

## **TO:- Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Mike Davies , Councillor Philip Davis , Councillor Andrew Adams , Councillor Helen Adams , Councillor Penny Allen , Councillor Jeff Ashley , Councillor Meg Barrow , Councillor Barry Bond M.B.E. , Councillor John Brindle , Councillor Gary Burnett , Councillor Val Chapman , Councillor Bob Cope , Councillor Steph Dufty , Councillor Robert Duncan , Councillor Sue Duncan , Councillor Christopher Evans , Councillor Mark Evans , Councillor Warren Fisher , Councillor Sam Harper-Wallis , Councillor Dr Paul Harrison M.B.E. , Councillor Diane Holmes , Councillor Fiona Hopkins , Councillor Matthew Jackson , Councillor Victor Kelly , Councillor Dan Kinsey B.E.M , Councillor Vincent Merrick , Councillor John Michell , Councillor Rob Nelson , Councillor Martin Perry , Councillor Ray Perry , Councillor Gregory Spruce , Councillor Christopher Steel , Councillor Wendy Sutton , Councillor Sue Szalapski , Councillor Bernard Williams , Councillor Kath Williams

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held as detailed below for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Date: Tuesday, 26 September 2023

Time: 18:30

Venue: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX



D. Heywood  
Chief Executive

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## **AGENDA**

### **Part I – Public Session**

- |          |   |               |
|----------|---|---------------|
| <b>1</b> | Minutes of meeting held on 25.7.23<br>To approve the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25 July 2023  | <b>1 - 2</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | Apologies<br><br>To receive any apologies for non-attendance.   |               |
| <b>3</b> | Declarations of Interest<br><br>To receive any declarations of interest.  |               |
| <b>4</b> | The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2028/29 and 2024/25<br>Budget Outlook and Indicative Figures<br>Report of The Finance Team Manager (and Interim 151 Officer) | <b>3 - 10</b> |

<b>5</b>	<b>Members update on Climate Change Actions</b> Report of Corporate Director, Place and Communities.	<b>11 - 16</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Work Programme 2023/24</b> Report of Corporate Director of Governance	<b>17 - 20</b>

#### **RECORDING**

**Please note that this meeting will be recorded.**

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS**

Spare paper copies of committee agenda and reports are no longer available. Therefore should any member of the public wish to view the agenda or report(s) for this meeting, please go to [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy).

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** South  
Staffordshire Council held in the Council  
Chamber Community Hub,  
Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South  
Staffordshire, WV8 1PX on Tuesday, 25  
July 2023 at 18:30

**Present:-**

Councillor Andrew Adams, Councillor Helen Adams, Councillor Penny Allen, Councillor Jeff Ashley, Councillor Meg Barrow, Councillor John Brindle, Councillor Gary Burnett, Councillor Val Chapman, Councillor Bob Cope, Councillor Mike Davies, Councillor Philip Davis, Councillor Steph Dufty, Councillor Robert Duncan, Councillor Sue Duncan, Councillor Christopher Evans, Councillor Warren Fisher, Councillor Sam Harper-Wallis, Councillor Dr Paul Harrison, Councillor Diane Holmes, Councillor Victor Kelly, Councillor Dan Kinsey, Councillor Vincent Merrick, Councillor Martin Perry, Councillor Ray Perry, Councillor Christopher Steel, Councillor Wendy Sutton, Councillor Sue Szalapski, Councillor Bernard Williams

**01 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 January 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**02 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bond, Hopkins, Jackson, Nelson, Spruce and K Williams.

**03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Allen declared an interest in item 5: Closed Churchyards Revision of Special Expense Decision and left the chamber for consideration of this item.

Councillor Harrison on behalf of himself and Councillor Dufty, for transparency, made reference to their pre-election campaign position with regard to Item 5. This did not constitute an interest and therefore they could continue to take part.

**04 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (IPM) REPORT - 2022/23 QUARTER 4 AND OUTTURN**

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Director - Chief Operating Officer providing a combined update as of 31 March 2023 (Quarter 4 of 2022-23) and 2022-23 outturn on performance, finance and risk including performance against delivery of the Council's Plan 2020-24.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Quarter 4 Integrated Performance Management Report (IPM).

