



South Staffordshire Council

Council Plan 2020 – 2024

“Shaping South Staffordshire’s future”

Report of the Leader of the Council

Date: 5th September 2023

Introduction and Overview

The Council Plan 2020-2024 sets the Council's vision of “Shaping South Staffordshire's future” and within this prioritises “Prosperous Communities” and “Vibrant Communities”.

A number of key performance measures and targets have been set in order to monitor delivery against this vision. These ‘hard’ measures and targets are monitored and reported through the Council’s Integrated Performance Management Report.

This report provides a commentary on matters which are not covered within the Integrated Performance Management Report, but which are nevertheless important activities and developments within each Cabinet area.



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CORPORATE SERVICES

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Roger Lees, Leader

1. Activities and Developments

Parish profiles

There is a brand-new tool on our website featuring 2021 Census of Population data at parish level [Parish data | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/parish-data).

Drawing information directly from the Office for National Statistics, these Parish Profiles present data on a small selection of the topics available from the most recent Census for all parishes. There is also a link to access data on all 34 Census topics available.

This data should be useful for parishes and others in understanding their local areas and planning the delivery of services.

Place Narrative 2023

This Place Narrative is an important step towards creating a new Council Plan for 2024 onwards. It sets out how, in recent years, the national, international, and local context has altered the position of the area, with regard to ongoing health, wellbeing and economic priorities.

[South Staffordshire Place Narrative | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/place-narrative)

Elections Annual Canvass 2023

The Canvass Form ensures that South Staffordshire Council can keep the electoral register up to date and identify any residents who are not registered so that they can be encouraged to do so. This will mean that residents will be able to take part in any future elections. People who have moved address recently are particularly encouraged to keep an eye out for the form and check the details. Research by the independent Electoral Commission indicates that recent home movers are far less likely to be registered than those that have lived at the same address for a long time. Residents will have already received some correspondence from the Council. Residents are encouraged to complete and return any updated information via the Household Response service online, by phone or by post. Please contact the elections team elections@sstaffs.gov.uk for more information.



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BUSINESS ENTERPRISE & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Victoria Wilson

1. Activities and developments

Council named West Midlands Planning Authority of the Year

South Staffordshire Council scooped the top award at the awards ceremony held on 30 June and was named Royal Town Planning Institute Planning Authority of the Year 2023 for the West Midlands. The award recognises planning excellence on a national scale and acknowledges the positive contribution that planning professionals make to the communities they serve. The team now goes forward to the national awards in November.

In addition, South Staffordshire Council was also awarded the Chair's Special Award on the night, for the way its planning team has worked to develop and nurture staff talent.



Local Plan Review

In January this year, work on the review of the Local Plan was paused awaiting clarity from the government on proposed changes to national planning policy which could have implications for us as a green belt authority.

The council firmly believes that the best way to stop unplanned development is to have a sound Local Plan in place. With this in mind, the council is revisiting the evidence that underpins the plan and is now moving forward again, aiming to undertake a new public consultation in early 2024.

We are still awaiting the outcomes of the government’s consultation on their proposed changes, but they have given no indication of when this will be or what form they will take.

In the meantime, the council wants to make sure that the evidence that underpins the plan remains relevant and that South Staffordshire has a strategy ready to get its plan in place as quickly as possible.

No decisions have yet been made about what changes there might be to the previously published plan, but we are pleased to be working proactively for our district and our residents.

Local Plans

Housing land supply annual monitoring is close to being finalised for 2022/2023 and will inform the council’s 5-year housing land supply, which is an important consideration for Members and officers in



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the determination of planning applications. It will also be taken into account in the emerging Local Plan.

We have published neighbourhood planning FAQs on the council website to provide more information about the way plans are prepared: [np faq sheet final 2023.pdf \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#)

Kinver Neighbourhood Plan

The council has received the independent examiner’s report on the Kinver Neighbourhood Plan, and following modifications recommended by the examiner has proceeded to referendum.

The referendum was held on Thursday, August 24 in Kinver parish. If it receives support from more than 50% of those voting, it will be brought into effect and form part of the development plan for the district.

