



SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Moorlands House, Leek

9 January 2024

PART 1

1. Apologies.
2. Notification of Substitute Members, if any.
3. To approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting. **(Pages 3 - 6)**
4. Urgent Items of Business, if any. (24 hours notice to be provided to the Chairman).
5. Declaration of Interests:-
 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
 - Other Interests
6. Questions to Portfolio Holders, if any.
(At least two clear days notice required, in writing, to the Proper Officer in accordance with Procedure Rule 15).
7. Work Programme **(Pages 7 - 8)**
8. Alliance Norse - Disabled Facilities Grants (Presentation - Tony Taylor, Operations Director)
9. Green Spaces Strategy **(Pages 9 - 32)**
10. Tourism Strategy (Presentation/Report) **(Pages 33 - 44)**
11. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

The Chair to move:-

“That pursuant to Section 100A (2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that exempt information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100I (1)

of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the paragraphs indicated.”

12. To Approve the Exempt Minutes from the Previous Meeting (**Pages 45 - 46**)
(Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

MARK TRILLO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & MONITORING OFFICER

Membership of Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Councillor L Malyon (Chair)	Councillor M Haines (Vice-Chair)
Councillor C Beswick	Councillor G Bentley
Councillor C Brady	Councillor J Cox
Councillor B Emery	Councillor K Flunder
Councillor I Herdman	Councillor K Hoptroff
Councillor V O'Shea	Councillor D Pascall
Councillor C Smith	Councillor P Wilkinson

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor L Malyon (Chair)

Councillors C Beswick, C Brady, J Cox, B Emery, K Flunder,
M Haines, K Hoptroff and P Wilkinson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C Atkins, B Cawley, M Gledhill, T Holmes, M Johnson,
D Price, D Proudlove, P Roberts, J Salt, M Spooner,
L Swindlehurst, M Swindlehurst, C Wood and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors I Herdman, V O'Shea, D Pascall and C Smith

17 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

The following substitutions were made:-

- Councillor Holmes for Councillor Herdman
- Councillor Spooner for Councillor Pascall
- Councillor Johnson for Councillor O'Shea
- Councillor L Swindlehurst for Councillor Smith

18 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:-**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda item 8 - Parkwood Annual Performance Update and 13 – Leisure Transformation Plan Update	Councillor Wilkinson	'Other' – Owner of a gym.

19 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 September 2023, be approved.

20 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY. (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).**

At this point of the meeting, the Leader announced that the opening hours of the Reception desk at Moorlands House had been extended until 4:30pm each day. These new opening times would be monitored and reviewed following the trial period.

21 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

None had been received.

22 **WORK PROGRAMME**

In response to a query in relation to the replacement of bins, the Portfolio Holder explained the various reasons residents would qualify for larger bins.

A request was made for the Panel to receive an update on Cheadle Market and it was agreed that this would be included on the Work Programme for the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Work Programme be agreed;
- 2) For an Information Digest to be provided to members on bin sizes.

23 **PARKWOOD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION**

The Panel received the Annual Performance Update from the Regional Director and Contract Manager at Lex Leisure. This included the following topics:-

- The UK Leisure Market
- Healthy Communities
- MSK Hubs
- Net Promoter Score
- Contract Highlights
- Fitness and Swimming Lessons
- Social Media
- Customer Feedback and Net Promoter Score
- Maintenance and Capital Investments
- Carbon Reduction and Utility Management
- Active Communities/Move More Strategy
- Drowning Prevention
- Grounds Maintenance
- Future Plans

Discussion took place around growth levels, affordability of swimming lessons, costs associated with the lifeguard for Leek Swimming Club, popularity of the musculoskeletal [MSK] hub project, promotion of the Escape Pain rehabilitation programme and the temperature of the pool and aging building at South Moorlands Leisure Centre.

Usage of the recently refurbished pavilion at Birchall had increased slightly and it was agreed this facility could be promoted more widely.

An issue around the football pitch at Halls Road Playing field and the use of swim snorkels was discussed.

It was suggested that more work could be done with the community, voluntary sector and councillors to increase usage of the various facilities in the area.

Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 8 November 2023

Ian Sales – Contract Manager, was thanked for the improvements at the bowling green in Leek.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted;
- 2) For the reported issues at Halls Road Playing Field to be investigated further with the Council's Commissioning Team;
- 3) For the next performance update to incorporate the outcome of the review of the MSK Hub Project.

24 **DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS ALLIANCE NORSE (DEFERRED)**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, this item was deferred and would be rescheduled for consideration at another meeting.

25 **PRIVATE HOUSING DAMP AND MOULD UPDATE**

The report provided information on the work undertaken by the Environmental Health service in response to concerns about damp and mould in properties within the private rented sector.

Members welcomed the priority given by the Council to damp and mould and debated the content of the Advice Leaflet attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Information was requested around the extent of the problem in the Moorlands, level of enforcement action taken and the timescales involved following a complaint.

Discussion took place around increased heating costs, condensation, energy efficiency grants, and a holistic approach (Every Contact Counts) to health and wellbeing when home visits were made by Environmental Health Officers.

RESOLVED:

- 1) The Panel noted the contents of the report;
- 2) Recommended that additional wording be added to the leaflet:-
 - I. Rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords;
 - II. The next steps/flowchart a tenant should take after the advice had been followed and the damp/mould issue persisted.
- 3) Detail to be supplied to members in relation to the extent of the problem in the area, level of enforcement and associated timescales.