**05 CLOSED CHURCHYARDS REVISION OF SPECIAL EXPENSE DECISION**

The Committee received a report from Councillor K Perry MBE, Cabinet Member for Community Services setting out her proposal for a revised approach to financing necessary work within closed churchyards.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed decision set out in the Cabinet Member's report regarding the revision to the 2019 decision made on this matter and that the Cabinet Member will take on board the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when

reaching her final decision.

**06 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Director Enterprise and Growth providing an update on activities relating to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund and the progress made to date.

**07 SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE PLACE NARRATIVE 2023**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Policy Manager presenting the Place Narrative 2023 which will be used for consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders including communities to shape the next Council Plan to be published in 2024.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Place Narrative.

**08 MEMBER WORKING GROUPS 2023 - 2024 - TOPIC SELECTION**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Governance proposing topics for Member Working Groups 2023-24.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed proposed topics 1 and 2 for examination by the Member Working Groups for the current municipal year; with climate change being proposed for a third working group.

**09 WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director of Governance setting out the work programme for the Committee for the municipal year 2023-24.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the work programme for the municipal year 2023-24.

**10 OUTCOME REPORT ON 2023/23 CHALLENGE PANELS**

The Committee received the report of the Challenge Panel Chairman and Vice Chairman providing an overview of the outcomes of the final round of Challenge Panels concluding in 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the outcomes of the Challenge Panels.

The Meeting ended at: 20:29

**CHAIRMAN**

## **SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2028/29 AND 2024/25 BUDGET. OUTLOOK AND INDICATIVE FIGURES**

#### **REPORT OF THE FINANCE TEAM MANAGER (AND INTERIM 151 OFFICER)**

#### **LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR ROGER LEES, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Council approved the budget for 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 to 2027/28 on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.
- 1.2 In setting the Council Tax for 2023/24, the report acknowledged considerable uncertainty in the latter years of the MTFS, particularly with regards to the timing and impact of any fundamental changes to local government financing from central government.
- 1.3 The position presented at that time showed the General Fund Reserves of the Council falling below minimum safe levels (of £1.5m) in 2026/27.
- 1.4 The budget for 2024/25 and MTFS for 2024/25 to 2028/29 will be formulated on best knowledge and understanding of a number of external factors and internal decisions around costing, priorities and service provision.
- 1.5 In depth analysis of the internal factors is ongoing but some greater clarity is starting to emerge in relation to the prevailing external factors, certainly in the shorter to medium term. This report informs members of the potential budgetary impact surrounding some of these major factors.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny note the broad economic and external climate that could precipitate the best, worst and likeliest scenarios presented.
- 2.2 Overview and Scrutiny to also note the potential impact of identified and provisionally costed external factors on the General Funds of the Council, notwithstanding that these are indicative and internal policy prioritisation remains ongoing.

### 3. Summary Impact Assessment

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	The budget is the financial expression of the Council's priorities and therefore underpins the Council Plan.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	Budget / MTFS assumptions and forecasts do not impact on equality issues.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2023	
KEY DECISION	No – Council decision	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	February 2024 for approval of the MTFS and setting of Council Tax	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	As set out in the report.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget (s32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992) and must make three calculations namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an estimate of gross revenue expenditure;</li> <li>• an estimate of anticipated income; and</li> <li>• a calculation of the difference.</li> </ul> <p>The amount of the budget requirement must be sufficient to meet the Council's budget commitments and ensure a balanced budget. The 2024/25 budget requirement must leave the Council with adequate financial reserves. The level of budget requirement must not be unreasonable having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its Council Taxpayers and non-domestic rate payers.</p> <p>A lawful Council Tax is required to be made on or before 12 March 2024.</p> <p>Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 places a general duty on local authorities to make arrangements for 'the proper administration of their financial affairs'.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>The relevant risk (per the Strategic Risk Register) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Budget pressures, increased income volatility and uncertainty as to the future of local government finance</b> – The budget, the MTFS and the financial stability of the Council is severely impacted by reductions and/or changes in the way in which local government is financed.</li> </ul>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

