



Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford

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Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 18 June 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. Curran".

Head of Law and Governance

CABINET - 18 JUNE 2026

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 21 May 2026 as circulated and published on 22 May 2026
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time
 - (a) Councillor D P Rouxel has submitted the following item in accordance with paragraph 2.9(b) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules:-

“Can the Cabinet member for Economic Development and Planning confirm that any sitting tenants related to the land acquisition for the Stafford Station Gateway (agreed in minute CAB13 of the 7 July 2025) are being supported and kept informed of any relevant timelines by which they will have to vacate by Stafford Borough Council.”

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

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(b) COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO	
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- (iv) Revenues and Benefits Collection Report - 210 - 215
Quarter 4 - **PART CONFIDENTIAL**

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**Climate Action Plans 2026/27**

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 2026
Report of:	Head of Regulatory Services
Portfolio:	Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the delivery of the 25/26 Climate Action plans (See **APPENDIX 1**)
- 1.2 To provide an update to Members on the agreed Climate Action plans for 26/27 as approved by the Climate Action Board. It seeks recognition of and support for the SBC Climate Action Plans. (see **APPENDIX 2**)

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the plans agreed by the Climate Action Board
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that regular performance and delivery updates will be provided to Cabinet on 6 monthly reporting cycle as determined by the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 The Council, alongside many other councils, declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 since then activities to mitigate and adapt for Climate Change have become part of the way the Council delivers services.
- 2.4 The Council has a target to reach Net Zero Operations by 2035. Climate Action is a fundamental consideration when delivering Council services, but we needed to develop a pragmatic and realistic approach to doing this. The 2025-2030 Strategy looked to develop this approach, alongside Action Plans, that demonstrate exactly what activities are taking place to contribute to the reduction of our operational carbon emissions.
- 2.5 Action Plans and the Climate Action Board allow us to track, review and ensure that we are moving towards our Net Zero targets in a meaningful way.

- 2.6 The Government's Climate Change Committee- states that only a third of the emissions reductions required to achieve the UK's national 2050 Net Zero target are currently covered by credible plans, these trackable Action Plans comprehensively measure the work being delivered to reduce the production of carbon emissions in the Borough.
- 2.7 The plans achieve this by focusing on several key areas within our own service delivery which are the most impactful. The plans deliver changes to the way that we work, facilitating the shift towards carbon neutrality, encouraging others in the Borough to do the same.
- 2.8 In addition, the plans show a clear intent to commit to work with businesses and communities in the Borough to engage, educate and facilitate them to deliver their own steps towards carbon neutrality.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 As a high priority it was essential that there was a mechanism in place to ensure the Council is working toward its Net Zero target.

There is limited funding available, so pragmatic ways forward have been prioritised, and the Action Plans only contain projects that have been costed, with delivery agreed or projects which will be considered for prioritisation for future funding.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

The climate change costs for local communities are significant and growing, affecting nearly every aspect of daily life. Higher energy demand leads to increased utility bills for households and businesses. Increased health-related absenteeism can also hurt local businesses, reducing productivity and income.

Several key sectors are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. These sectors often form the backbone of local economies, and disruptions can have cascading consequences. Climate-related disasters can disrupt supply chains, leading to shortages of goods and increased prices, impacting businesses and consumers alike. These Action Plans demonstrate our support for local businesses and communities to combat the effects of climate change.

4.2 Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing

In the most recent heatwaves of 2022, there was a record number of health related excess deaths. These occurred mostly among the elderly and those with existing ill-health. Heat exposure is estimated to cost the UK economy

£260–£300 million per year. The Council has an important part to play and a moral duty to address the impact its operations have on carbon emissions in the Borough and work to mitigate this alongside other action to mitigate and adapt for the impact of Climate Change. The Council needs to help to protect the most vulnerable in our society who are most at risk from Climate Change harm.

4.3 **Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment**

The Council Plan 2025-2029 states that Climate Action and Green Recovery are one of the top four priorities for the Council. These action plans demonstrate the clear commitment to Climate Change mitigation and demonstrate the clear path to reduce our carbon emissions, whilst delivering services for residents.

5 **Report Detail**

5.1 The Climate Action Team in conjunction with various service areas committed to deliver a pre-agreed set of objectives.

Highlights of the 25/26 action plans include:

- Stafford Leisure Centre cut electricity use by 140,000 kWh, saving around £35,000 annually and saved nearly 4 million litres of water annually through eco-shower installation.
- Stafford Riverway saved over £70,000 by removing the need for a gas-based heating system and significantly reducing overall water usage.
- Our Energy Advice Service supported 266 households across Stafford Borough with an average saving on energy bills of £625 per household. We helped save on average £306 per household on water tariffs.
- UKSPF Grants totaling £142,763.55 were provided to 11 local businesses towards energy efficiency measures to cope with increasing costs of doing business.

5.2 The outcomes are set out below with an explanation of each activity in **APPENDIX 1**

Base Line Emissions (Generic) 4

Climate Actions (Generic) 4

Projects/Pillars 25/26	
Corporate Assets and Housing	5 complete 1 incomplete
Transport	2 complete 1 incomplete
Community Engagement	3 complete
Business Engagement	3 complete
Sustainability Education	2 complete

5.3 Looking ahead to 26/27 the following table illustrates the actions that have been agreed across appropriate service levels. Full details are shown in **APPENDIX 2**

Base Line Emissions (Generic) 2

Climate Actions (Generic) 2

Projects 26/27	
Corporate Assets and Housing	5
Transport inc. Waste	5
Community Engagement	4
Business Engagement	4
Sustainability Education	2
Catch All Plans	10

- 5.4** The catch all plans refer to those climate change projects currently being delivered that are not reported on quarterly. These actions are updated on an ongoing basis as more projects are uncovered. **APPENDIX 3** illustrates the example of those currently identified.

To help support delivery of both the Climate Change Strategy and the action plans within a communications plan has been developed. Deliverables so far include:

- New updated web pages
- Social Media Templates Created
- Funding and Grant information listed
- Climate Change Strategy uploaded
- Films and case studies:
 - ✓ Total films CCDC = 3
 - ✓ Total films SBC = 7
 - ✓ Total Case Studies CCDC = 4
 - ✓ Total Case Studies SBC = 9
- Leaflets
- Photographs
- Events

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications from delivering these Action Plans. The councils budget for climate change principally relates to staffing resource and as such if funding is required for projects to deliver on these plans they will require external funding.

6.2 Legal

National government has a specific statutory duty to achieve net zero status by 2050. At present that does not apply to local authorities. However, existing planning and environmental legislation does require the Council to consider climate change so it is arguable that the obligation is inherent.

The Environmental Targets (Public Authorities) Bill currently at the House of Lords report stage aims to make provision for a statutory objective requiring public bodies to contribute to delivery of targets set under the Environment Act 2021 and the Climate Change Act 2008; to place a duty on public bodies to meet this objective in the exercise of their functions. Therefore, it should be noted that it is possible in the coming years, parliament may expand the Council's legal duties.

6.2 Human Resources

No direct HR implications

6.3 Risk Management

We could fail to achieve corporate objectives on climate change with the added risk we fail to react to the impact of climate change or fail to appropriately plan for anticipated issues.

6.4 Equalities and Diversity

People who are more deprived are especially vulnerable to climate change because they usually have fewer assets and less access to funding meaning fewer resources to adapt to climate change impacts. Climate change impacts tend to worsen inequalities because they disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups. This in turn further increases their vulnerability to climate change impacts and reduces their ability to cope and recover.

6.5 Health

Climate change is worsening existing inequalities, including health inequalities. As climate change progresses, the health impacts will not be distributed equally. The mental health impacts will be greater for some groups than for others including:

- children and young people
- people with existing health conditions
- occupational groups (such as farmers and emergency responders)
- people living in deprived areas
- ethnic minority groups
- inclusion health populations (such as migrants and individuals experiencing homelessness)

6.7 Climate Change

By continuing to deliver these Action Plans Stafford Borough Council will act towards implementing the commitments articulated within the Climate Change Strategy, which will positively impact the environment and respond to the climate and nature crisis

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: 25/26 Action Plans

Appendix 2: 26/27 Action Plans

Appendix 3 : 26/27 Catch All Plans

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet 10 April 2025 report of Head of Regulatory Services
Portfolio: Climate Action and Green Recovery

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Martyne Manning

Telephone Number: 07345 600144

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet 18 June 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: No

Climate Action Progress Update SBC - 2025/26 - Q4

Baseline Emissions

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update	RAG Status	Responsible Team
Gather and analyse emissions data from all council facilities to create a clear baseline for tracking progress.	Complete data collection and analysis for all major council buildings by Q4 of Year 1.	Data collection and analysis has been completed, establishing a robust baseline for future emissions tracking.		Regulatory Services
Build an integrated carbon monitoring platform to centralise data and guide decision making.	Procure or develop a central platform and pilot it with three departments within the first 12 months	Development of the central capture of data has become more centralised with information being captured and stored manually		Regulatory Services
Automate data collection systems for seamless updates to the monitoring platform.	Implement automated utility data feeds (e.g. energy, water) for at least 80% of council-owned buildings by Year 2.	Work has commenced to identify and connect automated data feeds for energy and water, with much of the data being monitored and tracked monthly.		Regulatory Services

Release an annual report detailing carbon metrics and future priorities.	Publish the first carbon report within 12 months, including reduction progress and next steps.	The annual carbon report is completed and appears on our website, outlining emissions data, reduction progress, and forward actions.		Regulatory Services
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Climate Action Working Group

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update	RAG Status	Responsible Team
Form a dedicated working group to coordinate and oversee climate action initiatives across all council departments.	Identify representatives from each department and launch the group within 6 months.	Final group structure in place as departments completed their action plans.		Regulatory Services
Conduct quarterly reviews of progress to identify opportunities for improvement and celebrate achievements.	Produce review summaries after each quarterly meeting to inform future planning.	Quarterly updates have been provided by service departments and documented		Regulatory Services
Update the action plan annually, ensuring it remains relevant and ambitious.	Review key targets and refresh actions based on new data and progress annually	Annual review scheduled once all inputs are consolidated at the end of 2026.		Regulatory Services

Report progress to Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team to ensure ongoing alignment with council priorities.	Submit biannual updates to leadership, including risks, successes and resource needs	Biannual reporting framework has been drafted and will be populated now action plans have been delivered.		Regulatory Services
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Corporate Assets

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update - Q1	Progress Update - Q2	Progress Update - Q3	Progress Update - Q4	RAG Status	Responsible Team
Green Electricity Procurement	Green Electricity Procurement	100% purchased	100% Purchased	Completed	Completed		Corporate Assets
LED Lighting Upgrades	LED Lighting Upgrades	Final floors of the MSCP to be completed July/Aug. Undercroft car park to be priced/started in Q3 All other buildings are ongoing	MSCP 100% completed Pricing has started for the Undercroft car park All other buildings are ongoing	Riverside car park prices received - circa £20k budget to be considered. Civic Centre 95% complete Riverway Nursery 60% complete Crematorium 40% complete	85% complete		Corporate Assets

Solar PV Installations	Solar PV Installations	Installations at Stafford and Stone Leisure centres completed	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed		Corporate Assets
Building Management Systems (BMS)	Building Management Systems (BMS)	BMS installed on all main buildings, Civic Centre, Crematorium, Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres and Stone Area Office	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed		Corporate Assets
Boiler Decommissioning	Boiler Decommissioning	Gas boilers at Riverway Nursery decommissioned - saving 43.64 tonnes of carbon	Completed Q1	Completed Q1	Completed		Corporate Assets
ICT Carbon Reduction	Reduce Printing: reduce waste generated	Printer estate has been refreshed for new modern devices. Numbers have also been reduced. Smaller desktop Printers will be	No update Underway	Complete - also defaulted to B&W print across all devices In progress	Completed Completed		Transformation & Assurance

	<p>Upgrade Equipment: Transition to energy-efficient IT systems and devices.</p>	<p>removed completely. The reprographics department has been centralised to one site; redundant equipment disposed of. End user devices are now replaced with remanufactured devices.</p>	<p>Completed Q1 Completed Q1 Underway</p>	<p>Complete Due to issues with the Ikonix we have reverted to Dell Direct. Dell do have their own initiatives eg planting trees for each device purchased etc. In progress, due to complete February 2026</p>	<p>Completed Completed Rollover through to 2028</p>		
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Transport

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update - Q1	Progress Update - Q2	Progress Update - Q3	Progress Update - Q4	RAG Status	Responsible Team
LEVI Programme	No Update	Staffordshire County Council have withdrawn from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure programme for on street charging and are submitting a potentially revision scheme to Office for Zero Emission Vehicles which has yet to be confirmed.	No Update	SCC new cabinet withdraws from on street charging programme but it still confident of delivering off street charging on council car parks by 2027 Following the latest round of assessments 3 car parks have been identified.	Incomplete Tender to be issued by SCC Car parks still to be agreed		Operations
Fleet and EV Charger Installation (Riverway)	Agree preparation groundworks plan to install EV charging points and gather associated quotes	Plan has been agreed and awaiting confirmation of quotes and scheduled works from	No Update	Still awaiting confirmation of quotes and scheduled works from	Completed		Operations Corporate assets

	Purchase and install EV charging points and 2 x electric vans	Corporate Assets Quotes have been obtained and will be purchased and installed once the above has been completed		Corporate Assets Costs have been prepared infrastructure works to be completed prior to 31 st March 2026. Work has taken place and chargers in place.		
Anti-Idling Campaign	Monitoring and review of idling activity of Streetscene vehicles Actions agreed to attempt a reduction in idling activity	Quarter 1 for 2025 is showing a 28.9% reduction in idling in comparison to quarter 2 Toolbox talks, notices and signage in place to influence reduction in vehicle idling	No Update	Quarter 3 for 2025 is showing a 33% reduction in idling compared to the same period in 2025 Vehicle Idling continues to be raised in Toolbox Talks as a standard item Individual Operatives		Operations

				have been spoken to regarding their ongoing idling statistics		
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Community Engagement

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update - Q1	Progress Update - Q2	Progress Update - Q3	Progress Update - Q4	RAG Status	Responsible Team
The Great Imagining	Develop scope, secure partners, coordinate delivery, and evaluate.	Primary and Secondary schools have engaged in pilot workshops and activities. All schools across Stafford and Cannock have been invited to and are now signing up for September/October workshops.	Primary and Secondary schools have taken part in pilot workshops and activities. All schools across Stafford and Cannock have now been invited to join September/October workshops, with dates shared and sessions scheduled for this term. Thinking kits have been distributed, and the programme is progressing in partnership with Keele University, the Climate Ambassador	Engaged 16 schools in Stafford Borough, supported by 20 teachers. October Roadshow, 82 workshops were delivered across Staffordshire, with Stafford schools actively involved. Students participated in creative, sustainability-focused activities, including assemblies and	Completed Funding has now ceased, work continues in 26/27		Regulatory Services

			Programme, and Staffordshire PSHE resources.	class workshops.			
Sustainable Living Campaigns	Engage with the community on sustainable behaviors (Waste, energy, Transport, green initiatives)	Community Groups contacted and awareness is being spread. SBC officers attended SCC's dream house and Tree Giveaway event and engaged with residents around waste, energy, transport and green initiatives.	No Update	Project Completed. Engaged with variety of Community Groups to talk about Waste, energy, transport, green initiatives.	Completed		Wellbeing and Regulatory Services
Energy Advice & Assistance Partnership	Provide energy advice to residents and encourage take up of energy advice measures in partnership with others.	12 month contract with Beat the Cold agreed to provide ongoing support with residents. ECO4 Statement of Intent is in place and team is issuing declarations to allow contractors to	No Update	Quarterly meetings with BTC demonstrate a continued strong demand for service and positive outcomes. ECO- LA Flex	Completed 377 Enquiries 266 Households supported Average saving of		Regulatory Services

		carry out energy efficiency measures. SBC working with SCC with regards to other opportunities.		work continues but anecdotally dropping off likely as a result of the end of ECO4. SCC have a new local grant scheme which is already fully committed for the FY and will look to deliver a modest number of property improvements in the borough next FY,	£625 per household £333935 potential value of energy retrofit		
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Business Engagement

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update - Q1	Progress Update - Q2	Progress Update - Q3	Progress Update - Q4	RAG Status	Responsible Team
Business Growth Programme	Identify businesses to support; run 3 workshops	No Update	No Update	Business Growth Programme -3 workshops where we discussed with a business audience 'what grants were available and how to complete a	Resilient Stafford Number of grants approved and total value - 11 grants at £142,763.55 towards energy efficiency measures.		Economic Development and Planning

				grant application'. These were held on 19 Aug at Stafford; 15 Oct online and 3 Sept (BIG Event) in Stone	<p>Carbon Literacy Training</p> <p>Number of people/businesses who have been on the courses - 13 individuals and 10 businesses for the entire project/year.</p> <p>Completed</p>		
Green Solutions Programme	Engage suppliers; promote low-carbon support	Net Zero SME support delivered by Keele to support 50 businesses to put in place energy efficiency strategies for energy efficiency, cost savings and support to access finance.	No Update	Keele have provided non-financial support to 13 businesses and 16 organisations in October 2025. One person has already gained a qualification and 3 businesses engaged in knowledge transfer.	<p>Businesses receiving support - 28 out of a target of 25</p> <p>Organisations receiving support - 16 out of 25</p> <p>Businesses adopting new to the firm technologies 15 out of 15</p> <p>People gaining a qualification/completing a course 13 out of 5 target</p> <p>Completed</p>		Economic Development and Planning

Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)	Allocate funds to rural SMEs	No Update	No Update	Rural Enterprises have applied for RESP funding to support eco projects. The funding has all been allocated.	Number of grants approved and total value 4 grants totalling £146,355 towards energy efficiency measures Completed		Economic Development and Planning
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Sustainability Education

Project	Actions/Milestones	Progress Update - Q1	Progress Update - Q2	Progress Update - Q3	Progress Update - Q4	RAG Status	Responsible Team
Schools Climate Education Programme	Identify schools, develop & deliver materials, collect feedback.	The Great Imagining continues to support schools across Stafford who have signed up as part of the Climate Education Programme, helping them develop and implement their Sustainability Action Plans.	We have had 5 schools signed up and workshops booked in: These have been taking place in October. All schools across the Borough have been contacted on numerous	Teachers received Thinking Kits to embed carbon literacy and nature awareness in lessons. Schools reported improved understanding of climate issues and several have introduced eco-clubs. Community events such as Burntwood Day and Fuse Festival showcased student work to thousands, strengthening engagement.	Completed Funding has now ceased, work will continue delivered directly by TGI		Regulatory Services

			occasions inviting them to take part	Youth Climate Summit in July 2026.			
Carbon Literacy Training	Develop and deliver training to staff and partners, evaluate impact.	The council is working with Keele University and Carbon Literacy training has been delivered to Staff. This Training will be delivered to local businesses in the near future. Keele will also provide an evaluation of the training at the end.	All workshops completed and we are waiting on Keele to provide an evaluation.	45 members of the council attended one or more of the training sessions offered. The figure is lower than our council counterparts initially hoped for, with the recognition upon reflection that the figure of 100 attendees was over-ambitious. It was clear that in-person sessions were found more helpful and dynamic and participation was better than the engagement achieved online	Completed		Regulatory Services

Climate Action Plan 26/27.



Foreword.

As a local authority, Stafford Borough Council is committed to addressing climate change and working towards a more sustainable future. Through this Climate Action Plan, we aim to integrate sustainability into all aspects of our operations, ensuring that our corporate assets, transport systems, businesses, and communities contribute to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing environmental resilience.

This plan outlines key actions under five strategic pillars:



1. **Corporate Assets and Housing** - Improving the sustainability of council-owned assets through energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.



2. **Transport** - Promoting sustainable transport solutions and reducing emissions from council fleets and operations.



3. **Community Engagement** - Supporting and empowering residents to adopt sustainable lifestyles.



4. **Business Engagement** - Encouraging businesses to transition to low-carbon operations and access funding for green initiatives.



5. **Sustainability Education** - Providing training and educational opportunities to improve understanding and participation in climate action.

Baseline Emissions.

Stafford Borough Council's total carbon emissions (excluding Freedom Leisure) are 1,461.8 tCO₂e. Scope 1 emissions account for 699.7 tCO₂e, primarily driven by gas consumption, with the remainder from fleet and fuel use. Scope 2 emissions total 0 tCO₂e, reflecting electricity consumption across council operations, which has been reduced through the use of green tariffs. Scope 3 emissions are the largest contributor at 762.1 tCO₂e, with key sources including waste transportation, grey fleet travel, and well-to-tank (WTT) emissions from fuels and electricity. Emissions from Freedom Leisure are reported separately and total 847.8 tCO₂e, with the majority arising from Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres.

Carbon Emission Breakdown by Scope.

Scope	Description	Stafford Borough (tCO ₂ e)
Scope 1	Direct emissions: Gas, LPG, and fleet vehicles.	699.7
Scope 2	Indirect emissions: Electricity usage.	0
Scope 3	Other indirect emissions: Waste, water, business travel.	762.1

Climate Actions.

Actions	Responsible Service
Release an annual report detailing carbon metrics and future priorities.	Regulatory Services
Conduct quarterly reviews of progress to identify opportunities for improvement and celebrate achievements.	Regulatory Services
Update the action plan annually, ensuring it remains relevant and ambitious.	Regulatory Services
Report progress to Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team to ensure ongoing alignment with council priorities.	Regulatory Services



Pillar 1.

Corporate Assets and Housing.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Decarbonisation planning	Review of decarbonisation report and develop strategy	Regulatory Services Building Control and Climate Change Housing and Corporate Assets Corporate Assets
LED lighting upgrades	Continue with planned installations	Housing and Corporate Assets Corporate Assets
Energy efficiency upgrades to SBC assets	HVAC system at Stafford Leisure Centres	Health and Wellbeing Leisure Services
Energy efficiency upgrades to SBC assets	Destratification fans at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre	Health and Wellbeing Leisure Services
Energy efficiency upgrades to SBC assets	LED at Rowley Park	Health and Wellbeing Leisure Services



Pillar 1.

Corporate Assets and Housing.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Food waste to energy generation	<p>Capture renewable energy generated from food waste and quantify carbon savings.</p> <p>Waste Collected* Total tonnage of food waste collected across the district (reported regularly via our waste contractor).</p> <p>Energy Generation Total renewable energy generated (kWh or MWh)</p> <p>Equivalent number of homes powered</p> <p>Carbon savings Derived using recognised emissions factors (e.g. DEFRA)</p>	<p>Operations Waste and Commercial Services</p>

* Improving sustainability through energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.



Pillar 2. Transport.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Fleet procurement (EV)	Purchase of 2 EV vehicles	Operations Streetscene
EV vehicles (inhouse)	Measure carbon offset	Operations Waste and Commercial Services Streetscene
SWARCO smart charging	Engagement with SWARCO on stats of current charging points. 8 installed further 2 to be installed on council owned land.	Operations Waste and Commercial Services
EV charging infrastructure (LEVI)	Continuation of programme. Sites identified in proposal.	Operations Waste and Commercial Services
Anti-idling campaign	Monitoring and review of idling activity of SBC vehicles	Operations Streetscene



Pillar 3. Community Engagement.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Energy Advice and Assistance through existing programmes	Provide energy advice to residents and encourage take up of energy advice measures in partnership with others	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change
Marketing and Communications Programmes	Website updates, social media, email, events, leaflets, press releases, case studies, litter picking promotion	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change Operations Streetscene
Community Energy	Staffordshire Energetic Communities (SEC) Steering Group updates quarterly Highfields and Western Downs identified for pilot	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change
Planting	Offset reports on trees and plants	Operations



Pillar 4. Business Engagement.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Advice on developing energy efficiency and decarbonisation plans across all education providers	Education providers engaged with across SBC	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change
SME business support	16 SMEs supported and referred to CC team for energy efficiency advice and funding.	Economic Development and Planning Economic Development
Sustainability and transformative tourism	Sustainability Tourism action plan measuring green accreditation achieved by venues in area	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change
Advice on developing energy efficiency and decarbonisation plans in premises occupied by community interest companies and social enterprises	Number of CICs and SE's engaged with	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change



Pillar 5. Sustainability Education.

Action	Description	Responsible Service
Educational engagement through existing community programmes	Work with partners: Bee Friendly The Great Imaging Eco Schools Climate Ambassador Scheme	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change
Behavioral change	Delivery of employee initiatives to promote energy efficiency	Regulatory Services Building Control Climate Change

Monitoring and Reporting.

This Climate Action Plan will be reviewed annually, with progress updates published on the council's website.

Key indicators for success include:

- Reduction in carbon emissions from council operations.
- Increase in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency improvements.
- Expansion of EV charging and sustainable transport use.
- Increased engagement and participation in sustainability initiatives.
- Increased engagement with organisations around sustainability.

Conclusion.

Stafford Borough Council remains committed to climate action, working with residents, businesses, and local stakeholders to create a sustainable and resilient future. This plan provides a clear roadmap for reducing emissions and integrating sustainability into council operations.



APPENDIX 3

- **Staffordshire Taxi Decarbonisation**
- **SBC Community Panel activities**
- **Green Skills with NSCG**
- **Keele University Sustainability Class Students**
- **Active lifestyle events promotion**
- **Demolition waste recycled or disposed of in a sustainable way**
- **The Peoples Emergency Briefing showing**
- **COP27 hosting**
- **Town Centre Master planning engagement**
- **SBC New Local Plan engagement**
- **Chamber of Commerce Environment and Energy Forum**

Agenda Item 4(b)i

Public Spaces Protection Order - Renewal

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 2026
Report of:	Head of Wellbeing
Portfolio:	Community Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to renew, and increase the scope, of the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in the Borough for a further three years - for the purposes of reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB), in accordance with the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the Act).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve:-
- (a) the renewal of the existing PSPO for a three-year period, following a compliant consultation exercise, pursuant to s.72 of the Act;
 - (b) the inclusion of a new prohibited activity relating to unauthorised incursions onto buildings/rooftops (as set out in paragraph 5.16), for a three-year period, following a compliant consultation exercise, pursuant to s.72 of the Act;
 - (c) the inclusion of a new prohibited activity relating to face coverings (as set out in paragraph 5.17), for a three-year period, following a compliant consultation exercise, pursuant to s.72 of the Act;
 - (d) the amendment of the current prohibited activity for busking with amplification (as set out in paragraph 5.13) to only include situations whereby such behaviours are causing a nuisance or disturbance;
 - (e) additional restricted areas for dog exclusion areas (as set out in 5.8(iii)), for a three-year period, following a compliant consultation exercise, pursuant to s.72 of the Act;

- (f) additional restricted areas for prohibited activities relating to loitering, and to remove the requirement for 5 people to be present for the offence to occur (as set out in 5.10), for a three-year period, following a compliant consultation exercise, pursuant to s.72 of the Act.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The existing PSPO expires on 6 December 2026. The current PSPO has worked well in its intention to address problematic behaviours associated with the below activities, and the Borough would benefit from these conditions being retained:
- Alcohol
 - Dogs
 - Vehicles in pedestrianised areas
 - Bicycles, scooters etc. in pedestrianised areas
 - Loitering
 - Tents
 - Canvassing
 - Busking
 - Feeding of birds
 - BBQs
- 2.3 The Community Safety Partnership have identified that unauthorised incursions onto buildings/rooftops across the Borough is posing persistent and significant challenges to Community Safety. As a result, it has been considered appropriate and proportionate to propose prohibiting behaviours linked to these activities within the new proposed PSPO. This would play a key role in ensuring local streets and communities are safe for residents, businesses and visitors. It would also send a clear message that certain behaviours will not be tolerated, and would help reassure residents that unreasonable conduct is being addressed (detailed information in 5.16).
- 2.4 The Community Safety Partnership have identified that the wearing of face coverings can contribute towards ASB in the Borough. The wearing of face coverings can cause alarm and distress to the community, embolden offending behaviour and prevent identification of offenders. As a result, it has been considered appropriate and proportionate to propose prohibit this behaviour within the new proposed PSPO. This would play a key role in ensuring local streets and communities are safe, and feel safe, for residents, businesses and visitors (detailed information in 5.17).

- 2.5 The Community Safety Team propose to amend the PSPO so that amplified busking is prohibited only where it causes, or is likely to cause, nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress, thereby maintaining effective controls against disturbance while allowing well-managed busking that contributes positively to the vibrancy and enjoyment of town centres (detailed information in 5.13).
- 2.6 It is proposed to extend the areas of Dog Exclusion Areas to include additional play areas in Holmcroft Park, the four play areas of Westbridge Park, Charnley Park play area and the entirety of the playing fields near Cherry Tree Avenue in Great Bridgeford. This will help to ensure safe and hygienic public spaces.
- 2.7 The existing PSPO has helped reduce ASB by restricting loitering by groups of five or more; however, it cannot assist where smaller groups or splinter groups cause similar issues. Removing the minimum number threshold and extending the restriction borough-wide would prevent displacement and provide a more effective, and flexible, tool to prevent behaviour that is causing, or is likely to cause, ASB. This approach would complement current police dispersal powers by allowing immediate intervention without the need for prior authorisation, while remaining proportionate and not targeting law-abiding individuals or specific groups.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 PSPOs are permitted for a maximum of three years and at that point will either expire, or an application must be made to renew (if certain criteria under section 60 of the Act are met). These criteria include that an extension is necessary to prevent activity recurring.
- 3.2 Updated statutory guidance, issued in September 2025 on the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, further stresses the need for local authorities to utilise all their tools and powers - including PSPOs.
- 3.3 The use of PSPOs in Staffordshire has also been recommended in the externally produced Community Safety Strategic Assessment, and its implementation would continue to be utilised alongside other approaches to ASB, as part of our broad and balanced anti-social behaviour policy.
- 3.4 In line with the Act and guidance, we consider that the proposed PSPO directly address the behaviours which themselves are causing ASB, rather than any activities which may not, in themselves, be detrimental to the community's quality of life. We also do not seek to unduly pursue individuals who are not causing any harm. We have given full regard to the freedoms permitted under articles 10 and 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 when drafting this proposed PSPO.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

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

4.1 Communities and Wellbeing

- A safe and secure place to live for local people
- A safe and cohesive Borough

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Anti-social behaviour can blight the lives of communities and often presents a cumulative impact. The Council holds a key role in ensuring local areas are safe and welcoming to live, work and visit. Tackling ASB remains a key strategic priority as detailed by the Community Safety Strategic Assessment and the Community Wellbeing Partnership.
- 5.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the Act) gained Royal Assent in April 2014. The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) provision within the Act has been in operation since 20 October 2014, and sits amongst a broad range of powers and tools to help tackle anti-social behaviour locally.
- 5.3 PSPOs are aimed at ensuring public spaces can be enjoyed free from ASB. They are intended to provide a means of preventing individuals, or groups, committing anti-social behaviour in a public space, where, pursuant to s.59 of the Act, the behaviour:
- (i) is having, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life for those in the locality;
 - (ii) is persistent or continuing in nature;
 - (iii) is unreasonable and
 - (iv) justifies the restrictions being imposed.
- 5.4 Councils can use PSPOs to prohibit specified activities within a defined public area. PSPOs differ from other tools introduced under the Act as they are council-led, and rather than targeting specific individuals or properties, they focus on the identified problem behaviour in a specific location.
- 5.5 Breach of a PSPO without a reasonable excuse is an offence discussed further under point 5.18.

