

24 November 2025

Dear Members

Council Meeting

I hereby give notice that a meeting of the Council will be held in the **Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford** on **Tuesday 2 December 2025 at 7.00pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.



Tim Clegg
Chief Executive

COUNCIL MEETING - 2 DECEMBER 2025

Mayor, Councillor Jenny Barron

AGENDA

- 1 Approval of the Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 9 September and 11 November 2025 as published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies for Absence
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Announcements (Paragraph 3.2(iii) of the Council Procedure Rules)
- 5 Public Question Time - Nil
- 6 Councillor Session - Nil
- 7 Notice of Motion - Nil
- 8 Recommendations Referred from Cabinet

Council is requested to consider the following recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 16 October 2025:

(i) Proposed Development of Rowley Park Sports Stadium Play Facilities - Minute No CAB34/25

"That:-

- (a) the allocation of existing off-site contributions under the terms of S106 agreements for the amount of £824,872, as laid out in paragraph 3.2 of the report for the enhancement of the above open space in Rowley Park be approved;
- (b) it be recommended to Council that the above sum be included within the capital programme and permission be granted to spend for the project, as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report;
- (c) progress so far be noted; that stage one public consultation had been completed, the master planning exercise had begun, and further public consultation was underway. In order to progress with the works through design, procurement, and delivery, officers were to proceed with the project as detailed within;
- (d) it be noted that further funding opportunities would be investigated, as detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the report".

(ii) Play Area Improvement Programme Update - Minute No CAB35/25

“That:-

- (a) the prioritisation of the top five play areas for improvement from the eleven previously identified to inform the improvement programme sequence be agreed;
- (b) the works to the play areas over a three-year period be undertaken;
- (c) it be recommended to Council that funding for the play area improvements as detailed below be included in the Council's capital programme and permission to spend be granted;
- (d) transfer of £224,000 from working balances to capital resources to fund the works be agreed”.

(iii) Parking Enforcement and Management Contract 2025-26 Award - Confidential - Minute No CAB37/25

“That:-

An increase of the parking services budget as detailed in confidential paragraph 3 of the report (plus indexation post 2025-26 financial year) to enable the award of the Parking Enforcement and Management Contract 2025-26 (following the outcome of the procurement process) be recommended to Council”.

The accompanying reports for the above recommendations can be viewed on the Council's website Cabinet - [Cabinet - 16 October 2025 - Agenda](#)

		Page Nos
9	Community Governance Review of Stafford Town	4 - 9
10	Any items referred from Scrutiny Committee(s)	-

Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford
ST16 3AQ

Agenda Item 9

Community Governance Review of Stafford Town

Committee:	Council
Date of Meeting:	2 December 2025
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Portfolio:	Resources Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the commencement of a Community Governance Review of Stafford town.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council:
- (a) Conduct a Community Governance Review of Stafford town within the terms of reference set out in paragraph 4.5.
 - (b) Authorise the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Stafford Town Working Group, to take all actions necessary to progress and complete the review.
 - (c) Approve a budget of £36,000, to be drawn from reserves for 2025/26, to fund consultation costs of the review

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 With current proposals to move away from two tier local government, and transfer all district functions to a larger authority, the Council recognises that Stafford Town is currently the only unparished area within the Borough and therefore the only area currently without a local council.
- 3.2 The Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act), to conduct community governance reviews in its area. This includes considering whether to create new parishes and parish councils, and what the electoral arrangements for any new council should be.

- 3.3 The report explains the procedure that must be followed in conducting a review and asks Council to consider whether a review should be commenced.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The power to review community governance arrangements in its area was devolved to the Council under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 4.2 A Community Governance Review can consider the creation of new parish councils as well as review arrangements for existing parishes and their respective councils.
- 4.3 The Council has the general power to conduct a review whenever it decides but can be required to carry out a review of an area if it is served with a valid petition signed by the prescribed number of electors (7.5% of electors where there are more than 2,500 electors in that area).
- 4.4 In light of the prospect of local government reorganisation for Staffordshire on the horizon, Group Leaders each nominated members of their group to sit on a working group to discuss the potential of a parish council for Stafford (the Stafford Town Council Working Group). The working group have already met and the group has recommended that a community governance review be undertaken.

The Review Process

- 4.5 The Council must initially set the terms of reference for any review. The Stafford Town Council Working Group recommend that Council adopt the following terms of reference for its review:

That the area to be reviewed should encompass the unparished area of Stafford Borough and the current parished area of Doxey; and that the review should consider what the boundaries of any new parish should be, what the name of the parish should be, whether any new parish should have a parish council and what electoral arrangements should be introduced for the parish council (including whether it should be warded and the number of councillors)

- 4.6 Once the terms of reference have been established, the Council must notify the County Council and must carry out consultation with all local government electors for the area under review, and any other person or body which appears to have an interest in the review. An initial consultation will seek views on the principle of creating a new parish for the town. If appropriate, further consultation may be required to assist in drawing up final recommendations.

