

**ALTERATION OF CORONER AREAS UNDER SCHEDULE 2 OF THE CORONERS AND
JUSTICE ACT 2009¹
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE BUSINESS CASE TEMPLATE FOR MERGERS**

NAMES OF CORONER AREAS THAT ARE PROPOSING TO MERGE

- Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire
- South Staffordshire

PROPOSED NAME OF NEW AREA

- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Coroners Service

INFORMATION ON AREAS THAT PROPOSE TO MERGE

- Please provide key details in the table as follows:

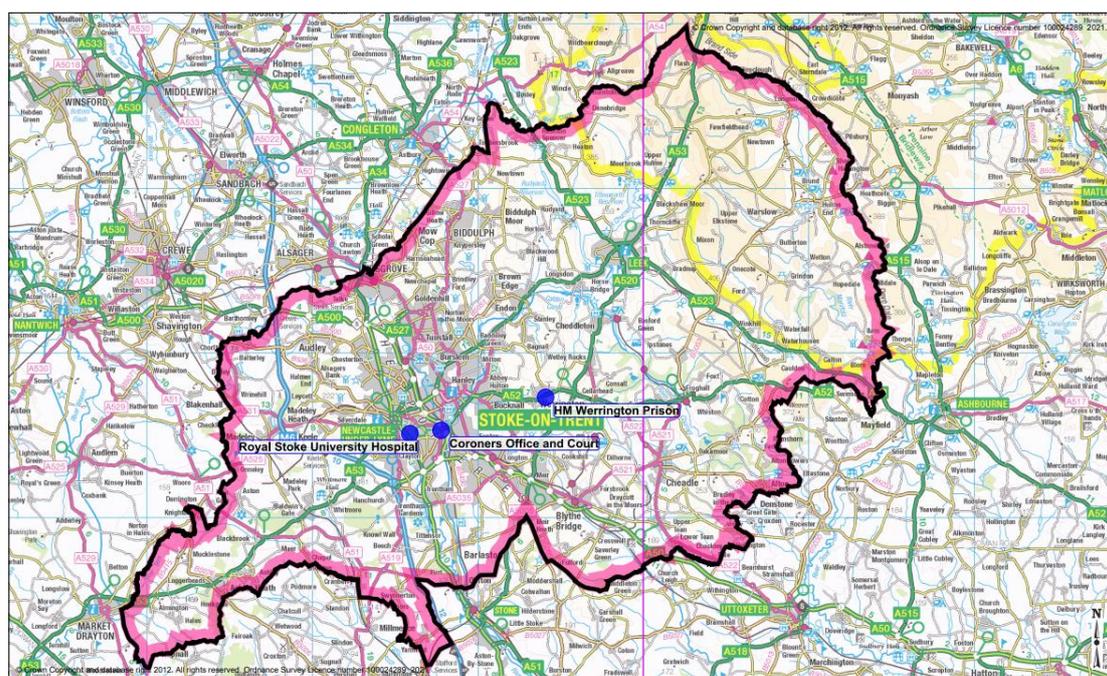
Coroner area	Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire	South Staffordshire	Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Coroners Service
Geographical area covered	Stoke-on-Trent & North Staffordshire	South Staffordshire	Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Coroners Service
Local authority/authorities that fund(s) coroner area and %	Stoke-on-Trent 51% Staffordshire 49%	Staffordshire County Council	% To be agreed
Relevant authority (formerly lead authority)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Staffordshire County Council	Joint committee
Police Force(s)	Staffordshire Police	Staffordshire Police	Staffordshire Police
Transport links	West Coast Rail Line M6	M6 motorway, M6 Toll Road, M54 as well as several major A-roads, main west coast rail line to/from London and the North West.	As now
Major hospitals	University Hospital of North Midlands – Royal Stoke	County hospital (managed by UHNM) Burton Hospitals NHS	As now

