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Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 8 September 2022** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. Curran".

Head of Law and Administration

CABINET - 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of 4 August 2022 as circulated and published on 5 August 2022
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

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Report contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)

Membership

Chair - Councillor P M M Farrington

- P M M Farrington - Leader
- F Beatty - Economic Development and Planning Portfolio
- J M Pert - Deputy Leader and Community Portfolio
- J K Price - Climate Change Portfolio
- R M Smith - Resources Portfolio
- C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio
- M J Winnington - Environment Portfolio

ITEM NO 4(a)(i)

ITEM NO 4(a)(i)

Contact Officer:	John Martin
Telephone No:	07970 237 905
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet 08/09/2022 Council 13/09/2022
Key Decision:	No

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR C V TROWBRIDGE
LEISURE PORTFOLIO**

**CABINET
8 SEPTEMBER 2022
Update of the Sport Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy Evidence
Base**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend the adoption of the interim update for the period 2019 - 2021 to the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy, alongside the supporting evidence base / assessments (please refer to the **BOOKLETS** - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-strategy-July-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/indoor-sports-facilities-strategy-april-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sports-facilities-strategy-assessment-report-March-2019 and www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-assessment-report)

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To approve and adopt the Interim Updates within the context of the recommendations contained in the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sport Facilities Strategy.
- 2.2 To use the information and recommendations within these Strategies to inform policies and allocations as part of the New Local Plan 2020-2040.
- 2.3 To note that a working group has been established with partners to oversee the development and monitoring of action plans to secure delivery of the strategies and their objectives.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The initial Playing Pitch Strategy report was completed in 2019 by Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) on behalf of Stafford Borough Council. To follow Sport England guidelines an annual review would then be undertaken by officers of the council in conjunction with the relevant National Governing Bodies. However due to the worldwide COVID Pandemic, it was not possible to update in 2020 and 2021. An update has now been undertaken.

3.2 Nearly all sports were affected by the lockdown restrictions put in place to stop the spread of COVID. Therefore, a large number of the 2019 recommendations are still relevant because the associated sports clubs and organisations were unable to progress any plans they may have had. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) sets out 'Key Issues' relating to each pitch-based sport across Stafford Borough, as follows:

Football

3.3 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same. When factoring in future demand there is a shortfall in:

- Youth 11v11 pitches.
- Youth 9v9 pitches; and
- Mini 5v5 pitches

Third Generation Turf (3G), Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPS)

3.4 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Insufficient supply of full 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand for football in Stafford Borough/Town
- Need for an additional 4 x 3G pitches

Cricket

3.5 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Insufficient supply of provision to cater for current senior demand across Stafford Borough / Town.
- When factoring in future demand there is a shortfall of provision for junior cricket and a continuing worsening for senior cricket.

Rugby

3.6 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- In the KKP report on PPS of 2019 it was reported that there was a shortfall of 7.75 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches.

- Stafford RUFC has completed its move to a new home venue at Blackberry Lane, Stafford.
- Following the completion of the World Rugby compliant 3G pitch at Stafford Rugby Club the shortfall has been negated.
- The Club as entered into a 999 year lease agreement for the site
- New site includes three senior pitches (one of which is floodlit), three mini pitches and one full size floodlit World Rugby compliant 3G pitch.
- St. Leonards Rugby Club still have an non-secure lease agreement. They are currently looking for a suitable site.

Hockey

3.7 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

Stone Hockey Club

- Stone Hockey Club and Stone Rugby Club is in the final stages of merging to form one club. Both England Rugby and England Hockey support the plan.
- The club has prepared a detailed plan to redevelop the site and is currently waiting on planning permission for the new club house and facilities.
- The plans will include new Rugby and Hockey pitches. It is hoped that work will begin in the late summer of 2022.

Stafford Hockey Club

- Stafford Hockey had been using the 2G pitch at Beaconside. However, they have been served notice that the 2G pitch over the summer months will be replaced with a 3G pitch. The 3G pitch will be unsuitable for hockey use. Therefore, they are currently looking for an alternative venue to play their club matches.
- They are working with England Hockey to develop plans to build a 2G pitch at their headquarters they share with Stafford Cricket Club.
- The club have advised that they are working closely with both Football and Cricket to ensure the other sports are not affected by their proposals.

Golf

3.8 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Current supply of facilities in Stafford Borough / Town can meet current and future demand.

Bowls

3.9 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- There is enough capacity to cater for current needs and future demand.

Tennis

3.10 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- There is sufficient supply of courts to accommodate club-based demand.
- Furthermore, spare capacity exists on non-club courts. The future focus should be on improving quality and encouraging further use.

Athletics

3.11 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- There is a need to protect the track located at Rowley Park Stadium for future participation.

Sports Facilities

3.12 An initial report was completed in 2019, and to follow Sports England guidelines it was intended that it would be updated annually. However due to the worldwide COVID Pandemic, it was not possible to update in 2020 and 2021. Nearly all sports were affected by the lockdown restrictions. Therefore, a large number of the 2019 recommendations are still relevant as the associated sports were unable to progress any plans they may have.

Sports Halls

3.13 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- The number of sports halls remains good. Most remain in good condition though are ageing and will need refurbishment at some point
- Alleyne's Sports Hall continues to be hired out to the public. However, there is no agreement between the school and Stafford Borough Council to continue to do so following the opening of Stone Leisure Centre
- Currently there are no 6-court sports hall within the Stafford area. The development of a sports hall would serve both the current needs of the population and any future needs.

Badminton

3.14 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Badminton 2017-2025 presents a vision for the sport to become one of the nation's most popular and to consistently win medals at world, Olympic and Paralympic levels. Following the pandemic, Badminton England is still committed to that goal. In Stafford there are currently 5 clubs. Two are affiliated to Badminton England and three are unaffiliated
- The report states that although many clubs nationally were affected by the measures put into place during the COVID Pandemic, the affiliated clubs

within Stafford have maintained their membership at 46 compared to 47 pre- COVID

Basketball

3.15 The following information was reported in 2019 and the situation currently remains the same:

- Stafford Spartans Basketball team who play at Beaconside, are currently the only registered basketball team in Stafford
- They continue to play at Beaconside

Netball

3.16 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Stafford has one main netball club. In Stafford Netball currently has 192 members. The club consists of both juniors and senior teams who play in the Stafford League and Staffordshire Junior league
- They train at Stafford Manor High School
- There is also a walking netball club in Stafford, who at Beaconside. The Club currently has over 50 members
- The main league in Stafford is the Stafford and District league. The league comprises of 17 teams playing in 2 divisions. Matches take place on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening

Table Tennis

3.17 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Table Tennis is an indoor sport and was greatly affected by the COVID pandemic. Players were unable to play the game for long periods while the lockdown and isolation was in force. However, all clubs have reported no adverse effects on membership numbers
- There are two leagues within the Stafford area. The Stafford League and the Stone League. In Stafford there are sixteen clubs with 83 members and in Stone there are eight clubs with 44 members

Stone Table Tennis League

- The Stone Table Tennis League is affiliated with Table Tennis England and consists of 12 teams from eight clubs. Each team has 4-5 players on average. The League also operates University of the 3rd Age (U3A) sessions which attract an additional 30-40 players. Its key sites are Walton Community Centre, Clayton Hall Academy (Newcastle-under-Lyme) and Stone Tennis Club. The League reports an increasing demand and a rise in participation. Consultation reports its main challenge to be the ageing demographic

Stafford Table Tennis League

- The Stafford Table Tennis League is made up of 20 teams from 16 clubs. Stone Table Tennis Club is a key club with 10 registered players and two competitive teams in the League. The Club plays at TT HQ – Walton Community Centre.

Gymnastics

3.18 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- Gymnastics continues to be well catered for in Stafford Borough, with a large number of clubs. They have reported no lasting affects from the closures due to the COVID Pandemic
- Stafford Gymnastic Club and Back to Back Gym Clubs continue to do well with their dedicated facilities

Swimming Pools

3.19 The following information is updated from the previous reported in 2019:

- There are currently 3 pools in the Borough, one pool at the new Stone Leisure Centre and 2 (main pool and learner pool) at Stafford Leisure Centre. The number of pools has remained the same when compared to that reported by the KKP 2019 report. With the opening of the new Stone Leisure Centre in 2019 it increased the available pool time available to the public. This was due to the fact that Alleyne's was a dual use facility, and the pool was closed to the public during school hours
- Currently there remains a shortfall of an 8 Lane by 25m pool space. When the projected population increase for the Borough by 2040 is taken into account, there will be a shortfall of a 10 Lane by 25m amount of pool space in the Borough without additional facilities being provided to meet needs.

3.20 **Squash Courts**

- In 2019 KKP reported that there were 10 squash courts available at 5 venues. In the preceding years the number of squash courts has decreased to 5. Two courts were lost to public use when the new Stone Leisure Centre opened and Alleyne's Academy no longer hire the courts out to the public
- The other 3 courts were lost when Yarnfield Sports Centre re-developed that area of sports provision to create conference facilities
- This now leaves just 2 courts at Stafford Leisure Centre which are available to the public on a turn up and play basis
- The other two sites Burton Manor and Stone Tennis and Squash Club are member-only facilities

- 3.21 It is recommended that this update, following on from the evidence base assessments together with the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sports Facilities Strategy (please refer to the **BOOKLETS** - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-strategy-July-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/indoor-sports-facilities-strategy-april-2019, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sports-facilities-strategy-assessment-report-March-2019 and www.staffordbc.gov.uk/playing-pitch-assessment-report) be adopted for use by the Council.
- 3.22 It is further recommended that the key issues highlighted in this report are acknowledged and that these are addressed, where possible, through policies and allocations as part of the New Local Plan 2020-2040.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 From the Corporate Business Plan 2018-2021 the following Corporate Business Objective 2 is relevant:

‘To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.’

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 In 2019 consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP) were commissioned to provide an up-to-date evidence base for the New Local Plan 2020-2040, to assess all formal sport and leisure facilities across the Borough in order to assist the Council in strategically planning for future provision. Separately, a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) would be prepared and reviewed and updated annually.. Unfortunately, due to the worldwide COVID pandemic the intended updates were not able to be undertaken until late in 2021. The contents of this report before members is therefore is an interim report for 2021. A full more detailed report will be completed later in 2022 with the co-operation of the National Governing Bodies (NGB’s) for the relevant sports.
- 5.2 The PPS is intended to be a living document which is maintained on a regular basis
- 5.3 Both the Playing Pitch and Sports Facility strategies set out the position in terms of current provision and the impact of future growth on facilities and provision.
- 5.4 The **Playing Pitch Strategy** (PPS) in 2019 set out the following ‘Strategic Aims and Recommendations’. They remain unchanged from the 2019 Strategy as set out below and provide the context for the information contained in this report:-

Aim 1: To protect the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs:

Recommendations:

- Ensure that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy
- Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements
- Maximise community use of education facilities where needed

Aim 2: To enhance outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Recommendations:

- Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary
- Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites
- Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding
- Secure developer contributions

Aim 3: To provide new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so:

Recommendations:

- Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock;
- Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

5.5 The PPS identifies the following major issues:

5.6 **Football:** in terms of grass pitches, when future demand is taken into account, there will be a shortage of youth 11 v 11, youth 9 v 9 and mini 5 v 5 pitches and therefore new provision will be required in the coming years to accommodate this demand.

5.7 There is already a shortage of available 3G pitches and this will be exacerbated by future population growth and related demand. There is a requirement to provide 2 additional 3G pitches across the Borough. Potential locations are Walton High School, the North Stafford Strategic Development Location (SDL), Alleyne's Sport Centre and Wellbeing Park at Yarnfield.

