilities for transport, infrastructure, environment, education, skills, and health.
4. To support the delivery of the economic vision and priorities our new Employment and Skills Strategy has a clear focus on improving the skills of local residents to be able to access the more and better paid jobs being created but also supports the delivery of wider priorities including

increased productivity, inward investment, innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve greater economic growth. This in turn can lead to improved prosperity, health and wellbeing of our residents across Staffordshire.

5. The development of this Strategy will ensure that we have the right skills and workforce locally to support our plans for the renewal and long-term transformation of the local economy. It will ensure that our interventions are targeted on the right employment and skills priorities for Staffordshire and allow us to influence/shape the approach taken by Government working closely with the Department for Education, the Midlands Engine and local partners including FE and HE such as informing the new accountability statements required from education providers and the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. It will aid with securing funding and powers to deliver our overall ambitions, including through the various Government policy agendas.
6. By outlining the County Council's employment and skills priorities in the coming years, the Strategy will also guide any future work and discussions with our partners and Government on opportunities for further devolution to the local area. Any County Deal agreed with Government has the potential to provide further powers and resources that will allow us to deliver our employment and skills priorities more quickly and effectively and is being considered through the Staffordshire Leaders Board.

Context

7. Through strong partnership working and significant capital and revenue investment e.g., City Deal, Growth Deal, ESF, Getting Building Fund etc. over recent years Staffordshire has seen significant improvement and success in developing local skills. Staffordshire has seen faster improvement in reducing the number of working age residents with no formal qualifications compared to nationally, with 7,900 fewer residents with no qualifications in 2021 compared to 2016 equivalent to a 19.5% reduction compared to a 17.0% reduction nationally. This significant improvement means that in 2021 there were 6.3% of working age residents with no qualifications which was just below the national rate of 6.4%.
8. Staffordshire has also closed the gap to the national for working age adults with higher skills. We have seen adults with Level 3+ (A Level equivalent or above) increase by 30,500 between 2016 and 2021, equivalent to 10.8% rise compared to a 9.0% rise seen nationally. The latest position for 2021 now shows 60.2% of adults in Staffordshire now

have Level 3+ qualifications just behind the 61.3% seen nationally. We have also closed the gap to the national average for Level 4+ qualification (Degree equivalent or above) where we have seen an increase of 39,200 adults with such qualifications between 2016 and 2021, equivalent to 22.1% rise compared to a 15.0% rise seen nationally. In 2021 41.7% of adults in Staffordshire had Level 4+ qualifications closing the gap to the national average of 43.1%.

9. By developing local skills, we have helped ensure that more residents can access better paid jobs and play an active and productive role in the local economy. In 2022 average annual resident earnings in Staffordshire stood at £32,386 which was just below the UK average of £33,000. Between 2017-22 Staffordshire saw faster improvement in resident earnings than nationally, with 16.5% growth compared to 14.2% for England.
10. Our unemployment and economic inactivity (worklessness) rates remain well below the national average meaning that significantly more of our residents are in work and fewer are reliant on state support. Staffordshire's unemployment rate for the latest available period of Oct 2021-Sep 2022 was estimated at 14,700 or 3.3%, which was below the national rate of 3.8% and significantly below the regional rate of 5.0%. While Staffordshire's economic inactivity rate for the same period was estimated at 16.3% equivalent to 87,800, which was significantly below the national rate of 21.2% and regional rate of 22.2%.
11. Overall, this recent employment and skills improvement and success has contributed to greater local economic growth and increased productivity, with more businesses choosing Staffordshire as a place to invest and operate creating more better paid jobs for the people of Staffordshire.

Approach

12. We are now looking to build on this recent employment and skills improvement and success across Staffordshire and ensure that the county has the highly skilled workforce it needs to reach its full potential.
13. Fundamental to our strategy are the **cross-cutting priorities of developing digital and green skills to support the adoption of new innovative and productive technologies and to transition our economy to net zero.**
14. Beyond these cross-cutting priorities, we recognise the similarities but also the diversity that exists across the county and with this in mind our employment and skills priorities are:

15. **Priority 1: Ensuring All Are Work Ready and Can Access Employment** – working with key partners such as the DWP, Job Centre Plus and Skills Providers across our communities we will look to provide employment and skills support to create a more inclusive local economy with opportunities for all and support business growth through reduced labour shortages with increased economic activity and transition to work.
16. **Priority 2: Providing Inspirational Careers Advice** - we will continue to develop inspirational Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) through our Careers Hub to ensure that all residents have access to the information and advice they need to make informed career choices and manage their career.
17. **Priority 3: Developing Technical Skills to Drive Productivity and Growth** - through our strong Colleges and Universities, we will increase the supply of higher-level technical skills and develop new skills needed by businesses in our priority sectors, with a particular focus on cross-cutting digital skills development through new state-of-the-art provision and green skills vital for the county's net zero ambitions. We want the needs of business to be at the heart of transformation and seek to forge new and lasting partnerships to make this happen. Key to this is building on the recent development of the £16m Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology (IoT), with business and education providers increasingly working together to deliver the facilities and technical provision needed in Staffordshire to provide the future skills for growth.
18. We will also look to ensure that there are fully effective pathways for all learners to achieve higher technical qualifications. An important aspect of this will be addressing the current progression issues from level 2 to level 3 and the requirement to reform level 3 alternative academic and technical qualifications that sit alongside A Levels, T Levels and apprenticeships in order to support progression and attainment for all students. This will provide the opportunity for all students to move into high-skilled jobs, either directly, or through progression into good quality higher education courses.
19. **Priority 4: Supporting Innovation and Enterprise** - we also want to ensure that residents have access to the support and provision in order to develop entrepreneurial and innovation skills that support greater local enterprise.
20. **Priority 5: Creating a Place of Learning** - Staffordshire is resilient and we have put in place skills support for our residents and workers to deal with change and access support and training when they need it. This includes ensuring that those people more adversely affected by economic shocks such as Brexit, the pandemic and energy/cost-of-living crisis

(young people, women and those with lower-level skills and workers from hardest-hit sectors) are front and centre of our plans for the future. Transferable skills are at the heart of this, especially for those leaving rapidly shifting sectors such as retail and hospitality.

21. Given the speed with which the economy is now changing we also recognise the need to develop a stronger culture of life-long learning in Staffordshire to ensure that all residents can continue to benefit from continued economic growth and the better paid jobs being created.
22. Models of delivery are changing, and we will support that change so that businesses, especially small ones, can be instrumental in crafting new courses in modular, bite-size, and on-demand formats. We want individuals to be able to access qualifications, especially for digital and green skills, at a time and in a way that suits them to upskill or reskill, improving social mobility, inclusion, and lifelong learning.
23. These better local skills and stronger workforce can support the delivery of our shared economic strategy and vision alongside the wide range of ambitious current and pipeline projects being delivered by our Local Authorities.
24. A significant amount of evidence continues to be compiled on the local labour market picture, primarily through the County Council's Economy and Skills Evidence Base and Economic Bulletin. Along with additional evidence produced by economic 'think-tanks' and alike, this locally produced evidence has underpinned the development of the Strategy and will continue to form the basis of our supporting plans and strategies in the future.
25. We recognise that the County Council does not operate in isolation and there are numerous stakeholders with a vital role in supporting the development of skills and growth of the Staffordshire economy, most notably our Colleges, Universities and District and Borough Councils. We have therefore conducted an extensive partner engagement exercise to help develop the Strategy and a 4-week public consultation, seeking views from stakeholders, businesses, and residents on the draft Employment and Skills Strategy.
26. Through the 4-week public consultation we have received very positive feedback on the strategy with 87% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the vision for employment and skills in Staffordshire. For all 5 of the strategic priorities 91% or more strongly agreed or agreed with those identified. In addition to this we have received ongoing input and positive feedback from key partners throughout the development of the strategy either directly or through partner forums including the SSLEP Skills

Advisory Panel, LSIP Board and College Principals Group, with a number of colleges asking to feature more prominently in the strategy and submitting case studies of where they are having a positive impact in our priority areas.

27. We will ensure that we are continuing to engage proactively with our Colleges, Universities, Districts and Boroughs, businesses, residents, and partner organisations to provide an opportunity to help shape the Delivery Plan for the Strategy.

Delivery

28. Our delivery approach for this strategy across Staffordshire and its districts and boroughs will be:
29. To work in partnership to leverage and align public sector investment e.g., the Local Skills Improvement Plan and associated Local Skills Improvement Fund, the Levelling Up Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
30. To match and maximise public and private sector investment e.g., Apprenticeship Levy.
31. To work with government on the opportunities for more powers and funding through devolution e.g., Adult Education Budget.
32. To maximise employer investment in skills and involvement in the design of skills provision.
33. To shape and influence the strategic commissioning of other funds and priorities e.g., HS2, West Midlands Freight Interchange, A50 A500 Strategic Corridor, the LSIP as a route to delivering technical skills.
34. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills has previously taken the draft Employment and Skills Strategy to the Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration and input.
35. We will develop a Delivery Plan to support the Strategy and this will be used as part of the updates on delivery to Cabinet and the Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, including performance reporting and monitoring of KPIs included in the Strategy evidence base.
36. We will continue to manage and monitor our progress in the delivery of the Strategy through our existing governance arrangements, including regular Cabinet updates and 6 monthly reporting to and consideration by

the Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee during the first year of the strategy and annually thereafter.

Legal Implications

37. At this stage in the development of the Strategy there are no specific legal implications to consider.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

38. There are no financial implications identified within the Strategy. Resource will be needed to deliver the Strategy, and this will therefore be considered as a part of the development of the associated delivery plan(s).

Climate Change Implications

39. A fundamental cross-cutting theme throughout the Strategy is the development of green skills to support the achievement of net zero by 2050.

40. Not delivering the Strategy has the potential to hinder the development of green skills across Staffordshire and therefore limit our ability to address climate change and achieve net zero by 2050.

41. The Strategy recognises the importance of green skills to the economy and environment and will look to embed their development into a wide range of delivery programmes and projects.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Final Full Employment and Skills Strategy

Appendix 2 – Final Summary Employment and Skills Strategy Brochure

Community Impact Assessment

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Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy

2023-2030

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Annex 2: Priority Sector Evidence

Foreword

Stakeholders from across the county have come together, recognising the importance of skills for employment in helping residents and businesses to fully experience the benefits of Staffordshire's enterprising, resilient, and inclusive economy.

Whilst we continue to concentrate on post-pandemic recovery and prepare for opportunities like devolution, we recognise an increased need to support people of all ages into work, to progress or change careers, and to ensure that businesses can access the skills and talent they need to diversify and grow.

This employment and skills strategy for Staffordshire puts in place the vision and priorities to deliver our united economic vision for the Staffordshire economy. It will achieve a county-wide workforce that is equipped, not only to weather the storms of economic shocks such as a global pandemic but to thrive and grow in a pioneering county. We will deliver the digital skills needed to embrace the power of technology and digital transformation in our priority sectors and the green skills needed to achieve net zero by 2050.

The essence of what makes this strategy different is that it is built on partnership and shared endeavour. The stakeholders and organisations that have contributed to this strategy are committed to making our ambitions a reality. We want people from all backgrounds and abilities to fulfil their potential and as devolution plans develop, we look forward to working with partners across Staffordshire and around its boundaries to capitalise on the talent and highly skilled workforce that already exists in Staffordshire.

Above all, we are committed to ensuring that Staffordshire is a place where everyone can thrive; harnessing and growing the county's existing skills base to enable residents and businesses to make the most of future opportunities and make prosperity a reality for all.

(Image) Alan White

Leader of Staffordshire County
Council and Leaders Board Chair

(Image) Philip White

Deputy Leader of Staffordshire
County Council and Cabinet
Member for Economy and Skills

1. Introduction

Our 10-year vision for employment and skills in Staffordshire

- **Building on recent employment and skills improvement and success**

Through strong partnership working and significant capital and revenue investment e.g., City Deal, Growth Deal, European Social Fund (ESF), Getting Building Fund etc. over recent years Staffordshire has seen significant improvement and success in developing local skills, with faster improvement than nationally in reducing the number of residents with no formal qualifications and those with higher skills at Level 3+ (A Level equivalent or above) and 4+ (Degree equivalent or above).

By developing local skills, we have helped ensure that more residents can access better paid jobs and play an active and productive role in the local economy. Our unemployment and economic inactivity (worklessness) rates remain well below the national average meaning that significantly more of our residents are in work and fewer are reliant on state support.

Overall, this recent employment and skills improvement has contributed to greater local economic growth and increased productivity, with more businesses choosing Staffordshire as a place to invest and operate creating more higher skilled, better paid jobs.

- **A united vision and mission for further employment and skills improvement**

Staffordshire County Council has recently published its new Economic Strategy 2023-2030, this ambitious strategy is our roadmap to delivering our ambitions for the Staffordshire economy, where our existing business are helped to grow, new businesses are established and thrive, our residents have the skills needed to access the jobs of the future and our towns across the county are supported to be places we can all be proud of.

Alongside this the Staffordshire Leaders Board has agreed an economic vision and priorities and a pipeline of priority economic growth projects to support the future development of the local economy.

This strategy looks to support the delivery of the County Council's Economic Strategy and the Leaders Board's economic vision, priorities, and pipeline projects by building on recent employment and skills improvement and success across Staffordshire and ensure that the county has the highly skilled workforce it needs to reach its full potential.

Working with key partners such as the DWP, Job Centre Plus and Skills Providers we will look to provide the employment and skills support needed for residents to access the better paid jobs being created across Staffordshire.

We will continue to develop inspirational Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) through our Careers Hub to ensure that all residents have

access to the information and advice they need to make informed career choices and manage their career.

Through our strong Colleges and Universities, we will increase the supply of higher-level technical skills and develop new skills needed by businesses in our priority sectors, with a particular focus on cross-cutting digital skills development through new state-of-the-art provision and green skills vital for the county's net zero ambitions. We want the needs of business to be at the heart of transformation and seek to forge new and lasting partnerships to make this happen. Key to this is building on the recent development of the £16m Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology (IoT), with business and education providers increasingly working together to deliver the facilities and technical provision needed in Staffordshire to provide the future skills for growth.

We will also look to ensure that there are fully effective pathways for all learners to achieve higher technical qualifications. An important aspect of this will be addressing the current progression issues from level 2 to level 3 and the requirement to reform level 3 alternative academic and technical qualifications that sit alongside A Levels, T Levels, and apprenticeships in order to support progression and attainment for all students. This will provide the opportunity for all students to move into high-skilled jobs, either directly, or through progression into good quality higher education courses.

We also want to ensure that residents have access to the support and provision in order to develop entrepreneurial and innovation skills that support greater local enterprise.

Staffordshire is resilient and we have put in place skills support for our residents and workers to deal with change and access support and training when they need it. This includes ensuring that those people more adversely affected by economic shocks such as Brexit, the pandemic and energy/cost-of-living crisis (young people, women and those with lower-level skills and workers from hardest-hit sectors) are front and centre of our plans for the future. Transferable skills are at the heart of this, especially for those leaving rapidly shifting sectors such as retail and hospitality.

Given the speed with which the economy is now changing we also recognise the need to develop a stronger culture of life-long learning in Staffordshire to ensure that all residents can continue to benefit from continued economic growth and the better paid jobs being created.

Models of delivery are changing, and we will support that change so that businesses, especially small ones, can be instrumental in crafting new courses in modular, bite-size, and on-demand formats. We want individuals to be able to access qualifications, especially digital and green skills, at a time and in a way that suits them to upskill or reskill, improving social mobility, inclusion, and lifelong learning.

These better local skills and stronger workforce can support the delivery of our shared economic strategy and vision alongside the wide range of ambitious current and pipeline projects being delivered by our Local Authorities.

To achieve these aims our shared vision and mission are set out below.

OUR SHARED VISION

At the heart of our strategy is **our vision** for employment and skills across Staffordshire:

“Developing local skills which enable more people to access higher value, better paid jobs across a wide range of priority and locally important sectors, to help deliver a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy across Staffordshire.”

OUR SHARED MISSION

The **mission** for local employment and skills stakeholders is to:

“Create strong and effective partnerships which support our people to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their ambitions and play a productive role in the growth of the Staffordshire economy.”

This Employment and Skills strategy can be used to guide future employment and skills work programmes, to support external funding bids, to enable effective communication of Staffordshire’s shared employment and skills goals.

OUR SHARED EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PRIORITIES

Fundamental to our strategy are the **cross-cutting priorities of developing digital and green skills** to support the adoption of new innovative and productive technologies and to transition our economy to net zero.

Beyond these cross-cutting priorities, we recognise the similarities but also the diversity that exists across the county and with this in mind our employment and skills priorities are:

Priority 1: Ensuring All Are Work Ready and Can Access Employment –

Work across our communities to provide employment and skills support to create a more inclusive local economy with opportunities for all and support business growth through reduced labour shortages with increased economic activity and transition to work.

Priority 2: Providing Inspirational Careers Advice - Continue to develop inspirational Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to ensure that all residents have access to the information and advice they need to make informed career choices and have a productive and prosperous career.

Priority 3: Developing Technical Skills to Drive Productivity and Growth

– Create a flexible Staffordshire-wide skills system that responds to local business needs now and, in the future, particularly in priority growth sectors which increases productivity and economic growth through technical skills development (including apprenticeships, T- Levels, Institute of Technology) e.g.

- Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing (Automation/AI/Machine Learning)
- Construction including Modern Methods (Automation/AI/Retrofitting)
- Advanced Logistics (Automation/AI)
- Health and Social Care (Digitisation of Services/New Technologies).

Priority 4: Supporting Innovation and Enterprise – Support entrepreneurial, enterprise and innovation skills that enable more residents to start-up and grow their own business.

Priority 5: Creating a Place of Learning - Embed the culture of life-long learning into the local labour force to support upskilling & retraining and progression to higher value, skilled and paid jobs.

These priorities are aligned to our shared and individual strategies and plans.

Our priorities have clear interdependencies and the action we take to deliver on each of them will have broader impact on local employment and skills.

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Principles that underpin our vision

- Ensure individuals have the **employability skills** that employers want.
- Provide **inspirational careers advice** so our residents can make informed career choices.
- Embrace technological advancement and develop the **digital skills** to support it.
- Contribute to Net Zero ambitions by proactively adapting and developing **green skills** provision.
- Focus on the **demand for technical skills** from residents and businesses now and in the future, particularly to support our **priority sectors**.
- Support innovation and enterprise through **entrepreneurial skills** provision.
- Positively include **disadvantaged people and underrepresented groups** when planning and delivering skills provision.
- Embed a culture of **life-long learning**.
- Drive **economic growth and raise productivity and pay** levels.
- Build and champion **partnerships** to enhance all aspects of the local skills system.

Our partnership

Logos for strategy partners

Strengths to build on for a strong Staffordshire workforce

- Diverse local economy, with a strong mix of production, construction and service-based industries contributing to resilience in the economy.
- Growth in key sectors such as engineering and advanced manufacturing, construction, and logistics with high demand for skilled workers.
- World-renowned expertise, businesses and facilities exist in important areas such as green technologies, life sciences and automotive.
- Vibrant visitor economy which offers flexible work to a broad range of people.
- Important rural economy which we continue to develop and modernise through the adoption of new technologies.
- Staffordshire is an attractive place to live and work with excellent connectivity and transport links.
- More businesses choosing Staffordshire as the place to do business leading to greater job creation.
- Significant improvement in adult skills levels over recent years supporting the creation and attraction of high-value jobs.
- Strong local universities with nationally leading specialisms are producing a pipeline of graduates to support existing business growth and attract new businesses.
- High performing local Colleges which are helping increasingly more young people and adults to achieve higher technical skills.
- High-quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is routinely offered by good providers.
- Low unemployment levels compared to similar areas.
- High number of job vacancies in highly skilled sectors such as engineering, construction, and health.
- Existing partnerships such as DfE Skills Advisory Panel and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology demonstrate the commitment of local organisations to boosting local skills.

Challenges

- Economy still recovering from the COVID pandemic and now facing further global challenges related to the war in Ukraine, with an energy and cost of living crisis impacting businesses and residents.
- Forecast rise in unemployment due to challenging business trading conditions.
- Need to limit climate change and global warming by achieving net zero by 2050, this requires significant business remodelling and the greenification of jobs and skills.
- Traditional businesses in key growth sectors still to adopt new digital technologies which is limiting productivity and growth.
- Automation in key industries such as manufacturing and logistics reduces the need for people in lower-skilled jobs.
- People need new skills to access jobs in new sectors after they have been displaced due to automation or redundancy.
- The demand for digital skills at all levels outstrips supply.
- Requirement for significant increased supply of green economy skills to support restructuring of the economy.

- Ageing workforce leading to increasing replacement demand requirements.
- Further improvement of adult skills required to support higher value growth and raise productivity levels, particularly at Level 4+ (equivalent to degree or above).
- Increasing higher apprenticeships and T Levels in priority sectors.
- Lower school performance is holding back progression of many young people to higher skills levels.
- Changes to the available workforce as a result of Brexit, the pandemic and the ageing population put extra pressure on businesses trying to recruit locally.
- Unemployment hotspots across the county need greater employment and skills support.
- Young people and disadvantaged groups continue to be disproportionately impacted by unemployment.
- Current models of employment do not always support people to fulfil their potential e.g., those with disabilities, low skills attainment, caring responsibilities, neurodiversity.
- Graduates who wish to remain in the region may be unable to access graduate employment.
- Continuing reports of hard-to-fill vacancies due to labour shortages and skills gaps in key sectors of the economy such as health and social care, logistics and hospitality.
- Ageing population is leading to a lack of skills as people retire from the workforce more quickly and in larger numbers than people can be trained or recruited.
- The demographics for people in highly paid, higher-skilled jobs in STEM industries do not reflect the population, with a lack of representation from all parts of society.
- Partnership working between employers and skills providers requires continued strengthening to help ensure that skills supply meets demand.
- Lack of employer investment in training with over 3 in 5 businesses not having training plans/budgets or workforce strategies.

Opportunities

- Industry 4.0 is providing more and better paid job opportunities through the adoption of new technologies which require higher digital skills.
- Technology offers innovation to traditional industries and opportunities for entrepreneurship among a wider group of people.
- The Green Economy provides wide ranging new job opportunities across all sectors which require new green skills.
- New innovative high-tech business models in key growth sectors provide competitive advantage and greater opportunities for growth in higher value, skilled and paid jobs.
- Significant investment to help regenerate and reshape our towns providing new employment opportunities.
- Enhancing the cultural, leisure, heritage, and visitor economy offer of the county can create new jobs in sectors such as hospitality and retail.
- The Rural Economy in Staffordshire is a key feature of the local area and further development can provide valuable job opportunities.

- Putting business closer to the heart of skills planning will be vital in ensuring that skills supply meets changing demand.
- Investment in large scale developments and infrastructure creates construction jobs in the short to medium term and a range of jobs in the longer term.
- The development of our strategic corridors through enhanced connectivity and innovation can enable businesses in Staffordshire to grow and create new jobs.
- The development of employment and housing sites as part of the delivery of local plans can create further job opportunities in sectors such as construction and engineering.
- Devolution can bring more opportunities to shape and develop provision using funding more creatively to address local issues e.g., Adult Education Budget.
- Expertise at a high level already exists in the workforce and can be utilised to greater effect by high performing work practices.
- To ensure that the strong graduate pipeline continues to meet local needs.
- Big data offers new opportunities to individuals and businesses e.g., vacancy data from recruitment sites gives real-time information to support people to transition to new jobs mid-career.
- The development of digital, green, higher technical skills can support increased productivity.
- Greater support for entrepreneurship can lead to an increased business base and greater job opportunities and prosperity.
- To work with education and skills partners to better align careers education information, advice, and guidance with the needs of Staffordshire's labour market.

Further detail on the areas of focus and the reasons why we plan to do the things included in this strategy can be found in **Annex 1: Key Employment and Skills Outcomes Measures**.

Strategy One Page Summary

Our Vision: “Developing local skills which enable more people to access higher value, better paid jobs across a wide range of priority and locally important sectors, to help deliver a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy across Staffordshire.”

Our Mission: “Create strong and effective partnerships which support our people to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their ambitions and play a productive role in the growth of the Staffordshire economy.”

Our Priorities

Ensuring All Are Work Ready and Can Access Employment

Providing Inspirational Careers Advice

Developing Technical Skills to Drive Productivity and Growth

Supporting Innovation and Enterprise

Creating a Place of Learning

Highly Skilled Workforce

Our Priority Sectors

Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced Logistics

Construction

Health and Social Care

Crosscutting Digital and Green Skills

Our Outcomes Focus

Greater Business Investment and Growth

Increased Economic Activity and Employment

Improved Productivity

Higher Wages

Economic Growth

Delivering the skills Staffordshire needs now and, in the future

2. Maximising new local initiatives for local benefit

There are a range of initiatives and forthcoming investments which will have skills and jobs implications across the county.

Building stronger links between the businesses and public sector organisations involved in those initiatives and the education providers will help ensure a pipeline of talent. Examples include:

West Midlands Freight Interchange

- Staffordshire is an extremely well-connected centre of modern logistics at the intersection of three major engines of UK growth with an excellent commercial offer and professional services are growing quickly.
- Due to our strengths, we have seen continued interest from investors with the likes of Pets at Home and ASOS moving to the County during the pandemic providing much needed jobs for our residents.
- We are also to be the home to the West Midlands Interchange (WMI) the largest site of its kind in the UK and one of the biggest in Europe with world leading logistics warehousing within a strategic rail freight interchange in the heart of South Staffordshire. The WMI will offer 8 million sq. ft of flexible premium logistics facilities, creating 8,500 jobs and providing sustainable foundations for the future of the logistics sector by replacing road freight for rail, producing 70% less carbon dioxide.

HS2

- HS2's construction is already supporting over 20,000 jobs and has seen over 650 new apprentices begin their career working on Europe's biggest infrastructure project.
- HS2 could be a catalyst to improve local and regional rail connectivity, by exploiting the extra capacity released on existing lines by the building of the high-speed service. It could also bring faster services on the existing network by using 'classic compatible' high-speed trains.
- The construction and operation of Britain's new railway, which will serve Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, presents a significant boost for the region's economy, alongside opportunities for residents to benefit from jobs and upskilling opportunities.

Strategic Corridors A50/A500, A38

- Our location at the heart of the country and between Manchester and Birmingham provides us with vast opportunities to develop the strategic corridors that connect places across Staffordshire and beyond. The A50 / A500 and A38 corridors are two of the most important locations for economic activity within the county and are vital in connecting residents to

jobs. However, the full potential of these corridors has yet to be fully exploited and therefore a substantial opportunity remains.

- There has already been a significant amount of investment across the corridors in recent years with a great deal of further investment planned. The corridors connect numerous towns and places, whilst planned investment in road and rail, including HS2, will only improve connectivity across the sub-region and provide the potential to deliver significant infrastructure-led sustainable growth in the future.
- The corridors play a central role in the Midlands and UK economy and are home to several renowned national and global brands including AstraZeneca, Bombardier, Bentley, JCB, Nestle and Rolls Royce. These and other major employers are engaged in highly innovative activity, such as JCB's recent development of the first hydrogen motor in the industry. Supporting existing and new businesses to innovate and grow remains a priority, whilst wider ambitions such as the provision of good homes and green infrastructure will be vital in creating places where people want to live, work, and invest.

Carbon Neutral Aims and the Green Economy

- Research performed by the West Midlands Growth Company has shown that despite the impact of Covid, low-carbon manufacturing is now the West Midlands' fastest-growing sector; the sector grew by more than 7% in 2020 despite a 9% decline in the wider West Midlands economy as a result of the pandemic.
- This positive news signposts a direction and signals a nationally leading position, which creates a platform to build new sectors which could be pivotal for the growth of the regional economy.
- Staffordshire plays a key part in the wider low carbon sector and there are two obvious markets where the County is optimally placed:
 - low-carbon heating and fabric insulation - greener buildings (retrofitting)
 - low-carbon transport - EV vehicles (and hydrogen)

New Digital Technologies

- New digital technologies such as automation and Artificial Intelligence alongside making the most of big data are now becoming increasingly prominent in all parts of the economy and society (connectivity), where even amid the COVID-19 recession there are some 90,000 new digital job vacancies a week nationally.
- There is a critical need to increase the digital capability of individuals to take advantage of the growth opportunities that digital technologies present.

- Growing importance of digital skills across all sectors of economy with such skills now essential to majority of occupations. Main benefits include improved overall efficiency and better marketing and sales.

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3. Our priorities for action

Priority 1: Ensuring All Are Work Ready and Can Access Employment – work across our communities to provide employment and skills support to create a more inclusive local economy with opportunities for all and support business growth through reduced labour shortages with increased economic activity and transition to work

Our Objectives

- Develop and improve skills so that all residents including those from disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups get better chances to access higher value, skilled and better paid jobs and support economic growth.
- Support entry-level and basic skills (including maths, English, digital skills, employability, and transferable skills).

Our Rationale

- Develop and improve skills so that all residents including those from disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups get better chances to access higher value, skilled and better paid jobs and support economic growth.

