

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 15 November 2023

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Simon Tagg
Julia Jessel	Alan White (Chair)
Jonathan Price	Philip White
Mark Sutton	

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

Also in attendance: Mike Wilcox (Local Member)

Apologies: Ian Parry, David Williams and Victoria Wilson

Part One

46. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

The following Member declared an interest in accordance with Standing Order 16.5:-

Member	Minute Nos.	Interest	Reason
Robert Pritchard	58	Personal	Local Member and also member of Tamworth Borough Council

47. Decision notice of the meeting held on 18 October 2023

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 be approved.

48. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the Remembrance Services which took place across the County, including at the National Memorial Arboretum, to remember those who gave their lives so we could enjoy the freedoms we have today; the Council's work with Tri Services in Newcastle to help them secure a permanent base for their work in supporting veterans; the extra costs that that Winter brings to families and the support available via the Household Support Fund; Staffordshire's Libraries to offer warm spaces to residents over the Winter period; the Government would shortly be announcing its spending priorities for the country as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement this month; the

Council's commitment to balancing its books while still promoting good education, training and job opportunities, growing our economy, investing in good roads, protecting our amazing countryside, leading the way on reducing our carbon footprint, fostering better, more independent lives and of course protecting our most vulnerable children and adults; and the launch of the Let's Talk Staffordshire survey which ask residents for their ideas on the future of their local communities; be noted.

49. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023 be received.

50. Staffordshire Means Back to Business - Oral Report

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 an increase of 335 claimants in Staffordshire, at the same time we have seen increases both regionally and nationally, this is reflective of the challenging economic conditions businesses continue to operate in across the country. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 14,955 or 2.8% of the working age population. It is important to state that 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 4.8%, and lower than the average for England of 3.8%. We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our Jobs Brokerage service.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 40 claimants to a total of 2,900 young people. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit now stands at 4.6%. This is lower than the national rate of 5.1% and far lower than the regional rate of 6.8%. This further increase in the youth claimant count highlights the importance of continuing to engage with our younger residents and supporting them to find employment or continue in education and training.
- The most recently released figures on disposable household income showed that Staffordshire is outperforming regional and national averages, with disposable income per head increasing by 4.4% in Staffordshire compared to 4% and 3.7% across the West

Midlands Region and UK respectively. Whilst high levels of inflation continue to present challenges, this is now expected to fall substantially over the coming months whilst the County Council will continue to do all we can to support our residents in getting a higher paid job, thereby putting more money in their pockets.

- Last month I updated Cabinet on some of the short-term localised difficulties the delivery of some of our investment activity can create, and particularly our Chatterley Valley West employment site and the ongoing closure of Peacock Hay Road. The highways works recommenced on 13th November following the appointment of our strategic infrastructure partner, Amey, to undertake these works. The site developer, Harworth Group has also appointed a replacement earthworks contractor to recommence plot preparation and servicing works. Although there may be a period of limited activity due to winter conditions, the development of the site will soon be fully back underway, ensuring that the full benefits of the scheme, including the creation of 1,700 jobs, will be realised at the earliest opportunity.
- The Council has now supported 598 people through the Staffordshire Start Up Mentoring Programme, with 279 of those who have successfully completed the course deciding that self-employment is for them and having gone on to start their own business. For those people who have completed this programme, we recently ran a series of peer-to-peer networks to support them in ensuring that their new business is a success and to work through any difficulties they may be facing and help find solutions together. These sessions have proved very successful, and we are therefore looking to commission more to be launched in the next couple of months.
- Our Get Started and Grow programme has now supported more than 194 business owners who have been trading up to five years with professional services support in marketing, accountancy, digital marketing, legal or human resources consultancy. These are just a few examples of our current activity to support businesses to start and thrive within Staffordshire and this will of course remain a key focus as part of the delivery of our Economic Strategy.

51. Strategic Vision for Early Years

	<p>"Childcare in Staffordshire is excellent, with 97 per cent of settings rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.</p> <p>The Government's move to extend the provision of funded childcare is an opportunity for young children to enjoy high-quality play and learning to pave the way for later life.</p> <p>We are developing how we back childcare providers across the county and help young families, particularly with early identification of support for delayed development and SEND."</p> <p>Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To review the structure of the Early Years Service within Staffordshire County Council following the transfer of the team from Entrust.

Decision – (a) That the strategic vision for the early years' service be endorsed and the contribution this will make to Staffordshire's Strategic Plan be acknowledged.

(b) That the principles for the proposed reorganisation of the Early Years Service delivery model detailed within the report be endorsed and support for Officers to further develop this model with staff and stakeholders be agreed.