5.8 **Cricket:** there is currently an insufficient provision of senior cricket facilities within the Borough. This will increase when future growth is taken into account. England Cricket report that the Borough requires an additional 2 grass wicket pitches. They are continuing to look for suitable locations. We will continue to assess the potential for delivering additional pitches where opportunities arise. Additionally, when future growth is considered there becomes a shortage of supply for junior cricket. These shortages result in the need to provide additional facilities. Creation of new non-turf pitches (NTP's)

would go some way to help alleviate the current over use of pitches and also the increase in future demand.

- 5.9 **Hockey:** Plans are currently being drawn up by Stafford Hockey Club and Stone Hockey Clubs to create a 2G pitch at both clubs.

Stone Hockey Club

- Stone Hockey Club and Stone Rugby Club are in final stages of merging to form one club. Both England Rugby and England Hockey support the plan.
- The club is preparing a detailed plan to redevelop the site.
- The plans will include new Rugby and Hockey pitches.

Stafford Hockey Club

- Stafford Hockey is working with England Hockey to develop a new pitch which is now a matter of urgency due to the Beaconside facility converting its 2G pitch to 3G. The club was informed in April 2022 that Beaconside would be converting the current 2G pitch to a 3G pitch to accommodate football.
- The club is working closely with both Football and Cricket to ensure the other sports are not affected by their proposals.

Squash

- 5.10 The number of available courts has reduced from 10 to 5 from as reported in 2019 by KKP. This will have an impact on the ability of the general public to go and play a game of squash on an ad hoc basis. The only facility to have the option of just turning up and playing is Stafford Leisure Centre. The other facilities require you to be a member first which is a barrier to casual use and people who want to try the game for the first time.
- 5.11 The 'Key Issues' identified within the **Sports Facilities Strategy** are set out in para 3.12. However of these Key Issues there are two matters that are major issues, these being the current shortage of water space and the development of a new 6 court sport hall.
- 5.12 Current shortage of water space, which currently equates to an 8-lane x 25m pool, when population projections are factored in this shortfall increases to a 10-lane x 25m pool.
- 5.13 The development of a new swimming pool is a major investment requirement for the Council and the key issue is where the best location is to locate additional water space, based on current demand, new build housing and ownership of land.
- 5.14 Following on from the adoption of the evidence base, the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy, further work will need to be undertaken in terms of acting on the strategic recommendations.

- 5.15 A working group has been established with relevant Stakeholders, including Sports England, to maintain and develop an ongoing action plan. Whilst the expectation is that national organisations will work with local sports groups to facilitate the delivery of new and improved facilities including playing pitches, the Borough Council will also have a leading role to play in identifying potential opportunities to meet needs. This will involve bringing representative bodies and groups together but also working with local communities to see how needs can be built into delivery plans.
- 5.16 The delivery of all these facilities is very much reliant on financial developer contributions obtained via planning obligations and other sources of external funding. The Council will need to agree the priorities to identify the need and also the delivery mechanisms working jointly with partners..

6 Implications

6.1 Financial	Staff resources required to manage and co-ordinate the finances associated with the projects. There will be a need to use external resources through consultancy studies in order to complete projects.
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	The requirements of the projects will be delivered by existing staff from within the Development Department and the wider organisation.
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	The Council will need to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to deliver the projects. Therefore the commitment for other organisations will be necessary to achieve the vision and corporate business objectives. If insufficient funding is provided there is a risk that the strategy and evidence based approach will be undermined or lead to the inefficient use of resources.

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>The Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport Facilities Strategy partnership of projects, evidence base</p>
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	<p>and strategies will improve sport and recreation across Stafford Borough. It will reconnect people and communities with sport and recreation to enjoy as part of a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>As this report covers a number of independent strategies an individual CIA considering any impact will be undertaken when the Strategies have been developed. If appropriate management and maintenance plans etc. will be developed as part of the Strategies. Investigation as to whether these plans can have specific Health and Wellbeing targets will be investigated as part of the individual strategies.</p> <p>As part of the development of the Strategies consultation with Stakeholders and members of the public where appropriate will be undertaken. It is envisioned that this work will help identify any targets or measures to meet specific needs.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers - Development Department (Strategic Planning and Placemaking)

ITEM NO 4(b)(i)**ITEM NO 4(b)(i)**

Contact Officer:	Eleanor Warren
Telephone No:	01785 619408
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet 08/09/2022 (Only)

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR J K PRICE
CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO**

**CABINET
8 SEPTEMBER 2022
Stafford Borough Council Climate Adaptation Strategy**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the updated Stafford Borough Council Climate Adaptation Strategy and to propose that the document be adopted.
- 1.2 To propose that a week-long communications campaign is delivered alongside the adoption of the Adaptation Strategy.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 That members approve the Stafford Borough Council Climate Adaptation Strategy and agree to a communications campaign.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 In 2019 Stafford Borough Council declared a climate change emergency and committed to become a carbon neutral authority by 2040. Since the declaration was made, preliminary work has been progressing to enable this to be achieved.
- 3.2 In 2020 the council adopted its Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy. The Strategy lists four objectives which, when achieved, will increase sustainability both internally within the council and across the wider Borough. One of these objectives is as follows:
- CC3 - Mitigating and adapt to climate change
- 3.3 Under the 2008 Climate Change Act, the UK Government is required to update and publish a Climate Change Risk Assessment every five years. This document has been updated and published this year and is called the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 (CCRA). The document identifies

eight priority risk areas which are likely to impact the UK as the climate continues to change. To lessen these impacts, adaptive measures need to be implemented.

- 3.4 The National Adaptation Programme (NAP) sets out how the Government will respond to the risks set out in the Climate Change Risk Assessment. This document sets out the role local government plays in helping the UK to respond and adapt to the climate change risks. The NAP states that “Many of the risks identified in the CCRA and set out in chapters 2-5 of this NAP and many of the impacts arising from climate change are relevant to the responsibilities and functioning of local government”. To fulfil this statutory duty, and to achieve Objective CC3 of the SBC Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy, consideration should be given as to how SBC can deliver climate adaptation, both internally and across the wider Borough area. It is for this reason that the SBC Climate Adaptation Strategy has been produced.
- 3.5 The Adaptation Strategy was produced in line with the existing body of Climate Adaptation legislation, including the Government’s Climate Change Risk Assessment and the National Adaptation Programme. To ensure it is as effective as possible, the Strategy builds upon research papers including the West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026, which was produced by Sustainability West Midlands. This document identifies climate risks which are specific to the West Midlands region, and provides a list of actions which local authorities could deliver in response.
- 3.6 The Stafford Borough Climate Adaptation Strategy identifies the climate risks which will impact both the council’s estate and operations and the wider Borough area. Measures which can be developed and implemented by the council which will lessen the impact of these risks are identified. Some of the measures were identified by council officers, and some came from the West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026. It is acknowledged that not all the measures are able to be delivered using existing resources, or under existing policy frameworks. Where this is the case, the changes that would have to be made to secure their delivery are identified in the document.
- 3.7 The Strategy has recently been subject to a six-week period of public consultation. The appropriate feedback has been integrated into the document.
- 3.8 To increase the awareness of the importance of climate adaptation within the Borough, it is proposed that a week-long communications campaign is ran alongside the adoption of the Strategy. This will involve updates to the council’s social media, the delivery of a series of webinars, and the publication of case studies which have already contributed to climate adaptation in the Borough.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This primarily supports business objective 3 but interlinks with all the corporate business objectives.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 There is now enough evidence to support the notion that climate change is the most severe threat humankind has ever faced. The effects of climate change are already affecting human and wildlife populations globally. As the effects of climate change continues to increase, so too does the need for adaptive and mitigatory action.
- 5.2 It is important to acknowledge the distinction between climate change mitigation and adaptation. Climate change mitigation refers to the implementation of measures which seek to reduce the levels of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere. However, even if the emission of all greenhouse gas stopped today, the levels that already exist in the atmosphere would continue to drive climate change for at least the next thirty years. In short, climate change is now unavoidable. Ensuring human and wildlife populations can deal with the impacts of a changing climate is therefore an essential step in the fight against climate change. This process is known as climate adaptation.
- 5.3 As the climate change agenda continues to gain momentum, the importance of climate adaptation is becoming increasingly recognised. In October 2021, the Government revealed its new Net Zero Strategy. Published to follow on from the 2008 Climate Change Act, the Net Zero Strategy sets out the steps that will be followed to enable the UK to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The importance of climate adaptation is echoed throughout the document, with the following being stated “While reducing emissions, we must also adapt to the inevitable changes in our climate, ensuring that policies supporting net zero are resilient to current and future climate risks¹”.
- 5.4 As mentioned above, climate change is now unavoidable, with its effects already being experienced across the world. The increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events are a good example of this. Extreme weather events such as high temperatures and heat waves, storms, excessive rainfall and flooding, and high winds, can all have a negative impact on the area in which they are observed. Looking at the impacts caused by historic extreme weather events can provide an indication as to how an area is likely to be impacted as the climate continues to change. Understanding how these impacts could be lessened, and implementing the measures to do so, is an example of climate adaptation.
- 5.5 It is in the interest of the council to increase provide climate adaptation measures both internally within the council, and across the wider Borough area. Providing the necessary climate adaptation measures will increase the resilience of the council’s own services, local communities, and biodiversity. Should the Climate Adaptation Strategy be adopted, the council will be able to demonstrate progress being made towards achieving this.
- 5.6 The Adaptation Strategy sets out what have been identified as the main climate risks which are likely to impact the Borough and sets out a series of

¹ [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener - October 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101111/net-zero-strategy-build-back-greener-october-2021.pdf)

actions which can be taken to reduce the impact of each risk. The service area responsible for each action is identified, and a timescale for delivery provided. It is proposed that the Adaptation Strategy is updated on an annual basis to record and demonstrate progress. This work has been developed in partnership with all service areas in the council.

- 5.7 The Adaptation Strategy forms the basis of the council's climate adaptation agenda and supports the delivery of Objective CC3 of its Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy and once approved it will be updated on an annual basis.
- 5.8 The Stafford Borough Adaptation Strategy has been subject to a six week consultation that ran from June to July 2022. There were a total of 21 responses received and a summary of the responses is contained below:

Question	Responses
Are you responding to this consultation as a representative of a partner organisation, or as a member of the community?	2 respondents represented a partner organisation 16 respondents were members of the community 3 respondents did not respond
If you are responding on behalf of a partner organisation, who are you representing?	Responses were received from the SBC Community Panel, Beat the Cold, and CPRE Staffordshire. One response was received from an SBC employee.
Considering the contents of the Climate Adaptation Strategy, do you think there is anything additional that could be considered that could contribute to the delivery of climate adaptation in Stafford Borough?	3 respondents did not respond. 2 respondents said that the strategy did not to contain anything further. 1 respondent suggested that the council should drop the green agenda entirely. 1 respondent suggested that more measureable outcomes should be integrated. 3 respondents did not provide an answer to this section. The further responses were based on the need for stricter flood zone policy in the Local Plan, increasing rewilding and tree planting efforts, increasing sustainable travel infrastructure, increasing the insulation of homes and businesses, and building fewer houses.
Are the areas of focus in the strategy about right?	3 respondents did not respond 6 respondents answered no 12 respondents answered yes

<p>If you are representing a partner organisation, do you think there are any opportunities for collaboration between yourselves and the council to deliver climate adaptation measures? If so, please identify what they are?</p>	<p>1 respondent suggested that, where there are financial constraints, members of the climate change panel would undertake work with partners to pursue grants.</p> <p>1 respondent suggested that there is a desperate need to reduce the high volume of traffic on the route, and proposed that the town centre should only be able to be reached by cycle.</p> <p>1 respondent suggested that the borough council should decarbonise their heating systems, plant trees rather than fell them and switch the buses in the area to electric.</p> <p>Beat the Cold stated that they would be happy to work in partnership with the council to alleviate fuel poverty.</p> <p>CPRE suggested that they are interested in working with the council to increase hedgerow cover in the Borough. They also stressed the importance of protecting existing hedgerows.</p>
<p>Are there any community related initiatives and/or projects that could be considered that would contribute to delivering climate adaptation in the area you live? Please provide details here:</p>	<p>1 respondent suggested that Stafford Common could be used as a site for tree planting, renewable energy should be installed in the build phase of new homes, and that surface water drainage and holding places should be included in developments.</p> <p>1 respondent said that they were aware of tree planting projects taking place.</p> <p>1 respondent said that they knew of home composting schemes and community planting schemes.</p> <p>1 respondent mentioned a repair cafe scheme.</p> <p>4 respondents mentioned the potential for community projects resulting in biodiversity enhancements and tree planting to be progressed.</p>
<p>Do you know of any existing projects which are progressing that are currently contributing to climate adaptation in the Borough? Please provide details here:</p>	<p>Projects identified included Rising Brook and Yarnfield urban landscape projects, Charnley Park fruit trees, Stoke Hospital solar panels, and Stafford Warmer Homes</p>

There were additional comments that were received but these were not relevant to the actual strategy and have been dealt with on an individual basis by officers.

