

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 March 2024

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

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Paul Northcott

Apologies: Robert Pritchard

Part One

103. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

104. Decision notice of the meeting held on 21 February 2024

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 be approved.

105. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including nine out of ten parents being allocated their first choice secondary school in Staffordshire this year, well above both the national and regional average, with nearly 99 per cent allocated one of their top three preferred schools; Staffordshire, one of 20 areas across the country, being selected to join a national pilot to encourage people to pursue a career in early years and childcare; the Holidays, Activity and Food scheme running over the Easter holidays with 15,000 places available to eligible children aged between five and sixteen on benefits related free school meals; the Council's commitment to spend an extra £50 million in maintaining and improving Staffordshire's highways over the next three years alongside a total of £53M being spent on a range of major projects, vital road improvements and general road maintenance in 2024/25; the Local Transport Fund deal which will see the county council allocated nearly £286million from 2025/26 from a national fund of £4.7bn; Staffordshire being chosen by City Nation Place to host its UK conference which will bring together leaders to focus on how to build place attractiveness and reputation – and to build pride, attract visitors,

talent and investment be noted.

106. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2024

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2024 be received.

107. 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:


- This month saw an increase of 855 universal credit claimants in Staffordshire, whilst at the same time we have seen significant increases both regionally and nationally. This reflects the challenging economic conditions businesses continue to operate in across the country and will in part be due to some seasonal jobs coming to an end. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 15,910 and the claimant rate has increased this month from 2.8% to 3.0% of the working age population. However, it is important to note that the claimant count rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands, far lower than the average for the region of 5.0%, and lower than the average for England of 3.9%.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 140 claimants this month to a total of 3,020 young people. Increases were also seen regionally and nationally. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has increased this month from 4.6% to 4.8%. This continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.3% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.1%.
- Last month I updated Cabinet on our work to transfer the functions of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership into the County Council. Government has confirmed that one of the LEPs previous responsibilities, namely the delivery of an economic strategy across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent geography, will now be the responsibility of the upper tier authorities from April and that this will be a key document in being able to access future national funding programmes. Whilst this is now the responsibility of the County and City Council’s, we will of course need to continue to work closely with our district and borough partners, local businesses and relevant economic stakeholders. The Staffordshire and

Stoke-on-Trent Economic Strategy needs to be published by the end of September and therefore this work will be progressing quickly over the coming months and I'll ensure that Cabinet are updated and have a chance to shape this important piece of work.

- Since 2010, the number of our residents who have no qualifications has almost halved, whilst we now have around 60,000 more residents who have a degree level qualification. This is a huge achievement and is a key reason why we have seen related successes in recent months and years, including average earnings of our residents now equalling the national average and the significant additional number of jobs that have been created in the area. Recently released jobs data shows that 15,000 additional jobs were created in Staffordshire between 2021 and 2022, whilst we now have almost 60,000 more jobs within the county when compared to 2010. This huge improvement in the skills levels of our residents is thanks to significant investment and the work of not only the County Council but all our skills providers across Staffordshire. Our Community Learning Service plays an important role in providing opportunities for lifelong learning and this week is our Adult Learning and Skills Festival, which is taking place at venues across the county, and will offer events and adult learning taster sessions for Staffordshire residents, whether they are looking to learn new skills for personal wellbeing, a career change or starting a business.
- We of course know that the skills required by not only our existing but also future businesses is continually evolving, and therefore we need to make sure that our skills system continues to be capable of providing the skills we need. Our Institute of Technology will play a key role in this by delivering higher level technical qualifications, led by the Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group in collaboration with university and private sector partners. Construction on the site officially started at the end of last month, with the first learners due to start in 2025.
- Last week was our Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism & Good Food Awards, a chance to celebrate and champion our tourism and hospitality businesses which contribute so much to our local economy. The awards have been growing year-on-year and we received a record number of entries for this year with our awards now being the largest tourism awards competition in the Midlands and the second largest in England. In total there were 20 award winners and 14 of these will now go on to represent the county at the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence to be held in

Liverpool in June.

108. Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25

	<p>“Maintaining our schools and creating an environment that encourages learning is crucial for our children to thrive.</p> <p>This year, we're investing nearly £57 million in Staffordshire schools for upkeep and improvements. The funds will also be used to make schools more energy-efficient, directly contributing to the county council's goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions.</p> <p>Some of this funding will also be used to deliver new school places and improve existing provision in schools for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This is to ensure children and young people, irrespective of background, can access a good education that enables them to fulfil their potential.”</p> <p>Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Schools Capital Programme for 2024/25.

Decision – (a) That the Schools Capital Programme 2024/25 investment proposal (as set out in the supporting appendices to the report) be approved.

(b) That the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets be authorised to monitor progress and make any necessary in-year alterations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND).

(c) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services to enter contracts for projects in the Capital Programme which have a value of £2,000,000 or above. Other contract awards and modifications will be in accordance with the Council's Procurement Regulations.

109. Highways and Transport Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27



"Staffordshire's huge road network is vital for keeping our county connected and its residents and businesses on the move, and we know that good roads are extremely important to our residents.

Over the next three financial years the County Council is planning to carry out at least an extra £50 million worth of repairs and essential maintenance to Staffordshire's roads, on top of any grant given by government. This includes more road resurfacing schemes and getting potholes repaired quicker.

The investment will enable 34 road reconstruction schemes to be carried out, including the resurfacing of junctions/roundabouts at key locations into our towns, 1.5 million sq. m of preventative surface treatments and £2.75M of work to repair highway drainage.

This year will also see more than £53 million invested in a range of major projects, vital local improvements, and general road maintenance.

In January 2023 we were also successful in securing £19.8M through the Levelling Up Fund for improvements to roads and bus and cycling routes in Staffordshire that will see investment in environmentally friendly buses and active travel between Stafford and Cannock, as well as significant investment around the A38 Branston interchange in Burton upon Trent.

However, we recognise that there is always more to be done and we continue to lobby central Government for the money necessary to keep Staffordshire's roads in the condition we expect and ensure local communities and businesses can see the benefits of an improved highway network."

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Highways and Transport Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27.

Decision – (a) That the Highways and Transport capital investment proposals (set out in the supporting appendices to the report) be approved and it be noted that, at the time of writing, the allocations from the Department for Transport have not been provided.

(b) That the additional investment of £30M by the County Council into highway maintenance to be delivered over the period from 2025/26 to 2026/27 be approved.

(c) That the progression of the programme of developer funded s.278/s111 highway improvement projects be approved and that authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills to agree the details of the works agreements and authorise the contracts for works to be entered into.

(d) That the Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County monitors progress of the overall programme and be given delegated authority to make any in-year alterations and additions to the programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

110. Climate Change Strategic Development Framework - Update

	<p>"Climate Change is a critical issue facing Staffordshire. The County Council declared a climate change emergency in 2019 to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>We recognise reducing emissions in isolation is not enough and we must also build resilience into our services to the changing climate.</p> <p>The revised Climate Change Strategic Development Framework outlines our priorities for achieving our net zero ambition and how to better prepare ourselves and local communities for the changing climate."</p> <p>Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the updated Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.

Decision – (a) That the updated Climate Change Strategic Development Framework be noted and approved.

(b) That it be noted that the revised Climate Change Strategic Development Framework highlights the importance of considering climate change mitigation and adaption in combination.

(c) That it be noted that the Climate Change Action Plan is being refreshed to incorporate carbon reduction initiatives and building climate change resilience across all council services.

111. Staffordshire County Council Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy and LEVI Update



"It is not the county council's role or responsibility to install or operate the charging points, but by working with partner local authorities, we will be in the strongest position to attract commercial providers which will undertake this.