Staffordshire benefits from a stronger labour market than most other areas with levels of unemployment and worklessness better than the national average. This is in part due to the continued development of a strong, robust, and diverse local economy which provides increased opportunities for residents to enter the workplace. While there has also been significant ongoing investment in developing local skills with adult skill levels seeing faster improvement than seen nationally meaning that more residents can access the higher value, skilled and better paid jobs being created across Staffordshire.

However, the economic impact of the pandemic and further recession resulting from the inflationary pressures caused in the main by the war in Ukraine have seen unemployment and worklessness levels increase both nationally and in Staffordshire. This has contributed to businesses struggling to recruit the workforce needed to grow and reports of wide-ranging labour shortages and skills gaps.

Our challenge is to support all people looking for work to gain the necessary skills for available jobs. It is therefore essential that those who are seeking work have access to high-quality advice and guidance as well as the relevant skills and retraining to help them re-enter the workforce.

What can be disheartening for people looking for work in a new sector is the perception that they will be starting from scratch. The reality is that many jobs have similar skills needs and those with experience in one field may be a perfect fit in another. The challenge is connecting the two together. Improving

information about how people can migrate from one sector to another using their transferable skills is therefore a priority.

People who have multiple barriers to work either from a skills perspective or due to other factors now have a greater challenge to secure employment. Support is needed to enable people furthest from the labour force and with multiple barriers, to access training and wrap-around support that prevents them becoming long-term unemployed. A potential approach being the co-design of a 'Job Rotation' programme to support unemployed people with employment experience and training, enabling unskilled/low skilled workers to access relevant vocational training and gain vital skills needed by local businesses.

Rightly there is a focus on young people with higher needs than other students and much good work has been done over recent years to ensure that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and care leavers have the additional support they need to help them progress and achieve. We have helped to ensure that there is more sufficient education and training provision for young people and improved the suitability of provision for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) such as through post 16 higher needs placements and increasing supported internships.

Overall Staffordshire performs comparatively well with most other areas for young people aged 16 or 17 not in employment, education, or training (NEET), however recently we have started to see an increase in NEETs. It is recognised that there is a need to further develop engagement provision across Staffordshire to provide preparation for continued learning and gaining recognised qualifications and prevent young people becoming NEET.

We also know that some highly skilled groups are not represented as they should be in key growth sectors and high-value jobs and we, therefore, want to maximise opportunities for people from minority groups and women to ensure that they fulfil their potential in our workforce.

The Staffordshire Countywide Employment and Skills Task Group is a key mechanism for bringing together partners to address such labour market issues by ensuring that residents skills match changing demand within the local economy, such as through the sector-based work academy programme (SWAP). While the new Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Brokerage Service will be vital in matching residents to new learning and job opportunities.

- Support entry-level and basic skills (including maths, English, digital skills, employability, and transferable skills).

Staffordshire has seen continued improvement in the proportion of adults with no formal qualifications and is now better than the national average, however, there are still many residents aged 16-64 with no qualifications. We must ensure that those without the fundamental skills to enter and sustain good jobs in areas of demand are supported to gain such skills. If we do not focus on enabling adults to achieve functional levels of maths, English and digital skills alongside wider employability and transferable skills required by employers then there is

an increased risk that they will not be able to play an active role in the economy or achieve their ambitions.

There is an established and well-regarded offer of adult and community learning delivered across Staffordshire and this has been able to adapt as demand for learning evolves. There is also increased dedicated support for the improvement of numeracy skills such as through the new Government Multiply scheme.

It is important that we continue to raise awareness of the free support and skills provision available to our residents to help reskill and upskill into areas of demand within the local economy. Ensuring that the information, advice, and guidance can be accessed through community settings, and it helps people to understand the training that will help them progress in their careers is key. Community outreach and engagement will be key to ensure that we meet the needs of our communities through employment and skills support, with Staffordshire's Adult Community and Learning Service a vital gateway to upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

For adults in declining sectors and occupations which are being displaced by new technologies such as automation and AI there is an increasing need to develop new digital skills in order to access jobs available in growth sectors. Therefore, skills provision across Staffordshire must enable those without basic skills to attain them in a flexible and supportive way.

While there also needs to be greater support for employers to develop training and skills plans, with a particular focus on helping staff that are being displaced

Priority 1: Key Outcome Measures – What does success look like?

- Fewer Residents with No Formal Qualifications
- Fewer NEETs
- Raising participation and attainment in education and training
- Increased Employment
- Lower Unemployment
- Reduced Worklessness
- Fewer Reported Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps

by new technologies to develop new skills.

Priority 1: Case Studies

Staffordshire Countywide Employment and Skills Task Group

- The group has worked together since June 2020 to support businesses and individuals across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire with the aim of supporting economic growth by delivering on the skills needs and securing job opportunities. The group has led on a countywide response in the implementation and delivery of the variety of Plan for Jobs initiatives, such as

Kickstart, Restart, Job-Entry Training Support, Sector-based Work Academies (SWAPs) and the Way to Work campaign.

- The group has 29 partners including the County Council, City Council, Districts/Borough Councils, Government Departments, Chambers of Commerce, FE, HE, and other national agencies and local partners.

Staffordshire Jobs and Careers online platform and brokerage service

- 'Staffordshire Jobs and Careers' (SJC) is part of the Skills & Employability team and is responsible for the management and delivery of free recruitment and support services to businesses, supporting Staffordshire residents into work, by providing a bespoke tailored service to match and screen potential candidates.
- A small team of 6 Employment Brokers have been appointed.
- The digital 'Staffordshire Jobs & Careers' platform forms part of the service and will help support the local economy by providing residents with a quick and easy way to find employment and/or training opportunities. It provides a platform to make live labour market information more accessible, bringing information and data together, enabling a vast amount of information to be presented in a coherent and coordinated picture of what is on offer for residents and businesses. It also signposts into the myriad of other web pages offering support both locally and nationally.

Post 16 higher needs placements, supported internships, RPA duties-NEETS

- Staffordshire SEND partners are developing a countywide, multi-partner forum to increase employment opportunities for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities throughout Staffordshire.
- The forum will create routes that will support more young people with SEND into paid employment and will promote training and resources that schools, colleges and employers can access to make meaningful paid work a realistic outcome for all children and young people with SEND.

Stoke-on-Trent College Fresh Start Programme

- Stoke-on-Trent College has created a fresh start programme hooked around their concept of re-invention and the 'I am' campaign for learners who are NEET or who have dropped out from learning in-year, to reengage them, or continue in education on a programme that would lead them to progressing to a full-time qualification the following year. The programme includes developing a strong sense of self and who/what they would like to become, study skills, an employability project and work placement. They have also worked with the local authorities to develop a post 16 Risk of NEET indicators report, which the College uses to target support and interventions on a risk basis.

Looked After Children

- Stoke-on-Trent College is the largest provider for Looked After Children in the City Region, with over 100 Looked After Children from 10 Local Authorities, the majority (64) from Staffordshire, and are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers studying ESOL, with good results for both achievement and

progression. The College is running a Summer School for this cohort in June/July funded by Staffordshire County Council. Retention for Looked After Children at the College is 99% and looked after children have reported during their Personal Education Plan meetings that they are developing their skills and on track to achieve their goals.

Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Service

- The purpose of Community Learning is to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents and the local economy by providing a range of lifelong learning opportunities. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is a key component of strategies to improve health, reduce dependence, increase economic prosperity, address inequality, and realise our aspirations for a better future.
- The Council receives funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for Community Learning through the Adult Education Skills Budget to provide training and education to approx. 3,000 adult learners aged 19+ per year. The Service currently works with schools, colleges, third sector organisations, independent training providers and local community groups to deliver a range of learning opportunities consisting of:
 - Wellbeing & Independence (physical and learning disabilities/difficulties and mental health)
 - Community & Family Progression
 - English, maths & Digital
 - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) & Vocational
 - English Speakers of another Language (ESOL) and Essential Digital Skills qualifications (Entry Level to Level 2)

Staffordshire Multiply

- Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Service is delivering the new Multiply programme as part of the government's new £560 million programme to help transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of adults across the UK.
- The £4.2m programme over 3 years, provides numeracy skills to Staffordshire residents through courses up to 30/45 GLH, non-accredited with a focus of progressing learners onto AEB Functional Skills with other providers. The programme includes outreach provision, learning festivals, tasters etc to aid engagement.

Priority 2: Providing Inspirational Careers Advice – continue to develop inspirational Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to ensure that all residents have access to the information and advice they need to make informed career choices and manage their

Our Objectives

- Raise awareness of how the local economy is changing and what skills are needed to access job opportunities now and in the future.
- Prepare students and adult learners for work by providing knowledge, understanding, confidence and skills needed to make informed choices and plans for their future learning and career.

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Our Rationale

The economy is going through significant transformational change with new digital technologies and clean growth profoundly altering business and work. This digital and green revolution is leading to rapid sectoral and occupational developments which require new skills. We therefore need to ensure that students and adult learners are aware of these changes and have access to the CEIAG they need to make informed career choices.

We recognise that effective CEIAG is an extremely important component of school and college provision as it impacts upon students' aspirations, achievement and therefore potentially their life chances and social mobility. It is also an important part of the development of employability skills as well as experience and qualifications which support a chosen career pathway. It is therefore vital that we continually work with education and skills partners to better align CEIAG with the changing needs of Staffordshire's labour market. As part of this we will continue to focus on encouraging STEM uptake in our schools.

High-quality CEIAG is routinely offered by good providers, and this should be applauded. The best providers understand ladders of opportunity in the local area and tailor their offer to enable people who are starting at a low level to understand the trajectory they are on from the outset. This also means aligning their offer with other providers especially when it comes to progression pathways in Staffordshire.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Careers Hub is the main mechanism for the development of CEIAG across Staffordshire and is continually improving the connections between schools/colleges and businesses through cornerstone employers and the Enterprise Advisor network. By bringing together the worlds of education and employment the Careers Hub is creating inspirational and

comprehensive careers programmes and work placements to the benefit of learners and their careers.

Staffordshire County Council is also one of 11 licensed awarding bodies nationally for the Quality in Careers Standard, which is the nationally recognised careers quality award for education providers. The Standard is fully aligned with the Gatsby benchmarks and offers an opportunity for schools to undergo an external evaluation of their careers programme, providing recommendations and actions to develop and enhance the careers offer and meet national best practice.

The new Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Brokerage Service is also making inspirational labour market information more accessible and relevant for everyone, where residents can explore resources to understand the career opportunities and pathways available locally. We will look to build on this improved access to local employment and training opportunities for our residents to enable more individuals to progress into rewarding careers.

Priority 2: Key Outcome Measures – What does success look like?

- Raising participation and attainment in education and training
- Increased Apprenticeships and T Levels
- Fewer NEETs
- Lower Unemployment following FE and HE
- Fewer Reported Skills Gaps

Priority 2: Case Studies

Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Careers Hub

- Careers hubs are a group of schools and colleges, across a designated area or district who have a shared vision and work in collaboration with each other, business partners, education, and training providers to help deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve careers outcomes for their young people. All hubs have access to a dedicated team of support, funding opportunities and bursaries and expert knowledge and resource to help drive this change. To accommodate the growing commitment of schools and colleges to join the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Careers Hub network we developed a new delivery model to include four district Careers Hubs (Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffs, West Staffs and East Staffs). Each hub has its own expert Enterprise Coordinator.
- The Careers Hub has developed an employer skills competency framework as a response to gaps identified, to better support the young people of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to effectively transition from education to the world of work. The purpose of the framework is to create a universal language of key employability skills that local businesses want and need to help their business to thrive and grow.

Stoke-on-Trent College 'Meaningful Encounters'

- Stoke on Trent College is working with Schools and the Careers and Enterprise Company on how we can partner with Schools to help them deliver the new required 'meaningful encounters' with technical skills and training from years' 8 to 11, to ensure pupils understand and take-up not just apprenticeships, but wider technical education options, such as T-Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications. We have also partnered with Staffordshire University to offer upskilling opportunities for staff in Schools in Careers Information Advice and Guidance from Level 2 to 6 bespoke to the local context and including CPD on T-Levels and vocational pathway routes.

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Priority 3: Developing Technical Skills to Drive Productivity and Growth – Create a flexible Staffordshire-wide skills system that responds to local needs now and in the future, particularly in priority growth sectors through technical skills (including apprenticeships, T- Levels, Institute of Technology)

Our Objectives

- Join up training and skills provision across the county to deliver a united and streamlined skills offer.
- Develop world-class training and skills infrastructure and ensure provision is aligned to priority growth sectors and skills needs in the county.
- Embed the business voice and participation into provision and planning by fostering more links between Further Education, Higher Education, Independent Training Providers, and businesses.

Our Rationale

- Join up training and skills provision across the county to deliver a united and streamlined skills offer.

Staffordshire is fortunate in having high-quality learning institutions which serve the county and offer good provision at all levels. However, it is not always clear to individuals and businesses what is available and how it will meet their needs. Information can be full of jargon which can be confusing for local people, and this prevents them from accessing qualifications and skills that can transform their lives.

The relationships between the institutions and the routes for progression are sometimes unclear and difficult to navigate. We want to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to skills and clearly articulated progression pathways.

We also want to transform the curriculum, so it increasingly meets the needs of businesses. Whilst there are good examples of businesses working with colleges and universities there is lots more that can be done. We want to develop a framework for partnership working that will enable innovative, agile development of new provision with employers at the heart of it.

- Develop world-class training and skills infrastructure and ensure provision is aligned to priority growth sectors and skills needs in the county.

Staffordshire's economy is rapidly evolving due to the adoption of new digital technologies and the need to be net zero by 2050. It is recognised that these transformational changes will impact all parts of the economy through the digitisation and greenification of existing jobs and the creation of a significant

number of new jobs. Clearly this will lead to businesses requiring new skills from their workforce with digital and green skills development a priority in Staffordshire.

We have seen the development of new provision over a number of years to aid the improvement of digital skills across Staffordshire, such as through our Digital Skills Bootcamps and this has seen more residents achieve entry-level skills right through to higher-level digital skills which businesses need to transform and grow. We recognise that digital skills demand continues to evolve and grow with acute demand in areas such as coding, programming, and software engineering. We will look to further develop our digital skills offer and ensure that it aligns with changing business needs.

As we move closer to 2050 dedicated low carbon education and training programmes as well as ensuring that green skills are embedded in existing qualifications will be a major focus of curriculum developments. In particular we have identified a number of green skills which will be needed in significant number including retrofitting housing to make them more energy efficient and electric vehicle production and charging point installation across Staffordshire.

Beyond these cross-cutting skills priorities for the local area including digital and the green economy. We also have strengths and recognised opportunities to grow the local economy through technical skills development and growth in higher value jobs in sectors such as engineering & advanced manufacturing, energy, advanced logistics, construction including modern methods, and health and social care. We will continue to invest in world-class training and skills infrastructure which help to develop higher skills at Level 3 and 4+ to support improved productivity in these priority sectors.

We will also look to ensure that there are fully effective pathways for all learners to achieve higher technical qualifications. An important aspect of this will be addressing the current progression issues from level 2 to level 3 and the requirement to reform level 3 alternative academic and technical qualifications that sit alongside A Levels, T Levels, and apprenticeships in order to support progression and attainment for all students. This will provide the opportunity for all students to move into high-skilled jobs, either directly, or through progression into good quality higher education courses.

It will be important that Government and education providers ensure that teachers and trainers have the expertise required to teach new skills that are in demand, particularly those to help address climate change and adopt new digital technologies to drive productivity such as skills in STEM and other key subjects required for green and digital jobs. This should take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the review of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) to make sure ITT providers teach high quality courses which incorporate detailed subject knowledge. The government should also ensure that teachers have access to high quality subject continuous professional development.

We will work in partnership to continually share the latest labour market information helping to raise awareness of changing businesses needs and ensure that skills supply meets this changing demand now and in the future. We will

also raise awareness of free higher skills development opportunities such as the Government providing a wide range of free Level 3 qualifications to help gain the skills that employers value, improve job prospects and earn a higher wage.

- Embed business voice and participation into provision and planning by fostering more links between Further Education, Higher Education, Independent Training Providers, and businesses.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill introduced in May 2021 set out the expectation from the Government that further and higher learning institutions embed business needs in the curriculum to a much greater extent than is currently the case.

Staffordshire has a good track record of employer engagement, but this must be dramatically enhanced, and barriers overcome if provision is to properly reflect the current and future needs of the economy. We commit to working with employer representative bodies, businesses of all sizes and providers to create a coalition of the willing which can co-develop new ways of supporting sectors and supply chains through the creation of new skills and training opportunities.

Initiatives such as the £16m Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology (IoT), which is being developed by a Newcastle and Stafford College Group-led consortium of education providers and key employers from across the Midlands, including Keele University, Burton and South Derbyshire College, Shrewsbury Colleges Group, Axia Solutions, Siemens, Moog Aircraft Group, Fujitsu UK and St. Modwen Logistics, is an example of how business and education can work together to transform facilities and technical provision in the area. The IoT is scheduled to open in 2024 enabling investment in learning facilities which increase and widen participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects to support our priority growth sectors. We will build on the IoT approach to ensure that business and education providers increasingly working together to deliver the facilities and technical provision needed in Staffordshire to provide the future skills for growth.

We will also support and promote the continued development of wider technical skills provision including apprenticeships and T-Levels, with the Government identifying this as the primary focus of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) being led by the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce. We see the Chamber's establishment of fully representative priority sector groups for all Staffordshire businesses including cornerstone employers and SMEs as the main mechanism to understand changing technical skills needs of local businesses.

This improved representative local business voice intelligence can then inform the development of Staffordshire's skills system, such as through the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) which provides capital and programme funding to enable FE providers in Staffordshire to develop technical skills provision which better meets the needs of employers in our priority growth sectors which we would expect to be fully reflected in the LSIP.

Priority 3: Key Outcome Measures – What does success look like?

- Raising participation and attainment in education and training
- Higher Level Skills Achievement at Level 3 and 4+
- Increased Apprenticeships and T Levels
- Fewer Reported Skills Gaps
- Raise Productivity Levels
- Increased Economic Growth in High Value Priority Sectors
- Greater Prosperity through Higher Paid Jobs

Priority 3: Case Studies

Newcastle and Stafford College Group - Institute of Technology (IoT)

- Newcastle and Stafford College Group (NSCG) lead a consortium of education providers and employers from across the Midlands to form the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire IoT development. The £16M IoT to be based in Stafford and scheduled to open in 2024, will bring together key industry, education and research opportunities to the county and will see employers and academia working collaboratively to widen participation in targeted STEM areas. The IoT's focus is to deliver education and technical training in the construction, engineering, manufacturing, digital and health, transport & logistics skills including specialisms of the built environment, sustainability, and innovation.

NSCG - Skills Innovation Hub

- The £28M Skills and Innovation Centre at Stafford College has a targeted completion date of July 23 to be fully operational by September 23. The 3-storey facility will have a floor space of 7,500 sq. metre and will be equipped with leading edge equipment to deliver state-of-the-art skills in construction, engineering, and motor vehicle. The build will also host 4 court sports hall, gym, and 300-seat auditorium.

South Staffordshire College - capital projects

- The college is developing bids to create an animal zone for T-Level Animal Care starting in 2024, a media suite and gaming hub and a green energy centre at its Rodbaston campus. The college's Tamworth campus will be relocated to the city centre in a new £30m build. The new campus will provide a high-quality teaching and learning environment through a mix of general teaching spaces, specialist teaching spaces - such as workshops and labs - learning and study spaces, support spaces and public-facing teaching spaces. The College is also seeking to consolidate the provision from the existing Tamworth and TORC sites to the new build. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 23.

Burton & South Derbyshire College – Innovation capital projects

- BSDC are set to benefit from brand new facilities after the College's exciting plan for a new suite of innovative facilities has received initial funding of £3.2 million through the Government's Stronger Towns Fund. The facilities are scheduled to be completed by September 23.
- The facilities boost will include a Health and Social Care Realistic Working Environment, Mechatronics Suite, Creative Digital Learning Hub, Cyber Security Lab, and a Games Development Suite.
- The Health and Social Care Realistic Working Environment will provide learners with simulated environments to gain experience, knowledge, skills and understanding within a range of health and social care settings.
- The Mechatronics Suite will support manufacturing productivity through the provision of mechatronics and robotics skills that enhance manufacturing productivity.
- In an ever-increasing digital world, the need to secure organisational systems and protect them against malicious cyber-attacks is growing exponentially. The new Cyber Security Labs will provide learners access to the latest technology and through its training and collaboration develop skills, knowledge to protect and secure organisational networks.

Stoke-on-Trent College – capital projects

- Stoke-on-Trent College is benefiting from £13m from the Capital Transformation Fund and other sources to create new facilities in 2023 and 2024. A brand-new building at Cauldon Campus will build on and connect to the state-of-the-art Digital and Creative Hub established in 2019 and further support Digital and Creative Industries through a showcase classroom and further investment in digital. All digital suites and immersive classrooms are equipped with cutting-edge Computer workstations, optimised for running the latest specialist software including Autodesk Maya, Unity, Unreal Engine, 3DS Max, Zbrush, Visual Basic and the full Adobe Creative Suite. Learners and employers have full access to innovative technology including Lidar scanning, 3D Printing, virtual reality (VR), motion capture, visual effects (VFX), drones and eSports labs.

Priority 4: Supporting Innovation and Enterprise – Support entrepreneurial, enterprise and innovation skills that enable more residents to start-up and grow their own business

Our Objectives

- Enhance skills opportunities and IAG for entrepreneurs and those seeking self-employment with a focus on hard-to-reach communities.

Our Rationale

We are seeing more businesses choose to operate in the county, particularly in our priority growth sectors. This increase in Staffordshire businesses is being driven by both increased inward investment but also improving business start-up rates with more residents deciding to start their own businesses. Staffordshire also benefits from lower-than-average business failure rates and higher survival rates indicating that we already have many of the elements of a sound entrepreneurial and business support ecosystem.

The creation of new businesses is vital to our local economy as SMEs are the lifeblood of any economy offering job opportunities, providing stable and growing incomes, driving local production of quality goods and services, and fostering innovation. Therefore, ensuring that there is the provision in place to develop entrepreneurial and innovation skills that support greater local enterprise is a continuing priority.

We have put in place wide ranging business support programmes and created high-quality start-up space across the county over recent years to support and encourage people to start and grow a business within Staffordshire such as Keele University Innovation Centres. While as part of its Staffordshire Means Business Programme Staffordshire County Council has delivered the Get Started scheme which offers fully funded expert advice and support for businesses aged 0-5 in Staffordshire.

Alongside this we have the Ignite programme which offers free advice, workshops mentoring and support for post-16 FE students looking to set up their own business in Staffordshire. While Staffordshire University offers a Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship degree and the new Peter Coates MSc in Entrepreneurship which provides the opportunity to develop a start-up idea into a sustainable, scalable, and investable business. The university has also established the BeInspired programme to support graduate start-ups in the county and a start-up hatchery in the Innovation Enterprise Zone complementing the entrepreneurial environment with prototyping facilities for entrepreneurs.

It is vital that we continue to strengthen support and provision for those looking to start a business to maximise the long-term benefits of local entrepreneurialism. This is especially the case if those budding entrepreneurs are not from conventional business backgrounds or live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Developing 'an enterprise for all' culture with the appropriate

facilities, advice and training will be essential to ensure both new and existing start-ups not only survive, but thrive and hopefully, in the long term provide

Priority 4: Key Outcome Measures – What does success look like?

- Higher Business Start-up Rates
- Higher Business Survival Rates
- Lower Business Failure Rates
- More Business Step-ups / High Growth Businesses
- Greater SME Job Creation
- Increased SMEs particularly in Priority Growth Sectors

new jobs across the county.

Priority 4: Case Studies

Keele University Innovation Centres

- As a response to the needs of employers and with the aim to support our local business community, Keele University has invested in dedicated innovation centres to help business grow.
- Innovations centres host a range of business facilities, including private and co-working office space, accommodation, and specialist workshop areas. Workshops areas offer businesses ultimate flexibility, providing space for various purposes from laboratory and plant room use to manufacturing. There are currently six Innovation Centres (IC) located at Keele University Science and Innovation Park, with innovation centres 7 & 8 soon to be completed.
- In total the current buildings offer more than 130,000 sq. ft. of modern commercial mixed-use space, including a range of high-specification flexible offices, laboratories, and workshops. Lettings are undertaken through lease agreements generally from three years upwards. However, certain units may also be available on short-term tenancy agreements.

Ignite

- The Ignite programme, delivered by Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, supports young people in the final year of further education who have the aspiration to start their own business. The programme is constructed around an intensive workshop, to provide the skills needed to start a business. Areas covered include business planning, marketing, networking, cashflow forecasting and selling. 13,500 students have been supported on the programme to date.

Staffordshire Means Business

- Staffordshire County Council has delivered a range of programmes to support business to start up, step up and grow.
- The Get Started scheme offers fully funded expert advice and support for businesses aged 0-5 in Staffordshire. Businesses can choose between:

- logo development
- website development
- existing website improvement
- digital marketing expertise and campaigns
- planning and accountancy support, including business planning, forecasting, getting loans and finance, etc
- The Start-up loans scheme offers brand new businesses or businesses less than two years old, an interest- free loan of between £3,000 to £5,000, which can be used for most purposes to fund those key purchases to get the business off the ground.
- The Carbon literacy programme engages with organisations through the Staffordshire Business Environment Network (SBEN) to receive accredited carbon literacy training, which promotes positivity and stimulates action towards reducing carbon emissions. As well as embedding awareness of the climate impacts of everyday actions, the Project lays a foundation for green-collar skills and grows demand for low carbon goods and services.
- To date 355 companies have been supported with free training, 320 companies have accessed the business start-up programme and 28 have received business start-up loans.

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Priority 5: Creating a Place of Learning - Embedding the culture of life-long learning into the local labour force to support upskilling &

Our Objectives

- Focus on occupations in highest demand e.g., nurses, social care workers, software developers and help people who are underrepresented in high-value professions to enter them.
- Increase traineeships, T Levels, and apprenticeships, especially at higher levels and in STEM industries.
- Ensure talent pipeline of graduates and people with higher-level skills is enhanced and aligned with priority growth sectors.

retraining and progression to better jobs

Our Rationale

- Focus on occupations in highest demand e.g., nurses, social care workers, software developers and help people who are underrepresented in high-value professions to enter them.

As seen both nationally and in Staffordshire there are significant labour shortages and skills gaps across the economy. There are multiple reasons for this, with fewer workers available to fill roles in demand, a lack of interest in some occupations due to poor pay and terms & conditions, a lack of awareness amongst learners of where there is highest demand for skills, and businesses struggling to retrain and upskill staff.

Therefore, one of the biggest challenges we face is generating a pipeline of talent with the right skills for current and future jobs. The skills needs of many professions are changing rapidly due to innovation and advances in technology, and skills acquisition for high-level jobs takes years to accomplish. Even with a focus on the occupations that are most in-demand, this is not a quick fix.

It is critical that we ensure that information, advice, and guidance is available for individuals at every stage of their working life to help them make the right choice and obtain the skills needed by employers. Through high-quality provision and a culture of lifelong learning, we can create a pipeline of talent that meets business needs and attracts, trains, retains and retrains people in the county.

We will continue our commitment to helping people from diverse backgrounds, disadvantaged communities, and under-represented groups to get access to the same opportunities as others so that they can get the skills and confidence needed to enter occupations that are in the highest demand.

- Increase traineeships, T Levels, and apprenticeships, especially at higher levels and in STEM industries.

The development of technical skills is vital to the Staffordshire economy with local businesses requiring technical skills in order to develop and remain

competitive. While residents need such skills in order to access higher value, better paid jobs that can improve their prosperity and wellbeing.

In Staffordshire we recognise the need to increase the technical skills of our local labour market and ensure that more residents can access the better jobs being created. We continue to promote the importance of traineeships and apprenticeships to help businesses grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled, and qualified workforce. A key aspect of this being the recently relaunched The Ladder for Staffordshire, previously established to support Apprenticeship growth across Staffordshire, with the aim to secure 1,500 individuals as a minimum onto an apprenticeship across the county by January 2025. We also recognise the opportunities which T Levels present as progression routes into higher apprenticeships, entry level employment or higher education.

Given the structure of Staffordshire's economy with large STEM related industries being a priority for future growth we will look to increase the number of residents choosing technical skills pathways which lead to the acquisition of STEM skills. In particular, we will look to keep the momentum going at the higher and degree level of apprenticeships to ensure businesses can recruit staff with the requisite skills.

We will also ensure that those from disadvantaged backgrounds have better access to technical skills pathways and raise participation in traineeships, T Levels, and apprenticeships. The Staffordshire Means Business Apprenticeship 500 scheme is an example of how we have increased such opportunities in Staffordshire to support businesses to recover from the pandemic. Staffordshire University is also one of the national leaders in higher and degree apprenticeships and work closely with a wide range of local employers.

It is recognised that the role of independent training providers and colleges is critical here in building further on the expertise and commitment to technical skills provision in the area. Independent training providers are also agile when responding to business needs and are often able to provide tailored solutions in timescales that are challenging for larger institutions.

