

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday 13 December 2023

**14:00**

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  
5 December 2023

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### **Agenda**

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of meeting held on 22 November 2023** (Pages 5 - 8)
4. **Natural Environment Strategy** (Pages 9 - 38)  
Report of Cabinet Member for Environment  
Infrastructure and Climate Change
5. **Staffordshire County Council's Economic Strategy – Delivery Update** (Pages 39 - 56)  
Report of Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for  
Economy and Skills
6. **Review of Schools Performance** (Pages 57 - 62)  
Report of Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)
7. **Work Programme** (Pages 63 - 86)
8. **Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 11 January 2024 at 2.00 pm, County Buildings, Stafford**

## 9. 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 the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

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### Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

Nil.

<b>Membership</b>	
Charlotte Atkins	Peter Kruskonjic (Vice-Chair (Overview))
Tina Clements (Chair)	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Hannah Gallimore	David Smith
Philippa Haden	Samantha Thompson
Philip Hudson	Ross Ward (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))
Graham Hutton	Bernard Williams

## Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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**Minutes of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 22 November 2023**

Present: Tina Clements (Chair)

<b>Attendance</b>	
Philippa Haden	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Philip Hudson	David Smith
Graham Hutton	Samantha Thompson
Peter Kruskonjic (Vice-Chair (Overview))	

**Also in attendance:** Darryl Eyers, Jonathan Lindop and Victoria Wilson

**Apologies:** Charlotte Atkins, Hannah Gallimore and Bernard Williams

**Part One**

**33. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

**34. Minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2023**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**35. Staffordshire History Centre Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture updating them on progress with regard to the development of the Staffordshire History Centre (schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

Staffordshire County Council and William Salt Library had been working in partnership since 2025 to create and deliver the Staffordshire History Centre project. The Project, which was part funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, envisaged a new facility located on Eastgate Street, Stafford. The Centre was to become a key part of the County’s cultural and heritage visitor offer, bringing three collections together for the first time and delivering a four-year programme of activities. It was anticipated that it would be opened to the public in Autumn 2024.

During the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued, Members gave detailed scrutiny to the progress made in the Project, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising areas of concern as necessary including:-

(i) the efforts being made to reach-out to local communities and new people who might not have previously engaged with the Arts and Archives service; (ii) the specific measures planned to mark the opening of the Centre including eg siting of a time capsule; (iii) the importance of having a co-ordinated communications strategy which included joint working with other local and national bodies eg the National Trust.

In conclusion Members were pleased with the progress which had been made to date and welcomed the key findings of the independent Evaluation report. They thanked the Cabinet Member and her Team for the opportunity to visit the construction site of the Centre prior to the meeting and agreed that its completion would be a significant addition to Destination Staffordshire.

In reply, the Cabinet Member undertook to provide Members with copies of:- (i) Archive and Heritage Service Newsletters; (ii) Staffordshire History Centre Project blogs and (iii) Lockdown Tour of the William Salt Library Revisited – video to keep them informed and help them in their role championing Staffordshire.

**RESOLVED** – (i) That the report be received and noted.

(ii) That the key findings of the Independent Evaluation Report on the Staffordshire History Centre Capital Works progress be welcomed.

(iii) That consideration be given to the citing of a Time Capsule at the Staffordshire History Centre, as part of the celebrations to mark its opening in 2024.

### **36. Staffordshire Libraries and Arts Service Performance 2022-2023**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture regarding performance of the Staffordshire Libraries and Arts Service during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

Members heard that during the period, efforts had been focused on recovering the physical service offer following reduced provision during the Covid-19 pandemic. They noted that library performance had improved post pandemic with significant increases in visits by the public, book issues, and new members joining being achieved. In addition, the service had actively supported the County Council's strategic priorities of supporting Staffordshire's economy; tackling climate change and; encouraging good health and wellbeing.

Keeping people and communities connected had been an important part of the Service's work during the Pandemic. The lessons learned in providing

digital services had helped inform the development of a hybrid offer in order to reach-out to new and existing clients. Notwithstanding this, there had been continued development of the Services' estate in particular the libraries located at Burton, Leek, Tamworth and Womborne.

During the discussion which ensued, Members gave detailed scrutiny to the work and performance of the Service, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising issues of concern as necessary, including:- (i) the need for libraries to share best practice having regard to the variation in service provision noted by Members around the County; (ii) the need to include Community Libraries in some of the future initiatives being promoted at County managed facilities eg Summer Reading Challenge and; (iii) the need to make Staffordshire's voice heard during the review being undertaken by Baroness Elizabeth Sanderson of Welton.

In conclusion, Members were encouraged by news of the significant post pandemic recovery and highlighted the valuable contribution made by the Service in achieving the County Council's Strategic outcomes and priorities. They noted the diversity of services on offer at Staffordshire Libraries and contrasted them with other Shire Authorities whose provision was less comprehensive.

In reply to a request by Members, the Cabinet Member undertook to provide them with a short handout/briefing note listing the various services and initiatives on offer at Staffordshire Libraries and highlighting some of the successes, for dissemination to residents in their Divisions, as necessary.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the overall direction of travel for the Staffordshire's Libraries and Arts Service, as set out in the report, be supported.

(c) That the performance of the Service continue to be monitored and further scrutiny be undertaken at the appropriate time, as necessary.

### **37. Work Programme**

Members noted the long list of items scheduled for their December 2023 and March 2024 meetings (five and nine items respectively).

The Chairman said that she would seek further clarification of the required timeframes for Scrutiny from the relevant Cabinet Members with a view to having a more manageable Work Programme and report back to the Committee, as necessary.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the above, the updated Work Programme (schedule 3 to the signed minutes) be approved.

**38. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 2.00 pm, County Buildings, Stafford**

**RESOLVED** – That the date, time and venue of the next meeting be noted.

**Chair**



## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 13 December 2023**

### **Natural Environment Strategy**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers and provides comments on the draft Natural Environment Strategy to support its consideration by Cabinet.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

### **Report of Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change**

#### **Summary**

#### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. We value the natural environment and recognise the vital role it plays in Staffordshire: environmentally, socially, economically, and for our health and wellbeing – we want Staffordshire to continue to be a great place to live.
2. The Environment Act 2021 brought in new duties and requirements for local authorities in relation to biodiversity and the natural environment, including a strengthened duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain through the planning system, and the requirement to report on biodiversity delivery.
3. A Natural Environment Strategy has been developed to set out how the Council will deliver its biodiversity requirements and enhance the natural environment.
4. The Committee is requested to consider the draft strategy and provide comments. The Committee's comments will be reported to Cabinet at their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 for them to take into account in their consideration of this matter.

## Report

### Background

5. In 2018 Government launched its 25-year Environment Plan to help the natural world regain and retain good health. 2023 saw the first 5-year review of the plan, resulting in a refreshed Environmental Improvement Plan. This also reflects global commitments made at the UN Nature Summit COP15.
6. Key Government commitments are to:
  - a. halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.
  - b. protect 30% of UK land for biodiversity by 2030.
  - c. increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030, surpassing 2022 levels by 2042.
  - d. restore or create at least 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife rich habitats by 2042.
  - e. reduce the risk of species extinction by 2042.
  - f. restore 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term by 2042.
7. The Environment Act 2021 brought in new duties and requirements to support the ambitions of the 25-year plan. In relation to biodiversity this includes:
  - a. Developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies
  - b. A strengthened biodiversity duty
  - c. Mandatory minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through the planning system
  - d. A requirement for local authorities to produce a report on their action for biodiversity.
8. As part of the strengthened biodiversity duty, public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, agree policies based on their consideration and act to deliver them. Reports should then be published outlining progress and further actions every five years (or more frequently as required) with the end date of the first reporting period no later than 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.
9. A Natural Environment Strategy (see appendix 1) has been developed with input from officers across the authority. The strategy takes into account our consideration of our duty and the associated Defra guidance, the national targets agreed by Government, and our existing nature recovery declaration, agreed at full council in February 2022. It reflects

continued efforts to manage protected sites in our ownership, our work to support rare and endangered species and the role we can play as champions for nature with our partners and communities.

10. The strategy sets out a broad mission statement and ten high level objectives that Staffordshire County Council will take to conserve and enhance biodiversity and our wider natural environment. These are:

a. **Mission Statement** - *We will directly support nature recovery in Staffordshire, through targeted action across our land and functions, and as a champion for activity across the county.*

b. **To achieve this, we will:**

- i. Develop and deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
- ii. Ensure coordinated delivery of biodiversity net gain.
- iii. Ensure our policies, strategies and operations consider biodiversity enhancement and reduce risks to the environment.
- iv. Ensure all designated sites in our ownership have management measures in place to achieve favourable condition by 2042.
- v. Manage and protect 30% of our land (excluding highways) for biodiversity by 2030.
- vi. Develop a wildlife-friendly management approach to roadside verges.
- vii. Develop a suite of species recovery measures for our land.
- viii. Use nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change wherever possible, to maximise benefits to both wildlife and climate.
- ix. Enhance and restore landscape character and quality and support landscape-scale nature recovery.
- x. Raise awareness and support the active involvement of communities in caring for our natural environment.

11. The strategy includes actions and milestones to achieve these objectives. The strategy will be reviewed in late 2025 and a progress report and refreshed strategy will be produced by January 2026 to comply with Environment Act requirements. This review will also align the strategy with the local nature recovery strategy, which will provide a framework for nature across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and is due to be produced by March 2025.

12. The draft strategy will be considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The Cabinet report will include measurable KPIs; will outline the level of environmental investment within the county and will demonstrate how

the Natural Environment Strategy supports the County Council's approach to land management.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

13. The Natural Environment Strategy will support delivery of the Council's second strategic priority - *Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable.*

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

14. N/A

### **Community Impact**

15. TBC

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Draft Natural Environment Strategy  
Appendix 2 – Community Impact Assessment

### **Contact Details**

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# **Enhancing Nature**

## **Staffordshire County Council’s Natural Environment Strategy**

### **What is this strategy for?**

Our natural environment strategy sets out how we, Staffordshire County Council, will conserve and enhance biodiversity and the wider natural environment on our land and through our functions.

We value the natural environment and recognise the vital role it plays in Staffordshire: environmentally, socially, economically and for our health and wellbeing. We also understand the pressures facing our natural environment, and the need to take action now to help nature recover.

We have declared a climate change emergency and made a nature recovery declaration through our Full Council. This strategy sets out how we will care for nature. It includes action we will take over the coming years. In late 2025, we will report on progress and set out an updated strategy.

### **Why do we need this strategy?**

Across the world, nature is in crisis. One million species are threatened with extinction, many within decades. Our planet is experiencing the largest loss of life since the dinosaurs and it is largely the result of human activity.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Wildlife in England has declined in abundance by 32% on average since 1970 and 13% of species in England are threatened with extinction.

A suite of commitments have been made by Government, some of which are international commitments made through the COP15 Biodiversity Agreement:

By 2030, the government has committed to:

- halt the decline in species abundance
- protect 30% of UK land

By 2042, the government has committed to:

- increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030, surpassing 2022 levels
- restore or create at least 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife rich habitats
- reduce the risk of species extinction
- restore 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term

The Environment Act 2021 provides some of the legal mechanisms to support nature recovery in England. It includes the development of local nature recovery strategies, a strengthened biodiversity duty for public bodies and the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain through the planning process.

Staffordshire is a beautiful rural county but, like much of the UK, nature is under pressure here too. In 2022 Staffordshire County Council made a nature recovery declaration, recognising the need to take action for wildlife. This strategy sets out the actions we will take to contribute to nature recovery through our own activities. This will form part of wider efforts across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, which will be identified through the local nature recovery strategy.

### **Helping nature helps us**

By helping nature, we are also helping ourselves. Nature provides important goods and services that support our wellbeing and quality of life. From the insects that pollinate our food crops, to trees storing carbon, nature is essential to us.

*Insert diagram of ecosystem services*

## **Mission Statement**

*We will directly support nature recovery in Staffordshire, through targeted action across our land and functions, and as a champion for activity across the county.*

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- 1. Develop and deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent*
- 2. Ensure coordinated delivery of biodiversity net gain.*
- 3. Ensure our policies, strategies and operations consider biodiversity enhancement and reduce risks to the environment.*
- 4. Ensure all designated sites in our ownership have management measures in place to achieve favourable condition by 2042.*
- 5. Manage and protect 30% of our land (excluding highways) for biodiversity by 2030.*
- 6. Develop a wildlife-friendly management approach to roadside verges.*
- 7. Develop a suite of species recovery measures for our land.*
- 8. Use nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change wherever possible, to maximise benefits to both wildlife and climate.*
- 9. Enhance and restore landscape character and quality and support landscape-scale nature recovery.*
- 10. Raise awareness and support the active involvement of communities in caring for our natural environment.*

## **1. Develop and deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent**

Staffordshire County Council has been appointed as the responsible authority under the Environment Act to work with partners to coordinate development of a local nature recovery strategy (LNRS) for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The LNRS will identify the most important areas, opportunities, and priorities for wildlife.

