Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 12 March 2026** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

Head of Law and Governance

CABINET - 12 MARCH 2026

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

AGENDA

1   Minutes of 17 February 2026 as circulated and published on 18 February 2026

2   Apologies

3   Councillors' Question Time (if any)

4   Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

                        **Report contains information relating to an individual, which
                        is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and
                        information relating to the financial or business affairs of
                        any particular person (including the Council).**

Membership

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

A T A Godfrey	-	Leader
R Kenney	-	Deputy Leader (Town Centres Regeneration Portfolio)
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

Agenda Item 4(a)i

Permission to Spend - Community Safety Funding 2026/27

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Head of Wellbeing

Portfolio: Community Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek approval to spend the allocated Community Safety Funding, for the purposes of improving community safety and reducing crime and disorder in the borough.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to accept, and approve, the spend of £10,000 Community Safety Funding allocated to the Council by the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue and Crime, hereafter referred to as the Staffordshire Commissioner.

2.2 Cabinet is asked to accept, and approve, bids from the Council into the £100,000 pan-Staffordshire Community Safety Fund, which shall be launched by the Staffordshire Commissioner.

2.3 That authority to enter into any necessary agreements to enable the Council to spend the funding be delegated to the Head of Wellbeing, in consultation with the Community Wellbeing Partnership.

Reasons for Recommendations

2.4 The £10,000 funding allocated to the Council from the Staffordshire Commissioner, and any successful bids, will be spent on implementing community safety initiatives across the borough and will assist the Community Safety Partnership in its statutory duty to reduce crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending.

2.5 Some flexibility will be required over the period of the funding in order to be able to respond to different pressures and emerging themes and trends as they arise. For this reason, it is requested that Cabinet delegates authority for the detail of the spend to be approved by the Head of Service in consultation with the Community Wellbeing Partnership.

3   Key Issues

3.1   All Community Safety Partnerships across Staffordshire receive funding from the Staffordshire Commissioner annually to support their work tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

Communities and Wellbeing

o   A safe and secure place to live for local people

o   A safe and cohesive Borough

5   Report Detail

5.1   The Staffordshire Commissioner allocates annual funding to all Community Safety Partnerships across Staffordshire to assist with the development and commissioning of projects to address local community safety issues.

5.2   The purpose of the funding is to give Community Safety Partnerships control and flexibility when allocating funding in their local area.

5.3   The amount of Community Safety Funding received for 2026/27 is £10,000, with the opportunity to bid into a £100,000 pan-Staffordshire fund.

5.4   The allocation of this funding is agreed at the Community Wellbeing Partnership, before the proposals are ratified by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office.

5.5   Funding will be aligned to the local community safety priorities identified within the Community Safety Strategic Assessment, and those identified by the Community Wellbeing Partnership

5.6   Funding is for a one-year period, from 1 April 2026 - 31 March 2027.

5.7   An evaluation of spend will be submitted to the Community Wellbeing Partnership, the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Staffordshire Commissioner.

6   Implications

6.1   Financial

Expected income, no implications.

6.2   Legal

Upon receipt of instructions to Legal Services, consideration will need to be given to the capacity within the team for the drafting and provision of advice

regarding legal agreements, and whether the work will need to be outsourced or carried out in-house.

Whilst it is likely that the majority of contracts required for the delivery of funded projects shall be grant agreements, which are not subject to the Council's Procurement Regulations, Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or to the Procurement Act 2023, any contract for goods, services and/or works required for the delivery of a project shall be procured in accordance with the Procurement Regulations and the requisite procurement legislation.

6.3   Human Resources

None

6.4   Risk Management

None

6.5   Equalities and Diversity

None.

6.6   Health

The impact of ASB and criminality on individuals and communities is well documented, and is known to impact upon both physical and mental health. By seeking to address these issues via appropriate allocation of grant funding, it is hoped that these negative effects shall be minimised.

6.7   Climate Change

None

7   Appendices

None

8   Previous Consideration

None

9   Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Oliver Greatbatch

Telephone Number: 01543 464477

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet 12 March 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: Yes

Agenda Item 4(c)i

Committee Cycle 2026/27

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Portfolio: Resources Portfolio

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1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To consider the proposed Committee Cycle for 2026/27.

2   Recommendations

2.1   That the Committee Cycle for 2026/27 be approved.

   Reasons for Recommendations

2.2   The Committee Cycle for 2026/27 has been produced on the basis of the current committee structure, and a similar basis to 2025/26. It also provides for the process leading to the 2027/28 budget.

3   Key Issues

3.1   Once again, timing of the Scrutiny Committees has been arranged in order to coincide with the production of performance and budgetary information. This enables the Scrutiny Committees to look at more current information with a view to taking more timely action, where necessary.

3.2   The Planning Committee has been changed from three weekly to four weekly, in line with Cannock Chase District Council, and in an attempt to cancel fewer meetings of the committee.

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   The Committee Cycle will assist the Council to support all Corporate Priorities.

5   Report Detail

5.1   The proposed Committee Cycle for 2026/27 is attached as an **APPENDIX.**

6   Implications

6.1   Financial

None

6.2   Legal

None

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

Appendix: Yearly Committee Cycle 2026-2027

8   Previous Consideration

None

9   Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Jackie Allen

Telephone Number: 01785 619552

Ward Interest: Nil

Report Track: Cabinet 12 March 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: No

Yearly Committee Cycle

2026 - 2027

Contents

Please Note: All meetings start at 6.30pm unless otherwise indicated

2026

May

| Friday | 1 | |
| Saturday | 2 | |

Sunday	3	
Monday	4	**May Day**
Tuesday	5	
Wednesday	6	
Thursday	7	
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	

Sunday	10	
Monday	11	
Tuesday	12	
Wednesday	13	Planning Committee
Thursday	14	
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	Council (Mayor Making) 10.30am

Sunday	17	
Monday	18	Council (Appointments) 7pm
Tuesday	19	
Wednesday	20	
Thursday	21	Cabinet
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	

Sunday	24	
Monday	25	**Spring Bank Holiday**
Tuesday	26	
Wednesday	27	
Thursday	28	
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	

| Sunday | 31 | |

June

Monday	1	
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	

Thursday	4	
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	

Sunday	7	
Monday	8	
Tuesday	9	
Wednesday	10	Planning Committee
Thursday	11	
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	

Sunday	14	
Monday	15	
Tuesday	16	Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	17	
Thursday	18	Cabinet
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	

Sunday	21	
Monday	22	
Tuesday	23	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	24	
Thursday	25	Audit and Accounts
Friday	26	
Saturday	27	

Sunday	28	
Monday	29	
Tuesday	30	

July

Wednesday	1	
Thursday	2	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee
Friday	3	
Saturday	4	

Sunday	5	
Monday	6	
Tuesday	7	
Wednesday	8	Planning Committee
Thursday	9	
Friday	10	
Saturday	11	

Sunday	12	
Monday	13	
Tuesday	14	Cabinet

Updated 04/02/2026

Wednesday	15	
Thursday	16	
Friday	17	
Saturday	18	

Sunday	19	
Monday	20	
Tuesday	21	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	22	
Thursday	23	
Friday	24	
Saturday	25	

Sunday	26	
Monday	27	
Tuesday	28	
Wednesday	29	
Thursday	30	
Friday	31	

August

Saturday	1	

Sunday	2	
Monday	3	
Tuesday	4	
Wednesday	5	Planning Committee
Thursday	6	
Friday	7	
Saturday	8	

Sunday	9	
Monday	10	
Tuesday	11	Cabinet
Wednesday	12	
Thursday	13	
Friday	14	
Saturday	15	

Sunday	16	
Monday	17	
Tuesday	18	
Wednesday	19	
Thursday	20	
Friday	21	
Saturday	22	

Sunday	23	
Monday	24	

Tuesday	25	
Wednesday	26	
Thursday	27	
Friday	28	
Saturday	29	

Sunday	30	
Monday	31	**Bank Holiday**

September

Tuesday	1	
Wednesday	2	Planning Committee
Thursday	3	
Friday	4	
Saturday	5	

Sunday	6	
Monday	7	
Tuesday	8	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	9	
Thursday	10	
Friday	11	
Saturday	12	

Sunday	13	
Monday	14	
Tuesday	15	
Wednesday	16	
Thursday	17	Cabinet
Friday	18	
Saturday	19	

Sunday	20	
Monday	21	
Tuesday	22	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	23	Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Thursday	24	
Friday	25	
Saturday	26	

Sunday	27	
Monday	28	
Tuesday	29	Audit and Accounts Committee
Wednesday	30	Planning Committee

October

Thursday	1	
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	

Sunday	4	
Monday	5	
Tuesday	6	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	7	
Thursday	8	
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	

Sunday	11	
Monday	12	
Tuesday	13	
Wednesday	14	
Thursday	15	Cabinet
Friday	16	
Saturday	17	

Sunday	18	
Monday	19	
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	
Thursday	22	
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	

Sunday	25	
Monday	26	
Tuesday	27	
Wednesday	28	Planning Committee
Thursday	29	
Friday	30	
Saturday	31	

November

Sunday	1	
Monday	2	
Tuesday	3	
Wednesday	4	
Thursday	5	
Friday	6	
Saturday	7	

Updated 04/02/2026

Sunday	8	Remembrance Day Service and Parade
Monday	9	
Tuesday	10	
Wednesday	11	
Thursday	12	Cabinet
Friday	13	
Saturday	14	

Sunday	15	
Monday	16	
Tuesday	17	
Wednesday	18	
Thursday	19	
Friday	20	
Saturday	21	