Our partnership strategy has identified where the most appropriate places for charging points could be and how we will work with the private sector to facilitate successful delivery. We will also work with businesses to encourage workplace charging and residents to support off-street charging, in addition to people and organisations making planning applications.

We understand that electricity may not be the only type of alternative power for vehicles in future years, but it's vital that we have our Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure in place as soon as possible."

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport



"The County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we are making great progress as an organisation to achieve our target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

We have a role to play in inspiring and making it easier for more people to switch to green and active travel, such as walking and cycling, or the use of electric vehicles. Indeed, the Government has banned the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars beyond 2035 so across the country and in Staffordshire we need to see more charging points

	<p>installed for electric vehicles in public places, on-street and in workplaces.”</p> <p>Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To seek approval to accept capital funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable the private sector to deliver public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in Staffordshire.

Decision – (a) That the Council agrees to accept funding from the Department for Transport to enable the private sector to deliver public EV charging infrastructure in Staffordshire.

(b) That the final decision to either remain in a local authority consortium with Midlands Connect or for Staffordshire County Council to procure an EV infrastructure partner independently be delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change.

(c) That the completion of any legal agreements associated with the installation of electric vehicle chargepoints, i.e. s50 and SCC private leases, be delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

(d) That the Department for Transport focus for on-street charging infrastructure and the need to include a combination of off-street and on-street provision as a requirement of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding, be noted.

(e) That the continued collaboration with district and borough councils to allocate LEVI funding to facilitate the installation of EV infrastructure at areas of off-street parking where there is a residential need, be noted.

112. Section 75 Agreement for Adult Social Care Assessment & Case Management and Occupational Therapy in Staffordshire



"This new agreement allows the Council to build on our long-running, successful partnership with Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust.

Together, we will continue to put people's needs at the heart of everything we do and provide integrated health and social care services for older people, people with physical disabilities, and those living with mental health conditions."

Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider entering into a new Section 75 Agreement for the provision of adult social care assessment and case management.

Decision – (a) That the progress with the current Section 75 Agreement with Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) be noted.

(b) That the Council enter into a new Section 75 Agreement with MPFT to continue to provide adult social care assessment and case management and occupational therapy in Staffordshire.

(c) That the completion of a change control to the Section 75 Agreement, to transfer the existing Mental Health Floating Support Service contract with MPFT into the Section 75 Agreement, be authorised.

(d) That the Director of Health and Care and Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Care, be authorised to finalise and implement a Section 75 Agreement for adult social care assessment and case management and occupational therapy commencing 1 April 2025.

113. Provision of Apprenticeship Services 2024



"Skills are the life blood of any economy and having a skilled workforce is essential if we are to grow the Staffordshire economy and attract further investment and more businesses.

Apprenticeships are key to this and last year 6,300 people started an apprenticeship in Staffordshire. Apprenticeships are also an important aspect of workforce development for Staffordshire County Council. We currently have over 100 apprentices doing 35 different subjects and a further 95 apprentices working in our grant-maintained schools.

As use of the Apprenticeship Levy becomes more established, and we use it to create a workforce with skills for both now and the future we need access to a wide range of specialist training providers. The appointment of Crown Commercial Services will make sure training is delivered by providers who have been approved and checked for due diligence. It will make it more efficient to award and manage the increasing number of contracts."

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

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the requirement to change to a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to procure apprenticeship provision.

Decision – (a) That approval be given for the Council to join Crown Commercial Service, Apprenticeship Training Dynamic Marketplace – Framework RM6102 until April 2025.

(b) That this be reviewed in April 2025 to consider whether it is appropriate to transfer to the CCS new framework RM6303 after considering the Apprenticeship Strategy that is currently being commissioned through People Services.

(c) That the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability be authorised to approve the award of contracts with training providers and the release of funds from the apprenticeship levy to fund training.

114. Staffordshire's All Age Carers Strategy 2024 - 2029



"Carers make an extraordinary contribution in helping their loved ones lead healthier and more independent lives, and it is important that they are supported to care for them as long as they want to.