#### 4. **Background**

##### Continuing levels of uncertainty

- 4.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) puts in place a strategic approach to the planning of the Council's resources and provides the framework for the planning of the Council's revenue and capital spending each year via the annual budget. The MTFS, once approved will cover the five years 2024/25 to 2028/29 and highlight the various financial challenges facing the Council over this period.
- 4.2 The underlying economic context remains challenging. There is greater certainty in relation to local government funding ahead of the next General Election (which will be on or before January 2025) and perhaps for a year following the election of a new administration. Beyond that however, local government funding remains uncertain.
- 4.3 There are four parameters outside of the control of South Staffordshire Council that could potentially have a material impact on the finances of the Council, these being:
- The level of interest rates as set by the Bank of England and impacting on the Council's ability to raise revenue through Treasury activities.
  - The level of inflation and the impact the cost of living crisis may have on pay levels awarded to employed staff and the impacts of contractual inflation for services outsourced.
  - The Local Government Finance settlement, particularly from 2026/27 onwards should a new administration embark on any fundamental reforms.
  - Significant economic developments within the locale (in particular West Midlands Interchange and Royal Ordnance Featherstone) have the potential to yield significant Business Rate income if developed and occupied as planned.
- 4.4 Whilst none of the above are directly in the control of the Council, it is possible to envisage the broad circumstances that would be prevailing in what is identified as the Best, Worst and Medium case scenarios that could significantly impact on budgets.
- 4.5 Table 1, Description of Prevailing Conditions in Each Scenario

	Best Case	Worst Case	Medium Case
Interest Rates	Interest Rates and Reserve Balances Remain at or close to current levels enabling material returns to bolster the MTFS	Interest Rates fall significantly in the medium term and/or council reserves are depleted significantly reducing the ability of the Council to gain from Treasury activity.	Interest Rates fall gradually in line with current Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) projections. Reserves are maintained at a sufficient level to maintain good returns from Treasury activity

Inflation	Inflation falls rapidly reducing pressure on pay awards and contracts	Inflation pressures persist and become embedded in the economy. Ongoing pressures on pay and external contracts, not funded through Local Government settlement.	Inflation falls in line with current MPC projections. Pay pressures are contained within resources (including Earmarked Reserves). Specific pressures to significant contracts (eg Waste and Fleet) may remain.
Local Government Settlement	Assumed settled for 2024/25,2025/26 and 2026/27. Future settlement makes no or neutral changes to funding parameters.	Assumed settled for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Future settlement makes radical changes to funding favouring single tier authorities over districts to South Staffordshire's detriment.	Assumed settled for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Acknowledged that any future settlement may see a rebalancing away from district Councils but that transitional arrangements will reduce any medium-term impact.
West Midlands Interchange/ Royal Ordnance Featherstone	New businesses (and multiplier effects) arise following the commencement of, eg WMI and development of ROF. Business Rate regime allows South Staffordshire to benefit directly from growth.	Economic conditions prevent or delay take up by new businesses of opportunities at eg WMI/ ROF. Changes to business rate regime mean any additional resources do not benefit South Staffordshire.	New businesses (and multiplier effects) arise following for example commencement of WMI and development of ROF. Any alterations to business rate regime are staggered to enable some, significant benefit to South Staffordshire finances.

- 4.6 Consistent with previous years, the intention shall be to construct the Medium Term Financial Strategy (upon which Council Tax decisions are based) on the mid-case scenario. Where the finances are particularly sensitive to future conditions, sensitivity analysis, informing members of the impact of different outcomes will be published in the text for information.



## 5. Indicative Financial Position

- 5.1 Table 1 below is reproduced from the Budget and MTFS approved by Full Council in Feb 2023.

Table 1, MTFS as presented to and approved by Full Council.

<b>General Reserve Balances**</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>FORECAST OUTTURN</b>	<b>PROJECTED BUDGET</b>	<b>PROJECTED BUDGET</b>	<b>PROJECTED BUDGET</b>	<b>PROJECTED BUDGET</b>	<b>PROJECTED BUDGET</b>
<b>Opening Balance 1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	(9,296)	(9,296)	(8,361)	(6,589)	(5,269)	(3,297)	824
Forecast (Surplus)/ Deficit		2,685	1,772	1,320	1,972	4,122	4,676
Transfers to (from) Earmarked		(1,750)					
<b>Closing Balance 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>(9,296)</b>	<b>(8,361)</b>	<b>(6,589)</b>	<b>(5,269)</b>	<b>(3,297)</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>5,501</b>

- 5.2 Whilst showing balanced budgets for three years (using General Fund reserves) it can be seen that there are deficits prevailing for all years of the MTFS and General Funds would fall below minimum decreed safe levels (of £1.5m) in 2026/27.
- 5.3 Table 2 below shows how the deficits projected in February 2023 may change as a result of external factors which are presently favourable to the Council.

