

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 April 2022

Present: Alan White (Chairman)

Attendance

Mark Deaville
Ian Parry
Jonathan Price
Mark Sutton

Simon Tagg
Philip White
David Williams
Victoria Wilson

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Johnny McMahon

Apologies: Julia Jessel

PART ONE

140. Decision notice of the meeting held on 6 April 2022

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 6 April 2022 be approved.

141. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including Earth Day, a worldwide event to highlight the actions we can all take to protect the planet; the Council's success in cutting its carbon emissions by 25%, by switching to renewable energy and LED streetlights; tree planting and other nature recovery schemes which are underway; an exhibition in Stafford Market Square to inspire more people to do their bit, from waste reduction and recycling to greener travel options like walking and cycling; work nearing completion on the £2million transformation of Shire Hall into a new business centre and enterprise hub for small and start-up businesses; the investment in a new junction at Stafford North Business Park, where the new Pets at Home facility will create 800 jobs; the hundreds of new and small companies, and jobhunters, who have received support and funding from the £5million Staffordshire Means Back to Business programme; the opening of nominations for the Dignity in Care Awards; and the Council doing its bit under the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, carrying out all relevant checks on the sponsors and the accommodation they are offering, and making sure support is in place for the arrivals; be noted.

142. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 April 2022

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 April 2022 be received.


143. Staffordshire Means Back to Business

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:

- The challenges our businesses and citizens are currently facing due to Global pressures on commodity prices and, the County Council’s responsibility to focus on the things we can do either alone or with partners that will make a positive difference for jobs, incomes and the vitality of our businesses.
- The recent launch of the Staffordshire Investment Prospectus, as part of our We Are Staffordshire brand activity, which, for the first time, brings all the priority investment opportunities across the county, into a single document. This document clearly articulates many opportunities and reinforces what a great place our County is. Highlights include:
 - i. Through the Future High Streets and Town Deal Programmes, we have over £130Million of planned investment for our towns
 - ii. We have 96.4% coverage of superfast broadband and have an ambition to be a county with access to 100% Gigabit connectivity by 2030
 - iii. We have unrivalled connectivity being at the heart of the country which will only get better with the arrival of HS2
 - iv. We are home to the UKs biggest theme park, the brewing capital of the world and the national football team.
 - v. Since 2011 we have seen a 50% rise in adults with Level 4+ qualifications
- The major employment sites at Chatterley Valley and the West Midlands Interchange in South Staffordshire
- The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has increased slightly and now stands at 4.3%, or 35 people.
- Staffordshire saw vacancies increase by 28% between February and March equivalent to over 4,200 more job vacancies.
- Despite this slight rise in young people claimants, our overall claimant rate remains static at 3.1% of the working age population in January compared to 5.4% regionally and 4.4% nationally

- The enormous scale and quality of our tourism and visitor economy in Staffordshire, which contributes over £1.8bn to our economy and includes some of the UK’s biggest attractions such as Alton Towers, Drayton Manor, The National Memorial Arboretum and a large part of the Peak District to name but a few.

144. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4 2021/22

	<p>“Dealing with Covid-19 and learning how to live safely with the virus remains a priority and we continue to do what is required to keep people safe. The vaccine programme has been a game changer and vaccination uptake in Staffordshire remains comparatively good with booster uptake now above the national average.</p> <p>We continue to do what is necessary to support those who need us most, including vulnerable residents, the care sector, local communities and businesses. Growing our economy, creating better quality jobs and supporting local businesses with their recovery through the Staffordshire Means Back to Business Programme remains a priority. Putting more money in people’s pockets and improving their financial security, especially at a time when living and energy costs are on the increase, is vital.</p> <p>The cost of adult social care continues to rise, and we face challenges in the sector although we have seen a reduction in waiting times for assessments since last quarter. We continue to address workforce issues through the Future Social Care Workforce Programme, which is in its early days, but will help us to understand current local issues and needs.</p> <p>The new model for the delivery of our Children and families’ services introduced last year continues to embed well and our work through the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme continues to support vulnerable families. An Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection of SEN provision in January found improvements in</p>
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six out of eight areas under review, with two areas requiring further development. Work continues to make improvements within the service.

The Warmer Home schemes have provided significant benefits to Staffordshire residents, especially given the rising price of energy. To date 3,500 people have accessed the schemes and received help and advice. This includes 507 families benefitting from over 562 home installations, such as gas central heating, replacement boilers or insulation measures.

Despite the pressures facing councils like ours, we will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We want Staffordshire people to enjoy a better quality of life, in thriving communities, and live longer in good health.

In much more sobering news, we continue to be horrified by the events unfolding in Ukraine and as a county we stand with all those affected by the conflict. Staffordshire has a proud history of helping those who have had no choice but to flee war or persecution. We have set up an Incident Management Team and we are supporting the delivery of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. We stand ready to offer Ukrainian refugees a warm welcome to our county should our help be needed".

Alan White, Leader of the Council



"All council departments continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation's Delivery Plan.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £4.417m (0.8%). This is compared to the previous forecast of a saving of £3.963m (0.7%) at Quarter 3.

Like many local authorities, we still face financial challenges including in adult social care and in children's social services, but we continue to keep


	<p>our finances in as strong a position as possible. Well managed finances ensures that we provide good value for money for local tax-payers and means we can continue to invest in our future and growing our economy”.</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the quarterly Integrated Performance Report which provides an overview of the Council’s progress, performance, and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan

Decision – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the use of £2.702m from the Contingency budget to fund the national pay award relating to 2021/22, be approved. (This is not currently included in service budgets as a pay freeze was assumed during the MTF5).

145. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

	<p>“A well-managed highway network that is safe, serviceable, and sustainable is one of the best ways to foster job creation, encourage economic growth and support local communities. It makes an important contribution to social inclusion, community safety, and education and health.</p> <p>Effective management of our highways assets has never been more important. This plan tells us how the county council will manage our highways infrastructure in the best way possible, ensuring we continue to meet our statutory duties, that we optimise the allocation of our resources and, wherever possible, can secure the maximum available funding from central government”.</p> <p>Clr David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for Staffordshire which details the principles for managing the highway network and recognises the importance of the highway infrastructure in supporting a number of the Council’s key objectives.

Decision – (a) That the new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for Staffordshire and annexed documents, be approved.

(b) That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills to approve the HIAMP supporting documents.

146. Staffordshire Rural Economic Strategy



“There is already an economic strategy for the whole county, which includes a focus on urban areas, so this part is specifically about how we deliver benefits to rural communities.

The continuing economic growth of Staffordshire rests in part on making sure that there is a collective plan for these towns and villages and that the diverse range of businesses within them are able to make the most of funding and investment opportunities as they come along.

Having consulted with businesses, groups and organisations, as well as local councils, we think this plan is in good shape, but it’s not set in stone and we still want people to contribute to the final version.”

Staffordshire’s rural economy has a good balance of traditional land industries such as farming and forestry, as well as sectors such as manufacturing, construction, services, food production and tourism.

This strength is underpinned by excellent mainstream and specialist universities and colleges and there is a skilled, well-educated workforce ready to go.

The challenge is to agree a clear way forward so that we can follow a common plan in the coming years to remove the obstacles preventing further progress”.

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

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Consultation Draft of the Council’s Rural Economic Strategy.

Decision – (a) That the Consultation Draft of the Rural Economic Strategy be approved.

(b) That it be agreed that a 4-week public consultation be conducted, seeking views from stakeholders, businesses, and residents on the draft Rural Economic Strategy.

(c) That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills take the draft Rural Economic Strategy to the next available Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration and input.

(d) That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills and Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills be authorised to agree changes and finalise the Rural Economic Strategy based on feedback received from the public consultation, Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee and in response to Government policy announcements including the Levelling Up White Paper.

(e) That, working with those Cabinet Members with associated responsibilities, the Director for Economy, Infrastructure & Skills be authorised to progress the development of supporting delivery plans, working with our partners as appropriate.

147. Formal Report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman


	<p>“Protecting children and young people is a priority for this council, so we take the investigation of any complaint by members of the public very seriously.</p> <p>To be noted, this report by the ombudsman is in relation to process in handling a complaint due to the time it dated back to, rather than any specific allegations.”</p> <p>Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider a Formal Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to the failure to fully consider a complaint about Children’s social care.

Decision – (a) That the Formal Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), in relation to the decision making of accepting a complaint for investigation, be noted.

(b) That the recommendations made as part of the investigation report, and the finding of “upheld, maladministration and injustice”, be accepted.

148. Framework Agreement for Demolition Services

	<p>“Managing our property portfolio to maximise their use or to breathe new life into sites is a key priority for the county council.</p> <p>Ensuring we have the rights contracts in place to demolish redundant buildings means we can turn around schemes as quickly as possible and get the best value for taxpayers’ money at the same time”.</p> <p>Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To seek authority to undertake a procurement exercise to procure a framework agreement for demolition services and to delegate authority to the Director for Corporate Services to enter into the necessary arrangements once the procurement exercise is completed.

Decision – (a) That it be agreed that officers undertake a procurement exercise in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the “Regulations”) for the Framework Agreement for the Provision of Demolition and Associated Services (the “Framework Agreement”).

(b) That, following the procurement process, the successful suppliers be appointed to the Framework Agreement for the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2024 and that, dependent on the quality of their delivery, the 24-month service extension be implemented to an end date of 30th June 2026.

- (c) That the Director for Corporate Services be given delegated authority to:
- i. Approve the initial awards of the tendered providers to the Framework Agreement.
 - ii. Approve all subsequent award of call-off contracts under this Framework Agreement; and
 - iii. (If applicable) approve the 2-year extension to the Framework Agreement in its 2nd year.

149. 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 Commercial Matters	In approving the termination of Joint Venture Agreements with Kier Ltd and Winding up of Penda Ltd.

150. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 18 May to 21 September 2022, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Staffordshire Better Care Fund 2021-22	Name: Dr Richard Harling MBE Tel: (01785) 278700
Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23	Name: Kerry Dove Tel: 07855 679112
Bus Service Improvement Plan - Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme	Name: Clive Thomson Tel: (01785) 276522
Digital Connectivity in Staffordshire	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Staffordshire Sustainability Board - Vision and council commitments	Name: Clive Thomson Tel: (01785) 276522
Final Financial Outturn 2021-22	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Mobilisation of Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres	Name: Clive Thomson Tel: (01785) 276522
North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan (NSLAQP)	Name: Clive Thomson Tel: (01785) 276522
Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service - from April 2024	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Family Hub Model	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079

151. Exclusion of the Public

Decision – 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 Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

The Cabinet then proceeded to consider the following matter:

152. Indemnity Clauses and Decision Making for Looked After Children/Use of Regulated Placements
(Exclusion paragraph 3)

Alan White
Leader of the Council