26 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

The Chair moved:-

“That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 8 November 2023

27 **TO APPROVE THE EXEMPT MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

RESOLVED: That the exempt minutes from the meeting held on 6 September 2023, be approved.

28 **LEISURE TRANSFORMATION PLAN UPDATE.**

Consideration was given to a progress update on the Leisure Transformation Plan.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date

Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2023/24

Date	Work Items	Scrutiny Role	Work Item Detail	Responsible Officers	Narrative
7 June 23					
	Bite-size Briefing	Overview	Overview of scrutiny	Executive Director – Governance Commissioning	
6 Sept 23					
	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023- 2027	Policy Development	Consideration of new policy	Head of Housing	
	Delivery of the Regeneration of Leek Town Centre LUF Programme (Presentation) CONFIDENTIAL	Overview/Project development	Project monitoring	Executive Director – Governance Commissioning	
	Leisure Operations Model (working group establishment)	Policy Development	Establishment of working group	Executive Director – Governance Commissioning	
8 Nov 23					
	Private Housing Damp and Mould Update	Information/monitoring	Service update	Head of Environmental Health	
	Parkwood Leisure Performance Update	Performance	Annual review/performance	Representatives from Parkwood	
	Leisure Transformation	Policy Development	Project update	Head of Service Commissioning	
17 Jan 24					
	Tourism Strategy	Policy Development	Overview of Policy	Head of Regeneration	
	Green Spaces Strategy	Policy Development	Consideration of new policy	Head of Service Commissioning	
	Alliance Norse – Disabled Facilities Grants	Performance & Monitoring	Service Update	Alliance Norse	
6 Mar 24					
	AES Annual Performance Update	Performance	Annual review/performance	Representatives from AES	
	Leveling Up Fund Update	Overview/Project development	Presentation	Executive Director – Governance Commissioning	
	Leisure Operating Model Update	Policy Development	Project Update	Head of Service Commissioning	
Information Digests					
	Maintenance of street furniture/signs	Information Update	Service overview	Head of Assets	Estimated to be published Jan 2024
	Domestic Refuse Collection – Bin Sizes	Information Update	Service overview	Head of Service Commissioning	Estimated to be published Feb 2024

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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel

17 January 2024

TITLE:	Green Spaces Strategy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Nigel Yates - Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Environment & Councillor Matt Swindlehurst Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism
CONTACT OFFICER:	Gareth Knapper – Service Development Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	All Wards

Appendices Attached:

Appendix 1 – Green Spaces Strategy

Appendix 2 – Strategic Context

Appendix 3 – Site List

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the progress made to develop a new Green Spaces Strategy for the Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel discuss the proposed Green Spaces Strategy and associated Green Spaces Development Fund.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Aim 4 of the Council's 2023 - 2027 Corporate Plan highlights an aspiration to protect and improve the environment. Key objectives within this aim include the 'provision of quality parks and open spaces' and 'meeting the challenges of climate change'. One of the priority actions to help deliver on this aim was to develop a Parks and Open Spaces strategy and following further scoping work, the draft strategy is now in a position to review, including a title change to the Green Spaces Strategy.
- 3.2 The many benefits our green spaces have on individuals, the wider community and the environment supports the need to develop a green space strategy. By

developing this strategy and subsequent management plans, we will ensure these spaces develop and are maintained effectively in the future.

- 3.3 The Green Spaces Strategy includes our vision statement - *Our green spaces will be vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Future proofed to provide climate resilience and biodiversity while supporting health and wellbeing for our communities.*
- 3.4 Creating a Green Spaces Strategy will help the Council focus its internal resources and also help attract additional external resources and funding to enhance our green spaces further and to deliver the projects detailed in the individual park management plans, which will accompany this strategy.
- 3.5 The Green Spaces Strategy uses an evidence base to identify five Strategic Priorities:
1. Make investment in green spaces a priority, protecting our heritage.
 2. Use resources effectively and sustainably, maintaining and improving our amenities.
 3. Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting of trees and managing sites for wildlife, whilst improving flora and fauna.
 4. Increase the use and accessibility of green spaces for all, improving health and wellbeing of our communities.
 5. Work cooperatively with our communities and effectively with partners through positive community engagement.
- 3.6 A set of Guiding Principles have also been developed for use when considering any changes that affect the current or future management or maintenance of parks and green spaces. The reason these principles have been developed is to ensure that any changes to the management and ongoing development of our green spaces are appropriate, affordable, sustainable and deliver clearly against the aspirations of the Strategy.
- 3.7 Feeding out of the priorities and principles is a set of nine Objectives that contribute significantly towards delivering the priorities of the Strategy. These objectives will be carried forward into a specific number of action plans within each of the management plans, from which local actions or projects will be developed.
- 3.8 Five site management plans will be developed during the 2024/25 financial year. These initial sites are some of our largest and/or offer good opportunities for how we can improve the current maintenance and enhance the diversity of the site. It should be noted that there are no sites for the Cheadle area as the significant green spaces are managed by Cheadle Town Council.