- Ensure talent pipeline of graduates and people with higher-level skills is enhanced and aligned with priority growth sectors.

Adult skills in Staffordshire have improved with increasingly more people with at least level 4 qualifications but we still lag behind the national average. To continue to close the higher-level skills gap we need to ensure that school performance and FE achievement rates continue to improve enabling more residents to progress to higher skills attainment. This can in turn help increase productivity and drive economic growth.

It is also recognised that many graduates leave the county once they have gained their degree. We need to work with businesses more closely to ensure that there are suitable graduate jobs available and continue to develop partnerships between Higher Education (HE) institutions and businesses. We also need to ensure that there are the places which graduates want to live and work

in Staffordshire with the right offer to retain more graduates and attract talent from other areas.

The mix of provision for undergraduates needs to continually adapt to reflect skills requirements in Staffordshire to ensure that employers have access to graduates with the technical skills they need. This is expected to become increasingly important as we transition to a higher skilled economy and HE provision will need to align closely to our priority growth sectors. An example of this is Staffordshire University's Innovation Enterprise Zone which is aimed at upskilling and reskilling the Staffordshire workforce in areas including digital, leadership and Net Zero.

People from disadvantaged groups are less likely to study for a degree. New and innovative approaches to tackle the issue are needed, for example scrutinising the potential biases in recruitment processes within organisations rather than a focus on individuals in outreach settings.

Progression routes from Further to Higher Education for adults need to be strengthened which is one of the key aims of this strategy. Higher Technical Qualifications are seen as a potential progression from T-Levels and then to further Level 6 higher education, with strong partnerships between colleges and universities being fundamental to such pathways being successful.

It is particularly important for progression pathways to be clearly articulated for adults already in the workforce to enable those from disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups to gain level 4 or above qualifications. The provision of more flexible short-courses and bespoke modular learning e.g., Skills Bootcamps and micro credentials which directly target digital and green skills gaps, are seen as an area we can develop further in Staffordshire.

Priority 5: Key Outcome Measures – What does success look like?

- Higher Adult Skill Levels
- Increased Apprenticeships and T Levels
- Increased Graduates particularly in Priority Growth Sectors
- Fewer Reported Skills Gaps
- Lower Unemployment
- Greater Prosperity through Higher Paid Jobs

Priority 5: Case Studies

Apprenticeship 500

- The programme works alongside existing initiatives to aid recovery of businesses hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic; providing grants of £5000 to cover the cost of recruiting and retaining an apprentice. Additionally, it helps unemployed 16–24-year-olds to gain an apprenticeship opportunity. The Ladder for Staffordshire supports businesses in finding the right apprenticeship and training provider, increasing apprenticeships in the area. The grants support businesses with digital skills and low carbon/net zero

through training and apprenticeships. Over 400 apprenticeships supported to date.

4. Priority sectors now and in the future

As well as the recognised need to continue our improvement of higher-level skills to drive higher value economic growth and raise productivity, we also see opportunities for growth and improved productivity in high-skilled high-value jobs in a number of key growth sectors.

In these sectors there are **sector specific technical skills** which require development and alongside this there are clear **cross-cutting digital and green skills** which need to be developed further if we are to maximise the opportunities for growth.

Digital and Green Skills Case Studies

Digital - South Staffordshire College Digital Skills Centres

- The £1m digital skills centres provides digital hubs at Cannock & Tamworth to provide access to high quality skills training supported by state of the art physical and digitally simulated environments to develop the skills needed by local and regional employers.

Green – South Staffordshire College Green Skills Village

- The Rodbaston Green Village £1.7m Getting Building Fund is a new training & development centre, based at the Rodbaston Campus, for low carbon, localised smart-energy management delivery, including electrical vehicle servicing courses with electric farm vehicle servicing and land robotics courses, a range of Green Technologies that will be utilized within buildings and transportation, allowing the UK to lead on Green Technology that meets our legal obligations for a Carbon Neutral future. As such it will include biomass, heat pumps, EV charging installations, solar/thermal, hydrogen boilers, thermal storage, and associated control systems.

Green - Keele University Smart Energy Network Demonstrator

- A European first, this world-class demonstrator facility for smart energy research and development enables the testing and evaluation of new and evolving energy technologies. Collaborating with local partner companies, the programme provides the opportunity to assess the efficiency of these new technologies in terms of energy reduction, cost, and CO2 emissions. Transforming the Keele University campus into an 'at scale living laboratory' will provide a unique testing site model due to the diverse range of activities and facilities within it – 3,100 students in halls of residence, 1,000 commercial users on the Science and Innovation Park, 200 'standard' domestic households, and academic activities serving 10,000 students.

The priority growth sectors include:

- **Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing** (Automation/AI/Machine Learning)

There is **high demand for talent** within this **fast-paced sector**, which includes roles from designing and building the next generation of electric vehicles to pharmaceuticals.

New technologies such as AI, automation, robotics, 3D printing, and plastic electronics are changing the shape of production and engineering.

Staffordshire is expected to see **high-value employment growth** which increases productivity and drives economic growth in areas of advanced manufacturing and specialism areas, such as automotive, aerospace, advanced materials, med-tech, agri-tech, energy, and other technology-intensive industries.

The availability of **skilled local labour** will be an important consideration for the economic outlook of this sector in the long-term.

Case Study - JCB Academy-Automation & Robotics Suite

- The £275k scheme created an Automation & Robotics Suite to include a Control and Automation Suite, a cad & visualisation suite, and an independent study area. The suite will enable the expansion of curriculum in both the mechanical and electronic sector from level 1 to level 3. The facility provides a bureau of specialist knowledge and equipment and allows smaller employers access to emerging technologies and advice.

Case Study - Perkins Engines Stafford - Manufacturing Excellence Centre

- The £767K project has supported the completion of a new training facility to enhance the skills of its Apprentices and other employees in core engineering practices as well as the Caterpillar production system curriculums. The facility provides the training area for assembly and core manufacturing process principles to support the existing key machining training facility.

Case Study - South Staffordshire College - Cannock Engineering Academy

- The £1m project has supported the refit of the Cannock Skills and Innovation Hub to create an engineering academy. The project has supported the purchase of specialist equipment including CNC lathes and mills, drills, mechatronic equipment Cad software to offer learning provision on a range of engineering principles including welding & fabrication, manufacturing, mechatronics, and computer aided design.

- **Advanced Logistics** (Automation/AI)

Logistics is a **diverse sector** covering road, rail, sea and air industries, the sector is a key part of the growing service economy with **other sectors heavily reliant on freight services** such as retailers and manufacturers whose businesses depend on the efficient movement of goods.

With Brexit, technology and other disruptive forces driving **changes in the way goods move across borders and through the supply chain**, logistics has never been more important to the UK economy.

Given our central location we are at the heart of one of the largest sectors in the UK economy with **sustained growth in the number of people employed in logistics**, with recent growth in occupations related to storage and warehousing to **support the accelerated shift to e-commerce and online retail with** this trend expected to continue, but there is an ongoing labour shortage in key vocations such as HGV and van drivers.

Alongside opportunities from changing consumer behaviour, the sector is also **seeing opportunities emerge from new technologies and ways of working** such as automation and AI, which are changing the shape of logistics and have the potential to significantly increase productivity.

Case Study - West Midlands Interchange (WMI)

West Midlands Interchange will be one of the largest logistic developments in the UK, offering 8 million sq. ft of rail served logistics facilities in South Staffordshire. This significant £1bn national project will support the creation of more than 8,500 skilled logistics jobs and apprenticeships for the local community during development, construction and operation. Local skills and training providers and partners will play a key role in ensuring that our residents have the skills needed to access the jobs being created.

- **Construction including Modern Methods** (Automation / AI / Retrofitting)

Construction is **one of the largest sectors in the UK and Staffordshire economy**. The sector continues face **skill shortages at all levels**, and along with BREXIT restrictions on migration impacting flows of EU workers which the sector has heavily relied upon, there is **high demand for talent to support future growth**.

We have **significant growth opportunities** including:

- **Population growth** leading to increased demand for construction of **housing and infrastructure**
- **Long-term major infrastructure projects**, such as HS2 and WMI, are also driving increased demand.

The sector is also seeing opportunities emerge from **new technologies and ways of working such as Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)**, including offsite manufacturing and prefabricated house building, which are changing the shape of construction and have the potential to significantly increase productivity.

The **Green Economy** is also key to the sector with job opportunities emerging in areas such as **sustainable construction, renewable energy, heat-pump installation and retrofitting** home insulation in existing properties.

Case Study - Skills Equipment Fund round 2 - Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group - Hybrid Construction Technology

This £1m project's specialist equipment supports the development of hybrid construction training at the college's national construction plant training centre at its Stafford campus. The college is one of only twelve centres in the whole of the UK to provide specialist training in heavy construction plant. The equipment supports the delivery of advanced apprenticeship frameworks in plant maintenance, plant operation, civil engineering plant & construction. Equipment includes heavy plant, dumper trucks, excavators, crane, scissor lifts, tractors, rigs.

Case Study – Stoke-on-Trent College Digital Construction Suite

A brand-new building at the Burslem campus will also support and enhance facilities at the Campus through investment in the digital Construction suite, electric vehicle and enable the delivery of the new T Level in construction with new workshop facilities for building surveying and computer aided design. This will enable the College to work with more learners both young and adults and with a range of employers to support upskilling in new green technologies for construction.

- **Health and Social Care** (Digitisation of Services/New Technologies)

Health and social care is a **significant sector**, with the **NHS** being Europe's biggest employer and the fifth biggest employer in the world. There are **over 350 job roles** in the health and social care sector and the sector is **vital to the health of the population in general and our workforce**.

A **growing and ageing population/workforce is seeing increased demand for health and social care services**. However, growth in the size of the sector workforce has not kept pace with this increasing demand and therefore the sector faces a **number of labour shortages and skills gaps**.

In Staffordshire the sector is growing with **ongoing high demand for social care workers and nurses**. Recruitment pressures have been **exacerbated by both the COVID pandemic and BREXIT**.

There are opportunities in the sector to **make better use of new digital technologies** to improve quality, efficiency and patient experience as well as

supporting more integrated care and improving the health of the population/workforce.

Case Study - Staffordshire University-Centre for Health Innovation

- The £5.8m Centre for Health Innovation has been designed in collaboration with industry experts and includes a state-of-the-art Clinical Simulation Centre.
- The facility aims to meet modern demands and challenges in the sector, meaning that students, healthcare professionals and start-up businesses, will have the chance to immerse themselves in the latest medical techniques and methods.
- Using advanced VR and AR technology, the Centre for Health Innovation will facilitate opportunities to explore and develop new patient safety techniques through cutting edge digital simulation and immersion suites.
- This ground-breaking approach will enhance the digital capability of the emerging healthcare workforce helping to position the UK at the forefront of patient safety and positioning Staffordshire at the heart of driving the Digital Health agenda forwards. The centre will help support over 500 skilled nurses, midwives and allied health professionals supplementing the NHS workforce per annum.

Annex 2: Priority Sector Evidence provides further detail on our priority sectors including SWOT analysis and labour and skills in demand.

5. What we will do and how we will do it

Our approach to deliver this strategy across Staffordshire and its districts and boroughs will be:

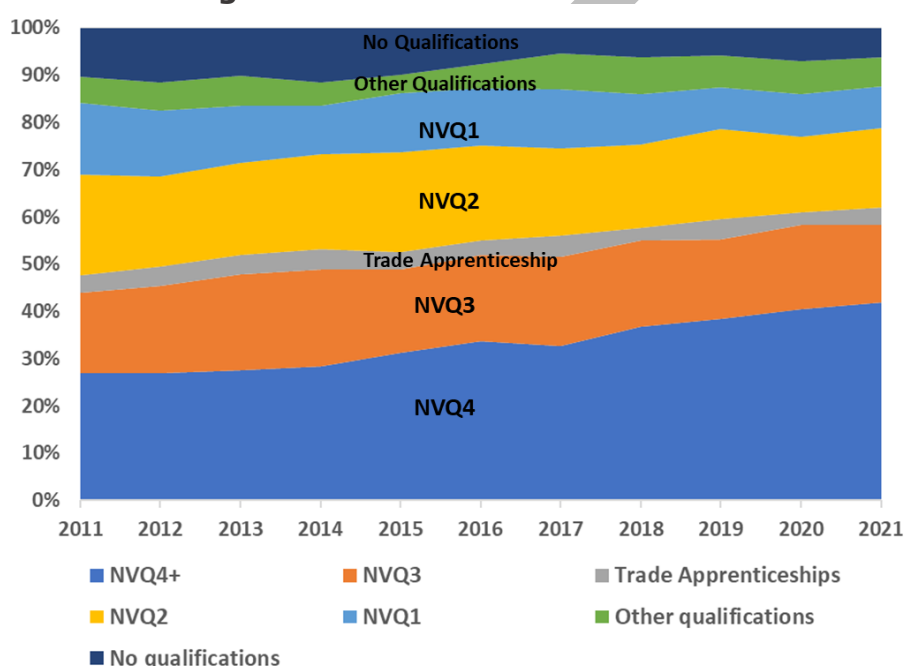
- To work in partnership to leverage and align public sector investment e.g., the Levelling Up Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- To match and maximise public and private sector investment e.g., Apprenticeship Levy.
- To work with government on the opportunities for more powers and funding through devolution e.g., Adult Education Budget.
- To maximise employer investment in skills and involvement in the design of skills provision e.g., Local Skills Improvement Plan.
- To shape and influence the strategic commissioning of other funds and priorities e.g., HS2, West Midlands Freight Interchange, A50 A500 Strategic Corridor, the LSIP as a route to delivering technical skills.

Annex 1: Key Employment and Skills Outcomes Measures

Areas of focus and the reasons why we plan to do what is included in this strategy.

- Working Age Adults with No Formal Qualifications** – Staffordshire has seen faster improvement in reducing the number of working age residents with no formal qualifications compared to nationally, with 7,900 fewer residents with no qualifications in 2021 compared to 2016 equivalent to a 19.5% reduction compared to a 17.0% reduction nationally.

Change in Staffordshire Adult Skills Levels



Source: Annual Population Survey

This significant improvement means that in 2021 there were 6.3% of working age residents with no qualifications which was just below the national rate of 6.4%. However, there still remain an estimated 32,700 Staffordshire residents with no qualifications which this strategy will look to reduce further.

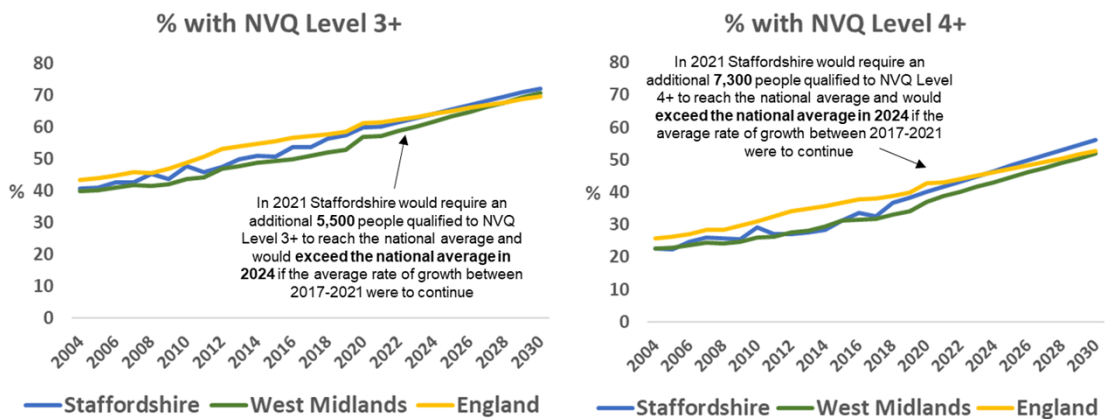
- Higher Adult Skills (Level 3+ and 4+ Qualifications)** – Staffordshire has closed the gap to the national for working age adults with higher skills.

We have seen adults with Level 3+ (A Level equivalent or above) increase by 30,500 between 2016 and 2021, equivalent to 10.8% rise compared to a 9.0% rise seen nationally. The latest position for 2021 now shows 60.2% of adults in Staffordshire now have Level 3+ qualifications just behind the 61.3% seen nationally.

We have also closed the gap to the national average for Level 4+ qualification (Degree equivalent or above) where we have seen an increase of 39,200 adults with such qualifications between 2016 and 2021, equivalent to 22.1%

rise compared to a 15.0% rise seen nationally. In 2021 41.7% of adults in Staffordshire had Level 4+ qualifications closing the gap to the national average of 43.1%.

Further raising adult skill levels to support higher value, skilled and paid roles and address the productivity challenge remains a priority – based on recent improvement Staffordshire is projected to exceed the national average for Level 3+ and 4+ skills in 2024 but there is a risk that COVID and the end of EU (ESF) skills funding may impact further improvement.



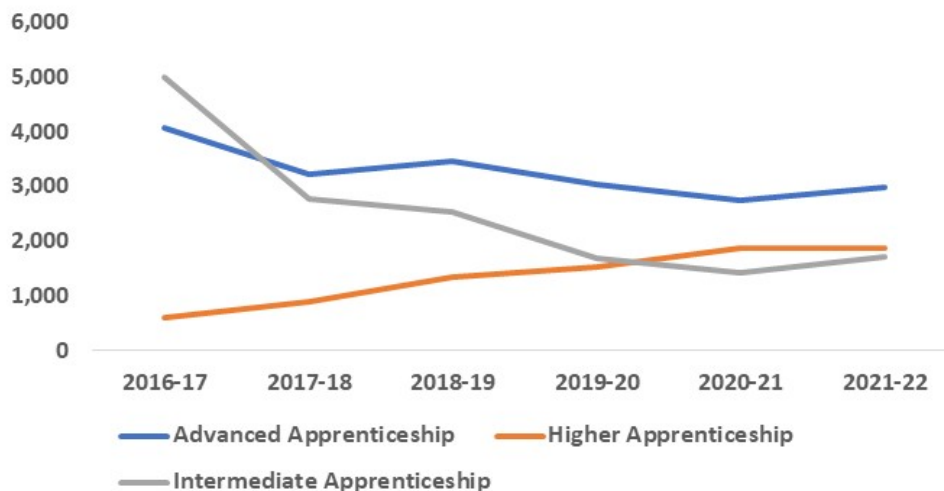
Source: Annual Population Survey

- **Apprenticeships** – As seen nationally, Staffordshire has seen a gradual long-term decline in the overall number of apprenticeship starts, with a 32% reduction from 9,620 in 2016/17 to 6,510 in 2021/22.

The main fall in apprenticeships has been seen at the intermediate level with a 66% decline between 2016/17 and 2021/22, while it is positive that higher apprenticeships have increased by 215%.

In 2021/22 advanced apprenticeships accounted for nearly half of starts (46% or 2,980), while higher apprenticeships accounted for 28% or 1,860 and intermediate apprenticeships accounted for 26% or 1,700.

Staffordshire Apprenticeships by Level



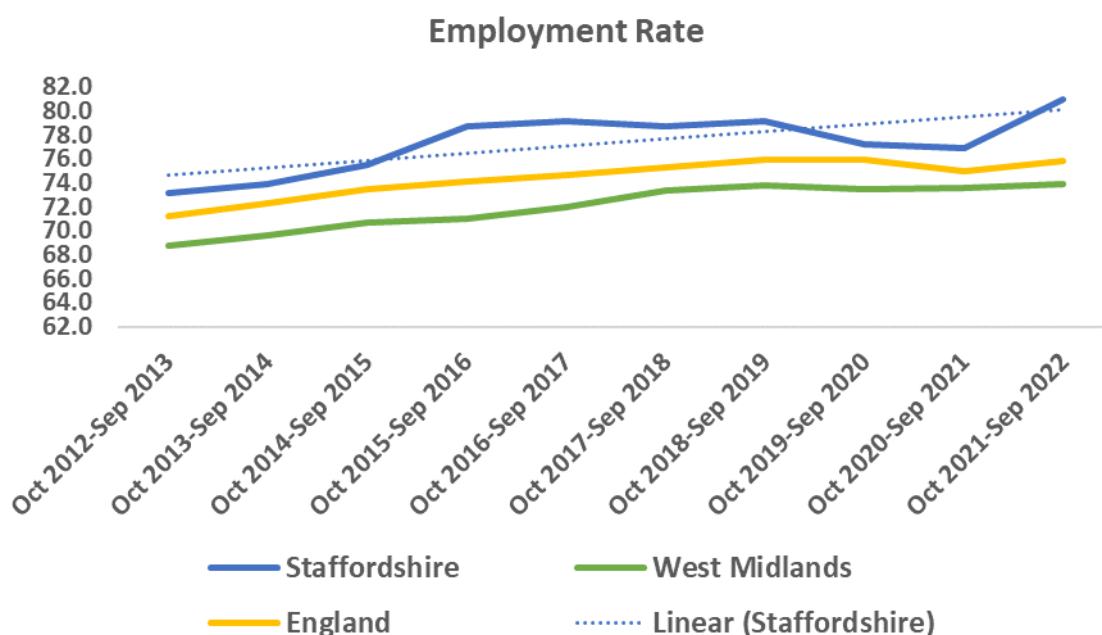
Source: DfE/Individualised Learner Record

Under 19s accounted for a quarter of all starts in 2021/22, while those aged over 25 accounted for nearly half (45% or 2,960).

In 2021/22 Health, Public Services and Care accounted for the largest number of apprenticeships with 1,900 (29% of total starts) followed by Business, Administration and Law with 1,750 (27%). The next largest sector subject areas were Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (1,070 or 16%), Retail and Commercial Enterprise (670 or 10%) and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment (420 or 6%).

Increasing higher apprenticeships in our priority sector areas will be vital to ensure that we have the technical skills needed to grow those sectors and increase productivity and pay levels.

- **Employment** – Latest employment figures for the period Oct 2021-Sep 2022 show that in Staffordshire there were an estimated 436,600 working age (aged 16-64) residents employed, with an employment rate of 81.0% well above the national average of 75.8%.

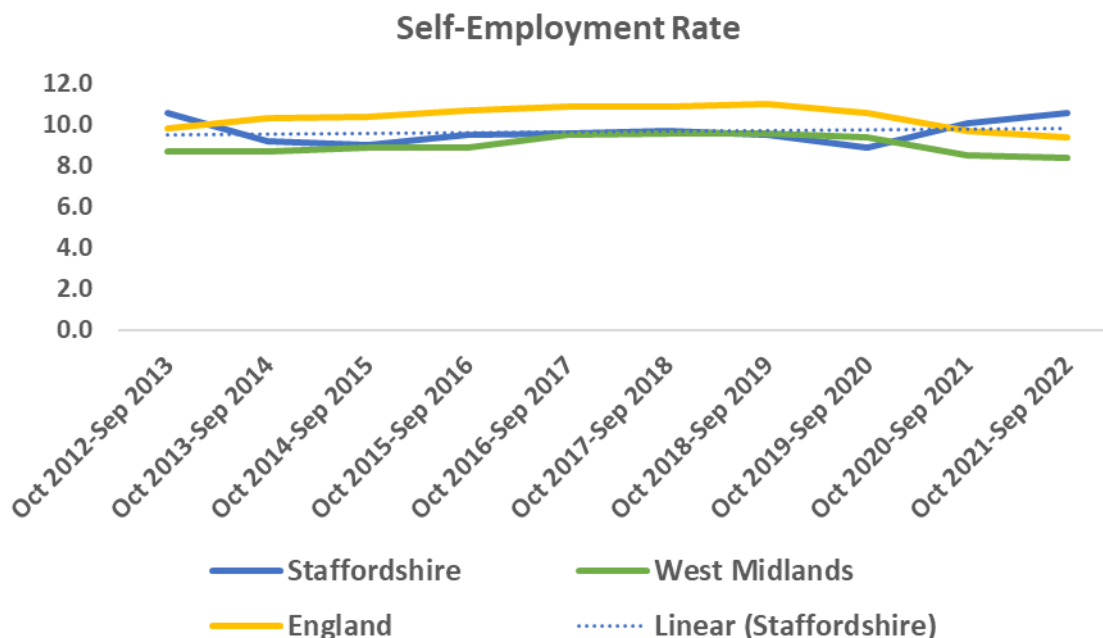


Source: Annual Population Survey

It is a real positive for the County that since the impact of the pandemic the number of residents employed has significantly increased and is now 20,500 or 4.9% higher than pre-COVID which is far better than the less than 1% growth seen nationally and regionally.

By continuing to support our residents to reskill and upskill we can ensure that Staffordshire’s employment rate continues to improve and remains well above the levels seen in most other areas of the country. This stronger local workforce can support businesses to grow and remain competitive while contributing to overall economic growth.

- Self-Employment** – Staffordshire has also seen a recent uplift in self-employment levels, with the latest self-employment figures for the period Oct 2021-Sep 2022 showing there were an estimated 55,300 working age (aged 16-64) residents self-employed, with a self-employment rate of 10.6% which is now above the national average of 9.4%.



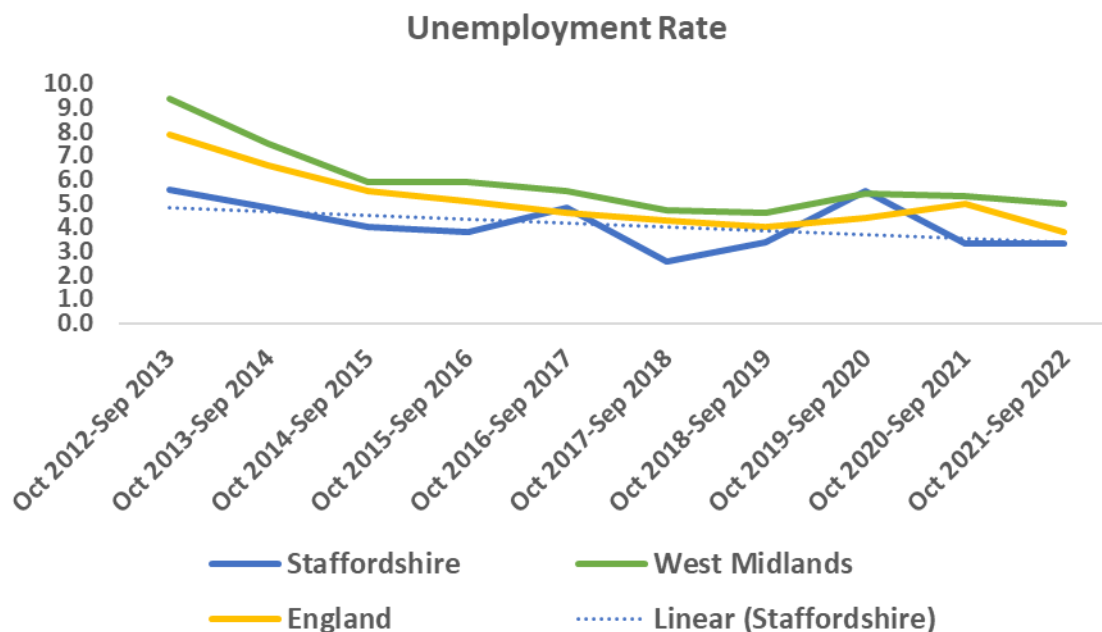
Source: Annual Population Survey

This increase in self-employment is a real positive for Staffordshire’s economy as it is new innovative businesses which can fuel economic growth and raise productivity and is reflective of the significant investment seen in entrepreneurial skills development and business support for start-ups and step-ups across Staffordshire.

This strategy will look to ensure that more of our residents can access the skills and training provision to develop the knowledge and skills needed to start-up and grow a business.

- Unemployment** – Following the increase in unemployment seen due to the pandemic effectively closing most parts of the economy, Staffordshire has seen unemployment levels decline to those seen prior to COVID.

Staffordshire’s unemployment rate for the latest available period of Oct 2021-Sep 2022 was estimated at 14,700 or 3.3%, which was below the national rate of 3.8% and significantly below the regional rate of 5.0%.

