

Councillor Frank James (Mayor)

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

Councillors:

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

Officers in attendance:-

C Forrester	- Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
J Aupers	- Head of Transformation and Assurance
E Fullager	- Chief Accountant and Deputy S151 Officer
C Lamb	- Legal Services Manager
W Conaghan	- Press and Communications Manager
J Allen	- Democratic Services Officer

## **C52 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 were agreed as a true and correct record.

### **C53 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M J Winnington.

Councillor J M Pert informed Members that Councillor M J Winnington is currently in hospital. All Members expressed their good wishes for a swift recovery.

### **C54 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

Considered the report of the Chief Executive regarding Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation.

Councillor A T A Godfrey introduced the report and noted the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2 before concluding his comments by moving that said recommendations be approved.

The proposal to approve the recommendations was seconded by Councillor R P Cooke.

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

“I ask that all options be considered, including the footprint of the County boundary of 8 Councils”.

The amendment was debated and put to the vote and subsequently declared to be lost.

The substantive proposal was then debated and put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that:-

- (a) authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), to submit to Government the interim outline proposal as set out in appendix 1 of the report, or a joint proposal for a Southern Staffordshire unitary authority together with other councils, if a draft be agreed by Leaders in accordance with the Council’s position as set out in 7.12-7.22 of the report;
- (b) authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to amend as necessary and finalise the interim outline proposal as set out in appendix 1 of the report and to submit this to Government by the 21 March 2025 deadline, working in collaboration with the other local authorities in Staffordshire;

- (c) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/S151 Officer, to commission expert advice and support as required to optimise the Council's position, including commissioning or cost sharing with other authorities as required;
- (d) the governance arrangements as set out in section 10 of the report for oversight of the further development of the proposals prior to the final submission by 28 November 2025 be noted;
- (e) a report be commissioned on the setting up of a Town Council for Stafford to understand what this entailed and the associated costs.

**C55 Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:- that pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting whilst the next following item of business be discussed, on the grounds that it included the disclosure of exempt information of the type specified in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act

*Recording of the meeting was stopped at this point.*

**C56 Proposed Purchase of Civic Centre, Stafford - CONFIDENTIAL**

Considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) setting out options for the purchase of the Civic Centre.

Councillor R P Cooke introduced the report and noted the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2, with an additional recommendation to facilitate its implementation, before concluding his comments by moving that said recommendations be approved.

The proposal to approve the recommendations was seconded by Councillor A T A Godfrey.

The matter was then debated and put to the vote and subsequently declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that:-

- (a) the purchase of the Civic Centre as per option 2 of the MUFG report attached at appendix 1 of the report be approved;

- (b) authority to proceed with the purchase be delegated to the Cabinet Member (Resources) and the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/S151 Officer.

MAYOR