

Recommendations of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet's responses

	Comments and Recommendations of the Corporate O&S Committee	Cabinet Member	Cabinet's Response - Comments
		Accept/ accept in part /Do not accept	Further detail: Current position, plans and timeline Resource implication
	Capital Programme and Assets		
R1	The Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters give consideration for a review of the assets disposal strategy to assist prioritisation of financial receipts.	Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters Accept in part	The current disposal strategy does prioritise receipts but it will be reviewed and if necessary, a revised version will be presented to the Property Sub Committee for approval.
R2	The Cabinet Members for Commercial Matters and Finance and Resources consider if selling all surplus land is the most suitable approach, could the Council hold onto some land for longer to increase its value?	Cabinet Members for Commercial Matters and Finance and Resources Accept in part	Financial considerations are a vital part of the disposal strategy and this will continue to be considered as part of any updated strategy. If updated, the strategy will be presented to the Property Sub Committee for approval.
R3	That the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources consider closer working with the Districts and Boroughs to get information needed to gather the Section 106 monies in	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	This will be investigated to find the best way of taking this forward, with officers from Legal and Planning taking the lead on finding a way of improving working with the Districts and Boroughs.

	a timely manner to not incur costs in having to finance projects by other means.	Accept	
R4	That the Cabinet Members for Commercial Matters and Finance and Resources give consideration to closer partnership working with Districts and Boroughs to maximise value of property across the County.	Cabinet Members for Commercial Matters and Finance and Resources Accept	This is already underway with the Leaders' Board which is encouraging closer working across all areas.
R5	The Leader considers lobbying the government for an Urban area traffic scheme.	The Leader Accept in part	The relevant portfolio holder and senior officers would welcome a discussion with the Chairman of the MTFS working group to obtain a better understanding of the problem that is solved by having an 'urban area traffic scheme'.
	Reserves		
R6	That the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources consider if the time is right to invest in projects due to the high level of general and earmarked reserves.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Accept in part	The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources considers current level of general reserves to be insufficient given the level of risk currently facing the County Council. The MTFS report includes an assessment of general balances showing that the County Council is currently a little short of the amount required to meet the High and Medium risks on the horizon. The review of earmarked reserves have been reviewed and an amount has been released to balance the budget in 2023/24.
R7	That the Cabinet Member Finance and Resources consider if the time is	Cabinet Member for	The Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 9b) sets out the approach taken to reviewing loans and making

	right to review long term loans due to interest rate rises, after due consideration of risks and inflationary pressures.	Finance and Resources Accept	any repayments deemed necessary. Any potential savings identified from repayment of a loan will be reported to the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.
R8	That the Cabinet Member Finance and Resources develop a reporting mechanism for review of larger project delivery. The Working Group has not seen evidence of past project review or monitoring and suggest that the Council may be able to invest in more projects if the allocation of funding is tighter from monitoring and learning from the past.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Accept in part	It is agreed that reviews of completed, large projects will be made available to the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.
R9	That all members be offered training to better understand General Balances and Reserves.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Accept	Training will be provided and the Director of Finance will liaise with Member Services to identify appropriate dates and times for such training to take place.
	SEND Transport		
R10	That the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) prioritise the SEND Transport review and consider if timelines can be moved forward. This should be a priority and addressed early in the financial year.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	Where changes to policy are proposed or significant changes to custom and practice, an appropriate consultation period is required. Exploring the option to bring in changes - for those requiring transport for the first time - from September 2023.

R11	That there is a need to work with early help and SEND transformation to reduce the EHCPs which would reduce the transport required.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept in part	Continue to embed the SEND & Inclusion district hub model which provides opportunity for early help. Agree and implement new EHCNA pathway which seeks to provide help and support pre statutory request for an EHCP to provide the right support at the right time. The strategy for special provision should also support the reduction in EHCPs by supporting CYP to remain in education in their mainstream setting (with the right support). This in turn should reduce transport needs.
R12	That consideration be given to a review of allocating SEND transport provision on an annual basis to reduce the number of single route taxis. We questioned whether the system used by SCC for route calculation was best in class or whether a more modern system may be beneficial. Routing reviews should also be carried out on a regular and frequent basis e.g. each academic year.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	Q Routes is now being used to identify most cost-efficient transport routes for those schools where contracts are being reviewed. It is intended that routes contracted will be reviewed at least annually where new children start or children leave the school.
R13	The SEND Transport supporting guidance should set out an expectation that total parent choice is unaffordable. Norfolk and Nottinghamshire seem to start with 'an educate the parent first' approach.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	The review will look to identify good practice in other local authorities. EHCP annual review will also include a review of the transport offer. Revised processes are being developed during the Spring term which will include offering a personal transport budget in the first instance. Exploring the option to bring in 'pick up' locations, rather than from the home, except in exceptional circumstances.

R14	That the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) review guidance and training for SEND parents and carers taking into consideration best practice in Nottingham and Norfolk, to encourage parents to use travel allowance and encourage independent travel which is beneficial for a child's long-term development.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	EHCP annual review will also include a review of the transport offer. Training for SEND keyworkers will include the prioritisation of Personal Travel Budgets as the offer of choice.
R15	Welcome the work being done to provide more mainstream education provision for SEND pupils, what are the SMART metrics here as to when we will see some benefits to the budget and the rate payers of Staffordshire.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	Currently undertaking a review of specialist provision. Implementation is planned from September 2023 – September 2024. The implementation plan will be developed during summer 2023 which will include timeline for expected impact.
R16	That consideration be given to the feasibility of making more efficient use of Council owned vehicles in SEND Transport.	Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) Accept	Currently in the process of recruiting capacity to enable the review of options available – going through a tender process to recruit consultants. Once a consultant is approved, work will commence with a report expected by September 2023.
	Draft MTFS report - Children in Care		
R17	We recommend work is prioritised to review of closure of Children in Care cases in a more timely fashion to	Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Work is underway to review Children in Care plans and progress them towards appropriate closure to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is given utmost priority. We are engaging in developing good practice guidance

	address the significant pressure placed on the MTFS.	Accept	and governance to ensure going forward, our thresholds for bringing children in care, and their time/journey through the care system is consistently monitored. This will also ensure that a child remains in LA care only for as long as necessary for their safety and well-being.
	Priority area discussed at Corporate O&S - post settlement		
R18	In view of the £37.8m additional government settlement announcement, which may allow for the £20m draw on reserves to no longer be needed, along with the Government scheme delay affecting £4.2m in the 'budget for market sustainability and cost of care' in Social Care, there were options to invest. A sum could be committed as investment in Highway/Capital improvements (in the same way as that proposed last year), as this would save money in the long term.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Accept	Reserves will still be required to ensure a balanced MTFS, albeit at a lower level than originally estimated. The Cabinet report includes reference to an investment, amount to be determined, pending receipt of final business rates figures from District and Borough Councils. Cabinet Members will shortly be considering where any investment would be best made.