

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 13 December 2023

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Alan White (Chairman
Julia Jessel	Philip White
Jonathan Price	David Williams
Mark Sutton	Victoria Wilson
Simon Tagg	

Cabinet Support Members in attendance: Paul Northcott and Robert Pritchard.

Apologies: Ian Parry

Part One

60. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

61. Decision notice of the meeting held on 15 November 2023

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 be approved.

62. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the Network North transport conference in Birmingham where local authority partners spoke with “one voice” on the major benefits improvements to the A50/A500 corridor would bring (which has now been included in the projects listed under the Network North proposals); the gritting crews working tirelessly to keep Staffordshire on the move during the recent adverse weather; the news that many local councils were facing increased pressure and significant financial challenges and, despite these challenges, this Authority’s proposals to deliver a balanced budget and still invest in its key priorities; the “Here to Help” pages on the council website which provides support and advice on where to turn for those in need of help; the free school holiday activities available to eligible families; the Council teaming up with Staffordshire Samaritans to help those who struggle with their mental health over the festive period and the proposal to light the Shire Hall green and encouraging people to safely put green lights in their windows on Friday, 22 December (the longest night of the year); be noted.

The Leader also extended his thanks to all his county council colleagues, partners and residents who work tirelessly to support people and businesses across the county 365 days a year and wished them a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

63. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Update

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

- This month saw an increase of 340 claimants in Staffordshire. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 15,030 or 2.8% of the working age population. The claimant count rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands and is far lower than the average for the region of 4.9%, and lower than the average for England of 3.8%. We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our partnership working and dedicated Jobs Brokerage service.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 60 claimants to a total of 2,915 young people. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit now stands at 4.7%. This is lower than the national rate of 5.1% and far lower than the regional rate of 6.9%. This further increase in the youth claimant count highlights the importance of continuing to engage with our younger residents and supporting them to find employment or continue in education and training.
- A few weeks ago, we learnt of the successful bid for £20m of Levelling Up Funding for parts of the Stafford Station Gateway project. Added to the previously successful bids, this now means that over £70m has been secured by the Staffordshire local authorities for the regeneration of our town centres from the Levelling Up Fund alone, with over £220 million national funding secured in total which the County Council continues to work proactively with our District and Borough Council partners to deliver. Stafford Station Gateway is of course an important piece of the town’s ongoing revitalisation which includes the County Council’s Eastgate regeneration plans and the Borough Council’s Future High Street programme.
- i54 South Staffordshire is one of flagship employment sites and the County Council, working with South Staffordshire Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council, have been working together

to unlock the western extension to the site. Back in the summer it was announced that Fortune Brands would be building a 270,000 sq ft manufacturing centre of excellence on the western extension to support the group's luxury ceramics and brassware brands within the kitchen and bathroom industry. This development is expected to be completed shortly with recruitment for the 300 expected jobs having recently begun.

- The visitor economy is one of Staffordshire's key strengths and we continue to support the development of this vital part of the county's economy. Back in June I updated Cabinet on our efforts to secure a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent as part of VisitEngland's national reform of Destination Management Organisations. This programme is expected to create around 40 strategic partnerships across the country which will work in collaboration locally, regionally and nationally on shared priorities and targets to support and grow the visitor economy. Importantly, the LVEP has the potential to bring significant benefits to the county, including through access to support and future funding programmes. We have recently received the news that our efforts to secure a LVEP have been successful. Over the coming months we'll be undertaking a substantial amount of work to establish the LVEP and ensuring that it is a success.
- Linked to this and as we are now in the run up to Christmas, I finally need to mention our marketing campaign to highlight the many events that are taking place across the county for people to enjoy. Many of these have been taking place over the last few weeks, although there are still plenty of activities and events planned and I'd therefore encourage everybody to fully enjoy the festivities and have a very happy Christmas.

64. Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024-2029



"We want to ensure that older people in our county are able to live healthy and well, and maintain their independence for as long as they can.

Our new Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy, which has been produced with local organisations, older people and their carers, aims to help everyone live independently at home for as long as possible.

It will also ensure that, as and when they do require support, they are able to access the best

	support available to meet their needs.”
	Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the proposed Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024-2029.

Decision – That the proposed Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024-29 be approved.

65. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029

	<p>“Next year we will spend millions of pounds in Staffordshire: backing communities, supporting residents, delivering infrastructure and investing in business.</p> <p>At a time when two-thirds of our budget is allocated to the provision of care and helping those who need a hand, I am proud that this council is also able to simultaneously sow the seeds for the future so that Staffordshire remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.”</p> <p>Alan White, Leader of the Council</p>
	<p>“Despite rising costs and increasing demand for services putting all councils under financial pressure, a combination of forward-thinking, planned service reform and attention to detail means we continue to invest in services while delivering a balanced budget.</p> <p>Like everyone, we have to make ends meet and we will work with partners to make the most of every pound we spend on behalf of our communities.”</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p>

Reasons for the Decision – To update Cabinet on the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2024 to 2029.

Decision – (a) That the updates to the financial plans, as set out in the report, including the potential use of reserves to balance the MTFs period and risks associated with that, be noted.

(b) That the new savings as well as the commitment to continue to deliver the previously approved cost reductions, as set out in Appendices 2a – 2e to the report, be endorsed.

(c) That a further report be received in January to recommend a Revenue Budget, MTFS and Council Tax to full council in February.

(d) That the Corporate Review Committee be asked to scrutinise the proposed pressures and cost reduction options against the principles of a good and balanced budget.

66. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

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

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	(i) In approving the extension of contract IA1632 "Improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people in Staffordshire", as per the Contract Particulars, for 12 months from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (final year). The contract will end 31 March 2025. (ii) In approving the utilisation of funding from SCC public health ring fenced reserves to meet inflationary pressures and maintain service levels in the final year of the contract (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025).

67. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Subject Matter	Contact
Homes for Children in Our Care	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Residential Overnight Education	Name: Neelam Bhardwaja Tel: (01785) 277041
Service Provision of Temporary and Interim Human Resources	Name: Sarah Getley Tel: (01785) 854265
Here to Help – Progress Update	Name: Catherine Mann Tel: (01785) 278320
Carbon Sequestration and Woodland Creation	Name: Deborah Breedon Tel: (01785) 276061
Natural Environment Strategy	Name: Catherine Mann Tel: (01785) 278320

Unregulated Placements	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Drug and Alcohol Services	Name: Claire McIver Tel: 07929 756384
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Apprenticeship Levy	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion - progress update	Name: Sarah Getley Tel: (01785) 854265
Lighting and ITS energy contract procurement proposal	Name: James Bailey Tel: (01785) 276591
Civil Contingencies Policy & Business Continuity Management Policy	Name: Tracy Thorley Tel: (01785) 276337
Joint Enterprise Legacy Committee	Name: Anthony Hodge Tel: (01785) 277204
Burton Regeneration	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Section 75 Agreement for the provision of Adult Social Care Assessment and Case Management	Name: Amanda Stringer Tel: (01785) 895170
Recommissioning of Residential and Nursing Care Homes	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Unregulated Placement Update	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088

68. 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

69. Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service (Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the arrangements for the future

provision of the Families Health and Well-being Service.

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

70. Drug and Alcohol Partnership Proposal

(Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the arrangement for the future provision of drug and alcohol treatment services in Staffordshire.

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

Alan White
Leader of the Council