5.6 As detailed in 3.1, the maximum duration of a PSPO is three years, but at any point before expiry the Local Authority can renew/extend, or vary the Order by up to three years - if they consider that it is necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring/recurring, or if there is a need to alter/remove an existing prohibition or requirement, or to introduce a new one.

5.7 **Alcohol**

- (i) Street drinking had previously led to seasonal, but unsatisfactory, levels of ASB within the locality, which in turn had made certain areas of the borough unsavoury to frequent. The current PSPO has been very effective in its control of this issue and provides a strong tool for dealing with the associated behaviours. Its continuance within the PSPO is necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour, and assists with engagement for those requiring support and diversion.
- (ii) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**, and we do not propose to alter them.
- (iii) The alcohol restrictions would not apply if within the curtilage of a licensed premises, pursuant to s.62 of the Act (i.e. a licensed bar, restaurant, shop, off license or marquee licensed with a Temporary Events Notice, as a one-off event).
- (iv) The PSPO would provide police officers or authorised persons, to require any person to cease consumption of alcohol and to surrender the alcohol, (or what is reasonably believed to be alcohol, or a container for alcohol).
- (v) Failure to comply would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.8 **Dog prohibitions**

- (i) The current PSPO has been effective at limiting dog-related ASB; including fouling, dogs causing issues when being off lead, and issues caused when more than 4 dogs are walked together at any one time. We therefore propose to renew this prohibition.
- (ii) The current restricted areas for dog fouling, dogs on lead (by direction) and a maximum of 4 dogs walked at any one time is the entirety of the borough, and we do not propose to alter them.

- (iii) The current restricted areas for dog exclusion and dogs off lead are detailed in **APPENDIX 4**. Following consultation with partners, we also propose to extend the Dog Exclusion Areas, only, to cover Holmcroft children's play area, Westbridge Park play area, Charnley Park play area and the entirety of the playing fields near Cherry Tree Avenue in Great Bridgeford. This will help to ensure safe and hygienic public spaces.
- (iv) The restrictions would not apply to a person with a disability who is accompanied by an assistance dog.
- (v) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.9 **Motor Vehicles/Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Roller Blades**

- (i) Public safety for users of the pedestrianised areas within the borough is paramount. The above activities threaten this and can cause alarm and distress for residents and visitors. The vast majority of Fixed Penalty Notices issued during the term of this PSPO are linked to this behaviour. We therefore propose to renew this prohibited activity.
- (ii) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**, and we do not propose to alter them.
- (iii) The restrictions would not apply to emergency vehicles, cash in transit vehicles, Royal Mail, or delivery vehicles (between specified times). Nor would the restrictions apply where the propelled vehicle/bicycle is being used as a mobility aid by a person with a disability.
- (iv) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.10 **Loitering**

- (i) The current PSPO has had a degree of success in helping to reduce ASB, by prohibiting groups of 5 or more from loitering. However, it does not address issues where there are less than 5 people, or when smaller 'splinter groups' become created - either by design, or otherwise.
- (ii) Therefore, we are proposing to remove the number of people required to constitute the offence, and seek to prevent loitering by any number of people in circumstances where this is causing, or is likely to cause ASB.
- (iii) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**. However, due to issues relating to ASB caused by loitering occurring across the locality, we are proposing to extend the restricted areas to include the entirety of the borough.

- (iv) 89 dispersal orders have been issued by police in the borough over the previous 12-month period, pursuant to s.34 of the Act - to proactively prevent significant ASB occurring. However, whereas a dispersal order requires the pre-approval of a Police Inspector, a PSPO would provide an immediate solution to any behaviour which is causing, or is likely to escalate to ASB. Both tools would therefore complement each other, and provide a graded response to any ASB being experienced.
- (v) It is crucial to note that the PSPO will not target any particular group, nor will it prevent any law-abiding people who are not committing anti-social behaviour from meeting.
- (vi) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.11 Tents

- (i) The existing PSPO created a prohibited activity of erecting, sleeping or otherwise being in a tent (or other like structure) within the pedestrianised areas of Stafford and Stone town centres. This was in response to a growing number of such tents and structures in these areas which were prompting public complaints regarding ASB, littering, human waste and the obstruction of public spaces. The use of tents was also making it more difficult to engage people and signpost to statutory services to address their housing and support needs.
- (ii) The PSPO has been successful in mitigating these issues, and we are therefore proposing to renew this prohibition.
- (iii) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**, and we do not propose to alter them.
- (iv) It is crucial to note, as stated in 3.4 that the PSPO will address the behaviours which themselves are causing ASB and harm, rather than any activities which may not, in themselves, be detrimental to the community's quality of life. We do not seek to criminalise any person who is homeless, or is in need of additional support.
- (v) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18, but engagement, signposting and support would be the preferred initial responses.

5.12 Canvassing

- (i) The existing PSPO contains a prohibition of canvassing for the sale of services in the pedestrianised areas of Stafford and Stone town centres. Previously, significant complaints were received regarding numerous

and persistent approaches by canvassers which led to the public feeling pressured, harassed or unable to pass freely through an area.

- (ii) The PSPO has been successful in mitigating these issues, and we are therefore proposing to renew this prohibition.
- (iii) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**, and we do not propose to alter them.
- (iv) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.13 **Busking**

- (i) The current PSPO prohibits any person from busking with an amplifier within the pedestrianised areas of Stafford and Stone town centres. This prohibited activity was introduced in response to numerous complaints from businesses and visitors, and has been effective in its purpose.
- (ii) Despite this, it is felt that this prohibited activity, in its current form, prevents legitimate attempts to provide entertainment.
- (iii) When managed well, busking can bring a range of social, cultural and economic benefits to public spaces - creating a vibrant, enjoyable and welcoming environment for residents and visitors. It can also enrich community life, provide opportunity for local talent and help foster a positive shared public realm.
- (iv) It is therefore proposed that the new PSPO will prohibit the use of amplified sound equipment in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress, or a public nuisance to others in the restricted area.
- (v) This will seek to create a balance between allowing beneficial entertainment, whilst still preventing nuisance that has a detrimental effect on the community. Busking “zones” were considered but have not been proposed for inclusion, as they can lead to complicated and inconsistent application of PSPOs.
- (vi) The current restricted areas for this prohibited activity are detailed in **APPENDIX 3**, and we do not propose to alter them.
- (vii) A breach - failure to comply after being requested to reduce volume, or cease, by an Authorised Officer, would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.14 **Feeding of birds**

- (i) The existing PSPO prohibits any person from feeding birds in public spaces across the Borough. The feeding of birds can increase flock size and aggression of birds - causing public nuisance and significant fouling. Additionally, leftover food attracts rats, mice and foxes to the area - further contributing to issues.
- (ii) By prohibiting this activity we seek to create a cleaner, more attractive Borough and a better environment for residents, businesses and visitors.
- (iii) The PSPO has been successful in mitigating these issues and we are therefore proposing to renew this prohibition.
- (iv) The current restricted area for this prohibited activity is the entirety of the Borough, and we do not propose to alter this.
- (v) The restrictions would not apply to the feeding of ducks or other waterfowl at ponds, lakes, or watercourses.
- (vi) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.15 **BBQs**

- (i) The existing PSPO prohibits BBQs (or equivalent) on any public space within the borough. Numerous complaints had previously been received regarding smoke drift entering properties, whilst BBQs themselves can present a fire hazard, create littering issues, and can contribute to environmental damage.
- (ii) The PSPO has been successful in mitigating these issues and we are therefore proposing to renew this prohibition.
- (iii) The current restricted area for this prohibited activity is the entirety of the Borough, and we do not propose to alter this.
- (iv) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.16 **Unauthorised access onto properties and buildings**

- (i) A new proposed prohibited activity within the PSPO would seek to prevent ASB and criminality as a result of unauthorised incursions onto buildings/rooftops within the borough.
- (ii) There is an emerging issue within Stafford linked to young adults accessing rooftops and elevated buildings without consent. There have been 62 known incidents of this behaviour since January 2025.

- (iii) This behaviour often leads to ASB and/or criminal damage, whilst causing high levels of concern and complaints from residents and businesses. It also places those partaking at substantial risk of injury or death.
- (iv) Work is ongoing between the Community Safety Team and Early Intervention and Prevention Officers to target harden vulnerable locations across the borough, thus making them less accessible and appealing to this activity. However, additional tools and powers are required to assist with further addressing this issue.
- (v) We propose to prohibit this activity across the entire borough.
- (vi) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

5.17 Face coverings

- (i) A new proposed prohibited activity within the PSPO would seek to prevent ASB and criminality as a result of the wearing of face coverings within the borough.
- (ii) There is an emerging issue within Stafford of youth adults wearing face coverings that wholly or substantially obscure the face. The wearing of such coverings has been reported as causing harassment, alarm, and distress to members of the public, and it can also facilitate anti-social behaviour or criminal activity.
- (iii) Fear of crime can be as damaging as crime itself, and the proposed inclusion of this prohibition within the PSPO will reassure residents, visitors and businesses and improve public perceptions of safety.
- (iv) The PSPO will not target anyone wearing face coverings for genuine religious purposes, for genuine medical or health reasons, for PPE or as required by law, or in circumstances where the face covering is not worn so as to cause or contribute to anti-social behaviour, harassment, alarm, or distress.
- (v) We propose to prohibit this activity in across the entire borough.
- (vi) A breach would constitute an offence as detailed in 5.18.

- 5.18 It would be an offence for any person, without reasonable excuse, to engage in any activity which is prohibited by this PSPO. Any person who is found to be in breach of this PSPO shall be liable on summary conviction to a maximum penalty of level 2 on the standard scale, (currently £500) for breach of Alcohol Restrictions, or to a maximum penalty of level 3 (currently £1,000) for all other restrictions. Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) where issued within the prescribed time period as specified in the Notice, will discharge any liability to conviction for the offence. FPNs will be £100, reduced to £75 if paid within 10 days. £100 is the current maximum fine, but this is currently subject to review currently within the Crime and Policing Bill 2025.
- 5.19 FPNs for PSPO breaches can be issued to anyone over the age of 10. However, in normal situations, we propose to only consider issuing FPNs to those above 14 years of age (and in consultation with Youth Justice services, up to the age of 18). However, in exceptional circumstances, there is still the option to issue to those aged between 10 and 14 years of age.
- 5.20 It will not always be appropriate to issue FPNs, or to prosecute offenders. Warnings, diversion, signposting and support may often be sufficient, and in many circumstances, this will be the initial preferred response.
- 5.21 If the offence does proceed to court, and following conviction, the Council and/or Police could apply for a Criminal Behaviour Order which can contain both prohibitions and positive requirements for the individual, including banning them from certain locations.
- 5.22 If approved at Cabinet, Legal Services will formally draft an Order and a consultation process must take place before the new PSPO is implemented. The legislation sets out a number of requirements for consultation and communication before the Order is introduced. Local authorities are obliged to consult with the local Chief Officer of Police; the Police and Crime Commissioner, owners or occupiers of land within the affected area where reasonably practicable, and appropriate community representatives. Any county councils (where the Order is being made by a district), parish or community councils that are in the proposed area covered by the PSPO must also be notified.
- 5.23 The consultation would also be published on the Council's website and across social media channels. This would be for a period of approximately 6 weeks. If any reasonable objections are received, these would be considered, and the draft Order amended, if necessary. If this is the case, Cabinet would need to make a further decision on the amendments.
- 5.24 Once the final Order is made it will need to be published on the Council's website (permanently for the three-year period it is in force). Also, amended signage will need erecting within the areas affected.

- 5.25 The validity of a PSPO may be challenged by way of application to the High Court within six weeks of the Order being made. For that appeal to be successful it would have to show that the Council did not have the power to make the Order, as the issue covered has not been demonstrated, usually by empirical evidence, to be a significant enough issue to justify the restriction. The other grounds for the appeal would be to demonstrate that the consultation process was inadequate. Only those who are directly affected by the restrictions (i.e. persons who live in the restricted area or regularly work or live there) are able to challenge the PSPO.
- 5.26 A PSPO can be rescinded, amended or extended at any point during its operation. Any amendment or extension will need to follow the agreed consultation process. There is no limit on the number of times an Order may be reviewed and renewed.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There will be some additional costs in terms of new/amended signage. This will be met out of existing Community Safety budgets. Where only an amendment to signage is required, re-wrapping will be considered as a cost-effective measure.

Any income gained from the issuing of FPNs shall be retained by the Community Safety Team. Any legal fees shall be initially financed by the Community Safety Team, and will be met out of existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

Legal have been, and will continue to be, consulted with for advice on the wording and details of the proposed Order, to ensure complete compliance with legislation.

The purpose of the PSPO is to enhance the environment and safety within the Borough through the use of the legal tools available. The renewal of the PSPO would seek to achieve a legitimate aim of the Council.

There will need to be procedures in place to deal with the scope of new provisions and changes within the PSPO to ensure the Council abides by the obligations placed upon by the Equality Act 2010 and reduce the risk of claims.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

Failure to renew the PSPO, and agree new proposals, may result in an increase in ASB and criminality within the borough.

The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to formulate and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder - and the use appropriate tools and powers contained within the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 is one strand of this strategy.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

An initial equality assessment has been undertaken in line with the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The proposed measures have been designed to be proportionate, evidence-based, and compliant with statutory guidance - addressing specific behaviours that are causing, or likely to cause, anti-social behaviour, rather than targeting any particular individual or group.

The exemptions described in the report, and officer discretion, will ensure the measures are applied correctly, with no disproportionate adverse impact on protected characteristics identified at this stage. Ongoing monitoring of the PSPO will help ensure that equality impacts continue to be identified and mitigated where necessary.

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, it is hoped that these negative effects shall be minimised, both for those partaking in the acts, and for the wider community.

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Prohibited Activities

Appendix 2: Map of Restricted Areas for:

- Unauthorised Access onto Buildings/Properties
- BBQs (or equivalent) on public space
- Dogs on Lead by direction
- Maximum of 4 dogs walked

- Loitering
- Feeding of birds
- Face coverings

Appendix 3: Maps of Restricted Areas including:

- Alcohol
- Motor Vehicles
- Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Roller Skates
- Tents
- Canvassing
- Busking

Appendix 4: Maps of Restricted Areas including:

- Dogs on Leads
- Dog Exclusion Areas

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer:	Oliver Greatbatch
Telephone Number:	01543 464477
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	Cabinet 18 June 2026 (Only)
Key Decision:	Yes

Appendix 1

Proposed Prohibited Activities

(a) Alcohol

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from having an open alcohol container in their possession, or consuming alcohol, or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol.

Any person in the restricted areas is required to surrender any open alcohol container, or which is reasonably believed to be alcohol or a container for alcohol, when required to do so by an Authorised Officer of the Council.

(b) Dog Fouling

Any person in the restricted areas is required to remove the faeces of a dog they are in control of immediately after the dog has defecated.

(c) Dogs on Leads

Any person who is in control of a dog in a "no dogs off lead" restricted area is required to keep the dog on a lead at all times, and such lead must not exceed a length of two metres.

(d) Dogs on Leads by Direction

Any person in the restricted areas who is in control of a dog is required to put and keep the dog on a lead, if given a direction to do so by an Authorised Officer of the Council.

(e) Dog Exclusion Areas

Any person is prohibited from allowing a dog they are in control of to enter the restricted areas.

(f) Dog Walking

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from walking more than 4 dogs at any one time.

(g) Motor Vehicles

All motor vehicles in the restricted areas are prohibited from travelling, or parking, along the pedestrianised routes.

(h) Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Roller Skates

Any person is prohibited from riding on a bicycle, scooter, skateboard or roller skates (including roller blades) in the restricted areas.

(i) Loitering

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from loitering or otherwise gathering in groups in circumstances where this is causing, or is likely to cause, anti-social behaviour.

(j) Tents

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from erecting, sleeping in, or otherwise being in a tent (or like structure).

(k) Canvassing

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from canvassing for the sale of services by means of direct debit, or for the purpose of obtaining an individual's bank account details.

(l) Busking

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited to use amplified sound equipment in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress, or a public nuisance to others in the restricted area.

Any person in the restricted areas is required to reduce volume or cease following a reasonable request by an Authorised Officer.

(m) Feeding Of Birds

Any person is prohibited from feeding birds in public open spaces across the Borough of Stafford, except for the feeding of ducks or other waterfowl at ponds, lakes, or watercourses.

(n) BBQ's or equivalent

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from using a BBQ, or equivalent.

(o) Unauthorised access onto properties and buildings

Any person in the restricted areas is prohibited from climbing onto, or accessing, any building, roof, or elevated structure across the Borough of Stafford without lawful authority or a legitimate purpose.

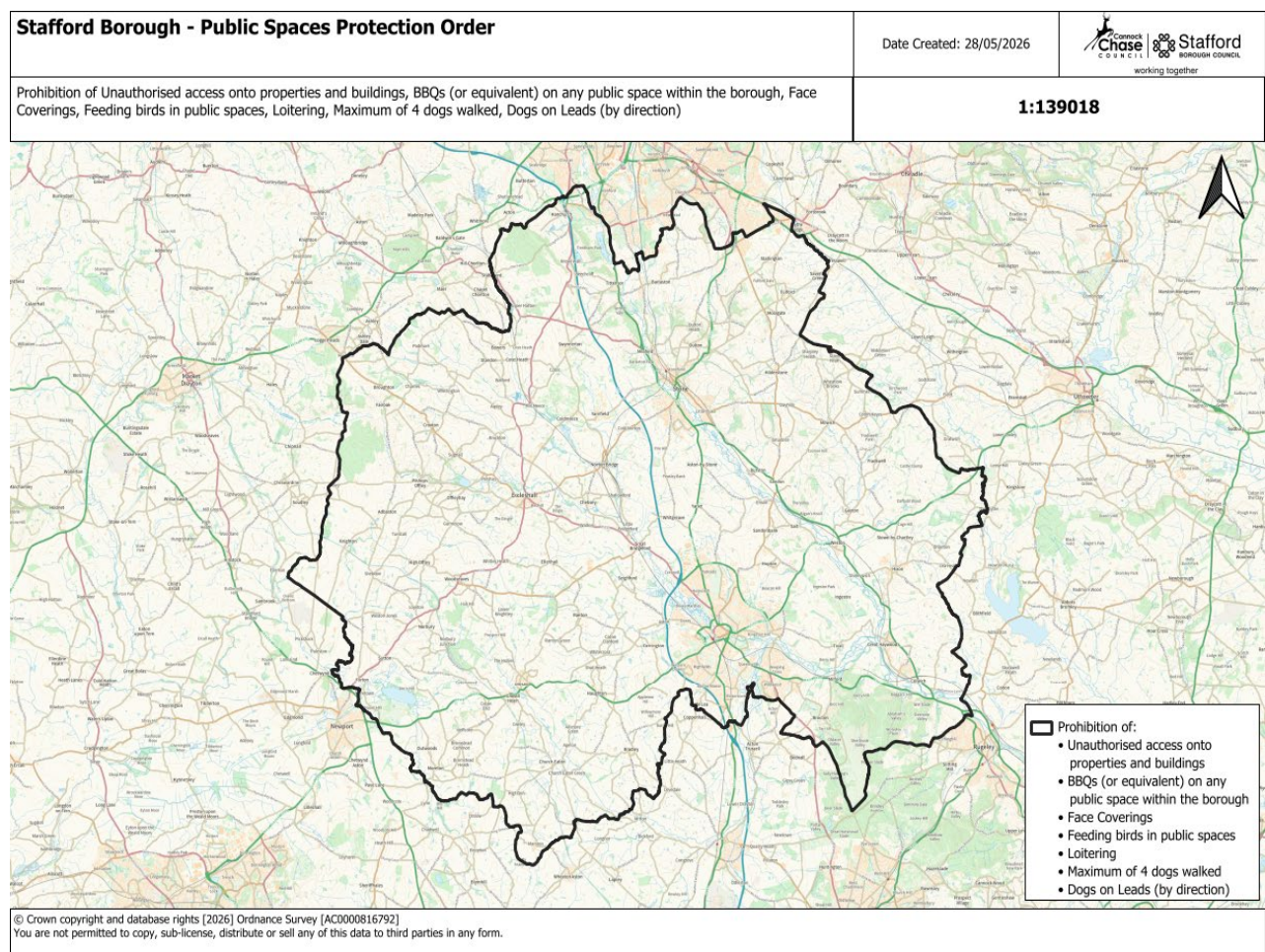
(p) Face coverings

A person is prohibited from wearing a face covering that wholly or substantially obscures the face, where that covering is worn in circumstances that are likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to members of the public, or to facilitate anti-social behaviour or criminal activity.

Appendix 2:

(Entire Borough) Map of Restricted Areas for:


- Unauthorised Access onto Buildings/Properties
- BBQs (or equivalent) on public space
- Dogs on Lead by direction
- Maximum of 4 dogs walked
- Loitering
- Feeding of birds
- Face coverings

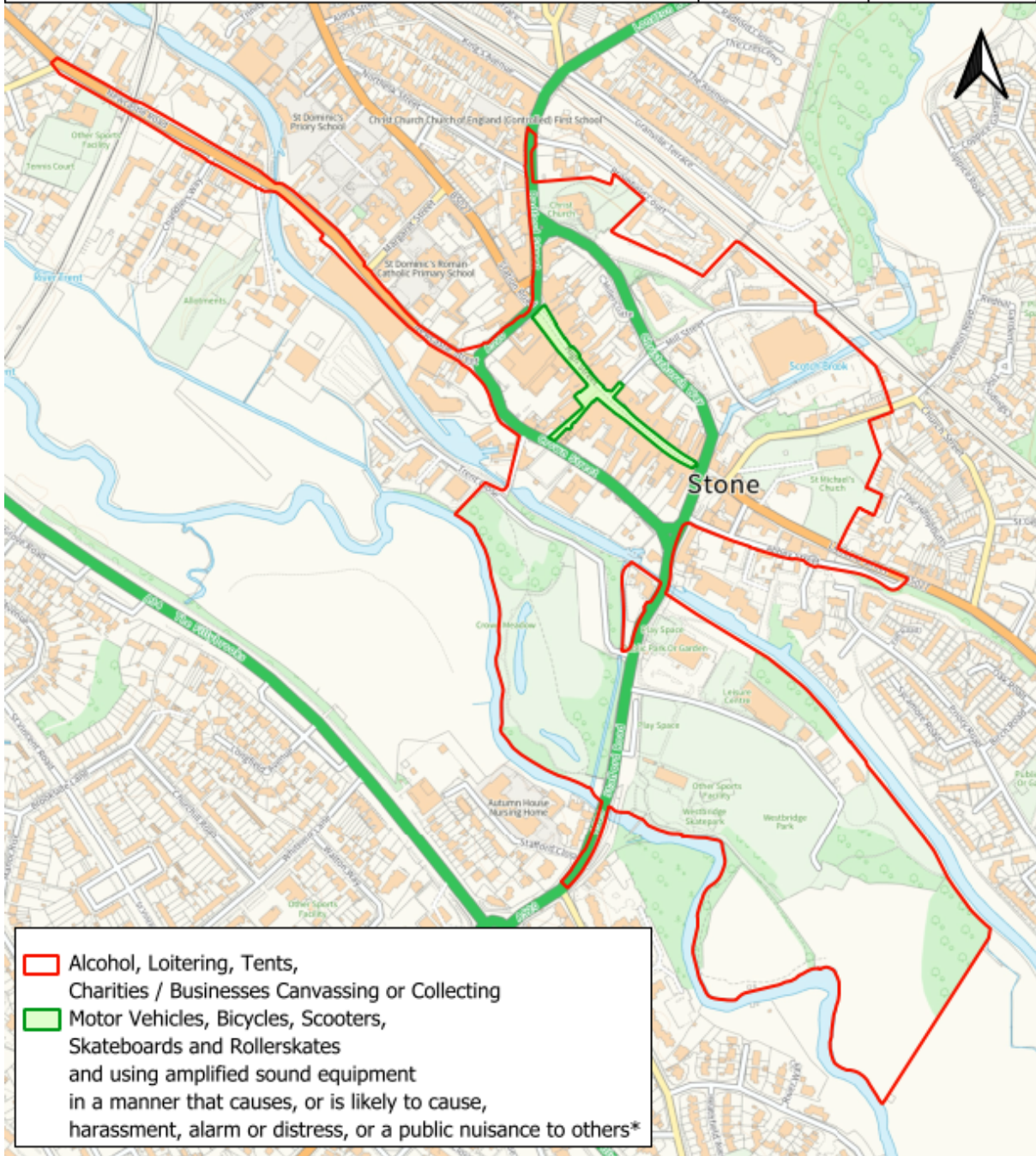


Appendix 3


Maps of Restricted Areas including:

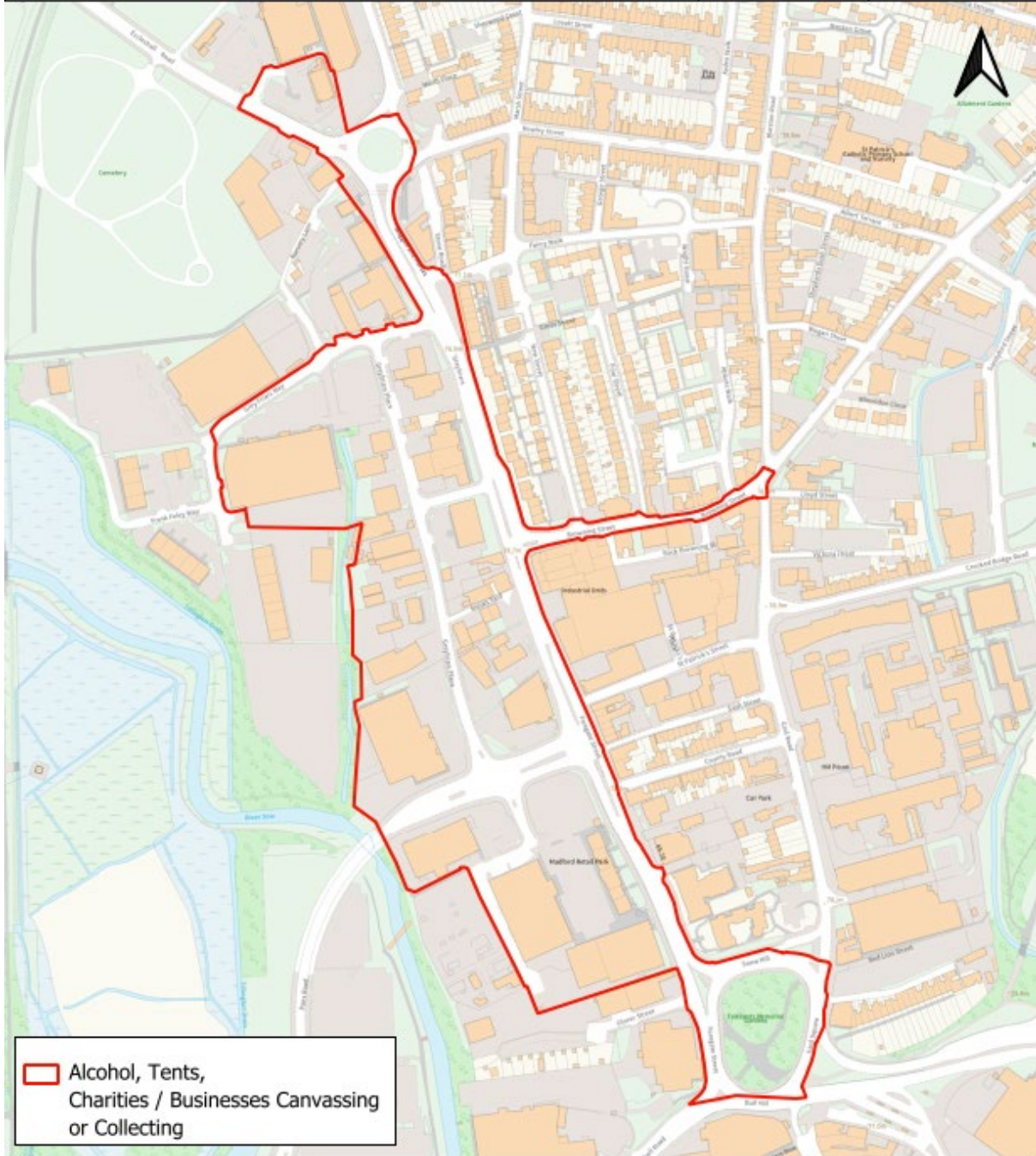
- Alcohol
- Motor Vehicles
- Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Roller Skates
- Tents
- Canvassing
- Busking

<h2>St. Michael's & Stonefield - Public Spaces Protection Order</h2>	Date Created: 02/06/2026	 Chase Stafford borough councils working together
Stone Town Centre	40a - 40b	1:5,592




