

## **COUNCIL AGENDA**

### **To:- The Members of the Staffordshire County Council**

Notice is given that the meeting of the Staffordshire County Council will be held in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Stafford at 10.00 am on Thursday, 9 December 2010 to deal with the matters set out on the agenda.

Nick Bell  
Chief Executive  
1 December 2010

## **AGENDA**

(**Note:** The meeting will begin with prayers)

### **PART ONE**

#### **General Housekeeping and Declaring an Interest**

1. **Apologies for absence (if any)**
2. **Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16.5**
3. **Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 October 2010**  
(Pages 3 - 16)
4. **Chairman's Correspondence**

The Chairman will mention a range of recent items of news which may be of interest to Members

5. **Leader's Statement** (Pages 17 - 20)

The Leader will inform the Council about his work and his plans for the Council, and will give an overview of decisions taken by the Cabinet (and Portfolio Holders) since the previous meeting of the Council

6. **Questions**

Questions to be asked by Members of the County Council of the Leader of the Council, a Cabinet Member, or a Chairman of a non-Scrutiny Committee. The question will be answered by the relevant Member and the Member asking the question may then ask a follow up question which will also be answered.

7. **Recommendations** (Pages 21 - 24)

8. **Report of the Chairman of:**

- a) Staffordshire Police Authority (Pages 25 - 30)
- b) Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (Pages 31 - 36)

9. **Petitions**

An opportunity for Members to present and speak on petitions submitted by their constituents

10. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman of the Council will move the following motion so that the County Council can consider confidential business in private:-

“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 on pink paper)

11. **Recommendations** (Pages 37 - 38)  
(exemption paragraph 1)





### 1. Fire/Bomb Alerts

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs. Do not stop to collect personal belongings, do not use the lifts, do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

### 2. Attendance Record

Please sign the Attendance Record Book, which will be located at the top of the main staircase. Please ensure that the book is signed again in the afternoon if you are attending the adjourned Council meeting.

### 3. Mobile Phones

Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Council Chamber.

### 4. Tea/Coffee

Refreshments will be available from 9.30 am.

### 5. Questions

Questions must be addressed to the Chairman, or to the Leader of the Council or to a Portfolio Holder or to the Chairman of a Committee. Notice in writing of any question must be delivered to the office of the Chief Executive at least three clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council i.e. **by not later than midnight on Sunday, 5 December 2010**. All questions and answers will be circulated around the Chamber before the commencement of the meeting. The questioner will be invited to read out his/her question. Similarly, the person responding will read out the reply. The Chairman will then permit the questioner to ask one supplementary question on each question/answer. Further information on Questions can be found in Paragraph 8 of Section 11 of the Constitution.

**NB. Under the new arrangements approved by the Council on 20 May 2010, questions for the County Council meeting on 10 February 2011 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Sunday, 6 February 2011.**

### 6. Notices of Motion

A Notice of Motion must reach the Chief Executive nine clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council, i.e. **by not later than midnight on Monday, 29 November 2010**. Further information on Notices of Motion can be found in Paragraph 11 of Section 11 of the Constitution.

**NB. Under the new arrangements approved by the Council on 20 May 2010, Notices of Motion for the County Council meeting on 10 February 2011 must reach the Chief Executive by not later than midnight on Monday, 31 January 2011.**

## **GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS - WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY**

### **DEFINITION OF WHAT IS A PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST**

**A PERSONAL INTEREST** is one where your well-being or financial position, or those of a relative or a friend would be affected by the decision.

You automatically have a personal interest if you have given notice in the Register of Members' Interests under Paragraph 14 and 15, eg. if you are a School Governor appointed by the Council.

**A PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** is where a member of the public knowing the facts would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it would prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY?**

If you have a **PERSONAL** interest you can stay but you must disclose its existence and its nature to the meeting.

An example of what you should say

*"I have a personal interest in item number..... on the agenda. The interest is ....."*

If you also have a **PREJUDICIAL** interest you must withdraw from the room when the matter is being discussed.

An example of what you should say

*"I have a personal and prejudicial interest in item number..... on the agenda. The interest is ..... I shall leave the room when that matter is being discussed"*

### **PLEASE MAKE IT CLEAR WHETHER IT IS A PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

It would be helpful if, prior to the commencement of the meeting, members informed Democratic Services Unit of any declarations of interest, of which they are aware. This will help in the recording of the declarations in the minutes of the meeting.

### **DECLARING INTERESTS AT FULL COUNCIL**

The Code of Conduct only requires that personal interests (or personal and prejudicial interests) are declared where the matter to which the interest relates is being considered. Some items will be mentioned in the papers for Full Council but are not actually being considered by Full Council. In particular, some items are mentioned in the Leader's Statement as having been dealt with in Cabinet but are not actually mentioned or discussed at full Council. In such circumstances the Monitoring Officer's advice to members is that there is no need to declare an interest unless the particular matter is mentioned or discussed. As a general rule, members only need to declare an interest at full Council in the following circumstances:

- Where a matter is before the Council for a decision and/or
- Where the matter in which the member has an interest is specifically mentioned or discussed at the Council meeting.

## Minutes of the County Council Meeting - 14 October 2010

Present:

<b>Attendance</b>		
Ben Adams	Brian Edwards	Mary Maxfield
Philip Atkins	Matthew Ellis	Geoff Morrison
Ray Barron	Terry Finn	Barrie Mycock
Lee Bates	John Francis	David Nixon
Erica Bayliss	Bob Fraser	Michael Oates
Peter Beresford	Gill Heath	Ian Parry
John Bernard	Mark Heenan	Kath Perry
David Billson	Derrick Huckfield	Steve Povey
Len Bloomer	Christina Jebb, FRSA	Robert Reade
Henry Butter	Ivan Jennings	Rex Roberts, OBE
Frank Chapman	Phil Jones	John Rowley
Tim Corbett	Philip Jones	Liz Staples
Pat Corfield	Kathy Lamb	Stephen Sweeney
Derek Davis, OBE	Frank Lewis, MBE	Simon Tagg
William Day	Geoff Locke	Steve Tranter
Veronica Downes	Robert Marshall	John Wells
Janet Eagland	Geoffrey Martin	Alan White
Ray Easton	Mike Maryon	Mark Winnington

Apologies for absence: Paul Atkins, Brian Beale, John Cooper, Dylis Cornes, Peter Davies, Mike Lawrence, Ian Lawson and Jeremy Oates

### **PART ONE**

#### **28. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 July 2010**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2010 be confirmed.

#### **29. Chairman's Correspondence**

##### **Great British Care Awards**

Members were informed that the County Council had won the West Midlands regional award for promoting "Dignity in Care" based on the work done at Brighton House in Newcastle. In addition, Glenys Robinson OBE, one of the Council's social care assessors, had won the "Outstanding Contribution to Social care Award". Both of the aforementioned award winners would now go through to the national finals in the New Year. Brighton House was also shortlisted for the "Putting People First" award.

