

## Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 17 April 2024

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

**Cabinet Support Members in attendance:** Keith Flunder, Paul Northcott and Robert Pritchard.

### Part One

#### 121. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### 122. Decision notice of the meeting held on 20 March 2024

**Decision** – That the notes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024 be approved.

#### 123. Leader's Update

**Decision** – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including the news that the majority of parents in Staffordshire have been allocated their first-choice primary school with 95 per cent of parents found being given a place at their first choice, with more than 99 per cent being offered one of their top three; the recent announcement that a total of £56 million will be spent on building new schools, and maintaining and improving existing ones in Staffordshire over the coming year, this includes building new primary schools in Stafford, Tamworth, East Staffordshire and Lichfield; the appointment of Councillor Mark Deaville to the strategic role of overseeing the Council's approach to delivering high quality projects, supported by Councillors Keith Flunder and Rob Pritchard, who will lead on highways operations in the North and South respectively; the Council's continued focus on the impact of HS2 on our county including work to ensure that the Handsacre Link, which is part of these plans, is built and operated to allow HS2 compatible trains to run from Stafford to London; the recent calls, following the scrapping of the leg of HS2 from Crewe to the North, for a HS2 mark2, as it were, to be built and the Council's position on any HS2 replacement remaining unchanged; the development and growth of an electric charging network in Staffordshire being boosted by £4.6million

of national funding; the on-going work of the Council in helping preserve Cannock Chase for generations to come and to ensure wildlife and habitats can continue to flourish, including the recent introduction of cattle there as part of a project to restore heathland habitats in an environmentally friendly way; and Staffordshire Day on 1 May with events of all shapes and sizes taking place across the county; be noted.

## **124. 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 430 claimants in Staffordshire, whilst at the same time we have seen increases both regionally and nationally. This reflects the challenging economic conditions businesses continue to operate in across the country. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 16,130 and the claimant rate has increased this month from 2.9% 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 5.1%, and lower than the average for England of 4.0%.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 100 claimants this month to a total of 3,100 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 4.8% to 5.0%. Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.3% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.2%.
- Supporting the creation of new, high-quality employment opportunities is the central aim of our Economic Strategy and the growth of the logistics industry has been one of our successes in recent years. Since 2015, 7,000 new logistics jobs have been created within Staffordshire and our location at the centre of the country will mean that we will continue to be attractive to the industry. Our aim has always been to ensure that we are supporting the creation of the type of jobs that we want within Staffordshire, and it is therefore really encouraging to see that recent logistics developments are increasingly creating jobs that require high-level skills, such as artificial intelligence and robotics expertise.
- Over the coming years, the West Midlands Interchange scheme in South Staffordshire will bring 8,500 new jobs to the county and we

are proactively engaged with partners on the scheme's delivery. Our Jobs and Careers service is working with Winvic, the lead constructor for phase 1 of the site, to showcase the development and promote different careers and pathways into the construction industry with our residents. As a rail-served logistics site, the West Midlands Interchange scheme will be a key part of the country's logistics network and it is estimated that once fully operational it will reduce HGV travel on the national road network by around 50 million km each year, making a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Recently GRIDSERVE Electric Forecourt have been granted planning approval to develop an electric vehicle charging station at our flagship i54 South Staffordshire business park, with only one plot now remaining on the western extension of the site. This will serve existing and future occupiers of the site, the wider area and users of the local road network and is the type of development that will be needed as we continue to move towards the greater use of electric vehicles.
- Burton and South Derbyshire College has recently opened its upgraded and revitalised facilities in Burton upon Trent's town centre. This has seen the creation of a range of innovative facilities including a Cyber Security Lab, Games Development Studio and Health Simulation Suite. These facilities will be vital if we are to prepare students for evolving demands of employers, with such developments also being important in the regeneration of our town centres.
- Alongside working with our local skills providers, the County Council also continues to support the development of the skills of our residents through our Community Learning Service which provides services for around 2,500 adult learners across Staffordshire every year, helping residents to upskill, access further learning and ultimately secure good quality jobs. The quality of the service has recently been recognised by achieving the international Matrix Standard, with the service being praised for helping people to understand their options, achieve their next steps and move towards further learning and employment.

## **125. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2023/24**



"We continue to deliver on our priorities, including creating the right conditions for our economy to grow and supporting those in our communities who need our help the most.

Local businesses continue to get the help they need to start up and grow and our 'We are Staffordshire' brand is successfully raising the profile of the county as a great place to live, work in and invest. Our work in tackling the effects of climate change is ongoing, including the highly successful Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme which is delivering energy improvements to hundreds of homes across the county.

We still face challenges in both adult social care where demand is high and in children's services with rising costs and ongoing placement pressures despite a further reduction in the number of children in care. Demand for Education, Health and Care plans for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities also remain high.

Despite facing rising costs and inflationary pressures we continue to deliver a balanced budget and will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way, to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We continue to find new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services and achieving results."

Alan White, Leader of the Council



"We continue to make significant progress across the organisation during the final quarter and departments are delivering on their priorities.

Rising costs across the organisation and levels of demand and complexity of needs remain challenging, particularly in children's and families services and in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities where transport costs are rising significantly.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £4.0m (0.58%), compared to the Quarter 3 forecast overspend of £5.4m

	<p>(0.9%). Like most local authorities, we still face financial challenges, but we are a well-run council and continue to live within our means, deliver value for money for taxpayers, whilst improving the services we deliver to our customers”.</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** – That the report be received.

## 126. 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 preferred option to procure return home interviews for Children who go missing, from the Children and Families Support Services (CAFSS) Framework and award to the most competitive tender.

## 127. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 15 May to 18 September 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Walleys Quarry: Addressing the Impact on our Communities	Name: Richard Harling Tel: (01785) 278700
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
Stafford Town Centre Update	Name: Anthony Hodge Tel (01785) 277204

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
Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024	Name: Melanie Stokes Tel: (01785) 276330

## 128. 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

## 129. Review of Local Authority Social Care Case Management Systems (Exemption paragraph 3)

**Reasons for the Decision** – To consider the procurement and implementation of a new case management system for Childrens and Adult social care.

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

## 130. Unregulated Placements Update (Exemption paragraph 3)

**Reasons for the Decision** – To provide Cabinet with an update in relation to the use of unregulated placements.

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

**Leader of the Council**