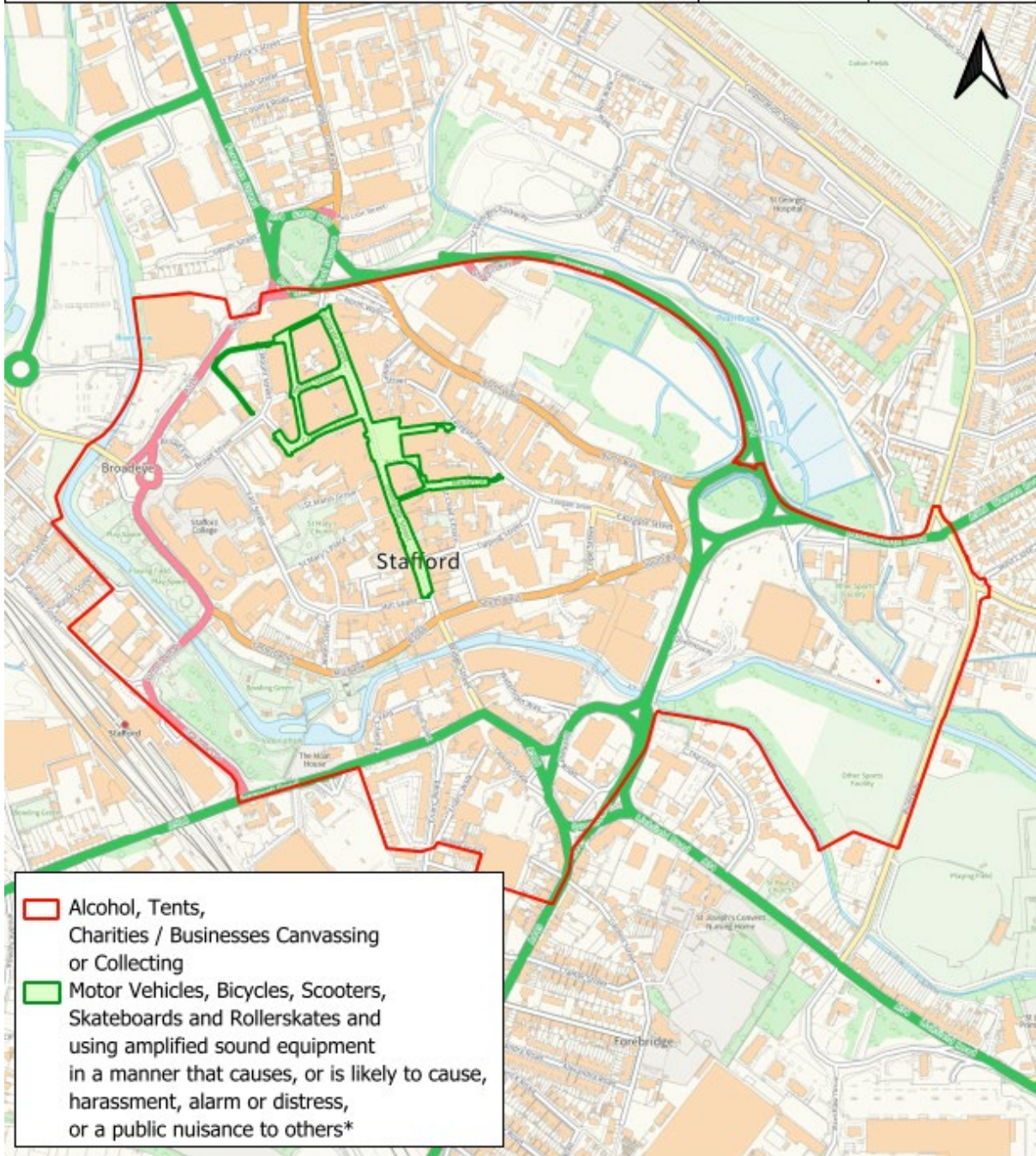
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 *Please see Public Spaces Protection Order for exemptions

Stafford Town - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Greyfriars, Stafford	41a	1:3,701




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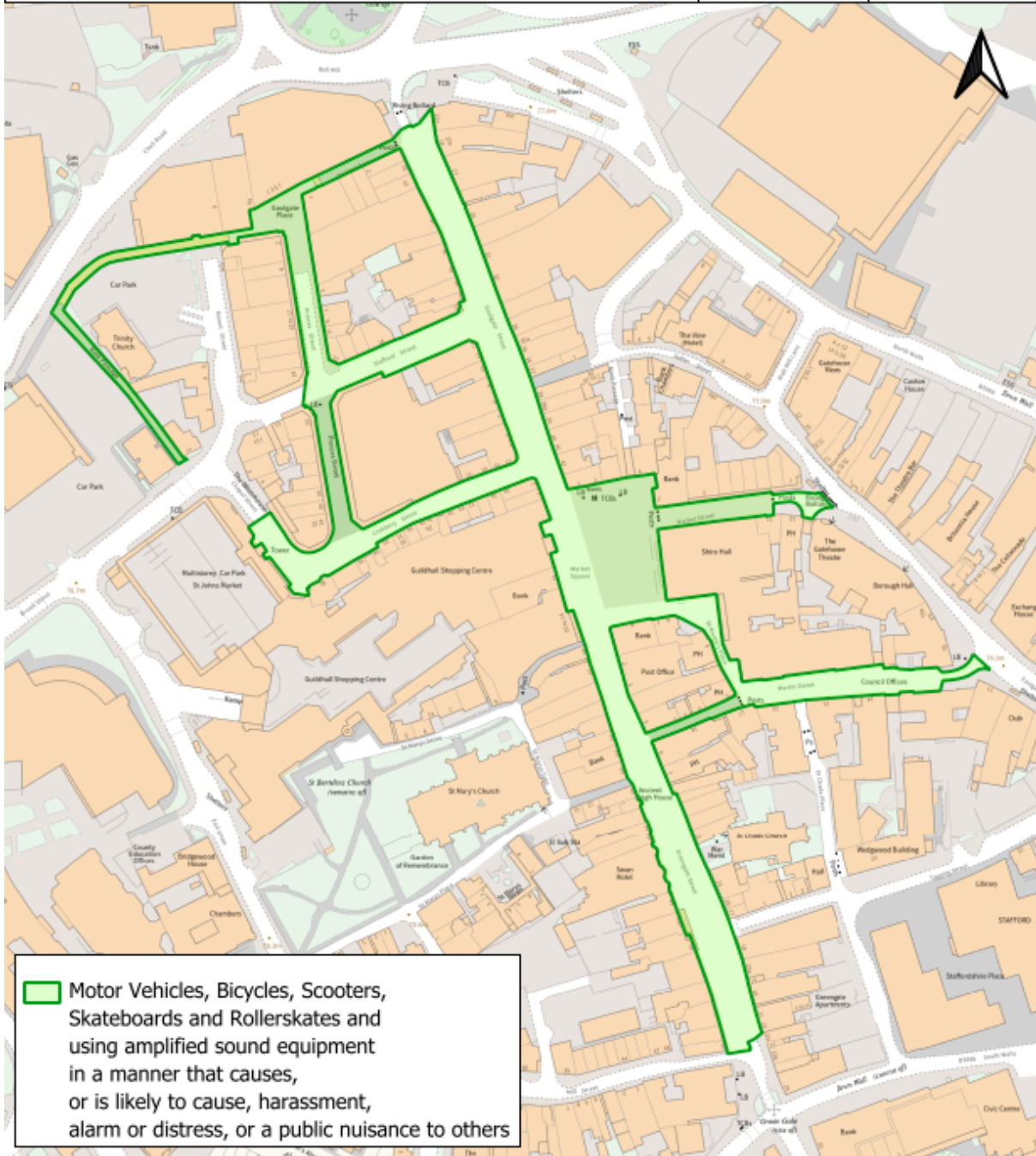
<h2>Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order</h2>	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Stafford Town Centre	43a	1:6,690




- ▭ Alcohol, Tents, Charities / Businesses Canvassing or Collecting
- ▭ Motor Vehicles, Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Rollerskates and using amplified sound equipment in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress, or a public nuisance to others*


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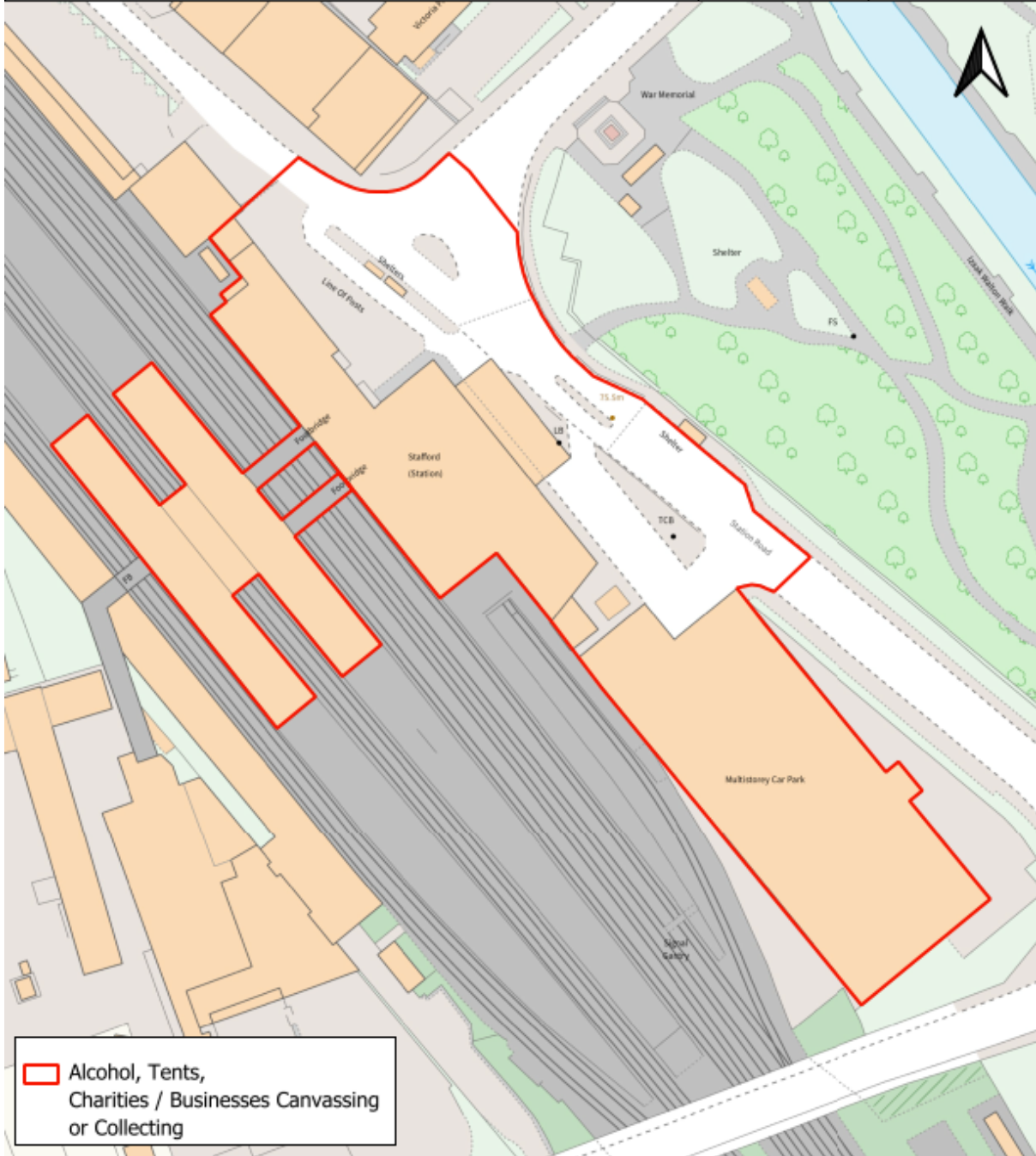
Stafford Town - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Stafford Town Centre	39b	1:2,080




 Motor Vehicles, Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards and Rollerskates and using amplified sound equipment in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress, or a public nuisance to others


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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Stafford Train Station	44a	1:1,008



 Alcohol, Tents,
Charities / Businesses Canvassing
or Collecting

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<p>Coton - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>St Georges Mansions</p>	<p>45a</p>	<p>1:1,476</p>




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Appendix 4:


Maps of Restricted Areas including:

- **Dogs on Leads**
- **Dog Exclusion Areas**

Doxey & Castletown - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Victoria Park North & Play Area	1a	1:1,250




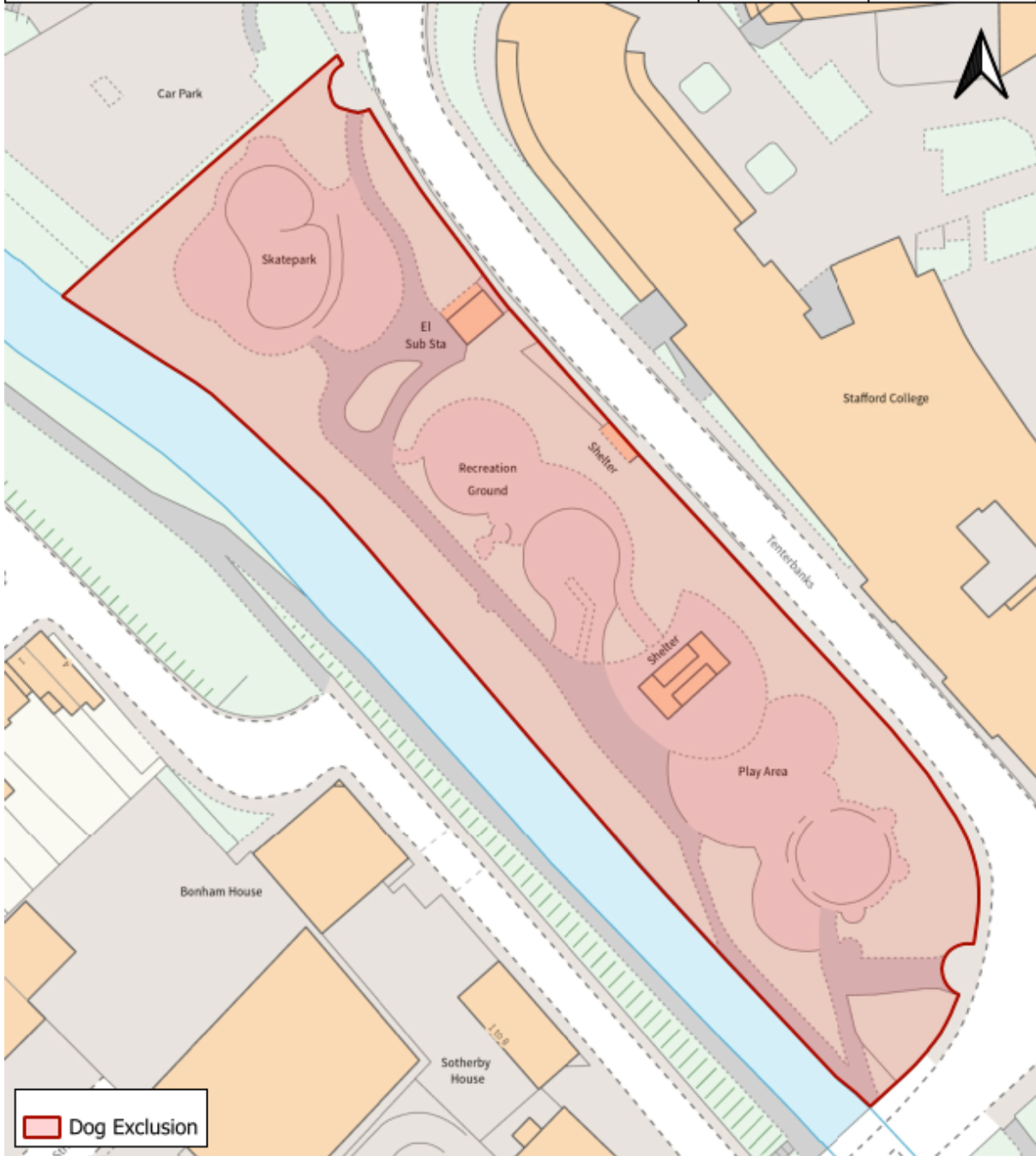
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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
Victoria Park, Stafford	1b	1:1,298




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Doxey & Castletown - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
Victoria Park North & Play Area	1z	1:734




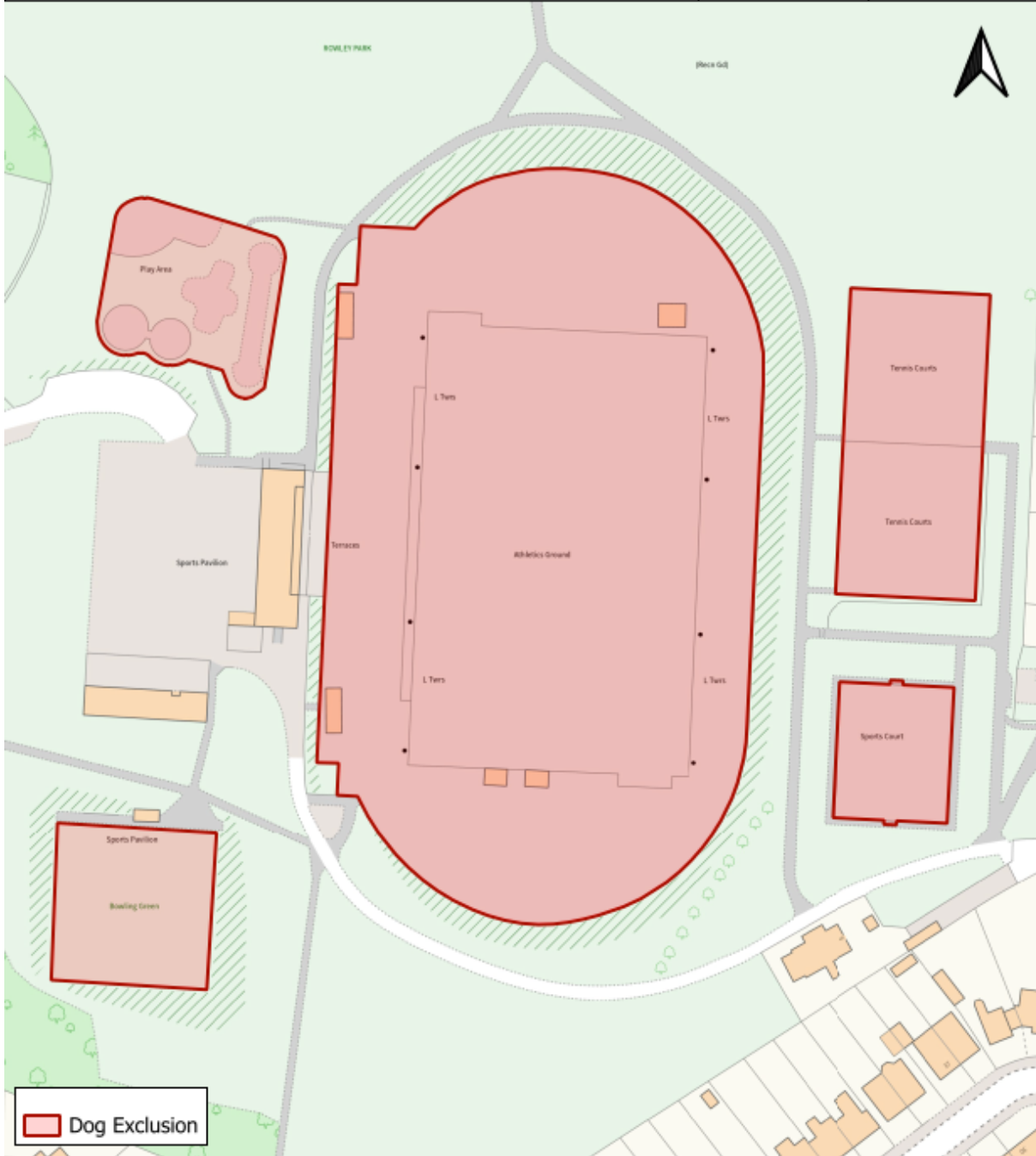
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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Bowling Green, Victoria Park, Stafford	1z	1:285




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Rowley - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Rowley Park, Stafford	2z	1:1,164




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St. Michael's & Stonefield - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
Stonefield Park, Stone	3a	1:579




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St. Michael's & Stonefield - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Stonefield Park, Stone	3z	1:518




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Littleworth - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Littleworth Park	4a	1:534




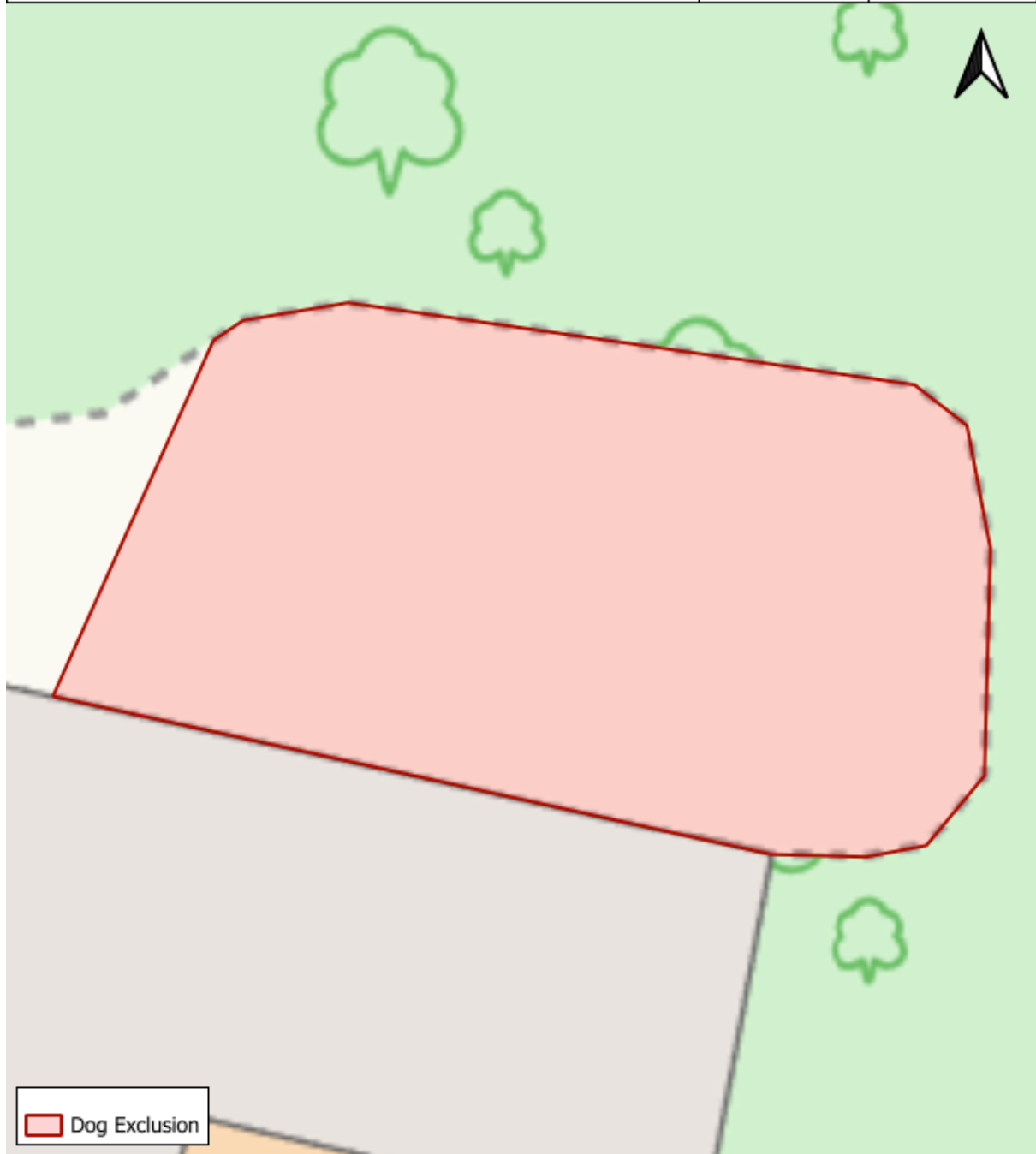
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Baswich - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Lancing Avenue, Stafford	5a	1:160




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Eccleshall - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Meadow View, Adbaston	6a	1:134




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<p>Milwich - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>All Ways Close, Milwich</p>	<p>7a</p>	<p>1:344</p>




 Dog Exclusion

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<p>Coton - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>Bell Close, Stafford</p>	<p>8a</p>	<p>1:191</p>




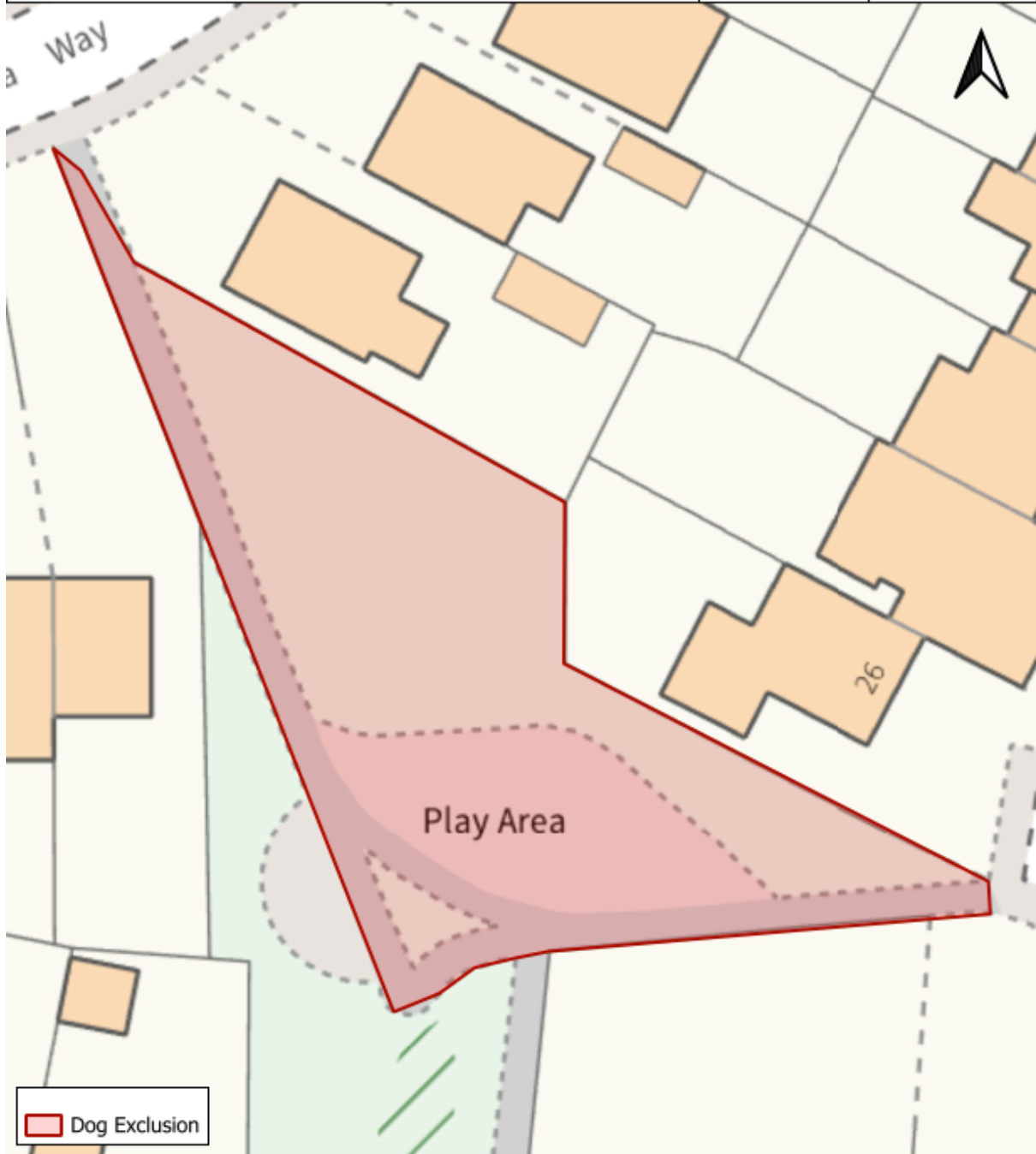
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Holmcroft - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Beton Way, Stafford	9a	1:128




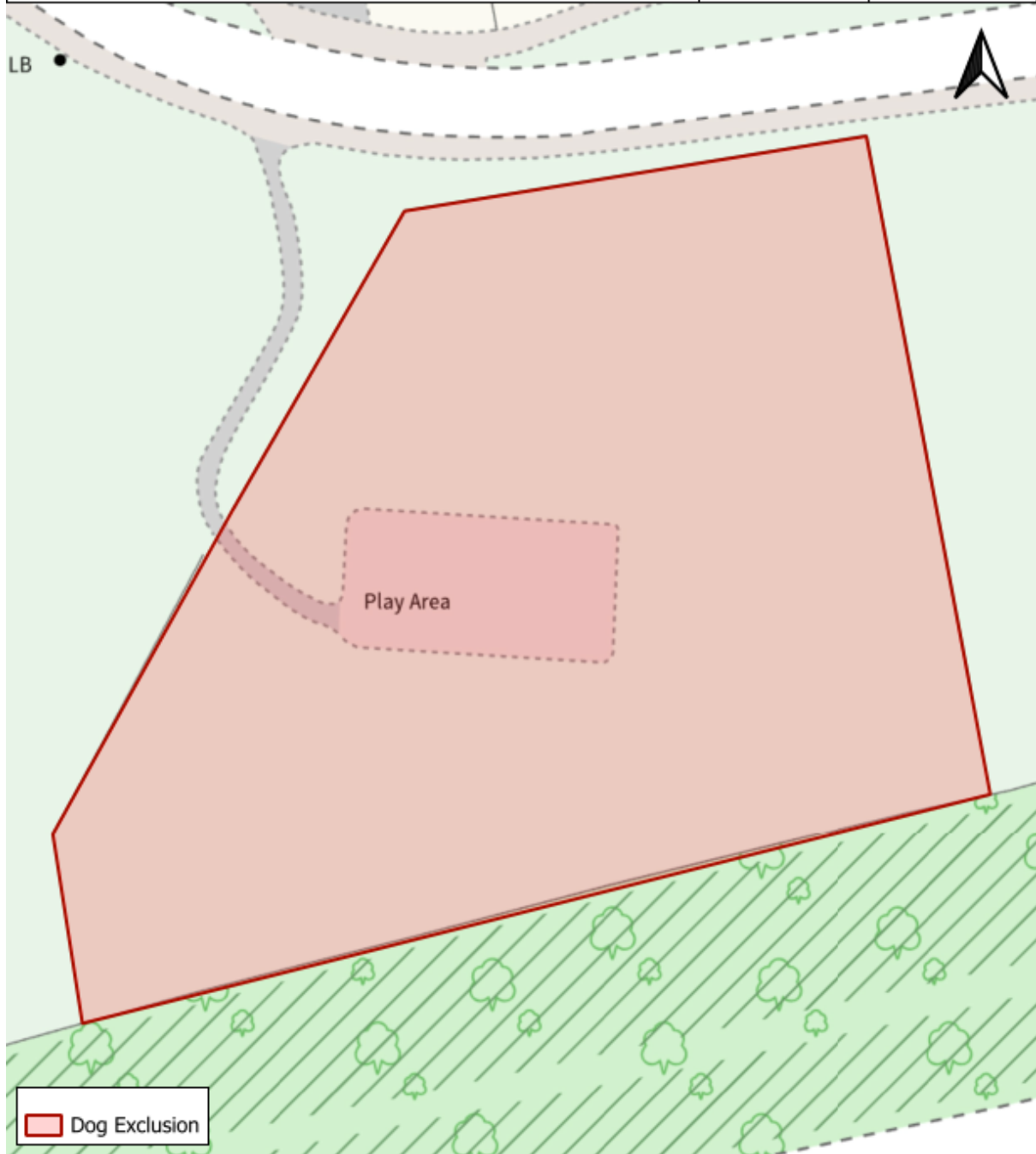
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Baswich - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Danta Way, Stafford	10a	1:256