## **NHS West Midlands Health and Social Care Awards**

The Chairman informed Members that the County Council had recently been awarded the "Excellence in Commissioning" award in the NHS West Midlands Health and Social Care Awards for the savings it had achieved in the cost of residential and nursing placements. The Council was also runner-up in the same category for the new "Memory Clinic" services it had commissioned to support people in the early stages of dementia.

## **Macmillan Cancer Support - World's Biggest Coffee Morning**

The Chairman informed Members that, on Friday, 24 September 2010, she had hosted a coffee morning in the County Buildings in support of the Macmillan Biggest Coffee Morning Appeal. The event raised £374 and the Chairman extended her thanks to those Members and staff who attended the event for their support.

## **50 Years Service**

Members were informed that the Chairman and Leader of the Council, together with the Chief Executive, hosted an afternoon tea for Marty Whitehouse from the Council's ICT division who, on 3 October, completed 50 years service with the County Council. Marty had joined the Council in October 1960 and originally worked in the Data Prep team of the Treasurers Department where she was one of the first staff to be involved with IT in the Council preparing "punched cards" that were used to input data into the Council's first mainframe computer system.

## **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**

The Chairman informed the Council that, on 5 October 2010, she hosted afternoon tea in the Oak Room for volunteers from Douglas MacMillan Hospice, Katherine House Hospice, Landywood and District Volunteer Help Centre, SCALE and the National Memorial Arboretum who had recently been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. These five Staffordshire based volunteering groups were amongst 103 charities nationally to receive the Award this year in recognition of the outstanding contributions they had made to local communities by voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others.

## **County of Staffordshire Rose**

The Chairman informed the Council that, on Thursday, 23 September, she had had the pleasure of visiting Sandon Hall for the Staffordshire launch of the County of Staffordshire Rose. The rose was originally the brainchild of Brian Cox, a member of The Staffordshire Society. It took over ten years to produce and was officially launched at the Hampton Court Flower Show in June. The rose had already won gold, silver and bronze medals in various international trials.

## **Charity Music Show in aid of Help for Heroes – Council Chamber, Friday 26 November 2010**

Members were informed that the Chairman was to host a Charity Music show in the Council Chamber on 26 November 2010 to raise money for her chosen charity, "Help for

Heroes". All the performers would be past or present Staffordshire County Council employees. The evening would take on a Victorian theme with members of staff dressed in Victorian costumes and the County Building dressed for Christmas. Tickets for the show were available from the Civic Office.

### **30. Leader's Statement**

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work; his plans for the Council; and an overview of decisions taken by the Cabinet (and Portfolio Holders) since the previous meeting of the Council.

#### **Staffordshire Compact Update including the Third Sector Commissioning Standards**

(Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Mr Lee Bates concerning the Staffordshire Compact, Mr Ben Adams indicated that the Compact was a crucial element in being able to offer the most straightforward of contracting arrangements to third sector organisations, particularly the smaller organisations who were of an insufficient size to be able to compete for larger contracts.

#### **Treasury Management Outturn Report for the Year ended 31 March 2010**

(Paragraph 4 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Mr Derek Davis concerning the size of the Authority's borrowing and its assets, Mr Philip Atkins indicated that the Council's overall level of borrowing stood at £532.239m whereas its assets, at current trading value, stood at £1.5bn.

#### **Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

(Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Mrs Christina Jebb asked whether the announcement that East Staffordshire Borough Council had withdrawn from the proposed Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership would have any effect on the Partnership's viability. In response, Mr Philip Atkins indicated that East Staffordshire Borough Council had indicated their intention to join the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and that this decision reflected the complex economic geography of the region. He added that such partnerships needed to have "porous" boundaries to enable adjacent Partnerships to work together. He concluded by indicating that, irrespective of East Staffordshire Borough Council's decision not to be a member of the proposed Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, he believed that the case for the Partnership was still a strong one.

#### **Consultation on the provision of Magistrates and County Courts in Staffordshire**

(Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

Several Members expressed concern at the Courts service's proposals to change Magistrates and County Court arrangements in Staffordshire which, if implemented, would result in the closure of the Magistrates and County Courts in Tamworth and the

closure of the County Court in Burton. Mrs Liz Staples expressed the opinion that the foundation for the judicial system should be local people dispensing local justice and that, if the proposals went ahead there would be a loss of local knowledge. In response to Members' concerns, Mr Philip Atkins indicated that the County Council would continue to press the Courts service to retain the courts.

### **Supporting the Staffordshire Economy – Staffordshire Business Support Fund** (Paragraph 9 of the Statement)

Mr Matthew Ellis explained that there was to be a further extension of the fund to support care orientated businesses. Another recent innovation was "Business in a Box" under which the County Council were providing help and advise to help "kick start" businesses providing care for vulnerable people. Mr Ellis also announced that the second trench of funding under the Community Wellbeing Fund was now available.

### **Staffordshire County Council – New Operating Model** (Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

In response to questions from Members in relation to the Council's new operating model, Mr Philip Atkins indicated that implementation of the new model was moving forward as quickly as possible with the intention that full implementation would be achieved by the time the 2011/12 budget was set in the spring of next year.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the Statement of the Leader of the Council be received.

(b) That an amendment to the Investment Strategy be approved to allow investment in UK Government treasury bills for up to 1 year maturity to be added to the list of in-house specified investments.

### **31. Petition Regarding the Closure of Burntwood Household Waste Recycling Centre**

The Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Democracy concerning the receipt of a petition opposing the proposed closure of Burntwood Household Waste Recycling Centre.

They were informed that the petition contained 12,222 signatures which, under the Council's Petitions Policy, was sufficient to trigger a debate at the Council meeting.

Mr Steve Tranter, one of the "local" members, welcomed the recent announcement by Mr. Robbie Marshall, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure that the Burntwood Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRS) was to remain open whilst a review of the longer-term financial viability of all HWRC sites in the County was undertaken. He extended his thanks to Mr Marshall for listening to the views of local residents.

In response, Mr Marshall indicated that, in spite of the difficult economic conditions, the Directorate had been able to find sufficient savings elsewhere in its waste budget to be able to keep the Burntwood site open.

Several Members spoke in support of the decision to keep the Burntwood HWRC open and Mrs Christina Jebb stated that she hoped that Mr Marshall would commit to full and open consultation during the review of the longer-term financial viability of all such sites in the County. Mr Derek Huckfield added that this review needed to take account of a range of issues including traffic generation and the increased incidents of fly tipping if one or more sites was identified for closure.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the receipt of the petition be noted.

(b) That the decision of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure to keep Burntwood Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) open whilst a review of the longer-term financial viability of all HWRC sites in the County is undertaken, be noted.

### **32. Electoral Review of Staffordshire**

The Council considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Electoral Review of Staffordshire which was being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

They were informed that the Review was being undertaken as, since the last review (200/2003), the electorate in County Electoral Divisions had changed to the extent that 42% of those Divisions now had electorates which varied by more than 10% from the average. (The threshold for a review was 30%). The aim of the Review would be to correct this so as to ensure that each County Councillor represented approximately the same number of electors as his or her colleagues.

The first stage in the Electoral Review process was to determine the appropriate size of the Council (the total number of Councillors). This figure would then be used as the basis for consultation on the other stages of the Review which would consider the possible electoral arrangements including the number of Councillors per Electoral Division; the boundaries of each Division; and the names of Divisions.