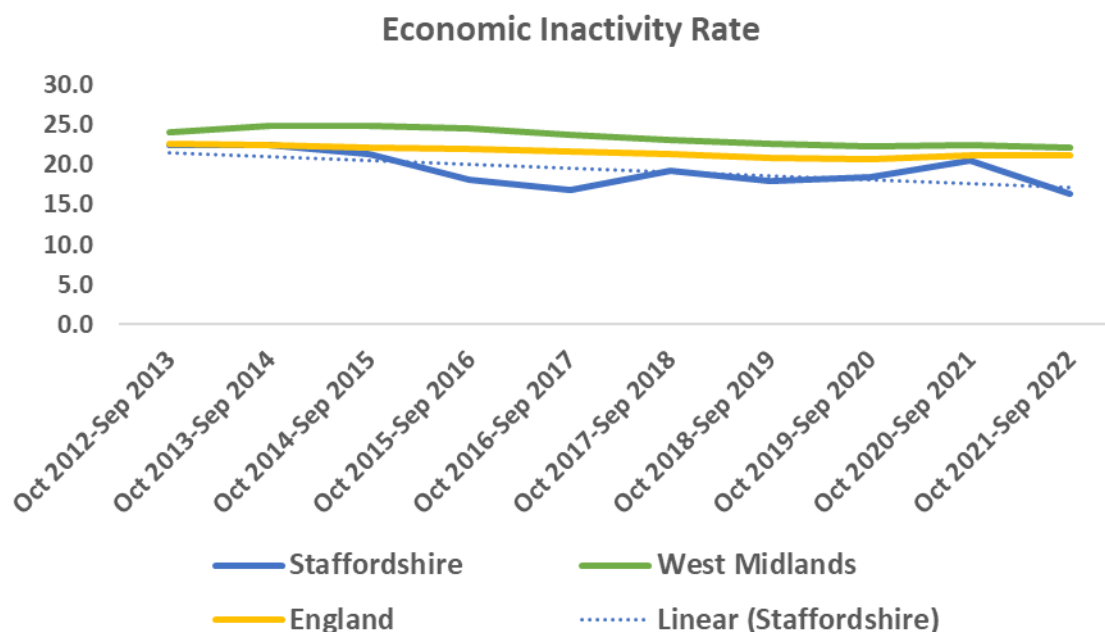


Source: Annual Population Survey

However, there still remained an estimated 14,700 unemployed residents of working age (aged 16-64) during Oct 2021-Sep 2022 and a key part of this strategy will be focused on ensuring that more residents that find themselves unemployed are able to find work and progress their careers.

- Economic Inactivity (Worklessness)** – Staffordshire has seen the estimated number of economically inactive working age (aged 16-64) residents recover to below pre-pandemic levels following an increase caused by COVID. This is in contrast to the national picture where those economically inactive still remain well above pre-pandemic levels.

Staffordshire’s economic inactivity rate for the latest available period of Oct 2021-Sep 2022 was estimated at 16.3% equivalent to 87,800, which was significantly below the national rate of 21.2% and regional rate of 22.2%.



Source: Annual Population Survey

This strategy will look to support those that economically inactive and who want a job to find work and help to address current labour shortages and skills gaps.

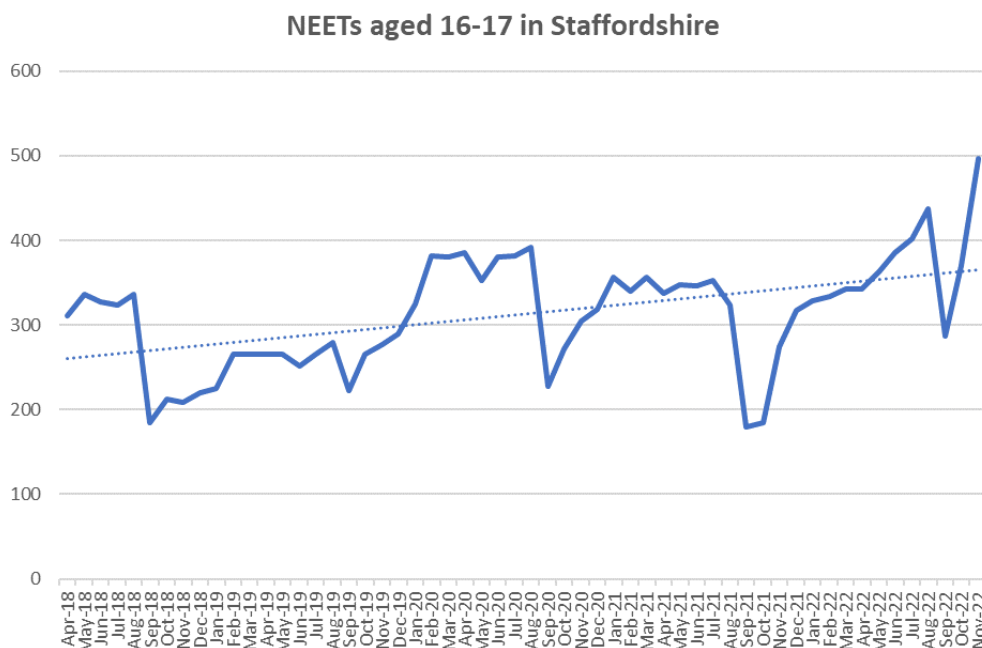
- NEETs** – Staffordshire performs comparatively well for the proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds living in each area who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) or their activity was not known (NK) at the end of the year. Latest published DfE data shows that 3.3% of 16- and 17-year-olds were NEET (1.8%), or activity not known (1.5%) at end 2021 (average of December, January, and February), which was down -0.1ppts on the previous year and well below the national average of 4.7%. This placed Staffordshire in the second-best quintile nationally.

Despite performing comparatively well, over recent years Staffordshire has seen an increase in the number of 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET, with latest local data for 2022/23 showing a significant increase to 497 in November 2022.

The main reason for young people in Staffordshire findings themselves NEET is due to them 'seeking employment or training' (52%), while over a fifth (21%) are 'not work ready' and 12% have a 'long term illness'. Further detail shows that that almost 1 in 4 of the Y12 NEET population had mental health issues that prevented, or part contributed to their lack of progression.

There is also an increasing asylum seeker population within the county, who require provision that incorporates ESOL delivery. We currently have a significant number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children without access to education provision despite being very willing to engage.

It will be vital for these young people that through this strategy the necessary support is put in place and available to support them into education, employment, or training.



Source: DfE NEET and Participation Data/Entrust

- Participation in education and training** – In March 2022 93.8% of Staffordshire 16–17-year-olds were participating in education and training. This was above the national average of 92.9% and placed Staffordshire in the second-best quintile nationally. However, this was -0.8 ppts down on the previous year.

Positively, in Staffordshire 98.5% of Staffordshire 16–17-year-olds were offered an education or training place in September 2021, which placed Staffordshire in the top quintile and well above the average for England of 95.5%. This also showed an improvement on September 2020 of 0.3 ppts.

[DfE NEET and participation LA scorecard](#)

- Post 16 attainment** – In Staffordshire 57.6% of 19-year-olds achieved level 3 in 2020/21, this was above the regional average of 57.4% but below the national average of 59.8%.

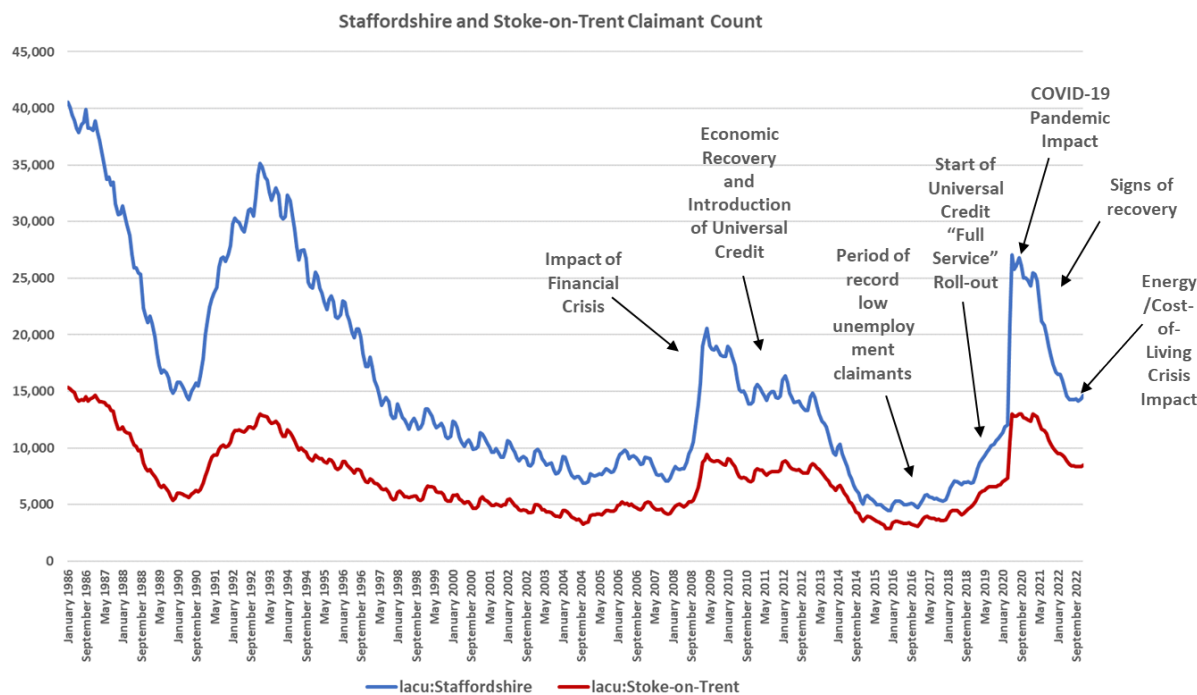
The proportion of 19-year-olds achieving GCSE 9-4 standard pass in English and maths (or equivalent) between ages 16 and 19, for those who had not achieved this level by 16 stood at 31.0% in 2020/21, which was below the regional average of 31.4% and national average of 32.7%.

It will be important that this strategy helps ensure that more young people have the skills needed to access better paid jobs in priority sectors. A key aspect of this is raising school educational performance where Staffordshire currently lags behind nationally for GCSE attainment with a lower average

attainment 8 score per pupil and for the proportion of pupils achieving 9-4 standard pass in English and maths GCSEs.

[DfE NEET and participation LA scorecard](#)

- Out of Work Benefit Claimants** – In December 2022 the Claimant Count in Staffordshire increased further to 14,640, the number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants is now 21.5% or 2,590 higher than the level seen in March 2020 (pre-COVID), which is below the 24.4% increase seen nationally and 22.9% increase seen regionally.



Source: ONS Claimant Count

It is important to recognise that although claimant numbers remain higher than pre-pandemic given our strong position going into the pandemic, we still perform comparatively well for our claimant rate which stood at 2.7% of the working age population in December compared to 4.8% regionally and 3.8% nationally.

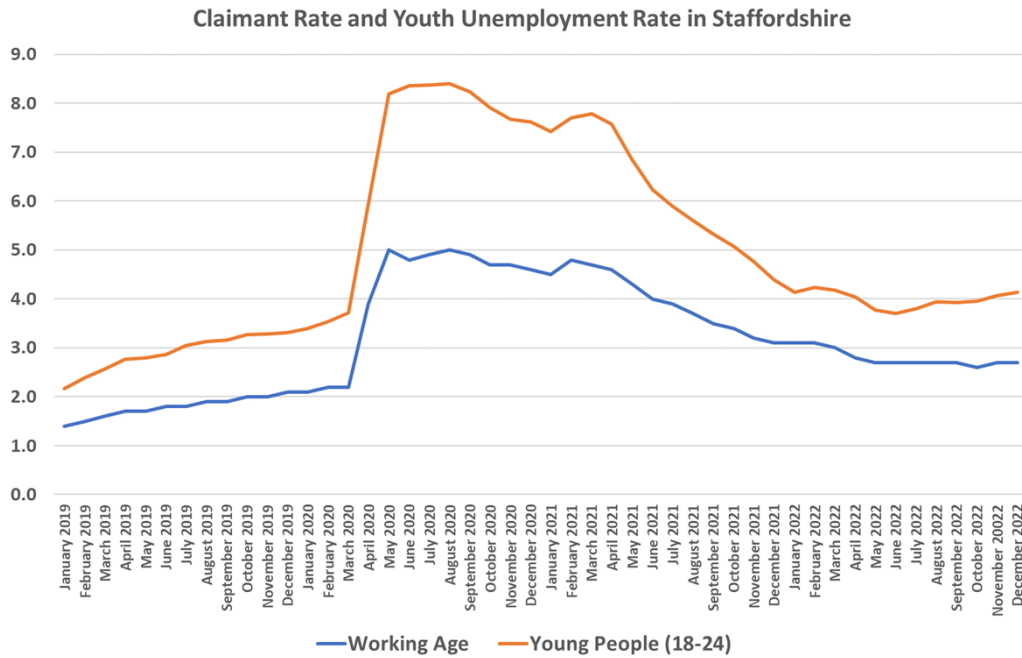
The Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) have forecast that unemployment will continue to rise in 2023 given the current global and national economic challenges we are facing.

This strategy will look to put in place the employment and skills support needed to support residents which find themselves out of work to find new work in areas of labour and skills demand.

- Youth Claimant Count** – In December 2022 the youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 40 to a total of 2,685 young people. This is similar to the trend seen across England as a whole.

Young people continue to be disproportionately impacted by work-related benefits dependency with the proportion of young people in Staffordshire

aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit at 4.1% in December 2022 compared to 2.7% for the working age population and 4.7% nationally.

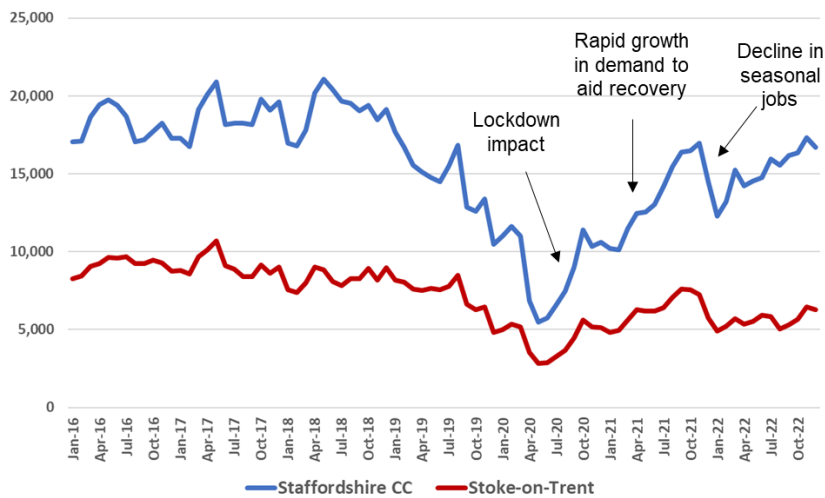


Source: ONS Claimant Count

Given that it is harder for these groups to find a new job it is increasingly vital that there is the right support in place to help young people find work such as through the Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Brokerage service, the Restart Scheme, and the new Skills Bootcamps to help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.

- Job Vacancies** - As seen nationally, job vacancies were heavily hit early in the pandemic, however overall levels have recovered and are now similar to pre-COVID with record levels in some key sectors. This is reflective of the high demand we are seeing for labour and skills across most parts of the economy to aid the recovery from the pandemic.

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Unique Job vacancies



Source: Lightcast

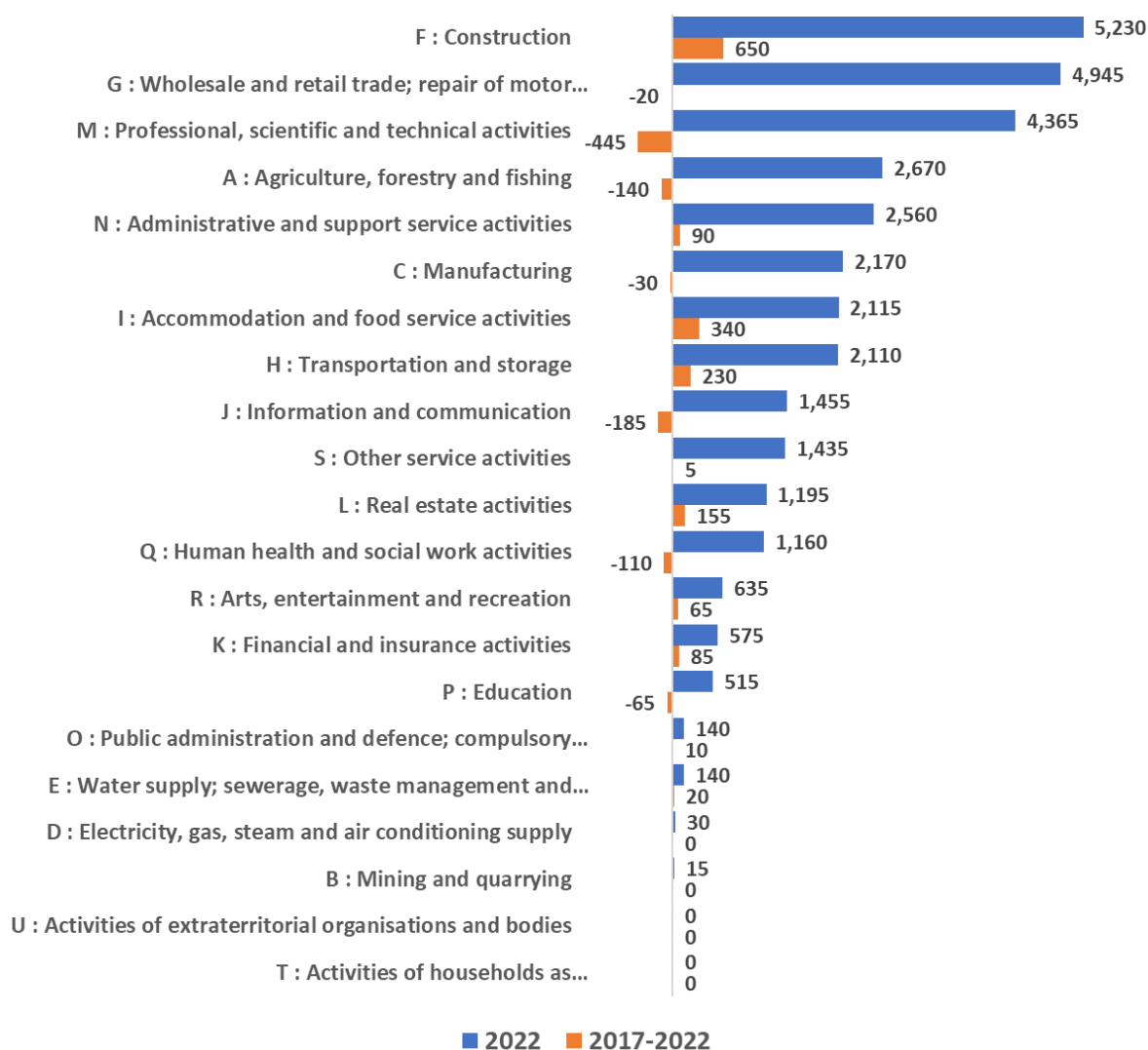
Demand for roles in health and social care including care workers and home carers and nurses remain by far the strongest of all occupations.

The increase in job vacancies to record levels is resulting in further reports of labour shortages and skills gaps with not enough skilled workers to fill the vacant jobs, especially in health and social care, logistics, hospitality, education, engineering, and digital/IT.

This has the potential to slow down the recovery or limit business survival unless the labour shortage and skills gap is quickly and effectively addressed, clearly employment support organisations, skills providers and the Government's Plan for Jobs including the Restart schemes and new Skills Bootcamps have a vital role in upskilling and reskilling jobseekers into areas of demand and preventing them becoming long-term unemployed. While Government and business sectors have a key role in ensuring that jobs in areas of demand are attracting workers with good pay and terms and conditions. Also encouraging those that have become economically inactive due to COVID will further help to address the labour and skills gap.

- **Businesses** - In 2022 some 33,465 businesses called Staffordshire their home, showing an increase of 2.0% between 2017-22, this compares to 3.8% growth seen for England. 99.6% are SMEs and the sectors with the largest number of businesses include Construction (5,230 or 15.6% of total), Wholesale and Retail (4,945 or 14.8%) and Professional Services (4,365 or 13.0%). Main growth in businesses between 2017-22 seen in Construction (+650), Hospitality (+340) and Logistics (+230) and main declines in Professional Services (-445) and Information and Communication (-185).

Staffordshire businesses in 2022 and change in businesses 2017-2022



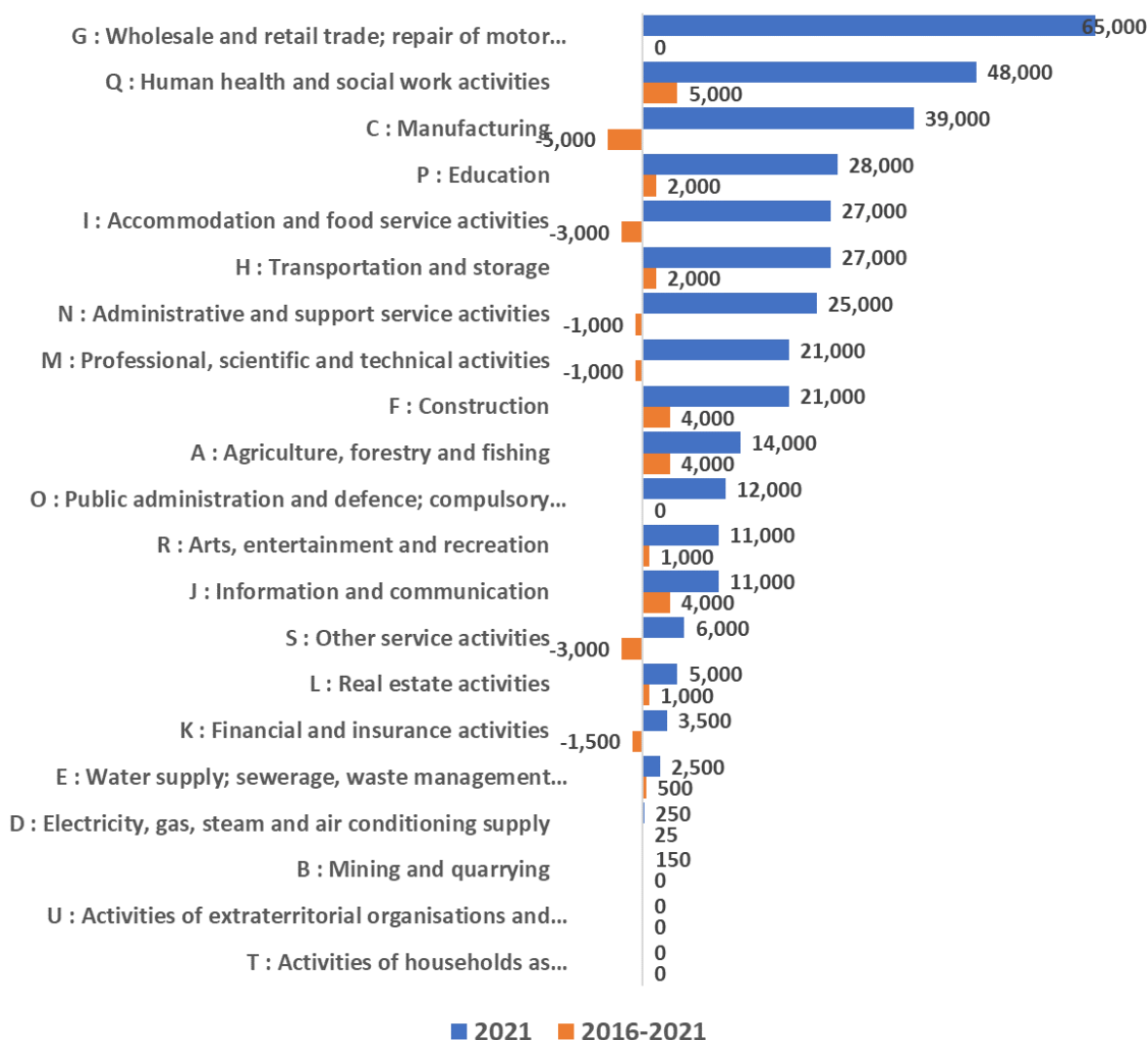
Source: ONS UK Business Counts/IDBR

- Business Start-up Rate** - Between 2020 and 2021, the number of Staffordshire business births increased from 3,050 to 4,145; this represents a birth rate of 12.2% in 2021, compared with 9.3% in 2020. Staffordshire’s birth rate for 2021 was for the first time largely in-line with the UK birth rate of 12.4%, whereas the County had a lower birth rate in 2020 when compared to the UK birth rate of 11.5%.
- Business 3-Year Survival Rate** - Staffordshire’s three-year business survival rate in 2021 stood at 61.9% which was higher than the UK survival rate of 57.6%.

This strategy will help support more businesses to start and grow in Staffordshire by ensuring that they have the labour and skills they need.

- Jobs** – Between 2016-21 total jobs in Staffordshire increased by 3% or 9,025 to a total of 366,400, this is lower than the 4% growth seen for England as a whole but shows recovery in 2021 following the decline seen early in the pandemic. The main sector growth between 2016-21 has been seen in Health & Social Care (+5,000 jobs) followed by Construction, Agriculture, and Information and Communication all seeing a 4,000 increase during the period. The biggest decline has been seen in Manufacturing (-5,000) followed by Hospitality and Other Services both seeing a -3,000 decline in jobs.

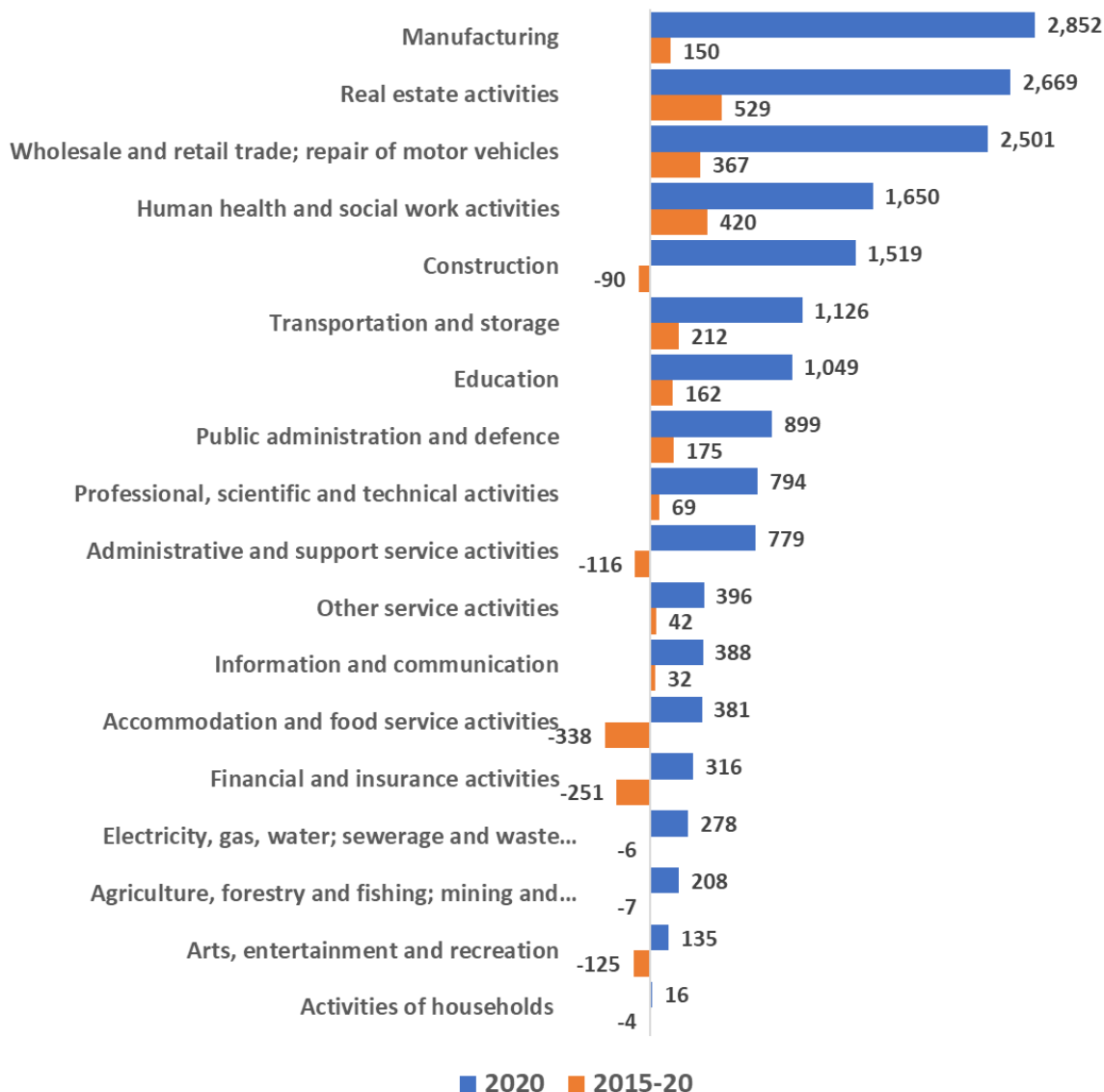
Staffordshire jobs in 2021 and change in jobs 2016-2021



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

- Economic Growth (GVA)** - In 2020 the Staffordshire economy was worth £18.0bn showing an increase of over £1.2bn between 2015-2020, equivalent to a 7.3% growth but lower than the growth seen for the WM (12.2%) and UK (12.8%) (the economy shrunk by nearly a billion between 2019-20 early in the pandemic, a -5.2% decline which was larger than the decline seen for the WM -3.9% and UK -3.4% - reflective of more businesses and jobs in sectors hardest hit by COVID).

