

1 September 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 9 September 2025 at 7.00pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.



Tim Clegg
Chief Executive

COUNCIL MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

Mayor, Councillor Jenny Barron

AGENDA

- 1 Approval of the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22 July 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

- (a) Councillor R A James has submitted the following question in accordance with Paragraph 12.3(a) of the Council Procedure Rules:-

“On 14 July 2025, the Government launched a Green Paper on the Post Office and in so doing launched the first comprehensive review of the Post Office in over fifteen years.

Post Offices play a vital role in maintaining access to postal services, banking, many government departments for things like driving licenses and passports and for access to cash and bill payment services, especially for those relying on access in person. They play a particularly important role for the elderly and for many within our disadvantaged communities.

Post Offices are especially important in rural communities, where they may be the last bastion in that community with access to goods and these services. Many of these Post Offices rely on the income from providing these services to remain viable and without this would simply disappear, leaving a massive hole in our communities.

Given the consultation, which closes on 6 October 2025, will the Council make a submission to ensure that rural and vulnerable communities in our area continue to have reliable local access to Post Office services and that the critical role that Post Offices play is recognised by decision makers in London?”

- 7 Notice of Motion - Nil
- 8 Recommendations Referred from Cabinet

Council is requested to consider the following recommendation from the Cabinet meeting held on 24 July 2025 in respect of the following matter:

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26 - Minute No CAB19/25

“That:-

- (a) the success of the UKSPF 2022-25 programme and the impact the investments and interventions have had across the Borough be noted;
- (b) both the content of the Urgent Executive Decision in respect of the UKSPF 2025-6 programme and delegations required to commence delivery and the awarding to the Council of £1,528,851 of UKSPF and the associated £146,355 Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 be noted;
- (c) it be recommend to Council that the current Capital Programme be amended to accommodate the sum of £282,270 in respect of UKSPF and £146,355 in respect of REPF to ensure delivery of capital projects identified in the UKSPF programme 2025-6;
- (d) authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the 5 Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning to take any associated decisions as required to ensure that the UKSPF programme is delivered on time and on budget, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) producing and submitting s151 Officer certified financial and output returns and monitoring and evaluation information as required to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);
 - (ii) developing and commencing the commissioning of external projects to be funded by UKSPF and commence commissioning of Council led projects to be funded by UKSPF;
 - (iii) to work with the Head of Law and Governance to develop and produce any legal agreements required for external projects funded by UKSPF;
 - (iv) to continue the existing governance arrangements in respect of the UKSPF Board.”

The accompanying report for the above recommendations can be viewed on the Council’s website Cabinet - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-24-july-2025-agenda

Council is requested to consider the following recommendation from the Cabinet meetings held on 7 July 2025 and 28 August 2025 in respect of the following matter:

Taxi Licensing Policy and Licence Conditions 2025 - 2030 - Minute Nos CAB 10/25 and CAB22/25

“That:-

- (a) the revised 2025 Policy and Conditions be approved and published, subject to minute (d) below;
- (b) authorise the Head of Regulatory Services to make any amendments to the Policy required due to changes in legislation or government guidance and minor variations to the Policy in the interests of operational efficiency;
- (c) authorise the Head of Regulatory Services, subject to broad headline dates being agreed by Council, and any external factors beyond the Council's control, to determine the dates/timescales within the revised Policy relating to vehicle emissions, the phasing out of licensed vehicles powered only by internal combustion engines and the introduction of electric and hybrid vehicles into the licensed taxi and private hire fleet.
- (d)
 - (i) the date of 2030 for all vehicles to be either hybrid/electric or hydrogen fuelled remain, subject to review;
 - (ii) Hackney carriages can now be black as well as white;
 - (iii) Proprietors of wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages (WAVs) will, once the vehicle has been licensed by Stafford Borough Council for a period of eight consecutive years to that proprietor, be permitted to license a saloon vehicle as a Hackney Carriage if they wish to do so.