Members considered a draft response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation on Council size which made the case for a future scheme of representation based on 62 Members representing 62 divisions.

Several Members expressed their support for the proposals contained in the draft response to the Commission as they felt that a Council's size of 62 was appropriate for Staffordshire. Differing views were expressed however with regard to whether the Council should press for single Member divisions across the whole of the County and it was therefore suggested that those Members representing dual Member divisions should be given an opportunity to submit their views before the final response was forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Several Members expressed their concern at the cost of the Review, especially bearing in mind that only six years had passed since the completion of the last Electoral Review in Staffordshire. Mr Mark Winnington responded by indicating that he had already written to the Secretary of State to convey Members' concerns.

**RESOLVED** – That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to update the draft response to take on board Members’ views and to then forward the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by the consultation deadline of 25 October 2010.

### **33. Report of the Audit Committee**

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Mr. R. Roberts OBE, presented to the Council an overview report detailing the work of the Audit Committee over the past year.

Following the consideration of the report, Mr Alan White indicated that, with the anticipated demise of the Audit Commission, the work of the Council’s Audit Committee would become more important.

**RESOLVED** – That the report of the Chairman of the Audit Committee be received.

### **34. Proposed Changes to the Constitution**

The Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Democracy proposing amendments to the Constitution to reflect changes to Council structures and processes following the introduction of a New Operating Model (NOM) for the Authority.

**RESOLVED** – That the Constitution as revised (as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report considered by the Council) be approved and that the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

### **35. Questions**

Mr. David Nixon asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

#### **Question**

I see in last week’s daily paper the headline ‘Academy plan for all Surrey schools.’  
Quote - “The (Surrey) council said that a wholesale conversion to academy status was preferable to a small number of schools opting out of local authority control”.  
Seeing that Surrey County Council will be able to reduce drastically its L.E.A. bill with regard to pension provision, maintenance and heating of buildings etc. etc. are Staffordshire County Council thinking of going down this route as it is Conservative flag ship policy?

#### **Reply**

Staffordshire County Council has no plans to adopt a model of wholesale ‘conversion’ to Academy status for our schools. We believe that the current diversity of educational provision, including various governance arrangements serve the Staffordshire population well. We work with all our ‘family’ of Staffordshire schools, regardless of their status or governance arrangements and will support those schools which choose to become academies or Free schools in the future.

In terms of school funding, Staffordshire's position for 2010-11 is as follows:-

- Almost 91% of funding for schools goes, via the local council, directly to schools
- The remainder is used to:-

support pupils educated out of school and in alternative provision (1%);

purchase services on behalf of schools, for example, building insurances, software and other licences and annual maintenance contracts (2%);  
support costs met centrally on behalf of schools, including maternity pay (1%);

payments to third parties for educational provision, including payments to private, voluntary and independent providers of nursery education (3%); and

pay for a number of central support services, mainly related to meeting the needs of pupils with more complex needs (2%).

It is possible that some savings would be made, however, the level of savings would depend on what statutory duties or powers were retained by the authority, which we are expecting to be included in the next education bill and whether the authority continued to provide services to academies. It is therefore unlikely that the council would see any significant financial benefit.

### **Supplementary Question**

A lot of this year's Education Budget is spent on bureaucracy. As schools opt out of local authority control will the Cabinet Member look to see if savings can be made?

### **Reply**

Many of the grants we get from Central Government are ring fenced and we therefore have little control over how this funding is utilised. I believe that this is a quite bureaucratic and wasteful way of doing business and I am hoping that the Government, in its comprehensive spending review, will do away with these ring fences so that we can utilise the resources to much greater effect. The County Council is a very lean organisation with most of the education funding going directly to schools. What we need to do is to tackle Whitehall red tape.

Mr. Ray Easton asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment

### **Question**

How much salt and grit has been ordered for the County's roads for this coming winter and how does this compare with last winter?

## **Reply**

In light of the problems of last year's most severe winter for 30 years a review of the winter service operations took place over the summer and as part of that we have increased our opening salt stocks from 13,500t to 30,000t. This is now sitting in our depots.

This week there will be a general communication to all Members, District Councils and Parish Councils regarding our Winter Service preparations

## **Supplementary Question**

When I asked this question last year you said that there were adequate stocks which proved not to be the case. May I therefore ask the Cabinet Member that, in the light of the increased stock levels this year, all grit bins will be refilled and that "B" roads will be gritted throughout the winter?

## **Reply**

Grit bins are being re-filled at the moment and there are approximately 1,200 such bins across the County. The level of salt and grit stocks we held in 2009/10 winter season had been sufficient for the last 28 years and it was the fact that we had an exceptionally bad winter last year which resulted in the supply of salt and grit running low. For this coming winter, if we begin to run low on salt and grit we have a contract in place with other Authorities in the region to obtain more supplies.

Mr. Ray Easton asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure.

## **Question**

What effect will the abolition of Regional Strategies have on the Council's Mineral and Waste Planning responsibilities?

## **Reply**

The County Council has in place policies on which to make decisions about regularising, permitting or refusing minerals and waste proposals.

In the case of future waste policy, we have just consulted on an Emerging Waste Core Strategy which is not dependent on a Regional Strategy being in place. We have reviewed regional waste projections, reassessed the need for additional waste management facilities/capacity in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and identified broad locations for new waste facilities which expand on regional policy and criteria set out in national waste planning policy.

Despite the abolition of regional policy, the Coalition Government advises that local planning authorities should continue to use the background technical documentation supporting the draft Regional Strategy in the process of preparing their waste core strategies, provided that there is a reasonable justification for doing so. The

information on which the draft regional strategy on waste was based is up to date, robust and credible having gone through an Examination in Public and provides a basis for our waste policy work.

For minerals policy, the Coalition Government has advised that "Planning Authorities can choose to use alternative figures for their planning purposes if they have new or different information and a robust evidence base." The County Council will be working on setting local targets for the provision of sand and gravel and crushed rock. The starting point will be using the evidence gathered in support of the March 2010 exercise completed by the former Regional Assembly, which resulted in reduced targets for the provision of aggregates in Staffordshire. The effect of abolishing the Regional Strategy remains unclear in terms of setting targets for the provision of sand and gravel and crushed rock

### **Supplementary Question**

What are you going to do about this uncertainty?

### **Reply**

It will be for us to determine our own targets both for waste and for mineral extraction rather than having the regional assembly or other regional bodies telling us what to do. The Coalition Government's decision to make such decisions more locally based has got to be a step forward and is in Staffordshire's interests.

Mrs. Christina Jebb asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment

### **Question**

(a) Which Safer Routes to Schools schemes, specifically, have been cut and which remain in operation?

(b) What is the estimated cost saving for each of the abandoned schemes?

