

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **County Council – Thursday 10 February 2022**

### **Strategic Plan 2022-26**

#### **Recommendations of the Leader of the Council**

I recommend that County Council:

- a. Adopt the Strategic Plan 2022-26 as set out in Appendix 1

#### **Report of the Director for Corporate Services**

##### **Background**

1. The Strategic Plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead. It outlines what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it. It is the Council's primary strategic document that shapes our financial and delivery plans.
2. Following Council elections in May 2021, work began on developing a new Strategic Plan for 2022-26. A new Plan offers us the opportunity to both reflect on our strengths and achievements in recent years and reassert our ambitions and priorities.
3. The last four years have brought many challenges and opportunities for local public services, not least the global pandemic. Throughout, the Council has remained ambitious for Staffordshire, and focused on delivery. A selection of highlight include:

##### Families and Communities

- Successfully completed a large-scale Children's System Transformation programme, taking circa.2000 staff through consultation to implement a district footprint, and lead to better outcomes.
- Staffordshire has continued to successfully deliver its Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme. In 2020/21, Staffordshire's programme achieved successful outcomes for 1,203 families, exceeding its annual target of 784, and helping over 9,000 families since 2015.
- We successfully launched virtual Family Hubs during Covid-19, which have been held up nationally as an example of good practice.

- Our award winning Hungry Little Minds campaign, equips Staffordshire families with personalised emails and messages to support their child's speech and language development
- Staffordshire County Council and its partner, the William Salt Library Trust, have received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of nearly £4m towards the Staffordshire History Centre Project.
- We continue to build on our successful Community Managed Library Model, with 12 out of the 27 existing contracts already renegotiated in 2021.

### Health and Care

- Staffordshire is nationally recognised for its response to Covid-19. A collective effort by the public sector, voluntary organisations, residents and businesses to minimise the spread of the virus and protect those most at risk.
- Our innovative Support Communities Programme has continued to deliver in 2021. The community-led approach to prevention, supports people to live healthier lives and stay independent for longer. 18 Community Help Points have been established across the county, with over 700 staff and volunteers being trained.
- Staffordshire Warmer Homes, in partnership with District and Borough Councils, aims to better insulate and heat homes to reduce fuel poverty and support our efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
- Staffordshire has built two Dementia Centres of Excellence in Stafford and Burton, leading the way in delivering care that is person-centred and promotes independence.

### Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

- The Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme, a £6m partnership with Staffordshire's District and Borough Councils is providing critical support for small businesses and people whose jobs and employment prospects have been impacted by Covid-19.
- Since 2014, Staffordshire's Economic Growth Programme has created or safeguarded more than 10,000 jobs and enabled construction of more than 4,000 new homes.
- We have successfully delivered a number of key infrastructure projects including the Lichfield Southern Bypass, Stafford Western Access Route and the 60 acre first phase of the i54 Western extension. These projects are creating more jobs and homes for Staffordshire.
- Significant success in recent years improving adult skills levels, both by reducing the number of adults with no qualifications, and increasing the number with higher level skills.

- We have achieved a 25% reduction in the council’s carbon emissions in the first year since declaring a climate change emergency.

## Strategic Plan 2022-26

4. Whilst the Plan may cover a four-year period, the ambitions contained within it set the direction of the Staffordshire we want to shape for decades and generations to come.

5. We have a clear vision for Staffordshire – an innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. We want everyone in Staffordshire to:

- Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth
- Live in thriving and sustainable communities
- Be healthier and independent for longer

6. Our Plan on a Page, summarises our ambitions, and priorities:



7. Our Strategic Plan identifies five priorities:

- Support Staffordshire’s economy to grow, generating more and better-paid jobs
- Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections

- Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence
- Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable
- Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential

8. A successful, vibrant economy is at the heart of achieving our vision. Creating opportunities and removing barriers for people to get better-paid jobs, is key to delivering our vision. We have a successful track record of investing to create the right conditions for our economy to grow and improving skills. Covid-19 has affected every part of the economy, it is essential that Staffordshire people have the chance to learn new skills throughout their career and seize opportunities as the economy continues to recover and evolve.
9. Great places enjoy great connections. Whether by road, rail or ultrafast broadband, we want the people and businesses of Staffordshire to be well connected to one another, to the UK and across the globe. We know that improving our highways is one of the top priorities for Staffordshire people. Maintaining and improving this network is very challenging. We need to do it with less funding from central government, costs are rising, and the growing county is making the network busier. Despite this we want Staffordshire people to see an improvement in our highways over the next four years.
10. Climate change is affecting more people's lives every year and we all need to act fast, to do our bit to slow and reverse the damage being done. We have a leading role to play in Staffordshire, by reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from our operations, as well as working with industry and other organisations to help lower their emissions and make our county more resilient to climate change.
11. Our health and wellbeing are influenced by many things: by our environment; our living conditions; and our own behaviour. Inspiring and encouraging everyone to look after their physical and mental health is at the heart of our ambitions for Staffordshire. For our most vulnerable residents, who do need care, we want to assess their needs quickly and fairly, and provide the quality services they need, at a price taxpayers can afford.
12. We want every child and young person in Staffordshire, whatever their background, to have the opportunity to achieve their potential, and go on to live happy and healthy lives. Families are at the heart of giving children and young people the best start in life. We want Staffordshire families to have the strengths, skills and knowledge to support their

children and young people. Working with partners, parents and carers to keep our most vulnerable children and young people safe and improve their outcomes is at the core of this priority.

13. In order to deliver against our priorities, we must continue to evolve the way that the Council operates. We believe that the following four statements need to be central to everything we do as a Council:
  - Lead our workforce to be ambitious, courageous and empowered
  - Encourage our communities to help themselves and each other
  - Use digital technology and data to connect, inform and support the people of Staffordshire
  - Engage and listen to our communities, partners and businesses, working together to improve our county
14. We want everyone who works for the Council to live our values in all they do; to be ambitious for Staffordshire, courageous in their work and empowered to make a difference. Our workforce is critical to achieving our Strategic Plan.
15. People who are independent and in control of their lives are more likely to enjoy better health and wellbeing. We need to continue to empower and inspire our communities and people to help themselves and each other. Our communities were critical to supporting our most vulnerable during Covid-19. Without our involvement, residents across the county were doing their bit to support each other. Collaborating with and working with our voluntary, community and social enterprise partners will continue to be crucial in helping to enable and support the growth of community action.
16. Technology is fundamental to how we work, live and communicate with each other. We will continue to review and develop our digital approach in everything we do, from helping the economy to grow to improving the lives and opportunities for the people of Staffordshire.
17. We cannot achieve our ambitions without listening to, and working with our communities, partners and businesses. Collaboration is at the core of everything we do in the Council and will be central to our plans over the next four years. We work best when we work together, never was this more evident than during the pandemic.
18. The Council has reaffirmed its pledge to live within its means and deliver value for money. The Council is financially stable and well run. However the financial outlook for whole of local government is challenging and uncertain. We must continue to find different ways to

help more people to help themselves and reduce demand for public services. We need to continue to:

- Reduce costs to live within our means
- Use our assets wisely to gain the best return for the council
- Work with central government to achieve fair funding, particularly for social care
- Develop initiatives and ways of working that encourage our communities to help themselves and each other, and use digital technology to make services efficient and effective
- Grow and support the economy
- Help partner organisations to build more homes

### **Conclusion**

19. The Strategic Plan 2022-26 clearly sets out our vision and ambitions for Staffordshire. Building on our strengths, and strong foundations, we believe the Strategic Plan provides the clarity and focus, to allow us to turn our ambitions into reality and continue to make a positive difference for the people of Staffordshire.

### **Legal Implications**

20. There are no specific legal implications for the Strategic Plan.

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

21. The Strategic Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2022-26, as such the financial implications of the Strategic Plan are set out in the MTFS Report which is also being considered by County Council on 10 February 2022.

### **Community Impact Assessment**

22. As the Strategic Plan has been developed in conjunction with the MTFS, a separate Community Impact Assessment (CIA) hasn't been completed. The MTFS CIA does provide consideration to the Strategic Plan.

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

Appendix 1 – Strategic Plan 2022-26

### **Contact Details**

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