### **Actions**

- 1.1 Working with partners, lead the development and publication of the LNRS
- 1.2 Coordinate collaborative delivery and monitoring of the LNRS
- 1.3 Review and republish our natural environment strategy to ensure it supports delivery of the LNRS.

## **2. Ensure coordinated delivery of biodiversity net gain.**

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) will be a legal requirement for most development from 2024. This will include our own county council developments which will need to demonstrate at least 10% gain in terms of area habitat (e.g. grassland, woodland), hedges and watercourses where these are affected.

We will also have a responsibility for checking, monitoring and recording all BNG connected with planning applications for which we are the planning authority, and we will report our progress on this.

### **Actions**

- 2.1 Ensure effective delivery mechanisms are in place to deliver BNG through the planning process.
- 2.2 Identify county council land that could support BNG delivery.
- 2.3 Work collaboratively with local authority partners, landowners and environmental bodies to maximise the benefits of BNG for nature recovery.

## **3. Ensure our policies, strategies and operations consider biodiversity enhancement and reduce risks to the environment.**

We undertake many different operations that impact on the environment for example management of highways, local flood risk and minerals and waste planning. We need to review activities to ensure they meet our



strengthened duty to enhance biodiversity and minimise wider environmental impacts.

This includes when we are making decisions and developing strategies and plans, but also in our day-to-day activities.

## **Actions**

- 3.1 Ensure County Council decisions take account of biodiversity conservation and enhancement and ensure that staff receive appropriate induction and training.
- 3.2 Consider biodiversity enhancement through all policy and strategy development for example, Better Health Staffordshire, Local Transport Plan, Flood Risk Strategy, Minerals and Waste Local Plans.
- 3.3 All council contracts and supplies to be peat-free wherever possible.
- 3.4 All council contracts and supplies to reduce pesticides wherever possible.
- 3.5 Promote positive behaviours and prohibit the use of environmentally harmful materials and activities on county council land, such as balloon launches, Chinese lanterns, disposable BBQs, other non-biodegradable materials.
- 3.6 All county council activities to follow good practice for biosecurity for example when working in and adjacent to water, or when receiving delivery of imported plants and construction materials.

**Case Study** Climate change means there is an increasing risk of wildfires, but also accidental fires from barbeques and lanterns can be avoided.

### **Case Study**

White-clawed crayfish are threatened by crayfish plague which can be carried on equipment, pets and clothing. Biosecurity measures 'check, clean, dry' include checking equipment over for any animals that may be 'hitching a lift', drying and cleaning kit between sites and use of disinfectant.

#### **4. Ensure all designated sites in our ownership have management measures in place to achieve favourable condition by 2042.**

The network of protected sites across the country provides vital space for nature. There is a national target to make sure that 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are in 'favourable condition' by 2042.

We have 1404 hectares (ha) of land designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (nationally important) at Cannock Chase and Chasewater Country Parks, of which 1077 ha of Cannock Chase is also designated as Special Area of Conservation (internationally important). Currently 90% of our SSSI land is improving in condition and working towards favourable status. There are studies under way to investigate why some areas are not in recovering condition.

We also have 297 ha designated land in around 20 Local Wildlife Sites, which are of county level importance. These sites require survey and a review of management.

Some of our protected sites include Scheduled Monuments and other important historic features, such as the remains of two Great War training camps on Cannock Chase. Managing for nature and managing historic features often go hand in hand, and conserving and enhancing the historic environment can play a key role in delivering sustainable nature recovery.

#### **Actions**

4.1 Continue delivery of our management schemes for Sites of Special Scientific Interest to reach favourable condition and undertake regular monitoring.

4.2 Establish a programme of surveys of Local Wildlife Sites in council ownership and update management briefs.

4.3 Embed best practice guidance on the historic environment when deciding management approaches for nature.

#### **Case Study**

Grazing at Chasewater - grazing of heathlands and other habitats is a good way of managing land. Grazing animals create better conditions for wildlife by recreating natural processes.

#### **Case Study**

Specialist equipment cutting heather on Cannock Chase. This low-impact mower does not damage historic features such as the remains of the Great War Training Camps.

## **5. Manage and protect 30% of our land (excluding highways) for biodiversity by 2030.**

There is a national target, and global commitment, to have 30% of land protected for biodiversity by 2030. To make a meaningful contribution to this target, ideally land should both have some form of protection and be in positive management so that it is either in, or moving towards, good condition for wildlife.

While guidance is awaited on what will count towards the national target, we estimate that around 22% of our land (excluding highways) may be relevant as it is protected, in management schemes and moving towards good condition for wildlife. Our priority is to continue to manage these sites towards good condition.

We will also explore the potential to increase council land protected and managed for biodiversity, which could potentially include land secured for biodiversity net gain, improved management of local wildlife sites, and land in higher tier agri-environment schemes. We will also undertake work to assess and understand the scale of opportunity to enhance biodiversity on land associated with highways.

### **Actions**

5.1 Ensure management measures and monitoring regimes are in place on all protected sites.

5.2 Identify further opportunities to protect our land for biodiversity including land associated with highways.

5.3 Encourage uptake of schemes that support biodiversity on county leased land.

### **Case Study**

Meadows and other habitats at Redhill Business Park meet criteria for designation as Local Wildlife Site only ten years after creation.

## **6. Develop a wildlife-friendly management approach to roadside verges by April 2025.**

Staffordshire County Council is the highways authority responsible for managing roads and rights of way across the county, excluding motorways and trunk roads. Roadside verges can provide important

corridors for wildlife movement, and sources of food and shelter for pollinating insects and other species. In Staffordshire some verges, particularly in East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Staffordshire Moorlands have been designated as Local Wildlife Sites.

There are opportunities to improve our verges for wildlife with careful management. In urban areas, gaining community support and understanding for this approach will be important for success.

## **Actions**

6.1 Survey road verges and identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement where compatible with safety.

6.2 Review management of verges to promote biodiversity and increase carbon capture where appropriate.

6.3 Raise awareness of the importance of verges for wildlife.

## **7 Develop a suite of species recovery measures for our land by April 2025.**

Wildlife in England has declined in abundance by 32% on average since 1970, and 13% of assessed species in England are threatened with extinction. 64% of flowering plant species assessed in England have seen decreases in their distributions. The UK holds key populations of some species which are rare elsewhere in the world.

We are already involved in species recovery work on country parks and other landholdings. For example, we are involved in projects to restore and conserve native crayfish, adder, nightjar and rare insects at Cannock Chase. On our country parks and business parks we are championing work to support amphibians such as great crested newts, and we are also adopting measures to support wildlife in our properties, such as bird and bat boxes.

Usually, good habitat management will ensure that species thrive, but some species need extra help. The local nature recovery strategy will develop a list of key species for the county. We will cross check that list against our land and include relevant species in management plans for all sites.

Invasive species and diseases are an increasing threat to wildlife. Some invasive species have been present for many years and are showing a gradual increase where not controlled (such as Himalayan balsam) but others seem to be increasing as a result of climate change (for example warmer, wetter conditions favour fungal diseases such as Phytophthora

found on bilberry). Regular monitoring of habitats is the best way to identify new cases and ensure action is taken early on.

### **Actions**

- 7.1 Retrofit measures for species in existing county council properties and include in all new county council development. Species measures to include where appropriate hedgehog gaps under fences, bird and bat boxes, invertebrate features and pollinator planting.
- 7.2 Continue to create special features for heathland and woodland invertebrates at Chasewater and Cannock Chase.
- 7.3 Continue to monitor and support bat populations on our country parks.
- 7.4 Support adder survey and modelling work for Cannock Chase and the wider county, developing a plan for the species on our land by end 2025.
- 7.5 Continue to support the creation and surveying of ark sites for native crayfish.
- 7.6 Building on the local nature recovery strategy, develop a species action plan for all county council land by end 2025.
- 7.7 Undertake regular monitoring of key habitats to check for invasive species and diseases and undertake action to tackle as appropriate.
- 7.8 Continue to collaborate with tenant farmers on the County Farms' estate to enhance habitat provision and biodiversity and the adoption of environmental land management schemes.

#### **Case Study**

New Moorlands Sensory Garden with planting suitable for pollinators – this was previously just concrete with a small lawn.

#### **Case study**

At Cannock Chase, we are working in partnership with expert advice from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust on a programme of habitat creation for crayfish, other rare invertebrates, and small fish species.

Use of brushwood bundles  
Trees felled to create small pools and backwaters

#### **Case study**

A suite of recent measures for biodiversity at school sites

St Leonards School, Stafford

- 'Woodland walk' with peripheral ground left wild to attract wildlife.
- Trees removed have been chopped up and left to rot in clusters (bug hotels) to attract creatures.
- Hedge planting.

Paulet High School, Burton

- Tree planting and naturalised grassland

## **8 Use nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change wherever possible, to maximise benefits to both wildlife and climate.**

Climate change is apparent in the increasing stormy weather events with high rainfall and winds, plus hotter summers. We are noticing more flooding and natural flood management can help with this. Good habitat management such as grazing, and bracken control will help prevent wildfires. Many species will struggle to adapt, so providing bigger, more joined up habitats will help them develop stronger populations and help them move to find suitable conditions. We will also need to consider which species will best resist climate change when we plant new areas.

Woodland is an important habitat, supporting many species, but trees can also deliver numerous wider benefits such as carbon storage, buffering pollution, flood protection and cooling. There is a national target to increase woodland cover in England to 16.5% by the end of 2050 and to increase tree cover outside of woodlands.

The local nature recovery strategy will identify priority areas for woodland expansion to link and connect wooded habitats. We are also exploring how we can use nature-based solutions such as tree planting to achieve our net zero carbon target by 2050. Within our landholding we have ancient woodland and veteran trees which are irreplaceable habitats that need particular care. We also have tree diseases such as ash dieback on our land, and this will affect our trees and woodlands over coming years.

### **Actions**

- 8.1 Identify nature-based solutions as part of our climate change adaptation action plan.
- 8.2 Develop a plan by April 2025 for expansion of woodland and tree cover to help achieve net zero, maximising biodiversity and other environmental benefits, ensuring that we follow the principle of 'right tree, right place, right purpose'.

### **Case Study**

Woodland planting at Kingswood Lakeside, Cannock was completed in 2008. It provides attractive screening of development, amenity for local residents and employees, and habitats for wildlife. The edges of blocks of woodland were designed at different angles to maximise the number of micro-climates around the edges of the woodland. Designed woodland connects with areas of existing woodland off site, creating corridors to aid in the movement of wildlife. Open areas in between the blocks of woodland allow for the creation of a network of footpaths.

### **Case Study**

Flood storage swale at St Leonard's Schol, Stafford, which will add water storage volume at key times which will also attract wildlife. Fencing is for safety of young children.

## **9. Enhance and restore landscape character and quality and support landscape-scale nature recovery.**

Within Staffordshire there are two nationally important protected landscapes, the Peak District National Park and Cannock National Landscape. The National Forest also extends into Staffordshire and is an important area of landscape restoration. On a smaller scale, fifteen Registered Parks and Gardens are also nationally protected. Staffordshire remains largely a rural county with a diverse character. Many areas have a high landscape quality and sensitivity.

Staffordshire's historic landscapes are rich in cultural heritage. The diversity of our landscapes greatly contributes to our sense of place and local identity, and the historic environment further reinforces the special character of our landscapes.

Working in partnership has enabled us to support the development and delivery of landscape-scale initiatives that enhance nature, landscape and our historic environment, working closely with local people. Recent examples include Transforming the Trent Valley, the South West Peak Project and working with partners in the Cannock Chase AONB and Special Area of Conservation Partnerships. There are ongoing projects and potential to develop further initiatives that deliver for nature at landscape-scale.

### **Actions**

- 9.1 Ensure County Council decisions take account of landscape conservation and enhancement and our duties for our protected landscapes.
- 9.2 Continue to host the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership and actively support the management and enhancement of our protected landscapes.
- 9.3 Support the development and delivery of landscape-scale initiatives in key areas as appropriate.
- 9.4 Promote hedgerow creation and restoration where appropriate, to restore and protect landscape-scale character and quality and contribute towards biodiversity net gain.

## **10 Champion biodiversity, raise awareness and support the active involvement of communities in caring for our natural environment.**

Nature underpins our quality of life. The health benefits of engaging in nature are well-understood, both for physical health and mental wellbeing. But while nature can look after us, we also need to care for it in return. Never has there been a more important time for us all to take action for nature.