To see the referendum documents visit: [Kinver Neighbourhood Plan | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#) or [Home | Kinver Neighbourhood Plan \(kinvernplan.co.uk\)](#)

Development Management

The RTPI West Midlands Chair’s Award recognised our planning team for its approach to mentoring and supporting planners to learn new skills, widen their experience and pass that knowledge on. Under this umbrella we acknowledge it is important to provide work experience to encourage young people into planning in the future. We had a very successful work experience programme in July, with 3 school students who spent time in the different planning disciplines.

A new partnership has been created through the Pathways and RTPI Explore programme. Pathways is a company which supports careers training and mentoring for students, and we have established ourselves as a placement provider with a link to the RTPI in this scheme. We took one student this year, and after a successful placement he is looking to start his career in planning. We will be taking more placements over the coming year.

We are extremely pleased to now be working on a pilot project with RTPI for Planners on the Front Line and where we are an exemplar LPA in terms of personal safety.

Planning Enforcement

The council appealed the Planning Inspectorate’s decision to grant full planning permission for the residential use of a Travellers’ site on land off Teddesley Road, Penkridge. The High Court quashed the decision on 25 July 2023 and the matter will return to the Planning Inspectorate for a second appeal.



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A court order was obtained at Birmingham County Court on 20 July to force the removal of an unauthorised events marquee at Hillton Hall.

Investigations have continued into the removal of three trees from highways land on Wrottesley Park Road, Perton. The case is being reviewed to establish if the matter will be put before the court.

A chimney stack was removed without listed building consent from the Grade II Listed Pigot Arms in Pattingham. The Planning Enforcement Team took steps to secure the retention of the materials disposed of in a skip and the chimney stack is now being reinstated to ensure that the heritage status of the building is maintained.

Business Enterprise

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

South Staffordshire District Council has been allocated £3.82 million to support revenue schemes and capital projects to March 2025. The Council has recently launched a call for projects for the UKSPF Residual Fund, for funds which have not yet been allocated. Expressions of interest are also being sought for the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). REPF is an additional UKSPF allocation of £489,391 to support the rural community and business infrastructure. Following initially expressions of interests, those projects which meet the priorities set out in the UKSPF prospectus will be invited to submit full applications. Further information and a copy of the UKSPF prospectus are available to view at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-funding.

Delivery of UKSPF projects under the ‘Supporting Local Business’ priority have now commenced. **Green Solutions**, delivered by Staffordshire County Council supports businesses in South Staffordshire to reduce their carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency.

Strive for Success is a business growth programme designed to assist existing business trading for 2+ years to realise their growth potential. Businesses will receive one to one support and have the opportunity to work with a growth specialist through a bespoke series of workshops focusing on the importance of business planning.

The Council are currently undertaking a tender exercise for delivery of business-start up and innovation programmes and a full launch event for the ‘Enterprise in South Staffs’ UKSPF business support programme will take place in early October.

South Staffordshire Business Partnership

Following the most recent partnership event in June, the number of business partners has increased to over 150. A Business Partnership Ambassadors Group is now being established. The Partnership



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Ambassadors will be a small group of business leads to help to steer the direction of the Business Partnership and represent their respective industry.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Rita Heseltine

1. Activities and developments

Environmental Health and Licensing

Environmental Protection

Over the past 2 months the team have received almost 200 requests for service. The requests vary in nature and relate to a wide variety of issues and concerns. As is typical for this time of year, the team are seeing an increase in complaints concerning alleged nuisance from noise and bonfires.

The team are currently continuing to investigate a number of particularly complex issues including a complaint of odour from a commercial premises affecting a neighbouring residential dwelling and have worked with partner agencies including Homes Plus and Severn Trent to resolve a complex drainage issue.

Licensing and Events

The summer period has been even busier than normal with events across the district. The team liaise with partners through safety advisory groups to support organisers in the organisation and delivery of safe events. Generally, we have confidence in the event organisers, but some require considerable monitoring, including noise monitoring over weekends and late into the night. On one occasion the safety advisory group wrote to an organiser advising that they did not support the event. It was subsequently cancelled.