- 3.9 Management plans will be working documents containing action plans that detail how the objectives of the strategy will be delivered. These will evolve over time, be developed between the Council, service providers and community groups who have an interest in each green space and be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to deliver against the Green Spaces Strategy priorities and objectives.
- 3.10 It is important to highlight that the Council owns and maintains many other highly valued green spaces (Appendix 2). These assets will be managed and developed using the principles of this strategy and when and where appropriate site plans will be produced. Any remaining sites will use maintenance regimes that are specific to each site. Opportunities for future development, including work with community groups to improve or care for them will also be prioritised.
- 3.11 The effects of Climate Change and the enhancement of biodiversity are key considerations for the future management of our sites. The Council is committed to implementing appropriate key themes identified in the Plan for Nature where they are suitable for the land we own and manage. This will be done with consultation and engagement to inform the community and users about any changes.
- 3.12 To help take forward changes to our sites which will come from the action plans, consideration should be given to establish a Green Space Development Fund. The suggested amount of £50,000 is proposed and would be allocated to be spent during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. If approved, a clear criteria for how the fund can be used will be developed and the fund will be used to support the development of projects, which deliver against the priorities and objectives set out in the strategy.
- 3.13 Should a green spaces development fund be agreed, the approved amount would be managed by Officers within Service Commissioning and seen as a revenue growth item which would need to be factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) accordingly.
- 3.14 The next steps for the Green Spaces Strategy, once approved, will be sent to the design team to complete the finished document. The Strategy will then be launched through our Communications Team.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Aim 4 of the Corporate Plan – Protect and Improve the Environment.
- Provision of quality parks and open spaces.
 - Meeting the challenges of climate change.
- 4.2 One of the main objectives of Aim 4 is the production of a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy – now changed to the Green Spaces Strategy.
- 4.3 Aim 2 of the Corporate Plan - Use resources effectively and provide value for money.

- Effective use of financial and other resources to ensure value for money.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 To review and approve the adoption of the Green Spaces Strategy and approve the request for a new Green Spaces Development Fund to be included in the MTFP for £50,000 to be used over financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. **RECOMMENDED.**
- 5.2 To not approve the adoption of the Green Spaces Strategy and not approve the request for a new Green Spaces Development Fund. **NOT RECOMMENDED.**

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Parks provide a range of opportunities for people of all ages to engage in positive activities. Outdoor facilities can provide an outlet for young people and help deter them from antisocial behaviour.

6.2 Workforce

Officers have developed the basis of this strategy, with involvement from relevant Portfolio Holders.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

An EIA has been completed in accordance with the Council's policy.

6.4 Financial Considerations

The 2024/25 budget cycle would allow the opportunity for inclusion of a growth item in the Medium Term Financial Plan to cover the request for a new Green Spaces Development Fund. It is proposed that £50,000 is allocated as a new revenue growth item, which would be managed by Service Commissioning and cover spending over two financial years (2024/25 and 2025/26).

AES are responsible for the maintenance of our parks and green spaces which the Council owns. The maintenance costs associated with these schemes can be contained within existing revenue budget provision.

Key objectives proposed in the strategy may have a financial implication, however, until further scoping works are undertaken these implications are unknown. Further reports detailing any

projects which have a financial implication for the Council, outside of the remit for the Green Spaces Development Fund, would need to be brought forward at the appropriate time.

6.5 Legal

There are no specific legal considerations at this stage.

6.6 Climate Change

Aim 4 of the Council's 2023-2027 Corporate Plan sets out an aspiration to protect and improve the environment, including responding to the climate change emergency. Development of a 'Green Spaces Strategy' was highlighted as a key action.

The Council will look to make best use of its own land to help fight Climate Change and improve biodiversity working alongside the Plan for Nature.

6.7 Consultation

Following review by the Service Delivery Panel, a period of consultation with town and parish councils will be undertaken, following which the final strategy will be taken forward for final approval by Cabinet.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Appropriate assessment will be made as per each project within the strategy.

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)

Web Links and Background Papers

[Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027](#)

[Local Plan](#)

[Plan for Nature](#)

[Move More Staffordshire Moorlands](#)

[Staffordshire Moorlands Open Space Study](#)

[Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)

[Sport England: Uniting the Movement](#)

[Green Flag Award Framework](#)

Contact details

Gareth Knapper

gareth.knapper@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

7. Detail

- 7.1 Aim 4 of the Council's 2023 - 2027 Corporate Plan highlights an aspiration to protect and improve the environment. Key objectives within this aim include the 'provision of quality parks and open spaces' and 'meeting the challenges of climate change'. One of the priority actions to help deliver on this aim was to develop a Parks and Open Spaces strategy and following further scoping work, the draft strategy is now in a position to review, including a title change to the Green Spaces Strategy.
- 7.2 The Staffordshire Moorlands is a beautiful place to live with so many valuable green spaces, parks and recreation areas on our doorstep. The challenge over the coming years is to protect, maintain and improve these wonderful assets to ensure they meet the current and future needs of our residents, whilst also delivering on some of the Council's wider aspirations, such as enhancing biodiversity. The many benefits of our green spaces have on individuals and the wider community support the need to develop a green space strategy and by developing this strategy and subsequent management plans, we will ensure these spaces develop and are maintained effectively in the future.
- 7.3 Since April 2020 the maintenance of the Council's green spaces has been undertaken by the Council's service provider, Alliance Environmental Services (AES). The Council retained overall responsibility for the management and ongoing development of its green spaces, supporting AES and valuable community partners such as 'Friends of the Park' groups who undertake day to day management and maintenance tasks as well as helping to organise events.
- 7.5 The Green Spaces Strategy includes our vision statement - *Our green spaces will be vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Future proofed to provide climate resilience and biodiversity while supporting health and wellbeing for our communities.*
- 7.6 For this strategy to focus on the future effectively, it is important to recognise the key influencing documents and evidence base which frame the provision, protection, and development of our green spaces. It is also equally important for people to understand the current strategic context in which our green spaces are managed and maintained as this will play a part in decision making and the delivery of future projects. (Full details of the documents below can be found in Appendix 1).