- 5.9 To increase the awareness of the importance of climate adaptation within the Borough, it is proposed that a week-long communications campaign is implemented to promote the adoption of the Strategy. This will involve updates to the council's social media, the delivery of a series of webinars, and the publication of case studies which have already contributed to climate adaptation in the Borough.

5.10 It is therefore recommended that the Stafford Borough Adaptation Strategy is approved and implemented.

6 Implications	
6.1 Financial	There are no financial implications associated with the publication of the Adaptation Strategy. However, the subsequent adaptation programme includes actions that are the responsibility of the Council, not all of which are funded. There should be no assumption that actions will be delivered, if no funding exists. There may be opportunities to access new funding streams to assist with the delivery of actions, which can be assessed as they arise.
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	Nil

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>There are no known impacts on any of the public sector equality duties.</p> <p>The impact assessment is currently being updated and will be available on the website when it is completed.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – Corporate Business and Partnerships

Stafford Borough Climate Adaptation Strategy

For Approval

Executive Summary

The Council agreed its new Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy in November 2020 and one of the key objectives outlined in that strategy is to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We use the word 'adaptation' in the context of what measures need to be planned and taken in order to cope with the impact of climate change. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, adaptation has been used in the context of improving resilience and being able to respond effectively to a broad range of threats and it is exactly this phrase that describes our approach.

One of the main concerns about climate change is the increase in adverse weather events that are being experienced all over the world and the scientific evidence suggests that the earth has been steadily warming over the past 100 years and this has accelerated since the 1970's. For the UK, climate change means hotter, drier summers (more heatwaves), milder winters, higher sea levels and an increased flood risk to coastal areas. Across the globe, there will be more intense heat waves, droughts and more flooding. There may be severe problems in regions where people are particularly vulnerable to changes in the weather. Population migration, water and food shortages and the spread of disease are commonly predicted. The social, environmental and economic costs of climate change could be huge.

Local impacts are harder to predict but flooding is a significant risk for Stafford. In addition, feeling safe and being able to live independently in your own home and surrounding area are vital to our wellbeing and ensuring the conditions to foster good health across the community is already a priority for the Borough Council. Addressing both the causes and impacts of climate change can bring about a number of improvements and we have an opportunity of working in partnership to further increase community resilience, enhancing the capacity of residents to mitigate their individual impact on the environment and collectively having better emergency and disaster-preparedness.

Cllr Jonathan Price

Cabinet Member for Environment

Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) states that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet¹. Threats associated with a changing climate includes biodiversity loss, disruption to food supply systems and depletion of water resources. These impacts are already being experienced by communities around the world.

However, hope is not lost. Advances to a more sustainable future are being made every day. Each wind turbine that appears on our landscape, electric vehicle that drives down our roads and tree that is planted in our green spaces sees us move towards a greener, safer, and healthier future. We must all harness the current momentum which is gathering around climate awareness, work together to find solutions to the problems a changing climate poses, and invest in making the necessary preparations to increase resilience.

Climate Change Adaptation

The degree to which the climate continues to change depends on the extent to which greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. However, even if the emission of all greenhouse gases stopped tomorrow, the gases already in the atmosphere would continue to drive climate change for at least the next 30 years. In short, climate change is now unavoidable. Preparations to deal with its impacts must therefore be made. This process is known as climate adaptation.

There are many ways in which climate adaptation can be delivered. From large scale infrastructure projects such as flood defence barriers, to the provision of green space to prevent the formation of urban heat islands, climate adaptation plays a crucial role in enabling us to live with the impacts of climate change. In doing so, the resilience of our communities, built environment, and biodiversity increases.

Data from the Met Office shows that in the UK, climate change is likely to result in warmer, wetter, winters and hotter, drier summers. In addition, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as storms and high winds are projected to increase. Climate adaptation should focus on increasing resilience to the likely impacts of these weather trends.

Stafford Borough and Climate Change Adaptation

In 2019 we declared a climate change emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral authority by 2040. In 2020 we adopted our Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy. Contained within this strategy are 4 objectives which we will achieve over the coming years to increase the sustainability of Stafford Borough as a whole. The four objectives are:

- CC1 - To reduce emissions from our own activities
- CC2 - To work in partnership with Government, elected bodies and members, partners, residents and businesses across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities and across the natural environment
- CC3 - To mitigate and adapt to climate change
- CC4 - To continue to implement our green recovery objectives

This document contributes to the delivery of Objective CC3.

Climate Risks in Stafford Borough

The Met Office has recently updated its climate projections for the West Midlands¹. These projections show that the West Midlands is expected to experience warmer, wetter winters, and hotter, drier summers. Extreme weather events such as heatwaves and excessive rainfall are also likely to be experienced more frequently.

To ensure this strategy is as effective as possible, the above impacts have been considered alongside the risks and opportunities identified in a number of regional and local strategies and plans which are detailed in **APPENDIX 2** and also ensures that we are fulfilling our statutory duty outlined in legislative documents detailed in **APPENDIX 1**.

Considering the outputs of these documents shows that the climate risks, and the adaptive measures needed to mitigate them, which are specific to Stafford Borough, can be categorized into the 6 categories below:

- Extreme Weather Events
- Natural Environment and Green Spaces
- Health and Wellbeing

¹ [About UKCP18 - Met Office](#)

- Supporting the Local Economy
- Planning and Regeneration
- Maintaining Stafford Borough Council Service Provision

This strategy identifies adaptive responses which the council, working in partnership, can deploy to help build resilience against these risk areas.

The final section of this document considers the opportunities and co-benefits which are likely to arise as a result of climate change.

How this Document Works

The following section of this document provides a breakdown for each of the climate risk area which are specific to Stafford Borough. Using the findings of the documents listed in the “Current UK Climate Adaptation Legislation and Research” in the appendix, the strategy seeks to identify which measures should be delivered by us, either on our own or in partnership, to build resilience to climate change in Stafford Borough.

The adaptive measures have been identified by Stafford Borough Council officers and the West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment. Where the identified measures cannot currently be delivered by the council, the resources or policy changes which would need to be achieved to enable delivery has been stated. Where possible, a timescale for the delivery of each measure has also been listed.

This strategy will be updated on an annual basis. This will enable the identification of further adaptive measures to be made, and the barriers delivery column to be updated. Where progress has been made, this will be detailed.

Partnership Working

Delivering the adaptive responses identified in this strategy will involve the collective efforts not only of the council but also a range of partner organisations and stakeholders. Where this is the case, the relevant party has been identified for each adaptive measure. In addition to this, it needs to be recognised that some of the longer term adaptive responses will require national legislative changes.

Section 1 - Extreme Weather

The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events are expected to increase. Extreme weather events such as flooding, heatwaves and storms can have a wide range of impacts on the Borough.

We have recently updated the Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) for Stafford Borough, which identifies 25 instances of extreme weather which were experienced within the Borough from 2016. A full breakdown of the types and frequency of extreme weather events is shown in Figure 1.

The LCLIP also identified a total of 10 types of impacts that the extreme weather events had on the local area and these were:

- Cancellation of events
- Closure of businesses
- Restrictions to the public realm through closure of green/amenity space and pedestrian routes
- Danger to life
- Travel disruption
- Severe ice warning
- Grassfires
- Adverse health effects
- Disruption to electric network
- Damage to vegetation
- Damage to private property

The next section will focus on how we will deliver adaptive measures across the Borough to help increase preparedness in the event of extreme weather.

1.1 Flooding

Flooding² is a recurring issue in Stafford Borough and this was a key finding of both the Stafford Borough LCLIP, and the Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation report. The Met Office projections for the West Midlands show that the risk of flooding is likely to increase. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, County Councils are designated as Lead Local Flood Authorities. Therefore, Staffordshire County Council are the strategic leader for flood risk

² [geho0609bqds-e-e.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

management within Staffordshire and their Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out how flooding will be managed in the local area. We will continue to work in partnership with them to further develop and implement the findings of the Risk Strategy.

The role of Stafford Borough Council in preventing and responding to flooding lies in three main areas; ensuring development is delivered in a manner which doesn't cause flooding impacts to worsen, working with partner organisations to deliver habitat enhancements which act as natural flood management measures, and to provide an emergency response to periods of flooding.

How Will we Build Resilience Against Excess Rainfall and Flooding?

Please note that any reference to reducing flood risk through planning and development will be listed in the "Planning and Development" chapter of this document.

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	None identified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Develop a system for issuing public advice around car parking issues during periods of heavy rainfall and flooding	Car parking		2022 - 2023	N/A
	Work with partner organisations and stakeholders to increase the implementation of Natural Flood Management projects in the Borough	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	To continue to deliver habitat enhancements, sources of funding should continue to be identified.	Ongoing	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency
	Engage with drinking water supply and sewage companies to ensure that systems are robust to prevent cross contamination during prolonged flood events- audit of systems and preventative maintenance.	Environmental Health			Severn Trent Water
	Review flood defences with the Environment Agency around watercourses where impacts affect residents/businesses in the light of new risk evidence.	Environmental Health			Environment Agency
	Support the Lead Flood Authority in the distribution of sandbags as and when required.	Operations			Staffordshire County Council
	Develop alternative route plans in the event of flooding to minimise disruption to service.	Operations			N/A
	On site staff risk assess and monitor sites to determine actions required to minimise risk to staff and users.	Operations			N/A
	Implement clean up requirements post flooding to ensure safe use.	Operations			N/A

How Can you Build Resilience Against Excess Rainfall and Flooding?

- Use permeable surfaces in your outside spaces wherever possible. For example, using gravel on driveways rather than concrete ensures that water can drain more freely, preventing the formation of standing surface water.
- If you have access to a garden, there are several ways you can make it more resilient to flooding. Laying live turf rather than artificial means that rainwater can drain more freely, digging a small pond can provide a holding area for excess water, and planting species which are better able to tolerate high water levels can all contribute to increased resilience during periods of extreme rainfall.
- Considering the flood risk of your property or business can enable better preparedness during periods of excess rainfall. The Environment Agency provides a template for personal and business flood plans and gives advice on how you can protect your property. For more information, visit: [Prepare for flooding: Protect yourself from future flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/prepare-for-flooding).

1.2 High Temperature and Heatwaves

The World Health Organization identifies a range of indirect and direct impacts which can arise because of high temperatures³ and heatwaves. Indirect impacts can include increased transmission of food and waterborne diseases, increased risk of accidents such as drowning, and a potential disruption to infrastructure. Direct impacts include health impacts on residents, disruption to food supply systems, and water supply issues.