We can all make a difference – by living more sustainably, reducing food waste, using water wisely, and reducing our carbon footprint. We can also get directly involved in supporting nature – by volunteering, taking part in wildlife surveys, supporting a wildlife charity and making our gardens and community spaces wildlife-friendly.

We will support our communities wherever possible to empower them to make a difference.

### **Actions**

- 10.1 Deliver awareness campaigns on ways people can support nature recovery.
- 10.2 Work with other bodies to support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- 10.3 Support volunteering activity on our countryside sites.
- 10.4 Offer support and signposting to nature connection through our network of Library Champions.



- 10.5 Develop a programme with family support teams, including walks, events and activities and link with our Holiday Activities and Food programme providers to explore opportunities to celebrate nature.
- 10.6 Continue to support forest school provision and other educational initiatives, exploring links to the new natural history GCSE.
- 10.7 Support delivery of the Better Health Staffordshire initiative across the county.

#### **Case Study**

Culture Nature, a project developed by Natural England and Libraries Connected has awarded Staffordshire Libraries and Arts Service funding to deliver Growing Connections. This project aims to promote mental health and wellbeing and encourage action for nature's recovery. It will connect arts and practical activities at Biddulph and Perton Libraries with the local environment, engaging difficult to reach groups and encouraging active involvement.

#### **Case study**

Recent give-aways of wildflower seeds and trees proved very popular and helped convey messages about the importance of pollinators and the value of trees.

#### **Case study**

Gardening for Better Health in Burton-on-Trent focuses on helping communities to grow food, with health and environmental benefits.

#### **Case study**

Move More Moorlands is an initiative to encourage more active lifestyles through a series of activities and engagement around our green spaces and countryside.

## Action plan

Action Ref.	Action	By when
<b>Objective 1 - Develop and deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent</b>		
1.1	Development and publication of the LNRS	April 2025
1.2	Coordinate collaborative delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	2023-2025
1.3	review and republish our natural environment strategy in line with LNRS	December 2025
<b>Objective 2 - Ensure coordinated delivery of biodiversity net gain.</b>		
2.1	Ensure effective delivery mechanisms are in place to deliver BNG through the planning process	
	2.1.1 Include BNG in pre-application guidance and advice	By end 2023
	2.1.2 Check, ratify and record BNG for planning applications	From January 2024 (large sites) and April 2024 for small sites
	2.1.3 Include BNG reporting in minerals and waste annual monitoring report and report on county developments	By end 2024
	2.1.4 Devise monitoring programme for all BNG 30-year plans	By end 2024
2.2	Identify county council land that could support BNG delivery	
	2.2.1 Complete a pilot study on countryside estate and on larger business parks	By end 2024
	2.2.2 Expand pilot work to include all SCC land	By end 2026
2.3	Work collaboratively with local authority partners, landowners and environmental bodies to maximise the benefits of BNG for nature recovery	
	2.3.1 Explore countywide system for promoting and monitoring BNG	By end 2024
<b>Objective 3 - Ensure our policies, strategies and operations consider biodiversity enhancement and reduce risks to the environment</b>		
3.1	Ensure County Council decisions take account of biodiversity conservation and enhancement and ensure that staff receive appropriate induction and training	Ongoing
3.2	Consider biodiversity enhancement through all policy and strategy development for example, Better Health Staffordshire, Local Transport Plan, Flood Risk Strategy, Minerals and Waste Local Plans.	Ongoing
3.3	All council contracts and supplies to be peat-free wherever possible.	By April 2024
3.4	All council contracts and supplies to reduce pesticides wherever possible	By end 2024
3.5	Promote positive behaviours and prohibit the use of environmentally harmful materials and activities on county council land, including balloon launches, Chinese lanterns, disposable BBQs, other non-biodegradable materials	Ongoing

3.6		All county council activities to follow good practice for biosecurity for example when working in and adjacent to water, or when receiving delivery of imported plants and construction materials.	Ongoing
Objective 4 - Ensure all designated sites in our ownership have management measures in place to achieve favourable condition by 2042			
4.1		Continue delivery of management schemes for Sites of Special Scientific Interest to reach favourable condition and undertake regular monitoring.	Ongoing
4.2		Establish a programme of surveys of Local Wildlife Sites in council ownership and update management briefs	
	4.2.1	Survey first tranche of 7 sites and produce management briefs	End 2025
	4.2.2	Survey 2 <sup>nd</sup> tranche of 7 sites and produce management briefs	End 2027
	4.2.3	Survey final tranche of 7 sites and produce management briefs	End 2029
4.3		Embed best practice guidance on the historic environment when deciding management approaches for nature	Ongoing
Objective 5 - Manage and protect 30% of our land (excluding highways) for biodiversity by 2030			
5.1		Ensure management measures and monitoring regimes are in place on all protected sites	Ongoing see Objective 4
5.2		Identify further opportunities to protect our land for biodiversity including land associated with highways	
	5.2.1	Identify and survey potential county wildlife sites on SCC land	By 2026 / ongoing
5.3		Encourage uptake of schemes that support biodiversity on county leased land	By end 2025
Objective 6 - Develop a wildlife-friendly management approach to roadside verges by 2026			
6.1		Survey road verges and identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement where compatible with safety	By end 2026
6.2		Review management of verges to promote biodiversity and increase carbon capture where appropriate	By end 2026
6.3		Raise awareness of the importance of verges for wildlife.	Ongoing
Objective 7 - Develop a suite of species recovery measures for our land by April 2025			
7.1		Retrofit measures for species in existing county council properties and include in all new county council development.	
	7.1.1	Develop programme of retrofit opportunities as part of annual maintenance / improvement programme	From April 2024
	7.1.2	Incorporate in all new development	From January 2024
7.2		Continue to create special features for heathland and woodland invertebrates at Chasewater and Cannock Chase.	Ongoing
7.3		Monitor and support bat populations on our country parks.	Ongoing

7.4		Support adder survey and modelling work for Cannock Chase and the wider county, developing a plan for the species on our land.	By end 2025
7.5		Continue to support the creation and surveying of ark sites for native crayfish	Ongoing
7.6		Building on the local nature recovery strategy, develop a species action plan for all county council land	by end 2025
	7.6.1	Produce list based on LNRS priorities	End 2024
	7.6.2	Produce species action plan for all major sites (over 50ha) and sites with known populations of priority species	End 2025
	7.6.3	Produce action plan for sites 5-50ha	End 2026
	7.6.4	Consider remaining sites	End 2027
7.7		Undertake regular monitoring of key habitats to check for invasive species and diseases and undertake action to tackle as appropriate	Ongoing
7.8		Continue to collaborate with tenant farmers on the County Farms' estate to enhance habitat provision and biodiversity and the adoption of environmental land management schemes.	Ongoing
Objective 8 - Use nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change wherever possible, to maximise benefits to both wildlife and climate.			
8.1		Identify nature-based solutions as part of our climate change adaptation action plan	By end 2024
8.2		Develop a plan for expansion of woodland and tree cover to help achieve net zero, maximising biodiversity and other environmental benefits, ensuring that we follow the principle of 'right tree, right place, right purpose'	by April 2025
Objective 9 - Enhance and restore landscape character and quality			
9.1		Ensure County Council decisions take account of landscape conservation and enhancement and our duties for our national landscapes	Ongoing
9.2		Continue to host the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and support the management of our national landscapes	Ongoing
9.3		Promote hedgerow creation and restoration where appropriate, to restore and protect landscape-scale character and quality and contribute towards biodiversity net gain	Ongoing
Objective 10 - Champion biodiversity, raise awareness and support the active involvement of communities in caring for our natural environment.			
10.1		Deliver awareness campaigns on ways people can support nature recovery	Minimum 2 campaigns per year
10.2		Work with other bodies to support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity	Ongoing
10.3		Support volunteering activity on our countryside sites	Ongoing
10.4		Develop nature champions across our library service to support and signpost	By end 2024

10.5		Develop a programme with family support teams, including walks, events and activities and link with our Holiday Activities and Food programme providers to explore opportunities to celebrate nature	By end 2025
10.6		Continue to support forest school provision and other educational initiatives, exploring links to the new natural history GCSE	Ongoing / 2024-5
10.7		Support delivery of the Better Health Staffordshire initiative across the county.	Ongoing



# Community Impact Assessment

## Natural Environment Strategy

Author: Sarah Bentley, Head of Environment &  
Countryside

Date: December 2023

➤ **Equality Assessment**

Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
Age - older and younger people	There are benefits to everyone from supporting a healthy natural environment and functioning ecosystems.		
<b>Disability</b> - 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.		People with different abilities may be impacted by some measures, such as accessibility impacts from more natural roadside verges, or lack of accessibility to green spaces.	Undertake accessibility checks for measures that may impact on public access, such as verge management or access works to green spaces to ensure they consider inclusivity.
<b>Gender reassignment</b> - those people in the process of transitioning from one sex to another		Evidence shows that people with some protected characteristics may be under-represented as users of the countryside and green spaces due to a variety of cultural, societal and physical factors. This could impact on the inclusivity of community engagement and involvement elements	Ensure that opportunities for community engagement and involvement, such as volunteering, are inclusively promoted and operated.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b> - people who are married or in a civil partnership should not be treated differently at work			
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b> - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers			
<b>Race</b> - people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins			
<b>Religion or Belief</b> - people with any religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of belief. A			



Protected Characteristics	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
belief should affect a person's life choices or the way they live for it to be considered		of the proposals, such as volunteering.	
<b>Sex</b> - men or women			
<b>Sexual orientation</b> - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes			

### Workforce Assessment

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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
n/a			

### ➤ Health, Well-being and Social Care Assessment

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The strategy proposes to support biodiversity recovery and enhance natural environments.</p>	<p>Evidence demonstrates that spending time in natural environments can reduce stress and support health and wellbeing. Natural environments also support climate adaptation, reduce air pollution, and support other essential ecosystem services that in turn support human health. The strategy aims to support biodiversity and natural processes.</p>	<p>Nature recovery is overwhelmingly positive for human health. There may be minor risks of zoonoses (animal-derived disease) in some circumstances.</p>	<p>Follow appropriate guidance.</p>

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The strategy proposes to support biodiversity recovery and enhance natural environments, with a focus on council-owned land and council functions. Objectives include raising awareness and actively involving communities.</p>	<p>Supporting nature recovery and natural environments can bring many benefits to Staffordshire's communities, enhancing the county as a great place to live, work and visit. Communities have a vital role to play in supporting nature, for example through citizen science and volunteering. This in turn can support learning, health and wellbeing and community cohesion.</p>	<p>There is a risk that some communities that could benefit from nature can be harder to reach or may have less access to green space. For example, more deprived communities often have less accessible green space available to them and opportunities to benefit from nature can therefore be limited.</p>	<p>Ensure measures to ensure inclusion and accessibility are built into strategy implementation. Explore through the local nature recovery strategy ways to make nature more accessible to all communities.</p>

Key consideration	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The strategy proposes to support biodiversity recovery and enhance natural environments, with a focus on council-owned land and council functions. Objectives include delivery of biodiversity enhancement through the planning process, other strategies / plans and through our properties.</p>	<p>Functioning ecosystems support the economy in numerous ways, underpinning ecosystem services such as pollination of crops, reducing air pollution, flood reduction, nutrient cycling etc. A thriving natural environment also underpins the visitor economy and supports inward investment.</p>	<p>There may be impacts on costs of development and other strategy delivery due to requirements to deliver biodiversity gain / enhancement, however there are also economic opportunities e.g. through offering net gain units.</p>	<p>Planning for biodiversity at the early stage in plans and developments reduces costs and risks of delays.</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The strategy proposes to support biodiversity recovery and enhance natural environments, with a focus on council-owned land and council functions. Objectives include linking to climate change delivery through nature-based solutions.</p>	<p>Actions include nature-based solutions such as tree planting and management of natural habitats to support carbon sequestration, plus the use of natural solutions to support climate adaptation – e.g. tree planting for cooling areas and watercourses, planting to reduce flooding.</p>	<p>Generally biodiversity enhancement supports climate and other environmental goals. There may be trade-offs to consider in relation to carbon uptake by different tree species, with some native species taking longer to deliver carbon benefits while some non-native species potentially offer greater carbon benefits in the short term which may help support net zero targets.</p>	<p>Consider an adaptive approach that delivers multiple benefits to support a range of outcomes – e.g. mixed planting that delivers both biodiversity and carbon benefits.</p>

Key considerations	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations
<p>The strategy proposes to support biodiversity recovery and enhance natural environments, with a focus on council-owned land and council functions.</p>	<p>The strategy aims to support the environment and therefore delivers significant benefits.</p>	<p>Competition for land will require a considered approach to deliver multiple goals and ensure that wider objectives, e.g. agriculture, are also supported.</p>	<p>Seek multi-functional land uses where appropriate to deliver multiple outcomes.</p>

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 13 December 2023**

### **Staffordshire County Council's Economic Strategy – Delivery Update**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Considers the update on progress made in the delivery of the County Councils Economic Strategy since its consideration by the Committee in June 2023.
- b. Considers the interventions already made by the County Council and partner organisations and recommends further interventions to be considered by Cabinet that the Committee believes would help to enable the successful delivery of the Economic Strategy.
- c. Invites the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to bring an update on delivery of the Strategy to this Committee for scrutiny in six months' time.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

### **Report of Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

#### **Summary**

#### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon progress made in the delivery of our Economic Strategy, and supporting strategies and delivery plans, since it was considered by the Committee in June 2023.
2. The successful delivery of our Economic Strategy in achieving its vision and aims remains dependent on many factors, not least the identification and delivery of appropriate projects and programmes.
3. Monitoring the County Council's performance in delivering the Economic Strategy will be vital to ensuring we ultimately achieve our ambitions.