### **Reply**

Over recent years a number of Safer Routes to School schemes have been successfully completed and the programme has largely achieved its original purpose in that all priority schools with significant safety issues have been addressed. As a result of the Coalition Government's intention to reduce the national debt and the reductions to this year Government grants announced in July, some of the current Safer Routes schemes have been deferred. Whether or not they can continue next year will depend on the amount of grant allocated by Government for next years programme. However, we will continue to consider any specific safety issues for inclusion in forward programmes regardless of the position with the Safer Routes programme. Members will no doubt wish to raise any such issues in their discussion with officers over their Divisional Highway Programmes.

At the same time we are pressing ahead with our targeted 20 mph plans and the deployment of speed indication devices to reduce speeds around schools and our road safety teams who continue to deliver tailor made programmes in schools.

Six Safer Routes to School schemes with works planned for the current year have had the works deferred in whole or in part and will be reviewed when the grant funding for next year is known. The value of the deferred schemes is £300k. The schemes are listed below. The first two have had some works carried out.

- Rawlett High School Tamworth
- Leek High School
- The Friary High School Lichfield
- Endon SRS
- Madeley High School
- Sir Thomas Boughey High School Halmer End.

### **Supplementary Question**

Officers have told me that at least the Endon Safer Routes to Schools scheme has not been “deferred” but “cut” completely. How much has been saved by cutting these schemes and by cutting the Endon scheme in particular? In addition, are you quite comfortable in justifying the £300,000.00 savings when the cost to the taxpayer of a serious road traffic collision can be up to £1m?

### **Reply**

The first thing I need to clear up is that I said “deferred” because of the reductions in government grants and I do mean “deferred” not “cut”. I do not have to hand the details of the cost of each of the schemes and I will therefore respond to you in writing. With regard to whether I feel comfortable with the issue of reducing expenditure on such schemes when taking account of the cost of a road traffic accident, I am not comfortable with anything that endangers road safety. However, we need to take a balanced view particularly in the light of reductions in public sector spending. The road safety we have in this county is second to none and we will endeavour to maintain these high standards.

Mrs. Christina Jebb asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

### **Question**

Staffordshire Police Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) willingly agreed to help out as Appropriate Adults while Staffordshire County Council developed their own policy and training programme to meet their responsibilities in providing Appropriate Adults for the county. There appears to have been an unfortunate disregard for the valuable service carried out by ICVs in this respect and poor communication about the county council's subsequent change of policy in using ICVs. The refusal to honour a claim form for an ICV carrying out an Appropriate Adult duty in late August was the first indication given of the county's change of policy.

Would you write to each of the ICVs involved to thank them for stepping into the breach and explain the county council's changed policy which means you no longer require their help?

Would you also honour the expenses claim which was refused for an ICV carrying out an Appropriate Adult duty on behalf of the county council?

### **Reply**

The County Council's social work services have always provided the appropriate adult service, both inside and outside of normal office hours. Tamworth custody (Police) entered into their own local agreement with their independent custody visitors, using them as appropriate adults rather than utilising the services available via the Local Authority.

Following a multi agency review of the Appropriate Adult service, in 2008, the Emergency Duty Service (out of hours Social Work services) secured further funding from the Youth Offending Service in order to provide a more robust and responsive service to young people in custody. A protocol was signed by Superintendent Juliet Prince of Staffordshire Police on 26 June 2009. We would expect that this would have been disseminated to relevant staff within the Police Service.

In 2009, Youth Offending Service and the Emergency Duty Service completed a recruitment and training process to secure / train further staff to provide a more robust Appropriate Adult service. This was open to anyone who wished to apply. Following recent discussion with Chief Inspector Ricki Fields, he advised that Tamworth Custody unit had wrongly continued to use an Independent Custody Visitor in the role of Appropriate Adult and requested that, as a gesture of good will, the Local Authority should pay the expenses incurred by the said Independent Custody Visitor. He stated that he would ensure that this would not occur again and that all of his custody suites would be advised accordingly.

I can confirm that 3 claims were submitted to the Youth Offending Service and that these claims were paid on the 14 September 2010.

Whilst we greatly appreciate the work that the ICVs have undertaken on behalf of Staffordshire Police, we need to be clear that this has been at the request of Staffordshire Police, rather than the Local Authority. The Local Authority has always maintained its own Appropriate Adult Service.

### **Supplementary Question**

The County Council used ICVs from across the whole of the County, not just Tamworth. You do not appear to be aware of the discussions that took place prior to the new protocol being put in place. Would you therefore write to the ICVs that were used as appropriate adults to thank them for their services?

## Reply

You are quite correct in that I am not aware of the discussions that have previously taken place regarding the use of ICVs as appropriate adults. I am, however, comfortable with regard to where we are now. The issues you have raised today would have best been dealt with outside of this Chamber and could have been dealt with more speedily. If similar issues arise in the future I would suggest that you contact me directly in order that I can deal with the matter in the most appropriate way.

### 36. Notices of Motion

Mr. Philip Atkins moved, and Mr. Ben Adams seconded the following motion under Standing Order No. 11:

“Staffordshire County Council recognises that there is a need for fundamental reform of the relationship between central and local government if we are to reduce public spending, tackle entrenched social, economic and environmental problems and rebuild trust in democratic accountability. The council supports the Local Government Association’s detailed proposals for Place-based Budgets which would bring together different streams of public spending into a single budget at the local level. It believes that this proposal would: save public money; cut waste and bureaucracy; allow for better decisions to be made transparently and accountably; and increase local communities control over spending in their area. It recommends that the Government begins the process of reform immediately by implementing Place-based Budgets throughout England and Wales as part of the 2010 Spending Review.”

Several members spoke in support of the motion and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED** – That the motion be carried.

### 37. Report of the Chairman of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Members welcomed the news that Rising Brook Community Fire Station in Stafford, the first of ten new Fire Stations in the county, was opened on 3 September 2010.

Members also expressed their concern at the recent increase in the number of attacks on fire fighters.

Mr Terry Finn reported that a team of fire fighters from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service recently came 18<sup>th</sup> in the World First Aid Championships.

**RESOLVED** – That the Periodic Report of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be adopted.

### **38. Petitions**

#### **Request for Traffic Management Measures to control parking along Manor Close, Alexander Close and Short Street, Uttoxeter**

Mr. Geoff Morrison presented a petition from local residents seeking the introduction of traffic management measures to control parking along Manor Close, Alexander Close and Short Street, Uttoxeter.

**Chairman**

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Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.



## Statement of the Leader of the Council

### 1. Joint Second Quarter Performance and Budget Monitoring

The Cabinet has received the joint finance and performance report covering the second quarter of 2010/2011 which focuses on the delivery of the new Strategic Plan – “Staffordshire Unites 2010 – 2015” and the associated Medium Term Financial Strategy. Based on these six months it is predicted that the Council is on course for a budget overspend for the year of £6.279m (1.6%). This is a significant improvement over the Quarter 1 projection (which highlighted a potential overspend of £9.177m) and reflects improvements in the budgets in Children, Young People and Families and in Social Care and Health.

*(Cabinet – 20 October 2010)*

### 2. Treasury Management report for the half-year ended 30 September 2010

The Cabinet have received a summary of the County Council's Treasury Management activities for the first six months of the year which contained details of both borrowing and investment decisions and the performance of internally managed funds and those funds managed by external cash managers.