The impacts of high temperatures and heatwaves on the health and wellbeing of communities are of particular concern. During the Summer of 2003, over 2,000 excess mortalities were recorded across the UK. These were attributed as being caused by extreme high temperatures. High temperatures and heatwaves aggravate existing health conditions including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and renal disease. For this reason, it is our most vulnerable residents who are most at risk of suffering during periods of extreme high temperatures. However, it can also cause new health conditions such as heatstroke, heat exhaustion and hypothermia. Cancer Research shows that, since the early 1990s, melanoma skin cancer incidence rates have more than doubled in the UK. Furthermore, incidence rates for melanoma skin cancer are projected to rise by 7% in the UK between 2014 and 2035⁴. Caution should therefore be exercised by everyone during periods of high temperatures.

³ [Heatwave Plan for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/heatwave-plan-for-england)

⁴ [Melanoma skin cancer statistics | Cancer Research UK](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/skin-cancer/melanoma)

Excess heat can also result in an increase in air and water quality concerns. During periods of high temperatures, the water supply in an area can decrease. Less water results in lower water quality. This can have an impact on agricultural processes and the health of residents. Air quality in an area can also decrease during periods of high temperatures. This is because of the formation of ground-level ozone. Ground-level ozone is formed when sunlight causes chemical reactions in pollutants emitted by sources such as vehicles and power plants. Ground-level ozone can have damaging effects on the health of people and wildlife alike.

Climate projections produced by the Met Office show that an increase in average temperature is now inevitable and also show that extreme temperature events are likely to increase in the future. Preparations should therefore be made to ensure Stafford Borough, its residents, and its biodiversity are able to withstand these high temperatures.

How Will We Increase Resilience to High Temperatures and Heatwaves?

Please note, preventing the formation of Urban Heat Islands is addressed in the Planning and Development and Natural Environment and Green Spaces chapters of this document.

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Take advantage of longer, drier summers by encouraging flexible lifestyle choices to enhance health and wellbeing. This could include changes to working patterns, promotion of use of outdoor spaces or encouraging uptake of outdoor past-times to boost local tourism and economic opportunities	Human Resources	N/A	Ongoing	N/A
	Assess areas that may be most prone to wildfires, and provide signage and guidance at these sites by encouraging users not to exacerbate the risk, for example by having barbecues or campfires.	Corporate Assets	N/A	2022 - 2023	Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Consideration of adaptive work processes to minimise health risk to the workforce. For example, changes to work patterns and PPE.	Operations	N/A	2022	N/A

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Provision of sun protection and supply of drinking water for the streetscene workforce.	Operations	N/A	2022	N/A
	Continue to monitor air quality levels in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management, ensuring air quality remains at a safe level during periods of high temperatures.	Environmental Health	N/A	Ongoing	N/A
	Consider how high temperatures and heatwaves can cause an increase in public health concerns and ensure resource allocation takes this into account.	Environmental Health	Potential financial constraints		Public Health England
	Prepare advice for the storage and handling of foodstuffs domestically and commercially where extreme heat events may result in increased food borne pathogens. Increase inspections during such events.	Environmental Health	N/A	2022 - 2023	N/A
	Develop a tree planting strategy which will see trees being used for cooling purposes on designated wildlife sites.	Operations	N/A	2022 - 2023	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Prepare a resilience plan for controlling heat related vermin and insect infestations and invasive species.	Environmental Health	N/A		N/A
	Extreme heat is often combined with high pressure weather systems where pollution becomes trapped multiplying the respiratory risk associated with extreme heat- evaluate 'live' local poor air quality warning systems and mitigations.	Operations	N/A		N/A

How Can You Increase Resilience to High Temperatures and Heatwaves?

- Whilst summer days can be enjoyable, it's important to bear in mind the potential damage that can be caused if proper precautions aren't taken. Being mindful of how long you are spending in the sun, using adequate sun protection, and drinking plenty of water can all contribute to enjoying the high temperatures safely.
- If you have an outdoor space, consider planting trees as soon as possible. This will give them more time to reach a shade-producing size as temperatures continue to increase.
- Vulnerable people may find it more difficult to access critical services and facilities during periods of high temperatures and heatwaves, so checking in on any vulnerable family members or friends can help to build community resilience.

1.3 Emergency Response to Extreme Weather Events

Extreme weather⁵ events are one of the most destructive examples of the impacts of climate change. Weather events such as heavy rainfall, drought, and heatwaves can cause damage to infrastructure, biodiversity loss and disruption to food supply systems. As mentioned, the frequency and duration of such events are all predicted to increase in the future.

Increasing resilience to extreme weather events can be achieved in two ways. Firstly, measures can be put in place which lessens the impacts. Secondly, a swift and effective emergency response is crucial in minimising the impacts of extreme weather on local communities. As the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increase within the Borough, so too will the impacts experienced.

⁵ [Civil Contingencies Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

How Will we Build Resilience Against the Impacts of Extreme Weather Events?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Ensure waste management practices, storage and treatment facilities are robust to withstand future climatic conditions, including flooding and heatwaves.	Operations	N/A	Ongoing	
	Rollout advice and guidance on what to do if residents are affected by an extreme weather event (e.g. flood, heatwave etc.), prioritising vulnerable communities, so that they can respond quicker in the event of extreme weather.	Communications and Corporate Business	N/A	2022/2023	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Prepare strategy to increase public awareness around the council's role in responding to climate based emergencies.	Communications and Corporate Business	N/A	2022 onwards	N/A
	Retain links with partners such as PHE and the NHS formed during the Covid-19 pandemic to increase resilience when dealing with future emergencies.	Environmental Health	N/A	Ongoing	Public Health England and the National Health Service
	Continue to develop a Hybrid working model which will enable members of staff to work from a range of locations, enabling the continuation of service delivery during periods of extreme weather	Human Resources	N/A	Ongoing	N/A
	Embed flexibility of working into the standard working practice of the council to enable staff to work around periods of extreme weather	Human Resources	N/A	Ongoing	N/A
	Develop a notification process of high wind risk between SBC and Stafford Castle, and consider the subsequent actions required due to large quantity of trees on site.	Operations	Financial resources may be an issue	2023 - 2024	Freedom Leisure
	On site staff risk assess and monitor sites to determine actions required to minimise risk to staff and users.	Operations	N/A	2022 - 2023	N/A
	Tree survey process ongoing to determine works required to minimise risk.	Operations	N/A	Ongoing	N/A

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Continue to work with key partners to ensure services are still provided to the best of our ability.	All service areas	N/A	Ongoing	
	Ensure management plans are in place to deal with any emergency incidents that may occur to ensure services continue to be provided wherever possible.	All service areas	Staffing resources may be an issue	2022 - 2023	
	When allocating resources, both financial and staffing, the surplus needed to respond to future climate related emergencies whilst ensuring the continuation of service delivery will be considered.	All service areas	N/A	2022 - 2023	
	Consider what essentials the council should keep in storage to distribute to local residents in the event of a climate related emergency. Subsequently build up a stock of essentials to be kept on site so that they are available for immediate distribution in the event of an emergency.	Corporate Business and Partnerships	Financial resources may be an issue	2022 onwards	
	Consider which service areas are likely to be most heavily impacted during periods of climate related emergencies. Produce an Emergency Response Manual which sets out the role of each service area during periods of climate related emergencies.	All service areas	Staffing resources may be an issue	2022 - 2023	
	Develop a communications plan focusing on how waste collection will be impacted during periods of inclement weather	Operations and communications	Staffing resources may be an issue	2022 - 2023	
	Ensure climate risks are embedded into corporate risk assessments	Corporate Business and Partnerships	N/A	Ongoing	
	Survey trees and structures that are vulnerable to high winds and which may pose a risk of harm should they collapse/fall during high winds. Preventative measures should then be prioritised.	Operations	N/A	Ongoing	
	Ensure management plans are in place to deal with any extreme weather incidents that may occur to ensure services continue to be provided wherever possible	Operations	N/A	2022 - 2023	

How Can you Build Resilience Against the Impacts of Extreme Weather Events?

- One way in which you can increase your own resilience to extreme weather is to be aware of when events are likely to affect your area. The Met Office website publishes weather warnings here: [UK weather warnings - Met Office](#)
- Plan in advance. If a storm is forecasted, make sure you have enough supplies to avoid having to travel during periods of adverse weather.

Section 2 - Healthy Communities

It is now acknowledged that climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity⁶. Extreme weather events, air pollution, forced displacement, food insecurity, disease and pressures on mental health can all impact an individual’s health and wellbeing. These factors are all likely to worsen as the climate continues to change.

There are multiple adaptive measures which can be used to safeguard the health of our local communities. These include the installation of water conservation devices, activating the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol during periods of inclement weather, and creating community groups which support those suffering from climate and ecological grief. Adopting a holistic approach to embedding climate adaptation measures which seek to safeguard the health of local community members is a crucial consideration when planning for our future.

2.1 Health and Wellbeing

The World Health Organization states that climate change is adversely affecting human health⁷ by increasing exposure and vulnerability to climate related stresses. The level to which an individual’s health is impacted by climate stresses is dependent on several factors including existing health conditions, poverty levels, and age. However, climate change is likely to impact the health and wellbeing of all members of society to some extent. The health and wellbeing of our residents is already a key priority for us. It is for this reason that we have committed to take a “Health in All We Do” approach across our activities and we will ensure that this translates across to our climate adaptation agenda.

How Will we Help Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Local Residents as the Climate Changes?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Prioritise adaptation measures, such as improved drainage, green infrastructure integration and cooling station, such as water fountains and shaded benches, on the most popular walking	Corporate Business and Partnerships and Operations	Staffing and financial resources may be an issue	2023 onwards	Staffordshire County Council

⁶ [fast-facts-on-climate-and-health.pdf \(who.int\)](#)

⁷ [COP26 Special Report on Climate Change and Health \(who.int\)](#)

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	and cycling routes across the region.				
	Establish community resilience programmes in areas where climate risks and demographic vulnerabilities intersect (see Map 1, page 6), to ensure these areas are better prepared for more frequent and intense extreme weather events (flooding, heatwaves, storms), and can respond and recover more effectively.	Corporate Business and Partnerships and Health and Housing	Staffing resources may be an issue	2023 - 2024	
	Build on and scale-up existing plans to reduce air pollution in the region, factoring in the impact that climate change could have on this progress.	Operations	N/A	Ongoing	
	Capitalise on local food and growing initiatives to reduce the need to import food from countries where there may be an increase in food safety, availability and quality due to climate change.	Corporate Business and Partnerships	N/A	2022 onwards	

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Ensure home retrofit programmes that are required alongside the delivery of Net Zero targets integrate adaptation measures where possible, such as installation of water efficiency measures, shading options, better ventilation to reduce the overheating risk and to improve indoor air quality, etc.	Health and Housing	Financial resources may be an issue	2023 onwards	
	Ensure all sectors and businesses which require environmental permits, such as for activities involving potentially harmful substances, cement works, petrol stations assess all impacts of climate change on their operations.	Environmental Health	N/A	2023 onwards	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Develop and run a communications campaign which details the impacts climate change can have on an individual's health and wellbeing. Ensure this signposts resources which are available to residents which may help to improve their health and wellbeing	Corporate Business and Partnerships and Communications	N/A	2022 onwards	
	Environmental Health to engage in the planning consultation process to ensure impacts on water availability and	Environmental Health and Development	N/A	2022 onwards	N/A

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	air quality are considered at the planning application stage.				
	Continue to activate the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol during periods of extreme weather, ensuring homeless people have access to shelter.	Health and Housing	N/A	Ongoing	
	Allocate staff time to allow Environmental Health staff to participate in the development of the Climate Change Strategy. This will enable public health issues that are becoming more apparent because of climate change to be identified, and mitigation measures to be implemented.	Environmental Health	Potential staffing resource constraints	2022 - 2023	N/A
	Prepare a plan to identify and deal with harmful invasive species, particularly those that pose a public health risk	Environmental Health	Potential staffing resource constraints	2023 - 2024	Natural England

How Can you Improve Your Health and Wellbeing as the Climate Changes?