The Committee has an important role in scrutinising our performance over the duration of the strategy, up to 2030.

## **Report**

### **Background**

4. The Committee last considered the delivery of our Economic Strategy in June 2023 and work has been ongoing on numerous programmes and schemes since then. Our Rural Economic Strategy and Visitor Economy Action Plan, prepared in collaboration between local authority and private sector partners that make up our Destination Management Partnership, both support the delivery of our overall Economic Strategy.
5. Our draft Employment and Skills Strategy has been produced with extensive support and input from our skills providers and partners and was considered by the Committee in September 2023. Comments received from the Committee will be considered within the final version of the Strategy which will 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, and to inform the development of other relevant skills plans and actions as appropriate. The delivery of our overall Economic Strategy and all supporting strategies and plans are considered throughout the report and will be within all future updates.
6. The global economic climate, detailed further within the next section, continues to present challenges to the local, national, and regional economies in the short-term. Whilst this should not be underestimated and we will continue to ensure that we support our local businesses and residents where we can, our longer-term focus remains on those priorities set out within the Economic Strategy. Interventions put in place by the County Council, and local and national stakeholders, to support the economy through challenging periods are relatively short-term measures to enable us to continue to work towards the delivery of our Economic Strategy and our vision for the local economy up to 2030. Any such interventions will be set out within the Economic Strategy Delivery Plan (appendix), a live document that aligns to our Corporate Delivery Plan, which is regularly reviewed and reported to the Committee through these ongoing updates.

### **Summary economic headlines**

7. Global events continue to impact the local and national economies, particularly in respect of inflation and associated cost-of-living pressures. More recently the rate of inflation has fallen substantially which is clearly



welcome, although this remains high compared to the level seen in recent history.

8. Recently released figures on disposable household income showed that Staffordshire is outperforming regional and national averages, with disposable income per head increasing by 4.4% in Staffordshire compared to 4% and 3.7% across the West Midlands Region and UK respectively. This is clearly very positive support and highlights the continued importance of supporting Staffordshire residents in being able to take advantage of higher paid employment opportunities.
9. Global and national macroeconomic issues have the potential to impact our ability to deliver some of our Economic Strategy priorities in the short-term, although some of the priorities will and have come even more strongly into focus. Staffordshire remains in a strong position to remain resilient through challenging times. Unfortunately, we have seen some increases in unemployment over recent months, whilst Amazon have also decided to leave its site in Rugeley and consolidate its operations at a new facility in Sutton Coldfield. It however must be stressed that this is not in any way a reflection of the local economy or our business environment but is purely an operational decision by the company.
10. However, local increases in unemployment have largely been in-line with national trends, whilst our overall unemployment rates remain significantly below regional and national averages. Demand for labour and skills remains high, with there currently being 1.1 jobs available for every claimant within the county, and therefore our focus continues to be to support those that unfortunately find themselves unemployed, to transition into work.
11. The resilience of the local economy is at least in part due to our continued efforts to support the creation of high-quality jobs within the county, as is detailed throughout the rest of the report. Since 2010, around 42,000 additional new jobs have been created in the county, with many more in the pipeline.

## **Summary of Recent Activity**

### **Priority: Town Centre / High Street Regeneration**

***Ambition: By 2030, we will tackle the challenges faced by many of our town centres and strive to create places that we can be proud of.***

12. We have continued to see the impacts of changing shopping habits on the high street in recent months with the closure of Wilko stores across

the country, including several in Staffordshire. As with our response to the Amazon relocation, we convened a taskforce comprised of senior representatives of the County Council, Borough and District Councils, Department for Work & Pensions and the National Careers Service to exchange information and consider our support offer, including the deployment of our Jobs & Careers Service. Positively, we know that there are substantial numbers of jobs being advertised within the county, and we continue to support people who unfortunately find themselves out of work in finding a suitable employment opportunity.

13. This of course highlights the continued importance of our efforts to support the regeneration of our high streets and significant activity continues to be progressed on the regeneration of town and local centres across the county. This primarily relates to the delivery of Government programmes including Future High Streets Fund, Town Deals, and the Levelling Up Fund. Much of this funding is being directed through our District / Borough Council partners, but the County Council has a significant role to play, and we are fully engaged with and supporting the development of business cases and delivery of multiple projects across Staffordshire.
14. Following the launch of the County Council's supporting Rural Economic Strategy in March 2023 a steering group has been established to work with key partners, including the District and Boroughs Councils, on interventions around the five overarching priorities, including the regeneration of the rural hub towns.
15. Work is continuing to procure a development partner who will work with the County Council to design and deliver the Eastgate Regeneration scheme which will play a key role in the transformation of Stafford town centre through a residential led, mixed used development focused on vacant and underused buildings and land in the County Council's ownership. The opportunity, which is a direct opportunity for the County Council to deliver town centre regeneration, was launched at the UKREiiF property exhibition in mid-May. Procurement for a development partner for the scheme is underway and now at the competitive dialogue stage. Two remaining bidders, who have vast levels of experience in town centre regeneration projects are expected to submit their final tenders before Christmas 2023. These will be fully assessed and a recommendation made to Cabinet in early 2024 next year. Given the challenging market conditions associated with such regeneration projects at present, all opportunities to enhance the longer term viability of the scheme are being investigated.

## **Higher skilled, higher paid workforce**

**Ambition: By 2030, we will address the low levels of skills across some parts of the county and support more of our residents to gain the high-level skills needed to take advantage of many better paid job opportunities.**

16. A great deal of skills related activity also continues to be progressed aligned to local capital projects e.g., NSCG £28m Skills Innovation Centre, £20m Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Institute of Technology. Many of the regeneration projects being progressed across the county, such as the town centre programmes and large-scale site developments including West Midlands Interchange, include an element of funding for skills programmes secured from the development to upskill and increase local employment opportunities, enabling residents to benefit from investment in their communities.
17. Construction of the West Midlands Interchange development has now commenced, with the first phase of the project comprising major infrastructure works. A key aspect of the project will be supporting our residents to take advantage of employment opportunities through both the construction and operational phases. We were successful in securing a significant amount of funding through the formal planning obligations for the development of the site (i.e. the section 106 agreement), to be used for employment and skills programmes and two dedicated Employment Brokers, working within our Jobs & Careers Service. One Employment Broker has been recruited to date and is working closely with the contractors and partner agencies.
18. More widely our Jobs and Careers Service has continued to grow and receive referrals from residents across the county either via the website, word of mouth or via one of the many events the Employment Brokers have attended. A key focus in recent months has been results day for both GCSE and A-Level students, promoting the support the team can offer with advice and signposting. Our Employment Brokers have been supporting people across the county, whether they have received their grades in order to follow their favoured path, or maybe need some advice on where to turn next and consider other avenues such as employment, apprenticeships or alternative training.
19. The Council's Community Learning Service receives approx. £1.6m annually from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to provide learning opportunities to adults that support people to gain the skills they need so that they can progress in the world of work, and that support the independence and wellbeing of families and communities. The Community Learning strategy 2023-27 outlines our priorities and our

curriculum offer consisting of: wellbeing & independence, community and family progression, English, maths & digital and STEM & vocational courses. The service was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2023 and is judged to be a good provider of adult education. In 2022-23 we delivered 300 courses across Staffordshire in over 50 venues and online. We engaged 1,855 adults who made 2,942 enrolments which is an 8% increase on the previous year. Provision is targeted with 59% of learners not having a full level 2 qualification (GCSE grade A\*-C) and 43% residing in targeted wards. From the overall enrolment figure, 17% of people were unemployed and looking for work. At the end of the course, 60% of these reported intending to continue with their learning.

20. The Council received £4.2m to deliver the national Multiply programme, consisting of targeted adult numeracy interventions delivered at local level to adults aged 19 plus who have not previously obtained a level 2 or equivalent numeracy qualification. The programme aims to boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work to enable them to achieve a formal qualification that can open doors for them, such as into a job or progression to further study. In year one of the programme, delivery commenced in Q4 and achieved a total of 426 enrolments. Evaluation identified good skill development and progression destinations for learners. In Year two we have been successful in establishing new partnerships to broaden our reach and raise awareness of the programme. To date our delivery providers report 646 enrolments and 162 outreach participants. The programme offer is being further developed with the introduction of more engaging outreach provision with clear progression pathways and planning is well underway for a January relaunch and roadshow in May coinciding with National Numeracy Week.

### **Supporting start-up and step-up businesses**

***Ambition: By 2030, we will create the conditions to allow more people to start and grow their business within Staffordshire, thereby addressing our relatively low levels of business start-ups across large parts of the county.***

21. We have delivered and continue to deliver many business support programmes and created high-quality start-up space across the county such as the Shire Hall Business Centre, which is now over 85% occupied, to support and encourage people to start and grow a business. We have now supported 598 individuals through the Staffordshire Start Up Mentoring Programme, commissioned through the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce since June 2020. 279 of those who successfully complete the course have decided that self-employment is for them and have started their own business. Get Started and Grow has supported

more than 194 business owners who have been trading up to five years with professional services support in marketing, accountancy, digital marketing, legal or human resources consultancy. The County Council will continue to procure established Staffordshire businesses to provide this valuable support to start-up and step-up businesses.

22. A series of peer-to-peer networks were launched in the summer of 2023 for new businesses who wanted to take the next steps in their journey to success. The facilitated sessions took groups of six to eight people who successfully completed the Start Up Mentoring Programme and supported them in working through difficulties they may be facing to help find solutions together. These were very successful with 93% of participants stating that the sessions were relevant to their business and 91% satisfied or very satisfied with the programme. Therefore a new series of six peer to peer networks are currently being commissioned to start in the next two months.
23. My Own Boss supports entrepreneurs who are struggling to launch their new business and provides up to six hours of bespoke coaching to look at barriers to trading. To date 130 people have been approved to participate in this scheme.
24. The Growth Hub has been an important part of the local business support offer for several years, being the first point of contact for people seeking advice to start and/or grow a business. Growth Hubs are nationally funded and led by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), but Government has this year made the decision to cease funding the LEPs after this financial year with responsibility for their functions to be integrated into local democratic institutions. Work is ongoing on the transfer of functions to the County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, including consideration of the future of the Growth Hub and how we want this to operate from 2024/25 onwards. Whilst this is dependent on Government funding which is expected to be confirmed in the coming months, this presents an opportunity for us to ensure the Growth Hub is providing a high-quality, effective service within Staffordshire.

## **Innovation**

***Ambition: Build upon our existing strengths and future opportunities to increase innovation activity throughout the county, both within our businesses and innovation institutions.***

25. From a relatively low base, innovation activity within the county has increased substantially in recent years and particularly within our universities. This includes the delivery of many innovation projects, with a particular strength in energy and green technologies.

26. As an alternative to fossil fuels, hydrogen is quickly becoming an increasingly important part of meeting our future climate change targets, particularly within many of the industries that are highly prevalent within Staffordshire. Many major businesses are developing hydrogen technologies as a key component of their future operations, including JCB and the development of its hydrogen engine. The HyDeploy project at Keele University trialled injecting hydrogen into the gas network, and this is likely to play an important role in creating early demand for hydrogen and providing assurances to prospective suppliers.
27. Recognising the importance of hydrogen, we are actively engaging with the Hydrogen Valley programme which is being delivered by Cadent and National Gas Transmission. The aim of the programme is to establish the hydrogen economy, attract investment and explore how infrastructure can secure long-term, low-cost hydrogen across the middle of England.
28. The Keele University Science & Innovation Park is one of the county's flagship employment sites and has led to creation of a vast number of high-skilled, high-paid jobs in the area. However, this is Staffordshire's only science park and in comparison to many areas of a similar scale and nature, it could be argued that we currently have an underrepresentation of these types of development. Working through the Staffordshire Leaders Board and in partnership with our District and Borough Council's, we are therefore undertaking a study to consider the opportunities and feasibility for the development of another science park within the county. We are currently in the process of procuring a consultant to complete the work which is expected to be finalised over the next few months.