Sunday	22	
Monday	23	
Tuesday	24	
Wednesday	25	Planning Committee
Thursday	26	
Friday	27	
Saturday	28	

Sunday	29	
Monday	30	

December

Tuesday	1	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	2	
Thursday	3	Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Friday	4	
Saturday	5	

Sunday	6	
Monday	7	
Tuesday	8	Audit and Accounts Committee
Wednesday	9	
Thursday	10	Cabinet
Friday	11	
Saturday	12	

Sunday	13	
Monday	14	
Tuesday	15	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	16	
Thursday	17	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee
Friday	18	
Saturday	19	

Sunday	20	Borough Carol Service
Monday	21	
Tuesday	22	
Wednesday	23	
Thursday	24	
Friday	25	**Christmas Day**
Saturday	26	**Boxing Day**

Sunday	27	
Monday	28	
Tuesday	29	
Wednesday	30	
Thursday	31	

2027

January

Friday	1	**New Year's Day**
Saturday	2	

Sunday	3	
Monday	4	
Tuesday	5	
Wednesday	6	Planning Committee
Thursday	7	
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	

Sunday	10	
Monday	11	
Tuesday	12	Cabinet Briefing (Budget)
Wednesday	13	
Thursday	14	
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	

Sunday	17	
Monday	18	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday	19	
Wednesday	20	
Thursday	21	Cabinet (Budget)
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	

Sunday	24	
Monday	25	
Tuesday	26	
Wednesday	27	

Updated 04/02/2026

Thursday	28	
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	
Sunday	31	

February

Monday	1	
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	Planning Committee
Thursday	4	Audit and Accounts Committee
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	

Sunday	7	
Monday	8	
Tuesday	9	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	10	
Thursday	11	
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	

Sunday	14	
Monday	15	
Tuesday	16	Cabinet (Provisional)
Wednesday	17	
Thursday	18	
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	

Sunday	21	
Monday	22	
Tuesday	23	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	24	
Thursday	25	
Friday	26	
Saturday	27	

Sunday	28	

March

Monday	1	
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	Planning Committee
Thursday	4	
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	

Updated 04/02/2026

Sunday	7	
Monday	8	
Tuesday	9	
Wednesday	10	
Thursday	11	
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	

Sunday	14	
Monday	15	
Tuesday	16	Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	17	Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Thursday	18	Cabinet
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	

Sunday	21	
Monday	22	
Tuesday	23	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday	24	Audit and Accounts Committee
Thursday	25	
Friday	26	**Good Friday**
Saturday	27	

Sunday	28	
Monday	29	**Easter Monday**
Tuesday	30	
Wednesday	31	Planning Committee

April

Thursday	1	
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	

Sunday	4	
Monday	5	
Tuesday	6	
Wednesday	7	
Thursday	8	
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	

Sunday	11	
Monday	12	
Tuesday	13	Council 7.00pm
Wednesday	14	
Thursday	15	Cabinet
Friday	16	

Saturday	17	

Sunday	18	
Monday	19	
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	
Thursday	22	
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	

Sunday	25	
Monday	26	
Tuesday	27	
Wednesday	28	Planning Committee
Thursday	29	
Friday	30	

May

Saturday	1	

Sunday	2	
Monday	3	**May Day**
Tuesday	4	
Wednesday	5	
Thursday	6	Elections
Friday	7	
Saturday	8	

Sunday	9	
Monday	10	
Tuesday	11	
Wednesday	12	
Thursday	13	
Friday	14	
Saturday	15	Council (Mayor Making) 10.30am

Sunday	16	
Monday	17	Council (Appointments) 7.00pm
Tuesday	18	
Wednesday	19	
Thursday	20	Cabinet
Friday	21	
Saturday	22	

Sunday	23	
Monday	24	
Tuesday	25	
Wednesday	26	Planning Committee
Thursday	27	

Friday	28	
Saturday	29	

Sunday	30	
Monday	31	**Spring Bank Holiday**

NOTE: School Holidays 2026-2027

- Monday 4 May 2026 (May Day)
- Monday 25 May - Friday 29 May 2026 (Half Term)
- Tuesday 21 July to Monday 31 August 2026 (Summer Holiday)
- Tuesday 1 September 2026 (Inset Day)
- Monday 26 October - Friday 30 October 2026 (Half Term)
- Monday 21 December 2026 - Friday 1 January 2027 (Christmas Holiday)
- Monday 15 February - Friday 19 February 2027 (Half Term)
- Monday 29 March - Friday 9 April 2027 (Easter Holiday)
- Monday 3 May 2027 (May Day)
- Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June 2027 (Half Term)

Quarter 3 Performance Report for 2025-26

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Head of Business Support and Assurance

Portfolio: Resources Portfolio

1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To advise Members on the progress in delivering the Council's priorities and performance at the end of the quarter 3 for 2025-26.

2   Recommendations

2.1   To note the progress made during quarter 3 in the delivery of the Council's priorities and performance as set out in **APPENDICES 1 AND 2**.

Reasons for Recommendations

2.2   The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

3   Key Issues

3.1   The Corporate Business Plan 2025-28 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. The plan is supported by Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) which set out the key projects and actions for delivery each year.

3.2   Overall, 58% of the key actions scheduled for quarter 3 have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in **APPENDICES 1A TO 1D**.

3.3   With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 78% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found at 5.6 and in **APPENDIX 2**.

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   The indicators and actions contribute individually to all of the Council's priorities.

5   Report Detail

5.1   The Corporate Business Plan 2025-28 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. There are four overarching priorities which focus on:

- the economy of the Borough;

- the heath and wellbeing of residents;

- climate change and our environment; and

- being an effective Council.

5.2   The priorities are supported by a number of objectives that set out what the Council is aiming to achieve, how we will deliver these and how we will measure our performance.

Priority Delivery Plans

5.3   The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in **APPENDICES 1A TO 1D** to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council's performance reporting framework.

5.4   A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the actions set out in the Delivery Plans is given in **APPENDICES 1A TO 1D**. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of progress in delivery of key projects/actions for Quarter 3 2025-26

Performance Rating	Action completed	Work on Target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Actions due to end of Quarter 3	Actions not yet due	Total Number of Actions
Priority	★	✔	🔺	❌		N/A	
Prosperous Economy	5		5			9	**19**
Communities and Wellbeing	1	1	5			1	**8**
Climate Change and Environment	7	2	1			7	**17**
Effective Council	1	2		3		1	**7**
Total	**14**	**5**	**11**	**3**		**18**	**51**

5.5 At the end of quarter 3, of the 33 projects/actions due for delivery in this period:

- 19 (58%) have been completed or are on target; and
- 14 (42%) are behind target.

Quarter 3 has seen an increase in slippage (29%) and this is largely due to capacity issues / increases in caseloads.

Key Performance Indicators

5.6 In addition to the Priority Delivery Plans, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in **APPENDIX 2**. In summary:

Table 2 - Summary of key performance indicators for Quarter 2

Priority	★ Performance exceeds target	✔ Performance on target	🔺 Performance < 5% below target	✖ Performance > 5% below target	N/A Not Available/ Annual	Total Number of KPIs
Prosperous Economy	3			1	3	**7**
Communities and Wellbeing	2				4	**6**
Climate Change and Environment	3	1	1		2	**7**
Effective Council	5		2		4	**11**
Total	**13**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**13**	**31**

5.7 Of the 18 indicators due to be reported on in quarter 3:

- 14 (78%) show performance on or above target; and
- 4 (22%) show performance below target.

Performance in service delivery has improved in quarter 3 (increase of 11%).

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1A: The Economy
Appendix 1B: Community
Appendix 1C: Climate Change
Appendix 1D: The Council
Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2025-28

Contact Officer: Judith Aupers

Telephone Number: 01543 46411

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet - 12 March 2026

                                      Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee - 18 March 2026

                                      Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny - 19 March 2026

                                      Resources Scrutiny Committee - 24 March 2026

Key Decision: No

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

★	✔	⚠	✖	N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
5	0	5	0	9	19

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
Stafford town centre transformation – completion of main demolition works.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
Stafford town centre transformation - delay to finalising development delivery option due to change to site boundary and project scope. It is proposed to present the Development Framework to Cabinet in quarter 4.
Stafford Station Gateway - delay to concluding land acquisition. Officers are reviewing the Council's position and will advise Cabinet in Q4 of next steps.
Development Management Improvement Plan - reprofiling due to increase in caseloads. This will extend the Improvement Plan implementation to Q1 in 26/27.
Publication on 16 December 2025 of National Planning Policy Framework and associated SBC officer assessment linked to new Local Plan implications deferred to next quarter

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of regeneration schemes	**Stafford Town Centre Transformation**						
	• Complete work on Station Approach project	X				Work on site completed in May 2025. Initial feedback on the improvements has been positive.	★
	• Complete demolition works to Guildhall shopping centre and former Co-operative department store			X		Main demolition works completed Q3 2025	★
	• Agree preferred development delivery option for cleared development sites			X		Programme amended to reflect the additional land acquisitions during the summer - now to be reported to Cabinet in Q4	▲
	• Develop wider masterplan/development framework for Stafford town centre				X		
	Stafford Station Gateway						
	• Commence stakeholder engagement on delivery of the strategic vision for the site		X			Initial Officer Board meeting held in November 2025 to agree priorities following the funding updates announced in September 2025. Full Board meeting delayed as SBC role is determined by land ownership which is to be confirmed	▲