	<b>2023/4</b>	<b>2024/5</b>	<b>2025/6</b>	<b>2026/7</b>	<b>2027/8</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Forecast Deficit (Feb 2023)</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>1,972</b>	<b>4,122</b>	<b>4,676</b>
Latest Monitoring	(45)				
Revised Treasury Forecasts		(200)	(100)		
Impact of delayed Local Government Finance Reviews				(1,500)	(1,500)
Impact of Additional Business Rate Growth		(119)	(722)	(2,405)	(4,325)
<b>Revised Deficit/ (Surplus)</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>(1,149)</b>

- 5.4 To reiterate, the above Table does not take into account ongoing detailed work around future years' service budgets, specific inflationary impacts and Council policies and priorities which are being costed. However, it does provide a broad indication that ongoing delays to local government finance reform in particular may significantly benefit the General Fund of the council in the medium term. Balanced budgets (without recourse to reserves) may be achievable from 2026/27.
- 5.5 Table 3 below indicates how the position detailed in Table 2, if transpiring, would impact on General Fund reserves (with all caveats still applying).

**Table 3, Most Likely Indicative Financial Position**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Opening Balance	<b>8,672</b>	<b>6,945</b>	<b>5,944</b>	<b>4,794</b>	<b>4,577</b>
Adjusted Budget Deficit/ (Surplus)	<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>(1,149)</b>
General Fund Closing Balance	<b>6,945</b>	<b>5,944</b>	<b>4,794</b>	<b>4,577</b>	<b>5,726</b>

Note that Opening Balance in 2023/24 differs from Table 1 further to betterment in provisional outturn.

- 5.6 Table 3 above shows General Fund reserves not falling below £4.5m and being replenished if budget surpluses can be achieved from 2027/28.

## **6. Timetable**

- 6.1 The process for completing the MTFS and Budget shall be completed according to the following timetable:

12 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Cabinet – Indicative Figures pre-detailed analysis
26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	O&S – outline of timetable, process and key issues
September and October 2023	detailed analysis by Accountants/Service Managers
November 2023	Cabinet – RPP
November 2023	Member RPP forum
December 2023	Local Government Finance Settlement
December 2023	Cabinet RPP Summit
January 2024	Cabinet approval of draft budget
January 2024	Overview and Scrutiny examination of budget
January 2024	Public Consultation
February 2024	Full Council approval of draft budget and MTFS

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

MTFS and Budget Report – February 21 2023

Report prepared by:

John Mayhew

Finance Team Manager (Finance Manager and Interim 151 Officer)





## **SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**

#### **MEMBERS UPDATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS**

#### **REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES**

### **PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To update members on progress made on the council's work to mitigate the effects of climate change during 2022-23 and provide a brief update on actions and work that will take place during 2023-24.

#### **2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes/No	'Vibrant communities' – provide a quality environment that we can all be proud of
		'Caring for the environment' – responding to the climate change emergency declared by the council
		Support of the climate change strategy
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (Equal) been completed?	
	No	
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	
	No	The Constitution and associated protocol provides that front line Councillors, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer will have five clear working days following dispatch of a notification of a proposed decision in which to call in for scrutiny, decisions proposed by the Cabinet or its members. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and associated protocol, any two or more members wishing to request that this proposed decision should be called in for scrutiny should do so by giving notice to the Director Legal & Governance either by e-mail or in writing before

		the end of the fifth day specifying the reason or reasons therefore. The Director Legal & Governance will then call in the proposed decision and arrange for it to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/relevant Scrutiny Panel. A copy of such notice must also be sent to me either by email or in writing by the end of the fifth day. This proposed decision will be confirmed and implemented or, where appropriate, referred to the Council for consideration at its next meeting, on or after the date to be notified upon circulation of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, unless called in for scrutiny by that date.
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	March 2023	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	<p>Yes - Climate change activities and certain actions including carbon literacy training can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p>Further work such as EV installation may require additional business cases which will be brought to members as they develop.</p>	
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Any procurement of external consultancy, support etc. will be subject to the council procurement guidelines and procedures.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	Yes	Further engagement and promotion in line with the climate change strategy and action plan
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	N/A	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

- 3.1 During 2020 and following the declaration of a climate emergency, South Staffordshire Council published a climate change strategy setting out how it will take

action within the district, through our own operations, and also in partnership with others.