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/25/schedule/2>

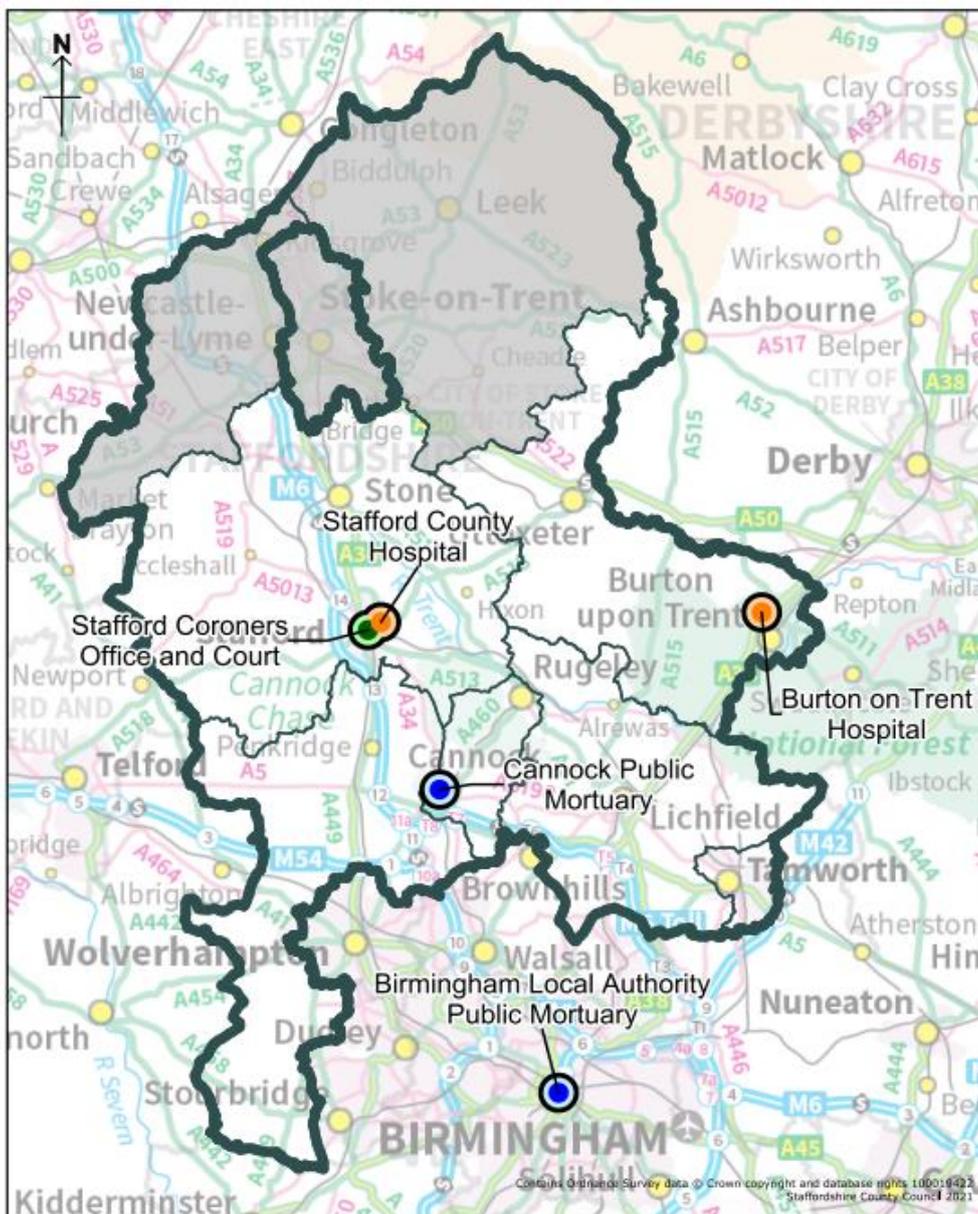
Coroner area	Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire	South Staffordshire	Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Coroners Service
		Foundation Trust	
Prisons in area		HMP Featherstone HMP Stafford HMP Oakwood HMP Brinsford HMP Drake Hall HMP Dovegate HMP Swinfen Hall YOI	
Other state detention facilities	HM Werrington young offender detention centre	NHS mental health unit with facilities for compulsory detained persons in St Georges hospital, Stafford.	
Courtrooms/ inquest venues	Stoke Town Hall X 2 Court rooms	Cannock Chase Coroners Court Staffordshire Place Digital – Teams	Continued use of existing or new and improved facilities is anticipated
Office/staff accommodation – location and capacity	Spacious office suite in Stoke Town Hall accommodating all coroners, support staff and Coroners officers There is capacity to accommodate additional staff and expand into an adjacent area if necessary	Ground floor Offices in Staffordshire Place 1, capacity for Coroner and two support staff	Continued use of existing or new and improved facilities is anticipated with a move to a single back office location in the medium term
Employer of coroner's officers'	Staffordshire Police	Staffordshire Police	
Name of senior coroner	Mr Andrew Barkley	Mr Andrew Haigh now retired – Mr Andrew Barkley Interim Senior Coroner	Mr Andrew Barkley
Number of area coroners	1	0	2
Number of assistant coroners	5	4	7 – 4 of the Assistants have been recruited for

Coroner area	Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire	South Staffordshire	Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Coroners Service
			both jurisdictions hence individual columns =9
Number of coroner's officers	5	3	8
Number of administrative support staff	1 X Office Manager 3 X Coroners Support Staff	3 (2 FTE) + nil hours contract staff	As Now
Number of deaths reported in the previous calendar year	2401	2395	4796
Inquests held in the previous calendar year	433	336	769
Post-mortem rate as % of reported deaths in the previous calendar year	27 %	15 %	n/a

Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire current jurisdiction Map



Staffordshire South existing jurisdiction Map



SENIOR CORONER APPOINTMENT

- **Why are you seeking a merger now (i.e., which area’s senior coroner is stepping down, when and why)?** South Staffordshire Coroner Andrew Haigh resigns at the end October 2021

The request for a merger is following the retirement of Mr Andrew Haigh, Senior Coroner for Staffordshire South on 31 October 2021. This has provided the potential to form a new (merged) jurisdiction comprising of Staffordshire South, Stoke on Trent, and North Staffordshire areas. Mr Andrew Barkley Senior Coroner for Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire is providing cover following Mr Haigh’s retirement.