This new strategy—produced in partnership with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and with direct input from carers themselves—recognises the extraordinary contribution carers make up and down the county, and ensures they have the help and support they need. It also reflects how we'll continue to seek the views of carers, and work with them to ensure they are aware of the support available and building access to support in their own communities.

We've listened to what carers want and in building this strategy and have also integrated the needs of our inspirational young carers to ensure support specific needs."

Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a new All-Age Carers Strategy (2024-2029) to replace the current strategy.

Decision – That the Staffordshire All Age Carers Strategy 2024 – 2029 be approved.

115. Extension to the Dynamic Purchasing System Agreement for the supply of Residential and Nursing Care home placements



"Ensuring timely access to care home placements, for people who can no longer be safely supported to live independently, is an essential part of ensuring the health and well-being of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Having a care home market, which is contracted with the Council, ensures quality of care and capacity is available to meet the needs of the people we support."

Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider an extension to the Dynamic

Purchasing System Agreement for the supply of Residential and Nursing Care Home placements.

Decision – (a) That an extension to the Council’s Dynamic Purchasing System for adult care home placements be approved.

(b) That it be noted that a new commissioning model for care homes is in the final stages of development and that it will be brought to Cabinet for consideration in summer 2024.

116. Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee



“Ensuring our businesses are at the heart of the conversation when local authorities make decisions that affect them is a priority to the county council and together with colleagues at Stoke-on-Trent City Council we will ensure that we build on the foundations put in place by the LEP.

Through our new joint committee we will also be a strong voice for businesses across our area, with a focus on securing funding for infrastructure development and future economic growth, both from government and private investors.

The committee will steer the work of the growth hub, careers hub and the newly established Local Visitor Economy Partnership, which will champion the county and city across the UK and internationally.”

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

Reasons for the Decision – To consider establishing a Joint Committee on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council to take all decisions within the budget and policy frameworks for both councils arising from the winding down and cessation of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Decision – (a) That the approach to form a Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee with Stoke-on-Trent City Council (“Joint Committee”) be endorsed.

(b) That the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee be agreed.

(c) That the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member

for Economy and Skills be appointed to the Joint Committee.

(d) That all necessary authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability in respect of transferring the Careers Hub to Staffordshire County Council as the accountable body.

(e) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Corporate Services to sign the Asset Transfer Agreement to formally transfer the SSLEP reserves to SCC as the Accountable Body for the LEP, with the reserves to be managed through the Joint Committee.

(f) That, once the SSLEP reserves are formally transferred to SCC as accountable body, the following funds are immediately ring-fenced (subject to Cabinet approval at Stoke-on-Trent City Council):

- i. SSLEP reserves of £298,250 and £425,934 are allocated to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub and Careers Hub respectively as a rolling contingency, thereby allowing an additional year of these services to be funded should national grants not be provided in 2025/2026, or any subsequent year.
- ii. SSLEP reserves of £324,130 are allocated to be spent on the establishment and work programme of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

117. 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 Education (and SEND)	In approving the admission arrangements relating to admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools.

118. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 17 April to 21 August 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2023/2	Name: Wendy Tompson/ Rachel Spain Tel: 01785 854267/ 01785 854455
Review of Local Authority Social Care Case Management Systems	Name: Jo Crowcher/ Nisha Gupta Tel: 07772 011078/

	07890 402088
Unregulated Placement Update	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Procurement for Garden Waste Disposal Framework	Name: David Atkinson Tel: 01785 277910
Roofing Framework Agreement	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Community Learning Accountability Agreement 2024-2025	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Supported Living Commissioning Update	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Final Financial Outturn 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: 01785 854455
Digital Innovation Strategy for Staffordshire County Council	Name: Linsey Bissell Tel: 07855 026263
Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079

119. 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

120. Sale of Surplus Land at Histons Hill, Codsall (Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the sale of surplus land at Histons Hill, Codsall.

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

Leader of the Council