

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 15 December 2021

Present: Alan White (Chairman)

Attendance

Mark Deaville	Mark Sutton
Julia Jessel	Simon Tagg
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	David Williams

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Johnny McMahon

Also in attendance: Arshad Asfar, Syed Hussain and Conor Wileman (local members).

Apologies: Victoria Wilson

PART ONE

80. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

The following Members declared an interest in accordance with Standing Order 16.5:-

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Simon Tagg	93	Personal	Member of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board
Philip White	93	Personal	Member of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board

81. Decision notice of the meeting held on 17 November 2021

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 be approved.

82. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the coverage of the trial of the father and stepmother of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes this month acting as a reminder of the vital role the Council and its partners play in protecting vulnerable children and young people in Staffordshire from harm and neglect; the huge challenge facing the Council in caring for the elderly, with demand for adult

social care rising sharply in Staffordshire this year, alongside difficulties in recruiting home care staff; the long-awaited publication of the Government's Social Care White Paper and the need for quality adult social care to be put on a long-term, sustainable footing; the Council awaiting its annual funding settlement from Government; the new Omicron variant of Covid-19 entering the UK with cases confirmed in Staffordshire; and the Council and its eight district and boroughs agreeing to work closer than ever on the things that matter most, including the creation of a County Deal bid to Government, under its plans to level up the country be noted.

The Leader also extended his thanks to his cabinet colleagues, and everyone who works for Staffordshire County Council for their hard work and dedication over the past year. He also wished them a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and a well-earned break over the festive season.

83. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 December 2021

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 December 2021 be received.

84. Update from COVID-19 Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board

Reasons for the Decision – To consider an update from the COVID-19 Member led Local Outbreak Control Board including:

- The number of new cases of Covid in Staffordshire remained high, and slightly below the England average. Cases were particularly high among school age children and were continuing to cause significant disruption to education. The Council continued to work with schools and other settings to prevent and control outbreaks.
- The emergence of the Omicron variant of the virus was of concern because it showed significant mutations and there is the possibility it might escape the immunity conferred either by prior infection or vaccination. Further data was required before it was possible to be confident about the level of the threat posed by the Omicron variant.
- Recent Government guidance on the use of face coverings in public places and the intention nationally to offer all adults a booster as well as children over 12 two doses by the end of January 2022.
- HM Government had provided a series of one-off grants to support care providers, which had been distributed via local authorities.
- In light of growing challenges nationally with recruitment and retention of care staff, HM Government had now provided a Workforce Recruitment & Retention Grant to fund measures to recruit and retain care staff. Local authorities had been asked to disseminate the Grant as quickly as possible. The Workforce Recruitment & Retention Grant

allocation for Staffordshire was £2.398m. The grant must be spent by 31 March 2022 or any unused funds must be returned.

- In Staffordshire the NHS had already provided £2.8m to support recruitment and retention in home care, and this funding was currently being disseminated to home care providers. A larger proportion of the Workforce Recruitment & Retention Grant would therefore be used to support care homes, Supported Living and Extra Care providers who had not benefited from the NHS funding.

Decision – (a) That the update from the Covid Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board be noted.

(b) That the HM Government grants already disseminated to care providers be noted.

(c) That the dissemination of the Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund to care providers be endorsed.

85. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Update

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

- Staffordshire continuing to see a real appetite from the private sector to invest in the County including the new Pets at Home facility in Stafford and the proposals for the Chatterley Valley site, Meaford, ROF Featherstone and i54 in South Staffordshire.
- JCB taking delivery of the new British built Toyota Corolla Hybrid vehicle for its national sales team, which links with their stated intention to drive forward their own low emissions technology through electric and hydrogen powered vehicles.
- Concern over the challenges Covid19, including the new Omicron variant, continues to create for businesses.
- The help available to businesses via extensive support packages, or the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub, including the Get Started Scheme, a new support programme for people looking to start their own business or who may have recently done so.
- The claimant count in Staffordshire saw a further decrease of 440 claimants between September and October 2021 to a total of 18,560, 3.5% of the working age population, compared to 5.9% regionally and 4.9% nationally.