- During periods of inclement weather, it is important that you take the necessary precautions to safeguard your health. Wherever possible, stay indoors during storms and high winds, enjoy sunny days safely by sticking to shaded areas, wearing SPF, and staying hydrated, and stay safe during instances of excess rainfall and flooding by familiarizing yourself with the relevant emergency plans for your area.
- Food borne diseases increase in prevalence during periods of high temperatures. Ensure that you are following the recommended food hygiene practices to minimize your risk of illness.

2.2 Water Supply

Stafford Borough has been identified by the Environment Agency as falling within an area of serious water stress⁸⁹. As the population continues to grow and the climate continues to change, it is likely that this problem will worsen. Ensuring everybody has access to an adequate water supply, particularly during heatwaves and droughts, requires the implementation of water saving measures, as well as the behaviour change of consumers.

How Will we Conserve Water in Stafford Borough?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	None identified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Environmental Health to engage in the planning consultation process to ensure impacts on water availability and air quality are considered at the planning application stage.	Environmental Health and Development	N/A	2022 onwards	N/A

⁸ [JBA Consulting Report Template 2015 \(staffordbc.gov.uk\)](http://staffordbc.gov.uk)

⁹ [Water stressed areas – 2021 classification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Develop a communications plan which seeks to inform residents as to how they can reduce their water use, helping to conserve water.	Corporate Business and Partnerships and Communications	N/A	2022 onwards	Severn Trent Water

How Can you Conserve Water?

- Being aware of how much water you are using is the most effective way you can contribute to water conservation efforts in the local area. Small actions such as turning the tap off whilst you are brushing your teeth, taking shorter showers and using shorter washing machine cycles can all help to reduce your water usage. Having a water meter installed can make it easier for you to track your water usage.
- Installing water butts in your outdoor spaces harvests rainwater, reducing your reliance on mains water. Harvested rainwater can be used for things like watering plants and washing the car. Not only will this save you money, but it will help to conserve water.
- A dripping tap wastes at least 5,500 liters of water a year, that's enough to fill 30 bathtubs! Fixing any leaks is a simple way to reduce your water use, saving you money and ensuring there's enough water for all.
- Reducing your water use is even more important during periods of high temperatures and heatwaves as the demand for water increases. Avoid using jet washers, hoses and cover paddling pools so that the water can be reused multiple times.
- Severn Trent Water offer water saving freebies, meaning you can install devices to help save water around the home for free. Take a look at their website for more information: [Get Water Fit | Save water | Wonderful on Tap | Severn Trent Water \(stwater.co.uk\)](#)

Section 3 - Natural Environment and Green Spaces

The natural environment and climate change are intrinsically linked. The future survival of our natural environment is at risk, and one of the main drivers of this is climate change. Sea level rise, melting ice caps, the spread of invasive species, habitat destruction, and a change in environmental conditions are all either directly caused by, or are exacerbated by, climate change. There exists no ecosystem which is unlikely to be impacted by climate change. However, one of the best possible solutions to combat, and to adapt to, climate change is nature itself.

Working to restore and create new habitats has a wide range of benefits, including acting as a climate adaptation measure. This is known as a nature-based solution. A nature-based solution is defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as “action to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”. Take tree planting, for example. Trees absorb water from the ground. Therefore, in areas where tree cover is greater, there is likely to be less risk of flooding. Not only this, but trees provide important habitats for a wide range of species. By planting more trees, not only do we help to increase biodiversity levels, but we also help to reduce the risk of flooding. Nature based solutions can range from small-scale measures, such as planting a tree, to large-scale measures such as the restoration of flood plain meadows within a river corridor. Using them wherever possible is one of the most effective ways in which we can prevent the worst impacts of climate change from being experienced.

3.1 Biodiversity

Global biodiversity is being placed under extreme pressure¹⁰ by climate change. In fact, such is the scale of the problem that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) states that climate change poses a serious threat to species conservation and identifies climate change as the biggest potential threat to natural World Heritage sites¹¹.

Stafford Borough is home to a wide range of habitats. The Borough contains 15 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four Special Areas of Conservation, three internationally important Ramsar sites, and many Local Wildlife Sites which are of county-wide importance. The Borough is home to many protected species including otter, barn owl, great crested newt, and farmland birds.

¹⁰ [Nature Positive 2030 Evidence Report \(jncc.gov.uk\)](https://www.jncc.gov.uk/publications/nature-positive-2030-evidence-report)

¹¹ [Our work - Climate Change | IUCN](https://www.iucn.org/en/our-work-climate-change)

To ensure their future survival, we must work in partnership to deliver measures which will see local biodiversity become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

How Will we Work to Increase Biodiversity Resilience?

Please note that any reference to enhancing biodiversity through planning and development will be listed in the “Planning and Development” chapter of this document.

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Continue the implementation of Natural Flood Management projects in areas where they would be of most benefit.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	External funding would have to be secured to enable the continues delivery of NFM	Ongoing	Environment Agency, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Embed climate adaptation into any natural environment / capital working groups operating Borough wide	Corporate Business	N/A	Ongoing	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Seek opportunities to increase tree planting efforts in the Borough. Where tree planting is undertaken, ensure that it is delivered in a manner which is beneficial for biodiversity, whilst increasing carbon sequestration	Corporate Business, Operations, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	The extent to which tree planting can be delivered is partially dependent on the acquisition of external funding	Ongoing	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Work with partner organisations and stakeholders to increase the implementation of Natural Flood Management projects in the Borough	Corporate Business, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	Some external funding would have to be secured	2022 onwards	Environment Agency, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Use the Nature Recovery Network to provide a spatially explicit assessment of the Borough's priority habitats, to target action which will build biodiversity resilience	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	N/A	2022 onwards	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Encourage adaptation of habitats and natural colonisation by species suited to changing climatic conditions through the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	External funding would have to be secured	2022 onwards	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Use of habitat creation in strategic locations to reduce the risk of soil erosion	Corporate Business and Strategic Planning and Placemaking	The extent to which habitat creation can be delivered is partially dependent on the acquisition of external funding	Ongoing	Environment Agency
	Develop and adapt a Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure delivery of more and improved habitats	, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	N/A	2022 - 2023	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
	Protect and enhance green open space, habitats and ecological corridors via landscape scale projects through the implementation of a Biodiversity Net Gain developer scheme.	, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	The extent to which habitats can be enhanced is partially dependent on the acquisition of external funding	2022 onwards	
	Develop and adopt a Landscape Strategy to ensure strategic landscape design considers climate change	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	External funding would have to be secured	2022 onwards	

How Can you Work to Increase Biodiversity Resilience?

Providing a space for biodiversity in your own outdoor spaces is one of the best ways you can personally help protect our biodiversity. Some great ways to do this are:

- Plant a tree. The average tree absorbs around one ton of carbon dioxide a year, preventing it from further driving climate change. Trees also provide habitats for a range of species, including birds and invertebrates. By planting trees in your garden, you are contributing to the reduction of carbon in an area whilst providing space for biodiversity.
- Plant drought resistant flowering plants in your outdoor space. This will ensure that pollinators are encouraged to an area, even during periods of dry weather and heatwaves. Some examples of pollinator friendly plants which require little water to grow include foxglove, cosmos and sunflower.

Think about how you can integrate micro-habitats in your garden. Creating log and rock piles are great ways of providing a space for invertebrates, providing nesting boxes will encourage birds to the area, whilst maintaining and planting hedgerows increases habitats which can be used by small mammals.

3.2 Green Spaces

Green spaces play an important role in climate adaptation. They provide multiple adaptive measures, including the absorption of flood water, and the provision of urban cooling. They can also provide an outdoor space for residents to enjoy, which can help improve health and wellbeing.

We are responsible for the management of over 300 hectares of open space across the Borough. There are several ways in which areas of public spaces can be altered so that this can be achieved. These can range from integrating drought resistant flowering species into planting regimes, to integrating flood alleviation measures into the design of landscaped parks.

Areas of green space also provide climate adaptation through the role it plays in urban cooling. Research shows that temperatures are higher in more built-up areas. The reason for this is that the surfaces of buildings can absorb heat, warming the surrounding areas. Green spaces counter this process. Therefore, not only should we protect our existing green space network, but ensure new development integrates sufficient levels of green space.

How Will we Use Green Space as a Climate Adaptation Measure?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Capitalise on the rollout of local tree-planting programmes by ensuring that all schemes contribute to climate adaptation objectives, e.g. that they help to reduce flood risk and contribute to urban cooling.	Operations, Strategic Planning and Placemaking, Corporate Business and Partnerships	External funding may have to be secured to enable tree planting efforts to continue	2022 onwards	Environment Agency, Natural England
	Assess the resilience of Stafford Borough urban parks and green spaces, considering both the biodiversity within and the users. Integrate adaptation measures where appropriate such as strategic tree planting, water meadows, changing mowing regimes, installing drinking water fountains and planting more drought-resistant species.	Corporate Business, Operations, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	Some external funding would have to be secured	2022 onwards	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Establish management regimes for parks, green spaces and semi-natural habitats to maintain and enhance biodiversity	Corporate Business, Operations, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	N/A	2022 onwards	
	Protect and enhance green open space, habitats and ecological corridors via landscape scale projects through the implementation of a Biodiversity Net Gain developer scheme. Explore ways to increase access to green spaces in rural areas. Ensure green spaces also provide biodiversity enhancements.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking Corporate Business, Strategic Planning and Placemaking	The extent to which habitats can be enhanced is partially dependent on the acquisition of external funding External funding may have to be secured	2022 onwards 2022 onwards	Natural England, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Section 4 - Supporting the Local Economy

Climate change has the potential to impact the local economy in multiple ways. Extreme weather events can prevent residents from accessing services and facilities in town centers, which could reduce revenue, and could result in the cancellation of leisure and tourism events. Climate change could also alter the types of industry which continue to prosper due to a reduction in consumer demand. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to how we can support local business as the climate continues to change, whilst also considering how the economy is likely to change in the future.

How Will we Increase the Resilience of the Local Economy?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	None identified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Produce a communications campaign which seeks to teach local businesses about the importance of climate adaptation	Corporate Business and Partnerships, Economic Development	N/A	2022 onwards	Stafford Chamber of Commerce, LEP
	Factor the potential delay extreme weather events could cause if they occurred during regeneration projects	Economic Development	N/A	2023 onwards	
	To work in partnership with Stafford Chamber of Commerce and the LEP to ensure businesses which will increase resilience to climate change are promoted	Corporate Business and Partnerships, Economic Development	N/A	2022 - 2023	Stafford Chamber of Commerce, LEP

Section 5 - Planning and Regeneration

We are the local planning authority for the Borough^{12/13}. As such we are responsible for the production of the Local Plan, which provides the framework for the delivery of development within the area. The Local Plan is a far-reaching document which considers factors such as flood risk, biodiversity enhancement, the allocation of sites for development, and the provision of new areas of green space. Specific climate change adaptation policies can also be included. This would see development having to be delivered in a way which includes the provision of climate adaptation measures. This could include the provision of multi-functional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, the usage of permeable paving or the integration of green spaces into new development.

Stafford Borough currently has an adopted Local Plan, the Plan for Stafford Borough¹⁴, but is currently progressing the production of a New Local Plan. The New Local Plan provides an opportunity to increase climate adaptation efforts being delivered throughout the Borough.