This is an interim arrangement pending a decision relating to the proposed merger to form a new jurisdiction.

This proposed merger would follow national policy established by the Ministry of Justice and supported by the Chief Coroner to merge smaller coronial areas and reduce the overall number of Coronial jurisdictions in England and Wales.

- **How do you propose to appoint the Senior Coroner for the new merged area – (i.e., does the relevant authority propose to appoint one of the senior coroners from the affected areas or to hold an open competition)?**

It is the intention that the current Senior Coroner for Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, Mr Andrew Barkley, will be appointed as Senior Coroner for the merged jurisdiction. At the time Mr Barkley was appointed as the Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Coroner in April 2019, the potential for a future merger was discussed. Mr Barkley confirmed his support for a merger should the opportunity arise and is fully engaged in this request.

- **Are all affected senior coroners aware of and content with this approach?**

Senior Coroners for both jurisdictions are aware of the approach however there is no impact on the Staffordshire South Senior Coroner as he retired on 31 October 2021. Mr Barkley has indicated his support for a merged jurisdiction, and it is the intention that he would become the Coroner of the new merged jurisdiction.

Based on the latest Annual Return 2020 there were 2,395 reported deaths in Staffordshire South and 2,401 reported deaths in North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. On this basis the total number of deaths reported in a merged area would be approximately 4,800.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED MERGER ON SERVICE DELIVERY

- **What will be the impact of the proposed merger on service delivery?**

The merger will have a positive impact on service delivery. It will provide an opportunity to focus on improving services to bereaved families, whilst retaining high quality and consistent services for local people across both jurisdictions. It will also ensure that the service is sustainable and fit for the future.

Through the leadership of a single Senior Coroner the merger presents an opportunity to streamline processes and procedures across the merged jurisdiction and therefore deliver efficiencies. There will be the opportunity to align and improve working practices by identifying best practice across the merged jurisdiction; working with members of the team to drive positive change, to deliver a single simplified process for partners who currently engage with both jurisdictions and must deal with different processes; and it will enable economies of scale. Both

local authorities use the same service provider for IT, however the systems operate differently, the merger will provide the opportunity to move to a single platform and have a single contract.

Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent) is a large geographically spread county, and it is intended to keep current arrangements for the location of inquests; these will continue to be held locally, both in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. The opportunity to enhance the local service through the use of additional sites which will provide access to the service within increased locations across the new coronial jurisdiction.

- **Will additional coronial or administrative support be provided in the new area? (e.g., will additional coroners need to be recruited or will workloads be increased/redistributed etc? How will additional caseloads be managed?)**

As above, the merged area will deal with approximately 4,800 deaths per annum.

The recruitment of an additional Area Coroner, alongside a small team of Assistant Coroners will ensure that the caseload is managed effectively, and the service is resilient, should additional cases present themselves.

Both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent provide administrative support to their respective teams based in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. It is proposed to have one centralised back-office team based in one location (anticipated to be Stoke-on-Trent), however it is expected that the existing officers and administration staff will remain in their current locations and with their existing employer, should they not wish to move to the central location. This situation will remain until such time as staff retire or leave which will then enable us to achieve a single physical office space. This will ensure a smooth transition to the new structure and minimise the loss of experienced staff and keep the use of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) to a minimum, however, any new appointments will be placed upon a contract which will reflect the scope of the new service

It is intended to use a Section 113 agreement to allow the joint service to operate under the Local Government Act 1972.

- **What will be the impact of the merger on associated services – such as post-mortem examinations, and mortuary provision?**

Body storage and post-mortems facilities are currently based at Cannock and Stoke-on-Trent public mortuaries and there is an arrangement in place for use of facilities at Birmingham City Council public mortuary.

Body storage and post-mortem facilities are also based at the NHS hospitals across the County in Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, and Burton on Trent. These arrangements will initially remain in place.

However, we do intend to review all the current arrangements as part of the merger, to mitigate any deficiencies that exist, due to shortages of pathologists. It is recognised that the existing Public Mortuary facilities in the North and the South are aging and require significant investment to maintain them to the required standard, therefore the review will make recommendations on an appropriate way forward which will reflect the needs of the new joint service. There will also be an exercise to consolidate contractual arrangements to deliver increased value for money. It is hoped that the joint procurement of services will achieve economies of scale and create financial savings which will benefit both authorities

There is also an opportunity to review body removal arrangements and align these arrangements to provide a more cost-effective single service.