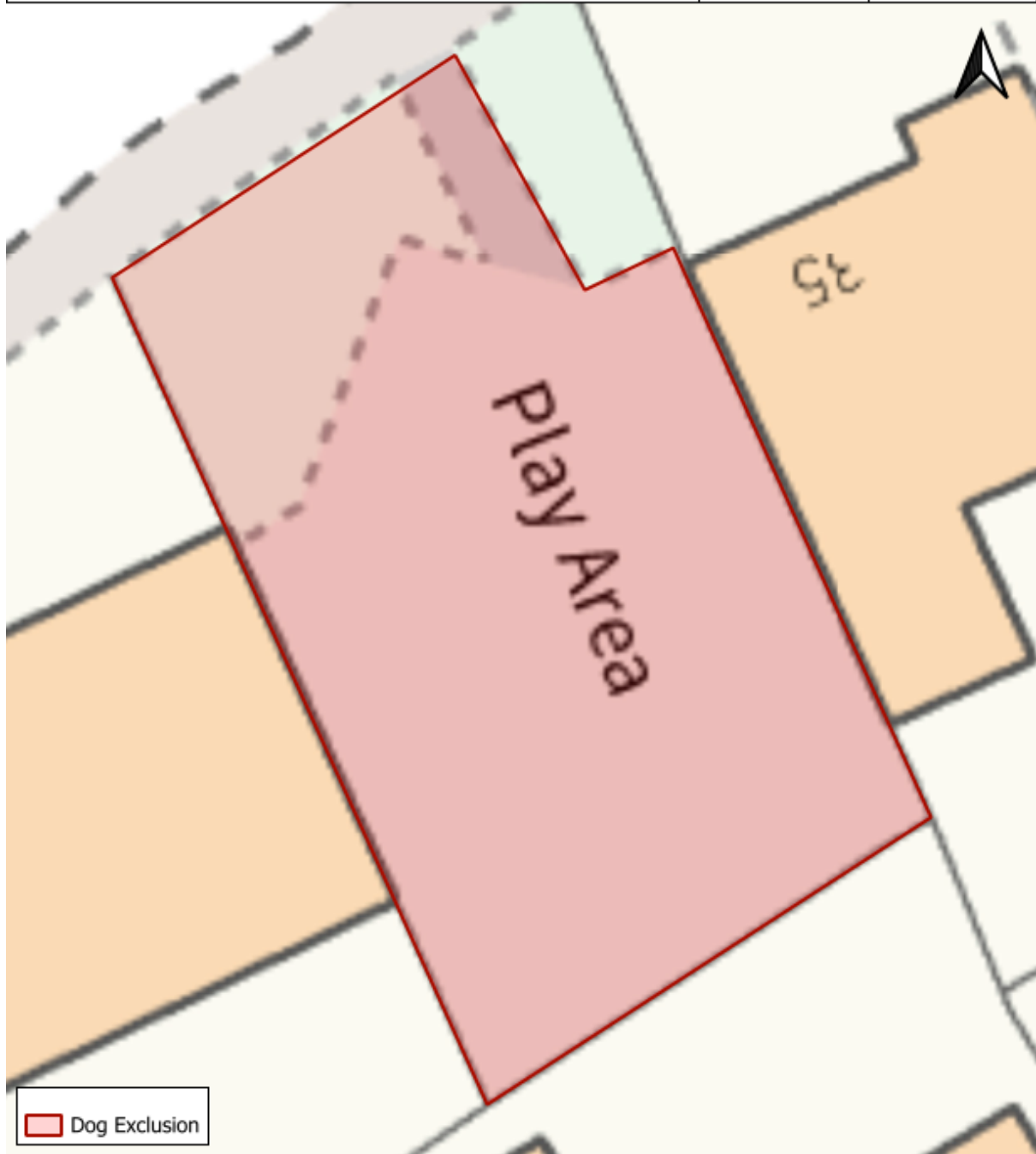
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Swynnerton & Oulton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Ferndown Drive South	11a	1:424




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Common - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Fernwood, Stafford	12a	1:111




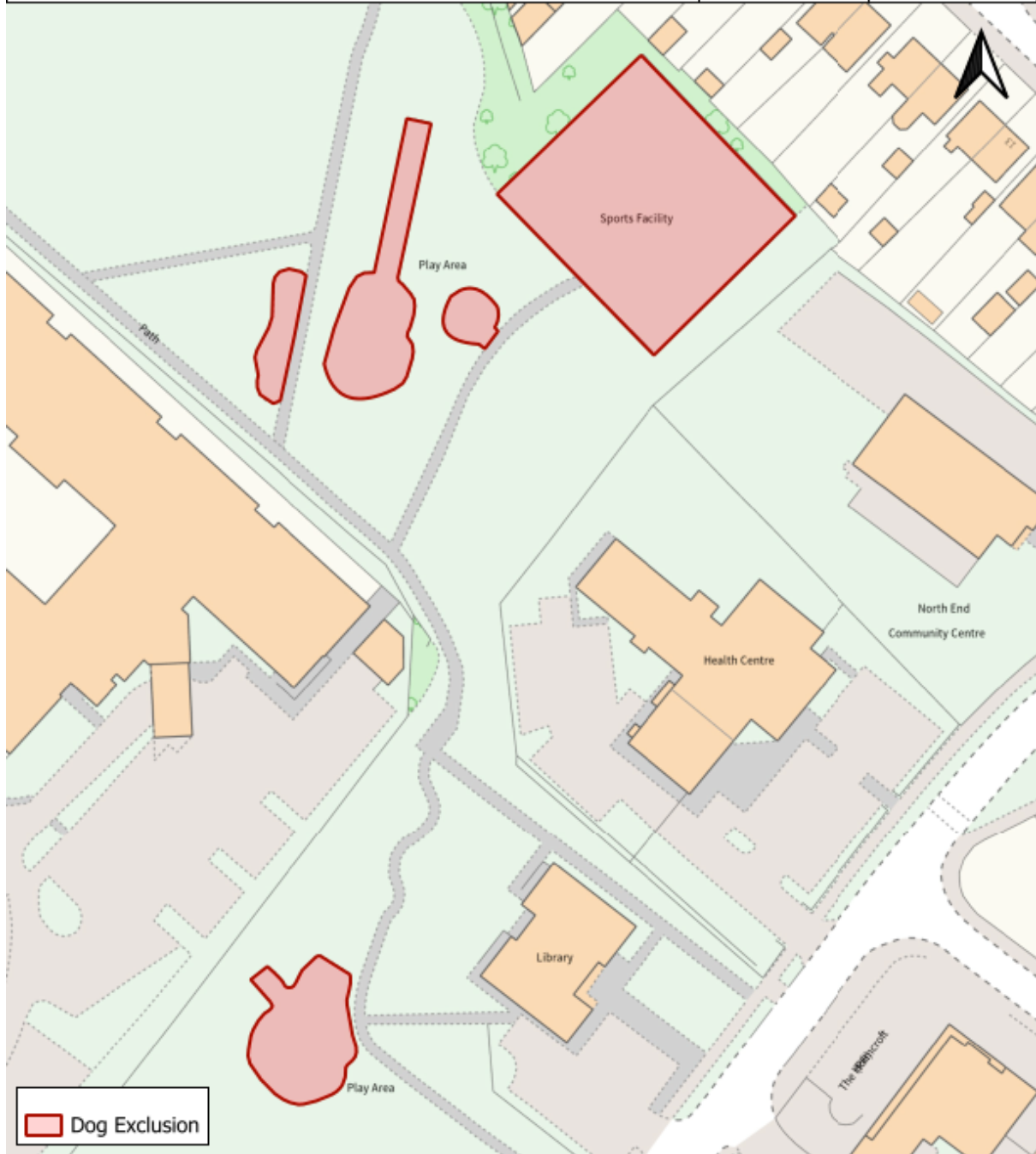
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Walton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Heathfield Avenue, Walton, Stone	13a	1:171




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Holmcroft - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Holmcroft Road	14a	1:768




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Holmcroft - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Lawnsfield Walk, Stafford	15a	1:138




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Littleworth - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Melbourne Crescent, Stafford	16a	1:175




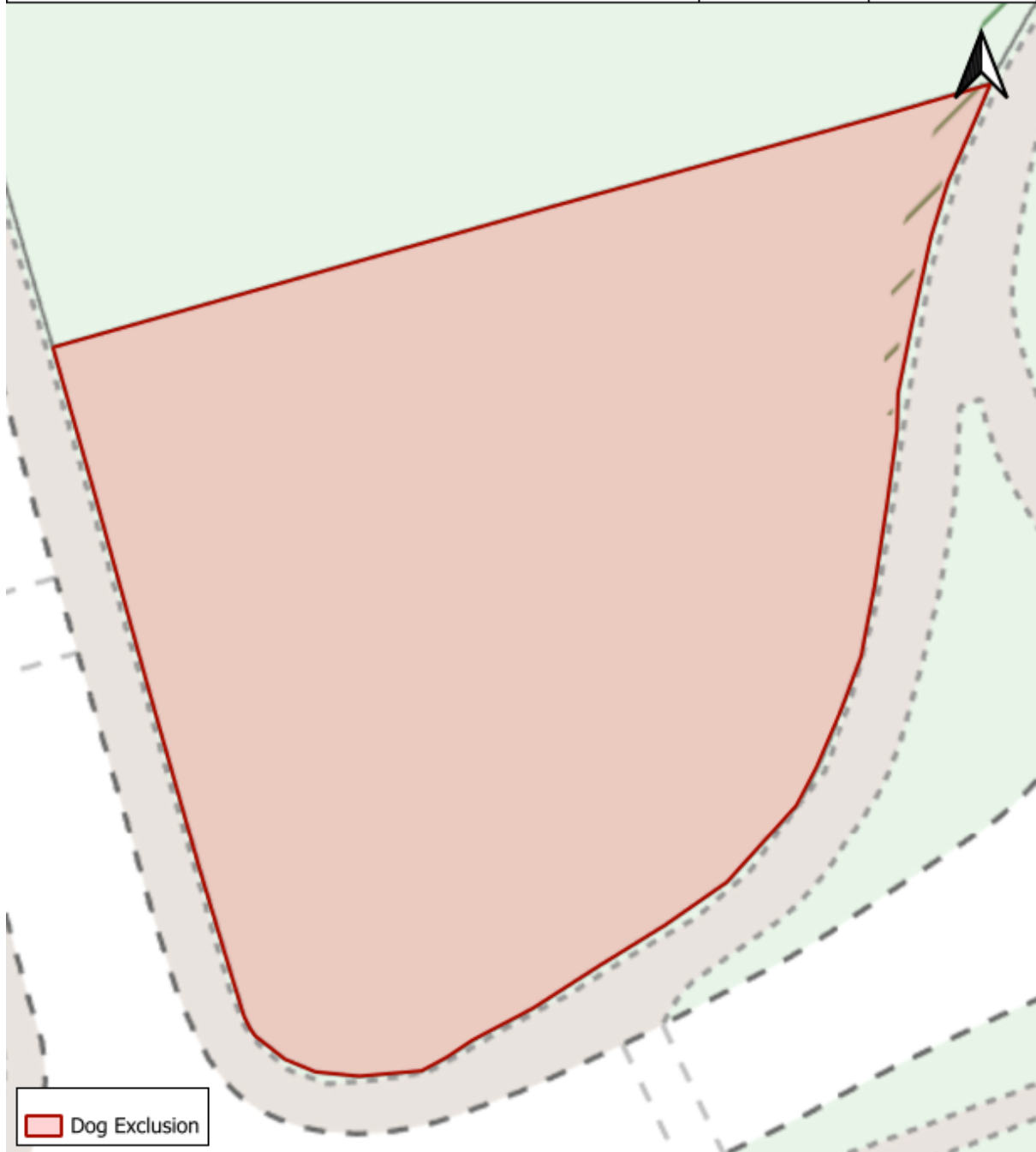
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Eccleshall - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
New Street, Norton Bridge	17a	1:259




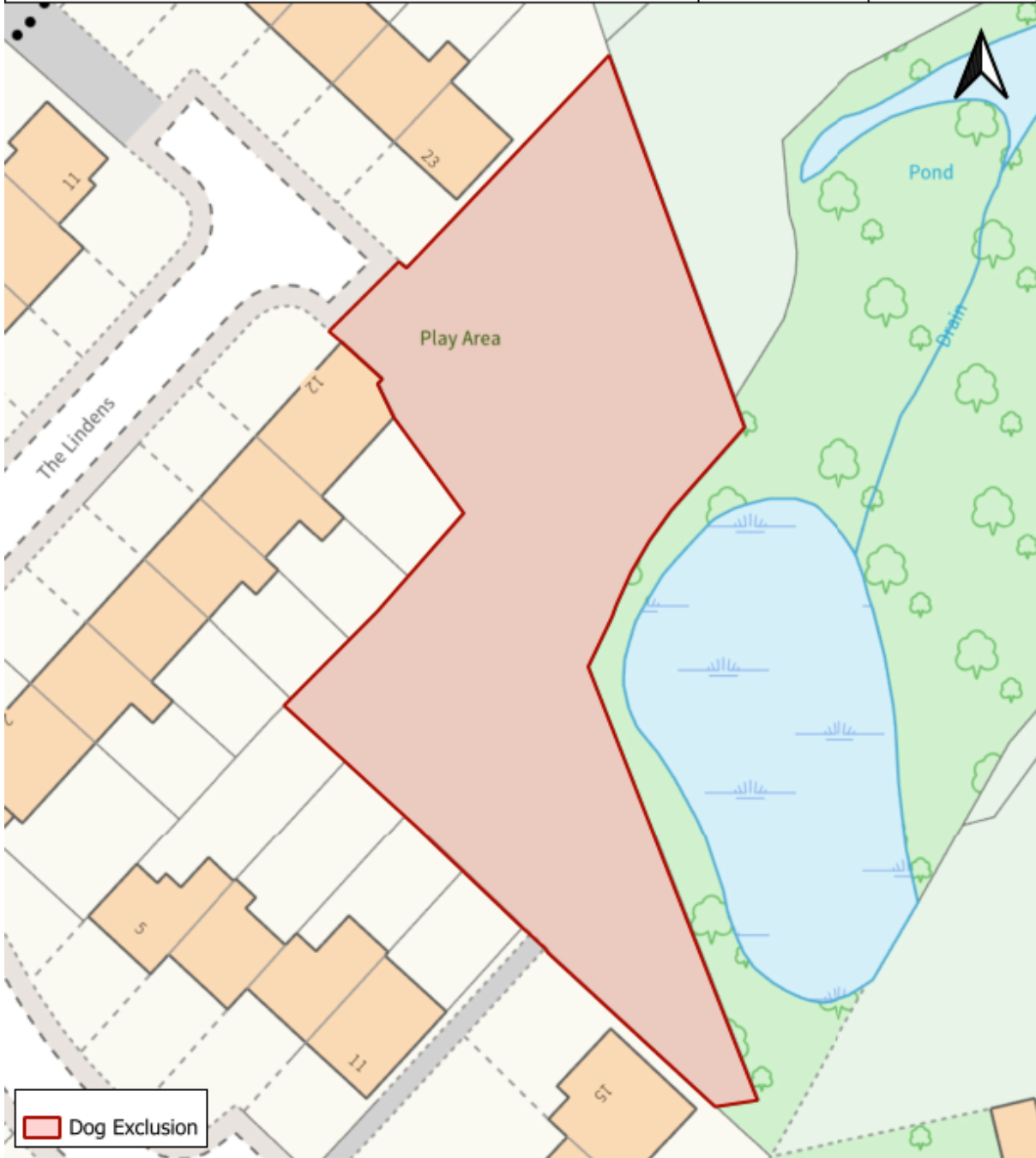
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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
St Georges Road, Stafford	18a	1:232




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Walton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
The Lindens, Stone	19a	1:456




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Holmcroft - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Wayfield Drive, Stafford	20a	1:98




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Walton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Whitemill Lane, Walton, Stone	21a	1:397




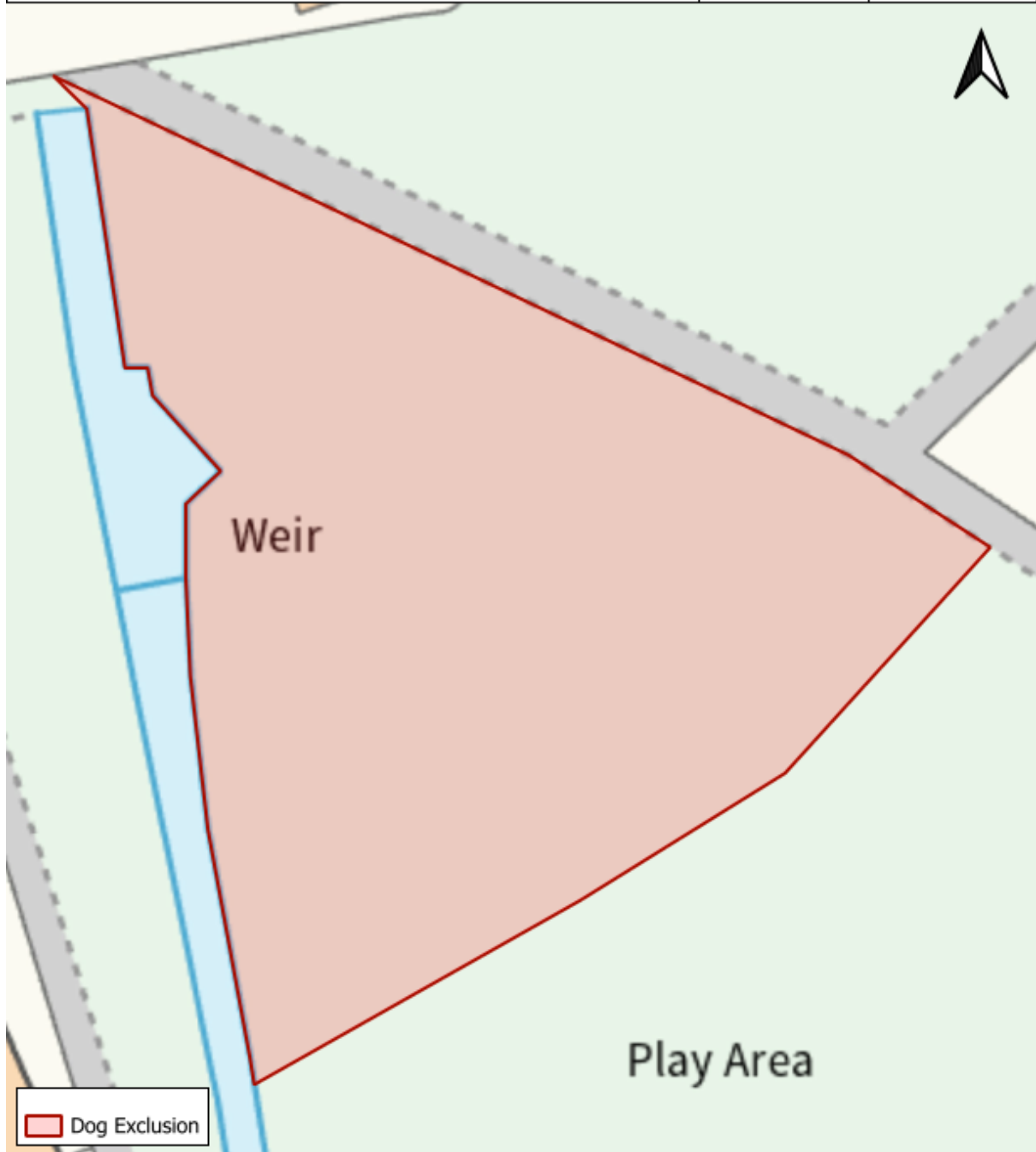
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Holmcroft - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Wooton Drive, Stafford	22a	1:221




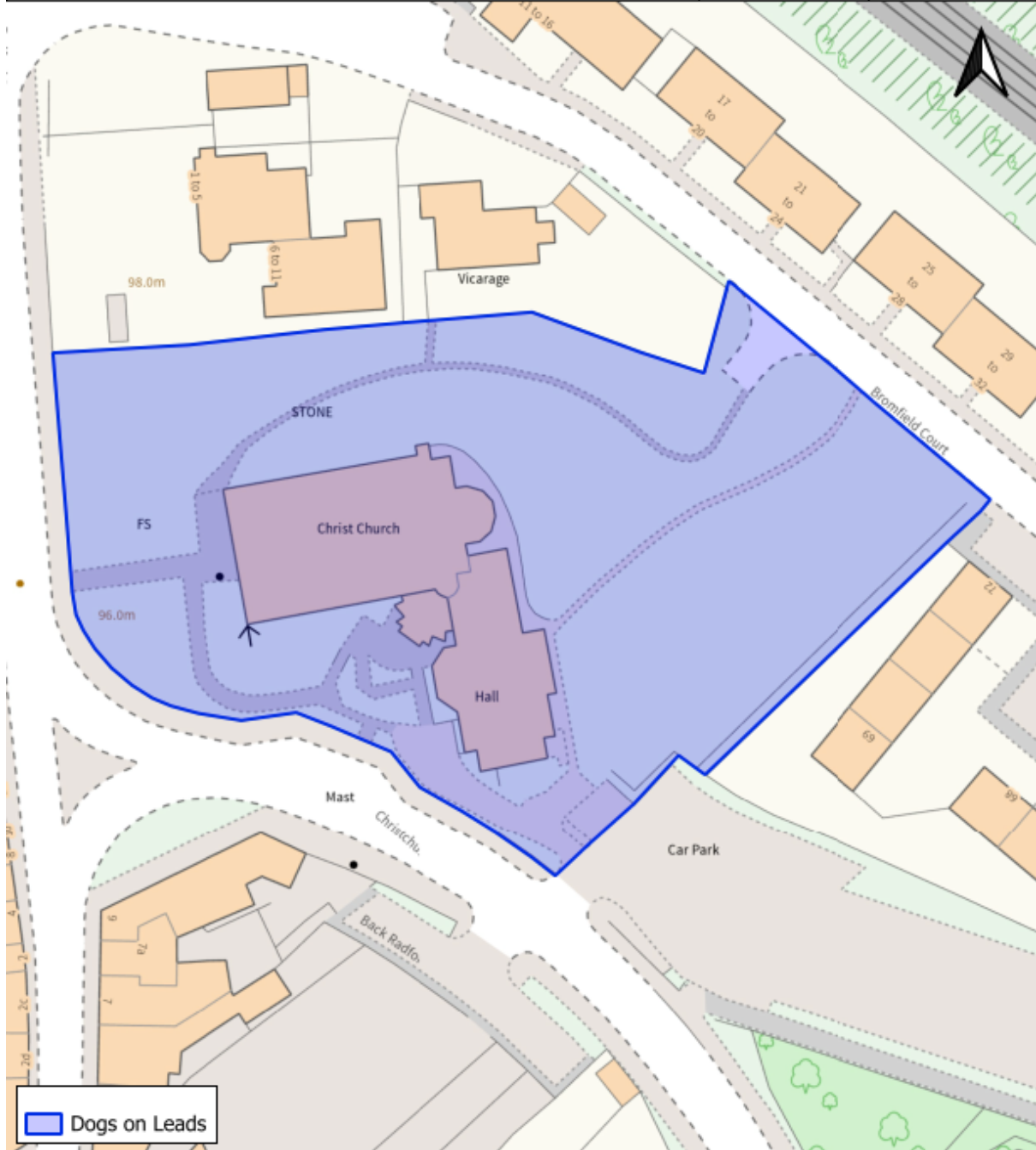
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Swynnerton & Oulton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
The Green, Yarnfield	23a	1:195




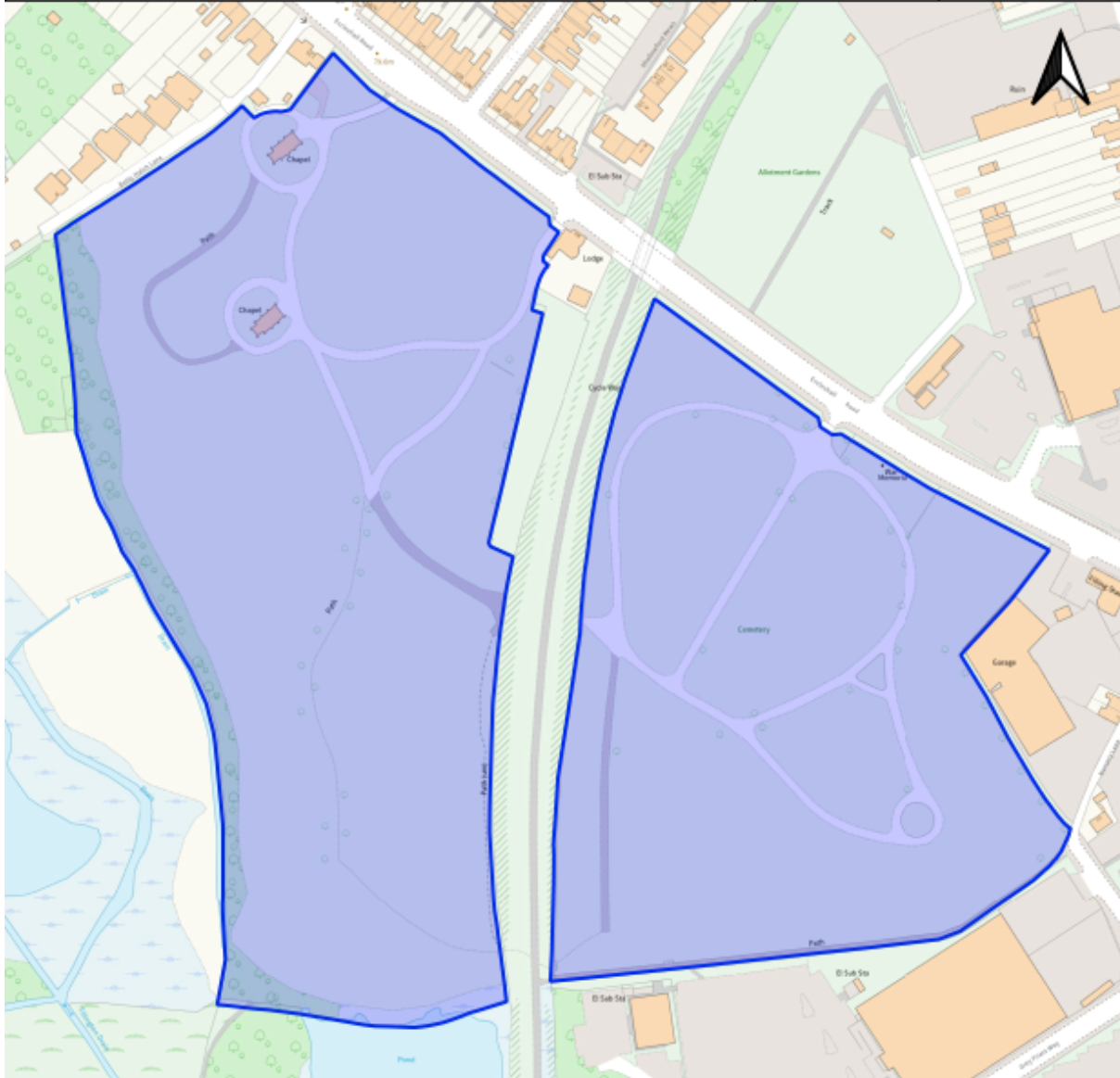
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St. Michael's & Stonefield - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Christ Church, Stone	24a	1:648




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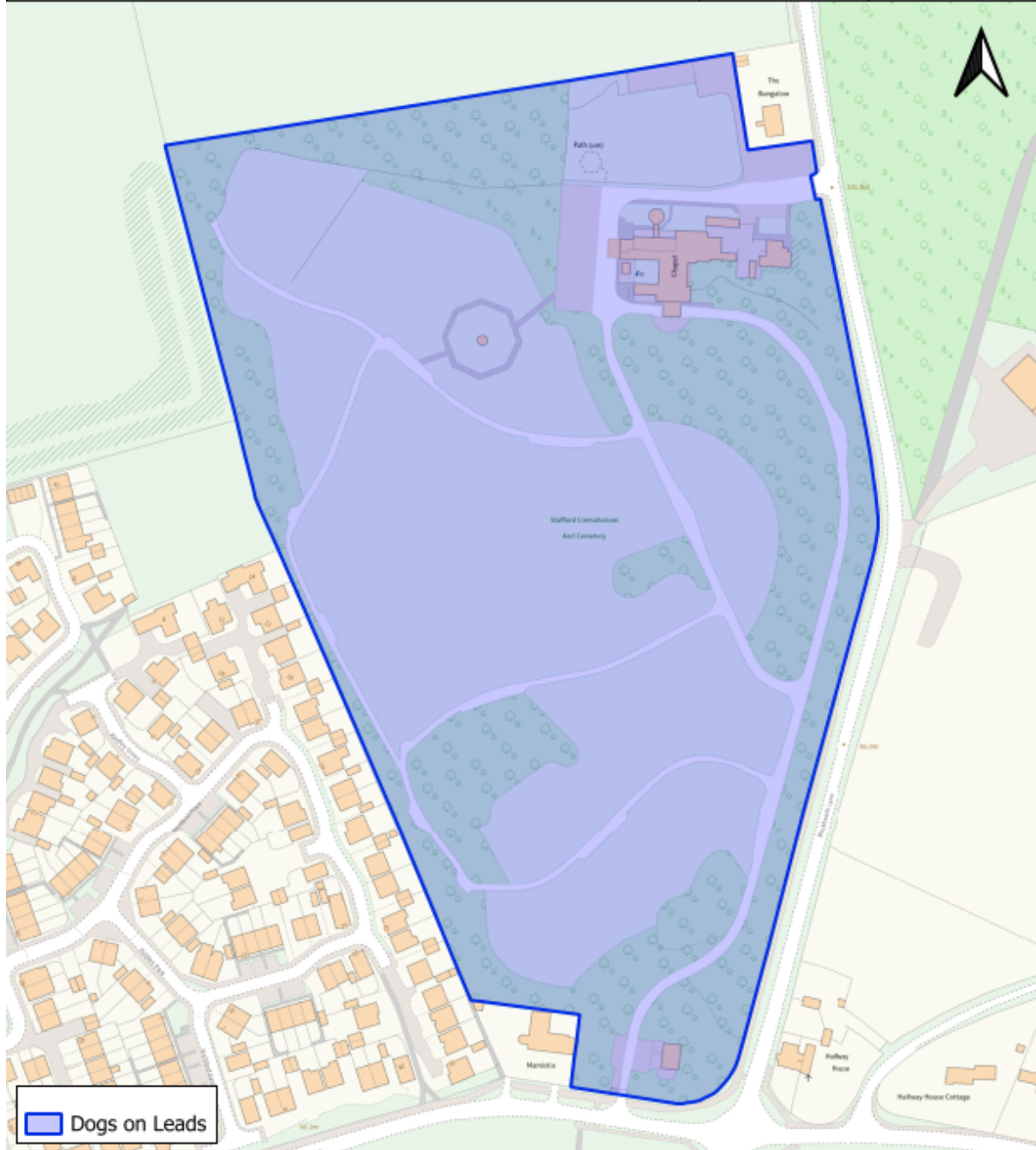
Holmcroft & Common - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Eccleshall Road Cemetery, Stafford	25a	1:2,110