How Will we Ensure New Development Contributes to Climate Change Adaptation?

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Ensure that large-scale conversion of brownfield sites across the region integrate adaptation measures, such as natural flood alleviation, SUDS and greening initiatives that benefit climate adaptation, and ensuring all new builds contain rigorous climate resilient standards. Where such sites are not suitable for development, consider appropriate site greening options (urban forests, wetlands, parks etc).	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	This would need to be embedded as a policy in the New Local Plan to secure delivery. Viability is potentially a barrier to delivery	2024 onwards	
	Ensure planning decisions adhere to the NPPF, which states that new developments avoid flood risk in accordance with the sequential test in the NPPF and inappropriate development directed away from areas of existing or future flood risk. New development should not cause flooding elsewhere and be resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking and Development Management	N/A	Ongoing	Environment Agency, Staffordshire County Council

¹² [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-guidance)

¹³ [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-practice-guidance)

¹⁴ [The Plan for Stafford Borough | Stafford Borough Council \(staffordbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/the-plan-for-stafford-borough)

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Ensure there is a requirement for all new commercial developments to include a SUDS. Ensure the guidance builds on existing resources, is based on best practice and includes case studies.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	N/A	2024 onwards	
	Ensure all existing and new SUDS schemes are subject to regular monitoring and maintenance procedure to ensure continued, long-term effectiveness.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking, Operations and Development Management	It is unclear as to who should be responsible to deliver this. The council does not have a member of staff with the relevant expertise, whilst it is unlikely that developers would be willing to do this once the development was complete.	2024 onwards	Environment Agency, Staffordshire County Council.
	Establish Borough-wide supplementary planning guidance that requires the need for SUDS in all new home and developments across the West Midlands. Ensure the guidance builds on existing resources, is based on best practice and includes case studies	Strategic Planning And Placemaking	There is already guidance available which addresses the implementation of SUDS in new development. Therefore, consideration should be given as to whether this would provide any added value.	2024 onwards	

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Ensure climate adaptation standards are a requirement of new homes, alongside measure to achieve Net Zero. This could include natural ventilation to improve thermal performance and comfort during heatwaves, natural greening, roof reflectivity, permeable paving and rainwater harvesting to reduce freshwater use. Design guidelines should be produced for large capital investment projects, which set out how to use regionally specific climate projections and adaptation options.	Strategic Planning and Placemaking and Development Management	We are looking into the feasibility of enforcing this through the New Local Plan. However, viability is potentially a barrier to delivery.	2024 onwards	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	Ensure the New Local Plan mandates the protection and enhancement of natural spaces	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	N/A	2024 onwards	
	Ensure green spaces are embedded in new development to prevent the formation of Urban Heat Island effects	Strategic Planning and Placemaking and Development Management	We are looking into the feasibility of enforcing this through the New Local Plan. However, viability is potentially a barrier to delivery.	2024 onwards	
	During the masterplanning phase of major regeneration projects, ensure the risk of flooding is considered and mitigated for	Economic Development	We are looking into the feasibility of enforcing this through the New Local Plan. However, viability is potentially a barrier to delivery.	Ongoing	

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Develop a local strategy to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in new development	Strategic Planning and Placemaking	We are looking into the feasibility of enforcing this through the New Local Plan. However, viability is potentially a barrier to delivery.	2022 onwards	

Section 6 - Maintaining Council Service Provision

A crucial part of our climate adaptation strategy is considering how climate change is likely to impact on the delivery of our services. Extreme weather events are likely to have the greatest impact on the service provision of the council. Therefore, to ensure we can continue to maintain a high level of service delivery, the following measures will be implemented:

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 Identified Adaptive Measures	Undertake research into the extent which the digital infrastructure, telecoms and ICT within the council is considering future climate change projections.	ICT	Potential staffing constraints	2023	
	Ensure climate risks are embedded into corporate risk assessments.	Corporate Business and Partnerships	N/A	2022 onwards	
	Develop and roll out a climate adaptation training programme, ensuring all members of staff and elected members are aware of its role in the delivery of climate action.	Corporate Business and Partnerships	N/A	2022 onwards	
Stafford Borough Council Identified Adaptive Measures	All staff will be set up to work from home, enabling most services to be maintained when adverse weather conditions make travelling to the offices difficult.	Human Resources	N/A	Ongoing	
	Staff who are required to work outdoors during extreme weather events, for example the Streetscene team, will be provided with full Personal Protective Equipment.	Human Resources	N/A	Ongoing	

	Adaptive Measure	Responsible Service Area	Barriers to Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Delivery Partners
	Staff who are required to work outdoors may have their working patterns revised during extreme weather events. This will enable services to be provided, without compromising the health and wellbeing of our teams.	Human Resources	N/A	2022 onwards	
	Communications systems will be developed which will alert the public of any impacts to our service delivery, should it be impacted by extreme weather events.	ICT and Communications	Potential financial constraints	2023 onwards	
	We will ensure our own estate is subjected to continuous risk assessment of potential damage to on site infrastructure such as the solar panels at Riverway Nursery.	Corporate Assets	Potential financial constraints	2022 onwards	
	Measures to provide a more comfortable working environment for staff who are required to work in the office during extreme weathers will be provided.	Corporate Assets	Potential financial constraints	2023 onwards	

Opportunities and Co-Benefits

Whilst the impacts of climate change are likely to be overwhelmingly negative, there are some more positive opportunities which are likely to arise. One of the ways we can increase our resilience to climate change is by taking advantage of these wherever possible. The West Midlands Adaptation Plan identifies four opportunities, and three factors that could be both a risk and an opportunity. Implementing measures to build upon these are an important part of adapting to a changing climate. The identified opportunities are:

Risks and Opportunities	Extreme events and changing climatic conditions (including temperature change, water scarcity, wildlife, flooding, wind) could potentially impact on the landscape character of the Borough, and the agricultural and forestry sectors. Whilst this might sound like a risk, a change in climate might, for example, enable the growing of species which would previously have been unable to thrive.
	Higher winter temperature changes could potentially reduce household energy demand. However, this is likely to be countered by an increased need for cooling in the summer months.
	Migration to the UK and effects on the UK's interests overseas are likely to be impacted by climate-related international human mobility.
Opportunities	Climate change could result in new terrestrial and freshwater species being able to colonise in the UK. However, caution should be taken that this does not result in the spread of invasive species.
	Drier, warmer summers could lead to more opportunities to use outdoor spaces. This could provide a boost for outdoor leisure/tourism industries.
	Long term climate change effects could result in changes in demand for goods and services. This could result in certain industries becoming more prosperous in the future.
	Increases in productivity and areas suitable for agriculture could increase UK food availability and enable greater exports overseas.

The council will consider how best to take advantage of the potential changes listed above.

Communications and Engagement

We have already said that climate change and green recovery is not something that we are able to tackle on our own and this can also be said about climate change adaptation. Some of the measures will need a multi-partnership approach if we are to achieve what has been set out and identified. This adaptation plan forms part of a bigger agenda on climate change that is built on the need for collective borough-wide action that will involve everyone, it places an emphasis on two-way communications – using relevant channels to share and capture information that residents, businesses, partners and other organisations within our communities need to know. And listening to residents, customers, businesses and others through both formal and informal consultations.

Monitoring and Review

This Adaptation Strategy will run for a period of two years 2022 – 2024 and will be refreshed in line with the Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy but the risk assessment process will be reviewed on an annual basis. Progress against the plan will be proactively managed through our senior management team and elected members by the Council's Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committees.

As part of this process we will ensure that progress is reported to our residents via:

- Publishing progress on the website, social media and the local press
- Sharing our progress with our partners

We will be open and transparent in how we work and conduct consultation and engagement activities for all of our major projects so that we can ensure our residents are able to have their say and be part of the process.

Current UK Climate Adaptation Legislation and Policy

There are a number of policy frameworks which set out the risks climate change poses to the UK, and how climate adaptation measures can be deployed to minimize the impact. Whilst not all apply directly to local authorities, they can be used as a guide to ensure adaptive responses are effective. Some examples of these policy frameworks are:

*UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022*¹⁵

Under the 2008 Climate Change Act, the UK Government is required to update and publish a Climate Change Risk Assessment every five years. This document has been updated and published this year and is called the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022. This document identifies eight priority risk areas which require the provision of the most urgent adaptive action. These were identified as:

- Risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitat and species from multiple hazards
- Risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought
- Risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards, leading to increased emissions
- Risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple climate hazards
- Risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks
- Risks to people and the economy from climate-related failure of the power system
- Risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings
- Multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas

All the risks identified were assessed as needing “more action” to enable adequate preparations to be made.

*National Adaptation Programme (NAP)*¹⁶

The second National Adaptation Programme sets out a response to the Climate Change Risk Assessment. The NAP recognizes the role that local authorities play in delivering climate adaptation, identifying the main areas of focus as infrastructure, planning, emergency planning and biodiversity.

¹⁵ [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103122/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022.pdf)

¹⁶ [national-adaptation-programme-2018.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103122/national-adaptation-programme-2018.pdf)

*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*¹⁷

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how they should be applied. As a local planning authority, we need to ensure its contents are embedded in our Local Plan.

Paragraph 154 states that “new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green measures”. The New Local Plan for Stafford Borough will include policies that enforce this.

*Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)*¹⁸

Planning Practice Guidance forms a further part of the planning system in England and is intended to add further context to the NPPF. The PPG includes further direction as to what should be included in the policies of a Local Plan.

The PPG states that “when preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation approaches and looking for ‘win-win’ solutions that will support sustainable development”. It also states that local planning authorities should “be aware of and avoid the risk of maladaptation”. Maladaptation refers to the occurrence of adaptation which becomes more harmful than helpful. As with the contents of the NPPF, the New Local Plan for Stafford Borough will be guided by the contents of the PPG.

¹⁷ [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432424/nppf-guidance-2019.pdf)

¹⁸ [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432424/ppg-guidance-2019.pdf)

Climate Change Adaptation Research

Alongside the policy and legislation which refer to climate change adaptation are several research papers. Climate adaptation actions which fall within the sphere of influence of a local authority are identified. To increase its effectiveness, the Stafford Borough Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will be guided by the contents of these documents.

The main documents which will be used as a steer are:

Stafford Borough Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP)

We have recently updated the Local Climate Impact Profile for Stafford Borough. This document identifies extreme weather events which have been observed as having occurred within the Borough and identifies any impacts that arose from their occurrence. T

The Climate Change Committee Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk¹⁹

As mentioned above, every five years the UK Government is required to update its Climate Change Risk Assessment. Informing this document is an independently produced assessment of UK Climate Risk. Produced by the Climate Change Committee, the document sets out the level of adaptation which is needed to ensure the country is equipped to deal with the potential impacts of climate change. It then assesses the current level of adaptive action which is being taken to establish whether sufficient efforts are being made. Worryingly, the most recent version of this report demonstrates that the gap between the level of risk we face and the adaptive response is widening. This reinforces the need to level up our adaptive efforts.

West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026²⁰

Developed by Sustainability West Midlands, the West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021 - 2026 takes a closer look at the climate risks and opportunities which are specific to the West Midlands region. Recommendations are then made to identify actions which local authorities can take to increase adaptation efforts.

Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Final Report²¹

¹⁹ [Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://theccc.org.uk)

²⁰ [WMCA Sustainability Benchmarking Report Sep 2018 Final.docx \(sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk\)](https://sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk)

²¹ [Report Final Report 2020-06-17 \(staffordbc.gov.uk\)](https://staffordbc.gov.uk)

Produced by external consultants, the Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Final Report was commissioned to form part of the New Local Plan evidence base. It was produced in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council and its eight district and borough councils. The report details the measures which need to be delivered in Staffordshire to enable the transition to decarbonization, and prepare for the now unavoidable impacts of climate change.

