

**Minutes of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Meeting held on 29 September 2022**

Present: Tina Clements (Chair)

Attendance

Philippa Haden	Jessica Shulman
Syed Hussain	David Smith
Graham Hutton	Ross Ward (Vice-Chair
Peter Kruskonjic (Vice-Chair (Overview))	(Scrutiny))
Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf	Bernard Williams

Apologies: Philip Hudson and Ian Lawson

PART ONE

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

19. Minutes of meeting held on 7 July 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

20. Variation of Order of Business

RESOLVED – That the order of business be varied and Item No. 6 on the Agenda, “Petition - Management of HGV's on Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme”, be now taken.

21. Petition - Management of HGV's on Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme

County Councillor David Smith declared an interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting room during its consideration owing to his membership of Planning Committee who would be considering an associated Planning Application in due course.

In accordance with:- (i) the provisions of Section 4 of the County Council's Constitution relating to petitions containing between 2,500 and 5000 signatures and; (ii) Guidance for Consideration of Petitions by

Staffordshire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Committee were addressed by Mr. S. Burgess, the organiser of the petition, "Petition to Staffordshire County Council: Management of HGVs on Cemetery Road, Silverdale which had been presented to County Council at their meeting on 21 July 2022.

In addition, the 'local' Member for the area, County Councillor Simon Tagg spoke to the petition.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a Planning Application had been made by Walley's Quarry Limited 'to allow waste carrying vehicles to park on the internal haul road between 06:00 and 07:00 Monday to Friday (excluding Bank and Public Holidays)' on 26 July 2022, aimed specifically at addressing residents' concerns. This Application was likely to be determined by Planning Committee at their meeting on 2 December 2022 (at the earliest) and therefore, following advice from the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services, the matter should not be debated.

- RESOLVED** – (a) That the petition be noted;
- (b) That the petition organiser be thanked for his attendance at the meeting;
- (c) That no further action be taken by the Committee pending determination of the above-mentioned Planning Application No. SCC/22/0078/FULL-MAJ by the County Planning Committee.

22. Schools White Paper

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) regarding the Schools White Paper, "Opportunity for All: Strong Schools with Great Teachers for your Child", which had been published in March 2022 (schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

The White Paper set out the Government's ambition for a school system that helped every child in England to fulfil their potential by ensuring:- (i) "an excellent teacher for every child; (ii) high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance; (iii) targeted support for every child who needed it and; (iv) a stronger and fairer school system". A Schools Bill followed in May 2022 in order to provide the legislation necessary to enact the reforms.

The Committee heard of potential implications for the Local Education Authority arising from the proposed legislation which included:- (i) their retention of various statutory duties eg ensuring fair access to school places, provision of suitable home to school transport etc; (ii) a

requirement for Local Safeguarding Partnerships to commission safeguarding audits every three years; (iii) the establishment and maintenance of a Children not in School Register; (iv) provision of support to parents who chose to home educate their children; (v) changes to the School Attendance Order process requiring Orders to be issued within three days of the relevant event triggering the duty to issue and; (vi) a change in the non-statutory status of Government guidance entitled "Working Together to Improve School Attendance", to make it statutory.

During his presentation of the report the Cabinet Member highlighted that progress of the Schools Bill through Parliament was currently on-hold pending a review of current reforms by the new Secretary of State for Education.

In the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the contents of the White Paper asking questions, seeking clarification and raising areas of concern to help inform the County Council's response, as necessary, including:- the need for any new legislation to reflect the importance of parental responsibility in raising children; (ii) the importance of ensuring all children were able to attain their full potential including those pupils with high ability; (iii) the future role and relevance of the Office for Standards in Education; (iv) the advantages and disadvantages of elective home education for children and how parents could better be supported by the Local Education Authority in the future; (v) how the specific needs of children with behavioural problems were to be addressed by future legislation and; (vi) how changes in the length of the school week helped to support the Government's ambitions for children.

In conclusion, the Committee were generally supportive of the findings of the White Paper and proposed legislation. They welcomed efforts to ensure every child reached their full potential. However, they were mindful of the extra responsibilities which were likely to be placed on Local Authorities and the corresponding resource implications for the County Council.

- RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.
- (b) That the Cabinet Member be urged to have regard to their comments in his on-going correspondence with Government in implementing their new ambitions for the school system in England.

23. SEND High Needs Capital Funding 2022-24

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) regarding High Needs Provision Capital Allocations funding

(HNPCA) for financial years 2022/23 and 2023-24 (schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

The County Council had been awarded a total of £13,287,793 HNPCA funding by Central Government for the period 2022 to 2024 to support the Authority in their delivery of new places and improve existing provision, within education settings, for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Specifically, the allocation would be used to improve access for children with SEND to mainstream placements and specialist provision in the county increasing the number of children with SEND able to access their local mainstream setting within their community and reduce the numbers of children and young people with SEND accessing independent placements and educational placements out of County.

In addition, the funding supported Staffordshire's SEND Strategy and the achievement of the Accelerated Progress Plan developed in response to the Local Area SEND revisit inspection which had been undertaken in January 2022. As part of the work on the Accelerated Progress Plan and Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management Plan, a County-wide Review of Specialist Provision was being undertaken, to produce a model of graduated specialist provision that ensured equality of access to education which met individual needs of children within their local community.

During the discussion which ensued Members welcomed news of the HNPCA settlement, its implications for the Authority's SEND Strategy and looked forward to real improvements in the education of children with SEND which the additional funding would enable them to achieve.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the utilisation of funding within Staffordshire's educational settings to support the delivery of new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), in line with the SEND Strategy, be supported.

24. Work Programme

RESOLVED – That, subject to the addition of "Tree Planting Net Zero by Nature" to list of items to be considered at their 10 November 2022 meeting, the updated Work Programme (schedule 3 to the signed minutes) be approved.

25. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 19 October 2022 at 2.00 pm, County Buildings, Stafford

RESOLVED – That the date, time and venue of the next meeting be noted.

Chairman