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	• Complete land acquisition		X			Legal process initiated following Cabinet approval, timescales of acquisition are not wholly in SBC control	🔺
	• Delivery of Levelling Up Funded activities				X		
Economic Growth Strategy	• Review and re-draft Economic Growth Strategy for consultation				X		
Promotion of the Borough	• Promote Stafford town centre development prospectus at UKREiiF 2025	X				Investment Prospectus produced and launched at UKREiiF development event in Leeds, May 2025 with significant interest generated in the regeneration of Stafford town centre.	⭐
Pipeline of projects	• Develop pipeline of future economic development and regeneration projects				X		
	• Agree programme of projects for UKSPF for 2025/26	X				The programme was agreed with the Leader in advance of submitting to Government in May 2025. Full details are being reported to Cabinet in July 2025.	⭐
	• Complete delivery of UKSPF programme for 2025/6				X		
	• Complete review of section 106 policy and allocations				X		

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	• Programme and Project Allocations for section 106 funding through evidence for Cannock Chase SAC and Leisure				X		
Delivery of planning services to enable economic growth	• Publish revised Local Development Scheme				X		
	• National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) assessment and New Local Plan implications			X		NPPF consultation published 16 December 2025 which was later than expected by MHCLG, this has delayed completion of this action. Officers currently reviewing proposed changes for NPPF deadline in March 2026 and assessing implications on the New Local Plan process in terms of resourcing, evidence base and timetable related to Regulations expected in early 2026.	
	• Prepare New Local Plan and updated evidence base,				X		
	• Implement improvement plan for Development Management			X		The Improvement Plan is currently being implemented but the improvements are taking a longer time frame to achieve. The service continues to address a large backlog of applications and is	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
						under further pressure from speculative applications. In December 2025, Leadership Team agreed to reprofile delivery of the improvement plan to June 2026. LT also agreed to additional short term agency cover being brought in to deal with the current caseloads and release capacity to support implementation of the improvement plan.	
	• Full introduction of a chargeable pre-application service		X			Pre-application service introduced.	★

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

★	✔	🔺	❌	N/A	**Total Number of Projects**
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
1	1	5		1	8

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
Temporary accommodation Cabinet report will be submitted in quarter 4. Work on the housing strategy is progressing but behind schedule; it has been delayed due to staff capacity issues. The community wellbeing strategy will be started in quarter 4, but work continues on all the key elements of delivery.

Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of council owned temporary accommodation	Scope the acquisition of council owned temporary accommodation and options for management of the properties.		X			Scoping work is underway on what the delivery of council owned temporary accommodation will look like, including ways to acquire properties as well as options for contractors to manage the repairs/maintenance and compliance of the units.	▲
	Cabinet approval for the acquisition and management of temporary accommodation units			X		Scoping has continued for temporary accommodation units with permission to spend report being prepared for Cabinet.	▲
	Start of property acquisition				X		
Strategic Housing and Homelessness	Start procurement of a Stafford Housing Strategy.		X			Staffordshire County Council are supporting on the procurement of a Housing Strategy and a specification is in the process of being agreed	★
	Award contract for Housing Strategy			X		Specification has been finalised and is with Staffordshire County Council.	▲
Community Wellbeing	Work with partners and the Integrated Care Partnership to develop priorities for reducing health inequalities	X				Community Wellbeing Partnership and wider partners including NHS primary care network representatives have continued to	▲

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
						refine shared priorities under the CORE20+5 framework.	
	Complete Community Wellbeing Strategy, setting out priorities across community safety and health (2025-2028).			X		Strategy to be started in quarter 4; delayed due to lack of staff capacity	🔺
✔	Deliver a small grant scheme to voluntary, community and social enterprises, to support delivery of the corporate plan and Community Wellbeing Strategy			X		Grant scheme developed. Bids have been received and evaluated. Approval scheduled for early February. Projects to begin 1 April.	✔

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

★	✔	⚠	✖	N/A	**Total Number of Projects**
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
7	2	1		7	17

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
Communications on the Council's introduction of weekly food waste collections from April 2026 were launched on social media during Q3 in accordance with the communications plan. Work has continued on the multi-phase master plan for Rowley Park, Stafford, as an inclusive main/destination park. Planning for UKSPF funded work starting in Q4 have been worked upon during Q3. These works will be to the entrance gates, and in part, main road and pathways.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
Work on outsourcing the health and safety tree inspections has been delayed, due to staffing issues within the Council's Tree Team. During Q3 the Council's only remaining fulltime tree officer left the authority for a role in another local authority. The postholder was working on the project in addition to his normal duties, and at the time of drafting the post remained vacant. Due to planned changes in the tree management team the post has yet to be advertised, however, it should soon be. This vacancy will continue to have an impact upon tree management, and the Councils tree management projects for some time after it has been filled.

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of Climate Change Action Plan	Training to be carried out for Senior Officers and Elected Members	X				Keele University delivered three training workshops in the first quarter to senior service managers and elected members	★
	Delivery of the Climate Change School Engagement Project	X	X	X	X	Active engagement with 16 schools and 20 teachers. Workshops have been held in 6 schools.	✔
	Decarbonisation Plans for SBC owned Sites will be commissioned that will provide options for the decarbonisation of our buildings.				X		
Local Plan with positive climate change policies	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation study				X		
Biodiversity in new developments	Implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with statutory requirements	X				A BNG guidance note has been produced and has been published on the Council's website.	★
Nature Recovery	Produce a nature recovery strategy				X		
	Develop an action plan to deliver the nature recovery strategy				X		
Minimise Household Waste - Introduction of Mandatory weekly	Complete procurement of food waste caddies	X				Food waste caddy procurement has been completed with orders placed with the successful bidder. Deliveries expected late 2025/early 2026.	★

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
food waste collections	Launch of communications plan for food waste introduction with residents			X		Food waste communications successfully launched on social media during Q3 according to the Council's communications plan.	★
	Distribute new food waste caddies and new service information to residents				X		
Tree Management	Secure approval and funding for integrated tree management system and tree inspections		X			Completed - Funding for the new integrated tree management system was secured following a report to Cabinet on 24 July 2025.	★
	Begin procurement of joint tree management system (including Open Customer Facing Public Portal)		X			Completed - procurement of the joint tree management system was commenced following the above.	★
	Commence procurement of outsourced routine health and safety tree inspections			X		Work on the outsourcing health and safety tree inspections has been delayed due to staffing issues within the Council's Tree Team.	🔺
	Implement joint tree management system				X		
	Prepare joint investment strategy and work programme as part of the budget setting process				X		
	Carry out play area development in accordance with play area	X	X	X	X	Work has continued on the multi-phase master plan for Rowley	✔

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Investment in Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces	improvement programme, agreed by Cabinet during 2024/25					Park, Stafford, as an inclusive main/destination park. Plans for UKSPF funded work starting in Q4 have been worked upon during Q3.	
	Prepare Cabinet Report to identify S106 and other capital funding to enable the implementation of the Councils play area/parks improvement programme	X	X	X	X	Report prepared for Cabinet early in Q3, allocating significant s106 and other funding to Rowley Park and four other play areas that were prioritised for investment/improvement.	★

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 4 - Effective Council

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

★	✔	▲	✖	N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
1	2		3	1	7

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
The Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for Southern Staffordshire was completed and submitted to the Government in November 2025.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
Whilst initial discussions have taken place, the development of a work programme to provide more services online is behind schedule. This is due to other work having taken precedence. Meetings with managers to progress this work will take place during Q4 with the aim of having the work programme in place for the start of 2026/27. The review of the Code of Conduct has now been completed and will go through the approval cycle in Q4.

Priority 4 - Effective Council

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Provide more services online and improve accessibility	Work with services to produce a work programme		X			Initial discussions to scope the work needed and some data gathering has taken place. Meetings with managers has been delayed and will now commence in Q4	✖
	Delivery of the work programme (key actions will be added once the plan has been developed and approved)			X	X	This has been impacted by the delay in developing a work programme. Delivery will now commence in Q1 26/27	✖
Delivery of the Value for Money Improvement Plan (now referred to as the Governance Improvement Plan)	Complete delivery of the actions set out in the VFM improvement plan (this is reported on separately to Cabinet and the Audit and Accounts Committee)	X	X	X	X	Working is ongoing to deliver the actions set out in the improvement plan - this is the subject of a separate report	N/A
Code of Governance	Review and update the Code of Governance	X				The review of the Code has been completed. Updated Code to be reported to Leadership Team and onto Cabinet for approval in Q4.	✖
Consultation	Undertake consultation/engagement with the public and stakeholders on key projects that affect our communities eg the production of the local plan.	X				Work is ongoing with regard to undertaking consultation for specific projects.	✔

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	These will be determined each year as part of the development of the annual priority delivery plans.						
Local Government Reorganisation	Develop an action plan to respond to the Government's Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation.	X				The final proposal for submission to government has been drafted and was considered by Council and Cabinet in November.	★
	Delivery of the action plan (key actions will be added once the plan has been developed and approved)		X	X	X	A report was approved by Cabinet in November setting out a number of key areas for preparation for LGR. This will be developed into an action plan in due course.	✔

Summary of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - Quarter 3 2025/26

Symbol	Description	Prosperous Economy	Communities and Wellbeing	Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment	Effective Council	Total
★	Performance exceeds target	3	2	3	5	**12**
✔	Performance on target			1		**1**
🔺	Performance < 5% below target			1	2	**3**
❌	Performance > 5% below target	1				**1**
N/A	Reported Annually/Not Applicable	3	4	2	4	**14**
	TOTAL	7	6	7	11	**31**

KPIs for Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
★	Performance exceeds target	1	2	3		
✔	Performance on target	1				
▲	Performance < 5% below target		1			
✖	Performance > 5% below target		1	1		
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	5	3	3		
	TOTAL	**7**	**7**	**7**		