In the last six months steps have been taken to save around £100,000 in interest payments through debt rescheduling (replacing existing loans with new loans at a lower rate of interest).

In the light of revised interest rate forecasts, which suggest that interest rates will remain “low for longer”, it is proposed to increase risk marginally to take advantage of longer term investment interest rates (up to one year) that are around 0.80% higher than three month rates.

**RECOMMEND TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL** - That the Approved Investment Strategy (AIS) for 2010/11 be amended to allow investments up to 12 months for nationalised banks in the UK only.

*(Cabinet – 20 October 2010)*

### 3. Improving the Way We Work

The Cabinet have considered the progress being made in relation to the introduction of the new operating model for the County Council which came into effect on 1 October 2010 and is based on a “one council” approach.

This new model will transform the county council into an organisation which: provides better value for money for tax-payers; puts customers' first; and improves the prosperity of the county by supporting families, communities and enterprise, underpinned by the Council's five core values.

As part of this new approach, a number of initiatives have been introduced including more effective partnership working, a new single access number and longer opening hours to county council services.

*(Cabinet – 17 November 2010)*

#### **4. Staffordshire Public Sector Network**

The Council is in the process of purchasing a new telephone and broadband internet network to replace the existing network which has reached the end of its life. Rather than just seeing this as a County Council issue, we are approaching this from the point of view of purchasing a network that will be available for the whole of the public sector in Staffordshire as well. By doing this we are able to provide much better value for money for the people of Staffordshire, and we will be working hard to encourage our partners to take advantage of this opportunity to work better together.

*(Cabinet - 17 November 2010)*

#### **5. Staffordshire Travel Concessions Scheme**

On 1 April 2011, the County Council will take over responsibility for concessionary travel for elderly and disabled persons. This is a national scheme that was previously administered by the District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire but which the Government has now asked the County Council to carry out instead.

The scheme entitles pass holders to travel without charge on local buses throughout England between 0930 and 2300 (Monday-Friday) and all day on Saturdays, Sundays, and Bank Holidays. Some districts and boroughs have chosen to offer additional concessions in addition to the national scheme and they continue to have the power to do so if they wish.

The Cabinet have also approved arrangements for free travel at the above times for a companion travelling disabled people who would be unable to travel unaccompanied.

*(Cabinet – 17 November 2010)*

#### **6. Staffordshire Cares - Development of a Single Community based Health and Wellbeing Service - Progress and Next Steps**

The Cabinet have noted the progress of the negotiations with the three Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in Staffordshire to establish a single service to deliver community health and social care services.

The benefits expected from integration include: -

- Ensuring an integrated approach to the assessment, treatment and care of service users, leading to more appropriate services that will better serve the needs of the population of Staffordshire
- Enabling holistic, individual assessment, care planning and care delivery within a whole system framework, resulting in greater opportunities for independent living and recovery
- Providing a seamless interface for citizens, users of services and their carers, securing, wherever possible, a single point of access
- Providing the vehicle for unified contracting arrangement for service agreements with SSPCT and NHSNS, leading to better value for money.

It was envisaged that the new integrated service would come into effect from 1 April 2011.

*(Cabinet – 17 November 2010)*

## **7. Portfolio Holder Delegated Decisions**

Portfolio holders have recently taken decisions in respect of the following matters:

- The granting of a 5-year fixed term Farm Business Tenancy in respect of Holding No.7 Manor Farm.
- The disposal of 5 parcels of former highway land in Hednesford (totalling 0.141 acres) to Cannock Chase District Council.
- An amendment to the Constitution of the Schools Forum to include representation from Academies within the local authority area.
- The granting of a 12 year Farm Business Tenancy in respect of Holding No. 44 Plardiwick.
- The granting of a 25 year lease of 2,538 sq. m. of land at Merryfields School, Hoon Avenue, Newcastle-under-Lyme for the provision of a Nursery for children with special needs together with associated family support.
- The removal of pre-reception (nursery) places at Western Springs Community Primary School, Rugeley and Manor Hill First School, Walton, Stone from maintained provision from 31 August 2011.
- To lower the age limit at Henry Chadwick Community Primary School, Hill Ridware, Rugeley in order to create a Foundation Stage Class from 1 January 2011

## **8. Forward Plan**

The Cabinet have approved the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2010 to 31 March 2011, which contains details of the decisions which the Cabinet are expected to take during that period.

## **9. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

I was delighted that on 28 October 2010, Vince Cable announced that our LEP had received the go-ahead. We are one of just twenty-four successful applications. We have worked hard with Staffordshire business and other public sector partners to sell our case. I am grateful to all those who have helped us to make progress. There is still a lot to do but I am convinced that this partnership will bring jobs and prosperity to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The Shadow Board met for the first time on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 and we will be preparing bids to the Regional Growth Fund as a priority.

## **10. Staffordshire Good Food Awards**

I was delighted to attend the prestigious awards ceremony which celebrates "local enterprise" in promoting the excellent taste of top quality food sourced from the county. It is a real showcase for home grown talent with local companies flying the flag for Staffordshire. My congratulations to all the winners and to those shortlisted for awards.

## **11. Peri-Urban regions**

During early November 2010 I visited Brussels to address the European Commission. Together with colleagues from France and Holland, we challenged the commission to develop considered policies for "peri-urban regions". These are areas such as Staffordshire with sizeable populations but no major urban centres; areas where the proximity of large cities such as Birmingham and Manchester bring economic benefits and challenges. I hope that the Commission pushes this work forward and that it at least can develop a more meaningful description than "peri-urban".

## **12. Seasons Greetings**

This is the last County Council meeting of 2010 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of the County Council for their hard work and dedication in representing their communities during 2010. Despite political differences, the common issue that binds us together is our passion for improving the lives of those that we represent. I look forward to working with all Members during 2011 to achieve our ambitions for the county of Staffordshire.

I hope that all County Council Members, all County Council officers, all of our partners and all those who live and work in Staffordshire have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**P.E.B. Atkins**  
**Leader of the Council**

**Recommendations to the Council****9 December 2010****Proposed Amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers**

## W2R - Delegation of Authority to Officers

1. As the W2R Project progresses work is underway on the management arrangements for the contract. Under the approved Inter Authority Agreement the governance structure comprises four layers, the main decision making components of which are the Contract Management Board and the W2R Project Board. Both involve member and officer level representation.

Decisions are divided into various categories ranging from those which need to be taken by the County Council as the 'Lead Authority' to decisions which bind all Authorities who are party to the Agreement.

Delegated authority has been approved for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure to act on behalf of the Authority at meetings. In addition to seeking approval to their appointment as representatives of the Authority on the Contract Management Board this report seeks the necessary delegation of Authority to Officers, namely:

*The Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive:*

Delegated authority to make any decisions classified as 'Authority Representative Matters' on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and the Contract Management Board in connection with the operation of Project W2R except where such matters have been specifically reserved for Cabinet decision.

*The Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Contract Manager:*

Delegated authority to make any decisions on 'Contract Board Matters' on behalf of Staffordshire County Council in connection with the operation of Project W2R except where such matters are reserved for Cabinet decision.