(c) That authority be delegated to the Director for Children's Services in consultation with the lead member for Children and Young People and lead member for Education and SEND to approve the final staffing structure for the service.

(d) That the planned budget profile for the Early Years Service and investment in new areas of delivery be endorsed.

52. Climate Change Annual Report (2023) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 3 (November 2023)



"As a county council, we're driven by a powerful mission—to make Staffordshire Sustainable.

We've set our sights on an ambitious goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions as an organisation by 2050.

Back in 2019, we declared a climate change emergency. I am pleased to share that we have reduced our carbon emissions by 50%. This achievement is a testament to our dedication and hard work. It's also a stark reminder that our journey is far from over.

We've devised a comprehensive 'Climate Change Action Plan. This blueprint outlines our strategy for tackling the remaining half of our carbon emissions. It's a roadmap that signifies our determination to continue this vital work and pave the way toward a sustainable future."

Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Council's Climate Change 2022/2023 Annual Report and to approve the Climate Change Action Plan revision 3, November 2023 (CCAP), which contains specific actions to be undertaken by the Council prior to 2025 which will assist in our journey to become net carbon zero by 2050.

Decision – (a) That the Council's Climate Change 2022/2023 Annual Report, which records the positive progress that has been made on our target to become net carbon zero by 2050, be noted.

(b) That the Climate Change Action Plan revision 3, November 2023, which lists our key climate change mitigating actions over the next 2 years, be approved.

53. Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030

	<p>"As Staffordshire's economy continues to grow and with high demand from employers for skilled workers it is essential that we have a population ready to take advantage of new opportunities.</p> <p>Developing people's skills before they embark on their careers and then upgrading them throughout their working lives means they can play an active part in a modern and evolving economy. Having relevant skills to our key sector industries will enable Staffordshire people to enjoy working in higher value jobs in their own county.</p> <p>Our employment and skills strategy is truly collaborative between councils, learning providers and business and aims to make the world of learning and skills as easy to navigate as possible. This includes our Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Service which matches people's skills with jobs or training relevant to them.</p> <p>The strategy draws on our collective expertise and sets out a shared vision and approach. We are confident that it will help to improve people's lives, their communities and our economy in the long-term."</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 new Employment and Skills Strategy which outlines the County Council's vision and priorities for developing the skills of our residents to create the workforce needed to deliver our Economic Strategy and Strategic Plan.

Decision – (a) That the Employment and Skills Strategy be approved.

(b) 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.

54. Treasury Management Report for the half-year ended 30 September 2023



"Staffordshire County Council is a well-run Council, and we continue to manage our finances prudently while doing and spending what is required. By using cash reserves rather than borrowing more, we have been able to achieve substantial savings in what remain challenging times. In addition to being prudent, our low-risk investment approach, which focuses on lending to low-risk institutions, means we have been well placed to deal with challenges arising from difficulties the current global economy presents.

We remain committed to supporting local businesses along with providing access to funding, as we work to grow our economy. Like most Councils we face financial pressures, rising costs and uncertainty over the long-term funding of some services but we will continue to spend and invest where necessary, focusing our efforts and resources on where they are most needed."

Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a summary of the County Council's borrowing and investment activities during the first six months of the year.

Decision – (a) That the treasury management activities for the half-year ended 30 September 2023 be noted.

(b) That the early repayment of £50 million of PWLB debt, as discussed in Paragraph 30 of the report, be noted.

55. 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 Children and Young People	In approving the name change and rebranding for the existing eleven Children's Centres in Staffordshire and two additional county council buildings, Families First at Faraday Road in Stafford, and Families First at Basin Lane in Tamworth into Family Hubs

56. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 13 December 2023 to 17 April 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Older People Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024-2029	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Families Health & Wellbeing (0-19) Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Drug and Alcohol Services	Name: Anthony Bullock Tel: (01785) 276649
Provision of Services for Children and Young People	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Residential Overnight Education	Name: Neelam Bhardwaja Tel: (01785) 277041
Service Provision of Temporary and Interim Human Resources	Name: Sarah Getley Tel: (01785) 854265
Unregulated Placements	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: (01785) 854455
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain/ Wendy Tompson Tel: (01785) 854455/ (01785) 854267
Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion - progress update	Name: Sarah Getley Tel: (01785) 854265
Burton Regeneration	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079
Unregulated Placement Update	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088

57. Exclusion of the Public

"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 the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below".

PART TWO

58. Development of Additional Nursing Home Capacity for Older People (Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a proposal to build two nursing homes in the Tamworth/Lichfield area.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

59. Provision of a Waste Transfer Facility (Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a proposal for the re-procurement of waste transfer facilities to receive, manage and transfer waste.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

Alan White
Leader of the Council