 Dogs on Leads

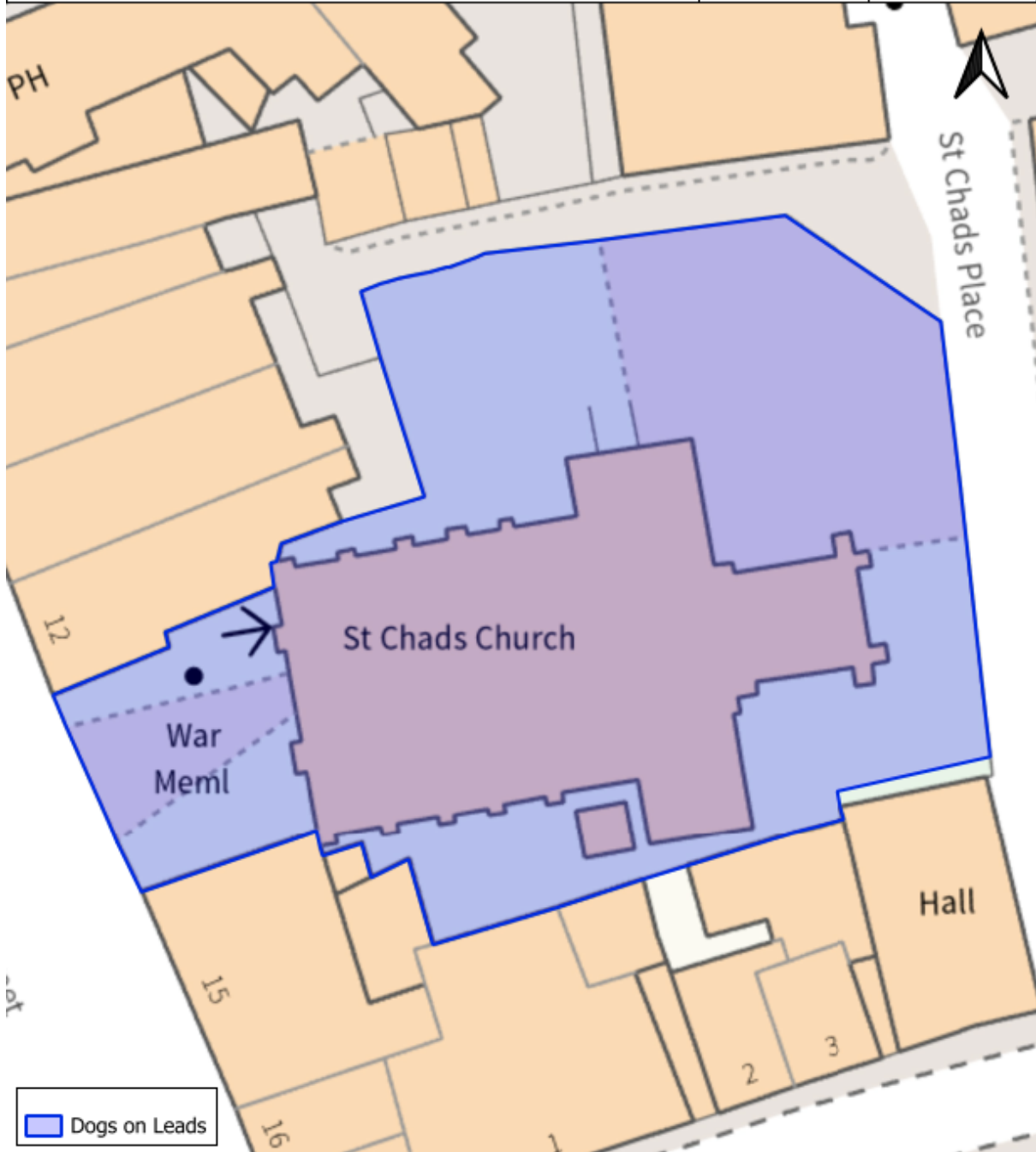
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Milwich - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
Stafford Crematorium, Tixall Road	26a	1:2,060




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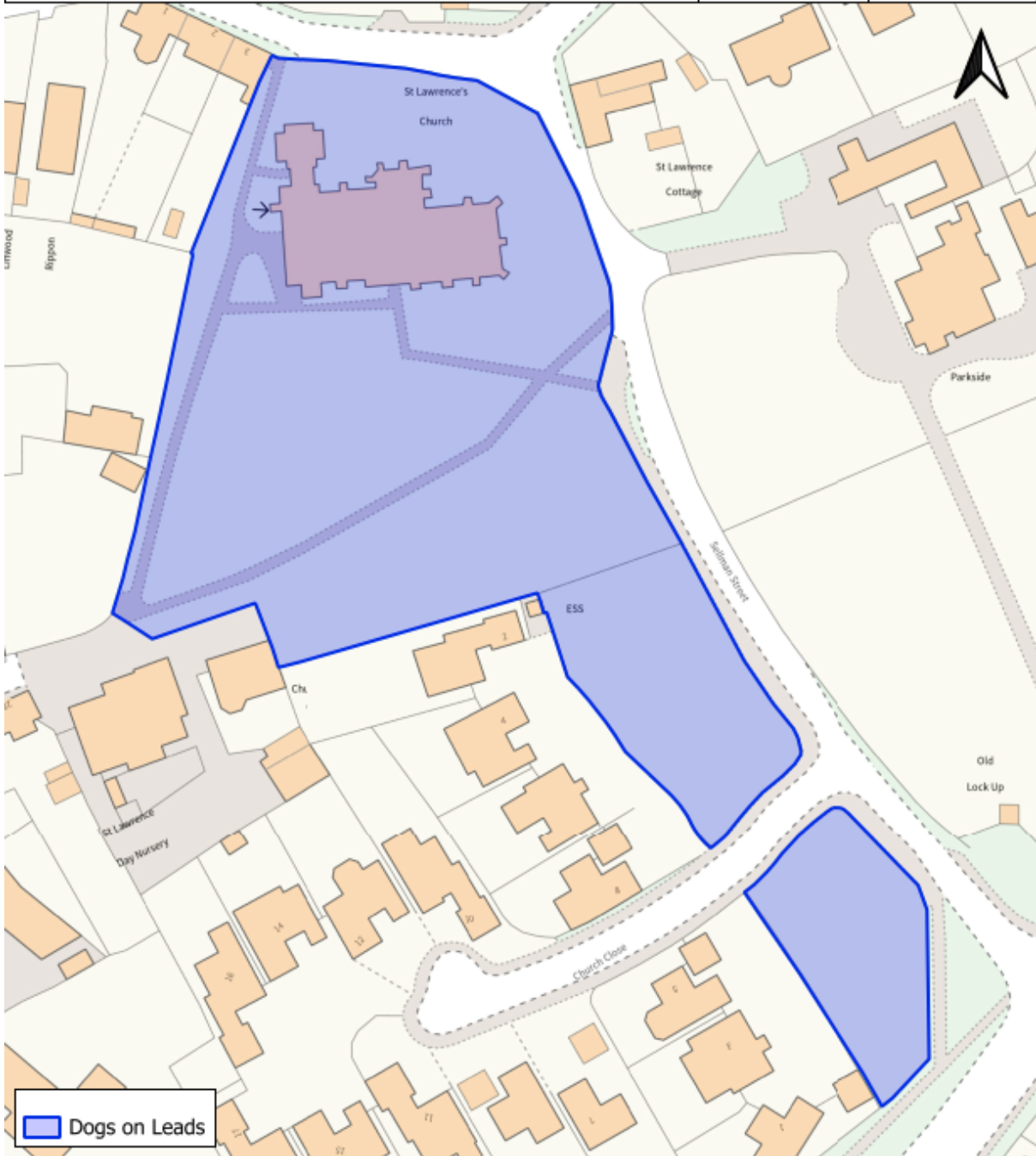
Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
St Chads Church	27a	1:278




 Dogs on Leads

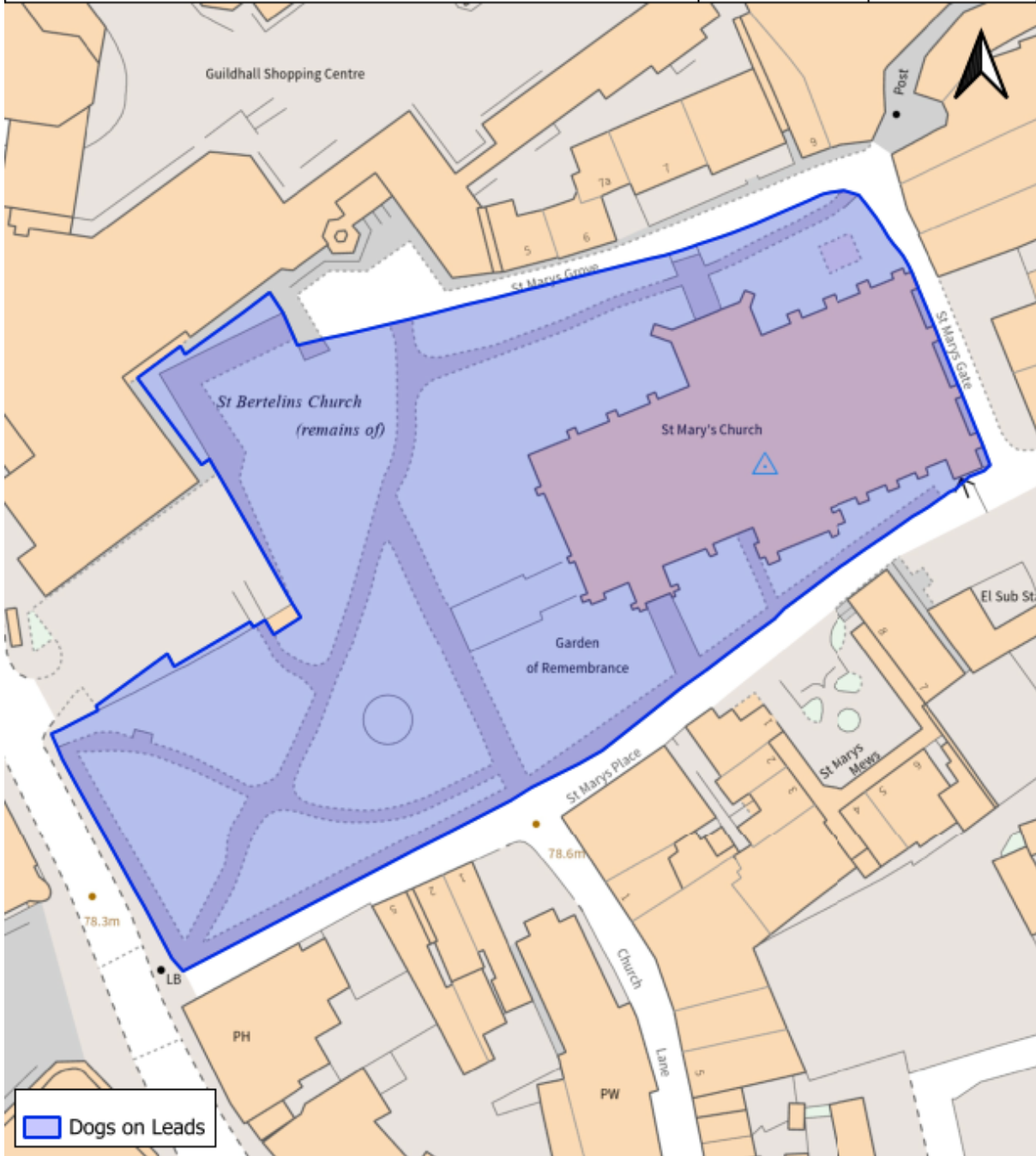
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Gnosall & Woodseaves - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
St. Lawrence's Church	28a	1:855



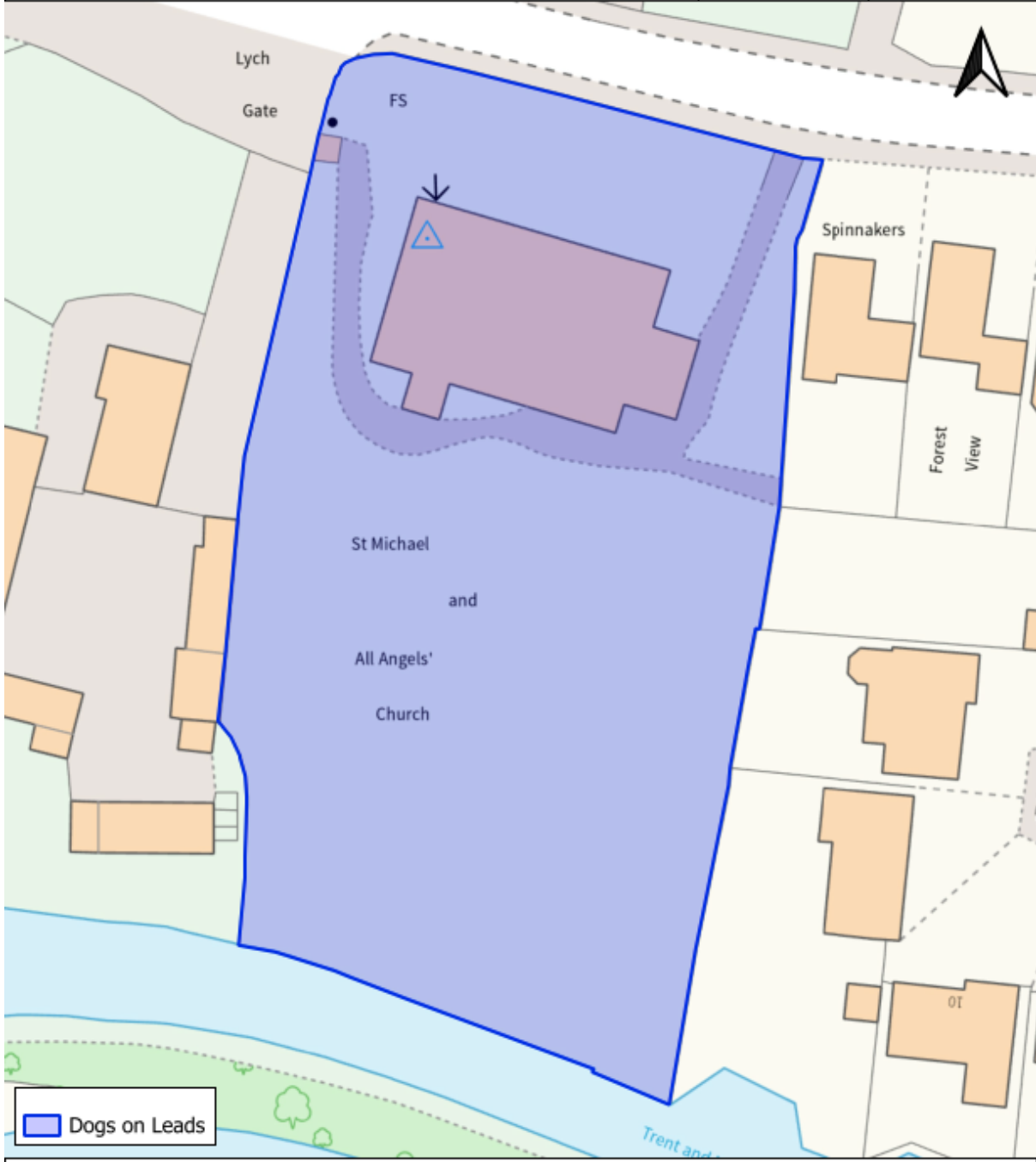
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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
St. Mary's Church, Stafford	29a	1:655




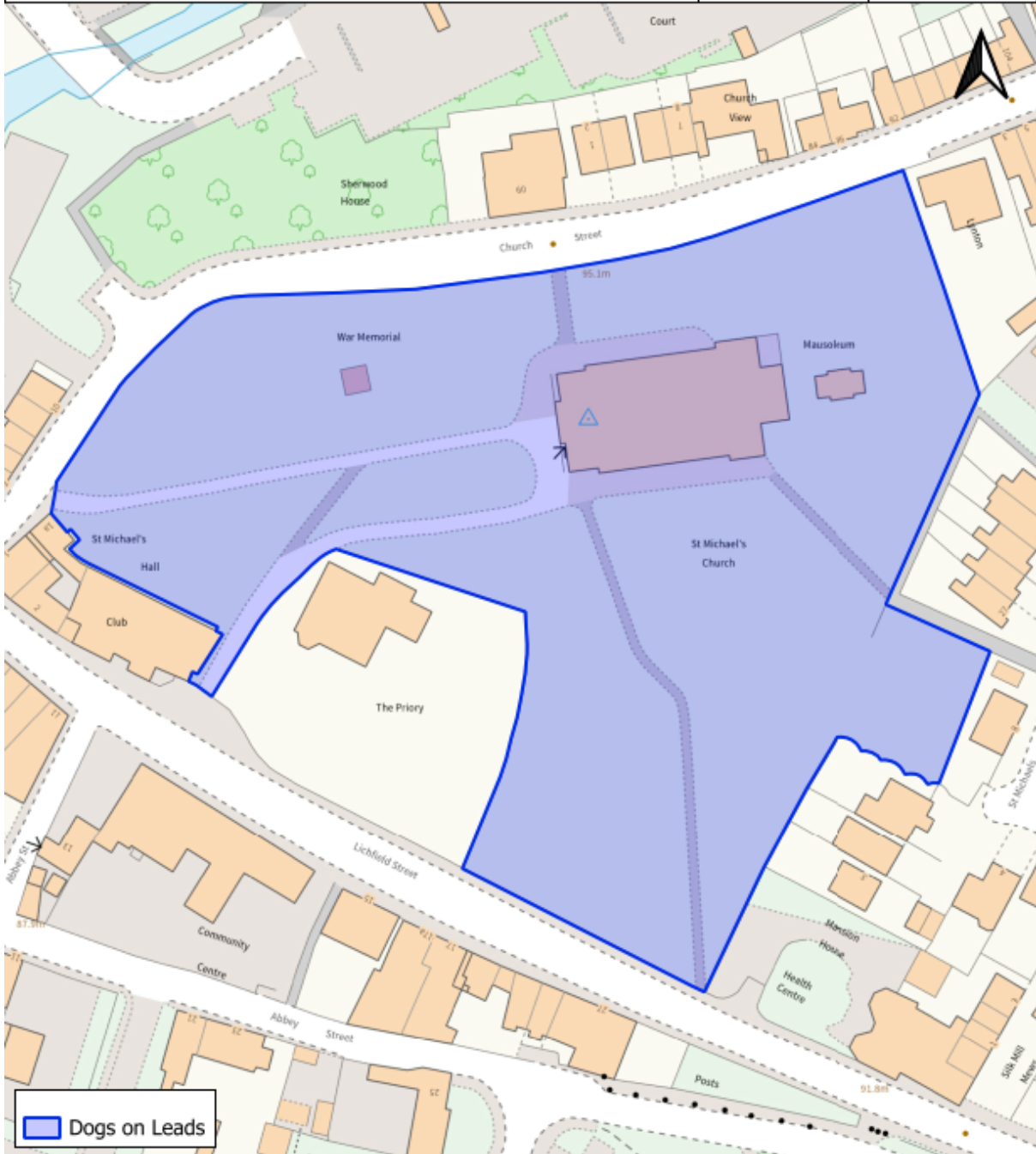
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Haywood & Hixon - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
St. Michael and All Angels' Church	30a	1:522




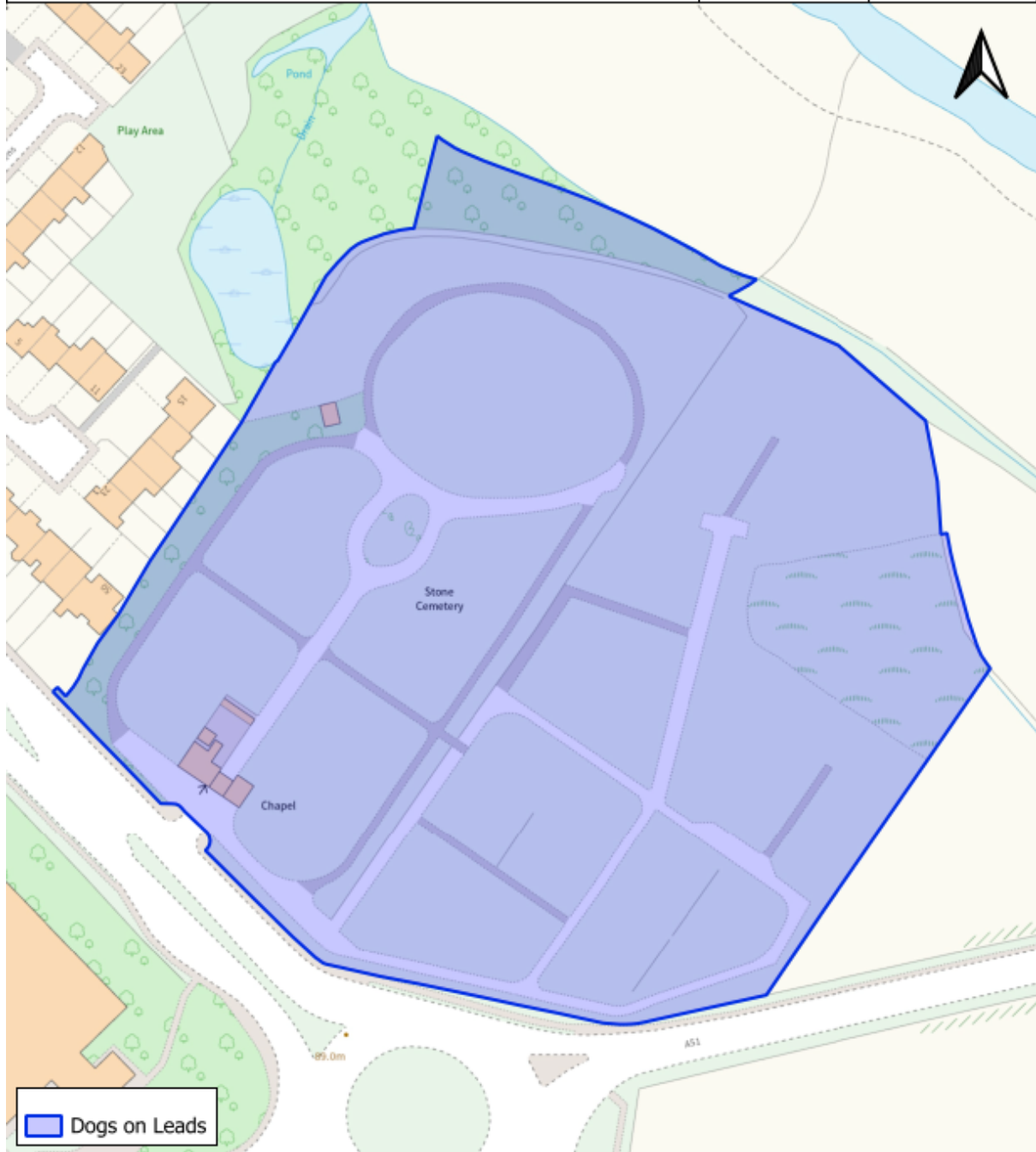
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St. Michael's & Stonefield - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
St. Michael's Church	31a	1:861




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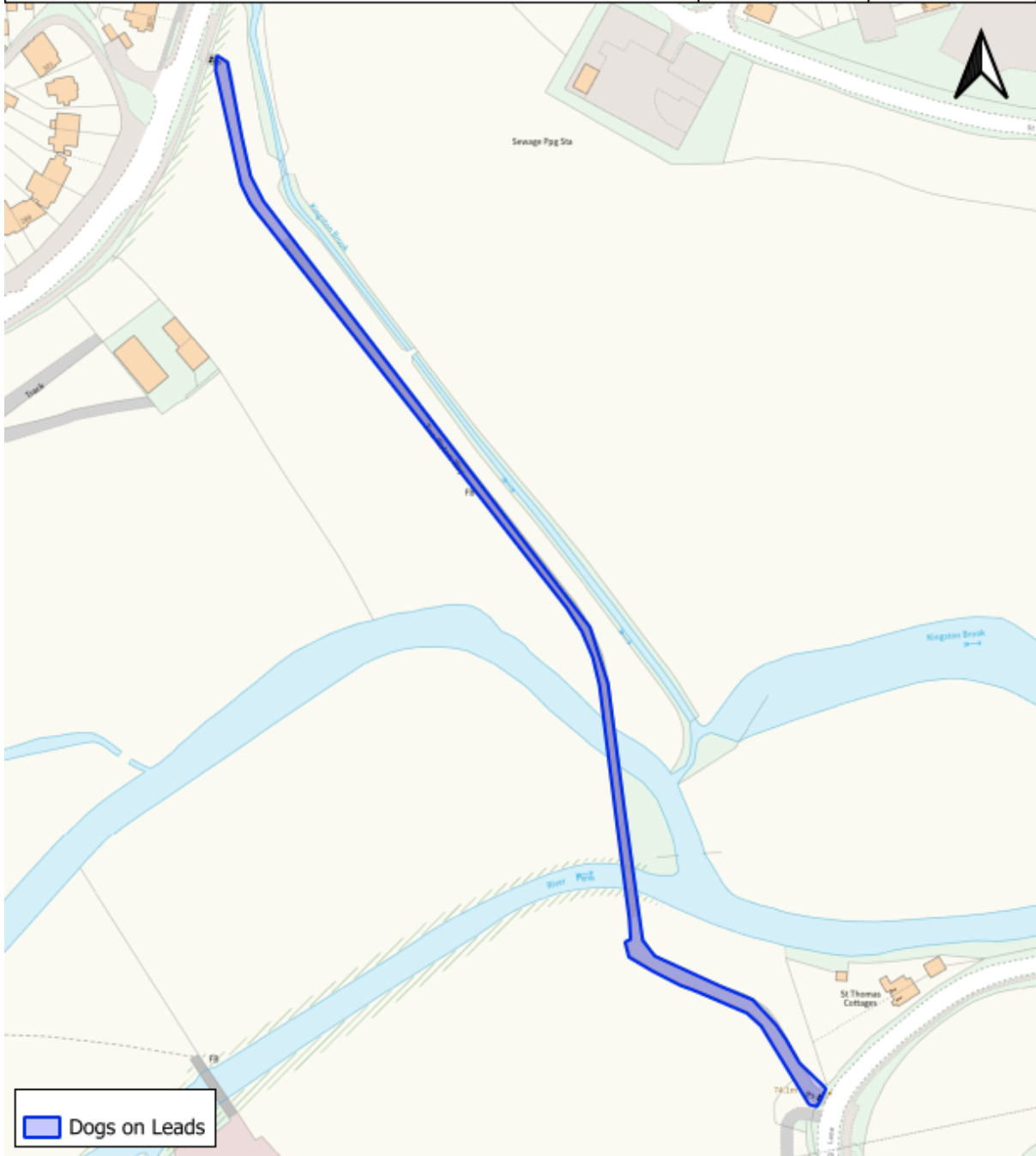
Walton - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Stone Cemetery	32a	1:1,286




 Dogs on Leads

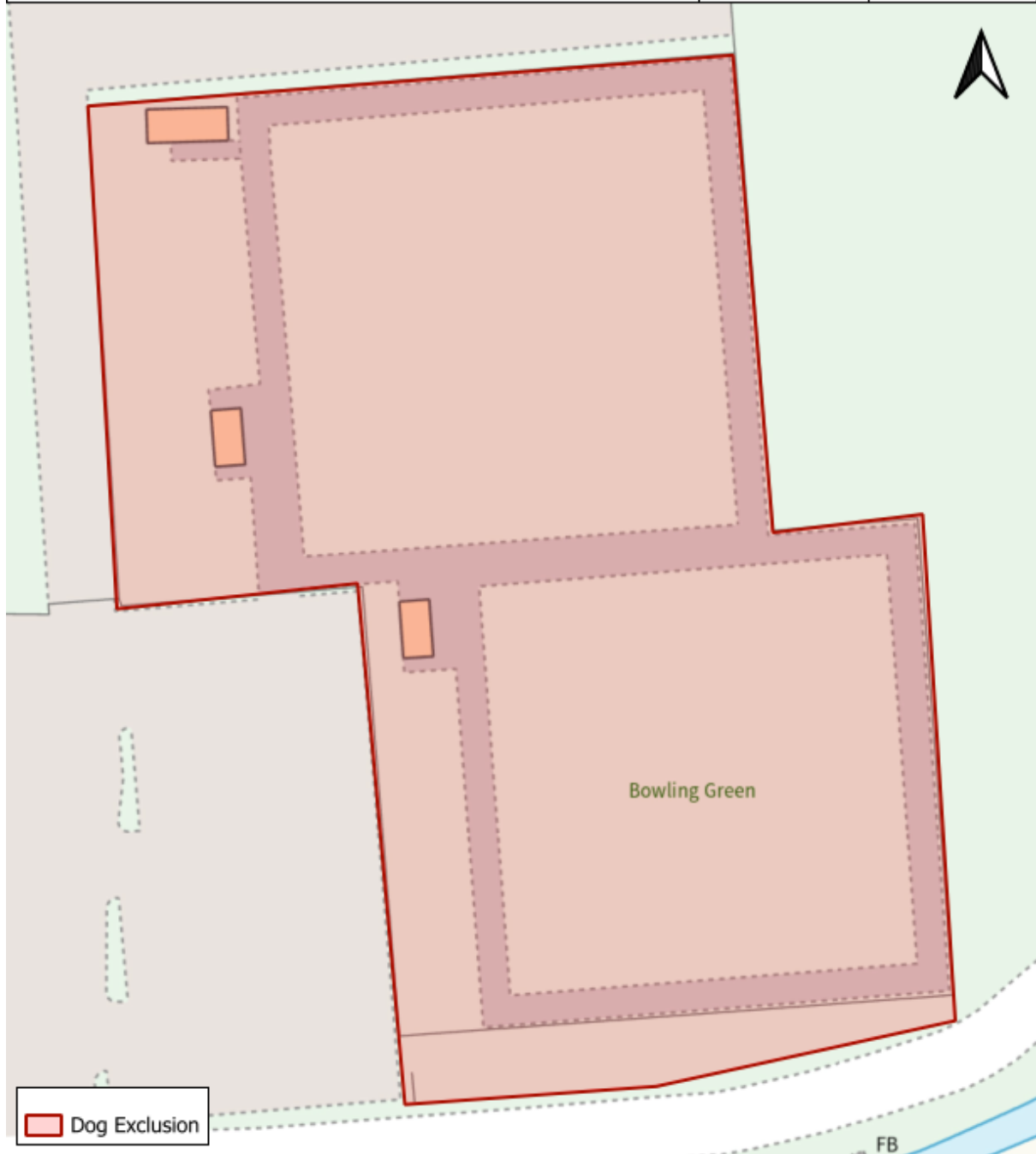
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Milwich & Baswich - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Two Waters Way, Stafford	33a	1:1,692