Key Strategies and Documents:

- Corporate Plan (2023-2027)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020 - 2033)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Open Space Study (2017)
- Move More Staffordshire Moorlands Strategy (2023 – 2033)
- Play and Outdoor Sports Facilities (2022 – 2026)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Tree Strategy (2016)
- Climate Change Emergency (2019)
- Staffordshire Moorlands "Plan for Nature" (2022 -2030)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018)
- Sport England: Uniting the Movement (2021- 2031)

7.7 Creating a Green Spaces Strategy will help the Council focus its internal resources and also help attract additional external resources and funding to enhance our green spaces.

Overall the strategy will:

- Set the overarching context and direction for the management and development of our green spaces.
- Outline the approach for managing, protecting and developing green spaces which is considerate to the Council's resources, maintenance responsibilities, including recognising the contribution made by community and interest groups.
- Highlight a set of principles which guide future maintenance, investment, community engagement, decisions and actions regarding our green spaces.
- Agree a set of priorities and objectives which focus effort, resources and decision making to ensure that our green spaces remain high quality spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- Help secure additional investment and external funding to enhance the infrastructure, facilities and opportunities within our green spaces for the benefit of the community.

7.8 The Green Spaces Strategy uses an evidence base to identify five Strategic Priorities:

1. Make investment in green spaces a priority, protecting our heritage.
2. Use resources effectively and sustainably, maintaining and improving our amenities.
3. Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting of trees and managing sites for wildlife, whilst improving flora and fauna.
4. Increase the use and accessibility of green spaces for all, improving health and wellbeing of our communities.
5. Work cooperatively with our communities and effectively with partners through positive community engagement.

7.9 A set of Guiding Principles have also been developed for use when considering any changes that affect the current or future management or maintenance of our green spaces. The reason these principles have been developed is to ensure that any changes to the management and ongoing development of our green spaces are appropriate, affordable, sustainable and deliver clearly against the aspirations of the strategy.

- 7.10 Feeding out of the priorities and principles is a set of nine Objectives that contribute significantly towards delivering the priorities of the Strategy. These objectives will be carried forward into a specific number of action plans within each of the management plans, from which local actions or projects will be developed.
- 7.11 Management plans for the sites listed below will be developed during the 2024/25 financial year. These initial sites are some of our largest and/or offer good opportunities for how we can improve the current maintenance and enhance the diversity of the site. It should be noted that there are no sites listed for the Cheadle area as the significant green spaces are managed by Cheadle Town Council.
- Biddulph Valley Park, Biddulph
 - Birchall Playing Fields, Leek
 - Brough Park, Leek.
 - Halls Road Recreation Ground, Biddulph.
 - Pickwood Recreation Ground, Leek.
- 7.12 Management plans will be working documents containing action plans that detail how the objectives of the strategy will be delivered. These will evolve over time, be developed between the Council, service providers and community groups who have an interest in each green space and be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to deliver against the Green Spaces Strategy priorities and objectives.
- 7.13 Further management plans could be developed following the first set of five and any lessons we learn from the first tranche of plans will be used to ensure we produce a concise but useful plan. This approach could also be adopted by others wishing to maintain and develop their green spaces within a similar context.
- 7.14 It is important to highlight that the Council owns and maintains many other highly valued green spaces (Appendix 2). These assets will be managed and developed using the principles of this strategy. These remaining sites will use maintenance regimes that are specific to each site. Opportunities for future development, including work with community groups to improve or care for them will also be prioritised.
- 7.15 The effects of Climate Change and the enhancement of biodiversity are key considerations for the future management of our sites. The Council is committed to implementing appropriate key themes identified in the Plan for Nature where they are suitable for the land we own and manage. This will be done with consultation and engagement to inform the community and users about any changes.
- 7.16 There will be new considerations around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for our sites and we need to ensure that all relevant Council departments are linked to ensure a smooth transition in to the benefits this will offer. We will use the

Green Spaces Strategy and site management plans to ensure proposals are suitable and link with the Staffordshire Moorlands Plan for Nature.

- 7.17 To help take forward changes to our sites which will come from the action plans, consideration should be given to establish a Green Space Development Fund. The suggested amount of £50,000 is proposed and would be allocated to be spent during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. If approved, a criteria for its use will be developed and the fund will be used support the development of projects which deliver against the priorities and objectives set out in the strategy. Should a development fund be agreed, the approved amount would be managed by officers within Service Commissioning and seen as a revenue growth item and need to be factored into the MTFP accordingly.
- 7.18 The next steps for the Green Spaces Strategy, once approved, will be to have the document proof-read to ensure plain English, spelling and grammar. It will then be designed, from a plain Word document to one with photographs, infographics and colour to complete the finished document. The strategy will then be launched through our Communications Team.

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**Staffordshire Moorlands District
Council
Green Spaces Strategy
2024-2034**

Executive Forward

We are delighted to bring forward this strategy which draws together our ambitions alongside the hard work and contributions from a wide range of sources including those from our officer team, partner organisations, community groups and councillors who each play such an important and valuable role in maintaining, developing and improving the amazing green spaces in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

The Staffordshire Moorlands is a beautiful place to live with so many valuable green open spaces, parks and recreation areas on our doorstep. The challenge over the coming years is to protect, maintain and improve these wonderful assets to ensure they meet the current and future needs of our residents, whilst also delivering on some of the Council's wider aspirations, such as ensuring our sites can respond to climate change and meet the needs of wildlife through improved biodiversity.