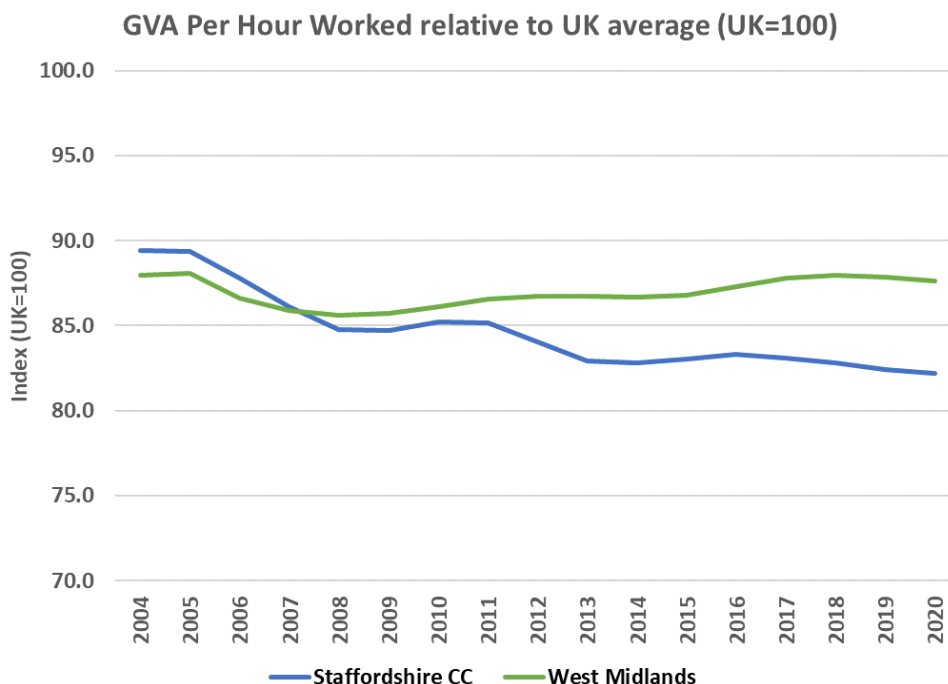
Staffordshire GVA in 2020 and change in GVA 2015-2020 (£million)



Source: ONS Gross Value Added (GVA)

This strategy will look to support further economic growth, particularly in our priority high value growth sectors.

- Productivity** - In terms of GVA per hour worked Staffordshire has seen continued improvement with GVA per hour worked increasing by 13.1% between 2015-20 to £31.0. However, this is slower improvement than seen nationally (14.2% growth) and each hour worked in Staffordshire is 18% less productive than the national average.



Source: ONS Gross Value Added (GVA) Per Hour Worked

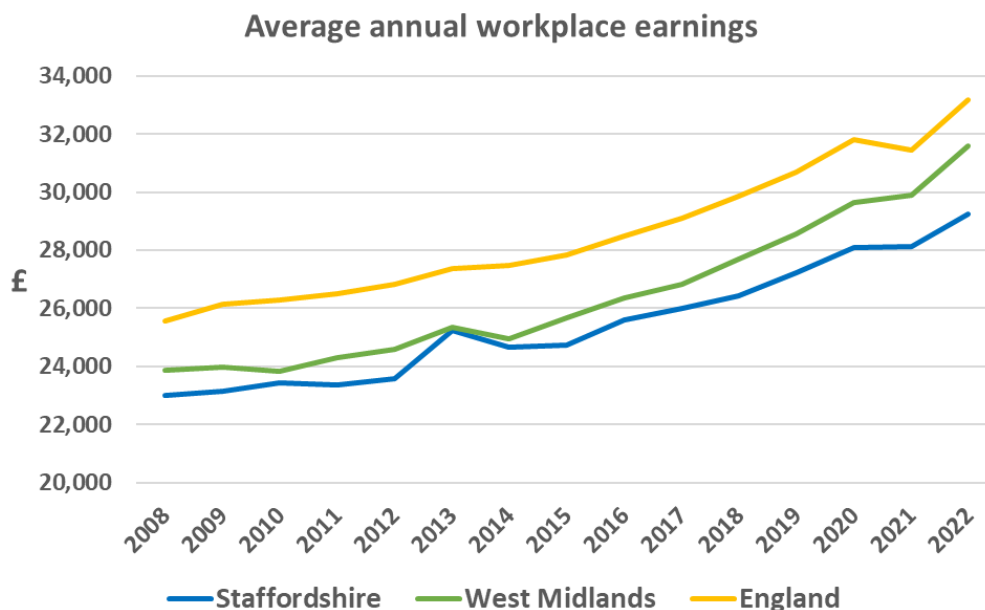
This strategy recognises that in order to help raise productivity there is a need to further improve education and skills levels across Staffordshire, particularly raising the achievement of higher technical skills in our priority high value growth sectors.

- Resident Earnings** – In 2022 average annual resident earnings in Staffordshire stood at £32,386 which was just below the UK average of £33,000. Between 2017-22 Staffordshire saw faster improvement in resident earnings than nationally, with 16.5% growth compared to 14.2% for England.



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

- **Workplace Earnings** – In 2022 average annual workplace earnings in Staffordshire stood at £29,243 which was well below the UK average of £33,000. Between 2017-22 Staffordshire saw a growth in workplace earnings of 12.4% which was below the growth seen for England of 14.1%.



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

By raising education and skills levels across Staffordshire this strategy can ensure that more of our residents can access the better paid jobs being created in and around Staffordshire.

Our **Local Authority Employment and Skills Profiles** provide further detail relevant to each district/borough including employment and skills opportunities and challenges.

Annex 2: Priority Sector Evidence

- **Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing** (Automation/AI/Machine Learning)

Now – Strengths and Weaknesses

- **39,000 Staffordshire jobs** equivalent to 11% of all employment well above 7% seen nationally¹
- 90% full-time and 10% part-time¹
- High demand for science engineering and production technicians; production managers and directors; mechanical engineers; welders; electricians²
- **Average salary £31,700**² – well above the average pay in Staffordshire of £28,100³
- **Male dominated sector** – 3 in 4 workers are males²
- **Ageing workforce** – 1 in 5 workers over 55 years of age²
- **Worth £2.8bn in GVA** equivalent to 16% of total economy (largest of all sectors)⁴
- Overall lower adult skill levels (NVQ level 3 & 4) to fill advanced roles⁵
- **Businesses struggle to recruit people with the right STEM skills and experience**⁶
- **Lack of employer investment in training** with 3 in 5 businesses not having training plans/budgets or workforce strategies⁶
- **Decline in apprenticeships**⁷
- **Institute of Technology** is developing high tech provision and increasing skills levels

Future – Opportunities and Challenges

- Growth sector generating **high value, high skilled and better paid jobs**
- **New technologies** driving growth in advanced manufacturing including automation, AI & Machine Learning - need to retrain and upskill lower skilled workers displaced by new technologies
- **Green economy** - potential to be a centre of energy innovation e.g. A50/A500 Hydrogen Corridor and low carbon adoption/renewable energy/electric cars e.g., JCB/JLR
- **Productivity gains** to help close the gap to national average
- Supporting **traditional manufacturing base** to adopt new technologies and efficient production methods to help drive productivity and sustainability
- **Require high skilled flexible workforce** to be able to adapt to new technologies quickly
- Male dominated sector with further **female engagement required**
- Potential for **apprenticeship growth**

Source: UK Business Counts 2022 - 2,170 Staffordshire businesses

¹ Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2021 – only wholesale & retail (65,000) and health & social care (48,000) have more jobs

² Source: Lightcast 2021

³ Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021

⁴ Source: Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2020

⁵ Source: Annual Population Survey Adult Skills Levels 2021

⁶ Source: SSLEP SAP Skills for Growth Survey 2022

⁷ Source: DfE apprenticeships and traineeships data 2021/22

Top Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Occupations in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Posting Intensity	Median Postin Duratio
🛠️ Science, Engineering and Production Technicians n.e.c.	3,027 / 1,255	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Engineering Technicians	3,238 / 1,170	3 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing	1,205 / 589	2 : 1	33 day
🛠️ Engineering Professionals n.e.c.	1,216 / 564	2 : 1	33 day
🛠️ Mechanical Engineers	1,066 / 480	2 : 1	33 day
🛠️ Welding Trades	1,080 / 434	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Electricians and Electrical Fitters	960 / 406	2 : 1	34 day
🛠️ Electrical Engineers	922 / 392	2 : 1	34 day
🛠️ Electrical and Electronic Trades n.e.c.	841 / 381	2 : 1	33 day
🛠️ Quality Assurance Technicians	570 / 298	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Quality Control and Planning Engineers	573 / 279	2 : 1	31 day
🛠️ Quality Assurance and Regulatory Professionals	563 / 278	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Civil Engineers	570 / 262	2 : 1	35 day
🛠️ Metal Machining Setters and Setter-operators	732 / 260	3 : 1	34 day
🛠️ Planning, Process and Production Technicians	549 / 252	2 : 1	34 day
🛠️ Production and Process Engineers	521 / 249	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters	564 / 240	2 : 1	32 day
🛠️ Design and Development Engineers	395 / 223	2 : 1	29 day
🛠️ Electronics Engineers	179 / 81	2 : 1	28 day
🛠️ Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades Supervisors	162 / 80	2 : 1	37 day

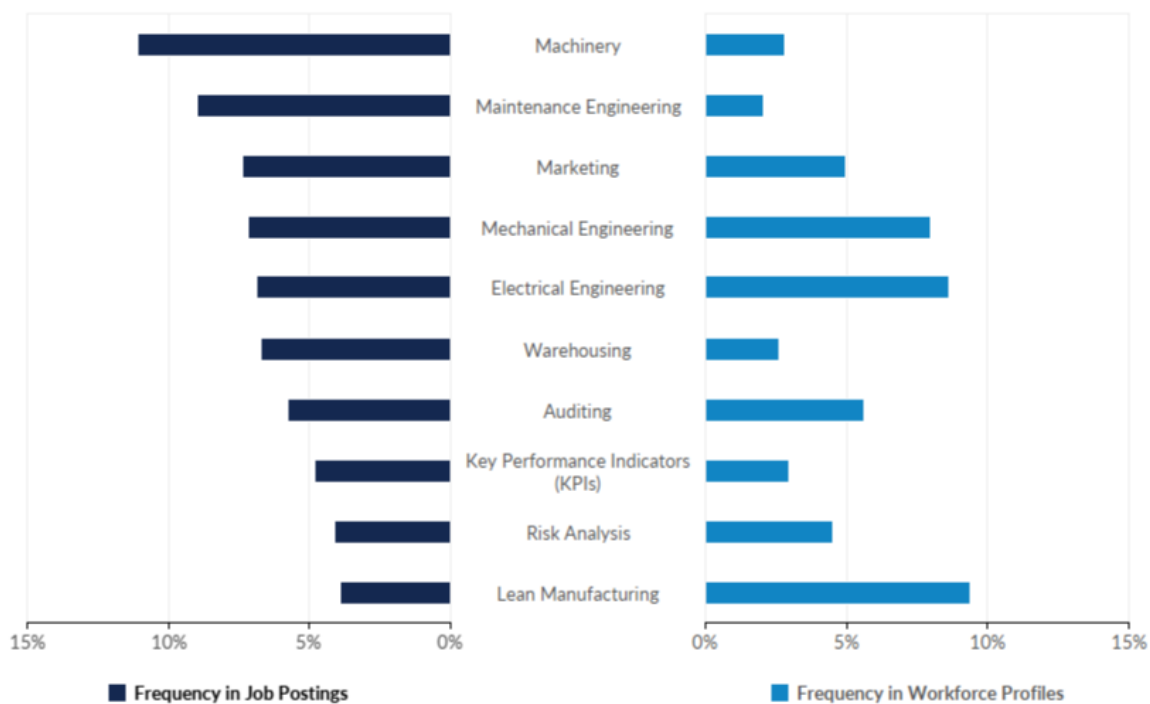
To find out more about what these occupations and more entail visit the Department for Education (DfE) funded LMI For All website - https://www.lmiforall.org.uk/explore_lmi/

Top Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Technical Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

The following provides insight into the supply and demand of relevant skills by comparing the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills present in today's workforce. Along with Lightcast's job posting analytics, this comparison leverages Lightcast's dataset of more than 100M online resumés and profiles. All resumés and profiles used in these comparisons have been updated within the last three years.

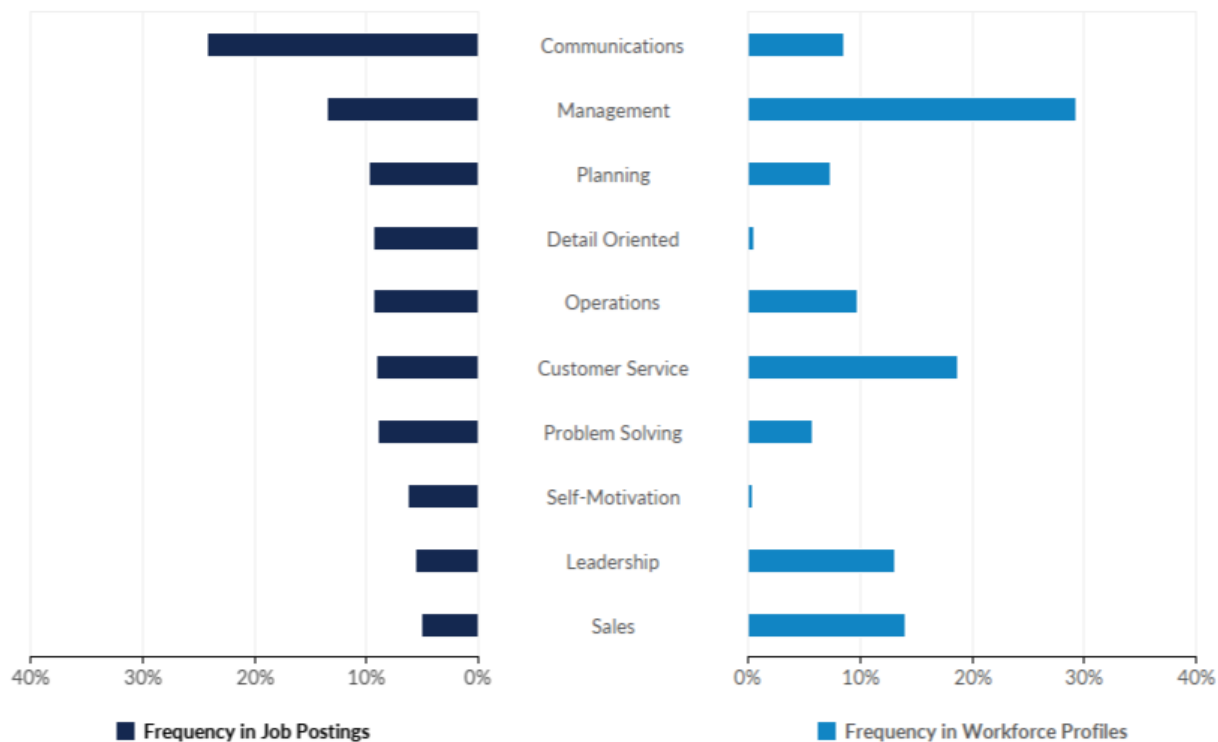
*The skills associated with workforce profiles represent workers of all education and experience levels.

Top Specialized Skills



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Machinery	11%	942 / 8,514	3%	119 / 4,218
Maintenance Engineering	9%	765 / 8,514	2%	87 / 4,218
Marketing	7%	628 / 8,514	5%	210 / 4,218
Mechanical Engineering	7%	612 / 8,514	8%	336 / 4,218
Electrical Engineering	7%	585 / 8,514	9%	363 / 4,218
Warehousing	7%	573 / 8,514	3%	111 / 4,218
Auditing	6%	493 / 8,514	6%	237 / 4,218
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	5%	408 / 8,514	3%	125 / 4,218
Risk Analysis	4%	350 / 8,514	5%	191 / 4,218
Lean Manufacturing	4%	335 / 8,514	9%	395 / 4,218

Top Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Transferable Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Communications	24%	2,058 / 8,514	9%	359 / 4,218
Management	14%	1,151 / 8,514	29%	1,234 / 4,218
Planning	10%	833 / 8,514	7%	313 / 4,218
Detail Oriented	9%	801 / 8,514	0%	20 / 4,218
Operations	9%	793 / 8,514	10%	414 / 4,218
Customer Service	9%	777 / 8,514	19%	788 / 4,218
Problem Solving	9%	768 / 8,514	6%	244 / 4,218
Self-Motivation	6%	530 / 8,514	0%	19 / 4,218
Leadership	6%	483 / 8,514	13%	555 / 4,218
Sales	5%	437 / 8,514	14%	592 / 4,218

- **Advanced Logistics** (Automation/AI)

Now – Strengths and Weaknesses

- **27,000 Staffordshire jobs** equivalent to 7% of all employment above 5% seen nationally¹
- 81% full-time and 19% part-time¹
- High demand for storage occupations; LGV drivers; van drivers; transport and distribution clerks; fork-lift truck drivers; managers and directors; couriers; packers²
- **Average salary £28,600**² – just above the average pay in Staffordshire of £28,100³
- **Male dominated sector** – 3 in 4 workers are males²
- **Ageing workforce** – over 1 in 5 workers over 55 years of age²
- **Worth £1.1bn in GVA** equivalent to 6% of total economy⁴
- **Businesses struggle to recruit people with the right skills and experience or interest in the roles available**⁵
- **Lack of employer investment in training** with over 3 in 5 businesses not having training plans/budgets or workforce strategies⁵
- **High jobs demand** locally to support **major inward investments and relocations** e.g., **Pets at Home and ASOS**

Future – Opportunities and Challenges

- **Central location and strong connectivity**
- **Available land and premises** to support growth
- Covid-19 has accelerated the **shift to e-commerce and online retail** with increasing demand for warehousing and wider supply chain logistics
- **New digital technologies** such as automation and AI are driving growth in highly productive advanced logistics
- **More workers needed in the sector to address key labour and skill shortages (i.e., ageing workforce)**
- **International trade** (including the need for frictionless trade with the EU and rest of the world post Brexit)
- **Climate change and the Green Economy** – need for modern and sustainable transport (e.g., emissions and air quality)
- **Innovation** – equipping workers with the **digital skills** needed to adopt new technologies to help drive productivity

Source: UK Business Counts 2022 - 2,110 Staffordshire businesses

1 Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2021

2 Source: Lightcast 2021











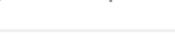


3 Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021

4 Source: Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2020

5 Source: SSLEP SAP Skills for Growth Survey 2022

Top Logistics Occupations in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Posting Intensity	Median Postin Duratio
Elementary Storage Occupations	9,782 / 2,695	4 : 1 	32 day
Van Drivers	3,740 / 1,412	3 : 1 	32 day
Large Goods Vehicle Drivers	3,316 / 1,344	2 : 1 	32 day
Transport and Distribution Clerks and Assistants	921 / 478	2 : 1 	31 day
Fork-lift Truck Drivers	830 / 323	3 : 1 	35 day
Purchasing Managers and Directors	440 / 250	2 : 1 	32 day
Managers and Directors in Storage and Warehousing	442 / 212	2 : 1 	32 day
Other Drivers and Transport Operatives n.e.c.	402 / 191	2 : 1 	32 day
Managers and Directors in Transport and Distribution	253 / 144	2 : 1 	29 day
Postal Workers, Mail Sorters, Messengers and Couriers	165 / 54	3 : 1 	23 day
Rail Transport Operatives	67 / 31	2 : 1 	35 day
Importers and Exporters	19 / 12	2 : 1 	23 day
Air Transport Operatives	3 / 1	3 : 1 	n/

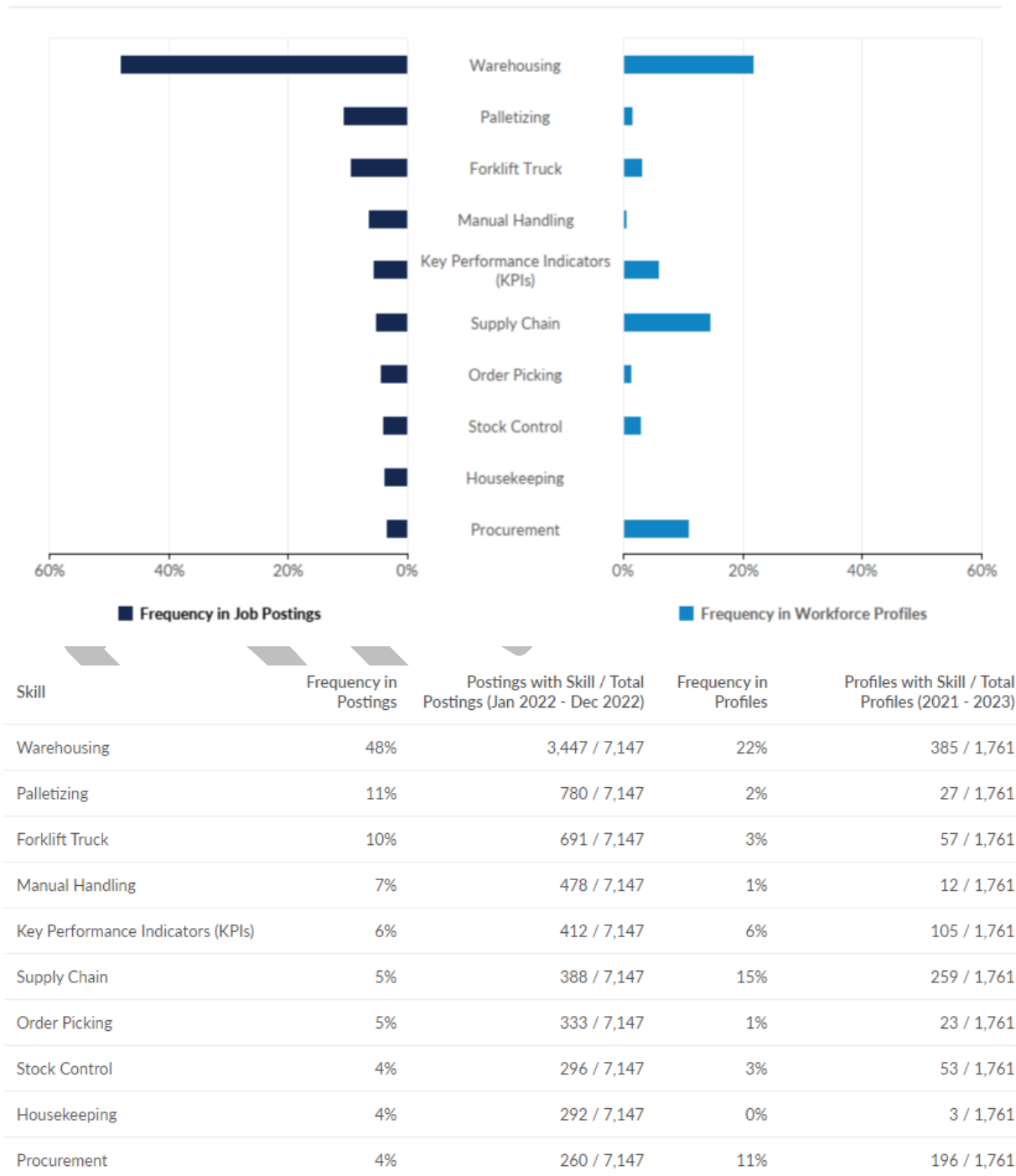
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Top Logistics Technical Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

The following provides insight into the supply and demand of relevant skills by comparing the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills present in today's workforce. Along with Lightcast's job posting analytics, this comparison leverages Lightcast's dataset of more than 100M online resumés and profiles. All resumés and profiles used in these comparisons have been updated within the last three years.

*The skills associated with workforce profiles represent workers of all education and experience levels.

Top Specialized Skills



Top Logistics Transferable Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Communications	18%	1,275 / 7,147	8%	147 / 1,761
Loading And Unloading	16%	1,176 / 7,147	1%	13 / 1,761
Customer Service	13%	941 / 7,147	26%	466 / 1,761
Management	10%	721 / 7,147	32%	567 / 1,761
Detail Oriented	10%	683 / 7,147	1%	13 / 1,761
Operations	8%	545 / 7,147	14%	241 / 1,761
Lifting Ability	6%	460 / 7,147	0%	4 / 1,761
Planning	6%	396 / 7,147	9%	152 / 1,761
Sales	4%	318 / 7,147	19%	341 / 1,761
Sorting	4%	304 / 7,147	1%	14 / 1,761

- **Construction including Modern Methods** (Automation / AI / Retrofitting)

Now – Strengths and Weaknesses

- **21,000 Staffordshire jobs** equivalent to 6% of all employment above 5% seen nationally¹
- 81% full-time and 19% part-time¹
- High demand for site workers; civil engineers; project managers; quantity surveyors; plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers; production managers; carpenters; chartered surveyors²
- **Average salary £34,500**² – well above the average pay in Staffordshire of £28,100³
- **Lack of workforce diversity** – women / BAME with 4 in 5 workers males²
- **Ageing workforce** – nearly 1 in 5 workers over 55 years of age²
- **Worth £1.5bn in GVA** equivalent to 9% of total economy⁴
- Overall lower adult skill levels (NVQ level 3 & 4) to fill advanced roles⁵
- **Businesses struggle to recruit people with the right skills and experience**⁶
- **Lack of employer investment in training** with over 3 in 5 businesses not having training plans/budgets or workforce strategies⁶
- **High jobs demand** locally to support major engineering projects such as **HS2 and WMI**

Future – Opportunities and Challenges

- **New digital technologies** driving growth in Modern Methods of Construction including offsite automation & AI
- **Housing building** – Government targets
- **Major Infrastructure projects** - transport and energy projects, including HS2 / West Midlands Interchange
- **Green Economy** – environmentally sustainable construction/renewable energy
- **More workers needed in the sector – male dominated**
- Ageing workforce with **high replacement demand**
- **Post-Brexit migration** system workforce impact
- Equipping workers with the **digital skills** needed to adopt technologies to help drive productivity

Source: UK Business Counts 2022 - 5,230 Staffordshire businesses – 16% of all businesses

¹ Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2021

² Source: Lightcast 2021

³ Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021





















⁴ Source: Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2020

⁵ Source: Annual Population Survey Adult Skills Levels 2021

⁶ Source: SSLEP SAP Skills for Growth Survey 2022

Top Construction Occupations in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Posting Intensity	Median Postin Duratio
Elementary Construction Occupations	1,063 / 537	2 : 1 	33 day
Civil Engineers	570 / 262	2 : 1 	35 day
Construction Project Managers and Related Professionals	460 / 223	2 : 1 	32 day
Quantity Surveyors	380 / 212	2 : 1 	35 day
Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers	339 / 194	2 : 1 	31 day
Production Managers and Directors in Construction	292 / 168	2 : 1 	31 day
Carpenters and Joiners	220 / 134	2 : 1 	35 day
Construction and Building Trades n.e.c.	226 / 113	2 : 1 	30 day
Painters and Decorators	226 / 113	2 : 1 	27 day
Chartered Surveyors	203 / 97	2 : 1 	33 day
Construction Operatives n.e.c.	132 / 85	2 : 1 	30 day
Construction and Building Trades Supervisors	142 / 84	2 : 1 	33 day
Architects	105 / 61	2 : 1 	30 day
Chartered Architectural Technologists	115 / 55	2 : 1 	30 day
Floorers and Wall Tilers	31 / 24	1 : 1 	39 day
Building and Civil Engineering Technicians	32 / 22	1 : 1 	33 day
Road Construction Operatives	26 / 20	1 : 1 	34 day
Scaffolders, Stagers and Riggers	30 / 19	2 : 1 	36 day
Glaziers, Window Fabricators and Fitters	30 / 18	2 : 1 	32 day
Rail Construction and Maintenance Operatives	28 / 18	2 : 1 	32 day

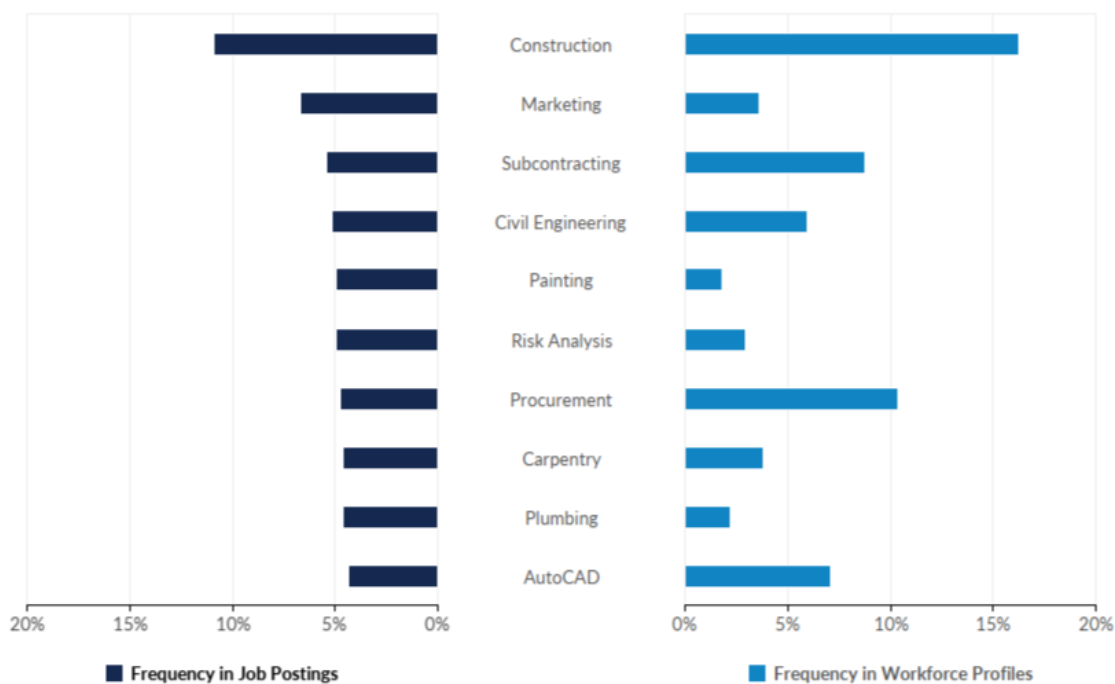
To find out more about what these occupations and more entail visit the Department for Education (DfE) funded LMI For All website - https://www.lmiforall.org.uk/explore_lmi/

Top Construction Technical Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

The following provides insight into the supply and demand of relevant skills by comparing the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills present in today's workforce. Along with Lightcast's job posting analytics, this comparison leverages Lightcast's dataset of more than 100M online resumés and profiles. All resumés and profiles used in these comparisons have been updated within the last three years.

