



Staffordshire Leaders Board

Leaders Board Priorities

23 June 2022

Recommendations to the Staffordshire Leaders Board

That the Leaders Board agree:

- (a) the priorities for 2022/23 set out at paragraph 4
- (b) the approach for the year set out throughout this paper

Background

1. Local authorities in Staffordshire have a history full of successful joint work, and we are clear that taking this further holds huge benefit for the county. The formal establishment of the Staffordshire Leaders Board marks the next milestone in further strengthening two-tier work between the county council and the eight district and borough councils within the Staffordshire area. It provides a forum to set a jointly-agreed strategic direction for Staffordshire on agreed priorities, and oversee the delivery of how we get there.
2. This paper outlines the proposed priorities for the Leaders Board in 2022/23. These priorities will form the basis of the agendas for future Leaders Board meetings, though do not in any way limit the scope of joint working in Staffordshire. The Leaders Board will identify named leads for delivery of specific projects and initiatives against each of the priorities.

Priorities for 2022/23

3. The Leaders Board is committed to working together on what matters most to the people of Staffordshire, and on areas where there is real opportunity for innovation and greater collaboration across Staffordshire. As such, the Chief Executives and Leaders of the nine councils have identified six draft areas of focus for 2022/23. The role of the Staffordshire Leaders Board will be to progress these, by nominating leads to take forward specific programmes of work and by maintaining oversight of delivery through the year.



4. These six areas of focus are identified as important to all nine local authorities and key to unlocking some of Staffordshire's most important current and future challenges:
 - a. Climate Change
 - b. Economic Development across the county
 - c. A 'Single Front Door' for Staffordshire residents who need to contact their councils
 - d. Addressing health inequalities across Staffordshire
 - e. A joint approach to Waste and Sustainability
 - f. Devolution and a County Deal

Further detail on each priority is outlined in the following paragraphs.

5. Climate Change is one of the greatest challenges facing us, and it can only be addressed through committed joint working over the long term. Each council in Staffordshire has already declared a Climate Emergency and the Staffordshire Sustainability Board has been established to work collectively on ensuring that Staffordshire councils are net carbon zero by 2050 or before. The Leaders Board will oversee and champion the work of the Sustainability Board and drive this crucial agenda, which in 2022/23 will include a focus on what is possible within each council's boundaries. A set of initial commitments includes full data analysis of the starting point, a detailed countywide communications plan, Carbon Literacy Training and Awareness for all members and senior leaders, a programme of member ambassadors, energy reduction plans for each area by January 2023, and having a plan in place by 2025 for all councils to aim to move to low carbon fuels for their fleet vehicles by 2030.
6. Staffordshire's local authorities have a long history of successful partnership around economic development and attracting inward investment to the county, for example the ongoing successes of i54 South Staffordshire and Redhill Business Park, and the successful delivery of the 'Staffordshire Means Back to Business' support through the Covid-19 pandemic. The Leaders Board will take this partnership working further by developing and overseeing the delivery of a shared vision and strategy for Staffordshire's economy and workforce. It will collaboratively oversee bids to key funding streams, for example Levelling Up Fund bids being prepared at present, and consider joint bids where appropriate to enable the delivery of growth projects. The Leaders Board will have a key strategic leadership role in ensuring the conditions for growth exist across Staffordshire, and that the right infrastructure is in the right places.



7. When Staffordshire residents need to interact with councils, or need help and support, it can often be difficult to know where to go or who is the right organisation to approach. As a two-tier area we have already made huge progress on this issue including the MyStaffs App which provides a single front door into each council's website. The Leaders Board will oversee development of a vision for how we collectively take this even further in Staffordshire, looking at all existing channels, including our websites and telephony. A more joined-up approach will also allow us to respond better to the needs of residents and offer opportunities for early intervention to improve outcomes.

8. While Staffordshire is a relatively healthy place to live, there are challenges. We need to improve healthy life expectancy, reduce health inequalities, and reduce activity in hospital services. Increases in life expectancy have slowed, and the number of years people spend living with illness is increasing. These issues are not evenly distributed across the county, but are more concentrated among certain groups in society, and this inequality is increasing and has been further highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is well known that a wide range of factors (such as education, employment, and housing) drive good health, and the events of recent months have shown how everyone has a role to play in creating the conditions that enable people to be healthy. Therefore, one of the key objectives of the new Health and Well-being strategy is to consider health and wellbeing as 'everyone's business' and aim for its integration into all that we do. This includes preventing illness, but also wider benefits, such as improved mental wellbeing, less reliance on specialist services, improved educational achievements, reduced isolation and loss of independence, safeguarding risks and crime.

9. Joint working on waste management is nothing new in Staffordshire, and we already have a developed local partnership. All local authorities in Staffordshire are part of the Staffordshire Waste Partnership, a collaborative approach to waste management issues, and the Joint Waste Management Board encourages and supports joint work within this framework. The Joint Waste Management Board holds responsibility for development and overseeing the implementation of a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for all members, and works practically on the joint procurement of large contracts, such as around how household waste is collected and recycled. In recognition of the fact that reducing waste is also hugely important to sustainability and climate change, the Joint Waste Management Board works collaboratively with the Sustainability Board on cross-cutting issues. By 2025 there will be a countywide waste strategy that all authorities will work to, covering all aspects of the countywide waste operation.



10. Central Government's recent Levelling Up White Paper included a commitment to offer all parts of England a devolution deal by 2030. Devolution offers the opportunity for more powers and funding to move even further and faster with our ambitions for Staffordshire. The Leaders Board will closely monitor the progress of the first cohort of County Deals which are currently in progress, and initiate work to move this forward for Staffordshire at the right time. Staffordshire and the Leaders Board will in the meantime press forward with all the aspects set out in this paper without need for delay, and will continue to take any opportunity to engage with Central Government on what matters most to us.
11. The Staffordshire Leaders Board will form the key overview structure for these priorities, as the different streams of work begin to take shape and the specific projects underneath them move forward. With named leads for the Board driving these specific elements forward, progress will be regularly discussed.
12. This set of key focuses is based on jointly addressing some of the biggest issue faced in Staffordshire in 2022/23. Over time these focuses may change in the face of emerging circumstances, and they will be regularly reviewed to ensure joint working and overview in the county is as effective as it can be.