Camp Bestival is our largest event of the year which took place 17th - 21st August at Weston Park.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor David Williams

1. Activities and developments

Customer Experience Improvement Programme

Following the launch of the council’s new website in March 2023, the focus of the Customer Experience Improvement Programme has turned to online forms.



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The Freedom of Information process is currently being trialled by the Digital Services team, before being rolled out to other services across the council.

WELFARE SERVICES

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Robert Reade

1. Activities and developments

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Our People and Skills programme, Creating Brighter Futures commenced in April and is progressing well, we are currently working with 43 applicants, all of whom have received various degrees of support. Since April, 4 individuals have moved into work, having received advice to update their CV's, support to apply for jobs and advice to prepare for interviews.

We are exploring opportunities to fund Green Skills training courses with local colleges as well as engaging with local employers that may offer work experience opportunities.

Jobs Fair

We are facilitating a Jobs Fair at Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre on 21 September 2023, 2pm until 6pm. We are currently working along-side the enterprise team to fill 35 exhibition stands with a mixture of employers, training providers and support organisations. We will also have four guest speakers on the evening to deliver updates on a range of topics.

Warmer Homes

Within the first quarter of working with Beat The Cold, 76 advice line enquires have been received: 36 from disadvantaged households with health conditions or residents of old age and vulnerable. 30 from disadvantaged households with benefits and 11 from hospital referrals. South Staffordshire has managed to help residents with £5,250.00 estimated bill savings as well as providing an additional £8,550.00 household support fund through Staffordshire Community Fund.

The Staffordshire Partnership has successfully secured £10.5 million through Home Upgrade Grants which is an extension of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme and will run until 2025. The scheme aims to provide households not connected to the gas mains with air source heat pumps, insulation and solar panels. Staffordshire County Council is managing the scheme in collaboration with Community Homes Solutions. Due to limited availability of allocated funding, applications will be processed on a first-come, first served basis, therefore we advise any residents who are interested to apply promptly to determine their eligibility.

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For more information please see: [Staffordshire secures £10.5 million for home energy efficiency improvements - Staffordshire County Council Newsroom](#)

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Kath Perry

1. Activities and developments

Garden Waste Collections 2023/24

The sign-up period for the 2023/24 collection year opened on May, 22nd, with collections commencing on July 3rd. As part of the Customer Experience Improvement Programme, a new online sign-up form was developed which retained many of the tried and tested features of the previous forms and included some additional self-serve features. So far in 2023/24 we have 29,212 active subscriptions, representing 66% of eligible households.

Staff Volunteering

A big thank you to council staff, Cllr Dan Kinsey and Wombourne Best Kept Village who all joined in for a volunteering morning to help tackle the invasive Himalayan Balsam along the brook off Tollhouse Way in Wombourne on Friday 9th June. Just a couple of hours on site saw a huge amount of Balsam removed and will make a big difference to the local biodiversity.





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Green Flag

We are proud to say that the Wom Brook Walk in Wombourne has retained the Green Flag award for the 14th year running. We are very grateful for the collective efforts and help that we receive from Street Scene staff, the Friends of Wom Brook, Wombourne Best Kept Village, Wombourne Parish Council and many unsung litter picker volunteers in maintaining this valuable site.

Street Scene

The Street Scene team are delighted to be shortlisted for ‘Service Team of the Year: Street Cleansing and Street Scene Service (Public Realm) at APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Service Awards 2023. The awards will be held on 14th September.

Envirocrime

For the period April - July 5 FPN’s have been issued for littering. There is also an active prosecution for a fly tipping offense that is due to be heard in court on 11th September.

Leisure Services

Leisure Services have implemented changes to the membership offer in August following a review earlier this year. The new membership structure simplifies the offer assisting customers to make informed decisions on which membership package is right for them. Any existing members affected by the changes have been notified.

Baggeridge Country Park

Green Flag Award

Baggeridge Country Park has once again been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award for the 25th year running. The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. The award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of officers at South Staffordshire Council and local volunteers that care for the green spaces so that everyone can enjoy them.