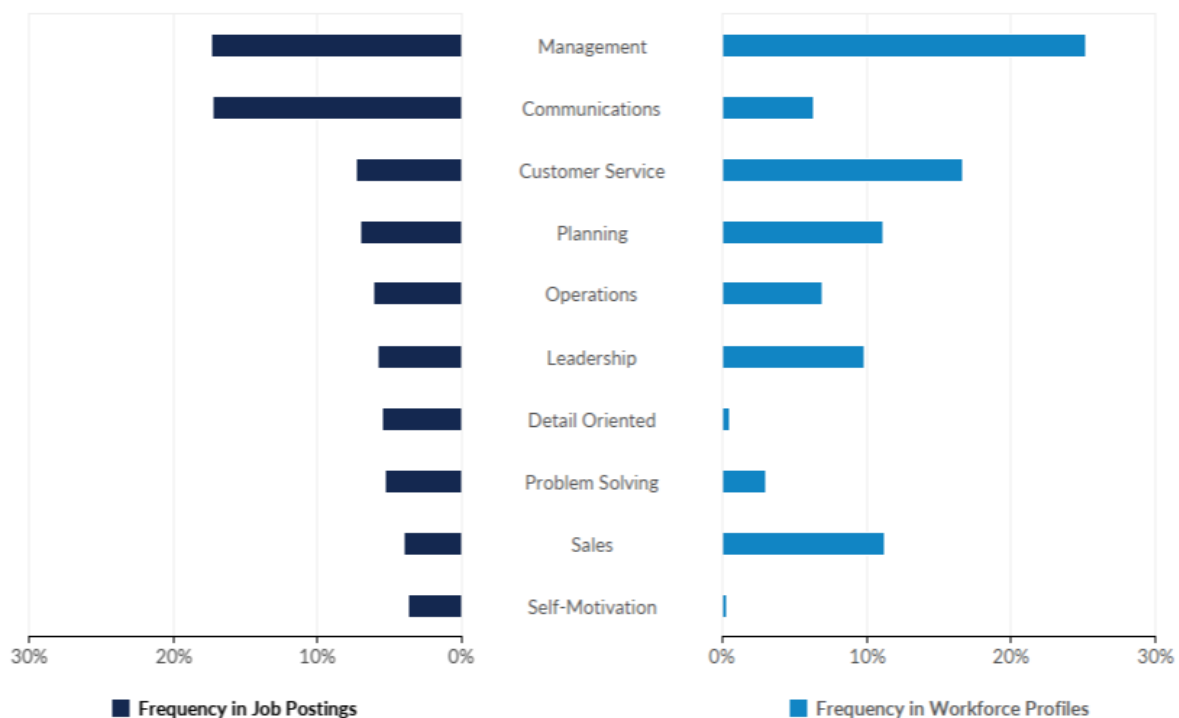
*The skills associated with workforce profiles represent workers of all education and experience levels.

Top Specialized Skills



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Construction	11%	277 / 2,539	16%	279 / 1,713
Marketing	7%	169 / 2,539	4%	62 / 1,713
Subcontracting	5%	137 / 2,539	9%	150 / 1,713
Civil Engineering	5%	130 / 2,539	6%	102 / 1,713
Painting	5%	126 / 2,539	2%	31 / 1,713
Risk Analysis	5%	125 / 2,539	3%	50 / 1,713
Procurement	5%	120 / 2,539	10%	178 / 1,713
Carpentry	5%	118 / 2,539	4%	65 / 1,713
Plumbing	5%	118 / 2,539	2%	38 / 1,713
AutoCAD	4%	110 / 2,539	7%	121 / 1,713

Top Construction Transferable Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Management	17%	440 / 2,539	25%	431 / 1,713
Communications	17%	439 / 2,539	6%	109 / 1,713
Customer Service	7%	185 / 2,539	17%	286 / 1,713
Planning	7%	178 / 2,539	11%	190 / 1,713
Operations	6%	156 / 2,539	7%	119 / 1,713
Leadership	6%	149 / 2,539	10%	169 / 1,713
Detail Oriented	6%	141 / 2,539	1%	9 / 1,713
Problem Solving	5%	136 / 2,539	3%	52 / 1,713
Sales	4%	102 / 2,539	11%	192 / 1,713
Self-Motivation	4%	93 / 2,539	0%	6 / 1,713

• **Health and Social Care** (Digitisation of Services/New Technologies)

Now – Strengths and Weaknesses

- **48,000 Staffordshire jobs** equivalent to 13% of all employment in-line with national¹
- 54% full-time and 46% part-time¹
- High demand for care workers and home carers; nurses; nursing auxiliaries and assistants; managers and directors; medical practitioners; nursery nurses; dentists²
- **Average salary £23,400**² – well below the average pay in Staffordshire of £28,100³
- **Female dominated sector** – 4 in 5 workers are females²
- **Ageing workforce** – over 1 in 5 workers over 55 years of age²
- **Worth £1.6bn in GVA** equivalent to 9% of total economy⁴
- Overall lower adult skill levels (NVQ level 3 & 4) to fill advanced roles⁵
- **Businesses struggle to recruit people with the right skills and experience or interest in the roles available more than any other sector**⁶
- **Staffordshire University's new Centre for Health Innovation** aiming to create a healthcare cluster in Staffordshire

Future – Opportunities and Challenges

- **Increasing demand for health and social care from overall population growth and an ageing population/workforce**
- Covid-19 has accelerated the shift to **new ways of working such as remote working and digital triage** which has seen efficiency and productivity gains
- **New digital technologies** such as automation and AI are driving growth in highly productive advanced health and social care practice
- **More workers needed in the sector to address key labour and skill shortages (e.g., nursing and care workers)**
- **COVID has further increased pressure on the sector and the requirement for further urgent recruitment**
- **Low pay and poor Ts & Cs** are contributing to recruitment issues in the sector
- **Requirement for increased investment to keep up with increasing demand**
- **Innovation** – equipping workers with the digital skills needed to adopt new technologies to help improve efficiency and drive productivity

Source: UK Business Counts 2022 - 1,160 Staffordshire businesses including some of our largest employers

¹ Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2021 – only wholesale & retail (65,000) has more jobs

² Source: Lightcast 2021

³ Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021









































⁴ Source: Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2020

⁵ Source: Annual Population Survey Adult Skills Levels 2021

⁶ Source: SSLEP SAP Skills for Growth Survey 2022

Top Health & Social Care Occupations in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
 Care Workers and Home Carers	14,600 / 4,022	4 : 1 	31 day
 Nurses	14,204 / 2,851	5 : 1 	33 day
 Teaching Assistants	3,000 / 1,240	2 : 1 	28 day
 Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants	3,316 / 887	4 : 1 	33 day
 Health Services and Public Health Managers and Directors	1,590 / 427	4 : 1 	33 day
 Nursery Nurses and Assistants	807 / 360	2 : 1 	33 day
 Medical Practitioners	973 / 344	3 : 1 	31 day
 Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals n.e.c.	651 / 321	2 : 1 	31 day
 Medical and Dental Technicians	590 / 233	3 : 1 	33 day
 Residential, Day and Domiciliary Care Managers and Proprietors	524 / 218	2 : 1 	33 day
 Health Associate Professionals n.e.c.	752 / 213	4 : 1 	32 day
 Pharmacists	543 / 204	3 : 1 	35 day
 Psychologists	581 / 194	3 : 1 	31 day
 Senior Care Workers	345 / 169	2 : 1 	30 day
 Physiotherapists	367 / 156	2 : 1 	33 day
 Health Professionals n.e.c.	460 / 155	3 : 1 	31 day
 Educational Support Assistants	317 / 155	2 : 1 	30 day
 Dispensing Opticians	345 / 150	2 : 1 	25 day
 Occupational Therapists	608 / 138	4 : 1 	36 day
 Ophthalmic Opticians	368 / 130	3 : 1 	29 day

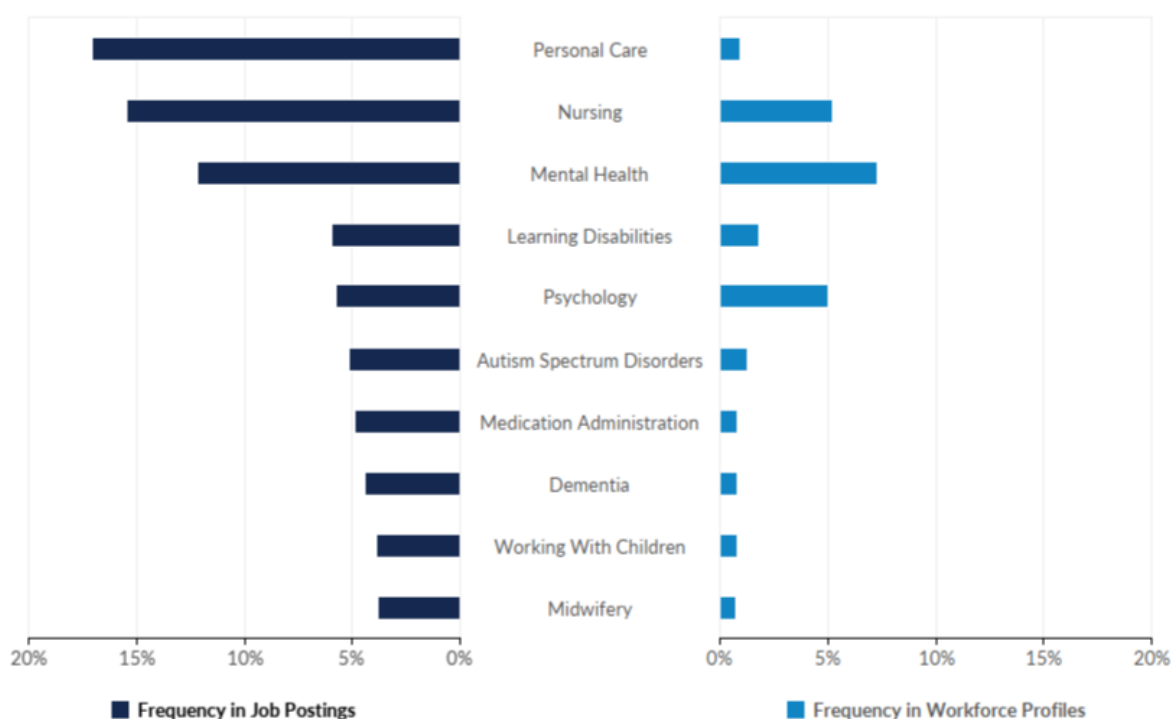
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Top Health & Social Care Technical Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022

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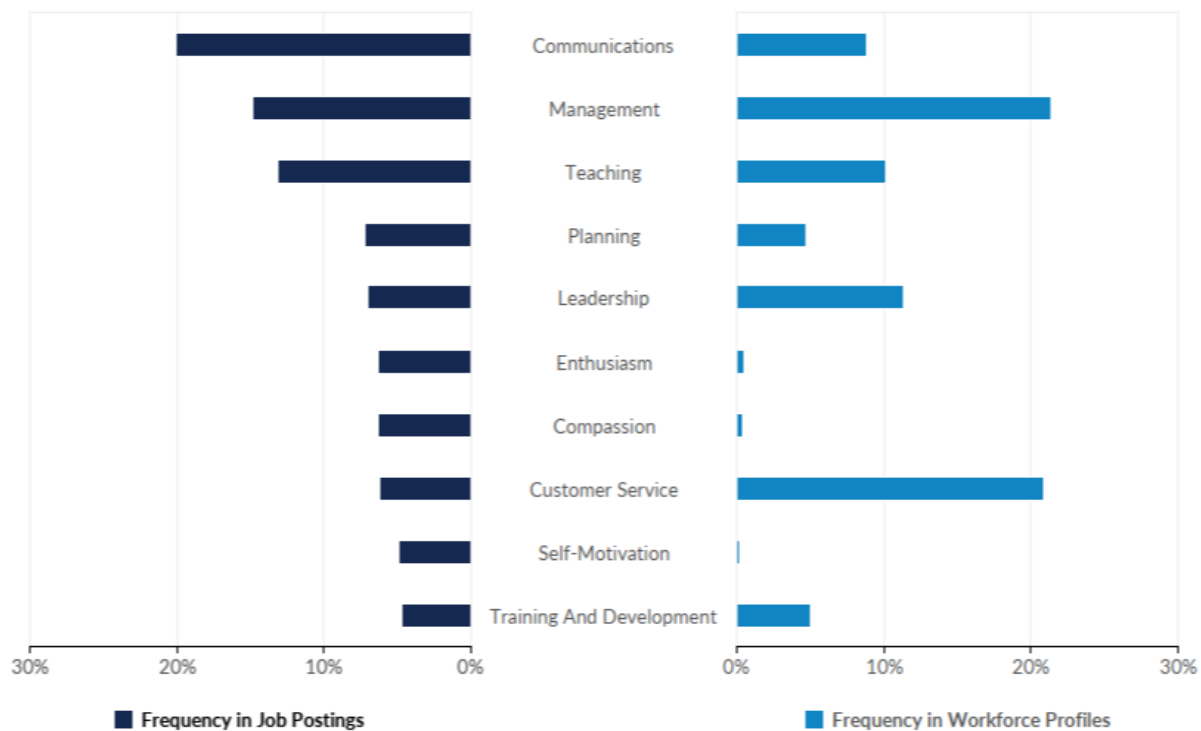
*The skills associated with workforce profiles represent workers of all education and experience levels.

Top Specialized Skills



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Personal Care	17%	2,316 / 13,560	1%	35 / 3,875
Nursing	15%	2,099 / 13,560	5%	202 / 3,875
Mental Health	12%	1,650 / 13,560	7%	282 / 3,875
Learning Disabilities	6%	810 / 13,560	2%	71 / 3,875
Psychology	6%	781 / 13,560	5%	194 / 3,875
Autism Spectrum Disorders	5%	696 / 13,560	1%	48 / 3,875
Medication Administration	5%	660 / 13,560	1%	30 / 3,875
Dementia	4%	597 / 13,560	1%	31 / 3,875
Working With Children	4%	525 / 13,560	1%	30 / 3,875
Midwifery	4%	520 / 13,560	1%	29 / 3,875

Top Health & Social Care Transferable Skills in Demand – job postings in Staffordshire 2022



Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)	Frequency in Profiles	Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2023)
Communications	20%	2,721 / 13,560	9%	341 / 3,875
Management	15%	2,013 / 13,560	21%	830 / 3,875
Teaching	13%	1,788 / 13,560	10%	391 / 3,875
Planning	7%	978 / 13,560	5%	181 / 3,875
Leadership	7%	954 / 13,560	11%	439 / 3,875
Enthusiasm	6%	854 / 13,560	1%	20 / 3,875
Compassion	6%	852 / 13,560	0%	16 / 3,875
Customer Service	6%	848 / 13,560	21%	809 / 3,875
Self-Motivation	5%	668 / 13,560	0%	8 / 3,875
Training And Development	5%	637 / 13,560	5%	196 / 3,875



Staffordshire

A PLACE WITH AMBITION

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STAFFORDSHIRE EMPLOYMENT
AND SKILLS STRATEGY 2023-2030



TOGETHER, WE'RE MAKING STAFFORDSHIRE A PLACE TO LEARN

Staffordshire already has an enterprising, resilient, and inclusive economy. But for the county to continue to thrive, and for residents and businesses to fully experience the benefits, it's vital to recognise the importance of skills for employment and the need to support people of all ages into work, to progress or change careers, so businesses can access the skills and talent they need to diversify and grow.

That's why stakeholders from across the county have come together to create our Employment and Skills Strategy, putting in place the vision and priorities to deliver our united economic vision for Staffordshire. And it will make sure our workforce is equipped not only to weather economic shocks such as global pandemics, but also to thrive and grow, with the digital skills to embrace technological transformation and the green skills to achieve net zero by 2050.

What makes this strategy different is that it's built on partnership and shared endeavour. Those contributing to it are committed to making our ambitions a reality. We want people from all backgrounds and abilities to fulfil their potential and as devolution plans develop, we look forward to working with partners across Staffordshire and beyond to capitalise on the talent and highly skilled workforce that already exists here.

But above all, we're committed to making sure Staffordshire is a place where everyone can thrive; harnessing and growing our skills base to enable residents and businesses to maximise future opportunities and make prosperity a reality for all.



Alan White

Leader of Staffordshire County Council and Leaders' Board Chair



Philip White

Deputy Leader of Staffordshire County Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

THE BENEFITS FOR US ALL



Higher skilled workforce



Increased economic activity



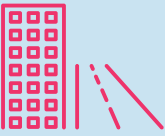
Reduced unemployment



Less labour shortages



Address skills gaps



Business growth



Greater inward investment



More high paid jobs



Increased productivity



Overall greater economic growth



Higher wages/prosperity



Better quality of life and wellbeing

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

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A PLACE WITH A GREAT FUTURE

In recent years, Staffordshire has seen significant improvement and success in developing local skills, thanks to strong partnerships and substantial capital and revenue investment – including City Deal, Growth Deal, the European Social Fund (ESF), the Getting Building Fund and more.

In fact, the rate of improvement has been significantly faster than the national average, reducing the number of residents with no formal qualifications and increasing those with higher skills at Level 3+ (A Level equivalent or above) and 4+ (Degree equivalent or above).

The result is that more residents can now access better-paid jobs and play a more active and productive role in the local economy; our unemployment and economic inactivity rates remain well below the national average, so more of our residents are in work and fewer rely on state support. And in turn, our skills improvements have already led to greater economic growth and increased productivity, with more businesses investing in Staffordshire and creating more skilled jobs.



OUR SHARED VISION AND MISSION



Now it's time to build on our recent success, and make sure Staffordshire has the highly-skilled workforce to reach our full potential.

Our vision is to give our residents the skills to access higher value, better-paid jobs across a wide range of priority sectors, helping deliver a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy.

The mission for employment and skills stakeholders is to create strong, effective partnerships to help our people gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their ambitions and actively help to grow Staffordshire's economy.

OUR PRIORITIES

Fundamental to our strategy are the **cross-cutting priorities of developing digital and green skills**, to help adopt new technologies and to transition our economy to net zero.

Our other employment and skills priorities are:

- **An Aspirational and Active Workforce** to increase economic activity, inclusivity, and productivity
- **Inspirational Careers Advice** to help access the world of work and career opportunities
- **Technical Skills to drive Productivity and Growth** and respond to business needs now and, in the future
- **Innovation and Enterprise** supporting entrepreneurialism and business growth
- **A Place of Learning** to instil a culture of life-long learning



CREATING AN ASPIRATIONAL AND ACTIVE WORKFORCE

Staffordshire's strong, robust, and diverse local economy is providing increased job opportunities for residents. But those jobs are becoming more advanced and digital in nature, so workers' skills need to continually develop and improve to access such higher value, skilled and better paid roles.

We need to help all those looking for work to gain the necessary skills by providing access to high-quality advice and guidance as well as relevant training and retraining, so they can play an active and productive role in the local economy.

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The council receives funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for Community Learning through the Adult Education Skills Budget, to provide training and education to approx. 3,000 adult learners aged 19+ per year. The service currently works with schools, colleges, voluntary and community sector organisations, independent training providers and local community groups to deliver a range of learning opportunities to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents and the local economy.

Staffordshire County Council's Community Learning Service

Staffordshire Jobs & Careers (SJC) is helping local people by providing a quick and easy way to find employment and/or training opportunities. Its jobs brokerage and digital online platform provide free recruitment and support services to both businesses and residents.

Staffordshire Jobs & Careers



PROVIDING INSPIRATIONAL CAREERS ADVICE

The economy's going through big changes, with new digital technologies and the move to a greener future – both of which will require new skills. So, we need to make sure both students and adult learners are not only aware of the changes, but also have access to the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) they need to make informed choices for a productive and prosperous career.

Effective CEIAG is vital in schools and colleges, as it influences students' aspirations, achievement and, potentially, their life chances and social mobility. It also plays a vital role – alongside experience and qualifications – in the development of the right skills for a chosen career pathway. So, we're continually working with education and skills partners to make sure CEIAG is aligned with employers' needs.

The Stoke & Staffordshire Careers Hub is the strategic arm for careers for all schools and colleges across the county including mainstream, academy, special schools and pupil referral units. The Hub assesses, quality assures and supports schools to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve career prospects for young people.

[Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Careers Hub](#)



DEVELOPING TECHNICAL SKILLS

Among Staffordshire's strengths are engineering and advanced manufacturing, logistics and construction. Together with increasing digitisation and the move towards sustainability, we have an opportunity to develop technical, digital and green skills to grow the local economy through increased productivity and help attract further high value investment.

Our colleges, universities and independent training providers are already improving the higher-level technical skills (including apprenticeships and T-Levels) available and developing new skills required by businesses, especially the combination of digital skills and green skills needed to help realise the county's net zero ambitions.

The needs of business are at the heart of our skills transformation – which is why we're building on the development of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology (IoT), bringing business and education providers together to provide the future skills for growth.

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) led a consortium of education providers and employers to form the £20M IoT, based in Stafford and opening in 2024. It brings together key industry, education and research opportunities with employers and academia working collaboratively to widen participation in targeted STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) areas.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire – Institute of Technology



SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

More businesses are choosing Staffordshire, driven by both increased inward investment but also improving business start-up rates.

The creation of new SMEs is the lifeblood of any economy, bringing job opportunities, providing stable and growing incomes, driving local production of quality goods and services and fostering innovation – so were making sure everything's in place to develop entrepreneurial and innovation skills as a priority.

Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce's Ignite programme helps young people in their final year of further education who are looking to start their own business. Areas covered include business planning, marketing, networking, cash flow forecasting and selling. To date, over 16,700 students have been supported on the programme.

Ignite

Keele University has invested in dedicated Innovation Centres to help businesses grow. Currently there are six located at Keele University Science and Innovation Park, with Innovation Centres 7 & 8 soon to be completed.

Keele University Innovation Centres



INNOVATION CENTRE 6
Keele University Innovation Centre

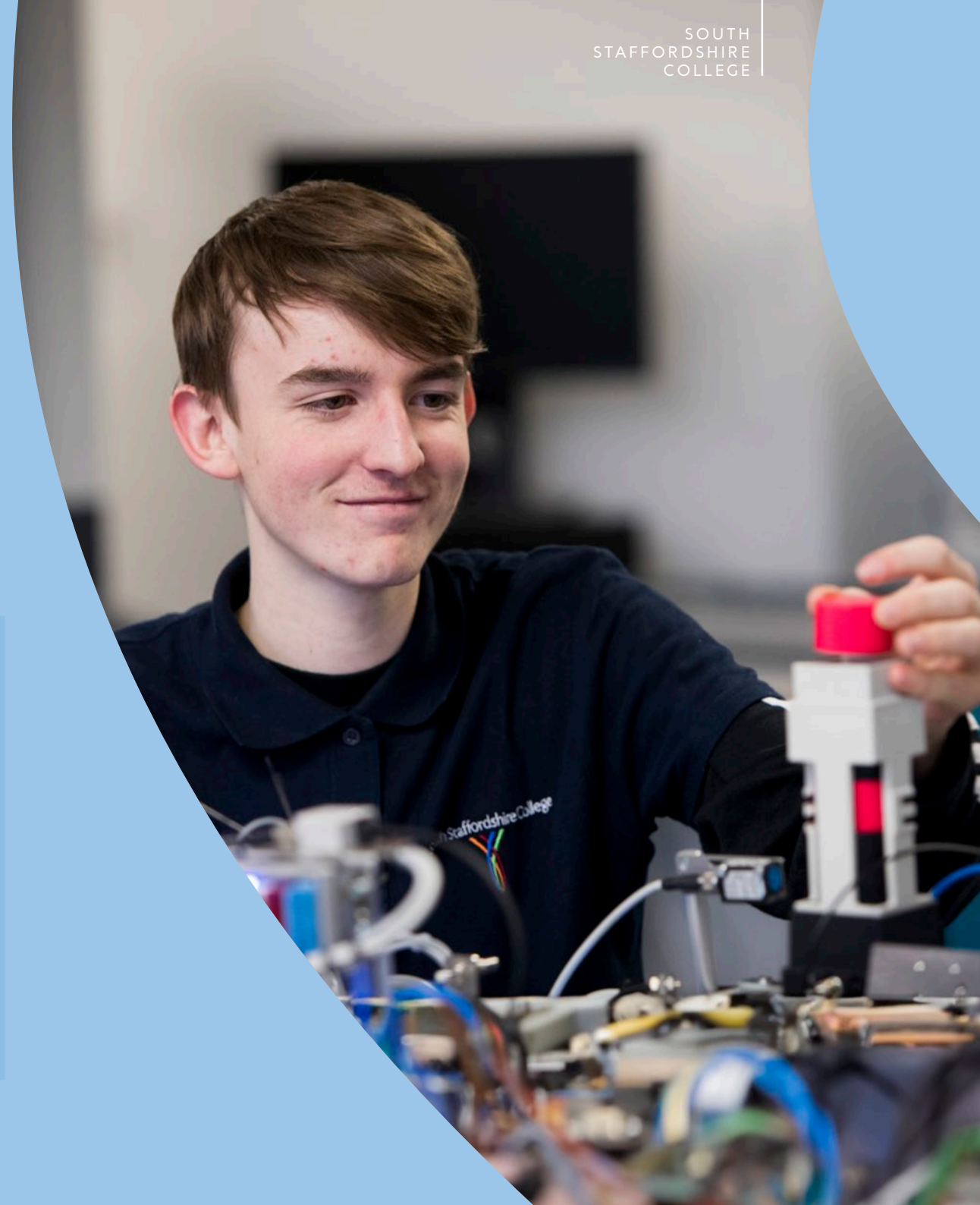
CREATING A PLACE OF LEARNING

With the economy developing more rapidly than ever, the world of work is constantly changing. There are now very few 'jobs for life', and wide-ranging labour shortages and skills gaps across both the local and national economy. One of the biggest challenges is creating a pipeline of talent with the right skills for current and future jobs. Most workers will need to retrain and upskill several times throughout their careers, as innovation and advances in technology change the skills requirements of jobs.

To support that change we've developed new delivery models so businesses, especially small ones, can help create new courses in modular, bite-size and on-demand formats geared around the skills they need. It gives people the opportunity to access qualifications, especially for digital and green skills, to upskill or reskill at a time and in a way that suits them, leading to improved social mobility, inclusion and lifelong learning.

With over 400 apprenticeships supported to date, the recently-closed Apprenticeship 500 programme provided grants of £5000 to cover the cost of recruiting and retaining an apprentice to help businesses recover from the pandemic.

Apprenticeship 500



OUR PRIORITY GROWTH SECTORS

As well as improving higher-level skills to drive economic growth and raise productivity, there are also opportunities for growth and improved productivity in high-skilled high-value jobs in several key growth sectors.

These require specific technical skills alongside digital and green skills – and developing them will help maximise the opportunities for growth.

Our priority growth sectors include:

- **Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing**, including Automation, AI & Machine Learning
- **Construction**, including Modern Methods such as Automation, AI & Retrofitting
- **Advanced Logistics**
- **Health and Social Care**, including Digitisation of Services/New Technologies

The £1M Digital Skills Centres provide digital hubs at Cannock and Tamworth offering access to quality training, supported by state-of-the-art physical and digitally-simulated environments, to develop the skills needed by employers.

South Staffordshire College Digital Skills Centres

A European first, this world-class demonstrator facility for research and development enables the testing and evaluation of new and evolving smart energy technologies.

Keele University Smart Energy Network Demonstrator



ENGINEERING & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

This fast-paced sector covers everything from designing and building the next generation of electric vehicles to pharmaceuticals, and with new technologies such as AI (Artificial Intelligence), automation, robotics, 3D printing and plastic electronics changing the shape of production and engineering, it has a high demand for talent.

