

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

R P Cooke	-	Resources Portfolio
I D Fordham	-	Environment Portfolio
J Hood	-	Community Portfolio
G P K Pardesi	-	Leisure Portfolio
A N Pearce	-	Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio
A F Reid	-	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

Officers in attendance:

T Clegg	-	Chief Executive
C Forrester	-	Deputy Chief Executive - Resources
G Stott	-	Deputy Chief Executive - Place
A Nevin	-	Head of Wellbeing
J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer

CAB42 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2025 as published on 19 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

CAB43 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Kenney.

CAB44 Freedom Leisure Fees and Charges 2026

Considered a report seeking approval for changes to Freedom Leisure's pricing structure for 2026, proposed by them and which was required in line with the terms of their contract with Stafford Borough Council.

The Cabinet Member, Leisure Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 before concluding her comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Councillor A F Reid was pleased to see fees for school visits remained low.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Cabinet Member, Leisure Portfolio, be approved as follows:

the proposal from Freedom Leisure for an increase in fees and charges for leisure services, as set out in appendix 2 of the report be approved.

CAB45 Planning Enforcement Policy

Considered a report requesting authority to implement a new Planning Enforcement Policy to be applied at a time to be agreed between the Head of Economic Development and Planning in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning.

In introducing the report the Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio read the following statement:-

“This administration considers Planning and Economic Development to be a key service for our residents and communities. Since taking on this role I’ve overseen the work of resolving the many and deep problems we had inherited from the previous administration - I’m really proud of the work our officers have put into this and the achievements they’ve made happen - all possible because as a Cabinet we’ve prioritised their needs each step of the way. Today we take another step on this journey to rebuilding the strength, the efficiency, and above all the morale of our Planning service.

Our Planning Enforcement team is among the most visible and impactful teams we have - getting this service right is important for our residents, getting it wrong has always caused them grief. After all, what’s the point of agreeing conditions when granting planning permission if there’s no enforcement of those conditions? How do residents get protection for their community if we don’t support our officers in getting enforcement right?

This new policy comes from our ongoing renewal of the Planning team, and is supported by officers. It gives our community the reassurance that we will handle new cases based on priority, and we’re publishing these rules of engagement so everyone can see the reasons, the workings out, as shown in page 23, table 1. Transparency is key to making this a success, it means we can build trust in our service and help our officers minimise friction during disputes.

This policy is written for our unique Borough but is based on best practice - much of what we do and how we handle cases is common with other authorities and where others have good policy we have aligned with them. More than that, this policy gives our team direction and clear guidance, making for a more efficient service that can achieve more.

Tonight I am asking Cabinet to agree to adopt this policy and to delegate both the date it starts and the ability to make minor amendments. We need a more efficient, nimble, and rapid enforcement service.

As I said before, this is but one step in our ongoing journey with our Planning Service, but this is one of high impact: enforcement is important for many of our communities and this policy helps us to get this service right”.

Councillor I D Fordham expressed his support for the proposals noting the work done in parallel with the other regulatory service teams of the Council.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio, be approved as follows:

- (a) the Planning Enforcement Policy 2025 (as set out in appendix 1 of the report) be agreed and adopted;
- (b) the date of implementation be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning);
- (c) approval of minor amendments to the Enforcement Policy be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning (in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Economic Development and Planning).

CAB46 Response to Notice of Motion - Protecting our Rivers and Oceans

Considered a report updating Cabinet of the continued response and next steps to the Notice of Motion entitled ‘Protecting our rivers and oceans’ proposed on 28 November 2023. This is to update from the response report to Council on 27 February 2024.

The Cabinet Member, Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and the associated appendix before noting his pleasure in reaching this point, demonstrating the Councils ongoing commitment to this matter.

Councillor Pearce concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Councillor A F Reid acknowledged those actions relating to the emerging Local Plan which would be incorporated at the appropriate time.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio be approved as follows:

- (a) the update of the report and the attached Action Tracker table of December 2025 be noted;
- (b) the continued response and next steps being undertaken be noted.

CAB47 Updated Strategic Risk Register

Considered a report setting out details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register as at end of September 2025.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6 and the associated appendices before concluding his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, be approved as follows:

the Strategic Risk Register be approved and the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks be noted.

CAB48 Quarter 2 Performance Report for 2025-26

Considered a report advising Members on the progress in delivering the Council's priorities and performance at the end of the quarter 2 for 2025-26.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6 and the associated appendices before concluding his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, be approved as follows:

progress made during quarter 2 in the delivery of the Council's priorities and performance as set out in appendices 1 and 2 of the report be noted.

CAB49 Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report for Quarter 2 2025-26

Considered a report advising Members on the progress in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan at the end of Quarter 2 2025-26.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6 and the associated appendix before concluding his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, be approved as follows:

progress made in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan set out at appendix 1 of the report be noted.

CAB50 Revenues and Benefits Collection Report - Quarter 2 - Part Confidential

Considered a report informing Cabinet of the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service as regards:

- the collection of Council Tax during quarter 2 of the 2025-2026 financial year;
- the collection of Business Rates during quarter 2 of the 2025-2026 financial year;
- the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit during quarter 2 of the 2025-2026 financial year and;
- seeking approval to the write off of the arrears listed in the confidential appendices.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 1 to 7 together with the associated confidential appendix.

Councillor Cooke concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio be approved as follows:

- (a) the information regarding collections be noted;
- (b) the arrears listed in the confidential appendices of the report be written off.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Leader of the Council wished all present the compliments of the season.

CHAIR