

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 21 June 2023

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Simon Tagg
Julia Jessel	Alan White (Chair)
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	David Williams
Mark Sutton	Victoria Wilson

Cabinet Support Members in attendance: Paul Northcott and Robert Pritchard.

Part One

1. **Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2. **Decision notice of the meeting held on 17 May 2023**

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 be approved.

3. **Leader's Update**


Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including Armed Forces Week, the annual celebration of our serving men and women and veterans, including an event in the Shire Hall in Stafford, in partnership with the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, to show businesses how they can support and benefit from employing reserves among their workforce; the success of the IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire on Sunday 11 June 2023 which saw around 3,000 athletes compete in a gruelling 70.3-mile race across the County; progress of work across the country to fix and improve more roads, including the extra investment of £5 million in pothole repairs, on top of an extra £30 million investment in larger repairs and resurfacing of roads and junctions over the next two years; the Council's on-going work to create the right conditions for it to grow and create more good jobs and opportunities for Staffordshire people, including joining forces with our district and borough council partners last month at the UK's largest conference for developers and investors, UKREiiF, in Leeds; how the Council is working with Staffordshire businesses large and small to reduce their impact on the environment, cut energy costs, and help tackle climate change; and the new initiative (Integrated Co-occurring Needs Pathway) to support people with mental health issues and drug and

alcohol use being pioneered in Staffordshire; be noted.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 7 June 2023**

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 7 June 2023 be received.

5. **Volunteering for Staffordshire County Council**

	<p>“Our dedicated army of volunteers across Staffordshire make an invaluable contribution to the council, this county and the communities we all serve.</p> <p>Without them life would certainly be more difficult for many and I would like to thank them for the difference they make to so many lives.</p> <p>We recognise too that volunteers can get a huge amount out of helping others and our new “volunteering principles” aims to make the experience flexible, enjoyable and personally rewarding.”</p> <p>Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Council’s new volunteering principles and practical guidance documents for staff, ensuring that everyone who volunteers with the Council is supported to have a positive and consistent experience.

Decision – (a) That Cabinet commits to the nine new ‘volunteering principles’ for the organisation to adopt.

(b) That the implementation of the volunteering guidance documents for managers and colleagues supporting Council volunteers be approved.

(c) That the proposed plan to embed this approach across the organisation and further develop our volunteer offer, noting the approach to monitor progress, be approved.

6. **Joint Coroners Service - Legal Framework and Financial Protocol**



"This proposal will see the creation of a new joint coroner's service for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

It is expected that the merger will not only help improve services for bereaved families, but would also provide opportunities for efficiency savings, ensuring that the service is sustainable and fit for the future. Inquests will continue to be heard in both Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, however there will be the potential to use other sites and locations under the new joint service.

The proposal links in with wider Ministry of Justice aspirations to merge smaller services which helps create a more consistent service and results in more coroner's areas being of a similar size and population."

Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Reasons for the Decision – To consider proposals for the creation of a new joint coroner's service for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Decision – (a) That the Heads of Terms for the Legal Framework for Staffordshire County Council to enter a partnership with Stoke on Trent City Council to allow the operation of a joint Coroner's service through the Joint Executive Committee, subject to a similar resolution being passed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and subject to Ministerial sign off, be approved.

(b) That it be agreed that the merger should take place subject to a similar resolution being passed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and subject to Ministerial sign off.

(c) That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, to take all steps necessary to enable the Joint Agreement.

(d) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, to finalise any Legal Agreement.

7. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Update


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:

- This month saw a decrease of -465 claimants, with the total number of claimants in the county now standing at 15,385 or 2.9%. The claimant count rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands and is far lower than the average for the region of 4.9%, and lower than the average for England of 3.8% of the working age population. The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw a decrease of -40 claimants to a total of 2,870 young people. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has remained the same this month at 4.6%. This is lower than the national rate of 4.9% and far lower than the regional rate of 6.6%, both of which also remained at the same level this month. These decreases coincide with a significant 26% increase in job vacancies seen between April and May, both in Staffordshire and nationally.
- The Staffordshire Jobs & Careers service to support people to find a job and help businesses to find suitable employees now has six Employment Brokers in post with a 7th Broker to be recruited in the Summer to specifically support employment and training needs related to the West Midlands Interchange scheme.
- The Staffordshire Jobs & Careers Service website continues to be well publicised, and the team continue to develop promotional materials and messaging to promote the service.
- We are in the process of developing updated communications to support our Open Door Staffordshire programme, which continues to support work placements within the County Council and external organisations. Since April 2022 the team have supported 47 Open Door candidates to start a placement, with eight going on to secure paid employment to date.
- To support the delivery of our overarching Economic Strategy, we are currently developing a new Employment and Skills Strategy for Staffordshire with the support and input from our skills providers and partners. This will be used to guide our future employment and skills work programmes, support external funding bids, enable effective communication of Staffordshire’s shared employment and skills goals and to inform the development of other relevant skills plans and actions as appropriate.
- Developing higher-level technical skills is one of the emerging priorities of our Employment & Skills Strategy, and the growth of

high-quality apprenticeships will be key to us achieving this. Our partners have recently relaunched The Ladder for Staffordshire, previously established to support Apprenticeship growth across Staffordshire, with the aim to secure 1,500 individuals as a minimum onto an apprenticeship across the county by January 2025.

- Staffordshire’s recent success in the National VisitEngland Awards for Excellence where three of our visitor economy businesses collected awards, most notably the National Memorial Arboretum won Gold for Business Events Venue of the Year. Also, the Duncombe Arms for Pub of the Year and Trentham Gardens for Unsung Hero who both brought home Bronze.