- 4.7 The Council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. In deciding what recommendations to make, the council must take into account any other arrangements that have already been, or that could be, made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of that area.
- 4.8 As a significant amount of work will need to be conducted before final recommendations can be brought back to Council, it is recommended that Council delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance to carry out the review process. The Stafford Town Council Working Group should be updated and consulted on any key stages of the process and will assist the Head of Law and Governance in drafting recommendations to Council.
- 4.9 Final recommendations would usually be published within 12 months of the commencement of the review. Recommendations are then considered by Council along with the terms of a draft “establishment order” creating the new arrangements. A decision should be made before 1 December in the preceding year of elections so that electoral registers and data can be updated.
- 4.10 Parish council elections are held every four years with the next ordinary year of elections scheduled to take place in 2027. Any new arrangements would come into effect prior to the next ordinary day of elections. For example, the new council could become a legal entity on 1 April, with its first elections in the May.

Setting the Initial Precept

- 4.11 The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008, allow the Council to anticipate the precept for the initial year and include it in the establishment order before the end of March. If this was not done, then the new parish council would need to raise a precept before 1st October of its initial year and the Council would have to re-bill residents to collect the money.
- 4.12 The Parish Council will need initial funds to be able to pay for the employment of a Town Clerk, and any other necessary officers, as well as rental of any office space and essential operating systems such as IT and stationary. The amount of initial precept required will also depend on the amount of functions or liabilities that are transferred initially.

Transfer of Assets, Functions or Liabilities

- 4.13 Regulation 9 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) Regulations 2008 automatically transfers any land held by the Council for the purpose of allotments to the parish council.

- 4.14 Consideration could also be given to transferring other local public facilities to the parish council, but there is no imperative to do this at the outset and this is a matter that could be agreed with the parish council at any point going forward. Prior to transferring any assets the Council would need to carry out a thorough financial assessment to understand the implications of transferring assets, including ongoing maintenance costs, potential revenue generation and the impact on the Council's budgets and staff.
- 4.15 Any proposals to merge the existing Doxey Parish Council with a new Town Council would also involve considerations regarding the transfer of assets, liabilities and staff.

Ceremonial Functions

- 4.16 The original "Stafford Borough" was reorganized and combined with other local districts, to form Stafford Borough Council, in 1974. In the same year, Queen Elizabeth II granted a charter to Stafford Borough Council. Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972 therefore allows the Council to call itself a borough and to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Borough.
- 4.17 Section 246 of the LGA 1972, vests any privileges or rights in the original Stafford Borough in the inhabitants of that area.
- 4.18 Once established, section 245(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a parish council to resolve to adopt the style of "Town" Council, with the right for the Chair and Vice-Chair to adopt the styles of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.

Local Government Reorganisation

- 4.19 The Government has indicated that the use of Neighbourhood Area Committees will be its preferred method for local authorities to engage with local communities. It also states that areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. However, it does recognize the value that town and parish councils offer to their local communities and does not exclude the creation of new town or parish councils.
- 4.20 In the period immediately leading up to abolishment of the district council, there are likely to be restrictions on the transfer of any significant assets or functions from the Borough Council without consent and appropriate consultation with the Shadow Authority.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial

Costs of the CGR will be dependent upon the methods used to consult and engage with residents and stakeholders and whether any external technical support is required to assist with the process and ensure adequate capacity to complete the project.

A communications strategy has been drafted. It is considered that most of the consultation and communications involved can be supported by the Council Communications Team, with support from other Council departments and local Members. However, additional resource is considered likely to be necessary to cover costs such as survey software licences, printing of information materials, and temporary additional officer hours. These costs are estimated at £6,000. A letter drop to all households within Stafford would have an estimated cost of £30,000. In order to commence a public consultation in this financial year, Council would need to approve the use of reserves for this purpose.

Significant preparatory work would be needed to ensure the Town Council was ready to operate from day one of its existence. This would involve engagement of an experienced parish council practitioner to work with, and advise, councillors on matters such as formulation of governance documents, recruitment of staff, responsibilities for assets, accommodation and assessment of initial budgets. These costs are estimated around £40,000.

If consideration is given to transferring assets or liabilities to the Town Council, then further costs could arise due to the need to obtain professional advice, or consultancy support, regarding asset transfers including impacts on financial viability, staffing and contract implications.

If it is decided to move forward with engagement of a parish council practitioner and a review of potential asset transfers, costs will need to be included in the budget setting for 2026/27. This will be a budget pressure and consequently monies may need to be moved from reserves to fund this. The mechanism to fund this will be addressed in the budget setting report 2026/27 as no monies are anticipated as being spent on those elements of the project in financial year 2025/26.

5.2 Legal

As set out in the report.

5.3 Human Resources

Dependent on whether any functions are transferred. A transfer of any function could require the transfer of any relevant staff contracts under Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE).

5.4 Risk Management

If a review is not conducted prior to reorganisation, any subsequent review would fall within the responsibilities of the successor council and subject to its own plans and priorities.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

5.6 Health

None

5.7 Climate Change

None

6 Appendices

None

7 Previous Consideration

None

8 Background Papers

None

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Ward Interest:	Forebridge, Doxey and Castletown
Report Track:	Council 2 December 2025 (Only)