ITEM NO 4(c)(i)

ITEM NO 4(c)(i)

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Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet 08/09/2022 (Only)

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLORS J K PRICE AND M J WINNINGTON
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIOS**

<p>CABINET</p> <p>8 SEPTEMBER 2022</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council Waste Reduction and Reuse Project</p>

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To introduce the proposed delivery of the Stafford Borough Council Waste Reduction and Reuse Project, which will be delivered in response to the plastic motion which was passed by the council in 2019.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 To note the proposals of the Stafford Borough Council Waste Reduction and Reuse Project, and to approve its delivery.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 In 2019 Stafford Borough Council declared a climate change emergency and committed to become a carbon neutral authority by 2040. Since the declaration was made, preliminary work has been progressing to enable this to be achieved.
- 3.2 Following the declaration of the climate emergency, the council carried a single use plastic motion. This saw the council commit to the following five actions:
- (a) State its support for the eradication of single use plastic items and this policy to be made clear to all suppliers and contract holders;
 - (b) Encourage our community to reduce and ultimately stop the use of single use plastic products;
 - (c) Actively promote the reduction of single use plastic products;
 - (d) Work with other agencies and local authorities to reduce the use of all single use plastic products as soon as possible;
 - (e) Make the reduction of single use plastic products part of the implementation of the climate emergency declaration.

- 3.3 In 2020, the council adopted its Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy. This document sets out the council's sustainability objectives, which are as follows;

CC1 - To reduce emissions from our own activities,

CC2 - Work in partnership with Government, Elected Bodies and Elected Members, Partners, Residents and Businesses across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities and across the natural environment,

CC3 - To adapt and mitigate to climate change,

CC4 - To continue to implement our green recovery objectives.

Working to reduce the production of waste, and encourage the reuse of waste both internally within the authority and across the wider Borough area will fulfil objectives 1 to 3 of those listed above.

- 3.4 Whilst the motion which was passed in 2019 focused solely on plastics, it is suggested that any project focusing on waste takes a broader stance, and seeks to reduce, reuse and recycle all waste items. This is because this will see the greatest environmental gains.
- 3.5 At present, local authorities do not have a statutory duty to reduce their production of waste, nor to work with the community to enable them to do the same. However, given the motion which was passed in 2019, and the objectives set out in the council's Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy, it is proposed that Stafford Borough Council launches a waste reduction and reuse project, which will seek to reduce the amount of waste being produced, and increase the reuse and proper recycling of waste across the Borough.
- 3.6 To support the above aim, it is proposed that a Stafford Borough Waste Reduction and Reuse Project is delivered.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This primarily supports business objective 3 but interlinks with all the corporate business objectives.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Research shows that the UK produces an estimated 43.9 million of tonnes waste annually. The production of waste causes multiple negative environmental impacts. For example, the manufacture and disposal of waste results in an increase in carbon dioxide emissions. This means that waste production directly accelerates climate change. When improperly disposed of, waste can cause pollution levels in an area to increase. This has negative impacts on local wildlife and can cause environmental health concerns. However, there are actions that can be taken to reduce these impacts. These include opting for waste free alternatives when purchasing products, fixing broken products, and recycling wherever possible.

- 5.2 Over recent years, the detrimental impacts of waste have been increasingly understood. This has resulted in policy changes such as the introduction of the 5p carrier bag levy. Since the introduction of the carrier bag levy, the usage of single use carrier bags has decreased by 95%. In October 2020, the Government issued a ban on the supply and sale of plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds. Both of these changes increased discourse around the reliance on the production and improper disposal of waste, encouraging consumers and businesses to seek more sustainable alternatives.
- 5.3 The production and improper disposal of waste represents a significant environmental challenge. Increasing awareness of how waste can be avoided, and how we can dispose of unavoidable waste in the most environmentally friendly way is of crucial importance as the impacts of climate change and the biodiversity crisis continue to be felt. There are many actions that can be taken by residents, businesses, and organisations to transition to a more sustainable consumer culture. An opportunity therefore exists for the council to deliver a campaign which will empower residents to make more sustainable decisions, whilst simultaneously championing sustainable businesses which exist in our community. It is therefore proposed that Stafford Borough Council builds upon the increased momentum around environmentalism, and works to address the issue of waste production and disposal across the Borough area.
- 5.4 To fulfil the actions set out in the Plastics Motion, and to achieve the objectives listed in the council's Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy, it is proposed that a five step Waste Reduction and Reuse Project is delivered.
- 5.5 It is acknowledged that Item 1 of the plastics motion commits the council to review its use of single use plastics internally. However, given the shift to a more flexible working model following the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more difficult to monitor the amount of waste which is being produced because of council activities. It is therefore proposed that focus is initially placed on reducing waste produced externally to the council.
- 5.6 If the council is to deliver the actions that were committed to in the plastics motion, and fulfil the objectives outlined in the Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy, a waste reduction and reuse project should be delivered. To progress this work further it requires the sign off by Leadership Team, therefore, it is requested that colleagues:
- Consider whether their service area could provide support to residents or businesses to help them reduce the waste they produce.
 - To consider whether their service area could provide support to residents or businesses to help them increase the reuse and proper disposal of unavoidable waste.
 - Consider how else Stafford Borough Council could help to reduce waste production and increase the reuse and recycling of unavoidable waste in the local area.

6 Implications	
6.1 Financial	It is anticipated that the main cost of delivering the Waste Reduction and Reuse Project will be officer time. However, it is possible that a small non-staffing cost will be needed. If so, this will need funding before being committed.
Legal	
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	The plastics project will have wide reaching impacts on local communities, and will be subject to a full CIA upon adoption.
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – Corporate Business and Partnerships

Stafford Borough Council Waste Reduction and Reuse Project Brief

The reduction and proper disposal of waste has garnered attention over recent years, with the environmental impacts of waste being increasingly recognised. This has led to the introduction of legislation to reduce the amount of waste, including the 5p carrier bag levy, and the banning of the sale of plastic straws.

The policy changes mentioned above have been successful in reducing the number of single-use plastics which are used in the UK. However, it is not just single-use plastics which can have negative impacts on the environment. The production of all waste has the potential to impact upon the environment. Therefore, focus should be placed on the reduction of waste generally and should not focus solely on the use of single-use plastics. It is also worth noting that the reuse and recycling of waste materials can contribute to reducing the environmental impacts of waste production.

To increase the sustainability of Stafford Borough, it is suggested that Stafford Borough Council develops and delivers a Waste Reduction and Reuse Campaign. The objectives of this project would be to encourage residents and businesses which operate in Stafford Borough to consider how they could reduce their levels of waste production, and where it is unavoidable, ensure they are disposing of it in the most environmentally friendly manner possible. The campaign will also seek to provide advice as to how this can be achieved, and where necessary will involve partnership working with external organisations to achieve this.

Policy Background

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, the council has been working to ensure the sustainability of the council and the Borough increases. This has resulted in the production and adoption of several strategies and motions. Consistent through these documents is the recognition that waste reduction has a role to play in ensuring the climate change and green recovery objectives of the council are met.

In 2019, Stafford Borough Council passed a motion addressing the council's usage of single use plastics. The motion included the following five actions that the council would seek to achieve:

1. State its support for the eradication of single use plastic items. This policy to be made clear to all suppliers and contract holders.
2. Encourage our community to reduce and ultimately stop the use of single use plastics.
3. Actively promote the reduction of single use plastics.
4. Work with other agencies and local authorities to reduce the use of all single use plastic products as soon as possible.
5. Make the reduction of single use plastic products part of the implementation of the climate emergency.

In 2020, the council adopted its Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy. This identified the four main sustainability objectives which the council would work towards achieving over the coming years. These are:

CC1 - To reduce emissions from our own activities,

CC2 - Work in partnership with Government, Elected Bodies and Elected Members, Partners, Residents and Businesses across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities and across the natural environment,

CC3 - To adapt and mitigate to climate change,

CC4 - To continue to implement our green recovery objectives.

Working to reduce the production of waste, both internally within the council and within our businesses and communities, would contribute to the realisation of items CC1 to CC3. It would also contribute to the actions identified in the plastics motion. It is therefore proposed that the council prepares and delivers a waste reduction and reuse campaign.

Method

Although the motion passed by the council in 2019 focused solely on plastics, it is suggested that the waste campaign looks at the reduction of waste more generally. This is because the greatest environmental gains come from reducing waste production, and where it is unavoidable, reusing and recycling all waste wherever possible. It is therefore suggested that the Stafford Borough Waste Campaign includes the following:

- 1) The production of two waste reduction pledges, one for residents and one for businesses.
- 2) The production of waste reduction resource packs. These will be sent to residents and businesses who sign up to the waste reduction pledge.
- 3) The exploration of developing an accreditation scheme which identifies which local businesses have signed up to the pledge.
- 4) The production of an interactive map which shows where waste recycling and disposal facilities can be found in the Borough.
- 5) A directory of local businesses based in the Borough who sell reusable products which can be used as an alternative to single use plastics.
- 6) The delivery of a communications campaign to reduce the contamination of waste which is collected by the council at the kerbside.

The five items listed above are discussed in more detail below:

1. Resident and businesses waste reduction pledges.

To encourage residents and local businesses to reduce the amount of waste they produce, it is suggested that two waste reduction pledges are produced, one for residents and one for businesses. The pledges will ask residents and businesses to think about ways in which they can reduce the amount of waste they produce and commit to doing so.

2. Waste reduction resource packs.

To support residents in reducing their waste production, resource packs will be produced. These will include ideas as to how they can reduce the amount

of waste they produce, and reuse and recycle the waste they can't avoid producing. It is suggested that the Climate Change and Green Recovery Community Panel are involved in the production of the waste reduction resource packs.

3. Local Business Accreditation Scheme

To encourage local businesses to sign up to the waste reduction pledge, it is proposed that the potential to deliver an accreditation scheme is explored. This will see businesses who sign up to the waste reduction pledge be provided with a logo they can display on their website and in their shopfront alerting customers to their commitment to improve their environmental credentials. As the awareness of the importance of sustainability continues to increase, it is likely that an increasing number of consumers will choose to use more sustainable businesses. The accreditation scheme will provide businesses with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, whilst also encouraging consumers to opt for more sustainable choices.

4. Interactive map of waste recycling and disposal facilities.

To further support residents and businesses who are looking to minimise the environmental impact of the waste they produce, an interactive map will be produced. This map will identify where waste disposal and recycling facilities can be found throughout the Borough. This will include facilities such as soft plastic and single-use coffee cup recycling bins, and businesses such as Roots Larder, which recycle hard to recycle waste. The interactive map will be published on the council website.

5. Directory of local businesses which sell reusable products.

To increase awareness of businesses operating in the Borough that sell reusable alternatives to single use products, it is suggested that a directory of said businesses is produced. This will be done in collaboration with Stafford Chamber of Commerce. The directory will be published on the council website.

6. Kerbside contamination communications campaign.

To increase the efficiency of recycling collections, reducing contamination in kerbside recycling collections is necessary. It is therefore suggested that a communications campaign which seeks to increase understanding of which waste items can be recycled is delivered. Due to the wide range of household waste items that are produced, it is suggested that a "yes please" approach is used, with only the items suitable for blue bin and blue bag recycling being identified.

It is acknowledged that Item 1 of the plastics motion commits the council to review its use of single use plastics internally. However, given the shift to a more flexible working model following the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more difficult to monitor the

amount of waste which is being produced because of council activities. This means that it is difficult to demonstrate any progress in reducing the amount of waste which is produced. It is therefore proposed that the reduction of waste is addressed through the procurement process. This will form the basis of a future piece of work which will contribute to achieving Objective 1 of the council's Climate Change and Green Recovery agenda.