- The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming Universal Credit currently stands at 5.2%. Encouragingly, for the seventh month in a row Staffordshire had seen a decrease in the youth claimant count with a decline of 85 over the last month to a total of 3,375, reflective of more young people being able to return to work in hardest hit sectors such as retail and hospitality and the record levels of job vacancies currently available.

86. VCSE Capacity Building Recommission

	<p>“A strong, flexible and sustainable VCSE partnership is at the very heart of what makes our communities tick.</p> <p>The helping hand that they can offer can make the real difference to people living independently, helping people getting back on their feet and supporting people with their lives.</p> <p>This is an opportunity now to build on the excellent value and excellent services offered by our partners as we continue to emerge from the Covid pandemic”.</p> <p>Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture</p>
--	---

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a brief update on the current approach to VCSE capacity building (including the findings of recent engagement with key stakeholders) and to agree proposals to commission a new VCSE Capacity Building Framework.

Decision – (a) That the brief update provided on our current approach to VCSE capacity building, including the findings of recent engagement with key stakeholders be noted.

(b) That approval be given to go out to market to commission a new VCSE Capacity Building Framework.

(c) That authority be delegated to the Director for Corporate Services to award the VCSE Capacity Building Framework Agreement (“Framework Agreement”) to the successful tenderers and authorise the award of any subsequent call-off contracts.

(d) That authority be delegated to the Director for Corporate Services to extend the VCSE Capacity Building Framework Agreement by an additional

fourth year, subject to both the Council's annual MTFS process and a review of performance.

87. Burton Town Deal - Proposed Library Move

 	<p>"As a Cabinet, collectively this has been an incredibly tough decision to make. The Town Deal process means projects which will ultimately join together to regenerate the town have to be evaluated separately. This can make it difficult to see the benefit the proposals will bring when they all come together and weight these against alternative proposals and opposing views.</p> <p>The fantastic proposals put forward for the waterfront area by the borough council this week, including a new public square, food hall, viewing tower and visitor centre as a gateway to the Washlands rely on the library relocating from its current site. This will be transformational for Burton, reconnecting the town with the river and creating a huge point of attraction to bring people into the town.</p> <p>We recognise that many of those who responded to the public consultation are opposed to the loss of the Market Hall as a market however, the borough council which owns the building has already made it clear that it is unviable in its current form. They will make the final decision on how the building will be used in the future but clearly no change is not an option.</p> <p>The debate in the town has moved on recently and even the alternative proposals for a food hall put forward by Burton Market Action Group would appear to displace the current market traders with no guarantee that it would safeguard the future of the building. The library relocation offers a reliable way of protecting this important heritage building and in response to feedback from the consultation rising concerns about alterations to the structure of the building the plans have been revised to avoid the need for major changes.</p> <p>The Town Deal process still has some way to go before the plans are finalised but we are pleased</p>
---	--

that we are able to play our part in the regeneration and improvement of Burton town centre.”

Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

“We have for many months now set out the reasons behind the proposed library move and conveyed these through our comprehensive public consultation and engagement programme. These include the ability to restore a valuable heritage building in the Market Hall and giving the building a secure long-term future. In addition, it would bring more people to Market Place outside, offering opportunities to new and existing businesses in what is currently an under-used part of the town centre. The proposals would allow us to effectively move other county council functions into the building and provide services for small businesses.

We have a strong track record in library service transformation and modernisation and aim to emulate the success of the projects in Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford which have proved hugely popular in those communities. We want to offer the same quality of facilities to the people of Burton

Relocating the library to the Market Hall will allow the county council to create a first-class modern library and community hub in an inspiring space. Our benchmark will be Lichfield Library which has won national attention for the quality of the library building and has acted as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area.

The eight-week consultation was a vital part of the decision-making process, enabling everyone to have their say. We carefully considered the feedback of around 1,500 people who responded either via the questionnaire or at one of the face-to-face opportunities. This represents around two per cent of the population of the town. Just over three-quarters of those who responded were opposed to the scheme and we have carefully considered the reasons they gave for doing so”.

	Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture
--	--

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the detailed development of the project proposals for the proposed Library move alongside the findings of the recently completed public consultation.