The accompanying report for the above recommendations can be viewed on the Council's website Cabinet - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cabinet-28-august-2025-agenda

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Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Riverside
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ST16 3AQ

Agenda Item 9

Appointment of Honorary Recorder

Committee:	Council
Date of Meeting:	9 September 2025
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Portfolio:	Leader of the Council

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of an Honorary Recorder for Stafford Borough.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council appoint His Honour Judge Avik Mukherjee as Honorary Recorder of the Borough of Stafford during his tenure as Resident Judge at Stafford Crown Court.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The appointment of an Honorary Recorder will recognise the position of the Borough as a centre for the administration of justice in the County.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Under section 54 of the Courts Act 1971, the Council of a Borough has the power to appoint a person to be honorary recorder of the borough. A person shall not be qualified to hold office as an honorary recorder of the Borough unless they are a Circuit Judge or Recorder.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Prosperous economy - The continuation of the Borough as the centre for the administration of justice supports the local economy by directly providing employment and supporting local legal and other related businesses.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Lord Chief justice's guidelines for the appointment of Honorary Recorders expressly reflect the fact that, since the implementation of the Courts Act 1971 and the establishment of the Crown Court for England and Wales, the councils of Borough of England and Wales have had the power to appoint a Circuit Judge as Honorary Recorder of the borough concerned. It has been the practice of councils to appoint their Resident Judge to be Honorary Recorder of the town or city during their tenure of the office, thereby continuing the important link between the town and its Criminal Court which had existed

throughout the history of the Courts of Quarter Sessions which were abolished by that act.

- 5.2 The previous Honorary Recorder of Stafford, Her Honour Judge Kristina Montgomery K.C. has recently come to the end of her term of office as Resident Judge at Stafford Crown Court. Her successor at Stafford is His Honour Judge Avik Mukherjee.
- 5.3 His Honour Judge Avik Mukherjee has indicated that he would be honoured to take up the appointment if the Council was minded to continue this tradition.
- 5.4 The office of Honorary Recorder is purely an honorary role and does not entail the post-holder in any specific duties, although the Recorder usually attends and is involved with Civic ceremonial events.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Nil

6.2 Legal

As set out in the report

6.3 Human Resources

Nil

6.4 Risk Management

Nil

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Nil

6.6 Health

Nil

6.7 Climate Change

Nil

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Ian Curran
Telephone Number: 01785 619220
Ward Interest: All
Report Track: Council 9 September 2025 (Only)
Key Decision: N/A

Agenda Item 10

Climate Action Net Zero Target Date

Committee:	Council
Date of Meeting:	9 September 2025
Report of:	Head of Regulatory Services
Portfolio:	Climate Action and Nature Recovery

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report addresses the motion proposed by Councillors D P Rouxel and E L Carter on the Council's Net Zero target date:

'Net Zero 2035

In 2019, Stafford Borough Council declared a climate emergency and agreed a target date of 2040 to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

Good progress has been made towards achieving this goal. However, it is clear that global warming is increasing at a faster pace than anticipated with weather-related disasters occurring with greater frequency.

The Council's new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan sets out the structure and mechanisms needed to take forward our approach to carbon reduction.

Given the growing threat posed by global warming we are determined to be more ambitious in reducing our carbon footprint and therefore agree to adopt a target of 2035 for achieving net zero carbon emissions.'

- 1.2 This report looks to explore the proposal and make recommendations to Council following a review of the current position.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the change of date for the council's net zero target from 2040 to 2035. This is an aspirational target date, which reflects the ambition of the council. This target date relates solely to Stafford Borough Council as an organisation and to achieve net zero operations.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The council has already identified the reduction of the Council's Carbon Footprint and working towards Net Zero as a corporate priority within its Corporate Plan.
- 2.3 By bringing the target date forward, the council re-emphasises the importance of this priority and signals its aspirations to work towards achieving the target as soon as possible.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Stafford Borough Council remains committed to climate action, working with residents, businesses, and local stakeholders to create a sustainable and resilient future.
- 3.2 The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040. Following the recent approval of the Climate Change Strategy 2025-30, and the Council motion, this has been reviewed, and a new target date of 2035 is proposed.
- 3.3 Whilst there is no Stafford Borough Council costed plan at this stage to achieve the new aspirational 2035 date, there is:
- a Climate Action Plan for 2025/6 which provides a clear roadmap for reducing emissions and integrating sustainability into council operations; and
 - a significant Climate Change Delivery Programme is currently in development, which will seek to accelerate the council's delivery, following the adoption of its new Climate Change Strategy
- 3.4 As this is an area of fast-moving change, the Action Plan will be reviewed annually and new targets put in place to enable the council to focus on the most meaningful workstreams.
- 3.5 The greatest impact on our carbon footprint and steps towards net zero will be made by focusing on the 'Climate Change Pillars' identified in the 2025-2030 Climate Change Strategy. These being:

Corporate Assets

Transport

Community Engagement

Business Engagement

Sustainability Education

The council will make best progress towards operational net zero by focusing on the first two pillars- corporate assets and transport of the Strategy.

