

Councillor Jenny Barron (Mayor)

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

Councillors:

Aspin K M	McNaughton A R
Beatty F E	Nixon A
Carter E L	Nixon J A
Cooke R P	Nixon L
Cooper A G	Pardesi G P K
Cross B M	Pearce A N
Dodson M G	Pert J M
Fordham I D	Phillips M
Hobbs A D	Powell J S
Hood J	Read J P
James R A	Rose J T
Jones E G R	Rouxel D P
Jones P W	Sandiford A J
Kenney R	Spencer S N
Leason P A	Thorley J
Loughran A M	Winnington M J
McKeown B	

Officers in attendance:-

T Clegg	-	Chief Executive
I Curran	-	Head of Law and Governance
G Whitehouse	-	Head of Regulatory Services
J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer

C20 Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 July 2025 were agreed as a true and correct record.

C21 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A P Edgeller, P C Edgeller, A T A Godfrey, D M McNaughton and A F Reid.

C22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor R A James declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item No 6(a) as his partner owned a local post office.

Councillor M J Winnington declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item No 8(i), noting he would leave the room during consideration of said item.

C23 Announcements

The Mayor detailed the following forthcoming events for Members to note:-

- Battle of Britain Commemoration and Freedom Parade by Tactical Supply Wing (RAF) on Sunday 14 September 2025;
- Ladies Luncheon in support of the Mayor's 2025/26 charity appeal on Wednesday 15 October 2025.

C24 Presentation of Petition

Councillor J M Pert submitted a petition on behalf of the residents of Eccleshall seeking:-

- that Eccleshall take only its fair share of increased housing numbers in the Borough;
- for Policy makers to identify ways to make sure developments take place in a strategic way; and
- for the Council to put pressure on Government to take back control of the planning system.

The petition was received and would be considered at a future meeting of Cabinet.

C25 Councillor Session

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?"

Councillor J Hood, responded as follows:

"Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of the Council. I am happy to work with Councillor James who is very qualified to address this matter being an assistant Postmaster to form a submission to the consultation which ends on 6 October 2025. All in this chamber must surely agree that said services must be retained".

Having declared a prejudicial interest in the following item, Councillor M J Winnington left the Council Chamber.

C26 Recommendations Referred from Cabinet

- (i) Council was requested to consider the 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."

Councillor R Kenney proposed and Councillor J M Pert seconded that the recommendations of Cabinet be approved.

On being put to the vote the matter was declared to be unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:- that the recommendations of Cabinet held on 24 July 2025, as detailed above, be approved.

Councillor F Beatty requested that thanks to Officers for their efforts in this area of work be placed on record.

Councillor M J Winnington rejoined the meeting at this point.

- (ii) Council was requested to consider the 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".

Councillor I D Fordham proposed and Councillor A N Pearce seconded that the recommendations of Cabinet be approved.

On being put to the vote the matter was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the recommendations of Cabinet held on 7 July 2025 and 28 August 2025, as detailed above, be approved.

C27 Appointment of Honorary Recorder

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance.

Councillor R Kenney introduced the report and noted the recommendation as set out in paragraph 2 before concluding his comments by moving that said recommendation be approved.

The proposal to approve the recommendation was seconded by Councillor P A Leason.

On being put to the vote the matter was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that His Honour Judge Avik Mukherjee be appointed as Honorary Recorder of the Borough of Stafford during his tenure as Resident Judge at Stafford Crown Court.

Members requested that thanks to the outgoing Honorary Recorder Judge Kristina Montgomery KC be placed on record.

C28 Climate Action Net Zero Target Date

Considered the report of the Head of Regulatory Services.

Councillor A N Pearce introduced the report noting the content of paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 before highlighting the recommendation as set out in paragraph 2 and concluded his comments by moving that said recommendation be approved.

The proposal to approve the recommendation was seconded by Councillor I D Fordham.

Councillor J M Pert raised concern regarding the absence of a fully costed plan to address the aims of the report, concerns echoed by Councillor M J Winnington.

During the ensuing discussion, the following amendment was proposed by Councillor R A James and seconded by Councillor M J Winnington:-

“That the recommendation be amended to read:-

That Council approve the change of date for the Council’s net zero target from 2040 to 2035 *once there is a fully funded plan in place*. This is an aspirational date...”

Members duly discussed the proposed amendment, which on being put to the vote was declared to have fallen.

In accordance with paragraph 17.4(a) of the Council Procedure Rules a recorded vote was taken; voting on the substantive motion was as follows:-

For	Against	Abstain
E L Carter	(Nil)	K M Aspin
R P Cooke		J A Barron
I D Fordham		F Beatty
A D Hobbs		A G Cooper
J Hood		B M Cross
F D J James		M G Dodson
R Kenney		R A James
P A Leason		E G R Jones
A M Loughran		P W Jones
B McKeown		L Nixon
A R McNaughton		J M Pert
A Nixon		M Phillips
J A Nixon		M J Winnington
G P K Pardesi		
A N Pearce		
J S Powell		
J P Read		
J T Rose		
D P Rouxel		
A J Sandiford		
S N Spencer		
J Thorley		

RESOLVED:- that the change of date for the Council's net zero target from 2040 to 2035 be approved (this was an aspirational target date, which reflected the ambition of the Council. The target date related solely to Stafford Borough Council as an organisation and to achieve net zero operations).

MAYOR