We are up for that challenge, and this strategy will be used as a framework to prioritise how we manage our parks and green spaces in the future. It will inform work with our service partners, be used as a reference point to guide discussions and help develop new initiatives in our green spaces by working collaboratively together with community and interest groups so that our green spaces are future proofed to ensure that they serve the needs of our current residents and those of the future.

Having a Green Spaces Strategy will help the Council focus its internal resources to help attract additional resources and funding to enhance our green spaces further and to deliver the projects detailed in the individual management plans which will accompany this strategy.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank once again those who have contributed so positively and generously towards the development of this strategy and look forward to delivering our shared aspirations together in the years to come so that the Green Spaces across the Staffordshire Moorlands are better community spaces at the end of the strategy's implementation and will stand up to the future challenges that the planet faces.

Photo SMDC Cabinet Member: Tourism and Leisure. Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst **Signature**

Photo SMDC Cabinet Member for Climate Change
and Environment. Cllr. Nigel Yates **Signature**

VISION

Our green spaces will be vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Future proofed to provide climate resilience and biodiversity while supporting health and wellbeing for our communities.

Introduction

Staffordshire Moorlands has a population of approximately 95,800 (census 2021) and covers an area of 222 square miles. The District has a fantastic array of green open spaces which are treasured assets, that are central to the lives of their communities and enjoyed by visitors to the District for many different reasons. We are extremely proud of our green spaces and the value they bring to communities from a from a wide range of perspectives including biodiversity, economic, education, heritage, health and wellbeing. In developing this strategy, we wish to recognise these benefits and develop clear priorities which will protect and enhance them in the future.

When we talk about our green spaces we are referring to the collection of sites, which Staffordshire Moorlands District Council owns and manages, which also have free public access. Within the list of these sites are formal parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, general open spaces, play areas, closed churchyards and cemeteries.

These green spaces play fundamental roles in the provision of increased community cohesion, physical and mental health, and wellbeing. We aim to ensure that these spaces will serve the communities of the future, as well as those of today. In doing so we will provide opportunities that are sustainable, help improve biodiversity, contribute to climate change mitigation, encourage tourism, help grow the local economy, conserve the heritage and cultural offer in the Moorlands and contribute to education.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council also owns a number of sites which are now managed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. These sites include two country parks, a large area of lowland heath common as well as a number of smaller but no less distinctive open spaces. We will continue to work with the Trust to ensure that the needs of both local communities and the environment continue to be met.

Additionally, we recognise that a large amount of green space which is available to residents within the District is owned and managed by others, and that having a positive, open, and helpful collaboration with these organisations including the County Council, local town and parish councils, community groups and private land owners is the best way to achieve the aims set out within this strategy.

Management Plans

A number of our sites will have individual management plans produced. Each management plan will include a bespoke action plan to identify where local improvements can be made and that recognise the ongoing contribution of community groups and partners in delivering some of these actions with us.

Our remaining green spaces are extremely valuable assets and contribute individually to the broad benefits already highlighted. They play an important part in community life and are extremely important to the people that use them.

Each of our green spaces will be managed and developed using the guiding principles within this strategy and via maintenance regimes that are specific to each site.

As in many cases these spaces often contain their own natural features, have unique heritage value and in some cases, play facilities for children. Whilst they may not require detailed management plans, it is important to state that these are vitally important assets for local communities, and we are committed to improving these to ensure that they remain that way.

We want to ensure that all of our green spaces will stand up to future challenges: we therefore have a strong desire to improve biodiversity within these areas, manage the sites for the benefit of wildlife, provide more protection and shelter from the climate and reduce the impact of climate change.

Why have a Green Spaces Strategy

Our green spaces have such a major part to play in community and family life. They are places for us to socialise, enjoy being active, connect with nature and wildlife, relax and reflect. Some green spaces contain heritage features which tell a story about the past. They can also play an important part in providing a more sustainable future, contributing towards climate change aspirations, and providing educational opportunities.

It is also important to see our green spaces in the context of their abilities to support and enhance our fauna and flora. The wide mix of sites offer a diverse range of habitats which may already provide homes to many species, but with greater understanding could provide much more.

Because of their wide variety of uses and benefits, as well as the pressures on them, it is important that their management and ongoing development is recognised and prioritised in a way in which everyone can understand and support.

The purpose of developing this Green Spaces Strategy is to bring these key issues into focus and by doing so:

- Set the overarching context and direction for the management and development of our green spaces
- Outline the approach for managing, protecting, and developing green spaces which gives consideration to the Councils resources, management and maintenance responsibilities and the contributions from community and interest groups.
- Highlight a set of principles which will guide future maintenance, investment, community engagement decisions and actions regarding our green spaces.
- Agree a set of priorities which focus effort, resources and decision making, ensuring that our green spaces remain high quality spaces for everyone to enjoy.

- Help secure additional investment and external funding towards enhancing infrastructure, facilities and opportunities for the benefit of the community.

Strategic Context

For this strategy to focus on the future effectively, it is important to recognise the key influencing documents and evidence base which frame the provision, protection, and development of our green spaces. It is also equally important for people to understand the current context in which our green spaces are managed and maintained as this will play a part in decision making and the delivery of future projects. (Full details of the documents below can be found in Appendix 1).