Decision – (a) Subject to confirmation from Government and the Town Board that a Town Fund allocation of £6,991,549, or greater, is awarded following submission of the necessary Business Case, and that the identified shortfall of £1,036,382 can be resourced from either the Town Board or other external funding; Cabinet agrees to re-locate Burton Library and consolidate other County offices into the Market Hall and Crossley House with a maximum capital investment from the County Council of £1,067,000.

(b) Cabinet delegates authority to negotiate with East Staffordshire Borough Council, secure their ongoing support and deal with all aspects of any property transactions necessary to implement (a) above to the Property Sub Committee.

(c) Cabinet delegates authority to submit the Final Business Case to East Staffordshire Borough Council to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the County Treasurer.

88. Burton Town Deal - River Trent Cycle / Footbridge Update

	<p>“The proposed River Trent cycling and pedestrian bridge would utilise nearly £7million from Burton’s Town’s Fund allocation – offering a fantastic opportunity to improve sustainable transport and revitalise the riverside areas. Our aim is to secure the additional funding needed to ensure we have an all-year round accessible facility.</p> <p>The bridge would also extend the leisure uses of the Washlands area, including proposed new visitor centre, by creating a circular walking or cycling route without traffic.</p> <p>The Towns Fund investment would bring long-term benefits to Burton and the surrounding areas and complement other proposed projects in the programme. These in turn will help attract future investment, businesses and create jobs”.</p> <p>Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet</p>
---	---

	<p>Member for Economy and Skills</p> <p>“The new bridge over the River Trent would support the future regeneration of Burton and improve connectivity into the town for walkers and cyclists on the east of the river. It would also attract visitors and boost tourism on the riverside area and businesses located there.</p> <p>During the pandemic more people have discovered enjoyment through walking and cycling and we want to sustain that legacy in Staffordshire wherever we can. The new bridge would provide a pleasant traffic-free route for people, providing benefits for communities in the long-term.</p> <p>We recently completed a public consultation on the project with most respondents supporting the scheme. Their feedback on elements such as lighting will help us to shape the design. The funding allocation unfortunately falls short of the bridge we would need to build – one which is accessible all year and that will not be affected by high water levels. We will work with the Towns Fund Board to bid for the additional funding needed”.</p> <p>Cllr David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>
---	---

Reasons for the Decision – To consider progress, since August 2020, in respect of the proposal to create a new traffic free bridge over the River Trent in Burton to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists between the east and west sides of the river, increasing access to the town centre and the Washlands park.

Decision – (a) That the earmarked award of £7,183,099 from the Burton Town Fund grant towards the creation of a new traffic free bridge over the River Trent at Stapenhill Hollows, Burton be noted.

(b) That the feedback received as part of the public consultation exercise which was conducted as part of the Business Plan process be noted.

(c) That the risks around affordability and useability in the flood plain be noted and that the Cabinet be supportive of the project proceeding conditional on these issues being mitigated to the Council’s satisfaction

which will require additional external funding to be secured to enable the full scheme to be implemented as originally presented to the Town Deal Board.

(d) That the submission of the Business Case to East Staffordshire Borough Council, as the accountable body, in conjunction with the Burton Town Fund process agreed by Government, in the sum of £7,183,099 to secure the pre-Business Case costs, future design fees, tendered cost of the river crossing, associated ramps and footway links and a 12.5% construction contingency fund as set out in the Business Case, be agreed.

(e) That the preparation of a complimentary Business Case in readiness to include within the County Council's bid to the Levelling Up Fund, or other suitable external funding opportunities, to secure the necessary additional funding to complete the entire length of the stilted walkway structure either side of the new river crossing linking to Stapenhill Road to the east and Andressey Bridge and the Remembrance Gardens to the west, be agreed.

(f) That the Cabinet receives further reports once the detailed design stage has been completed and the tendered construction costs are known in order to establish the position of the separate funding bids which combine to create an overall project and does not proceed to award any construction contract until Cabinet are satisfied that sufficient funding and contingencies are in place.

(g) That the principle of adopting the bridge, ramps and stilted walkway structures as part of the local publicly maintainable highway network, whilst continuing to work with East Staffordshire Borough Council and Government to investigate innovative ways of offsetting future maintenance costs including potential commercial sponsorship and the retention of any unspent construction contingency to be ring-fenced to this specific bridge as a commuted maintenance sum, be agreed.