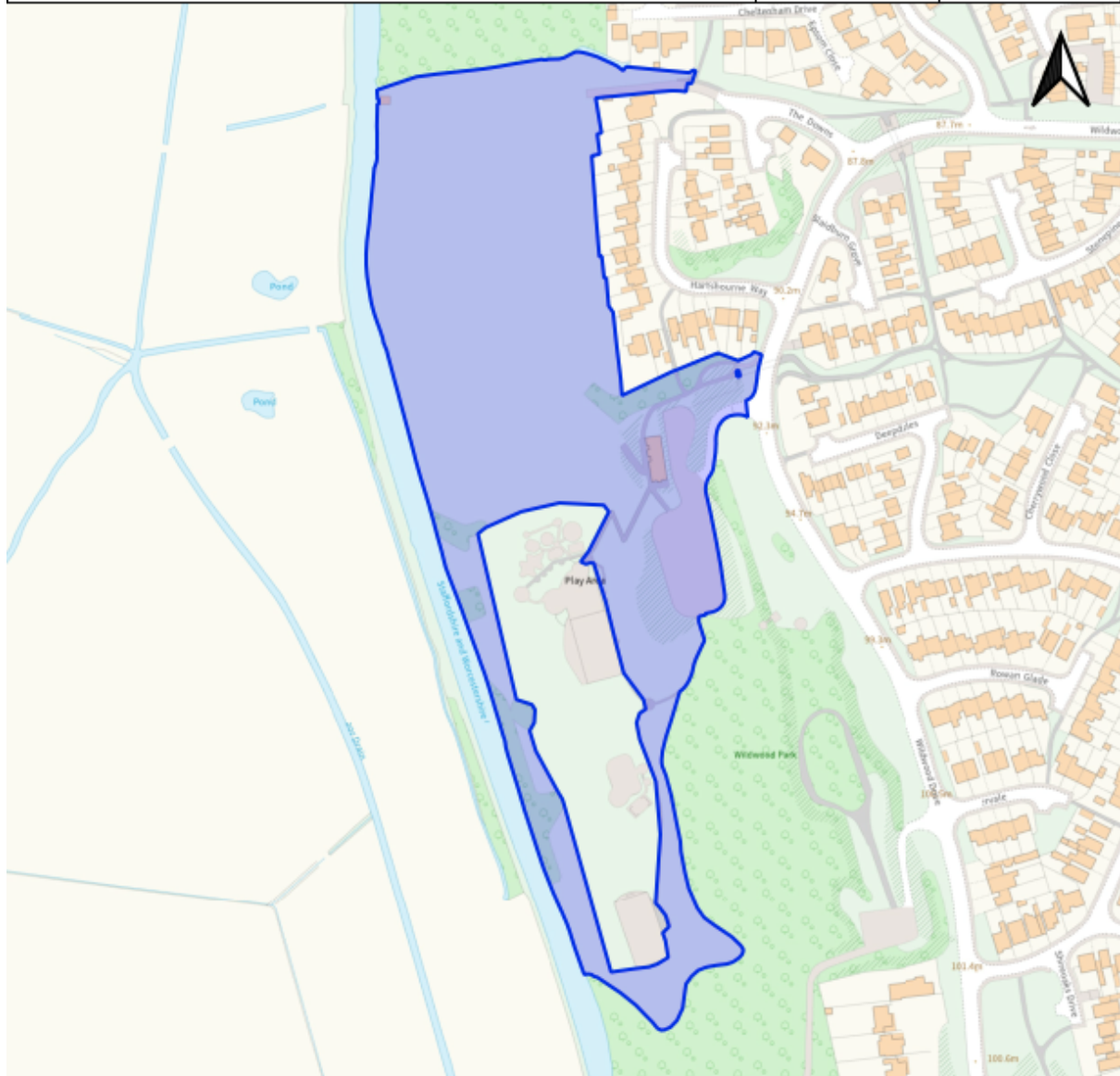
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Forebridge - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	
Riverway Bowling Green, Stafford	34a	1:449




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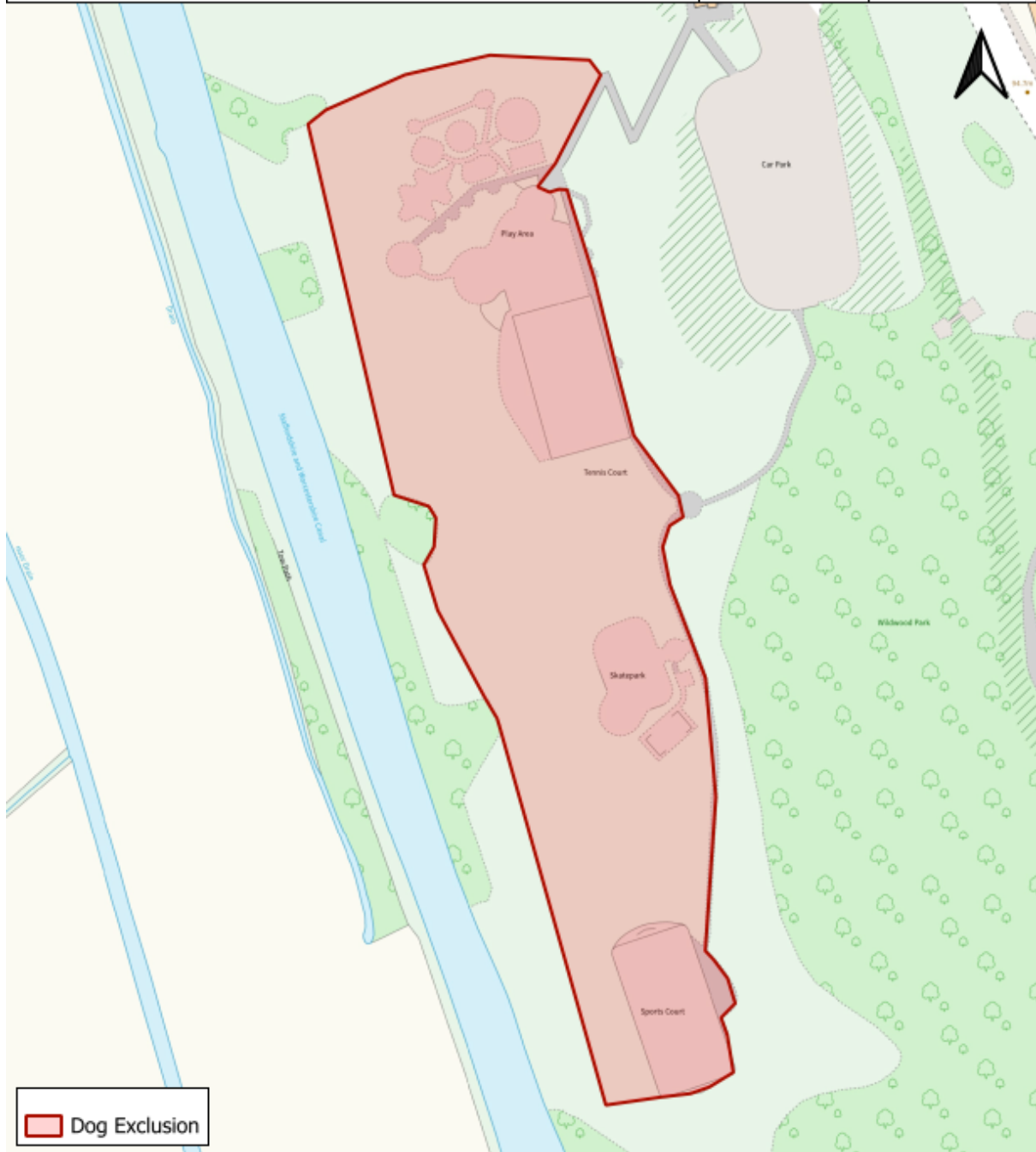
<p>Weeping Cross & Wildwood - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>Wildwood Park, Stafford</p>	<p>35a</p>	<p>1:2,747</p>




 Dogs on Leads

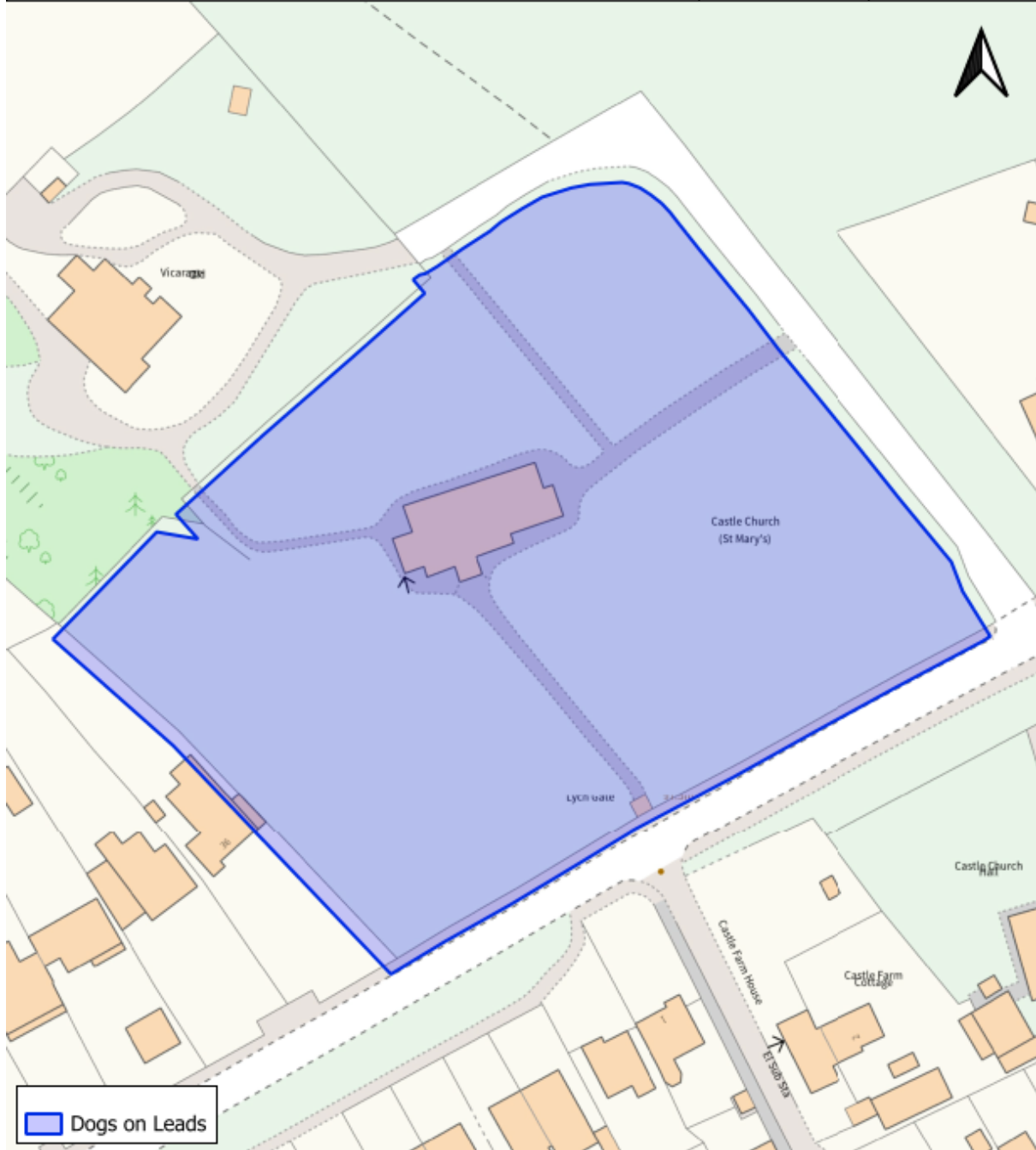
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Weeping Cross & Wildwood - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Wildwood Park, Stafford	35z	1:1,136




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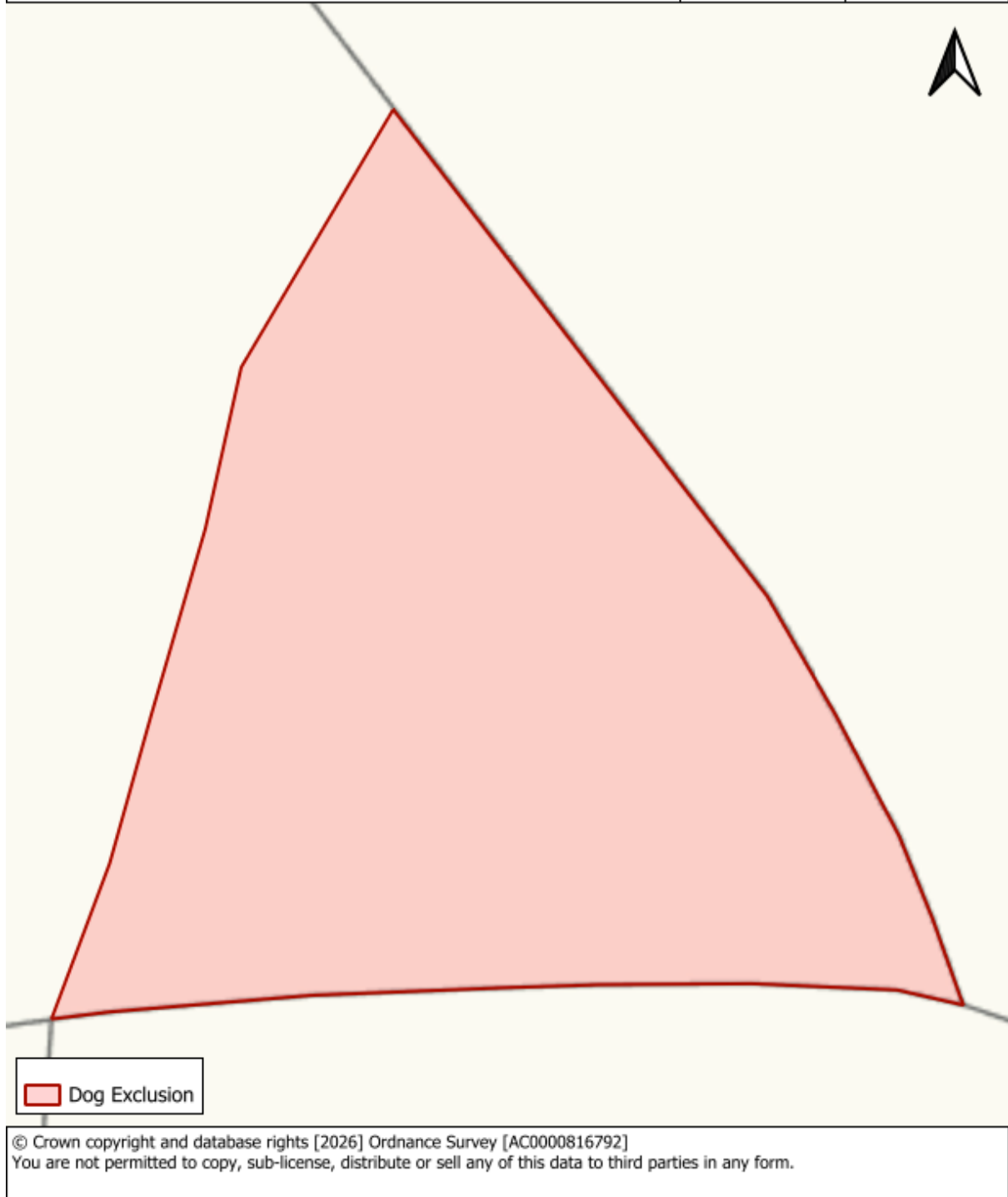
Rowley - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Castle Church (St. Mary's), Stafford	36a	1:798




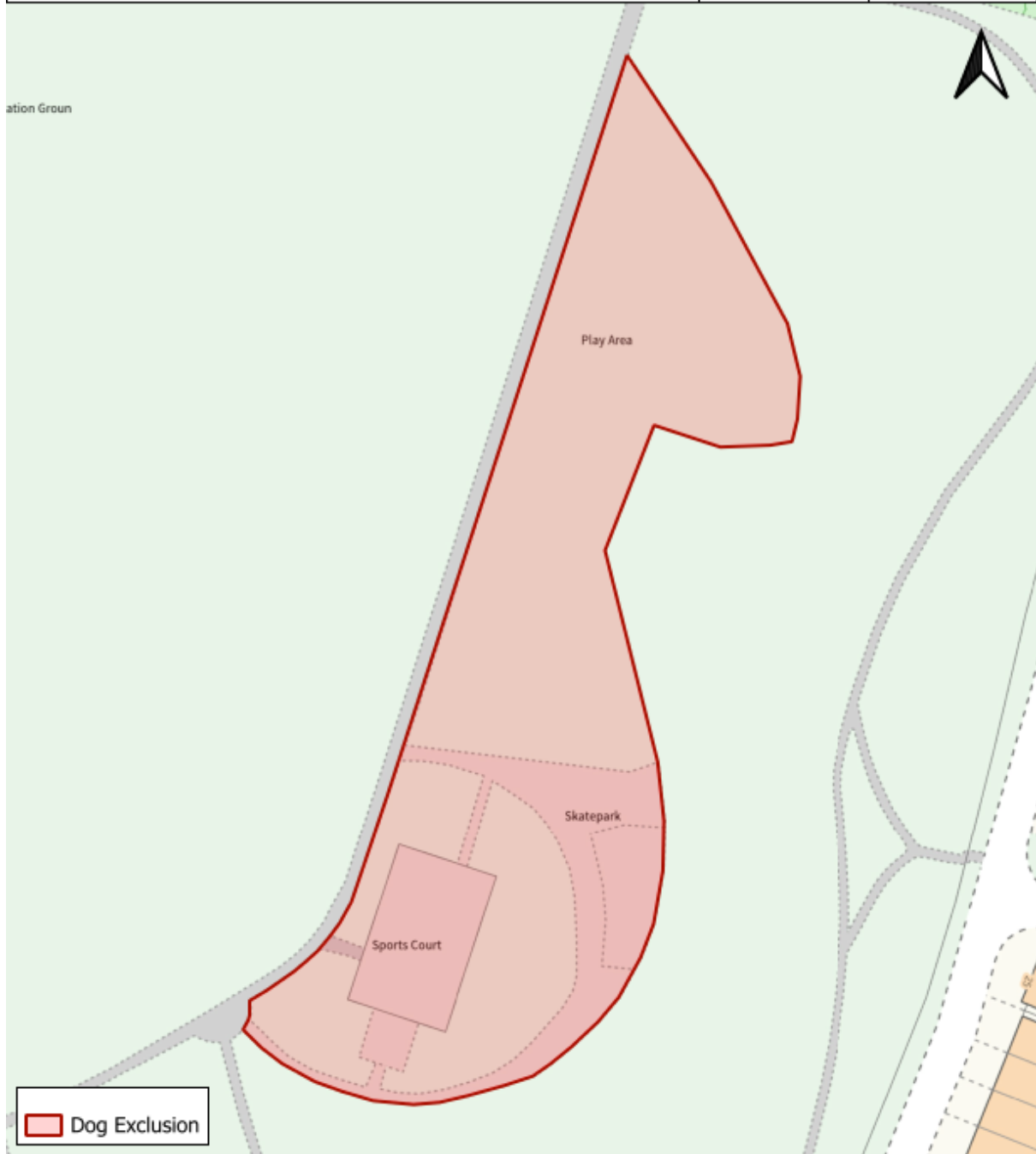
 Dogs on Leads

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Stowe by Chartley - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 working together
Stowe by Chartley Parish Playing Field	37a	1:171



<p>Coton - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>Charnley Road</p>	<p>42a</p>	<p>1:716</p>




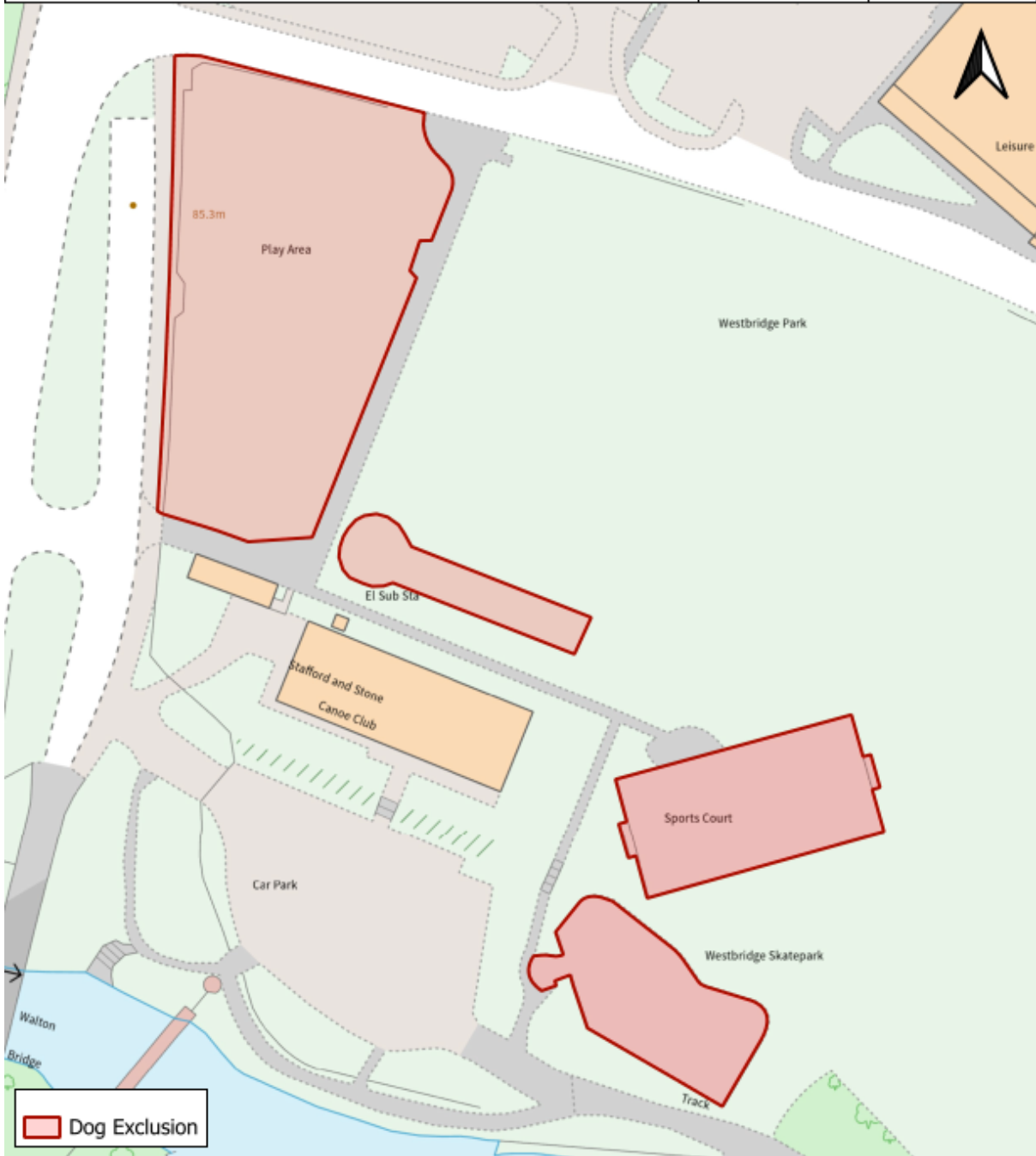
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Great Bridgeford - Public Spaces Protection Order	Date Created: 28/05/2026	 Stafford borough council working together
Cherry Tree Crescent	46a	1:693



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<p>Walton - Public Spaces Protection Order</p>	<p>Date Created: 28/05/2026</p>	
<p>Westbridge Park</p>	<p>47a</p>	<p>1:735</p>



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Agenda Item 4(c)i**Proposed Direct Action on non-compliance with Section 215 Notices and High Hedge Remediation Notices and other Measures**

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 2026
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To obtain approval to take direct action to enforce action under Section 215 (S215) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and High Hedge Remediation Notices (HHRN) pursuant to Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 in order to secure compliance and resolve complaints.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the use of direct action to address breaches of planning control through Section 215 or High Hedge Remediation Notices or other measures to secure necessary improvements and remediation.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree and adopt the Direct Action Protocol 2026 (**APPENDIX 1**).
- 2.3 That the Head of Economic Development and Planning in liaison with the Portfolio Holder Economic Development and Planning be authorised to develop and implement process to inform the prioritisation of projects to benefit from direct action.
- 2.4 That the Head of Economic Development and Planning and the Council's Section 151 Officer in liaison with the Portfolio Holder Regeneration and High Streets be authorised to approve funding towards priority projects requiring direct action.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.5 The Council has the ability to enforce complaints through powers contained in the Town and Country Planning Acts and Anti-social Behaviour Act, however, it is a discretionary service and one that is not currently funded. As complaints escalate this results in increased pressure and expectation that the Council will take action.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council regularly receives requests to take enforcement action and use its powers to deliver improvements. These requests can be submitted by members of the public by way of a complaint, Councillors, Parish Councils or other Council service areas.
- 3.2 The serving of Section 215 (S215) and High Hedge Remediation (HHR) Notices, in some cases, have not delivered the necessary improvements required by the notices served. Further prosecution proceedings can be considered for continued breaches, and if these fail then the Council will need to consider the possibility of carrying out the required works in default. There are a number of long-standing unresolved planning enforcement and high hedge remediation issues relating to a number of properties within the borough.
- 3.3 Whilst the Councils could enter a charge against the property to recover costs at a future date, there is no guarantee that the full costs can be recovered particularly if there is limited equity in the property.
- 3.4 The Council has identified a budget of £75,000 to charge works to and co-ordinate activities between Legal, Finance, Planning and potentially Parks and Open Spaces to carry out work and potential cost recovery. The Council would seek to enter a charge against the property should the cost of the work not be reimbursed.
- 3.5 In some cases, the recipient of the notice may be vulnerable or elderly and unable to carry out the works required, and some do not necessarily have the resources to pay. In the event of a prosecution, this could generate criticism of the Council's actions generating negative publicity and reputational damage.
- 3.6 Direct Action will sit alongside other initiatives that the Council has implemented relating to a new Planning Enforcement Policy that will provide criteria for prioritising action. The Multi-Disciplinary Team will bring together services from across different service areas to co-ordinate activity and make use of the most appropriate powers to seek improvements. These initiatives will deliver solutions that are focussed on outcomes in that resources will be targeted to priority cases that may be longstanding or generating continual complaints through Freedom of Information requests or complaints to the Ombudsman.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Development Management service contributes to the delivery of all the Council's corporate priorities.

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy. Creating the right conditions for economic growth and prosperity.

Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing. A safe and secure place to live for local people. A safe and cohesive borough and reduction in health inequalities.

Priority 3 - Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment. Promote nature recovery, climate change resilience, public areas that are clean and tidy as well as improved public open spaces, play areas, parks and landscapes.

Priority 4 - Effective Council. Good customer experience and value for money for taxpayers.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The planning system operates to regulate development and the use of land in the public interest. The effective and proper enforcement of planning controls is essential to protect the local environment and interests of the residents, visitors and businesses from the harmful effects of unauthorised development.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to investigate alleged breaches of planning control. A breach of planning control broadly means the carrying out of development without the grant of planning permission from the Council or deemed permission by government order. A breach will also include the carrying out of development without compliance with the approved plans or any conditions attached to a planning permission.
- 5.3 Sections 196A, 196B and 196C of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) enables Local Planning Authorities to authorise named officers to enter land specifically for enforcement purposes. Entry to a dwelling house requires 24 hours advance notice to be provided. Section 219 of the 1990 Act enables the execution of works required by a Section 215 notice, to be carried out by the Local Planning Authority and recovery of expenses. Section 77 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 provides powers for an authorised person of the relevant authority to enter land to obtain information allowing for 7 days prior notice. This also applies where action has not been taken to comply with a remedial notice and the authority can carry out the required action and recover expenses from owners or occupiers.

- 5.4 An Enforcement protocol has been developed to set out the Council's approach to the enforcement of planning control within the district. Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework - Decision Making refers to enforcement activities in paragraph 60:

“Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. They should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where appropriate”.

- 5.5 Unauthorised works to listed buildings, trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders, trees within a Conservation Area and advertisements also come within the scope of planning control but unlike the breaches identified above constitute a criminal offence. The Council also investigates offences under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and High Hedge complaints under Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 5.6 Stafford Borough enforcement activities are carried out by a team of 3 Enforcement Officers. All three full-time posts are currently vacant and are filled by agency officers that joined the authority between September and November 2026.