Key Strategies and Documents

- Corporate Plan (2023-2027)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020 - 2033)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Open Space Study (2017)
- Move More Staffordshire Moorlands Strategy 2023 – 2033
- Play and Outdoor Sports Facilities (2022 – 2026)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Tree Strategy (2016)
- Climate Change Emergency (2019)
- Staffordshire Moorlands “Plan for Nature” (2022 -2030)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018)
- Sport England: Uniting the Movement (2021- 2031)

Green Flag

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces. The Council will continue to work towards the Green Flag criteria as a best practice guide to managing our green spaces.

The Purpose and aims of the Green Flag Award is:

- To ensure everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

Other related priorities

In addition to the strategies and plans mentioned, green spaces contribute to many other priorities which the council, partners and communities share including economic, regeneration or preventing

crime and antisocial behaviour. Links will be made to these through green space management plans in the delivery of their respective action plans.

Community Involvement

We are committed to working with local organisations who may wish to manage and maintain some of the smaller land assets within their locality, which are owned and currently maintained by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. With community support, financial ability and agreed plans in place, these local green spaces maybe better suited to local management. We want to encourage dialogue between a range of local organisations such as town and parish councils and the district council that will lead to the management model that best serves the local community.

We additionally see the important role our parks and open spaces can have on our communities across the whole of the Staffordshire Moorlands. We will therefore ensure that our communities have the opportunity to help decide how their local spaces are managed and contribute to their upkeep and future development.

Management Responsibilities

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is responsible for the overall management of the sites listed in Appendix 2 as well as many more incidental parcels of land. In addition to having the overall management responsibility, we work proactively with service providers, partners, the community, and interest groups to develop and deliver projects that protect, maintain, or improve our green spaces.

Alliance Environmental Services (AES) is responsible for maintaining each of the Council's green spaces across the District. Management plans and their associated action plans detail an agreed schedule of maintenance standards undertaken in each area, where no management plan exists for a green space, pre-agreed maintenance schedules will be developed and adhered to. AES support the Council and community groups to deliver agreed projects that help protect and enhance green spaces for the benefit of the community.

Community and interest groups including 'Friends of the Parks' are a vital and valued support network which play an important role in assisting the Council and AES in undertaking specific maintenance tasks and development projects. These groups are also viewed by the Council as the formal voice for the community to bring forwards ideas, energy, and act as a mechanism to attract additional funding to protect, maintain or enhance aspects of the green spaces.

Vision

Our green spaces will be vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Future proofed to provide climate resilience and biodiversity while supporting health and wellbeing for our communities.

Key Priorities

1. Make investment in green spaces a priority, protecting our heritage.
2. Use resources effectively and sustainably, maintaining and improving our amenities.

3. Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting of trees and managing sites for wildlife whilst improving flora and fauna.
4. Increase the use and accessibility of green spaces for all, improving health and wellbeing of our communities.
5. Work cooperatively with our communities and effectively with partners through positive community engagement.

Guiding principals

Guiding principles will be used when considering any changes that affect the current or future management or maintenance of our green spaces. The reason these principles have been developed is to make sure that any changes that are made to these spaces are appropriate, affordable, sustainable and deliver clearly against the aspirations of this strategy.

These guiding principles are:

1. Use key strategies and recognised good practice evidence as a base to inform decision making so that any changes, improvements or projects are the right thing, in the right place and for the right reason.
2. To ensure that any projects to protect or enhance our green spaces are in keeping and proportionate with the overall purpose and heritage of our sites and deliver against one of the priorities listed in this strategy.
3. Any projects or improvements are developed with accessibility in mind, ensuring that wherever practical our sites are accessible to all.
4. Any new projects which have an impact on the ongoing maintenance of our sites are both affordable and financially sustainable.
5. Any projects or improvements are developed with serious consideration as to how our green spaces will be used by our future generations, whilst looking to increase biodiversity and climate resilience.

Objectives

1. We will review maintenance regimes to ensure that our green spaces are maintained to a high standard, in an affordable and sustainable way and make improvements to increase and enhance biodiversity. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 & 5)
2. We will ensure that infrastructure and heritage features are protected and well maintained, in accordance within the resources available to the Council. (Addresses priority 1 & 2)
3. We will encourage and enable positive physical and mental well-being by developing strong partnerships with community groups, sports clubs and other stakeholder groups. Ensuring that our green spaces fulfil their potential for enabling healthy lifestyles for all ages, encouraging all residents to move more. (Addresses priority 1, 2, 4 & 5)

4. We will plant more trees within our green spaces to help combat climate change (carbon storage) and increase canopy cover, providing future new habitats for wildlife and additional shade for our communities in periods of extreme heat. (Addresses priority 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
5. Ensure our green spaces are safe, welcoming, and accessible places for all of our communities and that the highest possible standards of health and safety are maintained by our service providers, event organisers and when engaging the community in projects. (Addresses priority 2, 4 & 5)
6. Actively encourage community engagement and involvement in the protection, maintenance, development and positive environmental impacts of our green spaces. (Addresses priority 1,2,3,4 and 5)
7. Effectively manage internal budgets and attract external funding wherever possible towards the ongoing maintenance and the future development of our green spaces. (Addresses priority 1,2,3,4 and 5)
8. We will review management plans and their associated action plans annually to ensure these objectives are being delivered against effectively. (Addresses priority 1,2,3,4 and 5)
9. We will create a green spaces development fund to be used to make improvements to our green spaces. (Addresses priority 1,2,3,4, and 5)

Appendix 1. Strategic Context

For this strategy to focus on the future effectively, it is important to recognise the key influencing documents and evidence base which frame the provision, protection, and development of our green spaces. It is also equally important for people to understand the current context in which our green spaces are managed and maintained as this will play a part in decision making and the delivery of future projects.