There are several options that will be considered once the merger has taken place about mortuary facilities and these are as follows:

1. Own Mortuary Service – provide an inhouse mortuary to fully meet the demands of the joined service, including the services of pathologists. This option includes exploring the potential to work in partnership with Keele University School of Medicine to create a centre of excellence
2. Subcontract – consider outsourcing of the arrangements to a third party e.g., another Local Authority
3. Arrangement with NHS – via contract to provide comprehensive mortuary services removing the need for a public mortuary infrastructure

- **How will the relevant local authority administer the new coroner area?**

It is proposed that the new Coroner Area will be overseen by a Joint Executive Committee comprising of Cabinet Members from both authorities, together with appropriate Lead Officers and with support from Legal and Finance teams. Responsibility for full administration including the appointment of Senior, Area and Assistant Coroners, subject to Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor consents, and employment of coroner's support staff will be undertaken by Stoke-on-Trent City Council who will employ the administrative staff required to manage the operation on a day-to-day basis. Stoke-on-Trent City Council will be accountable to the Joint Committee. Discussions are being progressed to determine an equitable charging methodology which will be applied between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, replacing existing arrangements.

- **How will administrative governance be achieved between the relevant local authority and other funding local authorities?**

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils have a well-established and positive working relationship which has operated successfully for many years. On approval of the merger, both local authorities will enter into a legally binding agreement which

will clearly set out the provision of the service, accountabilities, responsibilities, monitoring arrangements and financial arrangements. Governance will be through the Joint Committee who will agree funding allocations, approve, and authorise expenditure and other appropriate decision making.

When appropriate there will be the opportunity for significant decisions to be scrutinised through the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees prior to debate and agreement at the Joint Executive Committee.

It is anticipated that there will be an Accountable Officer within each authority who will have strategic and operational oversight of the Coroner's service and they will provide appropriate advice and reports into the Joint Committee.

There will be equally weighted membership, with an alternating chair using the North and South locations to host the joint executive committee.

- **How will the affected local authorities manage budgets?**

Budgets will be set and agreed by the Joint Committee consisting of Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Members, Stoke-on-Trent City Council Cabinet Members, with support from finance and legal officers.

The Joint Committee, in addition to setting budgets will, act as the management board for support activities, review the production of an annual report and carry out performance monitoring of the joint service. Meetings will be held quarterly, and HM Coroner will attend these meetings

A revised cost sharing basis will be considered between the two authorities and agreed at the Joint Committee. The service will not exceed funding over and above the current financial commitment of either authority. Therefore, the total budget envelope for this joint service will not exceed £2,132,130 with Staffordshire County Council's commitment not exceeding £1,363,780 and Stoke-on-Trent City Council's commitment not exceeding £768,350.

The current proportion of total costs equates to 64% being met by Staffordshire County Council and 36% by Stoke on Trent City Council. This proportion will be maintained in the new service which shall be subject to periodic review and adjustment if required.

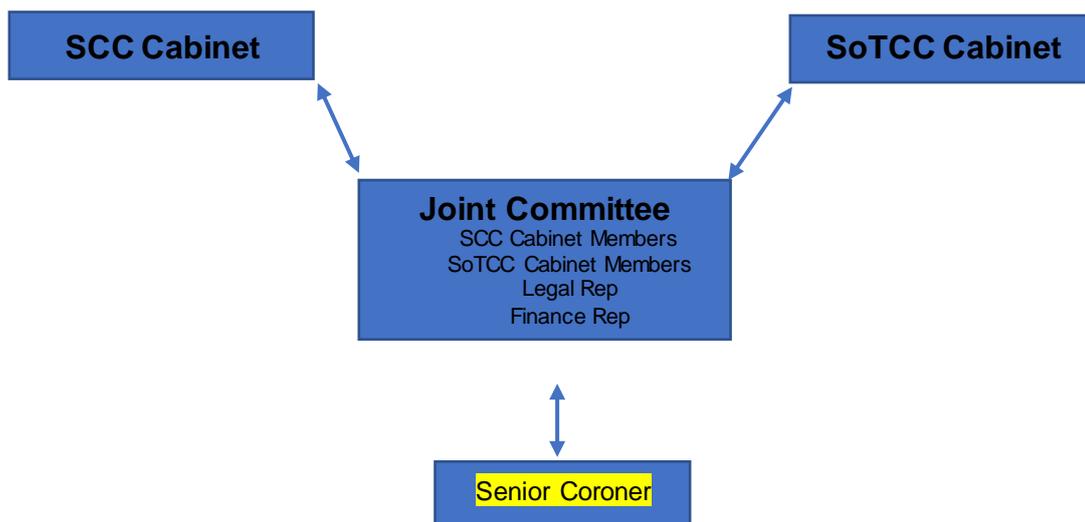
Overheads from Staffordshire are not included in the figures below as these will remain in the Authority when the service is managed as planned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. In the event of Staffordshire being the host authority then the same principle would apply, and Stoke-on-Trent City Council's overheads would not form part of the budget envelope. It is the aspiration that the total cost of a joint service would over time deliver efficiencies as described elsewhere in the business case.