Section 215 Remediation Notices

- 5.8 Under S215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, formal notices can be issued in relation to untidy land and buildings, where the external appearance of the building (be it commercial or domestic) are deteriorating or becoming dilapidated in appearance and have reached a state where external repairs are required to remediate the appearance of that building.
- 5.9 S215 Notices also can be served on land where the land, has deteriorated in appearance, and has become so visually unacceptable, that it is a detriment to the overall amenity of the area. These notices can only be considered where the land or property affects the visual amenity within the public domain and can be viewed from a public place. Action cannot be considered under this legislation, if the land is enclosed, for example a totally enclosed rear garden area, not open to public views.
- 5.10 These Notices should specify a schedule of works to be undertaken to remediate the harm to the visual amenity, and this can include, (in the case of a building) replacement guttering, replacement windows, and replastering or repainting of a building. In the case of land, the works required can include the removal of overgrowth the cutting back of trees and shrubs on the land, and the removal of rubbish or dilapidated vehicles.

- 5.11 In consideration of this action and dealing with complaints regarding untidy land and buildings, the harm to visual amenity must be significant, and action under this legislation cannot be applied or used, for example, to building sites where development is ongoing, or vacant properties, where there is no visual harm. Formal action is only taken where it is in the public interest, expedient and necessary. Prior to the issue of any formal notice, the interested parties are given the opportunity to deal with the issues raised, within a reasonable time scale. The circumstances of the individual would also need to be taken into consideration as the resident may be elderly and/or vulnerable and may not be in a position to improve or maintain their property. In such cases, appropriate referrals should be investigated and made to charities and community organisations to seek to obtain support for the affected resident.

High Hedge Remediation Notices

- 5.12 This legislation for dealing with High Hedges falls within Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and was introduced to combat the issues encountered by owners of domestic properties, where an occupier considers that the height of an adjoining hedge or hedges, would adversely affect the 'reasonable enjoyment of their property.'
- 5.13 The occupier or applicant is first required to follow a process which involves negotiating the reduction in height of the neighbouring hedge, with the owner of that hedge, within a reasonable time limit. If these negotiations fail, then the applicant can make a formal application to the Council, to be assessed and formally determined by a designated officer within the Authority. A fee is payable for the determination of this application. If action is required, a High Hedge Remediation Notice is issued to the neighbouring occupier(s) which usually require the reduction in height of the hedge within specified time limits. This requirement to reduce the height of any hedge is usually required in two stages, to ensure that the hedge does not die, or that any nesting birds are not disturbed during the nesting season. The Remediation Notice cannot require the removal of the hedge and only applies to evergreen species.
- 5.14 There is a right to appeal any Remediation Notice by both the applicant and the recipient to the Planning Inspectorate.

Enforcement Notices

- 5.15 An Enforcement Notice can be issued under section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and should only be issued where the local planning authority is satisfied that it appears to them that there has been a breach of planning control and it is expedient to issue a notice, taking into account the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations. There is a right to appeal any planning enforcement notice served.

- 5.16 If the notice is not complied with, once the period of compliance has elapsed, and there is no outstanding appeal, prosecution proceeding can be taken under s179 of the Act.
- 5.17 If the LPA achieves a successful conviction for failure to comply with an Enforcement Notice they can apply for a Confiscation Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to recover financial benefit obtained through unauthorised development.
- 5.18 The LPA also has default powers to enter enforcement notice land and carry out the requirements of the notice themselves under Section 178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 5.19 These default powers should be used when other methods have failed to persuade the owner or occupier of land to carry out, to the local planning authority's satisfaction, any steps required by an enforcement notice.
- 5.20 Further, the local planning authority can recover from the person who is then the owner of the land any expenses reasonably incurred by them in undertaking this work (regulation 14 Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992).

A local planning authority can prosecute for a failure to comply with a notice as well as using default powers.

Listed Building Enforcement - s38- 46 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990

- 5.21 Listed Building Enforcement Notice, s38(1) of the Act, Repairs Notice to a Listed Building s48 of the Act, Urgent Works to a Listed Building under s54 and s55 of the Act. Where the requisite Notices have not been complied with or urgent works are required to secure the Listed Building, the LPA can enter the land in order to carry out the works, (or carry out urgent works,) and recover the costs, reasonably incurred, of those works, from the owners of the land.

Enforcement Service

- 5.22 The enforcement service is provided by a team of 3 officers. The officers are responsible for:
- Investigating reports of alleged breaches of planning control.
 - Determine whether breaches of planning control have occurred.
 - Initiate and progress authorised enforcement action.
 - Provide advice to users of the planning enforcement service.

5.23 Investigations are carried out in accordance with the protocol following which a view will be taken as to how the investigation will proceed. This could include the following options:

- (1) No further action.
- (2) Further investigations required.
- (3) Negotiate a solution.
- (4) Request a retrospective application for planning permission.
- (5) Formal enforcement action.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are clear financial implications where works are carried out in default. As well as physical works there may also be a need to remove and store any goods and vehicles removed from land. A suitable facility will need to be found to store items for a temporary period.

Should Members agree to Officers pursuing direct action to address breaches of planning control, there will also be staffing implications which will need to be contained within existing approved budgets. However it is anticipated that all costs incurred by the Council can potentially be recovered with interest by placing a charge against the land.

The 'benefit' of taking direct action, particularly when a case has been unresolved for years without progress would resolve the ongoing problem and the complaints received.

6.2 Legal

Legal support (litigation, planning and property) will be required to service the Section 215 process and to place a legal charge against the property with the Land Registry.

6.3 Human Resources

Most of the implications outlined will impact staff resources across a number of service areas including Finance, Legal, Planning and Parks and Open Spaces.

6.4 Risk Management

The Council will meet statutory responsibilities relating to enforcement which are detailed within the Enforcement Protocol. The Council has powers to take direct action in appropriate circumstances, but this is a discretionary service. The risks involved with securing direct action are related to the Council's reputation and in not taking action will lead to further complaints and criticism of the Council. The Enforcement Protocol is silent on this matter and in that respect, expectations are often raised in the knowledge that the Council has powers to intervene.

Properties that are in poor or dangerous condition have added risks if action is not taken. These will need to be assessed as part of a Risk Assessment that would consider hazards that could be encountered within a building or site.

6.5 Equality and Diversity

There are no specific equality and diversity implications.

6.6 Health

Residents that are vulnerable may not have the means to maintain a property leading to disrepair. Where works are carried out to the property, vulnerable residents could benefit by way of improved physical and mental health. They could be brought to the attention of services providers that could offer support and assistance to support their wellbeing or to help towards improvements to the property.

6.7 Climate Change

No specific issues at this stage.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Direct Action Protocol

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer:	Sushil Birdi
Telephone Number:	01543 464326
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	Cabinet 18 June 2026 (Only)
Key Decision:	No



**PLANNING ENFORCEMENT
DIRECT ACTION PROTOCOL**

1. Introduction and context.

- 1.1 The planning system operates to regulate development and the use of land in the public interest. The effective and proper enforcement of planning controls is essential to protect the local environment and interests of the residents, visitors and businesses from the harmful effects of unauthorised development.
- 1.2 Paragraph 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 states:

“Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. They should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where appropriate.”

- 1.3 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 55 sets out the meaning of development:

“Development means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.”

- 1.4 A breach of planning control is defined under Section 171A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as:

The carrying out of development without the required planning permission or

Failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted.”

- 1.5 The main objectives of planning enforcement are:-

- To remedy undesirable effects of unauthorised development
- To bring unauthorised activity under control to ensure that the credibility of the planning system is not undermined.

- 1.6 The Council has an array of planning enforcement powers to address breaches of planning control and this includes the power to take Direct Action. The Council will consider the use of these powers on a case by case basis. Typically, the Council will draw on these powers when a planning enforcement notice has not been complied with, and the Council is seeking to secure improvements in default.

- 1.7 The planning enforcement notice specifies the obligations placed on an owner or occupier of land and a period within which to comply with the

notice. Section 178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides additional powers to the Council in order to:

- Enter land and carry out work to satisfy the requirements of the enforcement notice.
- Recovery of reasonable expenses incurred by the Council from the owner to secure remedial action.

1.6 This protocol sets out details of the procedures for undertaking Direct action as well as the considerations for undertaking action. The Council's approach to recover the costs of this action are also provided.

2. When will direct action be taken?

2.1 The Council will undertake an assessment to determine the appropriateness and viability of taking direct action and ensure that each case is considered on its merits.

2 Direct Action should be considered as necessary and proportionate to the harm caused by the planning breach without having a disproportionate impact on affected individuals or communities. The assessment will take into account the following factors:

- History of complaints and communication with alleged offender.
- Assessment of the level of harm caused by the planning breach.
- The impact of the breach on adjacent occupiers and communities.
- If other powers can be used to address the breach.
- The anticipated outcome of direct action.
- Assessment of anticipated cost.
- Prospect of cost recovery.
- Any risk to health and safety of Council employees, contractors, the owner or occupier of the property and any other party affected.
- Consideration of impact on the Council's reputation or impact on Council priorities.
- The personal circumstances of any persons likely to be affected by direct action.
- Whether direct action will deliver a lasting improvement.

2.3 The assessment will be an objective analysis of the reasons for and against taking direct action. The Council will target resources as efficiently and as effectively as possible and intervention will be determined based on

- Severity of the impact.
- Financial resources required in order to take action.
- The risks involved with direct action.
- Prospect of cost recovery.

The considerations will be recorded and explained within an assessment form in order to inform a score to be applied to the consideration. The distribution of scoring will be varied to ensure that the most significant considerations are weighted above those of a minor nature.

- 2.4 A risk assessment will be undertaken to assess the risks of taking direct action and will consider hazards that may exist within the site or building that would inform the method of intervention. There may be aggrieved parties that could escalate issues through violence or intimidation. This will also need to be captured within the risk assessment and liaison with partner agencies will be essential to quantify and address the risk with the involvement of the Police and other agencies in order to plan and mobilise the operation and safe implementation of the proposed improvement.
- 2.5 The Council will receive requests to take forward direct action utilising planning enforcement powers, either from other service areas within the Council, Council members, Parish or Town Councils or from community groups and individuals. The same process will be applied to each of these requests and a detailed evaluation will be carried out in each case to inform a decision. The Council will only take action where intervention has been identified as a priority and assessments indicate that direct action is imperative. Non-planning enforcement cases will be directed to other areas of the Council where the relevant powers reside.

3 Procedures

- 3.1 After the date for compliance has expired, Officers will visit the site to check whether the requirements of the enforcement notice have been met. If the site visit confirms that the notice has not been complied with, subject to there being no other decisions being awaited (from the Secretary of State or Planning Inspectorate) the Council will assess whether to take action and identify the appropriate mechanism.
- 3.2 The investigating officer will prepare a report for consideration by the Head of Economic Development and Planning, or nominated deputy, with a view to authorising a course of action. Should direct action be approved, discussions will take place with the Section 151 Officer to identify funding.
- 3.3 Where appropriate, the Council will notify interested parties of the intention to take direct action at least one month before any works are planned to take place. Details of the work and the costs that will be incurred will form part of the notice.
- 3.4 The Council will also advise of any materials, debris and/or property that are to be removed during the course of the works, and these will be stored securely for a minimum of 28 days. Details of how to recover the removed items or possessions will be provided. The Council may choose to dispose of these items or dispose of them and obtain income to recover expenses associated with the action taken.

- 3.5 In most cases, it is expected that direct action will be a matter delegated to a senior officer to decide. There may be occasions where it is deemed necessary for the matter to be reported to Cabinet for a decision such as where the financial, legal or reputation impacts are significant to warrant it. The Council will ensure the necessary delegations are in place.

4 Cost recovery Process

- 4.1 The Council will seek to recover all reasonable expenses incurred in undertaking direct action in accordance with the provisions of Section 178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 4.2 The Council will include expenditure that the Council considers as necessary and reasonable for administering direct action as set out in the Local Government Act 1974, Section 36.
- 4.3 The cost of undertaking direct action will be quantified and an invoice raised for issue to the owner or occupier of the land on which action has been undertaken. The Council will expect the invoice to be paid in full by the payment date specified on the invoice.
- 4.4 Should the invoice not be cleared by the due date, the Council will proceed with reasonable actions to recover the expenses as a debt. The Council will apply for a charge to be applied to the land that would run with the land and transferable to subsequent owners.
- 4.5 The Land Charges Service will be notified of the charge placed on the land for this to be recorded against the property in the register of local land charges. The Council will register the charge at the Land Registry if the debt remains unpaid.
- 4.6 It is acknowledged that age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. By virtue of Section 149 of that Act in exercising its planning functions the Council must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Council will have due regards to this duty in determining whether to take direct action or not.

Agenda Item 4(d)i

End of Year Performance Report for 2025-26

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 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 2025-26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made during 2025/26 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, 69% of the key actions scheduled for the year 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, 68% 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 health 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 2025-26

Performance Rating	Action completed	Work on Target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Actions not yet due	Total Number of Actions
Priority					N/A	
Prosperous Economy	7	3	7	1	1	19
Communities and Wellbeing	5	1		2		8
Climate Change and Environment	12	3	1	1		17
Effective Council	3			3	1	7
Total	27	7	8	7	2	51

5.5 At the end of 2025/26, of the 49 projects/actions due for delivery in this period:

- 34 (69%) have been completed or are on target;
- 15 (31%) are behind target; and
- 2 are not applicable.

5.6 The key achievements/deliverables during 2025/26 have been:

- Stafford Town Centre Transformation; completion of main demolition works to the former Guildhall and Co-op and creation of a draft Development Framework.
- UKSPF - the overall programme is on track to achieve full spend and delivery of outputs.
- Designs have been drawn up for the conversion of office units to 6 units of temporary accommodation and agreement has been reached to purchase a further property. External funding also secured to purchase two units of temporary accommodation.

- Biodiversity Strategy (Nature Recovery) 2026-2023 published, along with the nature recovery action plan.
- Successful distribution of the Council's food waste containers and information leaflets ready for the introduction of the new weekly food waste collection service in April 2026.
- UKSPF funded work to Rowley Park's main entrance and entrance pathways have been completed.





5.7 2025/26 also saw the submission of a proposal to the Government for the creation of two new unitary Councils to replace the current two-tier local authority arrangements in Staffordshire as part of the Government's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. A decision on this is expected in the summer.

5.8 Whilst overall performance has fallen by 10% compared to last year, a number of the projects delivered this year are significant in both scale and importance to the future of the Borough and its residents.

Key Performance Indicators

5.9 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 2025/26

Priority					N/A	Total Number of KPIs
	Performance exceeds target	Performance on target	Performance < 5% below target	Performance > 5% below target	Not Available/ Annual	
Prosperous Economy	3		1		3	7
Communities and Wellbeing	2			1	3	6
Climate Change and Environment	2	1	1	1	2	7
Effective Council	5		2		4	11
Total	12	1	4	2	12	31

5.10 Of the 19 indicators due to be reported on for the year:

- 13 (68%) show performance on or above target; and
- 6 (32%) show performance below target.

5.11 Overall performance is consistent when compared to last year with a significant number of services exceeding their performance targets:

- Waste collection
- Support for the Homeless
- Number of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) completed
- Processing of new benefit claims and changes of circumstances
- Customers Services Team - calls answered and wait times
- Responding to FOI requests

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 464411
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Cabinet - 18 June 2026 Resources Scrutiny Committee - 23 June 2026 Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny - 2 July 2026 Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee - 16 June 2026
Key Decision:	No

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4

				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	3	7	1	1	19

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4

Stafford Town Centre Transformation; completion of main demolition works to the former Guildhall and Co-op and creation of a draft Development Framework, to be presented to Cabinet on 9 April 2026.

Stafford Station Gateway; progression of Local Regeneration Funded activities including ground investigation works and surveys relating to Staffordshire County Council owned land.

Council has responded to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation and made good progress with its evidence base for the new Local Plan.

UKSPF; although there has been a slight delay with the delivery of two projects; the overall programme is on track to achieve full spend and delivery of outputs.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

Stafford Station Gateway; delays in establishing formal governance arrangements and acquiring third party land.






S106 review; review deferred due to capacity issues.




Development Management; slower than anticipated progress with implementing the agreed Improvement Plan. Project end date has been re-profiled.





Local Plan; delay in publishing timetable due to new Local Plan regulations only being published by Government on 25 March 2026.

Priority 1 - Prosperous Economy

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of regeneration schemes	Stafford Town Centre Transformation						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete work on Station Approach project 	X				Work on site completed in May 2025. Initial feedback on the improvements has been positive.	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete demolition works to Guildhall shopping centre and former Co-operative department store 			X		Main demolition works completed Q3 2025	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree preferred development delivery option for cleared development sites 			X		Programme amended to reflect the additional land acquisitions during the summer. Reported to Cabinet 9 April 2026	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop wider masterplan/development framework for Stafford town centre 				X	This is a joint commission with Staffordshire County Council and a draft masterplan is due to be completed April 2026 and presented to Cabinet in the summer.	▲
	Stafford Station Gateway						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete land acquisition 		X			Legal process initiated following Cabinet approval, timescales of acquisition are not wholly in SBC control	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Levelling Up Funded activities 				X	Spend within 2025/6 for this programme, now renamed as the Local Regeneration Fund, relates wholly to SCC activity and has been completed to date as planned	
Economic Growth Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and re-draft Economic Growth Strategy for consultation 				X	This was due to commence during Q4 but due to the changes within the Town Centre Transformation programme this has moved to Q1 2026/7	
Promotion of the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop pipeline of future economic development and regeneration projects 				X	This is aligned with the refresh of the Economic Growth Strategy. This was due to commence during Q4 but due to the changes within the Town Centre Transformation programme this has more to Q1 2026/7	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete delivery of UKSPF programme for 2025/6 				X	The deadline for spending the UKSPF allocation has been extended until 30 September 2026. This means that for two projects that encountered unexpected issues during delivery that would otherwise have lost a small remaining element of funding can now be completed - this is scheduled for Q1 2026/7.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete review of section 106 policy and allocations 				X	<p>Review of S106 policy and allocations project delivery to be reconsidered in 2026-2027 due to current lack of capacity in finance team to support this workstream due to competing priorities.</p> <p>With LGR and other competing priorities, it is proposed to deprioritise this action and remove it from the PDP for 26/27.</p>	





Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme and Project Allocations for section 106 funding through evidence for Cannock Chase SAC and Leisure 				X	Projects completed on schedule for 2025-2026 based on resources available and external partners	
Delivery of planning services to enable economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish revised Local Development Scheme 				X	New Regulations on plan-making came into effect on 25 March 2026 with new Local Plan timetable published Q1 of 2026/2027	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) assessment and New Local Plan implications 			X		NPPF consultation published 16 December 2025, later than expected so delayed completion of this action. Council response to NPPF submitted 5 March 2026 Implications assessed on the New Local Plan process related to Regulations published 25 March 2026	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare New Local Plan and updated evidence base 				X	Current projects in Local Plan programme on track based on resources available and external consultants	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	N/A

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
						<p>The service continues to address a large backlog of applications and is under further pressure from speculative applications.</p> <p>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.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 4

				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	1		2		8

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4



Plans to acquire Council owned temporary accommodation are progressing well. Designs have been drawn up for the conversion of office units to 6 units of accommodation and agreement has been reached to purchase a further property. Stafford Borough have been successful in securing funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund, to purchase two units of temporary accommodation and one unit of accommodation for Afghan resettlement.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

The housing strategy has not progressed; in part this is due to the new requirement from Government to complete a Supported Housing Strategy by 31 March 2027. Work is underway to understand how best to take forward these two separate, but related pieces of work.

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 completed	★
	Cabinet approval for the acquisition and management of temporary accommodation units			X		Funding included in the budget for temporary accommodation units	★
	Start of property acquisition				X	There is an agreement in place to convert a 6-bed unit and purchase a 3-bed house	✓
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 agreed shared priorities under the CORE20+5 framework.	★

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	Complete Community Wellbeing Strategy, setting out priorities across community safety and health (2025-2028).			X		Development of the strategy has begun in Q4. This had been delayed due to 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 received, evaluated, approved and funded in line with policy and evaluation matrix. Projects began 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 4

				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	
12	3	1	1		17

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4




The Council completed and published its Biodiversity Strategy (Nature Recovery) 2026-2023, along with its nature recovery action plan. Quarter 4 saw the successful distribution of the Council's food waste containers, kitchen caddies and information leaflets to all homes, ready for the introduction of the new weekly food waste collection service in April 2026. In addition, the funding and structure was agreed for the development of the joint tree team along with the funding for the outsourcing of the next round of tree inspections and follow up works. UKSPF funded work to Rowley Parks main entrance and entrance pathways were completed during Q4. Work has also continued on the multi-phase master plan for Rowley Park, with the procurement of a contractor to install the play area and work on the planning application for the play area improvements.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

Progress in implementing the new tree management system and commissioning inspections is behind schedule but work has been reprioritised. The intention is to upload tree data to the new system so that this can be used to commission the inspection of trees in red (high risk) zones. This work will commence in Q1 2026/27. Monitoring arrangements are also being put in place to ensure revised plans are delivered to target.

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update e	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	Completed in Q3. 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	Final Decarbonisation Report received. This included in depth analysis of 8 priority assets. Final checking of report underway.	✓
Local Plan with positive climate change policies	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation study				X	Consultants have been appointed to undertake the study and work is underway. On track to be completed by Q3.	✓
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	Completed – Nature recovery strategy entitled Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2023 was received by Cabinet during March 2026	★
	Develop an action plan to deliver the nature recovery strategy				X	Completed - The action plan was included within the Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2023.	★

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update e	Symbol
Minimise Household Waste - Introduction of Mandatory weekly food waste collections	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.	★
	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	Task competed during March 26 in preparation for the service rollout on 13 April 2026	★
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		The procurement of the inspections was being delayed to allow for the new tree management system to be implemented first so that all data from the inspections could be input directly to the new system.	✘





Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update e	Symbol
						However, this approach has been revised with inspections of trees in red zones being prioritised. Procurement process to commence in Q1.	
	Implement joint tree management system				X	Work on implementing the new tree management system is in progress but behind schedule due to vacancies creating capacity issues in the team. Priority is to be given to uploading tree data so that inspection work for red zones can be commissioned. Work to commence in Q1.	
	Prepare joint investment strategy and work programme as part of the budget setting process				X	Completed – funding and structure agreed for the development of the joint tree team. Funding agreed for the outsourcing of the next round of tree inspections and follow up works.	
Investment in Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces	Carry out play area development in accordance with play area improvement programme, agreed by Cabinet during 2024/25	X	X	X	X	UKSPF funded work to Rowley Parks main entrance and entrance pathways were completed during Q4. Work has also continued on the multi-phase master plan for Rowley Park, Stafford, as an inclusive main/destination park with the procurement of a contractor to install the play area and work on the planning application.	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update e	Symbol
	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 4

				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	
3			3	1	7

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4





Work on submission of the LGR proposal was completed on schedule and an action plan of preparatory actions is being developed.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

Work on increasing the range of services available on line has slipped and has been rescheduled for 2026/27.

Consultation and engagement has taken place throughout 2025/26 on key issues, but this has been done on a reactive basis. Work is in progress to develop a plan for 2026/27 so that projects can be scheduled in advance.

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			Discussion with managers are in progress and will be completed in Q1 26/27	
	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 Q2 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 and will be reported to the Audit Committee in June and full Council for approval	
Consultation	Undertake consultation/engagement with the public and stakeholders on key projects that affect our communities eg the production of the local plan. These will be determined each year as part of the development of the annual priority delivery plans.	X				Whilst consultation and engagement has taken place throughout 2025/26 on key issues, it was not possible to establish a work plan in advance. However, work is in progress to do this for 2026/27	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
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	<p>A report was approved by Cabinet in November setting out a number of key areas for preparation for LGR.</p> <p>All actions required during 25/26 have been completed.</p> <p>Preparatory work on data collection with all Councils in Staffordshire will commence in April 26 pending the Government's decision on which unitary option is to be adopted for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.</p> <p>Once a decision is known an action plan for LGR will be developed. Work has commenced on the development of an action plan of the preparatory actions for the Council and this will continue to evolve once we have clarity on the wider Staffordshire action plan</p>	★

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

Symbol	Description	Prosperous Economy	Communities & Wellbeing	Climate Change & the Environment	Effective Council	Total
★	Performance exceeds target	3	2	2	5	12
✓	Performance on target			1		1
▲	Performance < 5% below target	1		1	2	4
✘	Performance > 5% below target		1	1		2
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	3	3	2	4	12
	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	4	3
	Performance on target	1				
	Performance < 5% below target		1			1
	Performance > 5% below target		1	1		
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	5	3	3	3	3
	TOTAL	7	7	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	N/A	Annual figure released by ONS. % relates to working age population (16-64) economically active i.e. in work or training. Next data release from ONS 21 July 2026, therefore the 25/26 year-end figure will be reported in Q2.
Town centre vacancy rate	N/A	N/A					N/A	N/A	Data not available; indicator to be removed from the KPI reporting.
Number of housing completions	612	749						N/A	Data not available until June 2026 Annual figure at year end (1 April 25 to 31 March 26)

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Planning Services									
Major Planning Applications determined within time	93.3%	60%	60%	50%	80%	76%	66.5%	★	
Non-major Planning Applications determined within time	85.3%	70%	78.6%	67.9%	46.7%	76%	67.35	▲	As part of Improvement Plan, operational decision to prioritise the issuing of decisions to reduce backlog over securing an extension of time.
Major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.4%	2.3%	1.49%	2.56%	1.94%	★	
Non-major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	Forecast < 10%	< 10%	1.5%	1.1%	1.68%	1.11%	1.35%	★	

KPIs for Priority 2 - Communities and Wellbeing





Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
	Performance exceeds target	2		1	2	2
	Performance on target		2			
	Performance < 5% below target					
	Performance > 5% below target					1
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	4	4	5	4	3
	TOTAL	6	6	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%	52%	49%	★	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					83 homes	✘	The situation is kept under constant review. Good working relationships with Registered Providers are important and will continue to be prioritised. When development as a whole starts to slow down, this will inevitably impact on the delivery of affordable housing, therefore delivery performance can be beyond the control of the local authority.




Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
No of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) completed	160	125	28	30	53	42	184	★	Grant works that were completed by private homeowners and registered housing providers in Q1 and Q2 have been reported late, therefore the overall year end figure is greater than the sum of each quarter.
Annual report on delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grants service	N/A							N/A	Presented to Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
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									
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	£1,086,598	£3,491,331	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	1	2
	Performance on target			1		1
	Performance < 5% below target		1	1	1	1
	Performance > 5% below target				3	1
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	2	2	2	2	2
	TOTAL	7	7	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%	99.89%	99.95%		Annual target of 99.90% met. Q4 was 0.01% under the target which was due to the adverse weather in January.
Number of missed bin collections (including assisted) / 100,000 / qtr.	38 per 100,000	<40 per 100,000	38.12	28.66	28.10	110	51.22		Actual missed collections in January were 247 (110 per 100,00) due to adverse weather conditions. Figures returned to normal in February and March.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
% Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting	46.23%	48%	49.20%	45.83%	44.95%	39.79%	44.94%		Lower garden waste tonnages were collected during Q4 due to the very wet and inclement weather conditions.
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	108.53 kgs	424.04 kgs		Q4 figure is estimated as we await final confirmation from SCC but figure will achieve the annual target.
Streetscene									
% residents' satisfied with the appearance of town centres (Stafford, Stone and Eccleshall)	95%	90%	98.3%	94.0%	88%	78%	90%		Q3 & Q4 figures have dropped with the move of surveys to online only. Responses now include reference to activities not undertaken by the Council eg highways work. The survey questions will be reviewed.




Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Satisfaction with the quality of our parks, play areas, and open spaces.		New					A) 98% B) 100%	N/A	A) 98% park cleanliness satisfaction B) 100% floral displays satisfaction Annual measure based on 150 responses received in the first half of the year prior to survey moving online when responses reduced to virtually nil. Survey to be reviewed

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	3	5
	Performance on target	2				
	Performance < 5% below target	2	3	2	3	2
	Performance > 5% below target				1	
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	4	4	4	4	4
	TOTAL	11	11	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	14.2	17.1	★	
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax change of circumstances	4.9	9 days	2.1	2.4	3.1	3.9	2.7	★	
% of calls answered	96.7%	95%	97.1%	97.5%	97.5%	92.7%	96.2%	★	Performance has exceeded target despite an increase in the number of calls answered compared to last year
Number of calls answered	61,647		15,036	14,644	14,433	19,736	63,849	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	109 seconds	58 seconds	★	

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 services (forms) available online	New	N/A	55	85	85	85	85	N/A	This year will be used to establish a baseline
Number of online transactions	New	N/A	10,218	13,030	22,386	35,318	80,952	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%	97.5%	97.5%		The slight dip in collections appears to mirror local and national trends
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98.6%	98% at end of year	28.9%	57.1%	81.8%	97.6%	97.6%		A dip in collections was expected due to increased charges to Retail Leisure and Hospitality businesses. Of the 0.4% deficit against target, 0.3% is due to 60K worth of rates on demolished property awaiting take out of the rating list.
Good Governance									
Freedom Of Information requests within time i.e. 20 working days	79.4%	85%	83%	90.2%	88.1%	92.3%	88.4%		

Appendix 2

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 public consultations/engagement exercises undertaken		New					N/A	N/A	Data not collated

Agenda Item 4(d)ii**Updated Strategic Risk Register**

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 2026
Report of:	Head of Business Support and Assurance
Portfolio:	Resources Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register as at 1 April 2026.

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 required to approve the Strategic Risk Register.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 All strategic risks and associated action plans have been reviewed and updated for 1 April 2026, and the Council's risk profile is summarised in the table below

Risk Status	Number of Risks at 30 Dec 2025	Number of Risks at 1 April 2026
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.

- 5.5 A further full review has been carried out, and the updated Strategic Risk Register is attached as **APPENDIX 1**. Work has continued 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 continue to change as Leadership Team develops 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 **APPENDIX 1** and detailed information of all risk at **APPENDIX 2**.
- 5.8 Cabinet and Audit Committee will receive the summary risk register and detailed information on Red Risks throughout the year with Leadership Team monitoring the actions on all risks.
- 5.9 At the 1 April some actions had been completed, and others are being progressed. Progress updates against the position in December is set out in **APPENDIX 2**. An additional comment has been added to each risk to explain any movement or stability in the residual risk score across the 2025-26 year.
- 5.3 Risk 2025-08 has had the scope of the risk reviewed and amended to remove the internal factors relating to the financial stability risk and focus solely on external factors.

The wording has changed from:

“Internal - Poor budget planning, over commitment of financial resources or significant use of reserves to fund schemes leading to a financial shortfall, reduced financial resilience or overspends that undermine the Council’s ability to deliver services or corporate priorities.