## Planning Committee functions

2. As part of consideration of decision making processes for the newly formed Place Directorate a review is underway of the Delegation/Sub-Delegation Scheme in relation to those functions under the purview of the Planning Committee.

The current delegations are attached at Appendix A. Whilst detailed proposals for a completely new Scheme of Delegation to Officers will be submitted in due course, the review has shown that for operational purposes the early addition of two further delegations would be appropriate, namely:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To grant or refuse a Certificate of Lawfulness (CLU) for minerals and/or waste development.
2. Where there is a material planning objection to the application or matter in question, to refuse planning permission for minerals or waste development except in the case of a substantial new site or the significant extension of an existing site.
3. **Recommended (i)** - That the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Contract Manager be appointed as County Council representatives on the W2R Contract Management Board and be granted delegated Authority as indicated at 1 above; and  
**(ii)** That the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive be granted additional delegated powers in relation to Planning Committee matters as indicated at 2 above; and  
**(iii)** That the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to amend the Scheme of Delegation to officers accordingly

### Extract of Scheme of Delegation to Officers

8.16 Where there is no objection to the application or matter in question from:-

- The Chairman of the Planning Committee or the nominated opposition spokesperson;
- The relevant District Council or Parish Council;
- The local member of the County Council;
- A statutory consultee other than Sport England;

and no more than four letters of objection on planning grounds have been received (or such objection does not amount to a material planning consideration) then the Director may (subject at the Director's discretion to consultation with the Chairman, or Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee) decide to:-

- Grant planning permission for the County Council's own development other than those relating to proposals of the Development Services Leader;
- Grant planning permission for minerals and waste developments which do not involve the development of a substantial new site or the significant extension of an existing site
- Refer applications for the County Council's own development to the Secretary of State where the application involves a Listed Building or development in the Green Belt or Sport England have objected.



## **Staffordshire Police Authority**

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### **Periodic Report on Authority Matters**

#### **Former Members - Thanks**

1. **Report** - The Authority has noted the resignation of Randolph Conteh, a Councillor Member on the Authority nominated by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, effective from 18 October 2010.

The Authority has expressed its thanks and appreciation to Mr. Conteh for his substantial contributions to the work of the Authority, particularly to the communities in Stoke-on-Trent that he so ably represented, over the past eight and a half years. Members wished him well in his future endeavours.

#### **New Members – Welcome**

2. **Report** - The Authority is pleased to welcome Brian Ward as a new Councillor Member nominated by the City Council with effect from 17 November 2010.

#### **Former Executive Officers – Thanks**

3. **Report** – The Authority has expressed its gratitude to the work and achievements of its former Chief Executive Alan Wallis and its Deputy Chief Executive Don McBain, who have retired from the Authority with effect from 30 September and 31 October 2010 respectively.

Members have wished them both well in their retirement.

#### **Chief Executive to the Authority**

4. **Report** – Damon Taylor has taken up the role of Chief Executive from 1 November 2010

Mr. Taylor is continuing to develop the existing open, honest, challenging and constructive relationship with the Chief Constable and his Executive Team, plus the Authority's key partners, to ensure that the people and communities of Staffordshire are kept safe and reassured by the Force delivering quality services, professional excellence and value for money.

#### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

5. **Report** – The Authority has reviewed its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2011/16, built on previous strategies and incorporated policies and developments arising from the Policing Plan, the Workforce Plan etc.

The MTFS has been prepared over a five-year timescale to better reflect the challenges arising from the effects of the recession on public finances and including the reduction in central government grant for 2010/11 of £1.7m. The MTFS assumed that Central Government Funding would be reduced by 4.4% per annum between 2011 and 2016 and that Council Tax would be frozen in 2011/12, and would increase

by 1% per annum thereafter. Specific assumptions had also been made regarding pay awards and financing costs to fund the capital programme.

The Authority faces an extremely challenging position for the period 2011/16, including the need to identify savings of £11.2m in 2011/12 and the requirement to ensure that the Communities First Strategy delivers the savings required in the MTFs, whilst meeting the commitment level of resources for neighbourhood policing responsiveness, specialist investigation and protection and prevention.

### **Revenue Monitoring 2010/11**

6. **Report** – As at 30 September 2010 the overall budget forecast outturn showed savings of £3.041m (1.6%) when compared to the approved budget of £188.259m. The reduction in £1.7m in grant funding by the Government, notified in May 2010, has been met from the following budget heads: NI savings due to no increase in 2010/11 (£0.5m); Minimum Revenue Provision (£0.5m); IT savings (£0.2m); Overtime savings (£0.4m) and other general savings, including stationery and furniture (£0.1m).

Incorporated within the overall budget, the Authority's budget showed a forecast outturn saving of £0.261m, with £0.083m of this relating to an under spend on the running costs of the Authority itself, being mainly attributable to the retirements mentioned in paragraph 3 above. It was envisaged that actual savings as at the year end may be greater than this reported figure as a result of steps instigated by the Chair of the Authority re members' attendance at conferences and courses, travel arrangements etc.

### **Capital Programme 2010/11**

7. **Report** – The Authority's capital spend up to 31 March 2011 amounted to £14.987m for all projects approved in 2010/11, requiring a total of £10.074m to be funded from borrowing; representing a reduction of £3.192m on the previous approved budget.

### **Communities First Programme - Update**

8. **Report** – The Authority has received an update from the Chief Constable on the Communities First Programme that provides a blue-print for the Authority and the Force to keep the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent safe and reassured by the achievement of three strategic priorities, namely: delivering a quality service; delivering professional excellence and delivering value for money.

The re-shaping of the Force, creating nine Local Policing Teams co-terminus with local authority boundaries, will provide a new local policing structure from April 2011, streamlining the organisation to respond to the challenges of performance targets for 2011/12 onwards. This new approach will protect neighbourhood policing numbers and preserve frontline services at a time of diminishing finances and strengthen existing partnership arrangements throughout the county.

The Authority will continue to drive the strategic direction of the Force and the scrutiny and challenge of its performance, whilst ensuring that the development of the Communities First Strategy better aligns scarce resources to operational requirements and the needs and priorities of communities.

## **Force Performance Review 2010/11**

**9. Report** – Staffordshire Police has a clear focus on performance targets that matter to our communities, with targets being meaningful and based upon stated public priorities.

The Authority has reviewed the performance of the Force for the period 1 April to 30 September 2010 against the ten key priority targets for 2010/11 that showed that more than 2,600 fewer crimes were recorded in Staffordshire in the first half of 2010/11 as compared to the same period in 2009/10. The total number of offences having dropped by 6.5% to 37,679, as compared to 40,285 for April – September 2009.

Figures for serious acquisitive crime - which includes burglary, robbery and vehicle crime - fell to 4,860 from 5,702, a drop of 18% during the period April – September 2010. Business-related crime has also fallen to 4,257 from 4,854, a drop of 12% when compared with the same period last year. The figures for the first half of 2010/11 also show a 3% reduction in the number of violence with injury crimes across the Force-area, with a total of 4,770 being recorded, compared to 4,937 in the same period in 2009/10.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains a priority for both the Authority and the Force. Staffordshire Police continues to work closely with local authorities and other partners to tackle ASB. Between April and September 2010, 87% of people who called the Force to report instances of ASB were satisfied with the overall service they received, as compared to 82% during the same period in 2009/10.