Summary Costs – Budget Envelope for Joint Service

	Stoke-on-Trent & North Staffordshire £	Staffordshire (South) £	Total Funding Available for Merger £
Operational Budget	1,448,500	640,880	2,089,380
Overhead Recharge Budget	42,750	-	42,750
Staffordshire's 49% Contribution – North Staffs Coroners Service	(722,900)	722,900	-
Overall Total	768,350	1,363,780	2,132,130
*Staffordshire's overheads are not shown in the table as they are notional - It is only the operational budget that will transfer to the joint service administered by Stoke		*19,040	

A full breakdown of existing budgets for both local authorities Coroners Service are included at Annex A

Proposed Governance Arrangements



IMPACT OF MERGER ON THOSE WORKING IN / WITH THE SERVICE

- What will be the impact of the merger on:

- **Coroners (e.g., will the workloads of the Senior Coroner, Area Coroner (if applicable) and assistant coroners be affected? Will all existing assistant coroners transfer to the new area? Are the current assistant coroners all currently working and being trained? Do they or will they all have the Chief Coroner's recommended 15 days a year of work?)**

Due to the scale and average number of deaths for the merged area, it is proposed that the Senior Coroner will be supported by the existing and a new Area Coroner plus the 7 Assistant Coroners.

The existing Area Coroner and existing 7 Assistant Coroners would transfer to the new area. A joint recruitment process took place in September 2021 to recruit four new Assistant Coroners to support the Senior Coroner and ensure resilience across the jurisdictions.

- **Coroners Officers**

Coroners Officers in the North are based within Stoke-on-Trent City Council Offices alongside the Coroner and other staff. The Coroners Officers in the South are based remotely at Lichfield Police Station in Staffordshire. It is intended that the Coroners Officers will relocate to the central back-office location when the merger takes place. Coroners Officers currently have different working practices in the North and South jurisdictions. It is the intended that these working practices are aligned and for the Coroners officers to be integrated into the centralised back-office arrangement. This will be subject to a HR consultation process at the appropriate time once the single location has been agreed.

- **Other staff in the coroner's offices**

It is proposed that Coroners Support Office staff will be based in the central location with the Coroners Officers, and Coroners. However, its anticipated that this will take place gradually as existing staff may initially operate as a virtual single team remaining in their existing location to minimise the risk of losing valuable experienced staff.

Court hearings will continue to be held in both Stoke and Staffordshire and therefore existing resource requirements will remain as at present when court is sitting.

- **Pathologists**

Pathologists will benefit from having a single back-office function, as there will be one point of contact and back-office process.

- **Others**

It is intended that the contracts remain in place with the Coroners Court Volunteers Support Service, however it is proposed that this will become a single contract following the merger.

Currently there are differing practices in the North and South jurisdictions in respect of the body removal service; the North have an in-house provision whilst the South contract out these services. Services in the North are currently under review. These arrangements will be reviewed to allow alignment, economies of scale and better market management.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF MERGER

A requirement of both local authorities is that the new service operates within existing resource/budgets on day one with an expectation that efficiencies are delivered as the joint service develops and matures.

It is planned that existing staff remain on their current local authority terms to minimise the cost of redundancy, and the personal impact upon the office staff. However, as new appointments are made they will be placed upon a contract which reflects the scope of the new service.

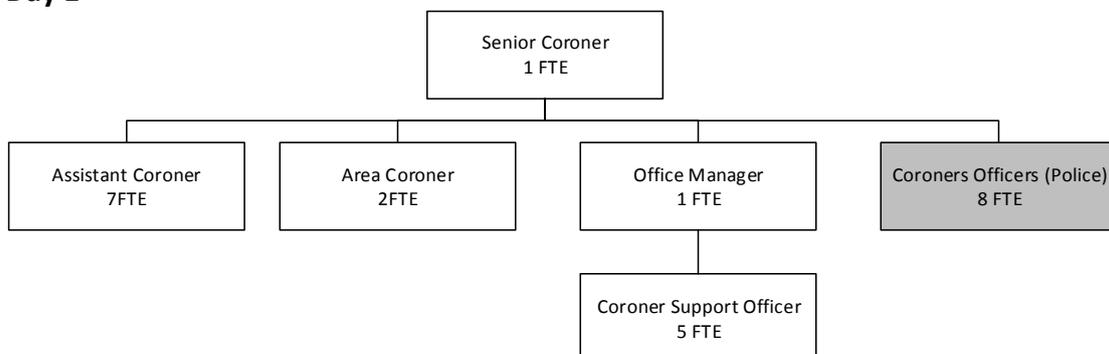
A local Coronial presence will be maintained in Stafford and Stoke on Trent, and it is intended that further access points for the bereaved will be introduced through utilising meeting rooms within libraries and other Council premises. Initial consideration for the location of touchdown centres has been given to those areas which are “remote” from the current Coroner offices, these being Leek, Wombourne, Burton on Trent and Cannock. Suitable access points within these locations will be identified