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Regeneration									
Employment rate	79.8%	80%						N/A	Annual figure released by ONS. % relates to working age population (16-64) economically active i.e. in work or training.
Town centre vacancy rate	N/A	N/A						N/A	Data not available; indicator to be reviewed.
Number of housing completions	612	749						N/A	Annual figure at year end (1 April 25 to 31 March 26)
Planning Services									
Major Planning Applications determined within time	93.3%	60%	60%	50%	80%			⭐	
Non-major Planning Applications determined within time	85.3%	70%	78.6%	67.9%	46.7%			❌	As part of Improvement Plan, operational decision to prioritise the issuing of decisions to reduce backlog over securing an extension of time.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.4%	2.3%	1.49			★	
Non-major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.5%	1.1%	1.68			★	

KPIs for Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
★	Performance exceeds target	2		2		
✔	Performance on target		2			
▲	Performance < 5% below target					
✖	Performance > 5% below target					
N/A	Reported Annually/Not Applicable	4	4	4		
	TOTAL	6	6	6		

Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Strategic Housing, Homelessness and Assistance									
% households had a positive outcome and secured accommodation for 6 + months	62%	39%	58%	42%	51%			★	The target is the national percentage, allowing comparison to local performance
Delivery of affordable housing per year working with Registered Providers, Developers and Homes England (Annual)	200 homes	210 homes						N/A	Annual figure rather than quarterly reporting
No of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) completed	160	125	28	30	46			★	
Annual report on delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grants service	N/A							N/A	
Leisure, Culture & Heritage									
Annual Report from Freedom Leisure setting out the performance of all facilities and the wider wellbeing work and events they facilitate.	N/A							N/A	Considered at Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in December 2025.
Health and Wellbeing									

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Total value of financial outcomes achieved as a result of the Citizen's Advice contract	£4,797,117	N/A Measure only	£674,929	£544,177	£1,185,627			N/A	Contextual information only

KPIs for Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
★	Performance exceeds target	5	4	3		
✔	Performance on target			1		
▲	Performance < 5% below target		1	1		
✖	Performance > 5% below target					
N/A	Reported Annually/Not Applicable	2	2	2		
	TOTAL	7	7	7		

Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Climate Change									
Climate Action Plan progress is monitored via the Climate Action Board and reported quarterly to Cabinet.	New measure							N/A	Data has been collected to enable review of the Action Plan but delays in recruiting to Climate Change roles has affected officer capacity in this part of the service.
Waste and Recycling									
% collections completed first time	99.97%	99.90%	99.96%	99.97%	99.98%			★	
Number of missed bin collections (including assisted)/100,000/qtr.	38 per 100,000	<40 per 100,000	38.12	28.66	28.10			★	.
% Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting	46.23%	48%	49.20%	45.83%	44.95%			🔺	The reduction is normal during Q3 due to the lower garden waste tonnages collected

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Amount of household residual waste collected per household (Kgs)	449.05 Kgs Ave. 112.26 kgs	<448 kgs or 112 kgs/qtr	103.88 kgs	106.20 kgs	105.43 kgs			★	
Streetscene									
% residents' satisfied with the appearance of town centres (Stafford, Stone and Eccleshall)	95%	90%	98.3%	94.0%	88%			✔	Qtr 3 is below target although the target is an annual one. Dip is considered due to seasonal and trial data gathering differences.
Satisfaction with the quality of our parks, play areas, and open spaces.		New						N/A	Annual Measure

KPIs for Priority 4 - Effective Council

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
★	Performance exceeds target	3	4	5		
✔	Performance on target	2				
▲	Performance < 5% below target	2	3	2		
✖	Performance > 5% below target					
N/A	Reported Annually/Not Applicable	4	4	4		
	TOTAL	**11**	**11**	**11**		

Priority 4: Effective Council

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Good Customer Experience									
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Claims	19.3	**20 days**	20	23	13.0			⭐	
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax change of circumstances	4.9	**9 days**	2.1	2.4	3.1			⭐	
% of calls answered	96.7%	**95%**	97.1%	97.5%	97.5%			⭐	
Number of calls answered			15,036	14,644	14,433			N/A	This is not a measure but gives context to the performance in call handling
Average call wait time	59 seconds	**90 seconds**	44 seconds	35 seconds	43 seconds			⭐	
Number of services (forms) available online	New	**N/A**	55	85	85			N/A	This year will be used to establish a baseline

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Number of online transactions	New	N/A	10,218	13,030	22,386			N/A	This year will be used to establish a baseline
Funding Council Services									
% of Council Tax collected annually	97.8%	98% at end of year	28.6%	55.7%	82.8%			▲	The collection rate is marginally below the equivalent period in 2024-25, which was 83.1%. This small dip seems to be consistent with most other Staffordshire authorities and not specific to particular issues in Stafford. We continue to follow our firm but fair recovery policy.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98.6%	**98% at end of year**	28.9%	57.1%	81.8%			▲	A dip in collection rate was predicted this year as many businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure industries face significant increases in their bills. The equivalent collection rate in 2024-25 was 83%. The amount of business rates collectable this year has increased by £4.2m or 8%.
Good Governance									
Freedom Of Information requests within time i.e. 20 working days	79.4%	**85%**	83%	90.2%	88.1%			★	
Number of public consultations/engagement exercises undertaken		New						N/A	Annual measure

Agenda Item 4(c)iii

Updated Strategic Risk Register

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Head of Business Support and Assurance

Portfolio: Resources Portfolio

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1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To set out details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register as at end of December 2025

2   Recommendations

2.1   That Cabinet approves the Strategic Risk Register and considers the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks.

Reasons for Recommendations

2.2   Cabinet are responsible for the approval of the Strategic Risk Register produced by Leadership Team and to monitor the progress made in relation to the management of the risks identified.

3   Key Issues

3.1   All strategic risks and associated action plans have been reviewed, and the Council's risk profile is summarised in the table below:

Risk Status	Number of Risks at 30 Sept 2025	Number of Risks at 30 Dec 2025
Red (High)	5	5
Orange (Medium)	4	4
Yellow (Moderate)	0	0
Green (Low)	0	0
Blue (Negligible)	0	0
TOTAL	9	9

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   Risk Management as a process supports the Council's Effective Council priority

4.2   The Risk Register supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

(i)   Risk management is a systematic process by which key business risks/opportunities are identified, prioritised, and controlled so as to contribute towards the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives.

(ii)   The strategic risks set out in the Appendices have been categorised against the Council's priorities.

5   Report Detail

5.1   The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 state that:

"A relevant body must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:-

(a)   facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;

(b)   ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and

(c)   includes effective arrangements for the management of risk."

5.2   Risk can be defined as uncertainty of outcome (whether positive opportunity or negative threat). Risk is ever present and some amount of risk-taking is inevitable if the council is to achieve its objectives. The aim of risk management is to ensure that the council makes cost-effective use of a risk process that has a series of well-defined steps to support better decision making through good understanding of risks and their likely impact.

Management of Strategic Risks/Opportunities

5.3   Central to the risk management process is the identification, prioritisation, and management of strategic risks/opportunities. Strategic Risks are those that could have a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver its Corporate Priorities and Objectives.

5.4   A new risk management framework was approved for implementation by Cabinet on 28 November 2024 and this has been used to do a fundamental review of the Council's Strategic Risks. This resulted in a fully revised risk register being produced for 1 April 2025. This has been reviewed and updated and a summary of the position at the end of the third quarter of 2025 is attached as **APPENDIX 1**.

5.5   Work continues to enhance and refine the risks and actions identified to manage them as the Strategic Risk Register matures. As such it is anticipated that risks and wordings may change as Leadership Team have a better understanding of the risks.

5.6   The risk summary illustrates the risks/opportunities using the "traffic light" method i.e.

   Red   High risk, score 12 and above (action plan required to reduce risk and/or regular monitoring by Cabinet/Audit Committee)

   Orange   Medium risk, score 6 to 9 (action plan required to reduce risk and monitored by Leadership Team)

   Yellow   Moderate risk, score of 3 to 4 (risk within risk appetite, no action plan required but watching brief to ensure controls are effective and operating)

   Green   Low risk, score below 3 (risk tolerable, no action plan required)

   Blue   Negligible Risk, score of 1 (risk tolerable, no action plan required)

5.7   Cabinet and Audit Committee are receiving summary level information on all the risks as they stand at 31 December 2025 **APPENDIX 1** and detailed information of risks which are red at a residual level **APPENDIX 2**.

5.8   Leadership Team have reviewed all risks in detail and are monitoring all of the orange risks in addition to the red risks.

5.9   At the end of December some actions had been completed, and others are being progressed. There has been some slippage on a few of the actions planned due to a lack of capacity/delays in recruitment and these are highlighted in **APPENDIX 2**. There has been no change in risk score for any of the risks during Quarter 3.

5.10   Progress on some areas is being hampered by the impact of Local Government Reorganisation.

6   Implications

6.1   Financial

   None

6.2   Legal

   None

6.3   Human Resources

   None

6.4   Risk Management

   The Risk Management implications are included within the body of the report and appendices.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Summary of Strategic Risks - 31 December 2025

Appendix 2 - Strategic Risk Register Red Risks - 31 December 2025

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File of papers held by the Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager.