89. Home to School Transport - Review of Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme



"Earlier this year we said that updated Government legislation had left the Council with a non-statutory service that could not be applied fairly and evenly across the county and placed a burden on taxpayers. We said then that we would not reinstate the suspended Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme unless a reasonable and workable solution could be found. Having undertaken a six-week listening exercise, to which less than one per cent of the school population responded, no such solution has been found and the service will not be reinstated".

	Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)
--	---

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the outcome of the Home to School Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme listening exercise together with the recommendation that the Scheme should not be reinstated as no legal and fair solution that benefits all has been presented.

Decision – (a) That the outcome of the temporary vacant seat scheme listening exercise carried out between 31 August 2021 and 12 October 2021, be noted.

(b) That the recommendation for the future of the temporary vacant seat scheme and mitigating factors be noted.

(c) That the home to school temporary vacant seat scheme be terminated.

(d) That the Cabinet Agree to review and consider reinstating the temporary vacant seat scheme once the availability of coaches that meet the requirements of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) significantly improves in the Staffordshire.

(e) That the Council’s Transport Operations and Future Connectivity Team be asked to work with bus operators to see if existing bus routes can be extended/alterd so as to provide travel opportunities for some pupils impacted by the PSVAR legislation.

90. Formal Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman regarding SEND

	<p>“This case was allowed to take too long to resolve at a time when demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had risen sharply and put staff under great pressure.</p> <p>Extra investment has since been made in the team handling EHCPs and processes have been reviewed to provide a better, more responsive service to the thousands of families that use it.”</p> <p>Clr Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)</p>
---	---

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Formal Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to the failure to review and update a young person’s EHC Plan.

Decision – (a) That the Formal Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to the failure to review and update a young person’s EHC Plan, be noted.

(b) That the recommendations made as part of the investigation report and the finding of “Report issued: upheld; maladministration and injustice”, be agreed.

91. Proposed Relocation and Expansion of St Leonard's Primary School, Stafford

	<p>“This authority is committed to building new schools, or expanding existing ones where appropriate, to ensure that all Staffordshire’s children have access to a good education in first class local facilities.</p> <p>This £4 million proposal to repurpose the Kingston Centre meets the anticipated future need in this part of Stafford in a sustainable way, as the site is within walking distance of the housing developments it will serve.</p> <p>Having engaged with the school community and residents in the area, the next step is to formally publish the proposal for the relocation and expansion of St Leonard’s Primary School.”</p> <p>Cllr Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)</p>
--	--

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals for the publication of a statutory proposal for the proposed relocation and expansion of St. Leonard’s Primary School, Stafford.

Decision – (a) That the publication of a statutory proposal for the proposed relocation and expansion of St. Leonard’s Primary School, Stafford, be approved.

(b) That, subject to no major objection to the proposal, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Families and Communities be authorised to implement the proposal at the end of the representation period.

92. Diversity and Inclusion - Principles, Objectives and Action Plan



"The County Council has an important role to play in promoting diversity and inclusion, both as an employer and as a leader in the community. It is important for our progress to be measured publicly and for us to remain proactive in ensuring that we continue moving forward and challenging prejudice in whatever form it takes.

I want those who work for the County Council, those who come into contact with it and for the wider population of Staffordshire to know that this authority is committed to equal treatment and opportunity for all".

Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the outcome of recent work to identify how the Council can further strengthen its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the Council and Staffordshire, together with proposals for the adoption of a set of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Principles and Objectives.

Decision – That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Principles, Objectives and Action Plan, as part of the Council's commitment to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, be adopted.

93. Chatterley Valley West - Project Update



"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to unlock a major parcel of disused industrial land, close to strategic transport links and provide the opportunity for existing businesses to expand and for new ones to invest in Staffordshire.

The county council has a proven track record of working in partnership to successfully develop commercial sites which provide jobs and growth in their area such as i54 South Staffordshire and Branston Locks in the east of the county. Chatterley Valley West will be a major project in the north and we look forward to working with our council and LEP partners to ensure its successful delivery".

Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals to unlock a 43-hectare (gross) employment site at Chatterley Valley which could generate around 1,700 jobs (depending on the nature of the end users), Gross Value-Added Benefits of £67 million per annum and £60 million of private sector investment.

Decision – (a) That Cabinet agrees to part fund the construction of the infrastructure to unlock the site, addressing the viability gap with the developer, Harworth Group, using prudential borrowing of up to £3.5 million on the basis of the most reasonable financial case scenario set out in the report, noting that the payback of business rates, through the Enterprise Zone designation, will be secured against the development of a speculative building to be developed out by Harworth Group.

(b) That investment by Staffordshire County Council is conditional on agreeing a Business Rates agreement with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to secure payback of the investment at the earliest opportunity. (The decision regarding the funding of the investment from future Enterprise Zone business rates is scheduled to be considered by the SSLEP Executive Board on 16th December 2021.)

(c) That authority be given to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, in consultation with the Directors for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills and Corporate Services, to enter into relevant contractual arrangements pursuant to the delivery of the Chatterley Valley West Development Site.

(d) That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills to approve and agree the details of and enter into Section 278 highways works contracts required to bring forward the site noting that £3.682m of Kidsgrove Town Deal funding has been allocated to these works.

94. Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service: Contract Extension



“Following lockdown, continuing concern over Covid and disruption to learning and exams, the need to support new parents, children and young people is clear and obvious.

Opting to extend this valuable service by 12 months will allow us to carry on supporting those who need it, while allowing a suitable period to consider recent events and how we ought to deliver this help in future”.

Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals to extend the contract for the Families Health and Wellbeing (0-19) service with MPFT from April 2023 – March 2024.

Decision – That the extension of the contract for the Families Health and Wellbeing (0-19) service with MPFT, from April 2023 – March 2024, be agreed.

95. IA2609 Framework for Responsive Property Maintenance and Day Works

	<p>“This process allows us to employ a range of suppliers to carry out planned property maintenance and repairs at buildings, including schools and libraries, across the county, while obtaining best value for money.</p> <p>Having a long-term relationship with approved suppliers enables us to maintain standards and save time by avoiding the need to advertise and manage multiple project tenders each year.”</p> <p>Cllr Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters</p>
--	--

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals for the procurement of a framework agreement for the provision of Responsive Property Maintenance and Dayworks.

Decision – (a) That Staffordshire County Council (the “Council”) undertakes a procurement in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the “Regulations”) to procure Framework Agreement for the provision of Responsive Property Maintenance and Dayworks.

(b) That, following the procurement process, the successful suppliers be appointed to the Framework Agreement for the period 1st June 2022 to 31st May 2025 and that, dependent on the quality of their delivery, the 12-month service extension be implemented to a final contract end date of 31st May 2026.

(c) That it be noted that the framework agreement and subsequent call off contracts will be entered into in accordance with the Council’s procurement regulations.

96. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

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

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Health and Care	In approving the award of a contract for Integrated Sexual Health & HIV Services to Inclusion (Part of Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT)) and a contract for Community Pharmacy Services to Central Health Solutions Ltd following a competitive procurement process.

97. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 19 January to 18 May 2022, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 - 2027	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Staffordshire County Council - Strategic Plan 2022- 26	Name: Kerry Dove Tel: 07855 679112
Economic Recovery & Growth: Enhancing Delivery	Name: Anthony Hodge Tel: (01785) 277204
Options Appraisal for the Future Commissioning Model for Supported Living Services in Staffordshire	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Potential Joint Coroners Service, Business Case	Name: Janene Cox MBE Tel: (01785) 278368
Business Case for Care Home Developments	Name: Helen Trousdale Tel: (01785) 277008
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3 2021/22	Name: Kerry Dove/ Rob Salmon Tel: (01785) 276354
Entrust Service Delivery Agreement	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
2022/23 Schools Capital Programme	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Highways and Transport Capital Programme 2022/23	Name: James Bailey Tel: (01785) 276591
Staffordshire Rural Economic Strategy	Name: Anthony Hodge Tel: (01785) 277204
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4 2021/22	Name: Kerry Dove/ Rob Salmon Tel: (01785) 276354

Alan White
Leader of the Council