The Authority has congratulated the Chief Constable on the drop in crime during the first-half of this year, the continuing increase in public satisfaction and the pleasing overall satisfaction rate of people calling the Force with the overall service they have received of 89%. These performance figures demonstrate that Staffordshire Police is continuing to make good progress in our mission to keep our communities safe and reassured.

Whilst the Authority welcomes the reduction in the number of cases of violence with injury, it will continue to drive to reduce it still further. It is acknowledged that the Force is working very hard with colleagues at local authorities and other partner agencies to clamp down on violence in all of its forms and make our communities even safer. The Force's 'Operation Safer Nights', launched in March 2010 to tackle violent crime (much of which is fuelled by alcohol) has seen numerous initiatives reducing violent incidents in our town centres.

### **Consultation and Engagement on the Communities First Programme and Force Performance, the Budget 2011/12 and Partnership Working**

#### **Local Authorities and Communities**

**10. Report** - The Authority has concluded that holding briefing and consultation sessions in local council chambers during January, as part of its overall consultation strategy, works well and has previously invited all county, unitary and district local

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authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to consider if they wish to receive a briefing on the above issues.

A programme of briefings has been agreed, as detailed below, which includes briefings with both the County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council:

Council	Date & Time	Venue
East Staffordshire	Monday 17 January 2011 6.30pm	Town Hall, Burton-upon-Trent
Lichfield	Wednesday 5 January 2011 6.00pm	District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield
Newcastle	Positive response received, awaiting a (second) proposed date	Civic Offices, Merrial Street
South Staffordshire	Tuesday 25 January 2011 6.30pm (provisional)	Council Offices, Histons Hill, Codsall
Staffordshire County	Friday 7 January 2011 2.30pm (provisional)	County Buildings, Stafford
Stoke-on-Trent	Monday 24 January 2011 2.00pm	Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent
Tamworth Borough	Wednesday 26 January 2011 6.00pm	Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth

A response from Cannock Chase District Council, Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to the offer of a Briefing has yet to be received.

Members of the Authority, together with members of your Council, are invited to attend the appropriate Briefing in their community. The Authority is committed to engaging with other local authorities, the business community and the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on the Force's performance, service delivery, other local policing issues and budget and precept issues, and especially to seek views on next year's priorities and budget prior to the Authority's meeting in February 2011 when the precept will be set.

### Chambers of Commerce

**11. Report** - In accordance with the duties placed on the Authority under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Authority is to meet representatives of the North and South Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses on **Tuesday 18 January 2011**.

The consultation meeting will, as in previous years, provide an opportunity for the Chambers' representatives to raise questions and advise on their views for priorities for 2011/12 and future developments in partnership with the business community, as well as fulfilling the Authority's requirement to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers.

## **Police Authorities – The Future**

### **Government Consultation Paper 'Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' – Authority Response**

12. **Report** – The Authority has considered the Government's consultation paper detailing its vision for policing and how it will cut crime; be more directly accountable to the public; and offer value for money.

The Authority has considered carefully the 23 consultation questions posed and submitted a response to each, together with a paper on many other aspects of the Government's proposals not covered in the specific questions. At this stage, although the detailed proposals are not available, the Authority has expressed serious concerns about the proposals and, in particular, how one person (the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)) will be able to fulfil the role currently undertaken by 17 members. The Authority is also concerned at the apparent lack of real powers in the arrangements put in place to act as a check and balance to the work of the Commissioner. The Authority also believes that the cost of the elections for PCCs, forecast to be in excess of £60m nationally, could be better utilised on front-line policing.

The Government has announced its intention to publish a response document to the consultation and a number of the proposed changes will feature in the Reform and Social Responsibility Bill to be placed before Parliament on 1 December 2010. The Authority will monitor closely the publication of the Bill and respond appropriately as the detail develops.

### **Home Affairs Select Committee Enquiry into Police and Crime Commissioners and Seminar on the new landscape of policing**

13. **Report** - The Authority has submitted a response to the Home Affairs Select Committee looking specifically at the proposed introduction of PCCs from 2012 and their intended relationship with Chief Constables and the role of the proposed Police and Crime Panels.

The Authority and the Force attended a seminar hosted by the Home Affairs Select Committee on 22 November 2010 in Cannock that examined the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on police numbers and the services that the police are able to provide, together with the implications of the proposals contained in the consultation paper 'Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. The Chief Constable, Mike Cunningham, and a local beat officer from Cannock, sat alongside the Committee during its discussions on police efficiency.

Delegations from a wide range of organisations, together with representatives of local bodies, gave their views on how policing could be more efficient in the current economic climate. Delegates also expressed views on the proposed changes to the policing landscape, which as well as the introduction of directly elected PCCs, will

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see the abolition of a number of agencies such as the National Policing Improvement Agency and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre to be replaced by the National Crime Agency. It was also announced that the Committee was shortly to publish a series of reports on its work into policing, the first being on the issue of PCCs, to be published in early December 2010.

**MRS. C.G. HEATH**  
**Nominated Police Authority**  
**Member**  
Staffordshire County Council

**MR. H.C. BRIAN**  
**Nominated Police Authority**  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

## **Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Periodic Report of the Chairman on Authority Matters**

### **Sandyford Community Fire Station Proves Popular**

1. The new Community Fire Station at Sandyford, near Tunstall officially opened on Friday 29 October 2010.

Members of the local community were invited to visit this new facility from Wednesday 3 November to meet the crew and tour the brand new Community Fire Station. On the first day alone there were over 250 visitors to the new Fire Station, with over 1000 people taking the opportunity to see their new facility over the first three days.

Partner and community groups are able to book the new community facilities at the Fire Station, which can accommodate up to 30 people.

### **Push the Button Launch**

2. On 21 October 2010, the Service launched the countywide 'Push the Button' campaign designed to encourage the weekly testing of smoke alarms. Despite nine out of ten homes having a smoke alarm, less than a third of households tested their smoke alarm every week. The idea for this campaign came from Gary Pearce a Firefighter based at Burslem Fire Station.

The Authority has extended their thanks to the Communications Team for their efforts in producing a video to support the Campaign which can be viewed on the Service's web site and on "you tube".

The "Push the Button" campaign is just one of a number of campaigns organised by the Service.

### **Our Heroes Award Winners 2010**

3. The Evening Sentinel "Our Heroes" Awards presentations took place on 30 September. Within the category 'Beyond the Call of Duty' both Keith Stubbs, Area Commander for South Staffordshire and Firefighters from Burslem picked up runner up awards for their proactive work within the community - Keith for his 30 years within the Fire and Rescue Service and carrying out voluntary work and Burslem Firefighters for their Junior Firefighter course which had been running since 2004.