Corporate Plan (2023-2027)

The Corporate Plan sets out Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's commitments in the delivery of services and community leadership to the residents and businesses of Staffordshire Moorlands for the next four years.

The Green Spaces Strategy makes a positive contribution to the four main aims of the plan highlighted below:

Aim 1: To help create a safer and healthier environment for all communities to live and work.

Aim 2: Effective use of resources and provide value for money.

Aim 3: To help create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages.

Aim 4: To protect and improve the environment.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020 - 2033)

Local plans are documents which provide a framework for delivering development over a set period, including ensuring that councils deliver sustainable housing development. They should, as far as possible, reflect the aspirations of local communities and should strive to contribute towards their wider social, economic, and environmental objectives.

The Staffordshire Moorlands local plan was adopted in 2020 and sets out the Council's vision and strategy for the district until 2033. The local plan identifies the main priorities which the council will focus its resources on.

The four aims below are taken from the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the aspirations of this Green Spaces Strategy contribute towards a number of them;

Aim 1: Creating distinctive, sustainable, self-supporting settlements.

Aim 2: Meeting the needs of our communities.

Aim 3: Encourage a strong, prosperous, and diverse economy.

Aim 4: Maintaining a quality environment and special places.

Staffordshire Moorlands Open Space Study (2017)

The Staffordshire Moorlands open space study provides an evidence base that is used to help protect parks and open spaces, inform the future provision of parks and open spaces, and helps to secure improvements to parks and open spaces. Using the evidence base contained in the study, the Council can secure investment from housing developments via section 106 agreements which is then used to provide new or enhance existing facilities locally.

Move More Staffordshire Moorlands Strategy 2023 – 2033

A partner strategy, adopted by the Council, written by a wide range of partners across the Staffordshire Moorlands from a wide range of perspectives including integrated health care, voluntary and community organisations, young people's services, education, wellbeing, sport, transport, housing, community safety and planning to name a few. The Move More strategy is fully supported by the Council. The core value of the strategy is *"Together, our aim is everyone across the Staffordshire Moorlands to move more every day and to provide greater support to those that need it most."*

Friendly, accessible and well managed green spaces which provide opportunities for all levels of physical activity play a vital part in the success of this strategy.

Our aspiration is for our green spaces to be places which contain a range of facilities, where there will be opportunities for people to be inspired to move more and realise the physical and mental benefits this is proven to bring about.

We will work in collaboration with local communities to identify their needs, having a positive open and helpful approach to delivering the Green Spaces Strategy. Working in partnership with residents, community groups, local ward councillors, recognising the value of this approach and supporting it.

We will develop robust management plans for some of our green spaces that build on the existing offering contained within those parks and green spaces. Facilities such as skate parks, pump tracks, tennis courts and multi-use games areas will be maintained to a safe standard. We will work with communities to enhance facilities, develop new facilities where appropriate and encourage activities within the parks and green spaces which attract people of all ages to be more active.

Play and Outdoor Sports Facilities.

Council play areas and outdoor sports facilities are important assets that help children, young people and adults keep active, build confidence, improve physical literacy and social skills. We aspire to ensure that all facilities are fun, accessible and free, helping to make parks an inviting destination for recreation and family time.

It is important these facilities are provided, maintained and developed effectively and to ensure this happens, the open space study includes a quality assessment of all children's play provision across the District that the council is responsible for. This evidence base is used to identify where future provisional improvements are required and will support the business case for investment.

Existing council play facilities are maintained and repaired by the Council's service provider Alliance Environmental Services (AES). The Council leads in developing new play areas or the replacement of

existing facilities. Projects to improve or develop play and outdoor sports facilities are included within park management plans and are specific to the needs locally.

Staffordshire Moorlands Tree Strategy (2016)

The Staffordshire Moorlands Tree Strategy sets out how the Council will manage trees, both on its own land and private trees protected by legislation. The policy outlines the Council's approach to tree management and is supported by detailed Good Practise Guides. These guides detail how tree works decisions are made and implemented and summarises how we manage risk and undertake inspection of trees.

In situations where works to trees within our parks are required, or when projects are developed which propose to add new trees to our parks, the Council's Arboriculture Officer will be consulted with their recommendations implemented accordingly.

Climate Change

In 2019 the Council declared a climate change emergency and is committed to become carbon neutral in its internal operations on the service it delivers, by 2030. The environmental impacts of all planning and decision making relating to the delivery of this strategy will be considered, so that our parks and green spaces contribute towards the council's targets for zero carbon emissions.

Staffordshire Moorlands “Plan for Nature” (2022 -2030)

Developed in conjunction with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Plan for Nature sets out to protect and restore priority species, restore natural processes and deliver nature based solutions to mitigate climate change. We will work alongside numerous stakeholders including the Trust to try and achieve these objectives.

Staffordshire Moorlands Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018)

To develop a network of green corridors and green spaces in the Staffordshire Moorlands that:

Support access to green travel, promote health and wellbeing, develop ecological networks, improve flood water management, unlock economic development potential and value ecosystem services.