ITEM NO 4(d)(i)**ITEM NO 4(d)(i)**

Contact Officer:	Tracy Redpath
Telephone No:	01785 619195
Ward Interest:	None
Report Track:	Cabinet 08/09/2022 (Only)

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR J PERT
COMMUNITY AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

<p>CABINET</p> <p>8 SEPTEMBER 2022</p> <p>Support for the Voluntary Sector - Food Distribution HUB</p>

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update in relation to the issues currently faced by the foodbanks in the borough and to agree additional financial support for their activities.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 That the information is noted and that the provision of additional financial support to assist the foodbanks is agreed.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council has been providing financial support to the community and voluntary sector for a number of years. It currently supports a number of community and voluntary sector organisations with grants totalling £132,250 per annum. During the covid pandemic, an additional £27,000 was provided to the voluntary sector to support vulnerable residents.
- 3.2 Over the past two years demand for support from the voluntary sector has increased considerably, and with the cost of living increases, this demand is predicted to increase.
- 3.3 Local foodbanks have seen a simultaneous significant increasing of demand with a drop off in the volume of donations from the general public leading to some foodbanks buying supermarket groceries off the shelves to maintain full shelves in the foodbanks to support those most in need.
- 3.4 The borough council has been working very closely with the voluntary sector during this time and has identified a further £18,000 of financial support to be allocated to support the foodbanks in the Borough.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This directly contributes to corporate business objective 2.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council has been providing financial support to the community and voluntary sector for a number of years. It currently supports a number of community and voluntary sector organisations with grants totalling £132,250 per annum. During the covid pandemic, an additional £27,000 was provided to the voluntary sector to support vulnerable residents.
- 5.2 Over the past two years demand for support from the voluntary sector has increased considerably, and with the cost of living increases, this demand is predicted to increase. The impact of this is already being seen as disposable income is tightening to an extent that families are already having to take difficult decisions to either heat their home or feed their families.
- 5.3 Local foodbanks have seen a simultaneous significant increasing of demand with a drop off in the volume of donations from the general public leading to some foodbanks buying supermarket groceries off the shelves to maintain full shelves in the foodbanks to support those most in need. Foodbanks have also indicated that there has been an increase in the number of working people also accessing their service during the past 2 years and it is anticipated that this is likely to continue increasing.
- 5.4 Stafford Borough Council has a proud record of supporting everyone in our communities, most recently during the COVID 19 pandemic and response to the first lockdown and could take an active role in supporting those on the front line, especially those most vulnerable, by increasing the availability of food into the foodbanks.
- 5.5 Officers have been consulting with the voluntary sector over the past couple of months to discuss the wider demand issues and they have suggested that a central hub for food deliveries may help to alleviate some of the demand issues. The proposal would involve setting up a food distribution hub from one of the main food support charities of which the foodbanks, in the borough, could collect from to supply their own foodbank. The food supply would contain a variety of staples both chilled and ambient) of food that would be available for collection by the individual foodbanks on the same day as it is delivered.
- 5.6 The distribution hub would be run by a Community Interest Company that would work with the network of foodbanks across the borough to ensure that the food could be distributed fairly and in accordance with need.
- 5.7 The distribution hub would be run by a Community Interest Company that would work with the network of foodbanks across the borough to ensure that the food could be distributed fairly and in accordance with need.

- To allocate a total of £18,000 to the Community Interest Company (CIC) to support the set up of a central hub for food deliveries, as set out above. This funding can be met from within the existing community portfolio budgets.
- To provide the former shop mobility to the CIC at a peppercorn rental per annum. This premise is not being utilised at this present time and will be vacant for a period of 12 months.
- Officers in the council work in partnership with the CIC to review this arrangement after a period of 6 months and provide a progress report to cabinet.

6	Implications	
6.1	Financial	The funding identified can be met from within the community portfolio budgets.
	Legal	
	Human Resources	Nil
	Human Rights Act	Nil
	Data Protection	Nil
	Risk Management	

6.2	Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <p>There are no known impacts against any of the protected characteristics that have been identified as the foodbank distribution hub will be accessible to all.</p> <p>Wider Community Impact:</p> <p>This arrangement could make an appreciable difference to those most at risk of food poverty and hunger. It will support those households who are experiencing the impacts of the cost of living rises.</p> <p>It will also provide much needed support to voluntary sector organisations at a time when they are seeing a simultaneous significant increase in demand for their services.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – Corporate Business and Partnerships

ITEM NO 4(e)(i)

ITEM NO 4(e)(i)

Contact Officer:	Rob Wolfe
Telephone No:	01543 464 397
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet 08/09/2022 (Only)
Key Decision:	No

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCILLOR R M SMITH
RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

<p>CABINET 8 SEPTEMBER 2022 Revenues and Benefits Collection Report - Quarter 1</p>
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1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service as regards:
- collections of Council Tax during the first quarter of the financial year.
 - collections of Business Rates during the first quarter of the financial year.
 - the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit during the first quarter of the financial year.
- 1.2 To seek approval to the write off of the arrears listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES**.

2 Proposal of Cabinet Member

- 2.1 That the information regarding collections be noted.
- 2.2 That the arrears listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES** be written off.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Efficient collection of the Council's revenues is of major importance to the funding of Council services and those provided by our preceptors.
- 3.2 Council Tax due for the current year amounts to £94.8M, of which some **28.4%** was collected by the end of the June, which is lower than the 29.1% collected in the same period last year.

- 3.3 Business Rates due for the current year amounts to £50M of which some **24.8%** was collected by the end of the June. This compares to 30.3% collected in the first quarter of last year.
- 3.4 Whilst our collection rates are traditionally good, regrettably not all of the monies owed to the Council can be collected and this report contains a recommendation to write off bad debts which cannot be recovered.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Not Applicable.

5 Report Detail

Council Tax

- 5.1 Council Tax is collected on behalf of the District Council, Parish Councils and our Major Preceptors (Staffordshire County Council and Commissioner for Police, Crime, Fire and Rescue). The effect of the Collection fund arrangements means that Stafford Borough Council retains around 10% of the council tax collected.
- 5.2 Council Tax due for the current year amounts to £94.8M and we would hope to collect in the region of 98% within the year, as was the case prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The knock-on effect of underpayments during the past two years, the current economic climate and the need for Revenues staff to continue to manage Council Tax Energy Rebate awards, will add to the difficulty in achieving this target in the current year. Action will continue to collect arrears after the end of the financial year, with around 99% traditionally being recovered.
- 5.3 By 30 June, we had collected 28.4% of the year's charges, which is broadly in line with the corresponding period of the previous year (which was 29.1%).
- 5.4 In accordance with the Council's approved policies, all reasonable and lawful attempts are made to recover all amounts due. In the first instance this involves the issue of bills, reminders and final notices, followed by Summonses in the Magistrates Court where the warning notices are not effective. At all stages of this process, debtors are encouraged to engage in voluntary arrangements to repay their arrears, to prevent the need for formal action.

Where necessary and when Liability Orders are granted by Magistrates, the Council uses its powers to make deductions from earnings and benefits of debtors, where it can, and instructs Enforcement Agents where such deductions are not possible or appropriate.

In the most severe cases and for debts exceeding £5,000, the Council will consider personal bankruptcy action against individuals.

- 5.5 The recovery powers available to the Council are considerable but not completely infallible. There are occasions when bills are not paid and the debts cannot be recovered.
- 5.6 Statutory safeguards such as Debt Relief Orders, Individual's Voluntary Arrangements exist to protect debtors suffering hardship, to attempt to the expensive, stressful and sometimes ineffective process of personal bankruptcy. Where a debt is included in such an instrument, or when a debtor is bankrupt, our ordinary recovery powers cannot be used.
- 5.7 For any of our powers to be effective we need to know the whereabouts of a debtor and this is not always the case. Where debtors abscond we will use all reasonable endeavours to trace them and are often successful in doing so. Unfortunately, on occasions this is not so and we must submit a debt for write off.

Our trace procedures include;

- Checking our internal Council systems, and following any information which may help us to trace the debtor.
- Use of Transunion credit reference agency data.
- Trace and collect facilities offered by our Enforcement Agencies
- Visits to the last known address by the Council's Property Inspector and use of external tracing agents.

Unfortunately, legislation does not currently permit access to DWP or HMRC records to trace Council Tax debtors or their employers, though a Cabinet Office project is currently reviewing this.

Data protection legislation allows us to receive information as to a debtor's whereabouts but we cannot disclose information to other creditors. Reciprocal arrangements with utility companies and similar are not therefore workable.

- 5.8 18 Irrecoverable council tax debts in the sum of £68,142.19 are listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** to this report.

Business Rates

- 5.9 Business Rates due for the current year amounts to £50M of which some **24.8%** was collected by the end of June. The effects of Covid-19, the withdrawal of the grants and many of the rate reliefs have been detrimental to collections, as has the need for Revenues staff to administer Council Tax Energy Rebates.
- 5.10 The recovery powers available to us are again contained in the Council's approved policies and are used in full. Those powers and our procedures are similar to the council tax powers described above, with the exception that deductions from individuals' benefits and earnings are not permissible, even if the debtor is an individual.

- 5.11 Where rates are owed by an individual, similar safe guards exist for the debtors and trace facilities are used by the Council for absconding debtors, as described above.
- 5.12 Additionally, in the case of business rates, as has been reported to Cabinet previously, our collection efforts are sometimes frustrated by weaknesses in legislation. Rates are due from the occupiers rather than the owners of property and where the occupier is a company, we can only recover from that company. Some proprietors will strip a company of its assets, or dissolve the company before we have had an opportunity to implement our recovery procedures. A new company is then formed in a similar style, to trade from the same premises.

Central Government has previously undertaken to review the loopholes that exist in rating and company legislation, though no changes have yet been received. Officers continue to actively monitor these issues.

- 5.13 No business rate debts are included in the write off **APPENDIX** to this report.

Housing Benefit Overpayments

- 5.14 The Council manages the Housing Benefit scheme on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, who fund the cost of benefits paid to claimants.
- 5.15 Recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit continues to progress well, with some £122,956.77 being collected into the Council's General Fund in the first quarter of the year.
- 5.16 11 irrecoverable Benefit Overpayment debts in the sum of £70,448.23 is included in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** to this report.

6 Implications	
6.1 Financial	<p>Council Tax write offs are losses to the Collection Fund and, as such, form part of the cost of collection incurred by this Council. The Council Tax write offs on this report total £68,142.19. is represents 0.08% of the outstanding collectable debit for the current year.</p> <p>The cost of collecting the debts has been considered as part of the decision to put them forward for write off. If further information does come forward about the whereabouts of any of the individual debtors the Council will pursue recovery action.</p> <p>Cabinet are asked to write off the debts as they are considered to be irrecoverable for the reasons given in the appendices. The debts remain legally due to the Council and should the circumstances causing the write off in any particular case, subsequently change, recovery action may be recommenced.</p>
Legal	Cabinet are asked to write off the debts as they are considered to be irrecoverable for the reasons given in the appendices. The debts remain legally due to the Council and should the circumstances causing the write off in any particular case, subsequently change, recovery action may be recommenced.
Human Resources	None
Human Rights Act	None
Data Protection	The appendices to this report contain personal information and are therefore not published.
Risk Management	The risk issues contained in this report are not strategic and therefore should not be included in the Strategic Risk Register.
6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-

	Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
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7 Appendices to the Report

APPENDIX 1- Council Tax write offs over £2,500

APPENDIX 2- Housing Benefit Overpayments write offs over £2,500

Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers - None