8. Community Learning Ofsted Inspection and Accountability Agreement 2023-2024

	<p>“Our Community Learning Service provides an excellent service to thousands of people across the county and fully deserved to receive a Good Ofsted rating.</p> <p>It recognises the hard work and dedication of our staff and learning providers in the delivery of the courses which make a real difference to people’s lives.</p> <p>The inspection provides us with the assurance that we are providing a quality service to our learners and has also helped us identify ways in which we can further develop and improve our provision.</p> <p>Now we are using the findings in the report to set out our plan for the service for the coming year in the accountability agreement, including key aims, targets and outcomes that demonstrate our contribution to local skills needs.”</p> <p>Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the outcome of a recent Ofsted Inspection of the Community Learning Service.

Decision – (a) That the Cabinet commends the outcome of the recent

Ofsted inspection and the contribution to Staffordshire priorities.

(b) That the accountability statement for the 2023-2024 academic Year be approved.

9. **Integrated Performance - Performance and Finance Final Outturn Report 2022/23**




“Creating the right conditions for businesses and our economy to grow and thrive while supporting our most vulnerable residents remain priorities for the county council.

We know that many people still face challenges in dealing with the increased cost of living and we continue to do what we can to support them. Programmes such as the Household Support Fund which has provided over £15 million of financial assistance and the Sustainable Warmth Competition which has installed energy saving measures in almost 900 homes are all providing valuable support. Through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme we’ve also helped thousands of families while the ‘Here to Help’ campaign has provided advice to over 24,000 visitors to the website.

Alongside this, our supportive communities work is helping people to live independently with support from their families and local communities. The programme has seen the recruitment of 166 Community Champions and the creation of 26 community help points to date.

Our work to support local businesses to start up, survive, and grow remains a priority, while our ‘We are Staffordshire’ campaign goes from strength to strength in promoting business and employment opportunities in the county. We also continue to invest in highways, enterprise centres and infrastructure including broadband which benefit both residents and businesses alike. Major investment projects at Chatterley Valley in Newcastle, i54 South Staffordshire and highways work at Pets at Home’s new headquarters in

	<p>Stafford are all helping attract more jobs to the county.</p> <p>Work to tackle climate change and achieve net zero by 2050 is ongoing with the council already reducing its carbon emissions by 44% since declaring a climate change emergency in 2019. We do continue to face challenges in adult social care and children’s services including levels and complexity of demand in both areas. However, additional investment is helping ease the situation”.</p> <p>Alan White, Leader of the Council</p> <p>“Significant progress has been made across the organisation during quarter 4 and during the year with departments delivering on key areas of work.</p> <p>We still face pressures from inflation across all council areas which we continue to monitor carefully. Challenges around recruitment and demand within children’s services also continue which we are trying to address within our longer-term plans. The final outturn position for the county council for the year is an overspend of £11.294m (1.9%). The quarter 3 forecast was an overspend of £11.635m.</p> <p>Like most local authorities, we still face financial challenges, but we are a well-run council and continue to keep our finances in as strong a position as possible. Well managed finances means we can continue to invest in our future, grow our economy and improve people’s lives”.</p> <p>Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider an overview of Staffordshire County Council’s progress, performance, and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan, Delivery Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Decision – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the final financial outturn be noted and the planned contributions to reserves be approved.

10. Framework Agreement for Maintenance and Minor Works



“The county council has a large property portfolio of varying age and condition. As we continue to innovate and develop our services, we need to be able to manage our property assets effectively.

This new framework agreement will allow us to procure works for planned and reactive maintenance and minor works.”

Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters

Reasons for the Decision – To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a procurement exercise to procure a framework agreement for the provision of planned and reactive maintenance and minor works. (The scope of the framework agreement also includes for, Building, Electrical and Mechanical works).

Decision – (a) That it be agreed that officers undertake a procurement exercise in compliance with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the “Regulations”) for the Framework Agreement for Maintenance and Minor Works (the “Framework Agreement”).

(b) That following the procurement process, the successful suppliers be appointed to the Framework Agreement for the period 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2028. Agreement of the final contractual agreements being delegated to the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets.

(c) That it be noted that any instructions in terms of the framework agreement subsequent call-offs will be approved in accordance the council’s Procurement Regulations.

11. 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 agreeing to work in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council (SoTCC) to procure a suitable operator when the current Hanford Energy from Waste (EfW) contract ends on 31 March 2025.
Cabinet Member for Health and Care	In approving proposals relating to Cannock Specialist Day Opportunities
Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change	In agreeing the Council's appointment by the Secretary of State as Responsible Authority to work with Supporting Authorities and stakeholders to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, as required under the Environment Act 2021.

12. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 19 July to 15 November 2023, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
'Living My Best Life' - A Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent People in Staffordshire 2023-2028	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23	Name: Rob Salmon Tel: (01785) 276354
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Staffordshire Bus Strategy	Name: Darryl Evers Tel: (01785) 854265
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards - Contract Award	Name: Jo Cowcher Tel: 07772 011078
Supported Living Future Commissioning Arrangements Update	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Children & Young People's Programme Framework	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Strategy for Special Provision	Name: Tim Moss Tel: (01785) 277963
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy	Name: Anthony Baines

2023-2030	Tel: (01785) 895984
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13. John Henderson

The Cabinet extended their thanks to Mr Henderson, who was shortly to retire from his position as the Council's Chief Executive, for the contribution he had made during the eight years he had served with the Council and wished him well for the future.

Alan White
Leader of the Council