- 3.6 As noted, the aspirational 2035 net zero target date, relates directly to Stafford Borough Council, although local businesses, communities and schools will be encouraged to work with the council to mitigate and adapt for the impact of Climate Change.
- 3.7 There is no request for additional revenue budget funding to support this, and the council will actively pursue all available external funding and investment to assist delivery and acceleration of the council towards net zero. In addition, and as part of any future business cases made for investment and delivery, the council will also consider its own approach from invest to earn / invest to save principle.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Climate Change issues are a fundamental consideration in the way the council works - the Climate Change Strategy supports the council's aspirations towards net zero and bringing forward the date further supports the council's strategic intent.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan 2025-2028 states that Climate Action and Green Recovery are one of the top four priorities for the council. The Strategy demonstrates the clear commitment to Climate Change mitigation and the SBC Climate Action Plan demonstrates the clear incremental path to reduce our carbon emissions, whilst delivering services for residents. Reducing the target date for us to work towards the net zero target, again, highlights the council's aspiration to work towards net zero carbon emissions and reach it as soon as possible.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 As previously detailed, Climate Action is a significant priority for the council. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040.
- 5.2 Climate change refers to long-term alterations in temperature, precipitation patterns, and other climate variables caused by natural processes and human activities, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). These changes impact weather patterns, sea levels, and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.
- 5.3 Compared to our climate in 1990, by 2070 the Met Office projects that:
- (a) Winters will be between 1 and 4.5°C warmer

- (b) Winters will be up to 30% wetter
- (c) Summers will be between 1 and 6°C warmer
- (d) Summers will be to 60% drier, depending on the region
- (e) And hot summer days will be between 4 and 7°C warmer

5.4 It is important that the council looks to tackle Climate Action, as the changing climate is having a damaging impact on people, ecosystems and infrastructure. As can be seen below, there is also a negative financial impact of Climate Change throughout the UK.

- (a) In the most recent heatwaves of 2022, there was a record number of health related excess deaths. These occurred mostly among the elderly and those with existing ill-health. Heat exposure is estimated to cost the UK economy £260-£300 million per year.
- (b) Infrastructure and communities: infrastructure impacts from the July 2022 heatwave were extensive, with flights suspended and disruption to rail and road networks, we are likely to see similar in 2025 with a number of heat waves already documented this year. The 2022 heatwave caused power cuts due to conductors sagging and transformers overheating. Increased electricity demand presented challenges for system security and operability. There were large spikes in 999 calls and fire services declared major incidents due to multiple wildfires.
- (c) Agriculture and ecosystems: the wettest 18-month period on record (from October 2022 to March 2024) resulted in thousands of acres of farmland being submerged for extended periods, leading to the loss of crops and animals. This followed a period of significant drought in 2022, where the combination of the lack of rainfall with the summer heat meant soils were very dry. This stressed ecosystems and agriculture and led to record numbers of large wildfires.

(Taken from 'The Seventh Carbon Budget'- Climate Change Committee 2025)

5.5 The council has an important part to play in addressing the impact its operations have on carbon emissions in the Borough, it must work to manage this alongside other actions to mitigate and adapt for the impact of Climate Change. The council needs to help to protect the most vulnerable in our society who are most at risk from Climate Change harm.

- 5.6 The 2025-2030 Climate Change Strategy looks to develop a pragmatic approach to Stafford Borough Council's operational impact on the environment, supported by Action Plans, that demonstrate exactly what activities are taking place to contribute to the reduction of our operational carbon emissions.
- 5.7 Having set out the new strategy, a Council motion has been proposed to revise the Council's Net Zero target date. A number of options have been considered:
- Option 1** is to leave the date as is - this has been considered, and discounted, as the change in date will emphasise the Council's aspirations to achieve the target as soon as possible.
- Option 2** is to bring forward the target date the Council has already committed to working towards net zero, as one of the council's key priorities in the Corporate Plan council Plan 2025 to 2028. A reduced target date would signal the Council's aspirations to achieve this target as soon as possible and to place it high on its list of priorities.
- 5.8 A number of other Councils in Staffordshire have already reduced their net zero target date - this follows a greater understanding of the challenges brought about by Climate Change and the need to mitigate and adapt to its impact. Changing the date, is a pragmatic step. (Lichfield District Council 2035, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council 2030, others remain at 2040.)
- 5.9 The new Strategy, Action Plan and Climate Action Board will allow us to track, review and ensure that we are moving towards our net zero targets in a meaningful way. In doing this, we hope to lead by example and support and encourage other organisations in the locality to do the same.
- 5.10 This will be achieved by focusing on a number of key areas within our own service delivery which will be the most impactful. This will deliver changes to the way that we work, facilitating the shift towards carbon neutrality, encouraging others in the Borough to do the same.
- 5.11 In addition, the strategy sets a clear intent to commit to work with businesses and communities in the Borough to engage, educate and facilitate them to deliver their own steps towards carbon neutrality.
- 5.12 The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually, performance against this will be tracked by the Climate Action Board - Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Green Recovery which will meet on a quarterly basis.