Existing arrangements for post-mortems will be maintained until the completion of the review of public mortuaries.

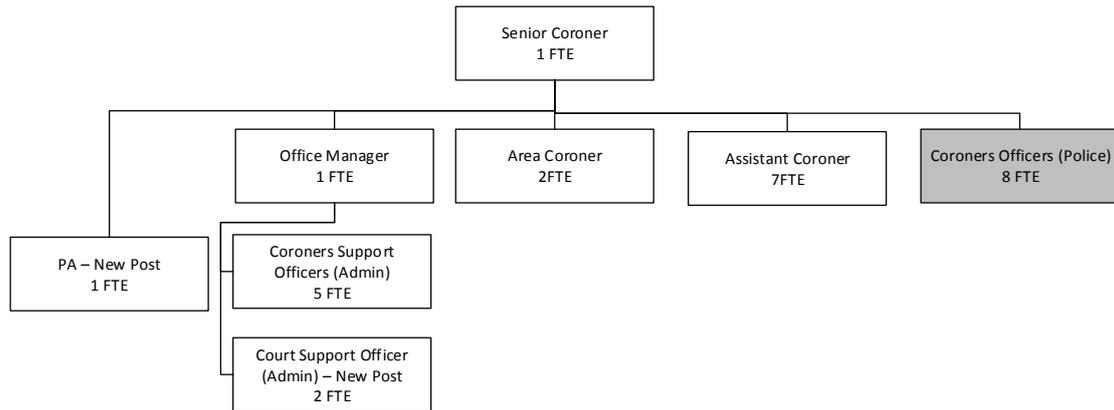
Please see Annex A for the full costing breakdown.

STAFFING

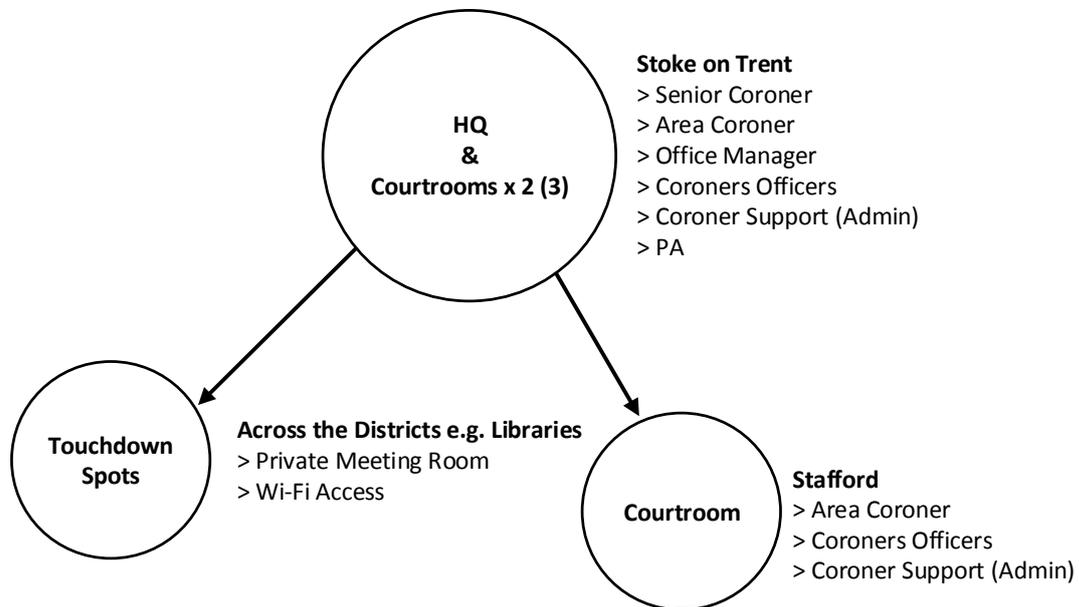
Day 1



Aspiration



Office Bases / Locations



LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Are you aware of any legal issues that need to be resolved before a merger can go ahead (in addition to the Lord Chancellor making an order under Schedule 2 of the 2009 Act)? If so, please give details.**

No. Legal representation from both local authorities will be key to the production of the Legal Framework for the joint service.