### **Developing Investment Ready Projects**

***Ambition: By 2030, we will play our part in supporting the substantial planned growth within the county through the development of investment ready projects and securing funding for our infrastructure and services.***

29. Substantial levels of growth continue to be planned for and delivered throughout the county whilst many large-scale schemes are also in development. We continue to work proactively with our partners in support of the planned growth of the county and ensuring continued investment in our infrastructure, including our transport system and schools.
30. The upgrade of the A38 Branston Interchange, being delivered through our successful £20m bid from round two of the Levelling Up Fund, is a

key project in providing residents of Burton with safer, easier access to and from the A38. Legal Agreements with the developer of the nearby Branston Locks scheme (who are part funding the scheme), the Department for Transport and National Highways are substantively complete and we are expecting works on improving the junction to commence in early 2024. The Levelling Up Fund is also paying for the upgrade of several major roads in Cannock and Stafford and the purchase of a new fleet of low emission buses to improve our public transport network.

31. Last month we learnt of the successful bid for £20m of Levelling Up Funding for parts of the Stafford Station Gateway project, with the funding announced through a site visit from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Staffordshire County Council is a key partner in the future development around the station area, working alongside Stafford Borough Council and London & Continental Railways, to deliver the masterplan for the regeneration of the area. Together we will be working on the delivery of this funding as part of the wider scheme over the coming months and years.
32. Our Chatterley Valley West scheme will unlock a 43-hectare employment site which will generate around 1,700 jobs, Gross Value-Added of £67 million per annum and £60 million of private sector investment once complete. However, we need to acknowledge the localised difficulties that the delivery of these schemes sometimes creates and the closure of Peacock Hay Road for longer than was expected has caused difficulties for local road users. This was due to the developer's contractor, Buckingham Group, going into administration with an urgent solution needing to be found. Whilst these situations are sometimes unavoidable, it is worth reemphasising that when they do arise, the County Council will always act as quickly as possible to find a solution. Offsite highways works recommenced on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, following the appointment of our strategic infrastructure partner Amey, to undertake these works. The site developer, Harworth Group has also appointed a replacement earthworks contractor to recommence plot preparation and servicing works.

### **Strategic Corridors**

***Ambition: By 2030, we will ensure we do not miss the substantial opportunities afforded by our location in the centre of the country by developing our key strategic A50 / A500 and A38 corridors, including securing increased investment in innovation activities.***

33. In October we heard the announcement that phases 2a and 2b of HS2 have been cancelled, with the funding to be reinvested in the Network

North programme. The County Council has always objected in principle to the impact that HS2 would have had on our rural communities and landscape, whilst working to ensure that we get the best deal for Staffordshire in terms of mitigation, compensation for residents, economic benefits and improved connectivity.

34. Whilst the full details are still emerging, the Network North announcement includes reference to improvements to the A50 / 500 corridor within Staffordshire, potentially cutting congestion for the 90,000 drivers who use the road each day and ensuring smoother journeys for drivers and freight. The plan also references future 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-on-Trent railway line and the opening of the Ivanhoe Line between Burton and Leicester to passenger services (currently limited to freight).
35. The Network North plan therefore has the potential to provide significant further investment in Staffordshire's key transport corridors across the county. The A50 / A500 corridor presents some of our greatest opportunities for growth, connecting many major towns and cities, universities, large-scale Original Equipment Manufacturers and numerous other economic institutions across a 90km stretch through the heart of England. Senior politicians of local authorities across the corridor recently met, with unanimous support to lobby for further investment along the route. The development of this investment programme will centre around decarbonisation and energy use including the use of hydrogen (as detailed in paragraphs 25 and 26), increased levels of innovation and the development of green skills. Collectively with our partners from across the corridor we are now progressing a public affairs programme to raise awareness of the opportunities presented by the A50 / A500 project with Government, whilst continuing to look to take advantage of specific funding programmes and investment opportunities within the corridor as and when they arise.

### **Supporting themes**

***Delivery of those supporting strategies and delivery plans that provide greater focus on specific issues as appropriate and will play a key role in the delivery of the overall Economic Strategy.***

36. 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. Our outstanding attractions, hotels and restaurants already make the county a hugely attractive place to visit and stay, although we continue our efforts to promote the county and develop and enhance



what we already have. Our efforts to strengthen our local visitor economy have been recognised by the announcement of accredited 'Local Visitor Economy Partnership' status for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, an official body which in time will supersede the area's current 'Destination Management Partnership'.

37. Our successful activities include the promotion of our visitor attractions and supporting businesses. Earlier in the year, three of our visitor economy businesses collected awards at the National VisitEngland Awards for Excellence, most notably the National Memorial Arboretum won Gold for Business Events Venue of the Year. The Duncombe Arms and Trentham Gardens also received bronze awards for Pub of the Year and Unsung Hero respectively.
38. The National Memorial Arboretum has also recently 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.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

39. The Strategy primarily relates to the 'support Staffordshire's economy to grow, generating more and better-paid jobs' Strategic Plan priority and all the associated priorities. However, there are aspects of the Strategy that cut-across all the Strategic Plan priorities with increased prosperity in the County having the potential to have positive impacts on resident's health, safety, and happiness.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

40. The delivery of the Economic Strategy was last considered by the Committee in June 2023.

### **Community Impact**

41. Following measures implemented in response to the pandemic, economic events continue to have the potential to affect some demographic groups and locations more than others, although this is a situation that evolves rapidly and with some uncertainty. However, a key aim of the delivery of the Strategy is to ensure all residents can gain high-value, better-paid employment. We continue to produce the Economic Bulletin monthly,

providing a 'live' evidence base to monitor the state of the local economy and allowing the County Council to respond accordingly.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Economic Strategy Delivery Plan 2023/24

### **Contact Details**

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**Appendix - Economic Strategy Delivery Plan 2023/24 - December 2023 Update**

Summary	What success will look like in 2023/24	How we will measure success? (KPI)	Cabinet Lead	SLT Lead	WLT Lead
<b>Town Centres</b> - <i>We will work with our partners to level up our town centres through targeted interventions.</i>					
To continue to work with the local planning authorities, to support masterplan-led regeneration schemes, in particular bidding and delivery of central government programmes that include future high street fund and town deals. Future opportunities may also come through UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Levelling Up Funds, and preparing for HS2.	<p>Eastgate Regeneration proposals - Procurement of preferred Development Partner by end of March 2024.</p> <p>A further pipeline of opportunities will be established with our local planning authorities and other partners where relevant (e.g. strategic one public estate sites / premises).</p>	<p>Pipeline and / or annual business plan published</p> <p>Successful development and delivery of projects</p> <p>This is likely to gain increased momentum throughout the financial year, and Work Programme outputs / KPI's will be established as appropriate</p>	Philip White	Darryl Evers	Anthony Hodge
Hub Towns Programme	Project Teams with the relevant District/Borough Councils working on individual plans to assist the 5 identified Rural Hub Towns.	SWOT analysis will be shared and action plans developed. A specific business support programme for each of the 5 towns will be developed in partnership. Funding will be applied for when a suitable scheme is available.	Philip White	Darryl Evers	Anthony Hodge
<p><b>Annual Capital Programme.</b> Carry out highway design that is: proportionate to the scheme size and complexity; complies with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015); and consults and engages with elected representatives and local communities in an appropriate and timely manner.</p>	<p>Delivery of the Divisional Highway Programme (DHP) to the satisfaction of Members and local communities.</p> <p>Ensure that good quality, sustainable, highway infrastructure assets are constructed, that are durable and efficient to maintain and manage.</p> <p>Continued development of the IT Projects Delivery Project Team (set up in November 2021), with a focus on KPI reporting and the creation of an improvement plan.</p> <p>Monthly and quarterly updates on the progress and finances of the programme.</p> <p>Setup an annual, internal audit of compliance with CDM 2015.</p> <p>Ensuring that sufficient design staff are trained and employed to deliver a growing IT programme.</p>	<p>Percentage of IT programme schemes (including carry over schemes from previous financial years) at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility stage</li> <li>• Design stage</li> <li>• Construction stage</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• On hold / cancelled</li> </ul> <p>IT programme expenditure per quarter against forecast expenditure per quarter.</p> <p>Percentage of DHP schemes (including carry over schemes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On hold</li> <li>• In progress</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Cancelled</li> </ul>	David Williams	Darryl Evers	James Bailey
<b>Higher Skilled, Higher Paid Workforce</b> - <i>Enable young people and adults to get the training and skills so they can have a successful career and that employers have the right skills to help their business be competitive and Staffordshire's productivity grows.</i>					
<p><b>Employee Skills Partnership.</b> Manage the delivery of the 3 £1.5m UK CRF projects in accordance with the requirements placed upon the Council as the Lead Authority.</p> <p>Manage the delivery of 4 skills Equipment Fund projects funded by the LEP's Getting Building Fund.</p> <p>Manage the delivery of the Ignite student business start-up project.</p>	<p>All 3 projects achieve their respective output, outcomes targets by June 2022.</p> <p>The SEF 3 projects will enable the delivery of high quality and high level training programmes to support the growth in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's priority economic sectors.</p> <p>Staffordshire young people in FE 16-18 and school 6th Form with aspirations to start their own business will receive training and support through the Ignite business start-up programme.</p>	<p>No. of people supported - 424 (outturn 224)</p> <p>No. of businesses supported - 222 (outturn 242)</p> <p>No. of organisations supported - 18 (outturn 19)</p> <p>SEF 3</p> <p>Apprenticeship - growth 178 (outturn 162)</p> <p>Learners - growth 174 (outturn 577)</p> <p>No. of students received Ignite lesson - 6,000 (outturn 6,500)</p> <p>No. of students registered on Ignite online learning platform - 450 (outturn 446)</p>	Philip White	Darryl Evers	Anthony Baines

<p><b>Apprenticeship &amp; Technical Skills.</b> Procure apprenticeship provision that meets the skills development needs of the core business and schools - maximising the levy spend including Transfer of Funds.</p>	<p>The increase in levy spend and the reduction of expired levy will be maintained. More teams will use the apprenticeship route to fill vacancies and recruit new talent into the Council. All funds available via the Transfer of Levy will be shared with Staffordshire businesses that cannot access apprenticeship funding from elsewhere.</p> <p>The grant will support eligible and approved employers who will be use the grant to enable them to recruit new apprentices to support business recovery and growth.</p>	<p>Levy spend will increase by 4%. Apprentice recruitment will increase by 20%.</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Baines</p>
<p><b>Adult Learning &amp; Skills.</b> Through adult learning programmes we will provide courses that contribute to better health &amp; wellbeing, resilience, independence and social inclusion for all young people and adults. A range of formal and informal learning programmes providing support to people and their families to gain the skills they need to progress in the world of work and give children the best start in life.</p>	<p>Funding is targeted and maximised.</p> <p>Good levels of participation.</p> <p>Good quality teaching &amp; learning leads to good achievement with no achievement gaps in equality groups.</p> <p>Safeguarding is effective and high percentage of learners report feeling safe.</p> <p>High learner satisfaction levels.</p> <p>Learners move into positive destinations - further learning, volunteering, employment.</p>	<p>100% of learners feel safe on their course  98% of learners report they have been informed about how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism  90% attendance  96% retention  98% pass  94% achievement</p> <p>The overall satisfaction rate of learners to be a minimum of 98%  At least 30% of Learners who were unemployed and looking for work at the start of their course progress into a positive destination  At least 70% of learners report positive impacts on their wellbeing and/or confidence as a direct result of attending their course  The actual number of enrolments and funding earned to be at least 97% of agreed delivery profile (TBC 23-24 academic year following procurement)  The overall percentage of new learners attending community learning to be a minimum of 70%</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Baines</p>
<p><b>Multiply.</b> The programme will provide a range of interventions and courses that support local residents to develop their numeracy skills.</p>	<p>Funding is targeted and maximised to extend the reach across Staffordshire. Good levels of participation across a range of identified targeted cohorts. Participants progress onto further learning, develop skills for everyday and where appropriate progress within their career.</p>	<p>Number of different types of provision: 44  Number of different initiatives developed with employers: 26  Number of different initiatives developed with community groups: 25  Number of different initiatives that lead to a qualification: 2  Number of learners participating in substantive provision: 2,536  Number of learners participating in outreach provision: 400</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Baines</p>

**Start-ups / Scale-ups** - Support more people to start and grow their business as a priority, ensuring that a variety of programmes are available to suit individuals with different needs. Support existing businesses to thrive and grow in Staffordshire.

