

14 July 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 22 July 2025 at 7.00pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.



Tim Clegg
Chief Executive

COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2025

Mayor, Councillor Jenny Barron

AGENDA

- 1 Approval of the Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 19 May 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
- 6 Councillor Session
 - (a) Councillor F Beatty has submitted the following question in accordance with Paragraph 12.3(a) of the Council Procedure Rules:-

“In the last two years, Conservatives have brought motions to this Council and asked questions of both the Cabinet Member and the Leader around the Local Plan on no less than six occasions, about:

 - 1 The importance of maintaining our residential boundaries in order to restrict housing growth to areas identified by the authority's long-term strategies. This is now dead in the water, with developers indiscriminately putting forward any land that they own.
 - 2 A timeline to bring forward the Local Plan. It has taken eighteen months so far to answer this, whilst the Local Plan was worked on but then shelved, at huge cost to the taxpayers of the Borough.
 - 3 We need to know where in the Borough, where in our villages, the administration is planning to sanction the preposterous and eye-watering annual house building regime imposed by central government. The Borough Council is working on a piecemeal basis with no adequate answers to the approaches from developers.

How does the Borough Council plan to stem the tide of opportunist developers?”
- 7 Notice of Motion - Nil
- 8 Annual Scrutiny Business Report

Page Nos

5 - 10

9 Recommendations Referred from Cabinet

Council is requested to consider the following recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 7 July 2025 in respect of the following matters:

- (i) Stafford Town Centre Regeneration Capital Programme Change - Confidential - Minute No CAB12/25

“That:-

- (a) it be recommended to Council that the capital programme be updated to include £332,000 in respect of the leasehold acquisition of the site as identified on the plan in appendix 1 of the confidential report, funded by the Council’s reserves;
- (b) a revenue budget be established from reserves to support the associated activities £88,000 as identified in paragraph 5.15 of the confidential report;
- (c) authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning (in consultation with the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning and the Council Section 151 Officer) to take all necessary steps to complete the acquisition set out in minutes (a) and (b) above;
- (d) authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning (in consultation with the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning, the Council Section 151 Officer and the Stafford Town Centre Transformation Programme Board) to progress the delivery plan of the acquired site. This will include appointment of external contractors, preparation and submission of regulatory approval applications, conducting relevant surveys and entering into any necessary license agreements to deliver the programme as a whole”.

- (ii) Land Acquisition - Stafford Station Gateway - Confidential - Minute No CAB13/25

“That:-

- (a) the update provided in relation to the LUF allocation be noted;
- (b) it be recommend to Council that the capital programme be amended to reflect an overall cost of £3.735m to complete the acquisition of the land identified within the red line boundary set out within confidential appendix 1 of the report, subject to the conditions as set out in paragraph 5.20;

- (c) authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning (in consultation with the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning and the Council Section 151 Officer) to take all necessary steps to complete the acquisition of the site;
- (d) a revenue budget of £90,000 be established to support the associated activities as identified in paragraph 5.21 of the report”.

The accompanying reports for the above recommendations can be viewed on the on the Council’s website [Cabinet - 7 July 2025 - Agenda](#)

10 Any items referred from Scrutiny Committee(s) -

Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford
ST16 3AQ

Agenda Item 8

Annual Scrutiny Business Report

Committee:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Portfolio:	Leader of the Council

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the business conducted by Scrutiny Committees over 2024/25.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council note the report and the work of Scrutiny over 2024/25.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To make Council aware of the scrutiny activity that has been undertaken over the last municipal year.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Scrutiny is an important function in every council operating executive arrangements. It is important that members understand the role of scrutiny and that Council is kept informed of the work undertaken by Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by each committee over the last municipal year. Full details of committee agendas and reports can be found on the Councils website.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Good scrutiny can enhance decision making across all Council priorities. In particular it supports Priority 4: Effective Council through providing good customer experience, value for money to local taxpayers and good governance across the Council.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council operates Executive arrangements through the election of a Leader and Cabinet. Every local authority operating Executive arrangements is required to establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee to act as a check and balance to the Executive.
- 5.2 Scrutiny Committees are cross party committees each reflecting the overall political balance of the Council. They are not decision making bodies, but allow elected members who do not sit on the Cabinet to scrutinise and influence Executive decision making. This can take the form of scrutinising decisions that Cabinet are planning to take (policy review and development), those it plans to implement (through use of call-in procedures) and those that have already been implemented (through performance review).
- 5.3 National guidance advises that scrutiny work should be based upon four principles. It should:
- Provide constructive “critical friend” challenge
 - Reflect the voices and concerns of the public
 - Be led independently by members who take responsibility for their role, and
 - Drive improvement in services and strategic decision making
- 5.4 The Council has established three scrutiny committees, each with its own terms of reference and areas of oversight. The three areas are Resources, Economic Development and Planning and Community Wellbeing. Details of each committee’s remit, and the procedure rules for the scrutiny function, are set out in the Council’s Constitution.