VIEWS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY MERGER

- **Do all affected local authorities support the merger? Please provide details.**

Yes, both Chief Executives support this in principle, this business case has been appended to reports for senior leadership teams and Cabinets for both local authorities.

- **Have the local authority councillors / cabinets approved the merger? Please provide details.**

Yes –(tbc subject to Cabinet approval taking place in February 2022)

- **What is the view of affected coroners and their staff?**

Affected coroners and staff are all aware of the proposals and formal consultation will be taking place following approval of the Business Case.

- **How will bereaved people be affected by the merger – e.g., travelling to inquests, being able to contact coroners' offices?**

Bereaved people will see a benefit from the merger and experience a more accessible service: inquests will continue to be held locally in Stafford and Stoke. Most communication with families is carried out by telephone, email and by post. There will also be an increased opportunity for officers to meet with the bereaved locally face to face if required at 'touchdown' locations throughout the district. Initial consideration for the location of touchdown centres has been given to those areas which are "remote" from the current Coroner offices, these being Leek, Wombourne, Burton on Trent and Cannock. Suitable access points within these locations will be identified

- **Have you sought the views of other affected stakeholders - such as police authority and constabulary, hospitals, prisons, GPs, faith groups and funeral directors? Please provide details.**

A brief consultation has been sent out to key stakeholders; written and verbal responses which are supportive of the proposal have been received.

- **What are the views of other stakeholders?**

As above

- **What impact will the merger have in terms of disability, gender, and racial equality?**

The impact will be positive with the provision of more accessible touchdown centres across the jurisdictions.

RISKS AND MITIGATING ACTIONS

- Please provide details of any risks identified and mitigating action (to be) taken.

See Attached risk log as Annex C.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

- Please describe other options considered, in addition to the proposed merger, and the advantages and disadvantages for each option.

The alternative to a merger would be for Staffordshire County Council to recruit a new Senior Coroner. This will be considered should it not be possible to achieve a merger.

CONTACT WITH THE CHIEF CORONER'S OFFICE / MINISTRY OF JUSTICE / CONSULTEES

- **Have you had previous discussions with the Chief Coroner on the proposed merger? Yes (This is a requirement before MoJ can formally consult on the merger.) Please provide details of the discussion.**

A letter of intent has been forwarded to the Chief Coroner and MoJ in October 2021. Communication from the Chief Coroner's Office on 7 December confirmed that discussions to date with the Office were sufficient for requirements

- **Have you had previous contact with MoJ on the proposed merger?**

Yes, a letter of intent has been forwarded to MoJ and Chief Coroner in October 2021.

- **Are you happy for this business case in its entirety to be sent to all consultees? If not please provide details.**

Yes

- **Please list consultees for the consultation on the proposed merger – the organisation's name and the most appropriate email address - at Annex B. MoJ will remove email addresses from Annex B before sending the business case to consultees**

Annex A**Resource implications of the merger***Table A: Details of current Senior Coroners and Area Coroner/s (if applicable) in each existing coroner area*

Position (e.g., Senior Coroner, Area Coroner)	First name	Surname	Current salary (including National Insurance and pension contributions)	Long Inquest Payments (if applicable) or other additional payments	Proposed salary in amalgamated area (if applicable) (including National Insurance and pension contributions)
Senior	Andrew	Barkley	2020/21 £192,192.00	n/a	
				n/a	
Senior	Andrew	Haigh	2021/22 £185,130	n/a	
Area	Emma	Serrano	£145,918.94	n/a	

Table B: Budgets Summary

	Stoke on Trent & North Staffordshire £	Staffordshire (South) £
Operational Budget:		
Salary Costs of Senior Coroner including on-costs	195,500	185,130
Salary Costs of Area Coroner including on costs	148,100	-
Salary Costs of Coroners Officer(s) including on-costs (**picked up by Police)	N/A	N/A
Salary Costs of Admin Staff including on-costs	141,200	62,210
Casual Hours Cover	0	27,000
Assistant Coroner - Fees Charged	46,000	22,000
Insurance Charges	4,000	5,390
Buildings (exc insurance on above line)	5,300	-
Transport Related Costs	1,900	1,890
Supplies and Services Costs (ie. General Running Costs)	22,000	9,860
Funeral Director Costs	0	7,320
Post Mortems/Pathology Costs	200,000	132,820
SLA's with Other Providers of Services:		
Cannock	-	105,150
Burton	-	44,310
Stoke	-	13,170
Birmingham	-	6,520
Other Costs:		
Legal Charges		
Other Costs Charged Against Inquest Expenses	25,000	18,110
I-gene	101,000	-
Coroners Removal Team	376,900	-
Public Mortuary	181,600	-
Total Operational Budget	1,448,500	640,880
Overhead Recharges Budget:		
Office Accommodation	3,000	5,490
ICT Costs	19,500	6,640
Finance	2,700	920
HR	6,300	2,150
Occupational Health	700	240
Property Services	3,800	1,300
Legal	500	170
Procurement	400	140
Central Expenses	150	50
Business Services	5,700	1,940
Total Overhead Recharges Budget	42,750	19,040
Overall Budgeted Cost of Service	1,491,250	659,920
Notes:		
North Staffs Coroner Recharge	(722,900)	722,900