Staffordshire is expected to see high-value employment growth in advanced manufacturing and specialist areas such as automotive, aerospace, advanced materials, med-tech, agri-tech, energy and other technology-intensive industries, which will be driven by the availability of skilled local labour in the long-term.



With a Control and Automation Suite, a CAD & Visualisation Suite and an independent study area, the £275k scheme enabled the expansion of curriculum in both the mechanical and electronic sector from level 1 to level 3. The facility provides a bureau of specialist knowledge and equipment and allows smaller employers access to emerging technologies and advice.

JCB Academy – Automation & Robotics Suite

Completing a new training facility to enhance skills in core engineering practices as well as the Caterpillar production system curriculums, this £767k project provides a training area for assembly and core manufacturing process principles alongside the existing key machining training facility.

Perkins Engines Stafford – Manufacturing Excellence Centre

A £1m project to refit the Cannock Skills & Innovation Hub and create an Engineering Academy with specialist equipment including CNC lathes and mills, drills, mechatronic equipment and CAD software. It provides training in a range of engineering principles including welding & fabrication, manufacturing, mechatronics and computer-aided design.

South Staffordshire College – Cannock Engineering Academy

ADVANCED LOGISTICS

A diverse sector covering road, rail, sea and air industries, logistics is a key part of our growing service economy with other sectors such as retailers and manufacturers heavily reliant on freight services and the efficient movement of goods. With Brexit, technology and other disruptive forces changing in the way goods move across borders and through the supply chain, logistics has never been more important to the UK economy.

Given Staffordshire's central location, we are at the heart of one of the largest sectors in the UK economy with sustained growth in the numbers employed in logistics and recent growth in storage and warehousing. The accelerated shift to e-commerce and online retail is expected to continue, with an ongoing labour shortage in key roles such as HGV and van drivers.

Alongside changing consumer behaviour, fresh opportunities are emerging from new technologies and ways of working such as automation and AI, which are changing the shape of logistics and have the potential to significantly increase productivity.

West Midlands Interchange will be one of the largest logistic developments in the UK, offering 8 million sq. ft of rail served logistics facilities in South Staffordshire. This significant £1bn national project will support the creation of more than 8,500 skilled logistics jobs and apprenticeships for the local community during development, construction and operation. Local skills and training providers and partners will play a key role in ensuring that our residents have the skills needed to access the jobs being created.

West Midlands Interchange (WMI)



CONSTRUCTION, INCLUDING MODERN METHODS

Construction is one of the largest sectors in both the UK and Staffordshire economies. There are continuing skill shortages at all levels, especially with BREXIT restrictions impacting flows of EU workers on which the sector has heavily relied, and therefore high demand for talent to support future growth.

Significant growth opportunities include:

- Rising population leading to increased demand for construction of housing and infrastructure
- Long-term major infrastructure projects, such as HS2 and WMI (West Midlands Interchange)

New technologies and ways of working such as Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), including offsite manufacturing and prefabricated house building, are also creating opportunities by changing the shape of construction and offering the potential to significantly increase productivity.

The Green Economy is also key in this sector, with job opportunities emerging in areas such as sustainable construction, renewable energy, heat pump installation and retrofitting home insulation in existing properties.

MEECEBROOK
GARDEN COMMUNITY
STAFFORD



A £1m project providing specialist equipment including heavy plant, dumper trucks, excavators, a crane, scissor lifts, tractors and rigs for hybrid construction training at the Stafford campus's National Construction Plant Training Centre. The college is one of only twelve centres in the UK to provide specialist training in heavy construction plant machinery, and this equipment supports advanced apprenticeship frameworks in plant maintenance, plant operation, civil engineering plant & construction.

Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group – Hybrid Construction Technology

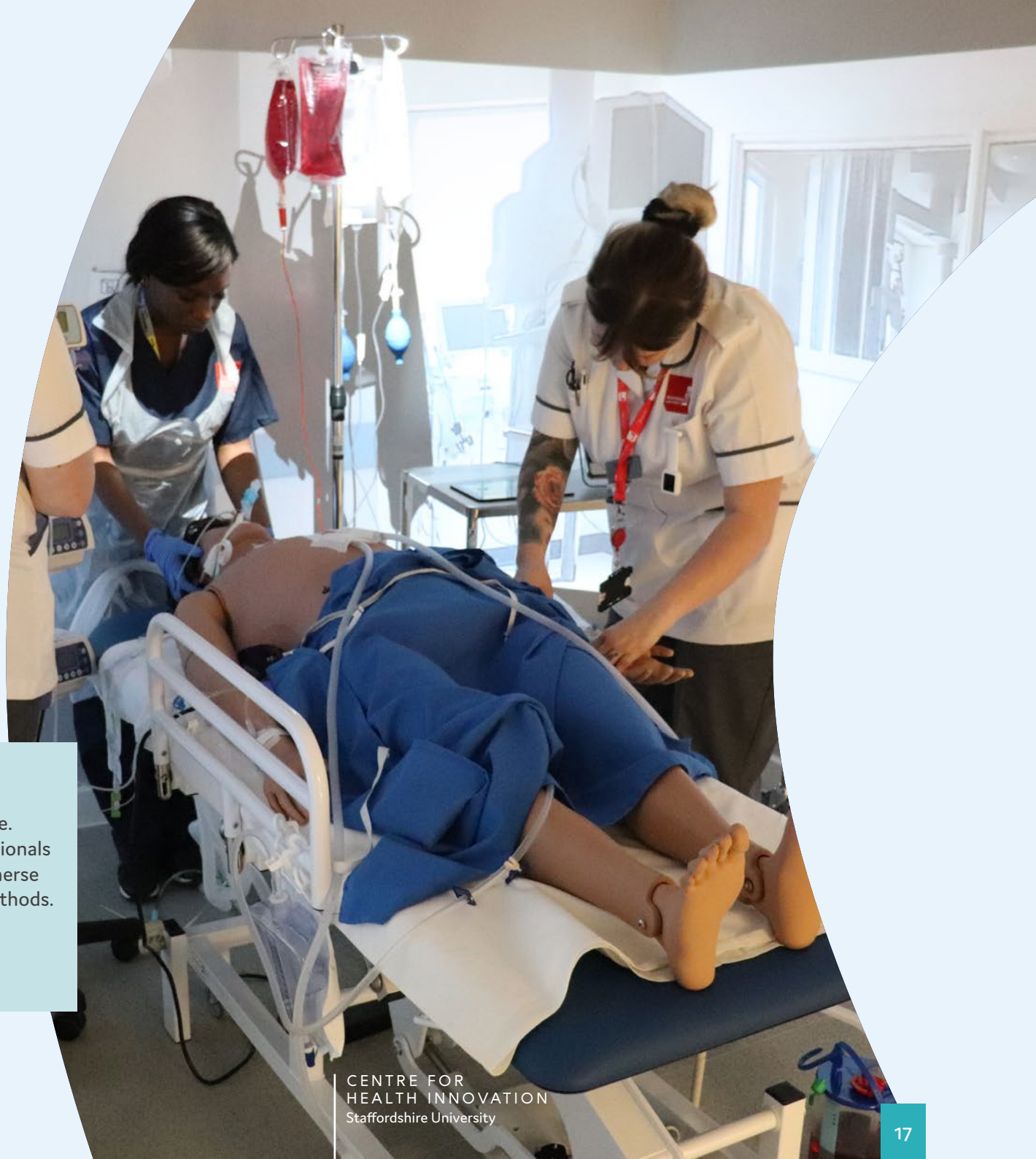
A brand-new building at the Burslem campus enabling the College to work with more young and adult learners and employers to support upskilling in new green technologies for construction. The investment includes a digital Construction Suite, electric vehicles and new workshop facilities for building surveying and computer aided design, to help deliver the new T Level in construction.

Stoke-on-Trent College Digital Construction Suite

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The NHS is Europe's biggest employer and the fifth biggest employer in the world, with over 350 job roles in the health and social care sector. A growing and ageing population is increasing demand for health and social care services – however, the size of the sector workforce has not kept pace with this demand leading to a number of labour shortages and skills gaps.

In Staffordshire, there's ongoing high demand for social care workers and nurses, with recruitment pressures exacerbated by both the COVID pandemic and BREXIT. There are also opportunities to make better use of new digital technologies to improve quality, efficiency and patient experience as well as supporting more integrated care and improving the health of the population.



The £5.8m Centre for Health Innovation has been designed in collaboration with industry experts and includes a state-of-the-art Clinical Simulation Centre. The new facility means students, healthcare professionals and start-up businesses will have the chance to immerse themselves in the latest medical techniques and methods.

[Staffordshire University – Centre for Health Innovation](#)

HOW WE'RE DELIVERING OUR EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STRATEGY

Our approach to delivering this strategy across Staffordshire and its districts and boroughs is clear:

We're working in partnership to leverage and align public sector investment, such as the Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

We'll match and maximise public and private sector investment – for example, the Apprenticeship Levy.

We're working with government on the opportunities for more powers and funding through devolution, including the Adult Education Budget.

We'll maximise employer investment in skills and involvement in the design of skills provision, such as through the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

We're shaping and influencing the strategic commissioning of other funds and priorities – for example, HS2, West Midlands Freight Interchange, A50 A500 Strategic Corridor and the LSIP – as a route to delivering technical skills.

THE EVIDENCE BEHIND OUR STRATEGY

Here's where you can access all the strategic evidence and information you need:

The latest Full Economy and Skills Evidence Base has the following key aims:

- To provide an overview of the pre-COVID economy and labour market position (core outcome datasets and Government KPIs e.g., Levelling-up missions).
- To discuss the impact of COVID and Energy/Cost-of-Living Crisis on the local economy.
- To identify COVID recovery opportunities.
- To consider economic renewal and transformation opportunities including priority sectors and skill areas.
- To provide detailed priority sector information including SWOT analysis.

The monthly Economic Bulletin provides the most timely analysis of official Government data, national intelligence and local analysis and insights on the state of the local economy and labour market.

We have commissioned over £250,000-worth of DfE funded research to inform specific aspects of local economic and skills system development including:

- Skills for Growth Employer Survey delivered by Metro Dynamics.
- Deep dive on CEIAG and employer education/provider relationships delivered by the University of Wolverhampton.



BETTER TOGETHER

“We’re delighted the county’s nine local authorities, skills providers, employers and wider stakeholders have come together in developing an Employment and Skills Strategy to ensure that Staffordshire has the highly skilled workforce it needs to reach its full potential.”

OUR SHARED VISION

Our vision is to give our residents the skills to access higher value, better-paid jobs across a wide range of priority sectors, helping deliver a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy.

DELIVERING THE SKILLS STAFFORDSHIRE NEEDS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

We’re united in our ambition to deliver the skills Staffordshire needs. By working together, we’ll develop the skills to access higher value, better-paid jobs and deliver a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable economy across the county. We remain as one to put the whole of Staffordshire on the UK and world map to contribute even more to our national wellbeing.

BURTON AND SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COLLEGE



OMRICON
Red Hill Business Park, Stafford



Staffordshire



Alan White

Leader of Staffordshire County Council
and Leaders' Board Chair
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and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
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Community Impact Assessment

Employment and Skills Strategy

Author: Darren Farmer

Date: 27th March 2023

➤ **Equality Assessment**

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>Age - older and younger people</p>	<p>The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and current energy and cost-of-living crisis has impacted some demographic groups more than others.</p> <p>Whilst the full impacts of the ongoing crisis remain unclear and will be for some time, evidence shows that the hospitality industry has been particularly adversely affected and this will have impacted some groups, such as young people, more than others.</p> <p>An evidence base is being updated on at least a monthly basis to monitor the state of the local economy.</p> <p>The new Employment and Skills Strategy will look to develop the skills and work readiness of</p>		<p>The strategy clearly sets out our priorities for residents and workers of all ages and how we can ensure that they remain an active and productive part of our local economy.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	<p>residents of all ages. There will be particular focus on ensuring young people have the skills and experience to enter the workplace and achieve their career ambitions in high value better paid jobs. There will also be focus on ensuring that older workers are fully valued and retained to the benefit of our local economy.</p>		
<p>Disability - people who are living with different conditions and disabilities, such as: mental illnesses, long term conditions, Autism and other neurodiverse conditions, learning disabilities, sensory impairment and physical disabilities.</p>	<p>The strategy will look to improve current models of employment which do not always support people to fulfil their potential e.g., those with disabilities, low skills attainment, caring responsibilities, neurodiversity.</p>		<p>There is a focus on young people with higher needs than other students and much good work has been done over recent years to ensure that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have the additional support they need to help them progress and achieve. We have helped to ensure that there is more sufficient education and training provision for young people and improved the suitability of provision for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) such as through post 16 higher needs</p>

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
			<p>placements and increasing supported internships.</p> <p>Staffordshire SEND partners are developing a countywide, multi-partner forum to increase employment opportunities for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities throughout Staffordshire.</p>
<p>Race - people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins</p>	<p>The strategy will aim to create a place of learning for all. Embedding the culture of life-long learning into the local labour force to support upskilling & retraining and progression to better jobs.</p> <p>There will be particular focus on occupations in highest demand e.g., nurses, social care workers, software developers and help people who are underrepresented, e.g. minority ethnic groups, in</p>		<p>We will positively include disadvantaged people and underrepresented groups, including minority ethnic groups, when planning and delivering skills provision.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	high-value professions to enter them.		
Sex - men or women	The strategy evidence base has identified that in a number of our priority sectors for the local economy there is a dominance of males in the workforce.		The strategy recognises the need to fully engage more women in our priority sectors and will proactively look to promote and engage women in becoming part of a more diverse workforce in those sectors which are expected to have more and better jobs in the future.

Health, Well-being and Social Care Assessment

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Impact on resident's health and wellbeing (mental and physical) - the crisis and negative impacts on the economy may have adversely affected mental health due to concerns related to jobs and money.	The Strategy aims to support those either at risk of redundancy or unfortunately out of work to gain the skills and experience needed to re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible,	A key concern is that residents become long-term unemployed with associated scarring effects.	The Strategy sets out how we will minimise such effects by supporting people to return to work as soon as possible and be able to find good quality employment.

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	<p>thereby reducing the impacts on mental health.</p>		
<p>Impact on health inequalities</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to further increase skill levels across Staffordshire, with a particular focus on evidence based priority areas where skill levels are lower than elsewhere and therefore helping to level up skills and opportunities across Staffordshire. This in turn can help to reduce health inequalities between areas.</p>	<p>There is a risk that by focusing on lower performing areas and groups that other parts of Staffordshire have reduced benefits from the Strategy.</p>	<p>The delivery of the Strategy will ensure that we support employment and skills development and improvement for all areas of Staffordshire, helping to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life for all residents across Staffordshire.</p> <p>Evidence is being updated on at least a monthly basis to monitor the impact of the crisis and subsequent recovery. This includes monitoring the impact on specific groups and locations to identify those residents most adversely affected by the crisis and allow us to respond accordingly.</p>
<p>Impacts healthy lifestyles, personal responsibility and independence</p>	<p>The delivery of projects that both support skills development and employment can help to enable people to make</p>	<p>Without consideration of health, future investment in economic development and associated employment</p>	<p>A key aspect of the Strategy is to increase the skill levels of residents so that they can access higher value better paid jobs. This raising of prosperity can enable residents to</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	positive healthy lifestyle choices and be less reliant on state support.	and skills projects could have a negative impact on people's health.	make better lifestyle choices including healthier diets and more active lifestyles.

➤ **Communities Assessment**

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Community development/capacity – educational attainment and training	Education and skills are vital parts of the Strategy with the aim being to improve outcomes for all our residents.	Not having a focus on education and skills has the potential for some residents not being able to benefit from future job opportunities and there being a mismatch between the skills of residents and those that businesses need.	<p>The Strategy sets out the priorities for future skills development within the county, with future projects and programmes aligning to these priorities.</p> <p>The Strategy has been informed by a comprehensive evidence base that is being updated on at least a monthly basis to monitor the impact of the crisis and subsequent recovery. This includes monitoring the impact on specific groups and locations to identify those residents most</p>

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
			adversely affected by the crisis and allow us to respond accordingly.
Safer communities	Residents being in employment and the positive effect economic growth can have on deprivation can have a positive impact on crime / community safety.	Some areas and residents being left behind and not able to benefit from economic growth could lead to increased crimes issues.	Inclusive growth and levelling up is a key strand throughout the Strategy.
Greater leisure and culture participation	More residents in better paid jobs can raise prosperity and therefore greater disposable income for increased leisure and culture participation.	By not increasing higher paid jobs in Staffordshire and the skills of residents that these jobs require could mean less disposable income for leisure and culture participation.	The Strategy will look to increase higher value jobs with better pay for residents across Staffordshire.

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Skills development, inward investment and economic growth	The Strategy aims to improve the skills of local residents to enable them to access the better jobs being created and in turn a more skilled workforce can attract inward investment to the area and generate greater economic growth.	Not delivering the Strategy has the potential to adversely affect our resident's prosperity and economic wellbeing, including for specific groups.	Whilst setting our overall priorities, the Strategy allows us to remain agile and respond accordingly to changing conditions to ensure we are continuing to have a positive impact on the development of local skills to enable more residents to access better jobs and grow the local economy.
Entrepreneurship and business growth	The Strategy has a specific priority to support the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills to increase business start-ups and growth.	Not delivering the Strategy could limit the ability of residents to start-up and grow businesses.	The Strategy will build on existing entrepreneurship and business support programmes to ensure that more residents are able to start-up and grow businesses which in turn can generate increased jobs across Staffordshire.
Poverty and income	The Strategy is focused on higher level skills to enable access to better paid jobs which can help reduce poverty in deprived areas and	Not delivering the Strategy has the potential to adversely affect our resident's prosperity and economic	Whilst setting our overall priorities, the Strategy allows us to remain agile and respond accordingly to changing conditions to ensure we are continuing to have a positive impact on the development of local skills to enable

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
	increase incomes of all residents.	wellbeing, including for specific groups.	<p>more residents to access better jobs and grow the local economy.</p> <p>Evidence is being updated on at least a monthly basis to monitor the impact of the crisis and subsequent recovery. This includes monitoring the impact on specific groups and locations to identify those residents most adversely affected by the crisis and allow us to respond accordingly.</p>

Climate Change Assessment

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Green skills development	A fundamental cross-cutting theme throughout the Strategy is the development of green skills to support the achievement of net zero by 2050.	Not delivering the Strategy has the potential to hinder the development of green skills across Staffordshire and therefore limit our ability to address	The Strategy recognises the importance of green skills to the economy and environment and will look to embed their development into a wide range of delivery programmes and projects.

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
		climate change and achieve net zero by 2050.	

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023

Half Yearly Treasury Management Report for the Period Ended 30 September 2023



Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Matters said,

“Staffordshire County Council is a well-run Council, and we continue to manage our finances prudently while doing and spending what is required. By using cash reserves rather than borrowing more, we have been able to achieve substantial savings in what remain challenging times. In addition to being prudent, our low-risk investment approach, which focuses on lending to low-risk institutions, means we have been well placed to deal with challenges arising from difficulties the current global economy presents. We remain committed to supporting local businesses along with providing access to funding, as we work to grow our economy. Like most Councils we face financial pressures, rising costs and uncertainty over the long-term funding of some services but we will continue to spend and invest where necessary, focusing our efforts and resources on where they are most needed.”

Report Summary:

1. This report provides a summary of the County Council’s borrowing and investment activities during the first six months of the year.
2. An analysis of the first half-year activities is set out in the report, but the key points to note are that:
 - the Treasury Management Panel, chaired by the Director of Finance and comprising other senior finance officers, met regularly to consider treasury matters.
 - all transactions were undertaken by authorised officers and within the limits approved.
 - all investments were to counterparties on the approved counterparty list and fully met the requirements of the relevant regulations; and
 - the County Council operated within the limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the County Council’s Treasury Management Practices and Annual Treasury Management Strategy.
3. The County Council maintained a cautious approach to investments. The policy of using cash instead of borrowing continued to generate savings,

helping reduce the average interest the County Council pays on its debt despite the increase in interest rates.

4. Overall, the report demonstrates that the County Council's borrowing and investment activities are being undertaken prudently and in line with agreed strategies in a very challenging environment.
5. The County Council made an early repayment of £50 million of PWLB loans on 3 July 2023, as allowed by the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and is detailed in this report.

Local Members Interest	
If report is relevant to ALL Members, type 'N/A' into table and delete what is not required	
Insert Members Name	Insert Electoral Division

CABINET – 15 NOVEMBER 2023

Treasury Management Report for the Half-Year Ended 30 September 2023

Recommendation of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Matters

1. That Cabinet note the treasury management activities for the half-year ended 30 September 2023.
2. That Cabinet note the early repayment of £50 million of PWLB debt as discussed in **Paragraph 30**.

Report of the Director of Finance

Reasons for Recommendations:

3. At their meeting on 18 January 2012, Cabinet adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code).
4. Treasury risk management at the County Council is conducted within the framework of the revised 2021 Edition of the CIPFA Code. This requires the County Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year and, as a minimum, provide a semi-annual and annual treasury outturn report. This report fulfils the County Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
5. This report provides a summary of the County Council's treasury management activities for the first half of 2023/24, in the context of the strategy for the year, which was agreed by Cabinet on 25 January 2023. It considers both the borrowing and investment decisions taken within the specified period, in view of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time.

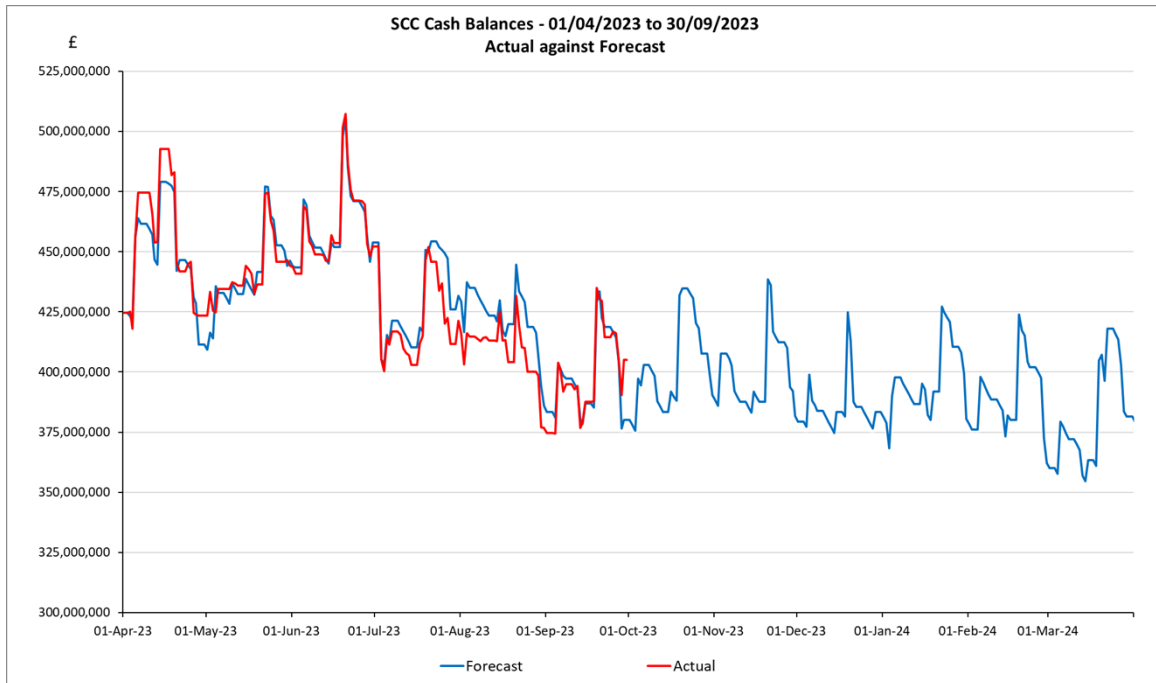
External Context

6. The first half of 2023/24 has seen increases in the bank base rate by most global central banks. UK base rates have risen by 1.00% since the start of 2022/23, from 4.25% to 5.25% by August 2023. It is possible that UK interest rates may have hit their peak at 5.25%, as projected by Link the County Council's independent treasury adviser, but other commentators predict further rises. Whilst interest rates are now not expected to reach as high as was thought earlier in 2022/23 (i.e., above 6% for the UK), the market now believes the current rates will be held for longer by central banks.

7. The direct effect of the UK interest rate rises is an increase in returns on investments. The link to borrowing is not as direct as PWLB rates are driven primarily by Gilt yields i.e., the cost of government borrowing. The strategy of using internal funding in lieu of borrowing adopted by the County Council still stands while investment returns are below short-term borrowing levels, known as the cost of carry. Increased interest rates may make early repayment of debt economically viable and officers within the Treasury Management function will monitor opportunities.
8. UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 0.5% in July 2023, leading commentators to suggest that underlying growth has slowed since the beginning the year. The weakness in July was in part due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, it is believed that there is an underlying weakness in the economy. The fall in the composite Purchasing Managers Index from 48.6 in August to 46.8 in September is consistent with a 0.2% rise in real GDP in the period April to June, being followed by a projected contraction of up to 1% in the second half of 2023.
9. The labour market has eased in recent months, with employment in the three months to July 2023 falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017 million in July to 0.989 million in August, the first time it has fallen below 1 million since July 2021, also suggest a slowing labour market. There was a 48,000 decline in the supply of workers in the three months to July offsetting some of the loosening in the labour market. That was due to a 63,000 increase in inactivity in the three months to July as more people left the labour market due to long term sickness or to enter education.
10. Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August 2023, the lowest rate since February 2022. This was accompanied by an unexpected drop in core CPI (which excludes volatile sectors such as food and energy), which declined from 6.9% to 6.2% and reversed the rises since March 2023, meaning the gap between UK core inflation and other major economies has shrunk (US core inflation is 4.4% and in the Euro-zone it is 5.3%). Another recent positive development was the fall in services inflation from 7.4% to 6.8%, which takes it below the forecast of 7.2% the Bank of England published in early August 2023.
11. The FTSE 100 gained more than 2% since the end of August, from around 7,440 on 31st August to 7,608 on 29th September. The rebound has been primarily driven by higher energy prices which boosted the valuations of energy companies. The FTSE 100's relatively high concentration of energy companies helps to explain why UK equities outperformed both US and Euro-zone equities in September. Nonetheless, as recently as 21st April the FTSE 100 stood much higher at 7,914.
12. The economic context in which the County Council operates remains volatile and uncertain and the measured approach the County Council takes with its treasury activity in the financial markets reflects this.

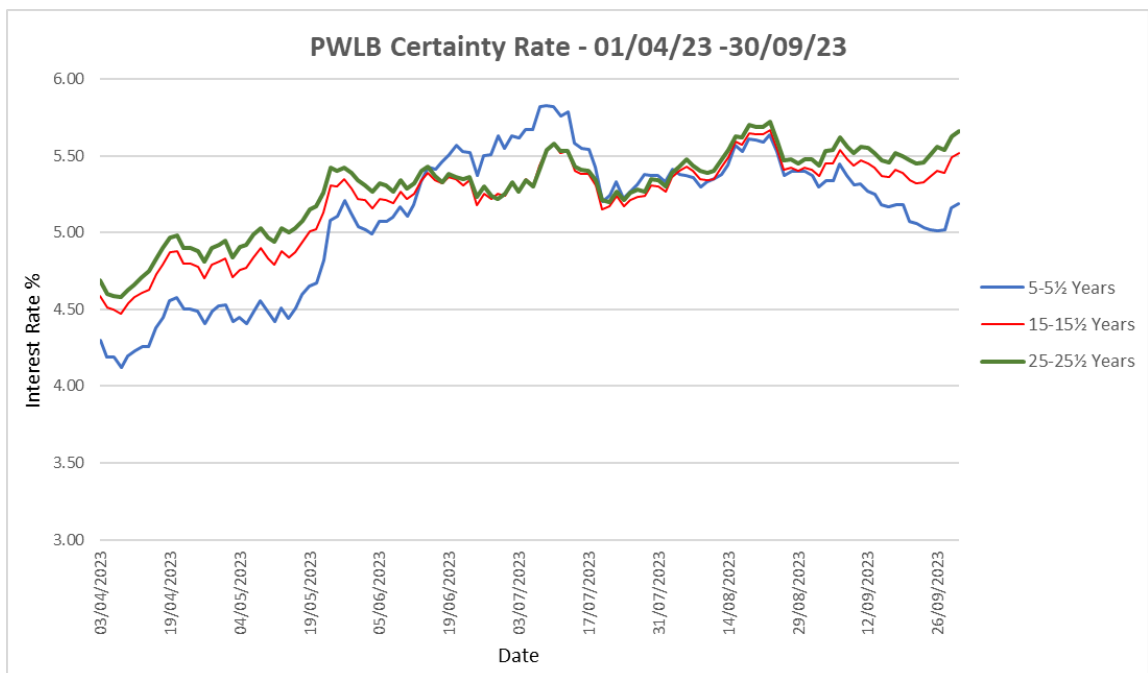
Borrowing strategy update

13. The Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2023/24 outlined the long-term borrowing strategy for the year stating that it was:
“more cost effective for the County Council to use its internal cash resources in lieu of borrowing”
14. In accordance with this, cash has continued to be used in lieu of borrowing and the County Council did not require new, or replacement loans, to be taken out in the first half of the year.
15. The strategy of using cash instead of borrowing has relied on two main factors; the Bank Rate (set by the Bank of England) remaining lower than borrowing rates, and cash balances being sufficient to meet the County Council’s day-to-day requirements.
16. The Bank of England (BoE) maintained Bank Rate of 0.1% from 19 March 2020 but since December 2021 has increased the rate incrementally to 5.25% as at 30 September 2023. This rate may continue to rise as the Bank of England attempts to reduce inflation.
17. In terms of the future, Link, the County Council’s treasury advisor, expects Bank Rate to remain at 5.25% until September 2024 when it predicts a fall back to 5.00%. A fall of 0.50% each quarter is projected thereafter until December 2025 when it will decrease by 0.25% and hold at 2.75%. As has been seen over the last 12 months, the financial markets are extremely volatile, and sentiment can change overnight impacting rates dramatically.
18. Currently interest rate returns are still lower than borrowing costs meaning that the strategy of using cash remains important and represents a cost-effective way of financing the capital programme. Overall, the short-term interest rate environment now and for future forecasts both still support the borrowing strategy adopted in 2023/24.
19. Cash balances have been sufficient to allow day to day cash management in the first half of the year. The following graph shows total actual cash balances for the first half of the year (in red) against those forecast for the full year (in blue).