Contact Officer: Stephen Baddeley

Telephone Number: 01543 464415

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet 12/03/26

Audit and Accounts Committee 25/03/2026

Key Decision: N/A

Appendix 1

Stafford Borough Council
Summary of Strategic Risk Register as at 31 December 2025

Risk Ref	Risk Owner	Risk Name	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score Sept	Residual Risk Score Dec	Direction of Travel in Period	Target Score
2025-03	Chief Executive	Local Government reorganisation	16	12	12	↔	8
2025-06	Chief Executive	Corporate capacity	16	12	12	↔	12
2025-09	Operations	Safe Management of Trees	16	12	12	↔	8
2025-16	Economic Development and Planning	Delivery of Town Centre Regeneration Project	16	12	12	↔	8
2025-08	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	Financial Stability - SBC	16	9	9	↔	9
2025-04	Transformation and Assurance	IT Resilience	16	8	8	↔	8
2025-10	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	Failure to deliver good governance	16	8	8	↔	4
2025-02	Housing and Corporate Assets	Health and safety arrangements for properties	12	12	12	↔	8

Risk Ref	Risk Owner	Risk Name	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score Sept	Residual Risk Score Dec	Direction of Travel in Period	Target Score
2025-12	Chief Executive	Health and safety arrangements for people	12	8	8	↔	4

Key to Direction of Travel

↓	Risk has decreased	↔	Risk level unchanged	↑	Risk has increased

Appendix 2

Stafford Borough Council
Strategic Risk Register as at 31 December 2025

Risk Ref	2025-02
Risk Owner	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
Risk Name	Health and safety arrangements for properties
Risk Description	Operational property procedures including CDM compliance, maintenance and management of properties is not sufficient to adequately ensure they are safe for tenants, employees, leaseholders or visitors leading to death or serious injury.
Consequences	Death or serious and minor injury and prosecution by HSE and private legal action. Reputational damage. Deterioration in condition of buildings Depreciation of buildings
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
Main Risk Category	Health and Safety

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	3	12
Residual Impact	**Residual Likelihood**	**Residual Risk Score**
4	3	12
Target Score		8

Comment on Target Score:
There are situations outside of the control which will lead to accidents and a large housing and property portfolio means that a risk score of 4 is unlikely as accidents and incidents will still happen.

Controls	Assurances
Compliance data is held for all properties	Monthly data validation by mangers
Policies approved by Leadership Team and published online, regularly reviewed.	Monitoring of spreadsheets by management
Updated policies and procedures for compliance areas.	Internal Audit Reviews

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Monthly validation of corporate assets data	Interim Asset Manager	Q4 2025/26	A central list has been collated and is being checked. Other validations will take place once the new Corporate Assets Manager is in post. No software solution identified so will remain on a spreadsheet. The list is complete, has been compared with Finance and Insurance and continues to be updated as needed or when new information is available.
Review of Health and Safety Compliance Records of Contractors	Interim Asset Manager	Q4 2025/26	In progress - information is being requested from key contractors. All contractors have been contacted, 75% response received, the remaining Contractors are being chased for documents.
Appoint Contractor to undertake Building Condition Surveys (prioritise top 5 - 60 in total)	Interim Asset Manager	Q4 2024/25	Building Condition Surveys - 23 sites completed, Consultant prices received, and an order has been placed with Lambert Smith Hampton for a further. 40 sites now completed, remaining 14 confirmed premises to be completed before 31st March 2026.
Appoint Contractor to undertake Fire Risk Assessments	Interim Asset Manager	Q3 2025/26	Action complete and Fire stopping works identified have been completed.
Lease and Asset Reviews	Interim Asset Manager	Q4 2025/26	On-going and In progress

Progress Updates

Current Position	Fire Risk Assessments have all been completed and the associated works identified have been actioned.
	Fire Compartmentation works are being scheduled for the Civic Centre.

	Work on the Asset Reviews is being dealt with on a reactive basis.
	Lease reviews and compliance checks continue and progress is being made.
	Due to the nature of actions identified it will take time to reduce the risk score as some of the actions require specialist skill set of which there is limited availability within the existing team.

Risk Ref	2025-03
Risk Owner	Chief Executive
Risk Name	Local Government reorganisation
Risk Description	The Council has to divert resources to the management of the Council's response plans for Local Government re-organisation which threatens the ability to maintain the quality of services at a time when capacity is already stretched.
Consequences	Core Services and major projects fail to be delivered Reputational damage
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
Main Risk Category	Capacity/Service Delivery

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	**Residual Likelihood**	**Residual Risk Score**
4	3	12
Target Score		12

Comment on Target Score:
As planning for LGR is still in its infancy, it is too soon to be confident that we can mitigate this risk fully and reduce it to a 4. At present it is considered we can reduce the likelihood to a 2 giving a target score of 8. As planning and work progresses, actions and the target score will be reviewed. Progress with this risk is also linked to the risk regarding capacity (ref 2025-06).

Controls	Assurances
LGR lead officers identified	Cabinet
	Scrutiny Committee
	Leadership Team

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Review of resources available to support LGR work	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 2 2025/26	Report approved by Cabinet in November recommending the redirection of resources allocated to transformation work to LGR and setting out key areas of preparatory work to be done. Action completed

Progress Updates

Current Position	The actions planned to date have been completed and the proposal for government has been drafted. Whilst there has been no impact on front line service delivery, there has been an impact on the delivery of actions within the Resources Directorate and in particular actions relating to the Governance Improvement Plan. Cabinet has approved a report setting out the redirection of resources planned for transformation work to support LGR and key areas of preparatory work for the Council. However, there is still uncertainty at the moment, as to what other work is going to take place over the coming months but it has been agreed to set up a County wide Project Management Office to commence preparation for LGR and the Council will be represented on this.

Risk Ref	2025-06
Risk Owner	Chief Executive
Risk Name	Corporate capacity is insufficient to maintain provision of core services and deliver major projects
Risk Description	The inability to recruit and retain staff particularly in statutory and other core areas threatens service delivery across the Council. This risk is exacerbated by other factors such as the number of high priority projects, large procurement exercises, demand for new software, competing priorities and Local Government Reorganisation.
Consequences	Projects are delayed or not implemented Operational services are delivered to a lower standard, backlogs arise or service not delivered at all Complaints/damage to reputation Wellbeing of staff who are under pressure to deliver
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
Main Risk Category	Capacity/Service Delivery

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	**Residual Likelihood**	**Residual Risk Score**
4	3	12
Target Score		8

Comment on Target Score:

Due to the limited market in key professions such as Finance, Legal, Planning etc, the uncertainty created by Local Government Reorganisation and the volume of major projects in progress, it is considered that the residual risk score cannot be reduced further and actions planned are focussed on maintaining the current position.

Controls	Assurances
Corporate Plan sets out priorities and key projects	Performance reporting
Use of agency staff and contractors to cover posts which are difficult to recruit to	
Market supplements to enhance salary to attract candidates	
Management of absences	Oversight by HR

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Assessment of capacity, pinch points and reductions in workload consequentially	Leadership Team	Quarter 3 2025/26 (Revised from Q1 to Q3 Sept 2025)	Assessment of current vacancies completed. Discussion with Leadership Team in January about the development of workplans covering the next 2 years.
Management of expectations/discussion with Cabinet	Chief Executive/ Leadership Team	Revised to Q4 from Q2 2025/26 and ongoing (Jan 26)	Discussions will take place once the work plans have been drafted. Likely to be March/April 2026.

Progress Updates

Current Position	Following a discussion with Leadership Team, workplans are to be developed setting out the key projects and workstreams for the next 2 years, which will include preparation for LGR. This will include an assessment of capacity. Once drafted, these will be shared with the Cabinet Members.
	Additional resources have been included in the proposed budget for 2026/27 onwards for a small number of services to create new posts or support agency payments where there are difficulties in recruiting. This will help in maintaining the current position but is not expected to significantly improve it.
	As flagged previously, the focus is on managing capacity within the current resources and maintaining the current position so that this does not deteriorate.

Risk Ref	2025-09
Risk Owner	Operations
Risk Name	Safe Management of Trees
Risk Description	Risk of a tree or part of a tree falling on an individual/s causing death or serious injury. Risk of a tree or part of a tree falling onto a building causing severe damage to a property or the death or serious injury of an individual/s.
Consequences	• Death/Serious Injury • Damage to property • HSE Investigation/Prosecution • Corporate Manslaughter • Insurance Claims
Corporate Objective SBC	Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment
Main Risk Category	Capacity/Service Delivery

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	**Residual Likelihood**	**Residual Risk Score**
4	3	12
Target Score		8

Comment on Target Score:
Given the number of trees and the unpredictability of the weather, and the increase in the number of severe weather events, it is considered the current residual likelihood score sits at a 3. With the residual impact score remaining at a 4, it makes the overall residual risk score a 12. It is unlikely that the impact score can be reduced below a 4. Due to its categorisation, the nature, and the subject area it may also be difficult to reduce the likelihood from a 3 to a 2. The residual risk score will remain high for some time at a 12 until re-inspections have been undertaken, and resultant work programmes are well established. Given the circumstances of the risk, while currently higher than preferred at 12, an overall goal of a residual risk score of an 8 is considered acceptable in the longer-term.

Controls	Assurances
Trained Manager, Tree Officers, and Arboriculturists.	IA Reviews.
Tree Surveys	Management Information
Policies and Procedures for Tree Management	
Trees maintained using recognised tree risk management process	
SBC - Urban Forestry Strategy	
Allocation of semi-dedicated management resource.	
Knowledge of tree locations	
Historic/recent tree inspections	
Rudimental tree database/systems in place	

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Review tree policy and procedures	Natural Environment Manager	Q3 2025/26	Work has been hampered on tree management by staffing issues. This will have a knock-on impact on each of the below.
Implement new full risk-based tree management procedure	Natural Environment Manager	Q3 2025/26	See above
Implement risk-based programme of tree works around inspection results	Natural Environment Manager	Q3 2025/26	See above
Implement new joint tree management ICT GIS based system	Natural Environment Manager	Q3/Q4 2025/26	See below comment around delay.
Outsource next round of tree inspections for all trees to create new baseline data (78,000 trees)	Natural Environment Manager	Q4 2025/26	See below comment around delay.
Implement procedure for on-going risk-based inspections of trees	Natural Environment Manager	Q4 2025/26	See below comment around delay.
Deliver and monitor tree risk-based works and ongoing inspections	Natural Environment Manager	Q1 2026/27	See below comment around delay.