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Staffordshires 49% Contribution - NorthStaffs Coroners Service	(722,900)	722,900	-
Overall Total	768,350	1,363,780	2,132,130

Annex B**List of consultees**

[Please include:

- *All effected Senior Coroners, Area Coroners and Assistant Coroners in the areas in question.*
- *relevant local authority contacts from all neighbouring coroner areas (MoJ can assist with this if necessary).*
- *all MPs with constituencies within the effected coroner areas.*
- *pathologist contacts.*
- *representatives of local funeral directors within the effected coroner areas.*
- *representatives from hospitals and/or prisons within the area.*
- *the Chief Coroner (MoJ will have the relevant contact details)*
- *local police contacts (MoJ can assist with this if necessary and will include a national ACPO contact as standard))*

Organisation
SCO
Police
Fire & Rescue
CCU
Funeral Directors
Medical council
NHS Trust – Royal stoke
NHS Derbyshire
SCC Registrations
ICS/ICB interim Chief Executive
ICB Chair Designate
University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, Chief Executive
HMP OAKWOOD
HMP STAFFORD
HMP DOVEGATE
HMP DRAKE HALL
Werrington Young Offenders Institute
FEATHERSTONE
BRINSFORD
SWINFEN
Medical Council
Coroners Court Support Service
Bereavement group (Compton Care)
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide
Bereavement Office
Staffordshire County Council

Stoke on Trent City Council
Stafford Borough Council
East Staffs Borough Council
Lichfield District Council
South Staffs District Council
Newcastle Borough Council
Staffs Moorlands District Council
Tamworth District Council
Chief Exec West Midlands Ambulance Trust
Chief Coroner
District Cllrs
Assistant Coroners
Home Office Pathologist
Pathologists
LRF Chair

Annex C -Risks

Risk Num	Subgroup	Risk Description	Owner	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Mitigation
R1	Joint agreement	Agreement of Heads of Terms may be challenging due to differing requirements and/or priorities for both parties.	TC/CE	4	4	16	Joint Project Team developing designs in partnership
R2	Business case	Timescales for gaining SLT approval may be longer than expected	TC/CE	4	3	12	Accept approval process timescales Interim Coroner in place
R3	Joint agreement	Forecast costs for the new joint service are higher than current service resulting in this being unacceptable to SCC & SoT	TC/CE	5	4	20	Work with Finance colleagues to monitor costs/budgets
R4	Joint agreement	SCC and SoT are unable to reach agreement on the terms of the merger	TC/CE	4	5	20	Joint Project Team developing designs in partnership, keeping both authorities informed of proposals
R5	Joint agreement	Unable to reach an agreement with SoT Coroner on merger	TC/CE	2	5	10	SoT Coroner supportive of merger and associate member of the project group Working with SoT Coroner, and recruited with a merger in mind
R6	Joint agreement	SoT Coroner removes interim agreement before merger is complete or alternative SCC arrangements are in place	TC/CE	2	5	10	SCC would approach Chief Coroner for permission to recruit
R7	Communications	SCC and SoT do not fully engage all relevant partners with the joint vision for the proposed merger	TC/CE	2	3	6	Robust engagement plan & comprehensive list of consultee for views to be sought
R8	Business case	There is a risk that the merger loses political support with the council leadership	TC/CE	2	2	4	Maintain continual engagement and communications with the Leadership/Members/Overview/Scrutiny
R9	Communications	There is a risk that staff within the Coroners system do not feel sufficiently informed	TC/CE	2	2	4	Robust engagement plan & regular briefing sessions taking place
R10	Business case	External factors adversely impacting on the progress of the business case (eg issues with lack of pathologists, digital autopsy contract (Stoke), Covid related etc)	TC/CE	3	4	12	Seeking alternate business arrangements as they occur as part of business as usual
R11	Service delivery	Loss of specialist staff - uncertainty on location of service	TC/CE	2	3	6	Business Case addresses location and existing staff will not be made to move if they do not wish to do so
R12	Communications	Reputational risk if perception is that the "local" service is going to be removed	TC/CE	3	2	6	It is planned to keep the current arrangements in respect of the location of inquests; these will continue to be held locally, both in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, therefore no impact on residents access to the Coroners' service. it is also intended that further access points for the bereaved will be introduced through utilising meeting rooms within libraries and other Council premises.

25/10/2021