20. It can be seen that the actual cash balances the County Council have fairly closely followed the forecast for the first half of 2023/24.

21. Cashflow forecasts indicate the County Council will have sufficient balances to fund its debt for 2023/24, without the need to take out further long-term loans. When loans are taken-up these are mainly sourced from the Public Works Loan Board (PWL), whose loan interest rates reflect changes in Gilt yields in the UK Government bond market. The following chart shows three typical loan periods where rates have been adjusted to reflect the “certainty-rate” reduction of 0.20% which is available to all local authorities who register with the Government.



22. Gilt yields are very sensitive to the risk appetite of international investors and the yields at the beginning of the year reflected the uncertain global financial environment. As interest rates rose so did gilts yields, gradually increasing

borrowing costs incrementally for the first half of the year. If the market believes that inflation is coming under control and bank rates will remain steady then the yields may fall or stabilise for the second half of the year.

23. The County Council's external loans portfolio as at 30 September 2023 was £398.5 million and includes £51 million Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans. LOBO loans are long term loans where the lender has the option to increase the interest rate at pre-determined intervals; if the lender exercises its option to change the rate, the borrower's option is triggered. The borrower must either accept the revised rate or they can repay the loan without penalty. LOBO loans were initially taken out by the County Council when their rates compared favourably to PWLB rates. It is unlikely that the holders of these loans will change rates unless base rate rises continue further.
24. The following table shows the interest rates incurred on the County Council's debt portfolio for 2022/23 and for this half year, including an adjustment reflecting the use of cash.

	2022/23 Full Year %	2023/24 Half Year %
Weighted average rate of interest for external loans	4.58	4.60
Adjusted for the use of cash	4.27	4.75

25. The average rate on external loans has risen slightly, as a PWLB loan repaid had a lower interest rate than the portfolio average. Once the utilisation of cash reserves is taken into account, the rate rises reflecting the increase in the current base rate and the opportunity cost of cash. Despite this, the County Council's policy of using cash instead of borrowing, while average borrowing rates are still higher than the interest rates paid on investments, is of real benefit and continues to generate significant savings. This policy is also helping to reduce the average interest paid on County Council debt and is estimated to have saved £0.557 million in interest payments in the first half of the financial year.
26. A graph illustrating the maturity profile of the long-term loans at 30 September 2023 is provided at **Appendix 3**.

Loan restructuring / repayment

27. Movements in interest rates over time may provide opportunities to restructure the loan portfolio in one of two ways:
- to replace existing loans with new loans at a lower rate (known as loan rescheduling); or
 - repay loans early, without replacing the loans. This would increase the use of cash.

28. The Treasury Strategy for 2023/24 approved loan rescheduling where this rebalances risk and approved repayment of loans with no replacement, where deemed appropriate.
29. A combination of factors has meant that PWLB loan restructuring became financially viable in the first half of 2023/24:
 - gilt yields rose as borrowing became more expensive for the government as interest rates rose; and
 - Government policy, whereby a margin is applied to the early repayment of a PWLB loan, meant that some of the County Councils loan portfolio attracted a discount rather than a premium.
30. After review by treasury officers in conjunction with Link, the County Councils independent treasury advisers, opportunities to repay £50 million of PWLB loans were identified. The information was presented to, and agreed by, the Director of Finance through the Treasury Management Panel. This decision will save the County Council £199,000 p.a. based on current interest rates taking into account discount, interest savings and loss of investment income.
31. If interest rates continue to rise in the latter half of 2023/24 additional opportunities which may arise to repay debt. Any decision will continue to be taken in conjunction with the County Council's treasury advisers and take into account the availability of cash.

Investment Strategy update

32. The County Council holds cash, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. As shown in the chart at **paragraph 19**, the County Council's investment balances during the year have ranged between £374 million and £507 million, due to timing differences between income and expenditure.
33. The Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) forms part of the Treasury Management Strategy and sets out those parties the County Council will lend its money to. The AIS details the requirements of government guidance and the CIPFA Code, with both documents requiring the County Council to invest its funds prudently and to have regard to the following two prime risk issues over return:
 - The security of capital; and
 - The liquidity of investments.
34. The resulting investment strategy adopted is characterised by:
 - the use of selected counterparties (high level of security).
 - the use of diversified sterling "AAA" money market funds (high level of security and liquidity);
 - a maximum duration of 12 months (high level of security).
 - the use of same day liquidity accounts (high level of liquidity); and
 - the use of Collective Investment Schemes.
35. The County Council has the ability to place unlimited funds with the UK Government, including Local Authorities (LAs), although investment in LAs is limited to £5 million per counterparty to ensure the investment diversification required by the Treasury Management Panel.

Treasury Investments

36. Approved investments stood at £405.097 million on 30 September 2023 (£413.710 million on 31 March 2023), these are analysed below:

Long-term local authority	£m
Derby City Council	15.000
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	15.000
Short-term UK Government	
Debt Management Office	126.500
UK Government T-Bills	4.933
Banks and building societies	
Lloyds Bank Plc (Commercial Banking)	0.864
Goldman Sachs	15.000
Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets	5.000
SMBC Bank International Plc	15.000
Standard Chartered Bank	15.000
Landesbanken Hessen-Thuringen	
Girozentrale	10.000
NatWest	15.000
Money Market Funds	
Aberdeen	23.350
Black Rock	16.050
Insight	37.000
Federated	27.000
State Street	14.400
Collective Investment Scheme	
Royal London Cash Plus Fund	20.000
AXA Sterling Credit Short Duration Bond	15.000
Royal London Investment Grade Short Dated Fund	15.000
TOTAL	<u>405.097</u>

37. Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the County Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to security and liquidity before seeking a rate of return. The County Council's main objective when investing money is to minimise the risk of incurring losses from defaults. In the light of the global economic climate, the likelihood of unexpected calls on cash flow, further possibility of austerity measures and settlement uncertainty, the County Council has cash available at very short notice. Liquid cash is diversified over several counterparties and Money Market Funds, to manage both credit and liquidity risks. With interest rates rising the County Council has begun utilising term investments, by placing core cash into secure institutions as recommended by its treasury adviser (Link) for up to 6 months, to increase returns. With interest rates continuing to be lower than borrowing rates and many organisations holding onto cash the County Council has continued to utilise cash to realise savings on borrowing costs as reported in **paragraph 25**.

38. Given the current circumstances, the County Council is principally utilising its MMF's for daily liquidity and Government held Debt Management Office Account and Banks for periods longer than overnight.
39. The following table shows the County Council's investment returns in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to date. It can be seen that the average return against the benchmark SONIA (sterling Overnight Investment Rate) is 0.54% lower in 2023/24 to date. This is due to base rate rising consistently since December 2021 and the financial markets adjusting at a slower rate. The County Council seeks to maximise interest returns where possible whilst ensuring the security of its funds.

	2022/23 Full Year	2023/24 Half Year
Average return on investments	1.34%	4.21%
SONIA Overnight (revised benchmark)	1.24%	4.75%
Additional return generated	0.10%	-0.54%

40. A copy of the counterparty list as at 30 September 2023 is provided at **Appendix 4**. Subject to undertaking further due diligence this list may be expanded in line with the County Council's Credit Management Strategy and approval from Treasury Management Panel.
41. The County Council has approval to use non-standard investments, which was granted by Cabinet on the 25 January 2023 via the Treasury Management Strategy Statement. Non-standard investments are all other types of approved investment counterparties that are not included in **Appendix 4**. These investments are used less frequently and require further approval from the Treasury Management Panel or Members. All approved investments that the County Council can make are shown in **Appendix 5**.
42. Collective Schemes can offer better risk adjusted returns than deposits in either Money Market Funds or term deposits with banks, with similar risk levels. Enhanced cash MMF's are considered to be Collective Schemes; they typically have a 2-5-day liquidity notice period, as they invest further along the yield curve. The County Council's is invested in one of these funds (the Royal London Cash Plus Fund). In addition, the County Council also has investments in two Short Dated Bond Funds with investment time horizons of 2 -3 year (the AXA Sterling Credit Short Duration Bond and Royal London Investment Grade Short Dated Fund) These funds have been utilised to expand and diversify counterparties as the authority currently holds a large cash balance.

Non-treasury investments

43. The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the County Council as well as other non-financial assets which the County Council holds primarily for financial return. The revised Investment Guidance from MHCLG (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLUHC) broadened this definition further to include loans and investments for service purposes.

44. The County Council currently has one non-treasury investment. This non-treasury investment, which was made for service purposes, is a 49% share in the company Entrust which provides education support services to schools throughout the County. On 31 March 2023, the County Council's share in Entrust had a nil value.

Compliance with Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators

45. It can be certified that for the half year ended 30 September 2023:
- (i) in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Treasury Management Panel chaired by the Director of Finance and comprising other senior finance officers, met regularly to consider treasury matters.
 - (ii) all treasury related transactions were undertaken by authorised officers and within the limits approved by the County Council.
 - (iii) all investments were to counterparties on the Lending List current at the time and fully met the requirements of relevant legislation, and
 - (iv) all work carried out in respect of treasury management is subject to independent review and is programmed into external and internal audit plans.
 - (v) The Council has kept within its Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
46. The latest position for Treasury Management Prudential Indicators is shown in **Appendix 2**.

Rob Salmon
Director of Finance

Background Documents

1. Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (CIPFA) (2021)
2. Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (CIPFA) (2021)
3. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003
4. Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments – Issued under Section 15(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003 (2018)
5. Statutory Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision – Issued under section 21 (1A) of the Local Government Act 2003 (2018)
6. Localism Act 2011 – Guidance on the General Power of Competence in sections 1 to 6.

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Staffordshire County Council

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Equalities Implications – There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications – There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Resource and Value for Money Implications – The resource and value for money implications are contained within the body of the report.

Risk Implications – Counterparty and interest rate risk arising as a result of Treasury Management activity have been considered in the body of this report.

Climate Change Implications – There are no climate change implications arising from this report. Counterparties invested in by the County Council have ESG policies in place.

Health Impact Assessment screening – There are no health impact assessment implications arising from this report.

Staffordshire County Council

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Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

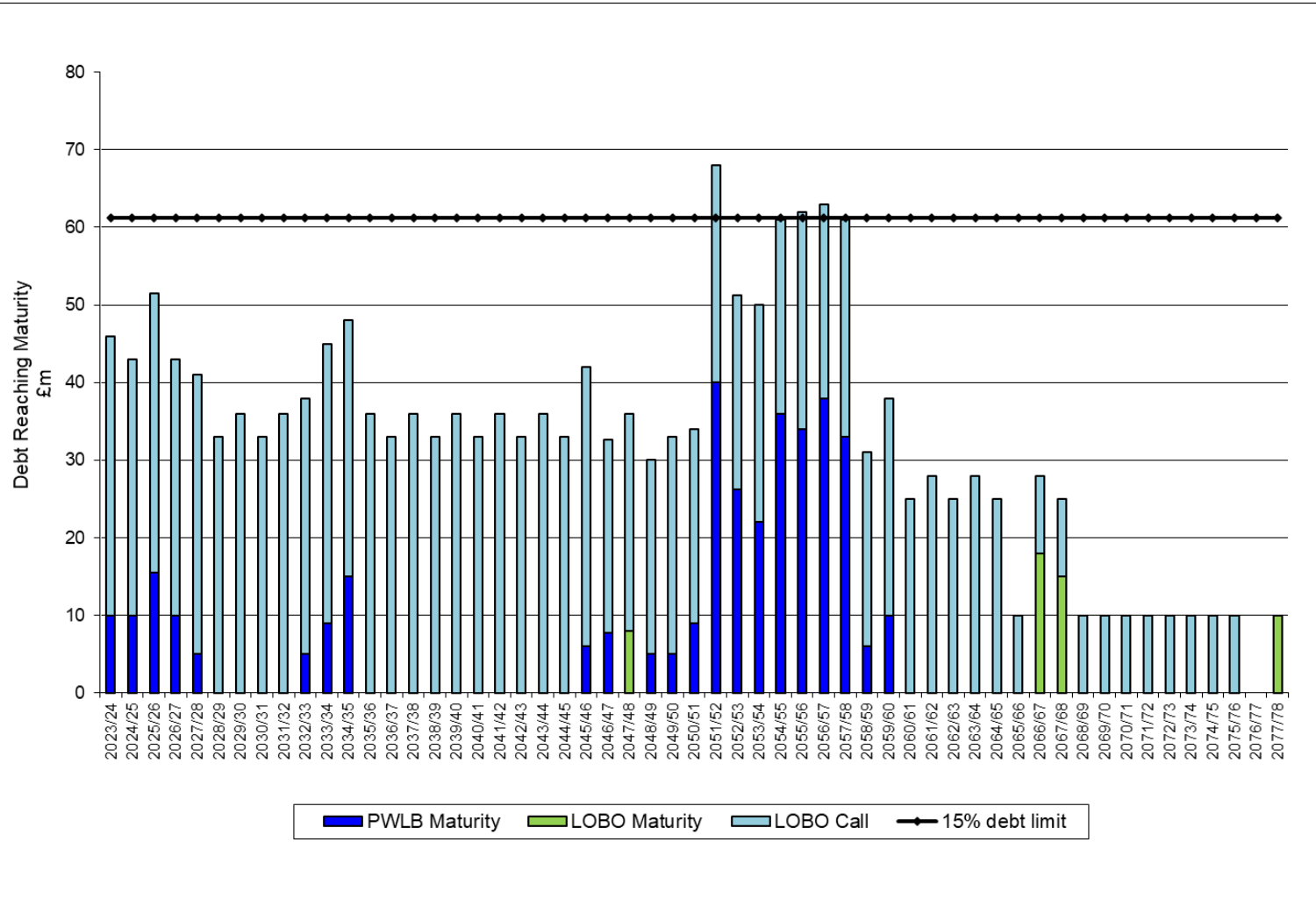
Indicator	Estimated Limit 2023/24	Actual Position at 30/09/23
1. External Debt		
Authorised Limit for borrowing	£621m	£399m
Authorised Limit for other liabilities	£118m	£117m
TOTAL	£739m	£516m
Operational Boundary for borrowing	£525m	£399m
Operational Boundary for other liabilities	£118m	£117m
TOTAL	£643m	£516m
External Loans	£596.5m	£399m
<p><i>The Authorised Limit is the maximum level of external borrowing which should not be exceeded. It is linked to the estimated level of borrowing assumed in the Capital Programme.</i></p> <p><i>The Operational Boundary represents the County Treasurer's estimate of the day-to-day limit for treasury management activity based on the most likely i.e., prudent but not worst-case scenario.</i></p> <p><i>"Other liabilities" relate to PFI schemes which are recorded in the County Council's accounts.</i></p>		
2. Interest Rate Exposures		
a. Upper Limit (Fixed)	£546.4m	£399m
b. Upper Limit (Variable)	(£470m)	(£405m)
<p><i>The County Council sets upper limits of fixed and variable borrowing and investments. The effect of setting these upper limits is to provide ranges within which the County Council will manage its exposure to fixed and variable rates of interest. Negative figures are shown in brackets; these relate to the "high- point" of investments at a variable rate which are not offset by variable borrowings. The exposure to variable rate movements has been reduced by the use of cash in lieu of borrowing.</i></p>		
3. Maturity Structure of Borrowing		
See Graph at Appendix 3		
<p><i>This indicator relates to the amount of loans maturing in specified periods. The overarching principle is that steps should be taken from a risk management point of view to limit exposure to significant refinancing risk in any short period of time. The County Council currently applies the practice of ensuring that no more than 15% of its total gross fixed rate loans mature in any one financial year.</i></p> <p><i>Because this is a complex situation for the County Council, involving PWLB loans, LOBO loans with uncertain call dates and the use of internal cash, specific indicators have not been set. Instead the County Council will manage its exposures within the limits shown on the graph at Appendix 3. This graph shows all LOBO call options on a cumulative basis; in fact the actual pattern of repayment, although uncertain, will not be of this magnitude.</i></p>		
4. Total principal sums invested for periods longer than a year		
	£245m	£30m
<p><i>Any investments made for over longer than a year will be in accordance with the County Council's limits on non-standard investments.</i></p>		

Staffordshire County Council

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Debt Maturity Staffordshire County Council 2023/24

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**Staffordshire County Council
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**Lending List
15 November 2023**

Standard Investment Counterparty by Country	Maximum Investment Duration
Australia	Not Applicable
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	12 months
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	12 months
Macquarie Bank Ltd.	6 months
National Australia Bank Ltd.	12 months
Westpac Banking Corp.	12 months
Belgium	Not Applicable
BNP Paribas Fortis	6 months
KBC Bank N.V.	12 months
Canada	Not Applicable
Bank of Montreal	12 months
Bank of Nova Scotia	12 months
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	12 months
National Bank of Canada	6 months
Royal Bank of Canada	12 months
Toronto-Dominion Bank	12 months
Denmark	Not Applicable
Danske A/S	6 months
Finland	Not Applicable
Nordea Bank Abp	12 months
France	Not Applicable
BNP Paribas	12 months
Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank	12 months
Credit Agricole S.A.	12 months
Credit Industriel et Commercial	12 months
Societe Generale	6 months
Germany	Not Applicable
Bayerische Landesbank	6 months
DZ BANK AG Deutsche Zentral-Genossenschaftsbank	12 months
Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg	6 months
Landesbank Berlin AG	12 months
Landesbank Hessen-Thueringen Girozentrale	12 months
Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank	24 months
Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale	100 days
NRW.BANK	24 months

Netherlands	Not Applicable
ABN AMRO Bank N.V.	6 months
Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten N.V.	24 months
Cooperatieve Rabobank U.A.	12 months
ING Bank N.V.	12 months
Nederlandse Waterschapsbank N.V.	24 months
Singapore	Not Applicable
DBS Bank Ltd.	12 months
United Overseas Bank Ltd.	12 months
Sweden	Not Applicable
Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	12 months
Svenska Handelsbanken AB	12 months
Swedbank AB	12 months
Switzerland	Not Applicable
UBS AG	12 months
United Kingdom	Not Applicable
Collateralised LA Deposit*	60 months
Debt Management Office	60 months
Multilateral Development Banks	60 months
Supranationals	60 months
UK Gilts	60 months
Bank of Scotland PLC (RFB)	6 months
Barclays Bank PLC (NRFB)	6 months
Barclays Bank UK PLC (RFB)	6 months
Goldman Sachs International Bank	6 months
Handelsbanken Plc	12 months
HSBC Bank PLC (NRFB)	12 months
HSBC UK Bank Plc (RFB)	12 months
Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets Plc (NRFB)	6 months
Lloyds Bank Plc (RFB)	6 months
NatWest Markets Plc (NRFB)	6 months
Santander Financial Services plc (NRFB)	6 months
Santander UK PLC	6 months
SMBC Bank International Plc	6 months
Standard Chartered Bank	6 months
Coventry Building Society	6 months
Leeds Building Society	100 days
Nationwide Building Society	6 months
Skipton Building Society	6 months
Yorkshire Building Society	100 days
National Westminster Bank PLC (RFB)	12 months
The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc (RFB)	12 months
United States	Not Applicable
Bank of America N.A.	12 months
Bank of New York Mellon, The	24 months
Citibank N.A.	12 months

JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.	12 months
Wells Fargo Bank, NA	12 months
Money Market Funds	
Aberdeen	Overnight
Black Rock	Overnight
Insight	Overnight
Federated	Overnight
State Street	Overnight

Cabinet – 15 November 2023
Investment categories authorised for use 2023/24

Investment	Standard	Non-standard	Comments
UK Government - Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) (regulation investment)	unlimited	x	6 months maximum available
UK Government - Treasury Bills (T-Bills) (regulation investment)	unlimited	x	6 months maximum available
UK local authorities term deposits (regulation investment) *	unlimited	£45m across these categories	Up to 40 years in duration (non-standard)
UK Government – Gilts	unlimited		
Money Market Funds	✓	x	100% of total investments in this category. Individual MMF - Lower of 0.50% of individual MMF size or 25% of total forecast cash balances per MMF
Term deposits with banks and building societies	✓	x	50% of total investments in this category. Lower of 5% (unsecured) or 10% (secured) of total forecast cash balances or £30m per counterparty
Certificates of deposit (banks / building societies)	x	Maximum £100m per investment category and £200m in total across all categories	Up to 10 years in duration (non-standard)
Bonds issued by Multilateral Development Banks	x		
Collective Investment Schemes	x		
Covered Bonds	x		
Real Estate Investment Trusts	x		
Repos (repurchase agreement)	x		

*Up to 12 months

Cabinet - Wednesday 15 November 2023

Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Recommendation of the Leader of the Council

1. That the decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers, as detailed in paragraph 3 below, be noted.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services

Reasons for Recommendations

2. To inform Cabinet of recent decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers.

Background

3. Cabinet are requested to note the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	In approving the name change and rebranding for the existing eleven Children's Centres in Staffordshire and two additional county council buildings, Families First at Faraday Road in Stafford, and Families First at Basin Lane in Tamworth into Family Hubs

List of Background Papers:

Cabinet Member Delegated Decision No. 566

Contact Details

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Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 13 December 2023 - 17 April 2024

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions is prepared on a monthly basis and published at least 28 days before the start of the period covered. Key Decisions are defined as those Executive decisions which are likely:

- a. to result in the County Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b. to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the County's area.

The Forward Plan will contain **all** matters which the Leader of the Council has reason to believe will be the subject of a Key Decision to be taken by the Cabinet. It may also include decisions that are not key decisions but are intended to be determined by the Cabinet. Part of the Cabinet meetings listed in this Forward Plan may be held in private where a report for the meeting contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If you would like to make representations about any particular decision to be conducted in private then please email: michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk. Such representations must be received in advance 6 clear working days before the date on which the decision is scheduled to be taken.

The Membership of the Cabinet consists of:

Leader of the County Council – Alan White
 Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills – Philip White
 Cabinet Member for Health and Care – Julia Jessel
 Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change – Simon Tagg
 Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters – Mark Deaville
 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport – David Williams
 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources – Ian Parry
 Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture – Victoria Wilson
 Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Mark Sutton
 Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) – Jonathan Price
 Cabinet Support Member for Highways – Robert Pritchard
 Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Integrated Care – Paul Northcott

A copy of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions may be inspected, free of charge, at the Member and Democratic Services office, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, during normal office hours Monday to Friday. A copy of the notice will also be available on Staffordshire County Council's Website at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/>.

Documents submitted for decision will be a formal report which will be available on the County Council's website at least 5 clear working days before the date the decision is to be made, unless that report is subject to any prohibition or restriction on its disclosure. Other relevant background documents used in compiling the report will also be made available in the same way unless they are subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure. Minutes of Cabinet meetings will be published within three working days and will be subject to call-in. The call-in period lasts for three working days. If the decision is not called-in it will be implemented on the fourth working day. Special urgency items are exempt from call-in.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 13 December 2023 - 17 April 2024

Note:

1. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions sets out all Key Decisions intended to be made by Cabinet during the above period.
2. The Cabinet date can be provisional and items may move/roll forward to another meeting date but this will be monitored.
3. Items should remain on the Notice until a decision is made by Cabinet or is formally removed.
4. Where there is an intention to make a decision in private the exemption paragraph relied upon will be included within this notice

Predicted Date of Decision	Public or Private Decision	Title and Description	Consultation	Contact Officer
13 December 2023	Public	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry)	In addition to the general budget consultation, any specific consultation, if appropriate, will be determined by the nature of any issues raised in the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Rachel Spain (Tel: 01785 854455) Service Area: Finance
		To update Cabinet on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2024 to 2029.		
13 December 2023	Public	Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024-2029 Cabinet Member for Health and Care (Julia Jessel)	We have engaged with a range of partners including a citizen survey, focus groups, care providers, MPFT, carers groups, voluntary sector	Andrew Jepps (Tel: 01785 278557) Service Area: Health and Care
		Older People Commissioning Strategy - Healthy aging and support for Older People in Staffordshire		

13 December 2023	Private	Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)	n/a	Natasha Moody (Tel: 07976 191079) Service Area: Wellbeing & Partnerships
		Recommendations regarding the Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service from 1st April 2024		
13 December 2023	Private	Drug and Alcohol Services Cabinet Member for Health and Care (Julia Jessel)	Various	Anthony Bullock (Tel: 01785 276649) Service Area: Public Health and Prevention
		Contract considerations		
17 January 2024	Public	Provision of Services for Children and Young People Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)	none currently	Natasha Moody (Tel: 07976 191079) Service Area: Placement Service - Wellbeing and Partnerships
		The West Midlands Framework is for residential children's homes for children and young people for access to local authorities and trusts in the West Midlands. It is to provide a safe, stable and nurturing homes for vulnerable children that require residential care.		
17 January 2024	Public	Residential Overnight Education Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton), Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) (Jonathan Price)	All 5 schools delivering the provision, all children/young people affected by any decision, staff at all schools and parent/carers of CYP who access this provision.	Neelam Bhardwaja (Tel: 01785 277041) Service Area: Education and Children's Social Care
		Future service delivery options for Residential Overnight Education to be considered.		
17 January	Public	Service Provision of Temporary and Interim Human	Not Applicable	Sarah Getley

2024		Resources Leader of the Council (Alan White)		(Tel: 01785 854265) Service Area: People Services
		Staffordshire County Council (SCC) is undertaking the re-procurement of a service for the provision of temporary and interim human resources. Temporary staffing forms a valuable, highly flexible key resource to assist the Council in delivering services. It is anticipated that the value of this procurement may exceed £34M over the proposed term of the contract.		
17 January 2024	Private	Unregulated Placements Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)	n/a	Nisha Gupta (Tel: 07890 402088) Service Area: Children and Families
		Update on the young people in unregulated placements		
24 January 2024	Public	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry)	Consultation as appropriate for each service area. Overall Community Impact Assessment included within report.	Rachel Spain (Tel: 01785 854455) Service Area: All
		To update Cabinet with the draft budget for 2024/25, the proposed council tax and the MTFs for 2024-2029.		
21 February 2024	Public	Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry), Leader of the Council (Alan White)	n/a	Rachel Spain, Wendy Tompson (Tel: 01785 854455, Tel: 01785 854267) Service Area: Strategy Team and Finance
		This quarterly Integrated Performance Report provides an overview of Staffordshire County Council's progress and performance in delivering against our Strategic Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan, and our financial position in relation to our Medium Term Financial Strategy.		
21 February 2024	Public	Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion - progress update Leader of the Council (Alan White)	None	Sarah Getley (Tel: 01785 854265) Service Area:
		To provide an update on the Council's approach to Equalities,		

		Diversity & Inclusion and progress over the past 12 months.		People Services
20 March 2024	Private	Burton Regeneration Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture (Victoria Wilson)	N/A at this stage	Ian Turner (Tel: 01785 277228) Service Area: Communities and culture
		Item relating to the Burton Regeneration works.		
20 March 2024	Public	Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25 Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) (Jonathan Price)	None at this stage	Ian Turner (Tel: 01785 277228) Service Area: Strategic Property
		The Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 2025 consists of SCC's Statement of Priorities for its schools and associated appendices for major projects and maintenance projects. Programme to be approved by Cabinet for commencement/ completion in 2024/ 2025.		
17 April 2024	Public	Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)	Not sure yet	Natasha Moody (Tel: 07976 191079) Service Area: Families and Communities Commissioning Team
		The options paper will outline the current children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service in Staffordshire and provide potential options for the future of a children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service, along with a preferred option / recommendation.		
17 April 2024	Private	Unregulated Placement Update Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)	n/a	Nisha Gupta (Tel: 07890 402088) Service Area: Children and Families
		Update on the young people in unregulated placements		

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of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972

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