Performance Review

- 5.5 Each committee regularly monitors Council performance, within its area of scrutiny, through the review of quarterly performance information. Information reported includes progress against delivery plans and key performance indicators, and enables members to identify whether the Council is achieving its corporate plan objectives. Effective monitoring helps the Council to identify good and poor performance and to take action where needed to put things right.
- 5.6 Senior officers attend committee meetings to answer any questions, or respond to requests for clarification, and committees have the power to call senior officers and Cabinet members to account.

- 5.7 In addition to playing an important role in reviewing performance, each committee sets its own scrutiny work programme for the year. The following additional scrutiny work was carried out by each committee during 2024/25.

Resources

- 5.8 The Resources Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Fees and Charges, prior to consideration by full Council at its Budget meetings. The Committee was also consulted on the Council's new Corporate Plan, setting out its vision, priorities and objectives for the next two years, prior to its adoption by full Council in April 2025.
- 5.9 The Committee set up a task and finish group to conduct the annual review of the Council's constitution. A number of proposals were considered and the committee recommendations were adopted by full Council in April 2025.
- 5.10 The Committee reviewed arrangements for the introduction of the new Procurement Act, in particular focusing on the changes to the Council's internal rules governing the conduct of public procurement. It also reviewed the performance of corporate complaints handling over 2023/24, including monitoring details of any complaints referred to the Ombudsman over that period.

Economic Development and Planning

- 5.11 The EDSP committee has been questioning as to what success looks like for this committee and what difference it is making to the work of the Council. The essence of the scrutiny function of the EDPS committee has been to measure the effectiveness and success of the council's activities and spend, concentrating in part on the cost/effectiveness of refurbishment of the Market Square in Stafford, whether it has attracted more events and an increased income stream, and the ongoing role for the TCP and other parties in promotion of the town to attract businesses and visitors alike. A Task and Finish group was set up and reported back to committee. Ten recommendations were sent to cabinet for their attention and consideration and await a response. The committee reviewed the significant volume of regeneration work currently being undertaken and the council's plans to improve interconnectivity of the town, including the Stafford Gateway Project.
- 5.12 Officer presentations on the deployment of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Business Growth Programme, highlighted the measurable value these funds had made to a range of enterprises across the borough, and was commended.

- 5.13 The Committee reviewed the performance of the Development Management service and noted that an independent review of the service was to take place during 2024/25. The Committee scrutinised the Council's efforts to reduce the backlog of applications and public complaints and noted challenges in Planning Enforcement, notable around recruitment of permanent staff. The Committee asked for further data on the number of live Enforcement cases and information on current resource levels. The Committee requested that officers provide details of the outcome of the independent review and regular performance updates during 2025/26.
- 5.14 The committee received a presentation on the Council's Economic Strategy and reviewed the contents of the draft Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2024, which outlined the Council's section 106 spend.

Community Wellbeing

- 5.15 The statutory overview and scrutiny function for Staffordshire is undertaken by Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In accordance with good practice, and to ensure co-ordinated scrutiny of local health matters between councils, the Chair of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is also a member of the County Council committee and a member of the County Council scrutiny is appointed to the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. The committee has a standing agenda item where it receives reports from the County Scrutiny alerting it to any health matters being scrutinised.
- 5.16 In addition to monitoring local health matters, the committee held meetings to review matters including Disabled Facilities Grants, development of the Homelessness Strategy, progress of Health Inequalities Projects and a presentation on the structure of the Councils Waste Services team.
- 5.17 The committee also reviewed the work carried out by the Councils external contractors for Leisure Services and Waste Collection, through receipt of their annual reports, and received a presentation on the work of the Social Housing Provider "Housing Plus" in the Borough.
- 5.18 The committee received a report from the Community Wellbeing Partnership regarding work carried out in respect of reducing crime and disorder within the Borough over the year.
- 5.19 The committee set up a task and finish group to look at the topic of Food Waste. The group has met once so far and will be scheduling a further meeting in the new municipal year.
- 5.20 The committee received one called-in item, referred to it under the Councils scrutiny call-in arrangements. This related to the Cabinets decision to adopt a

policy for the process of administering the provision of grants to Voluntary Sector Organisations. The committee considered the policy and made a recommendation back to Cabinet.

Future Work Programme

- 5.21 Each committee sets its initial annual work programme at the first business meeting of the new municipal year, taking into account any outstanding matters from the previous year and any new priorities for the upcoming year. The work programme is reviewed as a standing item at every meeting.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

As set out in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

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Ward Interest: N/A

Report Track: Council 22 July 2025, Resources 24 June 2025,
Community Wellbeing 17 June 2025, Economic Planning
and Development 2 July 2025

Key Decision: N/A