<p><b>Business Start Ups &amp; Growth.</b> Work with partner organisations to create new programmes with a variety of options for all those wanting to start a business in the County. This will include ensuring services are in place for those finding it difficult to launch their business idea due to areas such as long term unemployment, english language difficulties or a lack of confidence.</p>	<p>Achievement of the start-up programme targets for Start Up Mentoring programmes and Get Started and Grow.</p> <p>Establishment of new start up programmes which meet the needs of all people in Staffordshire</p> <p>Emphasis on continue to develop and deliver start-ups as part of year 3 delivery of the start-up programme</p> <p>Continue to support pre starts and start up individuals through the Staffordshire Means Business Programme including a comitment to spend £100,000 in the financial year.</p> <p>Development of support programmes to assist step-up businesses (trading 2 to 5 years), addressing a gap identified through commissioned research.</p>	<p>By the end of the Three Year start up programme, target is 300 Individuals through the programme, and 200 new businesses set up.</p>	Philip White	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Hodge
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 5</p> <p><b>Enterprise Centres.</b> Continue to offer good quality business units through the enterprise centre portfolio. Tenants to work with the team to understand how to manage business premises in preparation for their move to the private sector.</p>	<p>Develop new enterprise facilities across the county according to need, including looking at new delivery models such as hotdesking and mail boxes.</p> <p>Develop business support programmes with partners such as the chamber of commerce, FSB, and Growth Hub that provide existing businesses with the opportunities to flourish. Partnership working will successfully result in new schemes for existing businesses.</p> <p>Achievement of the occupation targets of the enterprise centres, and a continuation of the work with property services to move tenants onto 5 year leases.</p> <p>The Shire Hall Business Centre Project will continue on track. The Business and Enterprise Team will continue to work across functions on new enterprise centre projects such as the development of Innovation Space.</p> <p>Delivery of the extension of our Enterprise Centre in Knutton, providing light industrial units and supporting the wider regeneration of the high street.</p>	<p>85% minimum occupation in all 8 existing enterprise centres.</p> <p>The successful management of Shire Hall, and 80% occupancy by December 2023.</p>	Philip White	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Hodge
<p><b>Staffordshire Means Business.</b> Utilising SCC and external funding, the team will continue to offer business support services to local companies and individuals who want to start a business. Working with the district and Borough Councils, the business and Enterprise team will continue to seek out new funding streams to continue this partnership working through the year.</p>	<p>Meeting objectives set out in the Staffordshire Means Business Programme which includes start up services and environmental solutions for businesses.</p> <p>Sourcing continuation funding to enable the programme to continue throughout the financial year.</p>	<p>Total Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted</p> <p>Total number of people supported to participate in education and training</p> <p>Total number of businesses receiving support</p>	Philip White	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Hodge & Anthony Baines

<p><b>Economic Growth Programme</b> - continuing our successful Economic Growth Programme which continues to create the conditions for growth for new jobs and housing.</p>	<p>End Users Identified and on site at i54 Western Extension</p> <p>Chatterley Valley Development site earthworks and highways/access works completed</p> <p>Branston Interchange improvements on site (subject to confirmation of LUF 2 funding)</p> <p>Stafford Gateway Strategic Regeneration Framework adopted and proposals developed further</p> <p>Ongoing infrastructure works secured via key section 278 works packages</p>	<p>Hectares of land serviced / enabled</p> <p>Sq Ft of employment generating development</p> <p>Jobs created and safeguarded</p> <p>New homes enabled</p>	Philip White	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Hodge
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**Developing Investment Ready Projects** - *Develop investment-ready projects vital to the future of the county, ensuring our pipeline projects are ready to access funding.*

<p>Levelling up fund is expected to be announced in Spring Statement, C/O HM Treasury. Other funds may be launched throughout the year.</p>	<p>Successful Grant Bids</p>	<p>Grant opportunity maximised.</p> <p>This is an output type activity, of which the outcomes are not yet prescribed.</p> <p>As various government prospectuses are published / launched, KPI's will be updated here accordingly.</p>	Philip White	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Hodge & Anthony Baines
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<p>Accelerate delivery of gigabit capable technologies, maximising the opportunities and benefits for the businesses and residents of Staffordshire to enable the growth of our digital economy.</p> <p>Maximising the use of public sector assets, developing lucrative internal and external networks as well as contributing to and influencing policy to facilitate delivery and to reduce digital exclusion whilst supporting our climate change agenda.</p>	<p>Closure of Superfast Staffordshire and transition to Project Gigabit.</p> <p>Engage and support a successful procurement process for Project Gigabit - a government investment valued at between £70M and £123M in Staffordshire (including Stoke on Trent).</p> <p>5G development strategy in place and agreements with mobile network operators on improving coverage.</p>	<p>Take-up of Superfast services (at contract closure) exceeds 75%</p> <p>255,135 (61.1%) premises with Gigabit capability (Current baseline is 55.15%)</p> <p>Positive relationship with 100% of providers that have a successful bid in Gigabit procurement exercise (quantity currently unknown)</p>	Simon Tagg	Darryl Eyers	Anthony Baines
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<p>Delivery of the 2022/23 elements of the Schools Capital Programme, including both the maintenance programme and the basic need projects.</p>	<p>Opening of the two new schools in Uttoxeter and Fradley for September 2022.</p> <p>Completing the expansion of St John's PS, Essington and Princefields First School, Penkridge.</p> <p>Achieving planning permission and making good progress on the construction of: a new Primary School at Deanslade (Lichfield) and the relocation/ expansion of St Leonards Primary School (Stafford) to the Kingston Centre.</p> <p>Deliver the schools maintenance programme circa £8 million and over 100 projects.</p>	<p>Schools capital spend - delivery of projects in time and on budget</p>	Jonathan Price	John Tradewell	Ian Turner
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**Strategic Corridors** - *Develop an east/west strategic corridor project that enables businesses in Staffordshire to innovate and grow as part of the wider Midlands Region, initially developing new governance arrangements and supporting delivery.*

<p>Growth potential identified as an investment corridor, with private sector and universities presenting opportunities for infrastructure improvements. Plus range of other research and innovation / skills interventions.</p>	<p>Clear governance arrangements and direction of travel over strategy / delivery.</p>	<p>Adopted governance arrangements (Y/N)</p> <p>Successful delivery of corridors</p> <p>This is likely to gain increased momentum throughout the financial year, and Work Programme outputs / KPI's will be established as appropriate.</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Hodge</p>
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**Supporting the Economy to Become Net Zero** - Support Staffordshire's businesses to raise awareness of commercial opportunities to achieve long term sustainability and maximise their business opportunities through innovative environmental activity.

<p>The Staffordshire Business &amp; Environment Network (SBEN) will work with businesses to raise awareness of commercial opportunities, train and provide tools to implement environmental initiatives and make necessary changes as part of their journey to net zero.</p>	<p>Deliver energy audits through the Green Solutions programme with grants of up to £10,000 for environmental improvements available in areas where the District and Borough Councils contribute UKSPF funding</p> <p>Deliver a Carbon Literacy training service and provision of tools such as a Carbon Tracker to track and implement actions to reduce business carbon emissions.</p> <p>Practical support and provision of tools has enabled businesses to improve their environmental performance such as Sustainability Growth Mapper.</p>	<p>Save carbon through the Green Solutions Programme according to the individual District and Brough Councils outputs.</p> <p>Deliver Carbon Literacy training to 100 people.</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Hodge</p>
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**Supporting themes** - Delivery of those supporting strategies and delivery plans that provide greater focus on specific issues as appropriate and will play a key role in the delivery of the overall Economic Strategy.

<p>Rural Economic Strategy</p>	<p>Delivery of the Rural Economic Strategy to take advantage of those opportunities and address any issues specific to the rural economy.</p>	<p>To be decided as part of the delivery of the Strategy</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Hodge</p>
<p>Visitor Economy Action Plan</p>	<p>Supporting the delivery of the Destination Management Partnerships emerging Visitor Economy Action Plan</p>	<p>To be detailed as part of the delivery of the Plan</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Hodge</p>
<p>Place Branding / Inward Investment</p>	<p>The We Are Staffordshire Place Branding work remains integral to the delivery of our economic growth programmes, allied to our work to support increased inward investment within the county through the Make It Stoke-on-Trent &amp; Staffordshire service.</p>	<p>Forms part of the delivery of the KPIs related to the Economic Growth Programme, detailed above.</p>	<p>Philip White</p>	<p>Darryl Evers</p>	<p>Anthony Hodge</p>





## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 13 December 2023**

### **Review of Schools Performance**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. considers the progress of Educational Achievement in Staffordshire for the period September 2022 – July 2023

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

### **Report of Cllr Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)**

#### **Summary**

#### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. Considers the progress of Educational Achievement in Staffordshire for the period September 2022 – July 2023.

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

2. The number of schools that are academies across Staffordshire continues to increase. As at November 2023, 69.6% (282) of schools have academy status with 123 schools continuing to be maintained. Within the secondary sector there is a larger proportion of academy schools (62 schools, 87.3%) than maintained schools (9 schools, 12.7%).
3. Staffordshire's headteachers and school governors and academy trusts are responsible for the performance of their schools and academies.
4. The vast majority of schools in Staffordshire are judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The local authority continues to monitor the performance of all schools and academies and continues to work with the Regional Director where a school may be causing concern.

5. The latest Ofsted monthly performance information indicates that of the 405 Staffordshire schools, 6 are awaiting an inspection since opening as a new school.
6. As at 31 October 2023, the proportion of good and outstanding schools and academies is in line with the national average, with 354 (89%) of schools and academies currently judged as good or outstanding, 40 (10%) judged as requiring improvement and 4 (1%) judged as inadequate. The table below indicates the comparisons of the different phases compared to the national averages.

	<b>Overall effectiveness at their most recent Ofsted inspection</b>											
	Outstanding			Good			Requiring Improvement			Inadequate		
	Sch	%	Nat	Sch	%	Nat	Sch	%	Nat	Sch	%	Nat
All Schools	46	12%	16%	308	77%	73%	40	10%	8%	4	1%	2%
Nursery	1	50%	62%	1	50%	35%	-	-	2%	-	-	1%
Primary	38	13%	14%	230	77%	76%	28	9%	8%	1	0%	2%
Secondary	2	3%	16%	56	80%	66%	11	16%	13%	1	3%	5%
Special	5	22%	35%	17	74%	54%	0	-	6%	1	4%	5%
PRU	-	-	18%	4	67%	68%	1	17%	9%	1	17%	6%

### **Strategic Overview of Educational Achievement Staffordshire 2023**

7. This report summarises high-level performance for educational attainment and progress across Staffordshire. The performance information is unvalidated until the validated information is published in January 2024.
8. This performance shows that pupils generally start well, with high levels of attainment recorded at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) compared with national averages. Although outcomes are still below those seen prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. Staffordshire is showing improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the EYFS and at a higher rate than that recorded nationally.
10. In Staffordshire 69% of pupils at the end of EYFS achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) compared to 67% nationally. The DfE is yet to publish national rankings and quartile bandings for GLD.
11. At the end of Year 1 (Y1) 81% of pupils achieved the expected level in phonics decoding compared to 79% nationally. This means that

Staffordshire is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> and in quartile B when compared to all local authorities in England.

12. This will be the final year where reporting at the end of KS1 is possible as the DfE has confirmed that from 2024, assessments at the end of KS1 will be no longer statutory.
13. Staffordshire performs above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at KS1. Outcomes in 2023 increased from 2022 but in all three areas still remain below outcomes in 2019.

2023	KS1 (expected standard)			
	R	W	M	RWM Combined
National	68.30%	60.10%	70.40%	56.00%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>71.10%</b>	<b>63.00%</b>	<b>72.60%</b>	<b>59.00%</b>
GAP	2.80%	2.90%	2.20%	3.00%

14. Staffordshire is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> and quartile A for reading, 33<sup>rd</sup> and quartile B for writing and 24<sup>th</sup> and quartile B for mathematics at the expected standard when compared to all local authorities nationally.
15. 2023 Key Stage 2 (KS2) results indicate that Staffordshire pupils remain above the national averages for reading, writing, mathematics and combined reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard.

2023	KS2 (expected standard)			
	R	W	M	RWM Combined
National	72.60%	71.50%	72.90%	59.50%
SCC	73.70%	71.80%	74.10%	59.80%
GAP	1.10%	0.30%	1.20%	0.30%

16. The expected standard in reading is in line with 2019 outcomes, however writing and mathematics remain below the pre-pandemic levels.
17. The table below indicates the latest national ranking and quartile banding for attainment at the end of KS2.