Progress Updates

Current Position	Progress around tree management has been hampered by fulltime staffing and structure issues. This has been compounded by the loss of the recent loss Council's only remaining Tree Officer.
	Tree management is still heavily reliant upon the use of consultant tree officers and contracted tree maintenance works, at both SBC and CCDC. The Tree Management structure across both Councils is being finalised with HR and finance, and posts should be advertised during Q3 or early in Q4. Until the above restructure has been undertaken and embedded it is likely to impact on each of the above tasks and other tree management requirements. It is considered that the impact of having to restaff both tree teams will delay the tree management programme by up to 6 months. It is therefore recommended the above timescales be put back by that delay period and the action noted.
	Due to the nature of the risk, it is considered the overall residual likelihood score will not be reduced until the tree inspections have been completed and the majority of the high-risk remedial tree works identified has been completed. This may take upward of 2-3 years.

Risk Ref	2025-16
Risk Owner	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Risk Name	Delivery of Town Centre Regeneration Project
Risk Description	There is a risk that the high profile large regeneration projects may not deliver as anticipated, to time or to budget, leading to reputational risks to the Council and creating financial risks that impact on the Council's financial position and could impact on service delivery and hinder the Council's wider ambition to secure economic prosperity for the District. There is a risk that either the Council may not be able to deliver the demolition phase of the project or secure a development partner to re-develop the cleared sites.
Consequences	• Major reputational risk for the Council in terms of not delivering the schemes that local residents expect; potential that Council may be unsuccessful with future funding bids • Reduced growth and economic prosperity for local residents • Decline of town centres/impact on major redevelopment proposals • Council exposed to unplanned financial risks and pressure on revenue resources which impacts on delivery of core services • Clawback of funding for non-delivery • Increased pressure on already stretched services/functions of the council which have capacity issues. • Cleared sites could sit empty for indeterminate period if developer interest doesn't materialise
Corporate Objective SBC	Prosperous Economy
Main Risk Category	Reputation, Customer/Public Perception

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
4	3	12
	Target Score	8

Comment on Target Score:
Inherent nature of the risk profile of the regeneration schemes makes it difficult to reach a score of 4, therefore a target score of 8 has been set at this stage. External influences may affect the ability to secure operators/end users to build out development within the agreed footprint of the scheme. Although the main demolition works to the former Guildhall Shopping Centre and co-op have completed and there has been a strong level of interest in the town centre from potential operators, the residual risk score will remain at 12 until the Council agrees the overall Development Framework for the scheme and secures agreements with operators.

It should be noted that the risk profile of the scheme will change over time as the Council secures development partners/operators to bring forward development on the cleared sites.

Controls	Assurances
Monitoring/finance returns being prepared and submitted to MHCLG in line with timescales in agreed memorandum of understanding	Project Sponsor Statutory Officer Meetings
Key decisions taken by Cabinet in relation to the project with relevant delegations and budget approvals in place	Statutory Officer Meetings Project Sponsor
Business cases to support key acquisition with quantification of costs and risks	Review by Statutory Officers Project Sponsor
Procurement using approved frameworks to select and appoint key contractors	SCC Procurement team Internal Audit Reviews Project Sponsor
Detailed risk registers and project plans to Operational Group	Project Board Project Sponsor Internal Audit reviews. External Audit overview Statutory Office Meetings
Governance arrangements to ensure oversight of programme delivery, spend and risks; with Programme Boards, Steering groups and project delivery meetings taking place on a regular basis	Project Board Project Sponsor Internal Audit reviews. External Audit overview. Statutory Officer Meetings External Audit
Ensure that the Council is effectively managing contractors and consultants	Project Sponsor Statutory Officer Meetings
Ensure that the Council has sufficient Programme/project management arrangements and capacity to deliver the projects	Statutory Officer Meetings Project Sponsor
Ensure that the Council's Health and Safety/CDM requirements are met, and demolition/construction works are managed safely and in line with regulations	Review by Statutory Officers Project Sponsor

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Communications to stakeholders, partners and the public - development of Comms Strategy and Plan	Head of Economic Development and Planning, Communications Manager	Q3 2025/26 (Revised from Q1 to Q2 June 25 and from Q2 to Q3 Sept 25)	Target date needs to be revised to Q1 26/27. A revised comms plan for the project will be developed when the Development Framework has been presented to Cabinet and agreed (see next action)
Agree approach to securing development delivery	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Q4 2025/26 (Revised from Q3 to Q4 in Sept 2025)	The Council is producing a Development Framework which can be used to guide development within the cleared regeneration site. This will be reported to Cabinet in Quarter 4.
Formal procurement process to appoint development partner(s)	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Q1 - 2026/27	Officers have completed work to research procurement frameworks and other routes to market that could be used to select developers/operators.

Progress Updates

Current Position	Performance Dashboards and Risk Registers have been produced and reported to Project Boards and LT. Meetings with developers/operators are being organised to discuss the regeneration opportunity being created by the Council utilising the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) grant. Procurement frameworks have been researched with the view to taking a paper to Cabinet in spring 2026 to recommend a preferred approach to selecting operators/end users for the scheme.

Agenda Item 4(c)iv

Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report for Quarter 3 2025-26

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Head of Business Support and Assurance

Portfolio: Resources Portfolio

1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To advise Members on the progress in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan at the end of Quarter 3 2025-26.

2   Recommendations

2.1   To note the progress made in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan set out at **APPENDIX 1**.

       Reasons for Recommendations

2.2   The information allows Cabinet to ensure that all appropriate steps are being taken to improve the Council's governance arrangements.

3   Key Issues

3.1   The findings of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements for 2024-25 were reported to the Audit and Accounts Committee on 25 June 2025. The report included an action plan to address the findings.

3.2   This report sets out the progress made in delivering the action plan up to the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26. Of the 39 actions due to be completed, 26% have been completed or are on target. Progress in quarter 3 has continued to be impacted by work on Local Government Reorganisation taking precedence and ongoing capacity issues.

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   Good governance and financial management specifically links to the Council's priority to be "an effective Council" and the objectives relating to:

- Value for money to local taxpayers.

- Good governance across the Council.

It also underpins the delivery of the Council's other corporate priorities and operational services.

5   Report Detail

5.1   The Council has a statutory responsibility to undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, which includes the system of internal control and to publish an "annual governance statement" with the annual accounts.

5.2   In reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, the Council has to identify any 'significant governance issues' and what action will be taken to address these. There is no single definition as to what constitutes a 'significant governance issue' and judgement has to be exercised. Factors used in making such judgements include:

- the issue has seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective;

- the issue has resulted in a need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved, or has resulted in significant diversion of resources from another service area;

- the issue has led to a material impact on the accounts;

- the Chief Internal Auditor has reported on it as significant, for this purpose, in the Internal Audit Annual Report;

- the issue, or its impact, has attracted significant public interest or has seriously damaged the reputation of the Council;

- the issue has resulted in formal action being taken by the Chief Financial Officer and/or the Monitoring Officer.

5.3   The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2024-25 was approved by the Audit and Accounts Committee on 25 June 2025. The statement sets out details of the review undertaken, the "significant governance issues" identified and the actions to be taken to address them. This includes the outstanding actions identified during the VFM review undertaken by the External Auditors.

5.4   This report provides an update on the progress in delivering the planned actions at the end of quarter 3 (31 December 2025). Details of the progress is given at **APPENDIX 1** and overall performance is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of Progress - Governance Improvement Plan

Quarter	★	✔	⚠	✖	No longer applicable	Total Actions
	Action completed	Work on target	< 3 months behind schedule	> 3 months behind schedule		
2024/25	3			7	3	13
Q1 2025/26	5			9		14
Q2 2025/26				5	2	7
Q3 2025/26	1	1		2	1	5
TOTAL	**9**	**1**	**0**	**23**	**6**	**39 due to date**

5.5   At the end of Quarter 3 of the 39 actions due for delivery:

• 10 (26%) have been completed or are in progress;
• 23 (59%) of actions are behind schedule; and
• 6 (15%) are no longer applicable or not being actioned.

5.6   Work on Local Government Reorganisation has continued to take precedence in quarter 3 and this, together with already limited capacity, has had a significant impact on the progress made. Notwithstanding this, some progress has been made in updating a number of key policies which will be taken forward for approval in quarter 4.

5.7   An interim review of the outstanding actions has been undertaken. The Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) has decided that a small number of actions will not now be implemented. The most notable of these concerns regular budget monitoring reports; these will remain as twice yearly as there is insufficient capacity to do this quarterly.

The remainder of the outstanding/incomplete actions have been rescheduled but these will be subject to a further review when we know the outcome of the 2024/25 VFM assessment by the External Auditors. This will allow us to prioritise any new and the existing actions in line with the capacity available.