- 3.2 Following publication of the strategy, a climate change action plan was produced to detail how the council will achieve the proposals within the strategy through targeted and operational work.
- 3.3 The action plan was approved by members in 2021 and has been developed and updated by the climate change officers group which meets regularly. This plan is reported back to the officers group on a quarterly basis and to Members on an annual basis to ensure good progress against the objectives.
- 3.4 2022-23 has seen a significant amount of activity relating to climate change at South Staffordshire Council and these can be broadly summarised below as per the four headings of the climate change action plan: -

**Council operations**

- Continued to reduce the carbon footprint of the council operations (37% decrease since reporting began in 2010)
- Moved to green energy tariff at the Community Hub and enterprise estates.
- Installed solar powered EV charging on the top car park for council staff and tenants to use – in addition to the 9 public EV charging points already on site.
- Continuing to work with landowners and the Forest of Mercia to facilitate tree planting (estimating 1,000+ trees planted in the district during winter 2022-23)
- Roll out of carbon awareness training to members and corporate leadership team.

**Strategic planning responsibilities**

- Network recovery mapping across the district has been completed in partnership with the Wildlife Trust
- Appointment of a senior ecologist to help detail how biodiversity net gain may benefit green spaces across the district.
- Continue to build carbon friendly development measures within the emerging local plan.
- **Leading on the climate matters planning policy preparation at a county level.**

**Raising awareness**

- Delivery of the South Staffordshire Climate Festival 2022 to promote awareness of this issue.
- Hosted two climate youth committees with 6 schools across the district. Engaging with 30+ children to discuss what concerns them about climate change and what we can all do to help.
- Further engagement with schools – outreach and presentation of the council's climate work at 2 secondary schools
- Partnership with Beat the Cold to deliver energy saving advice to households across the district.
- Distribution of £4k+ funding to 21 'climate prize' projects across the 5 localities – each delivering carbon saving projects at a community level.

#### **Influencing partners**

- Working with Staffordshire County Council and the Sustainability Board to ensure a county wide approach to climate change issues.
- Hosting climate / business networking events both through SBEN and through partnership with the Bradford Estates.
- Developed a green energy solutions package for business through the UKSPF which businesses can tap into
- Improving the carbon efficiency on our own estate through solar panels and energy efficient light bulb which in turn will reduce costs for our business tenants.
- Engagement with the Kingswood Trust to host climate events and demonstrate their own environmental projects.
- Continued discussion with parish councils, community and friends groups to raise awareness.

- 3.5 During 2023, our climate change work was the subject of a Staffordshire County Council audit which has recommended we update the terms of reference of our climate officers group to ensure that any future action plan is checked and challenged. The proposed terms of reference are as follows: -

#### **Role of group**

- Check and challenge progress on action plan and projects
- To act if plan is deviating from agreed actions / timescales
- To escalate issues where appropriate
- To provide reporting to CLT on direction and priorities

#### **Membership**

- Street Scene Performance and Climate Change Manager
- AD community services
- AD assets and estates
- TM / senior officer - estates, waste, planning, corporate procurement, operational services, facilities

**Meeting once per month - with papers circulated in advance and actions / notes agreed.**

- 3.6 As the climate change strategy is into it's the third year and following the elections in May 2023 and introduction of Cllr Kath Perry MBE as cabinet member for community services, it is proposed to take the opportunity to refresh the council climate change strategy during 2023/24 to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the views and aspirations of members **This will be undertaken through the Member Panel on climate change, due to begin in October 2023.**

- 3.7 During 2023-24 we will be continuing to offer carbon literacy training for new members, officers across the council and visitors to the parish summit in Autumn 2023. At the very least, this will ensure that attendees understand the science of climate change, how it will affect us globally and locally, and enable better decision making and contributions to the climate change agenda through the work of the council.