2023	KS2 (expected standard)			
	R	W	M	RWM Combined
Ranking	50	57	57	61
Quartile Banding	B	B	B	B

18. Progress results from KS1 to KS2 continue to indicate that pupils in Staffordshire make less progress than that seen nationally. National

rankings and quartile bandings have not been published as at the time of drafting this report.

2023	KS1-KS2 Progress		
	R	W	M
National	0.04	0.05	0.04
SCC	-0.24	-0.18	-0.28

19. Staffordshire's outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) GCSE remain inconsistent. The proportion of students achieving grade 9 – 4 in English and mathematics is marginally the England all schools average but below the state-funded average. Staffordshire results in both English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measures and the grade 5 or above passes in English and mathematics are below both sets of national results.

2023	KS4 (provisional results)				
	Att 8	Prog 8	% 9-5 E&M	% 9-4 E&M	EBACC APS
National	46.4	-0.03	45.4	65.2	4.06
SCC	44.4	-0.14	39.8	61.9	3.77
GAP	2.0	-0.11	5.6	3.3	0.29

20. KS4 outcomes in 2023 are in line or above those in 2019.

21. The table below indicates the latest national ranking and quartile banding for attainment at the end of KS4.

2023	KS4 (provisional results)				
	Att 8	Prog 8	% 9-5 E&M	% 9-4 E&M	EBACC APS
National Ranking	102	103	115	104	116
Quartile Banding	C	C	D	C	D

22. DFE statutory guidance on 'Schools Causing Concern' sets out expectations that the local authority will work in partnership with the Regional Director (RD) and we will continue to:

- a. Analyse the performance of Staffordshire schools and, through the school categorisation process, use this information to identify maintained schools where we have concerns;
- b. Work with the RD, to ensure swift and effective action is taken when
- c. underperformance occurs in a maintained school, using intervention powers available to improve leadership and outcomes;
- d. Liaise with the RD where we have concerns about an academy school.

**Link to Strategic Plan**

23. N/A

**Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

24. N/A

**Community Impact**

25. N/A

**List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

None

**Contact Details**

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## **Work Programme**

### **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2023/2024**

This document sets out the work programme for Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023/2024.

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for scrutiny of highways infrastructure and connectivity, flood and water management, education, learning and skills. As such, the statutory education co-optees will sit on this committee. The Work Programme is linked to the Vision, Outcomes and Priorities detailed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26.

We review our Work Programme at every meeting. Sometimes we change it - if something important comes up during the year that we think we should investigate as a priority. Our work results in recommendations for the County Council and other organisations about how what they do can be improved, for the benefit of the people and communities of Staffordshire.

#### **Councillor Tina Clements**

Chairman of Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

If you would like to know more about our Work Programme or how to raise issues for potential inclusion on a Work Programme, then please contact Jonathan Lindop, Scrutiny and Support Officer ([jonathan.lindop@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.lindop@staffordshire.gov.uk)).

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
Friday 2 June 2023 at 10.00 am (Informal meeting)	Work Programme Planning	Annual consideration of potential areas of scrutiny focus during 2023/24. Resolved to be considered at informal meeting at 27 April Committee meeting.	
Wednesday 7 June 2023 at 10.00 am	<b>1. Work Programme Planning</b>	Annual consideration of potential areas of scrutiny focus during 2023/24.	
Page 64	<b>2. Residential Overnight Education</b> Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Neelam Bhardwaja/Paris Wood	Requested by Cabinet Member 17 March 2023 (email from Paris Wood) Programmed at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Postponed to July at 27 April Committee meeting.	
	<b>3. Highways Transformation Progress and Performance</b> Quarterly update Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Identified at 26 May 2022 Committee meeting. Scheduled at request of Chairman at 2 November 2022 Triangulation meeting. Previous update given 22 March 2023.	(a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted. (b) That satisfactory progress had been made in the Highways Transformation Programme to date. (c) That the Cabinet Member be urged to have regard to the above-mentioned comments in his work to implement the new future delivery model for Staffordshire Highways. (d) That Highways Functional Service Level Commissioning be added to their Work Programme for the meeting on 6 July 2023.
	<b>4. Economic Recovery, Renewal</b>	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee	(a) That the report be received and noted. (b) That the good progress made towards delivery of the County



**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
Page 65	and Transformation six-monthly Progress Report Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Anthony Hodge	meetings). Previous update given at 22 September 2022 Committee meeting.	Council's Economic Strategy 2023-2030, be welcomed. (c) That further updates on the various ambitions set out in the Strategy and targets in the accompanying Delivery Plan be brought to the Committee at six-monthly intervals. (d) That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills arrange for Members to receive an update on the development of the West Midlands Rail Freight Interchange. (e) That the Deputy Leader investigate the potential of promoting some of the initiatives available in support of the Economic Strategy, as set out in the report, through Staffordshire Schools.
	<b>5.</b> Digital Infrastructure – Update Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/David Atkinson	Proposed by Cabinet Member at 12 May 2022 Triangulation meeting. Considered at 10 November 2022 Committee meeting and six-monthly update requested.	(a) That the report and PowerPoint presentation be received and noted. (b) That the County Council's approach to deploying the Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework continue to be supported. (c) That a further update be brought to the Committee in six-months time.
	<del><b>6.</b> Traffic and Network Management Plan</del> Cabinet Member: David Williams	Requested by Cabinet Member 3 March 2023 (email from Hayley Fletcher) Programmed at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Postponed to June at 27 April Committee meeting. Further postponement requested by	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: James Bailey/Hayley Fletcher	Cabinet Member 3 May 2023 (email from Hayley Fletcher/Business Support).	
Thurs 6 July 2023 at 10.00 am	<del>1. Residential Overnight Education</del> Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Neelam Bhardwaja/Paris Wood	Requested by Cabinet Member 17 March 2023 (email from Paris Wood). Programmed at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Postponed to July at 27 April Committee meeting. Removal requested by Cabinet Member 30 May 2023 (email from Paris Wood) pending clarification from Senior Leadership Team.	
Page 66	<del>2. Traffic and Network Management Plan</del> Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: James Bailey/Hayley Fletcher	Requested by Cabinet Member 3 March 2023 (email from Hayley Fletcher) Programmed at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Postponed to June 2023 at 27 April Committee meeting. Further postponements requested by Cabinet Member 3 May and 11 May 2023 (emails from Hayley Fletcher/Business Support).	
	<b>3. Staffordshire Bus Strategy</b> Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Richard Rea	Requested by Cabinet Member 12 May 2023 (Teams message from Richard Rea).	(a) That the report be received and noted.  (b) That the proposed Enhanced Partnership (EP) and full review of the previously agreed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) be welcomed having regard to the likely availability of future Government funding for public transport.

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
Page 67			<p>(c) That the Cabinet Member consider revised ambitions for the new BSIP aimed at ensuring both rural and urban areas in the County are better served by public transport having regard to the feedback received from Government following the previously unsuccessful bid and County Council's Strategic Priorities.</p> <p>(d) In establishing an EP, the Cabinet Member prioritise Partnership working and communication with 'Local' Members particularly in respect of future significant service reconfigurations.</p>
	<p><b>4. Functional Level Service Commissioning</b> Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested at 7 June 2023 Committee meeting.</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the proposed new approach to the development of Functional Specifications for the delivery of highway works including the 'Main Headings' set out in the presentation, be welcomed.</p> <p>(c) That the Committee's concerns regarding the need for improved communication (especially with 'Local' Members'), responsiveness of third-party contractors to service requests, performance monitoring and enforcement, partnership working with other Public Sector organisations and actions to improve consistency, sustainability and tackle climate change be addressed in future revised</p>

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
			<p>Specifications across the range of Highway Works, as necessary.</p> <p>(d) That the Committee welcome the opportunity to input into the annual development of revised Functional Level Service Plans and Specifications and that further consideration be given as to what this should involve, at the appropriate time, having regard to their other Work Programme priorities.</p>
Page 68	<p><b>5.</b> Strategy for Special Provision Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Tim Moss/Halit Hulusi/Karen Withington</p>	<p>Requested by Cabinet Member 6 June 2023 (email from Karan Withington).</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the actions set out in Staffordshire's Special Education Needs and Disabilities Accelerated Progress Plan particularly in respect of Special Provision continue to be endorsed.</p> <p>(c) That the positive feedback received from the Department for Education following their twelve month review of progress against the APP be welcomed and that the 'next steps' and further actions required by the next review be implemented as necessary.</p> <p>(d) That the County Council's proposed Strategy for Special Provision be endorsed.</p> <p>(e) That the Cabinet Member continue his efforts to improve the processing of applications for statutory Educational Health and Care Plans so that pupils with Special Education Needs and</p>

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
<p>Thurs 28 September 2023 at 10.00 am</p> <p>Page 69</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly update Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Previous update given at 2 June 2023 Committee meeting.</p>	<p>Disabilities might have appropriate additional support, according to their needs, at the required time.</p> <p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That satisfactory progress had been made in the Highways Transformation Programme to date.</p> <p>(c) That the Cabinet Member be urged to have regard to the above mentioned comments in his work to implement the new future delivery model for Staffordshire Highways.</p> <p>(d) That the Cabinet Member investigate what additional support (financial and practical) could be provided to local communities by the County Council during Highway Improvement Works, in the future.</p>
	<p><b>2.</b> HS2 six-monthly update – Impact on and Opportunities for Staffordshire (focusing on Economy, Training and Skills) Cabinet Members: David Williams/Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Sarah Mallen</p>	<p>Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting, amended at 23 July 2021 Committee meeting.</p>	<p>(a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the efforts made to date to maximise the opportunities available to Staffordshire residents from the construction of the high-speed rail line, by HS2 be welcomed.</p> <p>(c) That a further update be brought to the Committee in April/May 2024.</p> <p>(d) That any further information received in relation to the above-mentioned requests be forwarded to Members as soon as possible.</p>

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
Page 70	<p><b>3.</b> Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Darren Farmer</p>	<p>Requested by Cabinet Member 11 May 2023 (email from Darren Farmer).</p>	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the Cabinet Member have regard to the various comments made by the Committee in finalising Staffordshire's Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030.</p> <p>(c) That the Cabinet Member explore how the County Council's engagement with school pupils (including those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)) wishing to undertake work experience placements could be improved having regard to the various ambitions contained in the Strategy.</p> <p>(d) That the Committee receive a progress update on implementation of the Strategy in six-months' time taking into consideration their other Work Programme priorities.</p>
	<p>Tues 17 October 2023 at 10.00 am (additional meeting)</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Avanti West Coast Main Line Rail Services Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Mark Osborne (Avanti West Coast)</p>	<p>Identified at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Request programme for October Meeting by Chairman (email 18 July 2023).</p>

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
			mentioned meeting so that the Committee can better understand the implications of recent Government announcements on rail services in the County.
Page 71	<del>2. Provision of Waste Transfer Facility Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Tim Cooper</del>	Requested at 21 August 2023 Triangulation Meeting. Postponed to 9 November 2023 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Emma Haynes 11 September 2023).	
Page 71	<del>3. Visit to Construction Site of Staffordshire History Centre Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Catherine Mann</del>	Requested at 21 August 2023 Triangulation Meeting. Moved to 22 November 2023 at request of service.	
Thurs 9 November 2023 at 10.00 am	<del>1. Tree Planting Net Zero by Nature Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/David Atkinson</del>	Proposed by Cabinet Member at 18 August 2022 Triangulation Meeting. Programmed for 10 November 2022 Committee meeting at 29 September Committee meeting. Postponed until April 2023 (indicative) Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Sarah Bentley 18 October 2022) owing to national delays in funding settlement. Further postponed at request of Cabinet Member (email Sarah Bentley 14	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
		March 2023) owing to delay in publication of commissioned report.	
Page 72	<p><b>1. Community Learning Self-Assessment Report 2022/23</b> Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Amanda Darlington</p>	Requested by email 7 June 2023 (Amanda Darlington on behalf of Cabinet Member).	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the 'Good' performance of the Community Learning Service during 2022/23 be welcomed.</p> <p>(c) That the Cabinet Member continue his efforts to address the above-mentioned areas of weakness with a view to achieving significant improvement by December 2023.</p> <p>(d) That the Cabinet Member consider reconfiguring future Self-Assessment reports to the Committee to include Key Performance Indicators listed by gender.</p> <p>(e) That the Cabinet Member consider reconfiguring future Self-Assessment reports to the Committee to better illustrate learners by ethnicity so that any inequalities highlighted can be addressed, as appropriate.</p>
	<p><b>2. North Staffordshire Air Quality Action Plan Ministerial Direction – Update</b> Cabinet Member: David Williams</p>	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for November 2023 Committee meeting (email Joanne Keay 12 July 2023). Postponed to 2 February 2024 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Darryl Evers 8 September 2023).	