- 5.13 The Climate Change Strategy supported by this year's Action Plan takes incremental steps within our agreed budget envelope to move towards the council's net zero ambitions. The Climate Change Action Plan focuses on the ongoing workstreams that the council will utilise to drive down our carbon emissions.

Additional Funding

- 5.14 The Council has recently secured funding via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support the development of decarbonisation plans across both councils. Stage 1 will review the assets across both councils and their suitability towards decarbonisation, a priority list will be created to show those where significant savings can be made by reducing energy consumption. Stage 2 will delve deeper into the sites and present the case for investment in energy efficiency measures and what the expected return would be.
- 5.15 There is also a programme of UKSPF activities in Stafford with the specific aim to address the pillars within the strategy for example, business support and engagement with communities. A series of UKSPF grant schemes are currently in place to support businesses with their transition to reducing energy costs.
- 5.16 The Business Energy Advice Service is providing free energy assessments and grant funding to eligible businesses across both Stafford and Cannock which will all deliver against the business engagement element of the strategy.
- 5.17 There is the potential to explore joint ventures with other major local property owners, electricity generators and electricity suppliers for investment in local renewable energy generation infrastructure.
- 5.18 Through the ongoing development of the Climate Change Delivery Programme and Action Plans, the council will seek to quantify both the cost and impact of delivery. The council will actively bid and source external funding to support its delivery and will continue to work with Government and other key stakeholders to maximise both financial and outcome impact.
- 5.19 As part of the ongoing development of the Climate Delivery Action Plan(s), the council has an aspiration to undertake the following (please note, this is not an exhaustive list):
- a) Build an integrated carbon monitoring platform with centralised and automated data collection systems
 - b) Green Energy Procurement / LED Lightening / Solar PV / Building Management Systems / Boiler De-commissioning / ICT carbon reduction
 - c) Replacement Fleet and Machinery and installation of EV charging infrastructure

- d) Sustainable Living Campaigns, Energy Advice and Assistance Partnerships
- e) Business Growth Programmes, including Green Solutions and Rural England Prosperity Fund
- f) Schools Climate Education Programme / Carbon Literacy Training

Staffing

- 5.20 Two Climate Change posts have been advertised, and interviews will take place shortly for a Principal Climate Change Officer and Climate Action Officer - this will allow greater capacity and focus to enhance and accelerate the council's ability to move forward with this agenda, with a particular focus on identifying external funding opportunities via grants and/or working with other partners to move towards net zero.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

From a financial perspective achieving net zero will be challenging as the council does not have significant resources available to fund this and will therefore be dependent on applications for external grant funding. A priority plan of viability will be determined as part of the decarbonisation plans to determine the order of grant funding applications. The reduction in the timeline will therefore reduce the amount of time to access, fund and implement the programme of works by five years.

It is envisaged that once any works to council assets are complete, this would result in a reduction in energy costs on the council's corporate assets.

Any proposed projects will have reports presented to members for approval as per the usual process.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

Failure to move forward towards net zero in a timely way would mean the council and the wider Borough of Stafford could face a number of risks across environmental, economic, legal, and social areas, some of this is already mitigated by adopting a robust Climate Change Strategy and the associated ongoing development of Delivery.

Revising the net zero date does carry risk. The council may fail to meet this date and action will require careful management due to the cost of taking climate action and officer capacity.

The budget to deliver any climate action is limited- this will be mitigated by seeking additional external funding to make improvements to the way we operate. Action will not progress without appropriate funding in place.

There is a risk that a greater focus on climate action could put pressure on already stretched services but the new officers being appointed will provide support and assistance to operational service areas to mitigate this.

All climate action work will be scrutinised by the Climate Action Board; this additional oversight will ensure these risks are considered and mitigation is in place.

6.5 Health

Failing to address Climate Change is a global issue and is likely to have an impact on health and particularly the impact on health of those most vulnerable in our society. The council has a duty to reduce and track its carbon emissions to reduce future health impacts.

6.6 Climate Change

Climate Change issues are a fundamental consideration in the way the council works and the council's aspirations in this field.

7 Appendices

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030

Contact Officer: Gabrielle Whitehouse
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Ward Interest: All
Report Track: Council 9 September 2025 (Only)
Key Decision: Yes