5.8 Whilst much progress has been made since the VFM report was received from the previous External Auditors in January 2024, the slowing in progress over the last six months and our limited capacity to address this is a concern. It will be important to maintain good governance arrangements over the next two years, during a period of considerable change and uncertainty. This will be borne in mind in undertaking the review of outstanding actions referred to in 5.7 and in planning the work necessary to support LGR over the coming months.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

A failure to deliver good governance, which includes the delivery of the improvement plan, has been included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Governance Improvement Plan - Summary of Progress

8   Previous Consideration

None

9   Background Papers

Report to Audit and Accounts Committee 25 June 2025

Contact Officer: Judith Aupers

Telephone Number: 01543 464411

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet 12 March 2026
                              Audit and Accounts Committee 25 March 2026

Key Decision: No

Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report

Summary of Progress at 31 December 2025

Quarter	⭐	✔️	🔺	❌	No longer applicable	Total Number of Projects
	Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	N/A	
2024/25	3			7	3	13
Q1 2025/26	5			9		14
Q2 2025/26				5	2	7
Q3 2025/26	1	1		2	1	5
Q4 2025/26						3
TOTAL	9	1	0	23	6	39 due to date

Commentary on Progress

Progress has continued to be limited in quarter 3 due to work on Local Government Reorganisation taking precedence and this is expected to continue in 26/27. However, we have made progress in reviewing and updating a number of key policies which will be taken forward for approval in Q4 25/26 and other work is in progress, albeit behind schedule.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of the 2024/25 VFM assessment by the External Auditors and will use this to inform a full review of the outstanding actions to prioritise them in line with the capacity available. In the meantime, a number of the outstanding actions have been rescheduled and a decision taken by the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) not to pursue a small number of others. The most notable of these concerns regular budget monitoring reports; these will remain as twice yearly as there is insufficient capacity to do this quarterly.

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
VFM	**Significant Governance Issues from the former VFM Improvement Plan**				
VFM1	**Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1)**				
17.	Regular performance monitoring to be re-established with budget managers and Leadership Team.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 3 2024/25	Due to ongoing capacity issues within the Finance Team, budget monitoring for 25/26 has not been restored to quarterly, and reporting will remain as twice yearly. The outturn for period 6 2025/26 has been completed and is to be reported as part of the budget to Cabinet in January.	N/A
26.	Lesson learnt exercise to be undertaken of implementation of the finance system	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 3 2024/25	Given the length of time that has elapsed, and the ongoing capacity issues within the Finance Team, it has been decided not to proceed with this action.	N/A
27.	Training of managers in budget management and use of the new finance system.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 3 2024/25	Completed	⭐
28.	Review of Financial Regulations	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Work has not started on this due to other priorities taking precedence. This has slipped again in Q3 and has been rescheduled for Q1 26/27.	❌
29.	Training for managers on Financial Regulations	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources	Quarter 2 - 2025/26	This has been rescheduled to Q2 26/27 to follow the review of Financial Regulations.	❌

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
4.	Implementation of remaining module of the finance system, ongoing development and maximising use of system functionality	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2025/26	In light of LGR and ongoing capacity issues, the s151 Officer has decided not to implement the outstanding module of the Finance system.	N/A
55.	Performance reporting for Cabinet and Scrutiny to be developed. This will be done alongside the review and development of performance and risk reporting.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2025/26	Due to ongoing capacity constraints and LGR, a decision has been taken not to pursue this action.	N/A
42.	Follow-on zero-based budgeting session with managers to continue work started as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 3 - 2025/26 for 26/27 budget setting	Follow on sessions have taken place with budget managers to discuss budget variations that are needed for 26/27.	★
VFM2	**Corporate Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (Key Recommendation 1)**				
44.	Consultation and engagement to be embedded into the planning for the delivery of key projects where appropriate to ensure schemes meet community needs eg regeneration projects, redevelopment of play areas	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Due consideration is given in all key projects as to whether consultation/engagement is required.	★
VFM3	**IT / Technology (Key Recommendation 2)**				
19.	Update IT security policy and adopt a cyber security policy.	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Technology Officer	Quarter 3 2024/25	Completed	★

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
30.	Develop assurance reporting for IT eg report on outcome of annual health check/penetration testing to Leadership Team and Audit Committee	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Technology Officer	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Work has commenced on the IT Assurance report, but this is behind schedule. This has been delayed further due to other work taking precedence. This will now be reported as part of end of the year end cycle in Q1 26/27	❌
31.	Review of what we include in procurements re ICT controls and information governance	Head of Business Support & Assurance, Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	A revised checklist has been produced and testing is ongoing on a sample of relevant procurements. This will be finalised in Q4 25/26 ready for formal adoption in Q1 26/27.	❌
VFM4	**Fraud (Key Recommendation 3)**				
56.	Assess fraud risks and include in risk registers as appropriate	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager and Leadership Team	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Work in progress as part of the development of directorate and operational risk registers and should be completed in Q1 26/27.	❌
45.	Review Anti - Fraud and Bribery Policy	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Review has been undertaken; the policy is being amended and will be taken to the Audit Committee for approval in Q4.	❌
46.	Review of Confidential Reporting Policy	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Review has been completed; the policy is being amended and will be taken to Audit Committee for approval in Q4.	❌
47.	Assess compliance against Cipfa 2014 Code for Fraud and develop an action plan as necessary	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	This has been undertaken as part of the review of the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy.	⭐

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
61.	Review the information we report on fraud work (including data matching) to the Audit Committee.	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Work has not yet started on this due to the work on developing and embedding risk management across the Council. It has been rescheduled to Q1 26/27 so that information can be included in the year end report.	❌
VFM5	**Performance Management (Key Recommendation 4)**				
33.	Establish corporate project resources to support transformation work (funding allocated in 2024/25 budget)	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 3 2024/25	Although proposals for a Transformation Team were approved by Cabinet as part of the Transformation Strategy (5 December 2024), a report was considered by Cabinet in November 2025 which agreed to the redirection of the transformation resources to support the preparatory work needed for LGR and a more modest programme of change.	N/A
34.	Review of all projects, the current governance arrangements and establish project reporting to Leadership Team	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	This work has been refocused to develop work plans for all Heads of Service to cover the next 2 years. These are to be developed during Q4 25/26.	❌
57.	Develop and adopt a performance management framework to establish golden thread from Corporate Plan to service plans through to employee reviews. Framework to include protocols for ensuring data quality	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Discussions are currently in progress with the External Auditors as part of the VFM review for 2024/25 as to the adequacy of our current arrangements and what additional work is required.	❌

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
58.	Review our performance report style - delivery plans and KPIs. To consider the development of performance outcome measures	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	As for comment above	❌
59.	Performance reporting for waste and leisure: • review of KPIs for monitoring and reporting on performance; • establish internal validation process of contract performance; and • review information reported to Cabinet/Scrutiny	Head of Business Support and Assurance, Head of Operations and Head of Wellbeing	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	The waste contract performance reporting has been reviewed and processes are in place to validate the contractor's data. The contractor will be required to present an annual report to the Scrutiny Committee in Q3 for the preceding year. Annual performance reporting for the leisure the contract has also been reviewed. The contractor is to be asked to present their report to the Scrutiny Committee in Q3.	⭐
32.	Establish a Corporate Project Management Methodology. Provide templates, guidelines, and training for key officers (LT, Service Managers and key Principal Officers/Team Leaders).	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2025/26	Work has not commenced on this due to the work on LGR taking priority. It has been agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive - Resources that a corporate methodology will not be developed but appropriate project management training is to be sourced and delivered instead. This is to be scheduled for Q1-2 26/27.	❌
VFM6	**HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 3)**				
23.	Complete review of hybrid working. This will inform the development of the workforce strategy and the review of the Code of Conduct as	Head of Business Support and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 3 2024/25	Report discussed at Leadership Team on 15 July 2025. Further work has been completed and will be reported back to Leadership Team in Q4.	❌

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
	well as support the development of an asset strategy.				
22.	Establish our culture, values and type of organisation we want to be. This work will inform the following actions	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Values are to be developed and embedded into the new Code of Conduct for Employees and this will be completed in Q1 26/27.	❌
48.	Develop a hybrid working policy and review other related policies and processes.	Head of Business Support and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 2 - 2025/26	Work cannot commence on this until the review has been completed and agreement reached on the future direction of hybrid working.	❌
49.	Review and update the Employee Code of Conduct	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Head of Law and Governance	Quarter 3 2025/26	A revised Code of Conduct for Employees has been drafted and it is intended to take this to Leadership Team in Q4 for consideration.	✔️
62.	Development of a workforce strategy that links to long term transformation/shared services	Head of Business Support and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 4 - 2025/26		
VFM7	**Risk Management (Improvement Recommendation 2)**				
24.	Training for Leadership Team, managers, team leaders/principal officers on risk management	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Completed	⭐
35.	Develop risk registers for each Directorate and ICT	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	The risk registers are being developed. A first draft of the risks has been completed. Progress to complete this, the scoring and develop action plans has stalled but will	❌

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
		and Head of Business Support and Assurance		be picked up in Q4 25/26 and completed in Q1 26/27.	
36.	Establish escalation process between other risk registers and the SRR eg services, projects	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	This is being developed as part of the work on the Strategic Risk Register, the Directorate Risk Registers, etc. This cannot be finalised until work on the directorate risk registers has been completed.	❌
VFM8	**Procurement and Contract Management (Improvement Recommendation 5)**				
15.	Update the contracts register and ensure it is compliant with transparency requirements	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Leadership Team	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Work on this stalled in Q3 but will be picked up in Q4 as part of the preparations for LGR.	❌
39.	Provide training for managers on procurement and contract management	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Training on Procurement and the new Regulations was completed in Q4 24/25.	⭐
50.	Work with managers and the County's Procurement Team to develop a procurements pipeline	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Leadership Team	Quarter 3 2025/26	This action has been superceded. Instead a plan will be developed as part of the preparation for LGR as to which contracts need to be re-tendered in the next 2 years. This will be completed in Q1 26/27	❌
51.	Process to be established for publication of key data on the Council's website to meet transparency requirements re spend data, contracts register	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 3 2025/26	The contracts register data will be published in Q1 and quarterly from there onwards	❌