External - central government policy changes which impact the Council’s financial position.”

to

“Central government policy changes which impact the Council’s financial position.”

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 - 1 April 2026

Appendix 2 - Strategic Risk Register Red Risks - 1 April 2026

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

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

Contact Officer: Stephen Baddeley
Telephone Number: 01543 464415
Ward Interest: All
Report Track: Cabinet 18 June 2026
Audit and Accounts Committee 25 June 2026
Key Decision: N/A

Stafford Borough Council Summary of Strategic Risk Register as at 1 April 2026

Risk Ref	Risk Owner	Risk Name	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score Dec	Residual Risk Score April	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	Business Support 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	Safety and compliance arrangements for properties	12	12	12	↔	8

[SBC]

Risk Ref	Risk Owner	Risk Name	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score Dec	Residual Risk Score April	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
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Stafford Borough Council Strategic Risk Register as at 1 April 2026

Risk Ref	2025-02
Risk Owner	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
Risk Name	Safety and compliance 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
	Monitoring of spreadsheets by management
	Internal Audit Reviews

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Monthly validation of corporate assets data to ensure all properties are recorded centrally. Asset register is continually being updated with new information as and when received along with the leased properties register to ensure tenancy data is up to date.	Complete Asset Manager	Q4 2025/26	A central list has been collated and is being checked on a regular basis. Completed
Review of Health and Safety Compliance Records of Contractors	Corporate Asset Manager	Q1 2026-27	Contractors continue to return updated information. Those that have not responded or are out of date have been contacted again.
Appoint Contractor to undertake Building Condition Surveys (prioritise top 5 - 60 in total)	Corporate Asset Manager	Q1 2026-27	Orders placed with Townsend and Renaudon for the remaining 15 properties to be completed. Surveys due in before the end of May 26.
Asset Reviews will be carried on all Council properties.	Corporate Asset Manager	Quarter 4 2026-27 (on-going)	Owing to lack of resources and direction regarding a large-scale review ahead of LGR this is on hold but reviews will be carried out on an ad-hoc basis when vacant or other activity prompts the need for review. (Asset Transfer Request etc)

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>Fire Risk Assessments have all been completed and the associated works identified have been actioned.</p> <p>Fire Compartmentation works are being scheduled for the Civic Centre.</p> <p>Work on the Asset Reviews is being dealt with on a reactive basis.</p> <p>Lease reviews and compliance checks continue and progress is being made.</p>
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[SBC]

	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.
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
12	12	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	The risk score has remained at a 12 as detailed work is required. These actions will take a significant time to produce results that will reduce the residual risk score.
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[SBC]

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		8
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
Development of action plan for internal preparation, pending decision	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Q1 26-27	

Progress Updates

Current Position	All of the actions planned for 25/26 have been completed and the proposal has been submitted to the government for consideration. Whilst a decision is awaited from the Government of a County wide project structure has been set up to oversee the planning for LGR and initial preparatory work. As part of this workstreams have been set up and will meet for the first time in April. Preparatory work continues to focus on corporate and support services at this stage. Alongside this work, planning has commenced on the internal preparatory work needed and an internal action plan is being developed.
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
12	12	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	<p>Although work regarding LGR has not impacted on front line service delivery to date, there has been an impact on corporate and support services who have been leading on the work relating to the proposals for the new unitary council model for Staffordshire.</p> <p>In view of this, the wider capacity issues that the Council is facing and the ongoing uncertainty around LGR until a decision is made, the residual risk score remains unchanged.</p>
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[SBC]

Risk Ref	2025-04
Risk Owner	Business Support and Assurance
Risk Name	IT Resilience Risk
Risk Description	Risk of unplanned disruptions to the IT infrastructure, network and systems which prevent accessibility and service delivery. This includes but is not limited to cyber-attacks, equipment failure, natural disasters, and human error.
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data, Systems and Applications inaccessible potentially for several months • Inability to deliver Council services including a reduction of services to the public • Cybercrime/ Fraud/ Ransom demands/Financial harm • Reputational damage locally and nationally • Data Loss causing a breach of Data Protection Act (DPA) and GDPR. Possible fine from the ICO. • Financial Loss
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
Main Risk Category	IT/Technology

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
4	2	8
Target Score		8
Comment on Target Score: All reasonable/affordable steps will be taken to manage this risk. However, it is only considered feasible to reduce the likelihood to a 2 giving a residual score of 8, due to the evolving nature of cyber-attacks.		

Controls	Assurances
IT Policies and Procedures including the IT Security Policy	External compliance checks - PSN Certification, Cyber Essentials Plus Certification (annual IT Health Check and penetration testing conducted by GCHQ approved consultants). Internal compliance checks by Technology Team and Internal Audit
Access controls to network e.g. complex password configuration and Multi Factor Authentication	Enforced for all users and third parties.
Vulnerability Monitoring - proactive monitoring of our entire network 24/7 to alert us to any signs of threat	

Controls	Assurances
Firewall and Anti-Virus System	
Protective Domain Name Service (PDNS) - prevents access to domains known to be malicious	
Standards Group - regulate any exceptions to the standard software/hardware in use.	
Third Party Agreement - used to manage access to systems by suppliers/contractors.	
Privileged Access Controls - role based access controls (RBAC) are in place for all staff and IT administrators.	
User education and awareness training	
Incident management - response and disaster recovery procedures in place	
IT risk register - assessment, management and monitoring of IT risks	
Replacement of IT systems in line with digital strategy	

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Replacement of network infrastructure hardware	Infrastructure Manager	Q3 2025	This work has now been completed.
Data files will continue to be moved to the cloud (SharePoint) during 2025/26	Technology Service Manager	Ongoing	Approximately 50% of the migration has been completed to date and we are aiming to complete the majority of the remaining files by the end of 2026/27.
Researching options to improve vulnerability scanning –	Technology Service Manager	Quarter 1 26/27	Addition funding has been provided through the budget. Once research has been completed, further actions will be developed to procure and implement the preferred solution

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>At the end of the year, progress has been made with essential work on upgrading the infrastructure completed. Work on completing the move to SharePoint has slipped but has been rescheduled into 26/27</p> <p>As a result of additional funding secured through the budget, research is to be undertaken into options to improve our ability scan for cyber threats and this work will take place during 2026/27.</p>
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
8	8	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	<p>There has been no change in the direction of travel and we are at our target score. Due to the ever evolving nature of cyber attacks, the focus is on maintaining the risk and the current level and not letting it increase.</p>
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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		12
Comment on Target Score:		
<p>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.</p>		

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
Development of work plans for the next 2 years. This will allow us to assess capacity and pinch points and prioritise work accordingly.	Leadership Team	Quarter 1 2026/27	Work is underway with each Head of Service developing a summary work plan and a detailed delivery plan for their service area.
Monitoring delivery of workplans	Leadership Team	From Quarter 2 2026-27 onwards	Progress monitoring template being developed
Monitoring capacity	Leadership Team	From Quarter 2 2026-27 onwards	Template to monitor vacancies being developed. Sickness reporting being updated
Management of expectations/discussion with Cabinet	Chief Executive/ Leadership Team	Q1 2026-27	Discussions will take place once the work plans have been drafted. Likely to be March/April 2026.

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>Capacity has been an ongoing issue throughout 2025/26. Recruitment in a number of service areas is difficult and there continues to be a reliance on the use of agency staff and consultants to cover vacancies.</p> <p>Workload continues to increase with a number of major projects underway which impact a range of front line and corporate/support services. In order to help to manage this workplans are being developed setting out the key projects for the next 2 years.</p> <p>At present the workplans only include some initial preparatory work for LGR; this will increase substantially once the Government announces the decision on the unitary council model for Staffordshire which is expected in July 2026. As the work required for LGR becomes clearer, the workplans will be reviewed and it may be necessary to stop work on some projects.</p> <p>Whilst some funding has been made available in the budget for 2026/27 to provide additional support, this is directed at services currently experiencing problems and is not expected to significantly improve the situation. Leadership Team is continuing to focus on managing capacity within the current resources and maintaining the current position so that this does not deteriorate.</p>
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[SBC]

Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
12	12	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	<p>The status quo has been maintained, in line with the stated position for this risk.</p> <p>However, workloads are expected to increase in 2026/27 with preparatory work for LGR due to commence so it will be essential to keep capacity under review.</p>
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[SBC]

Risk Ref	2025-08
Risk Owner	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
Risk Name	Financial Stability
Risk Description	Central government policy changes which impact the councils financial position.
Consequences	Damage to reputation with stakeholders May affect ability to bid for funding Poor PR
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
Main Risk Category	Financial

Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
3	3	9
Target Score		6
Comment on Target Score: The three-year financial settlement announced December 2025 has not increased certainty of funding moving forwards as it was varied at the last moment and there is continuing uncertainty around the funding levels contained in it. The provisional funding allocated has allowed the council to balance a 3-year budget with use of reserves. This has reduced the council's financial resilience.		

Controls	Assurances
Medium term financial plan in place	Council approval and s151 Officer
Working Balances maintained	S151 Officer and Deputy
Review of the capital programme is complete	S151 Officer and Deputy
Evaluation of consultations on changes to government funding regimes	S151 Officer
Financial regulations in place to be followed	Internal Audit periodic checks and Finance Team
Membership of appropriate bodies to gain insights into government funding direction	S151 Officer
Business cases required for drawdown of reserves to ensure VFM and appropriate use of monies	S151 Officer and Deputy/Leadership Team

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Quarterly review of reserves to be undertaken	s151 Officer	Ongoing	

[SBC]

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>A balanced 3 year budget has been approved. This is a major step forwards for the council. As above, this required the use of reserves which could be safely released to fund the position and increased investment in services.</p> <p>The internal risk has been removed. This is due to the council not currently planning to restart more regular budget monitoring as LGR is imminent and the focus being on delivering existing on going projects and LGR. Budgets will be reported on twice a year as part of outturn and budget setting. In year budget managers have been trained to use real time dashboards to monitor their budgets</p>
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
9	9	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	Due to the uncertainties of future funding this risk has remained static in the year.
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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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>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.</p>		

Controls	Assurances
Trained Manager, Tree Officers, and Arboriculturists. Tree and TPO officers covered by consultants	IA Reviews.
Tree Surveys	Management Information
Policies and Procedures for Tree Management, urban forest strategy best practice.	
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	

[SBC]

Controls	Assurances
Historical tree database/system in place	

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Review tree service, TPOs and procedures	Natural Environment Manager	Q3 2026/27	In progress – several requirements identified including tree team, full TPO review.
Joint Tree Team Structure to be developed and implemented	Natural Environment Manager	Q1 2027/28	In progress, structure has been agreed and costed and the first posts going out to recruitment have been job evaluated. Posts going out to advert in Q1 27/28
Implement new full risk-based tree management procedure	Natural Environment Manager	Q3 2026/27	In progress, trees are now in the process of being managed on a developing shared risk basis methodology
Implement new joint tree management ICT GIS based system	Natural Environment Manager	Q2 2027/28	System procured, data cleansing and preparation in progress. Data cleansing will take several months. Priority to be given to uploading tree data so that inspection work for red zones can be commissioned
Outsource next round of tree inspections for all trees to create new baseline data (78,000 trees) and ongoing inspections	Natural Environment Manager	Q4 2026/27	Trees in red zones are to be prioritised. Procurement process to commence in Q1.
Deliver and monitor tree risk-based works and ongoing inspections	Natural Environment Manager	Ongoing	Progress against Tree Management action plan to be monitored and reported to Trees Oversight Group

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>Consultant tree officers have been brought in to cover vacant posts until permanent staff can be recruited and a large amount of tree maintenance works are being contracted out.</p> <p>The limited capacity currently available within the team is being prioritised and focussed on responsive inspections and tree works.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, progress is being made to deliver the actions planned to improve the service.</p>
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[SBC]

	<p>The Tree Management structure across both Councils has been finalised and provision made within the budget for 2026/27. The recruitment process for all Tree Officer posts will commence in Q1.</p> <p>Work is in progress to catalogue SBC's area and other Tree Protection Orders for integration into the Council's new ICT tree system. Two officers are to be seconded in Q1 to support the implementation of the new tree management system to allow for the input of tree data which can then be used to inform tree inspection works.</p> <p>Work is to commence in Q1 on procuring a contractor to undertake inspections of trees in red zones as a priority, with inspections of other areas to follow.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the risk, it is considered the overall residual likelihood score will not be reduced until the full tree inspection survey has been completed and the majority of the high-risk remedial tree works identified from this has been carried out. This may take upward of 2-3 years.</p>
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
12	12	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	Although the risk score remains at 12, actions are progressing but will take time to complete. Delivery of project work has been affected by vacancies with resources focussed on operational response. The plans have been reviewed and refocussed for 2026/27 to allow for work to commence in stages with a focus on higher risk areas.
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Risk Ref	2025-10
Risk Owner	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
Risk Name	Failure to deliver good governance
Risk Description	The Council does not have in place or comply with Governance Best Practice processes leading to negative Annual Governance Statement, External Audit or other regulator comment, and/or Statutory Intervention. E.g. Statutory Officer Advice is not complied with, Members and Employees fail to follow Codes of Conduct and the Constitution
Consequences	Government intervention Negative PR/reputation damage
Corporate Objective SBC	Effective Council
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	2	8
Target Score		4
Comment on Target Score:		

Controls	Assurances
Code of Governance	Audit Committee
Annual Governance Review/Statement	Scrutiny Committees
Policy and Procedures e.g. Financial Regulations, Procurement Regulations, HR policies	Statutory Officers/Responsibilities
	Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report and Opinion

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Review of Code of Governance	Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 2026/27	Further work on the review of the Code of Governance has been undertaken. It will now be taken through the democratic cycle for approval in Q1 2026/27.
Regular Statutory Officer meetings - golden triangle	Chief Exec/ s151 Officer/ Monitoring Officer/Chief Internal Auditor	Q1 2025/26 onwards	Meetings are taking place on an ad hoc basis

[SBC]

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Reminders and training for Leadership Team and Service Managers on key policies, processes and good governance	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/ Head of Business Support and Assurance/ Head of Law and Governance	Q2 2026/27 (Revised from Q2 Sept 25)	This has been deferred to 26/27 and will now take place once the updated Code of Governance has been approved.
Delivery of Governance Improvement Plan	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/ Head of Business Support and Assurance/ Head of Law and Governance	Quarter 4 2026/27	Work on this is ongoing and will not be completed until 2026/27

Progress Updates

Current Position	Some progress has been made in delivering a number of the actions in the Governance Improvement Plan. The outstanding actions in the improvement plan will be reviewed and rescheduled at the end of March, alongside consideration of the findings of the External Auditor's VFM review for 2024/25 a draft of which has been received recently.
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
8	8	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	A stable position has been maintained during 2025/26. Some progress has been made in completing the outstanding actions in the Governance Improvement Plan, but not sufficient to reduce the risk score.
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[SBC]

Risk Ref	2025-12
Risk Owner	Chief Executive
Risk Name	Inability to demonstrate and implement adequate health and safety arrangements for people
Risk Description	Operational procedures and working practices are not sufficient to adequately ensure the safety of tenants, employees, leaseholders or visitors leading to death or serious injury.
Consequences	HSE Investigation Prosecution, Injury to employees, Personal Injury Claims, Corporate Manslaughter,
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	2	8
Target Score		4
Comment on Target Score:		

Controls	Assurances
Health and Safety Policies	Health and Safety Officer
Health and Safety Training	Health and Safety Audits
Health and Safety Risk Assessments, COSHH, PPE etc	Accident Reports/Stats
CDM Training	
IOSH Managing Safety for Service Managers	

Actions

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
A review of Health and Safety Training will be carried out in to determine a new package of mandatory training and refreshers.	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q2 2026-27	
An awareness campaign and reminders on Health and Safety matters will be rolled out	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q2 2026-27	

[SBC]

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Specific H&S Training to be delivered to Leadership Team and managers/supervisors	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q3 2026-27	
A programmed review of High Risk Service Areas will be carried out to cover reviewing risk assessments and regular engagement with relevant management teams.	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q2 2026-27	
Work will be carried out to determine a corporate approach to monitoring Health and Safety compliance on outsourced contracts.	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q3 2026-27	
A more formalised Assurance and Reporting regime will be established for the Health and Safety Team to ensure that regular information and reports are passes to Leadership Team covering H&S compliance and incidents	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Health and Safety Team	Q2 2026-27	

Progress Updates

Current Position	A review of the H&S training will be carried out and a new mandatory list of training and refreshers will be developed. There is a need to raise awareness and to do more substantive assurance work to provide additional assurance to those charged with governance.
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
8	8	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	The risk has remained the same across the year and additional actions have been identified to reduce the score.
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Risk Ref	2025-16
Risk Owner	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Risk Name	Delivery of Town Centre Regeneration Project
Risk Description	<p>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.</p> <p>There is a risk that either the Council may not be able to complete the demolition phase of the project or secure a development partner to re-develop the cleared sites.</p>
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 completes the demolition works to the former Wilko site and properties at 10 - 12 Gaolgate Street and secures agreements with developers/operators following a competitive procurement process.

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
Procurement using approved frameworks to select and appoint key contractors/developers/operators	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 capacity to deliver the projects including dedicated programme management support, commercial advice, legal, finance and comms resource.	Project Board Project Sponsor Deputy Chief Executive Resources (S151)
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
Approval of Development Framework to set out Council's vision for the regeneration opportunity and proposed uses/parameters for development	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Q1 2026/27	Presented to Cabinet for approval on 9 April 2026

Actions Planned	Person Responsible	Timescale	Progress/Comments
Approval of refreshed Governance structure for the project and additional resource/capacity to deliver the project	Deputy Chief Executive - Place Deputy Chief Executive - Resources (S151) Head of Economic Development and Planning	Q1 2026/27	Report being prepared and will be presented to Cabinet for consideration on 21 May 2026
Communications to stakeholders, partners and the public - development of Comms Strategy and Plan	Head of Economic Development and Planning, Communications Manager	Q1 2026-27	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	Q1 2026/27	A Development Framework has been produced and will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 9 April 2026. The report to Cabinet will set out a recommended development delivery route for each parcel within the Development Framework.
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. The recommended route for developer/operator selection will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 9 April 2026.

Progress Updates

Current Position	<p>Performance Dashboards and Risk Registers have been produced and reported to Project Boards and LT.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A Development Framework has been produced which sets out the Council's vision for the regeneration scheme and proposed uses for the 6 development parcels identified within the red line boundary.</p> <p>Procurement frameworks have been researched with the view to taking a paper to Cabinet on 9 April 2026 to recommend a preferred approach to selecting operators/end users for the scheme.</p>
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Risk Score April 2025	Risk Score April 2026	Direction of Travel in the Year
12	12	↔

Comment on Direction of Travel in the Year	<p>Whilst the Council has made positive progress with the regeneration scheme during 2025/26, the risk profile and score remains at the same level until the Council moves forward with the recommended development delivery route and secures developers/operators to deliver the regeneration opportunity.</p>
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Agenda Item 4(d)iii

Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report for 2025-26

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 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 2025-26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan set out at **APPENDIX 1**.
- 2.2 To approve the revised Governance Improvement Plan for 2026/27 set out at **APPENDIX 2**, subject to any further additions arising from the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 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 2025/26. Of the 42 actions due to be completed, 40% have been completed or are on target.
- 3.3 Taken together with the actions completed in 2024/25, this gives a total of 61%.

- 3.4 The External Auditors have recognised the considerable progress made in their VFM review for 2024/25 and have reduced the number of key recommendations from 4 to 2 and this follows the removal of the 1 statutory recommendation last year.

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	5			5	3	13
Q1 2025/26	9			3	2	14
Q2 2025/26	1			4	2	7
Q3 2025/26	2			2	1	5
Q4 2025/26			1		2	3
TOTAL	17	0	1	14	10	42

- 5.5 At the end of 2025/26 of the 42 actions due for delivery:

- 17 (40%) have been completed or are in progress;
- 15 (36%) of actions are behind schedule; and
- 10 (24%) are no longer applicable or not being actioned.

- 5.6 A number of outstanding actions were completed in the final quarter of the year but it has not been possible to catch up on all of the slippage from earlier in the year. When taken with the 22 actions completed in 2024/25, a total of 39 actions have been completed which amounts to 61% of the original number of actions planned.

- 5.7 The External Auditor's draft VFM assessment for 2024/25 has recently been received. The report recognises the considerable progress that has been made over the last 2 years and as a result, the number of key/significant recommendations has been reduced from 4 to 2. This follows the removal of the 1 statutory recommendation last year. Four minor improvement recommendations have been identified. In light of this, and the anticipated work expected to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation, a full review of the outstanding actions has been undertaken and a revised action plan for 2026/27 has been produced. The review has considered the resources available and the priority of the recommendations in order to determine which actions are to be progressed. The revised action plan is attached at Appendix 2.

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

Appendix 2: Revised Governance Improvement Plan for 2026/27

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 18 June 2026
Audit and Accounts Committee 25 June 2026

Key Decision: No

Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report

Summary of Progress at 31 March 2026

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	5			5	3	13
Q1 2025/26	9			3	2	14
Q2 2025/26	1			4	2	7
Q3 2025/26	2			2	1	5
Q4 2025/26			1		2	3
TOTAL	17		1	14	10	42

Commentary on Progress


A number of outstanding actions have been completed in Q4 but it has not been possible to catch up on all of the slippage from earlier in the year.

The External Auditor's draft VFM assessment for 2024/25 has recently been received. The report recognises the considerable progress that has been made over the last 2 years and as a result, the number of key/significant recommendations has been reduced from 4 to 2. This follows the removal of the 1 statutory recommendation last year. In light of this, and the anticipated work expected to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation, a full review of the outstanding actions has been undertaken and a revised action plan for 2026/27 has been produced.





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 been rescheduled for Q2 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.	✘
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






No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
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	★
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 progressed on the IT Assurance report and this is now due to be reported as part of end of the year end cycle in Q1 26/27.	✘

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
31.	Review of what we include in procurements re ICT controls and information governance	Head of Business Support and Assurance, Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager	Quarter 4 - 2024/25	Completed.	★
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 Q2 26/27.	✘
45.	Review Anti - Fraud and Bribery Policy	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Policy has been updated and approved by the Audit Committee and Cabinet.	★
46.	Review of Confidential Reporting Policy	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Policy has been updated and approved by the Audit Committee and Cabinet.	★
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.	★
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	The review has been completed and additional information will be included in the Annual Internal Audit Report which will be presented to the Audit Committee in Q1 2026/27.	★



No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
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. Work has commenced and is due to be completed in Q1 26/27. This will include a framework for performance reporting on delivery of the work plans.	
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	This has not progressed due to work on LGR taking precedence and it is not now planned to complete this action.	N/A
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	N/A

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
59.	Performance reporting for waste and leisure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Q2 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 well as support the development of an asset strategy.	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 but has not yet been reported back to Leadership Team due to other work taking precedence. This will now be completed in Q1 26/27.	✘
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 have been developed and embedded into the new Code of Conduct for Employees which has been approved by Council.	★

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
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	The Code of Conduct for Employees has been revised and approved by Council.	
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	This action is not being pursued due to LGR. Instead, those elements which are relevant will be progressed over the next 12 months eg recruitment & retention, learning and development	N/A
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) and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 1 - 2025/26	Risk registers are being developed for the HRA and ICT. Instead of producing directorate risk registers, it is now proposed to develop departmental risk registers (Head of Service level) to accompany workplans which are currently being developed. The workplans will be completed in Q1 and the risk registers in Q2 2026/27.	

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
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	Once the new departmental risk registers are in place, it is intended that they will be reviewed quarterly as a minimum and any significant risks will be reported to Leadership Team for inclusion in the Strategic Risk Register. This will take effect from Q2 2026/27.	
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 has not progressed but will now be picked up in Q1 2026/27 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 produced as part of the development of work plans and the preparation for LGR as to which contracts need to be re-tendered in the next 2 years. This will be completed in Q2 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 Q2 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 Audit Committee in June and Council for approval.	★
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	Decision taken not to proceed with this action unless it becomes essential to LGR preparatory work	N/A
63.	Development of Assurance Model	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 4 - 2025/26	Some preparatory work is underway with regard to developing corporate assurance reports for Technology and Health & Safety. An assurance statement for Heads of Service has also been prepared.	▲

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Progress Update	Progress Rating
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 follow the launch of the revised Code of Governance. This is now planned for Q2 26/27	
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 2025/26	Assessment undertaken as part of preparatory work for the Annual Governance Statement and Assurance Statement template developed for future reviews	

Governance Improvement Plan for 2026-27

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VFM REVIEW 2024/25

No	Recommendation	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Actions
SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS				
Financial Monitoring (Significant Recommendation 1)				
S1	<p>Ensure adequate capacity in the Finance Team and ensure that budget holders receive formal financial monitoring reports.</p> <p>Produce draft financial statements in line with statutory requirements and work with external auditors to deliver the audits effectively</p>	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)		<p>Efforts will continue to recruit to vacancies in the Finance Team and/ or to continue to use agency staff where appropriate. However, given the increase in workload facing the team and the challenges experienced in recruitment over the last 3+ years, it is not anticipated that capacity will improve sufficiently to produce more regular budget monitoring reports.</p> <p>In terms of the financial statements, it is planned that the statements for 2025/26 will be produced by the end of Summer 2026.</p> <p>Good working relationships will be maintained with the External Auditors to support the delivery of the audit.</p>
Fraud (Significant Recommendation 2)				
S2	Update the Anti Fraud and Bribery Framework and the Confidential Reporting Framework	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Complete	Completed April 2026

Governance Improvement Plan for 2026-27

No	Recommendation	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Actions
IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS				
Financial Sustainability (Other Recommendation 1)				
I1	Review the need to implement further savings ahead of LGR given the potential funding gaps identified in 26/27 and 27/28 as a result of changes to the financial settlement after the MTFS and 26/27 budgets were approved in January 26	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)		Due to the high uncertainty around the settlement and the previous late interventions by central government to ensure no decrease in core funding, a savings programme is not deemed necessary for 2026/27. There are sufficient reserves in place to be able to prudently adopt this approach should central government not change the current settlement amounts.
Risk Management (Other Recommendation 2)				
S2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place directorate risk registers for all service areas Risk registers to be subject to regular review to ensure mitigating actions are being taken Process to be put in place to escalate risks to the strategic risk register where appropriate 	Head of Business Support and Assurance, Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager and Leadership Team	Q2 2026/27	<p>Develop departmental risk registers</p> <p>Review departmental risk registers quarterly as a minimum, report any significant risks to Leadership Team for inclusion in the Strategic Risk Register</p>
Performance Management (Other Recommendation 3)				
I3	Develop a data quality policy or similar process for providing assurance on KPIS as part of performance management reporting	Head of Business Support and Assurance	N/A No further action	Whilst it is acknowledged that it would be useful to have a data quality policy, in light of limited capacity and LGR it has been agreed not to implement this recommendation. It would take several months to develop the policy and would at best have 18 months of use, assuming that LGR proceeds to the current timetable.

Governance Improvement Plan for 2026-27

No	Recommendation	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale	Actions
Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness / Procurement (Other Recommendation 4)				
14	Put in place a formal SLA with Staffs County Council re the shared procurement arrangements	Head of Business Support & Assurance	N/A No further action	Due to the advent of LGR, this is not deemed a priority. Working practices have been in place for several years and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Should LGR be delayed then this will be revisited.
15	Provide regular reports to Members on single tender waivers	Head of Law & Governance	Q1 2026/27 onwards	Waivers to be reported on to the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee quarterly.
16	Update the contracts register and ensure it is compliant with transparency requirements	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Leadership Team	Q1 2026/27 Q2 2026/27	Contracts register to be updated as part of the preparations for LGR. This will also include the development of a plan of those contracts which need to be re-tendered in the next 2 years.

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 2025/26

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale
VFM1	Financial Sustainability		
35.	Review of Financial Regulations and training for managers	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 2026-27
VFM4	Fraud		
73.	Develop a fraud risk register	Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	Quarter 2 2026/27

Governance Improvement Plan for 2026-27

No	Action	Lead Officer	Revised Timescale
VFM5	Performance Management		
47.	Develop work plans for all Heads of Service for the next 2 years to manage the lead up to LGR. To include the development of a performance reporting framework for Leadership Team	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	Quarter 1 2026/27
45.	Provide training for key officers (LT, Service Managers and relevant Principal Officers/Team Leaders) on project management.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Business Support and Assurance	Quarter 2 2026/27
VFM6	HR related issues		
31.	Complete review of hybrid working and develop a hybrid working policy.	Head of Business Support and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 2 2026/27
GOV	Governance Framework		
81.	Development of Assurance Model, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Assurance Report for Health and Safety • Annual Assurance Report for Technology • Heads of Service Assurance Statements 	Head of Business Support and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 2 2026/27 • Quarter 1 2026/27 • Quarter 1 2026/27
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	Q2 2026/27

Agenda Item 4(d)iv**Revenues and Benefits Collection Report -
Quarter 4**

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	18 June 2026
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive - Resources
Portfolio:	Resources Portfolio

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 the last quarter of the 2025-2026 financial year.
- The collection of Business Rates during the last quarter of the 2025-2026 financial year.
- The recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit during the last quarter of the 2025-2026 financial year.

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

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 APPENDIX** 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 £111.6M of which some **97.7%** was collected during the year.
- 4.2 Business Rates due for the 2025/2026 year amounts to £59.6M of which some **98%** was collected during the year.

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 £111.6M and we have collected 97.7% of this up to the end of the financial year. The collection rate for the same period last year was 97.8%.
- 6.3 The team also increased its 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 **98%** was collected by the 31 March. This is a small decrease on last year's collection 98.6%.
- 6.9 Repeating last year's performance was not achievable largely due to many retail, hospitality and leisure establishments facing increased bills as the government relief to these premises has reduced from 75% last year to 40% this year. Around £174,000 of the amounts uncollected relates to town centre properties which are demolished and awaiting Valuation office action to remove them from the Rating List. Had this happened before 31 March, our collection rate would have been 98.3%
- 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 2 irrecoverable Business Rate debts in the sum of £59,991.41 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 £443K being collected within this financial year. This income is received into the General Fund, in addition to the Government subsidy and is not shared with preceptors.
- 6.18 1 irrecoverable Housing Benefit overpayment debt in the sum of £10,439.43 are listed in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** to this report.

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 recommended.

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 recommended.

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 and Housing Benefit Overpayments to be considered for Write Off

9 Previous Consideration

None

10 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Rob Wolfe

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Ward Interest: None

Report Track: Cabinet 18 June 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: No