### **United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Rescue Challenge 2010**

4. Members of Red Watch from Lichfield Fire Station took part in the United Kingdom Rescue Challenge hosted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service between 30 September and 2 October. The team, consisting of Steve Whitehouse, Rob Horton, Damon Peaker, Chris Gaunt and Chris Ward, produced an excellent performance and were placed 27<sup>th</sup> out of 47 teams taking part. The Trauma team of Chris Gaunt and

Chris Ward also came 27<sup>th</sup> following their 16<sup>th</sup> placing in the World Trauma competition held in September in Cork, Ireland

### **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Education and Business Awards 2010**

5. The Service's Training and Development department attended the presentation evening of the Education and Business Awards held at the County Showground and were presented with a certificate and trophy as winners of the 'Work Experience Champion Award'

### **Spending Review**

6. The Authority were informed that, over the spending review period, the Service's formula grant allocation was to be reduced by 25%, leading to a £6m reduction in Government Grant by 2014. Importantly, the Department for Communities for Local Government had listened to representations and had agreed to back load the reductions to the last two years to give the Service time to put in place various changes. This would be a significant challenge and the level of reductions would be difficult to achieve without affecting services.

### **National Citizenship Service Pilot Project**

7. The Authority had been asked by the Cabinet Office, on 11 August, to make an initial expression of interest for attracting funding for the Citizens Pilot Project. Unfortunately the Authority's bid was unsuccessful but other ways of providing a similar project were now being explored.

Local MP, Mr Lefroy, had been in contact with the Cabinet Office and had been advised that the bid had been very close to being accepted. They also added that if an application was made next year by the Authority then it was very likely that it would be successful. It was intended to run a pilot scheme in Staffordshire this year which would help the bid for next year.

### **West Midlands Regional Management Board**

8. The Regional Management Board, at its last meeting on 25 August 2010, recommended to the region's Fire and Rescue Authorities that they agree to dissolve the West Midlands Regional Management Board and that they give delegated powers to their Chief Fire Officers in consultation with the Chairs of Authorities, to take all necessary steps to achieve dissolution of the Board at the earliest practical date, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

The recommendation from the West Midlands Regional Management Board regarding the dissolution of the Board was approved by the Authority.

### **Report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive**

9. Fire casualties for the period April to June 2010 saw an increase of two when compared to the same period in 2009/10. There had been no fire deaths for the period.

Despite an increase in Home Fire Risk checks, primary fire activity between April and June 2010 saw an increase of 29 when compared to the same period in 2009/10, a five percent increase. There has been a 300% increase in caravan fires from 2 to 8.

During the period April to June 2010 there had been an increase of three accidental dwelling fires (from 162 to 165) when compared with the same period in 2009.

Members were informed that no national trends had been identified in respect of new electrical appliances that were operating in the standby mode. Some fires had been caused by faulty wiring and overloaded plugs. The advice given by the Service was to unplug all electrical appliances apart from fridges and freezers at night.

Grass fires saw an increase of 314 for the period April to June 2010 when compared to the same period in 2009/10, a 61% increase. This had been attributed to the very dry start to the year. The small fire activity (excluding grass fires) had increased by 79 when compared to 2009/10, a 14.5% increase. Local Area Commanders and their teams were focusing their efforts on reducing these types of fire.

Arson performance had worsened across most areas over the first quarter of 2010. Factors such as weather patterns could influence certain types of arson fires such as small grass fires and nuisance fires and a dry early start to the year may have been a contributory factor.

Arson cases in schools were much lower in Staffordshire than in other fire authority areas as the Service operated "school watch" over the school holidays which involved firefighters keeping a visible presence around school premises.

Partnership work was being undertaken around the county with local authorities and others in relation to derelict buildings, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent. Absent landlords often caused issues for the local authorities as void/derelict buildings could not be demolished without their permission. Suggestions were made that the Authority should put pressure on central government to get planning authorities to take action to demolish derelict buildings. .

A new policy on Unwanted Fire Signals was to be introduced shortly and would reduce the Service's attendance at these calls.

There had been no attacks on firefighters for the first quarter. It was hoped that the presence of CCTV cameras on appliances, which were clearly marked, was acting as a deterrent.

### **Fire Fatality**

10. The Authority were informed of a recent fire related death in Brown Edge, Stoke-on-Trent where an elderly male suffered 70% burns after dropping a cigarette onto his pyjamas. The man was treated at the scene before being transported to Hospital where he later died .

### **V Music Festival**

11. In August 2010 the V Music Festival was attended by Officers from the Central Risk Reduction team who worked closely with the promoters and colleagues from the Police, South Staffordshire Council, and other agencies to ensure that the event ran smoothly and safely, and that all necessary public safety issues were addressed. The Service provided on-site first response fire cover and an officer was in the Event Control Room throughout the event. 50 incidents were attended during the Festival. The cost of the Service's attendance at the event was fully recoverable from the event organisers.

### **Provision of Domestic Sprinkler System**

12. A Domestic Sprinkler System was recently commissioned by the Service for a vulnerable family in Tamworth. The issues were highlighted by the Youth Intervention Officer over a household with a family member with mental health issues. An assessment was carried out and, due to the high fire risk, a permanently fitted BS9251 domestic sprinkler system was commissioned by the Service and became operational on 10 September 2010. The Third Sector Voluntary Co-ordinator also became involved with the family to investigate potential additional help that could be given to assist in the long term well being of the family.

### **Business Online Learning Solution**

13. John Berrisford, the Service's Business Support Manager had developed a working partnership with Terry Breslin of ATF Solutions Ltd to enable the delivery of on line fire safety training via the Service's web site. This was the second phase of low cost learning solutions that had been developed by the Service with their partners. The on line training modules would be used to deliver fire safety, and health and safety training in any work place that had access to the internet. The cost to businesses to use this facility would be low starting at £4.99 per person depending upon the number of employees. The Authority had extended its congratulations to Mr Berrisford on his achievement.

### **Members Training and Development Strategy**

14. A Member Training and Development Strategy had been agreed by the Authority with a view to that each Member had a one to one interview to assess their training needs. The Authority already facilitated a lot of training with Members but the Member Development Strategy would formalise how this training should take place.

The Strategy recognised that much of the training that Members required could be delivered in-house and would on many occasions involve the Service and its officers.

This approach recognised the resource costs of external training and the fact that, much of what Members needed in the way of knowledge of the Service could be obtained through a direct connection to the operational element of the Service or by sharing training opportunities with Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

### **Corporate Safety Plan 2011-2014**

15. The Authority was informed of the work which was ongoing on the combined Corporate Safety Plan 2011 - 2014. The document would be made available for consultation from November 2010 to February 2011 with a view to the finalized Plan being published in April 2011.

The Corporate Safety Plan combined the Corporate Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and provided clear understanding of the aims of the Service, strategic direction and objectives, over the next three years.

The document had been written in such a way that regardless of the financial situation the priority areas would not change although the way in which services were delivered might. Work was being undertaken by the Force's Business Transformation Team to define how the Service would need to adapt.

The Authority has extended their thanks to the team for their work in compiling the Corporate Safety Plan.

**L W BLOOMER  
CHAIRMAN**



Not for publication by virtue of paragraph(s) 1  
of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972

Document is Restricted