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
VFM9	**Other Related Actions**				
41.	Preparation of a transformation plan for Development Management to further reduce the backlog of planning applications and to manage this within the approved budget. (From AGS 2023-24)	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	The review of Development Management has been completed and a transformation plan has been produced.	★
60.	Review of Code of Governance	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	The Code has been reviewed and updated. It will be taken to Leadership Team for discussion in Q4 ahead of formal approval through the democratic cycle.	✖
53.	Review of Scheme of Delegations as part of shared services transformation. (From AGS 2023-24)	Monitoring Officer and Leadership Team	Quarter 3 2025/26	In light of LGR and the decision not to proceed with Shared Services Transformation, the Monitoring Officer has decided not to undertake a full review of the Scheme of Delegations. Updates will continue to be made as part of the annual Constitution review process.	N/A
52.	Establish an inventory of key policies and a programme of periodic reviews	Leadership Team	Quarter 4 - 2025/26		
63.	Development of Assurance Model	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 4 - 2025/26		

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
		and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager			
New Significant Governance Issues Arising from the 2024/25 Governance Review					
GOV	**Governance Framework**				
GOV1	Training and reminders for managers on good governance and key components of the framework	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Head of Business Support and Assurance and Head of Law and Governance	Initial session Quarter 2 - 2025/26	This has been deferred to Q1 26/27 to follow the launch of the revised Code of Governance.	✖
GOV2	Monitoring compliance with the governance framework	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Head of Business Support and Assurance and Head of Law and Governance	Mid Year Review to be undertaken in Q2	This has been deferred to Q4 due to work on LGR taking priority.	✖

Agenda Item 4(c)v

Revenues and Benefits Collection Report - Quarter 3

Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 March 2026

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive - Resources

Portfolio: Resources Portfolio

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1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To inform Cabinet of the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service as regards:

- The collection of Council Tax during quarter 3 of the 2025-2026 financial year.

- The collection of Business Rates during quarter 3 of the 2025-2026 financial year.

- The recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit during quarter 3 of the 2025-2026 financial year.

1.2   To seek approval to the write off of the arrears listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES**.

2   Reason(s) for Report being 'Not for Publication'

2.1   In accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the report is considered 'not for publication' under the following categories of exemption:

- Exempt Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual.

- Exempt Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

- Exempt Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council).

3   Recommendations

3.1   That the information regarding collections be noted.

3.2   That the arrears listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES** be written off.

Reasons for Recommendations

3.3   Efficient collection of the Council's revenues is of major importance to the funding of Council services and those provided by our preceptors.

3.4   Whilst our collection rates are traditionally good, regrettably not all of the monies owed to the Council can be collected and this report contains a recommendation to write off bad debts which cannot be recovered**.**

4   Key Issues

4.1   Council Tax due for the 2025/2026 year amounts to £111.8M of which some **82.8%** was collected by the 31 December.

4.2   Business Rates due for the 2025/2026 year amounts to £59.6M of which some **81.8%** was collected by the 31 December.

5   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

5.1   Not Applicable.

6   Report Detail

Council Tax

6.1   Council Tax is collected on behalf of the Borough Council, Parish Councils and our Major Preceptors (Staffordshire County Council and Commissioner for Police, Crime, Fire and Rescue). The effect of the Collection fund arrangements means that Stafford Borough Council retains around 10% of the council tax collected.

6.2   Council Tax due for the current year amounted to £111.8M and we have collected 82.8% of this up to the end of quarter 3. The collection rate for the same period last year was 83.1%.

6.3   The team will be increasing our efforts to collect older council tax debts due to the Council and this may impact some residents' ability to pay current charges.

6.4   In accordance with the Council's approved policies, all reasonable and lawful attempts are made to recover all amounts due. In the first instance this involves the issue of bills, reminders and final notices, followed by Summonses in the Magistrates Court where the warning notices are not effective. At all stages of this process, debtors are encouraged to engage in voluntary arrangements to repay their arrears, to prevent the need for formal action.

Where necessary and when Liability Orders are granted by Magistrates, the Council uses its powers to make deductions from earnings and benefits of debtors, where it can, and instructs Enforcement Agents where such deductions are not possible or appropriate.

In the most severe cases and for debts exceeding £5,000, the Council will consider personal bankruptcy action against individuals.

6.5   The recovery powers available to the Council are considerable but not completely infallible. There are occasions when bills are not paid and the debts cannot be recovered.

6.6   Statutory safeguards such as Debt Relief Orders, Individual's Voluntary Arrangements exist to protect debtors suffering hardship, to attempt to the expensive, stressful and sometimes ineffective process of personal bankruptcy. Where a debt is included in such an instrument, or when a debtor is bankrupt, our ordinary recovery powers cannot be used.

6.7   For any of our powers to be effective we need to know the whereabouts of a debtor, and this is not always the case. Where debtors abscond, we will use all reasonable endeavours to trace them and are often successful in doing so. Unfortunately, on occasions this is not so and we must submit a debt for write off.

Our trace procedures include:

- Checking our internal Council systems and following any information which may help us to trace the debtor.
- Use of credit reference agency data.
- Trace and collect facilities offered by our Enforcement Agencies
- Visits to the last known address by the Council's Property Inspector and use of external tracing agents.

Unfortunately, legislation does not currently permit access to DWP or HMRC records to trace Council Tax debtors or their employers, though a Cabinet Office project is currently reviewing this.

Data protection legislation allows us to receive information as to a debtor's whereabouts, but we cannot disclose information to other creditors.

Reciprocal arrangements with utility companies and similar are not therefore workable.

Business Rates

6.8   Business Rates due for the current year amounts to £59.6M of which **81.8%** was collected by the 31 December. This is a small decrease on last year's collection 83.0%

6.9   Repeating last year's performance in the coming year will be challenging as many retail, hospitality and leisure establishments are facing increased bills as the government relief to these premises has reduced from 75% last year to 40% this year. Additionally a number of new and increased rating assessments since the start of the financial year have increased the amount that we have to collect by around 2.3%. The bills in respect of the increases, having been issued later than the annual billing round, are due for payment, later in the year.

6.10   The recovery powers available to us are again contained in the Council's approved policies and are used in full. Those powers and our procedures are similar to the council tax powers described above, with the exception that deductions from individuals' benefits and earnings are not permissible, even if the debtor is an individual.

6.11   Where rates are owed by an individual, similar safeguards exist for the debtors and trace facilities are used by the Council for absconding debtors, as described above.

6.12   Additionally, in the case of business rates, as has been reported to Cabinet previously, our collection efforts are sometimes frustrated by weaknesses in legislation. Rates are due from the occupiers rather than the owners of property and where the occupier is a company, we can only recover from that company. Some proprietors will strip a company of its assets, or dissolve the company before we have had an opportunity to implement our recovery procedures. A new company is then formed in a similar style, to trade from the same premises.

Central Government has previously undertaken to review the loopholes that exist in rating and company legislation, though no changes have yet been received. Officers continue to actively monitor these issues.

6.13   5 irrecoverable Business Rate debts in the sum of £128,447.23 are listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** to this report.

Housing Benefit Overpayments

6.14   The Council manages the Housing Benefit scheme on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, who fund the cost of benefits paid to claimants.

6.15   Sometimes a claimant will be paid too much Housing Benefit, for example when the Council does not become aware of a change of circumstances until after the claimant has been paid the benefit. This is called an Overpayment of Housing Benefit. The Council is expected to recover these overpayments from the claimant in all but a few limited circumstances. DWP will fund only 40% of benefit which is overpaid as a result of claimant error or fraud.

6.16   Where an overpayment occurs as a result of a local authority error, DWP will provide 100% funding provided our error rate remains below a threshold of 0.48% of benefit paid, as it has routinely done for many years.

6.17   Recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit continues to progress well, with some £328K being collected in the first three quarters of this financial year. This income is received into the General Fund, in addition to the Government subsidy and is not shared with preceptors.

7   Implications

7.1   Financial

Council Tax write offs are losses to the Collection Fund and, as such, form part of the cost of collection incurred by this Council.

The amounts being recommended are well below the value of the bad debt provision, which the Council includes within its accounts in expectation that some amounts owed will not be paid and cannot be recovered.

The cost of collecting the debts has been considered as part of the decision to put them forward for write off. If further information does come forward about the whereabouts of any of the individual debtors the Council will pursue recovery action.

Cabinet are asked to write off the debts as they are considered to be irrecoverable for the reasons given in the appendices. The debts remain legally due to the Council and should the circumstances causing the write off in any particular case, subsequently change, recovery action may be recommenced.

7.2   Legal

Cabinet are asked to write off the debts as they are considered to be irrecoverable for the reasons given in the appendices. The debts remain legally due to the Council and should the circumstances causing the write off in any particular case, subsequently change, recovery action may be recommenced.

7.3   Human Resources

None

7.4   Risk Management

None

7.5   Equalities and Diversity

None

7.6   Health

None

6.7   Climate Change

None

8   Appendices

Confidential Appendix 1: Business Rates to be considered for Write Off

9   Previous Consideration

None

10   Background Papers

None

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Ward Interest: None

Report Track: Cabinet 12/03/2026 (Only)

Key Decision: No