- 3.8 Members will be aware that this council has been reporting on the carbon footprint of its operations since 2010, and during that time have reduced our emissions from the baseline figure by 37%.
- 3.9 It is recognised that the council is making good progress with reducing the carbon effects of our operational impact, and our wider ambition to be carbon zero by 2050. However, members should acknowledge that whilst we have come a long way, reducing our impact further will become increasingly challenging in the future.
- 3.10 During 2022/23, the council has engaged an external consultant to audit our Action Plan carbon reporting methods to better inform our future strategy for carbon reduction and long-term options on how we will achieve net zero. It is recommended that we carry out a review of our scope 3 emission reporting (not 'owned' or 'controlled' by us), and better understand the impact of our wider operations. For example, how we report on the carbon footprint of 'visitors' to our sites such as Baggeridge, industrial estates, cemeteries etc. as well as our purchased goods / services. Members will note that this may create an initial extra burden on our carbon footprint but will understand that it is important to be clear with our measures before making further plans to reduce and offset. Officers will carry out further work in the coming year to understand the financial costs that may be related to our carbon ambitions.
- 3.11 The council is working to help to encourage our residents and visitors to make the switch to EV vehicles and support the national change that is required to reduce the carbon footprint of our travel network. We are working with Staffordshire County Council on a wider central government bid to fund public EV charging for residents at sites across the county. Officers at South Staffordshire Council are also working with a private provider to detail how we can offer EV charging for visitors to our asset sites including enterprise centres, Baggeridge Country Park etc.
- 3.12 The council is proposing to support opportunities for green / active travel within the district via physical improvements to two council owned local nature reserves – the Railway Walk and the Wyrley Essington Canal. An officer working group has been set up with a view to bidding into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and potential partners include Wolverhampton CC, Dudley MBC, Walsall MBC, Canal and Rivers Trust, Sustrans and the West Midlands Combined Authority. Members will be updated on this project as work progresses.
- 3.13 Council officers are continuing to work with the County Sustainability Board and officer working group to ensure partnership working, networking and sharing of best practice in how we deliver our work around the climate change agenda.

#### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 N/A

#### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

5.1 N/A

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 N/A

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Members note the reported progress and achievements made during 2022-23, and the proposals for 2023-24

Report prepared by:

Ryan Taylor – Performance and Climate Change Manager

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL****OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023****WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report updates members in respect of the work programme for the Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Scrutiny is key to the effective and efficient operation of the Council to enable delivery against the Council Plan
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	No – not needed as any equality issues would be addressed individually rather than as part of the programme setting
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No – this report goes to Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	2023/24 Municipal Year	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	This is within existing budgets
LEGAL ISSUES	No	No specific legal issues from this report
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	None at this stage as setting the programme of work rather than considering individual items
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

3.1 At its meeting on 25 July 2023, the Committee agreed a work programme for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. This report updates the agreed programme.

3.2 In addition to the programmed work there will, from time to time, be a number of additional items coming to the Committee including:

- Councillor call for action
- Councillor “call ins”
- Key decision reports

This may require additional meetings to be programmed in depending on when the issues arise.

3.3 Any suggestions for additions to the work programme should be referred to the Chairman in the first instance.

### **3.4 Work Programme 2023/24**

25 July 2023

- Setting of work programme -COMPLETED
- UKSPF Report - COMPLETED
- Integrated Performance Management outturn for 2022/23 - COMPLETED
- Member Working Groups – Topic Selection - COMPLETED
- Challenge Panels Final Outcomes Report 2022/23 - COMPLETED
- Closed Churchyards Special Expense – Voluntary Referral of Member Decision - COMPLETED
- Place Narrative Findings - COMPLETED

26 September 2023

- Work programme update – ON AGENDA
- Climate Change Action Plan Update – ON AGENDA
- Peer Review Follow-up outcome – deferred to November meeting
- Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP) 2024 – ON AGENDA
- Service Standards – deferred to November meeting

14 November 2023

- Work programme update
- Member Working Groups Update
- Integrated Performance Management Report Q2

- Staffordshire County Council Highways – Potholes – understanding the position
- Customer Programme/Digital Programme update
- Service Standards
- Peer Review Follow-up outcome

23 January 2024

- Work programme update
- Budget meeting
- Member Working Groups Update
- UK Shared Prosperity Update Report
- DFG's update report
- Local Plan

12 March 2024

- Work programme update
- Member Working Groups Conclusion Report
- The draft Council Plan – 2024-2022

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
N/A

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES  
None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS  
None

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** That Members note the report.

Report prepared by: Lorraine Fowkes – Corporate Director of Governance