**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey		
	<b>3.</b> Local Transport Plan 4 Development Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Request programme for October Meeting by Chairman. Postponed to 21 December 2023 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Darryl Evers 8 September 2023).	
Page 73	<b>4.</b> Highways Network Management Plan (Including Permits) – Annual Report Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Request programme for November Meeting by Chairman.	<p>(a) That the report be received and noted.</p> <p>(b) That the Street Works Permit Scheme Annual Report for Years 1 and 2 (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2022) indicating the successful operation of the Scheme during that time, be welcome.</p> <p>(c) That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport consider lobbying Central Government regarding the level of fees and charges applicable under the Scheme to ensure they better reflect the scope of the Authority’s strategic aims, as set out above.</p> <p>(d) That the proposed format/headings for the Traffic and Network Management Plan be supported and that the draft Plan be presented to the Committee for Scrutiny when it becomes available in Spring 2024.</p>
	<b>5.</b> Provision of Waste Transfer Facility	Requested at 21 August 2023 Triangulation Meeting. Postponed to 9 November 2023 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Emma Haynes 11	

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
	<p><del>Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg</del>  <del>Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Tim Cooper</del></p>	<p>September 2023). Withdrawn at request of Cabinet Member (email to Chairman from Simon Tagg 8 October 2023)</p>	
<p>Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 2.00 pm (additional meeting preceded by site visit to Staffordshire History Centre (Members only))</p>	<p><del>1. Natural Environment Strategy</del>  <del>Cabinet Member Simon Tagg</del>  <del>Lead Officers Darryl Eyers/Catherine Mann</del></p>	<p>Requested by email 16 August 2023 (Sarah Bentley on behalf of Cabinet Member). Postponed to 13 December 2023 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email Simon Tagg 6 November 2023).</p>	
	<p><b>2.</b> Staffordshire History Centre Delivery Update  Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson  Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Catherine Mann</p>	<p>Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for November 2023 Committee meeting (email Catherine Mann 7 June 2023).</p>	
	<p><b>3.</b> Libraries Performance  Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson</p>	<p>Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for November 2023 Committee meeting (email Catherine Mann 7 June 2023).</p>	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Catherine Mann		
<p>Thurs 21 Dec 2023 at 10.00 am            Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 2.00 pm            Page 75</p>	<p><b>1. Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly update</b>            Cabinet Member: David Williams            Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey</p>	<p>Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Previous update given at 28 September 2023 Committee meeting. Re-scheduled to 11 January 2024 Committee meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>1. Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation six-monthly Progress Report</b>            Cabinet Member: Philip White            Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Anthony Hodge</p>	<p>Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Previous update given at 2 June 2023 Committee meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>2. Digital Infrastructure – Update</b>            Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg            Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/David Atkinson</p>	<p>Proposed by Cabinet Member at 12 May 2022 Triangulation meeting. Considered at 10 November 2022 Committee meeting and six-monthly update requested. Previous update given to 7 June 2023 Committee meeting. Matter to be subject of a briefing note, at the request of the Chairman.</p>	

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
	<b>3.</b> Review of Schools' Performance Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Neelam Bhardwaja/Tim Moss	Requested at 21 August 2023 Triangulation Meeting.	
Page 76	<del><b>4.</b> High Needs Block Deficit Management Plan.</del> <del>Cabinet Member:</del> <del>Jonathan Price</del> <del>Lead Officers:</del> <del>Neelam</del> <del>Bardwaja/Tim Moss</del>	Requested at 21 August 2023 Triangulation Meeting. Matter to be subject of a briefing note, at the request of the Chairman. Scrutiny being undertaken by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
	<del><b>6.</b> Local Transport Plan 4 Development</del> <del>Cabinet Member:</del> <del>David Williams</del> <del>Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey</del>	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Request programme for October Meeting by Chairman. Postponed to December 2023/January 2024 Committee meetings at request of Cabinet Member (email from Darryl Evers 8 September 2023 with clarification from David Atkinson 4 October 2023).	
	<b>5.</b> Natural Environment Strategy Cabinet Member Simon Tagg Lead Officers Darryl Evers/Catherine Mann	Requested by email 16 August 2023 (Sarah Bentley on behalf of Cabinet Member). Postponed to 13 December 2023 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email Simon Tagg 6 November 2023).	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
Thursday 11 January 2024 at 2.00 pm	<b>1.</b> Local Transport Plan 4 Development Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Request programme for October Meeting by Chairman. Postponed to December 2023/January 2024 Committee meetings at request of Cabinet Member (email from Darryl Eyers 8 September 2023 with clarification from David Atkinson 4 October 2023).	
Page 77	<b>2.</b> Lighting for Staffordshire Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Scheduled at request of Chairman at 25 October 2023 Pre-Agenda Preview.	
	<b>3.</b> Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly update Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Previous update given at 28 September 2023 Committee meeting. Re-Scheduled to January 2024 at request of Chairman at 25 October Pre-Agenda Preview.	
Friday 2 Feb 2024 at 10.00 am	<b>1.</b> Zero by Nature Strategy	Proposed by Cabinet Member at 18 August 2022 Triangulation Meeting. Programmed for 10 November 2022 Committee meeting at 29 September Committee	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/ Catherine Mann	meeting. Postponed until April 2023 (indicative) Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Sarah Bentley 18 October 2022) owing to national delays in funding settlement. Further postponed at request of Cabinet Member (email Sarah Bentley 14 March 2023) owing to delay in publication of commissioned report. Cabinet Member requested item programmed for February 2024 Committee meeting (email Catherine Mann 7 June 2023).	
Page 78	<b>2.</b> North Staffordshire Air Quality Action Plan Ministerial Direction – Update Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for November 2023 Committee meeting (email Joanne Keay 12 July 2023). Postponed to 2 February 2024 Committee meeting at request of Cabinet Member (email from Darryl Eyers 8 September 2023). Further timing re-alignment might become necessary (email from Joanne Keay 10 October 2023 and referred to by Cabinet Member at 17 October 2023 Committee meeting). Request made by Cabinet Member to re-schedule if necessary at 17 October 2023 Committee meeting.	
Thurs 28 March 2024 10.00 am	<b>1.</b> Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly update Cabinet Member: David Williams	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 2021 and 13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Previous update given at 28 September 2023 Committee meeting.	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey		
Page 79	<b>2.</b> HS2 six-monthly update – Impact on and Opportunities for Staffordshire (focusing on Economy, Training and Skills)	Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting, amended at 23 July 2021 Committee meeting.	
Page 79	<b>3.</b> Country Parks Strategy Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Offices: Darryl Evers/Catherine Mann	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for March 2024 Committee meeting (email Catherine Mann 7 June 2023).	
	<b>4.</b> Cultural Strategy Cabinet Member: Victoria Wilson Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Catherine Mann	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for March 2024 Committee meeting (email Catherine Mann 7 June 2023).	
	<b>5.</b> Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Update Cabinet Member: David Williams	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023.	

**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey		
	<b>6.</b> Review of Jobs and Careers Brokerage Service Performance Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Anthony Baines	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for March 2024 Committee meeting (email Tony Baines 5 June 2023).	
Page 80	<b>7.</b> Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership – performance Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023. Cabinet Member requested programme for March 2024 Committee meeting (email James Bailey 26 June 2023).	
	<b>8.</b> Household Waste Recycling Centres Performance Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Tim Cooper	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023.	
	<b>9.</b> Employment and Skills Strategy – Progress Update Cabinet Member: Philip White	Identified at 28 September 2023 Committee meeting	



**Work Programme 2022/2023**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
	Lead Officers: Darryl Evers/Darren Farmer		

Any provisional matters requiring Committee confirmation/approval are shown in green

**Items for Consideration – Work Programme 2023/2024**

<b>Suggested Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Proposed Date of Meeting</b>
Tourism and Visitor Economy: Cabinet Member: Phillip White Lead Officers: Darryl Evers	Identified at 26 May 2022 Committee meeting.	To be advised
School Age Education – Development Post Pandemic (including school attendance (request by County Councillor Paul Snape Cabinet Member: Jonathan Price Lead Officers: Neelam Bhardwaja/Tim Moss	Identified at 15 June 2022 Committee meeting	To be advised
<del>Traffic and Network Management Plan            Cabinet Member: David Williams            Lead Officers: James Bailey/Hayley            Fletcher</del>	Requested by Cabinet Member 3 March 2023 (email from Hayley Fletcher) Programmed at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting. Postponed to June 2023 at 27 April Committee meeting. Further postponements requested by Cabinet Member 3 May and 11 May 2023 (emails from Hayley Fletcher/Business Support).	<del>To be advised</del> Programmed for 9 November Committee meeting.
Avanti West Coast (West Coast Mainline train operator)	Identified at 22 March 2023 Committee meeting following request from County Councillor Jeremy Pert.	<del>To be programmed</del> Programmed for 17 October Committee meeting. Six-month

### Items for Consideration – Work Programme 2023/2024

<b>Suggested Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Proposed Date of Meeting</b>
Cabinet Members: Philip White and David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey		update requested at 17 October Committee meeting.
<del>Lighting for Staffordshire Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey</del>	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023.	To be advised (email from James Bailey 26 June 2023). Programmed for 11 January 2024 Committee Meeting at 25 October Pre-Agenda Preview.
On Street Parking Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/James Bailey	Identified at Work Programme Planning session on 2 June 2023.	To be advised (email from James Bailey 26 June 2023).
People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Baines	Identified at 9 November 2023 Committee meeting.	To be advised.

Any provisional matter requiring Committee confirmation/approval are shown in green

### Standing Items 2022/2023

<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
HS2 Six-monthly Update – Impact on Staffordshire Cabinet Member: Philip White Lead Officer: Darryl Eyers/ Sarah Mallen	Requested at 26 February 2021 Committee meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 Committee Meeting). Update given to 22 March and 28 September 2023 Committee meetings. Next update due March 2024.	See above
Economic Recovery Renewal and Transformation Six-Monthly Progress	Requested at 15 July 2020 Triangulation meeting (amended at 23 July 2021 and	See above

### Standing Items 2022/2023

Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
Update (incorporating former APMG Report – Future Economy and Enterprise – Update) Cabinet Member: Philip White Leads Officer: Darryl Eyers/ Anthony Hodge	13 January 2022 Committee meetings). Further update incorporated into County Economic Strategy report to 23 March 2022 Committee meeting. Updates given to 19 October 2022, 7 June 2023 Committee meetings. Next update due December 2023 Committee meeting.	
Highways Transformation Progress and Performance Quarterly Update. Cabinet Member: David Williams Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/ James Bailey	Identified at 26 May 2022 Committee meeting. Next Update due September 2022 (Update for Q2 postponed until later in Q3 at request of Director (email from James Bailey 18 August 2022). Updates due 16 December 2022, 7 June and 28 September 2023 Committee Meetings. Next Update due January 2023.	See above
Digital Infrastructure Plan Progress Update. Cabinet Member: Simon Tagg Lead Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Baines	Identified at 26 May 2022 Committee Meeting. Considered at 10 November 2022 and 7 June 2023 Committee Meetings. Next update due December 2023.	See above

Any provisional matter requiring Committee confirmation/approval are shown in green



**Briefing Notes / Updates / Visits 2023/2024**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
TBC	Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management Plan		
TBC	Digital Infrastructure in Staffordshire Update		

**Working Groups / Inquiry Days 2023/2024**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details (Background)</b>	<b>Action / Outcome</b>
In progress	Civil Parking Enforcement	Requested by Cabinet Member on 10 August 2022.	Inquiry Day held on 17 April 2023. Working Group established at 7 June 2023 Committee Meeting. Working Group meeting #1 held on 5 September 2023.

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Any provisional matter requiring Committee confirmation/approval are shown in green

<b>Membership – County Councillors 2023-2024*</b>	<b>Calendar of Committee Meetings - 2023-2024</b> (All meetings to be held at County Buildings, Stafford unless otherwise stated)
Tina Clements (Chairman) Ross Ward (Vice-Chairman – Scrutiny) Peter Kruskonjic (Vice-Chairman – Overview) Charlotte Atkins Philippa Hadden Philip Hudson Graham Hutton David Smith Samantha Thompson Bernard Williams Hannah Gallimore (Co-optee) Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf (Co-optee)	<del>Friday 2 June 2023 at 10.00 am;</del>
	<del>Thursday 6 July 2023 at 10.00 am;</del>
	<del>Thursday 28 September 2023 at 10.00 am;</del>
	<del>Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 10.00 am (additional meeting);</del>
	<del>Thursday 9 November 2023 at 10.00 am;</del>
	<del>Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 2.00 pm (additional meeting);</del>
	<del>Thursday 21 December 2023 at 10.00 am; Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 2.00 pm;</del>
	<del>Thursday 11 January 2024 at 2.00 pm (additional meeting);</del>
	<del>Friday 2 February 2024 at 10.00 am;</del>
	<del>Thursday 28 March 2024 at 10.00 am.</del>

\* Unless otherwise stated.