Sport England: Uniting the Movement. (2021- 2031)

10 year strategy to transform lives and communities through sports and physical activity. Recognising the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and how we need to collectively reimagine how we keep movement and sporting activities central to the lives of everyone. Supporting initiatives such as “Join the Movement” which is about simple, fun and free ways to get active outdoors such as in our parks and green spaces.

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Appendix 2. SMDC Site list.

Please note that this list does not include all of the incidental parcels of land SMDC owns .

Leek sites

Birch Gardens

Birchall Playing Fields

Brough Park

Buxton Road Cemetery

Cruso Street Play Area

Glebeville Play Area

Haregate Hall Play Area

Pickwood Recreation Ground

The Waste Open Space

Wallbridge Play Area & Open Space

Westwood Recreation Ground

Woodcroft Open Space

Biddulph sites

Biddulph Valley Park

Brown Lees Play Area

Church Road Recreation Ground

Halls Road Recreation Ground

Hawthorn Grove Play Area

Mill Hayes Playing Fields

Thames Drive Open Space

The Paddock Open Space

Cheadle sites

Glebe Road Open Space

South Moorlands Playing Fields

Stanfield Crescent Playing Fields

Thorley Drive Playing Fields

Rural sites

Bluetit Play Area, Blackshaw Moor

Horton Playing Fields, Horton

Hot Lane Playing Fields, Biddulph Moor

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 17th January 2024

TITLE:	Tourism Strategy - Update
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Matt Swindlehurst – Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism
CONTACT OFFICER:	Lorraine Wright – Head of Regeneration
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

Appendices Attached – None

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the Tourism Strategy and action plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands. It also provides detail on UKSPF activity to support tourism and background on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership work with Enjoy Staffordshire and Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel discuss and note the content of this report and the progress made since approval of the Tourism Strategy.

3. Executive Summary

Background – Tourism Strategy

- 3.1 In terms of context, the Strategy highlights 'located close to Stoke-on-Trent and with one third of the district in the Peak District National Park, Staffordshire Moorlands attracts ~5.6million visitors each year.'
- 3.2 Consultees suggest opportunities lie in:
- Generating more staying visitors/longer stays;
 - Focussing on family groups and adult couples;
 - Using canals and former railways to expand greater green infrastructure;

- Helping current experiences to develop and grow to create more impact;
- Providing more variety and choice in visitor accommodation; and
- Elevating local food and drink experiences, creating a stronger, more-rounded offer in the towns

3.3 The Strategy set out the following Vision –

Over the next five years Staffordshire Moorlands will become a stronger destination, unlocking its potential with an improved offer and a better reputation that results in more value from visitors. Staffordshire Moorlands is fortunate to have a wealth of attractions and experiences with Alton Towers being nationally significant. Further investment in attractions and accommodation will help Staffordshire Moorlands to become a year-round destination attracting higher value visitors that create quality jobs. Green and active experiences in an outstanding landscape are evident. Adding to these, expanding their appeal and joining them up as an integrated network will grow the destination's reputation and give visitors a reason to stay longer. The towns will become stronger, coherent visitor hubs providing essential services and a reason to dwell.

3.4 The Strategy identifies priorities for growth / areas of opportunity:

- Action Area 1 – Alton Towers - unlocking investment to create a year-round driver of visits
Support aspirations to develop Alton Towers as 365 day a year resort unlocking major private sector investment and generating new jobs and benefits for the local economy.
- Action Area 2 - Towns & Villages – animated hubs with distinct food & drink to increase dwell times
Ensure Cheadle, Biddulph and Leek strengthen their role as visitor hubs delivering animated places with a warm welcome, rounded visitor services with benefits for local businesses and communities. Produce bespoke plans for each town which show how each place will support the delivery of the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Strategy and meet the needs of visitors.
- Action Area 3 – Active Experiences – developing cycling and walking routes, trails and events
Develop and expand cycling and walking experiences across Staffordshire Moorlands to encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more and dig deeper into what the area has to offer, and which establishes a reputation as a place to get active in the great outdoors.
- Action Area 4 – Accommodation - – expand, improve and encourage investment
Expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions. Unlock private sector investment with a clear policy environment that encourages suitable accommodation development and improvement in Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Action Area 5 – Underpinning

Ensure the right kind of support is in place to deliver the Strategy and grow tourism sustainably, work in partnership with other organisations to influence, ensure alignment, efficiency and effective delivery of the Strategy and support for tourism sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

3.5 Monitoring and evaluating progress of the Strategy will be on the achievements within each of the Action Areas detailed above and the overall progress on outcomes as detailed in the five key performance indicators as shown in the table.

WHAT	HOW	WHY
Sector Growth (% annual increase in visitor spend)	Economic Impact Study e.g. STEAM, Cambridge	Once the national surveys recommence a target annual growth rate will be set to monitor progress and benchmark against other areas.
Proportion of visits that are 'staying' visits (overnight)	Visitor survey	Staying visits currently account for 10% of visits and 40% of spend. Growing staying visits will have a larger overall benefit to local communities.
Average length of stay and spend per visit (holiday visits)	Visitor survey	Longer stays and spend during a visit will contribute economic impact, business profitability and sustaining jobs.
Business Growth (% annual increase in turnover)	Local business survey	Monitors how businesses are doing overall as well as gathering intelligence on investment plans, challenges etc to inform policy.
Visitor Satisfaction (from a visit)	Sentiment research	Measures and tracks actual experience of visitors measuring satisfaction, likelihood of repeat visits and recommendations.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

3.6 UK Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been allocated funding through the UKSPF for the purposes of:

- The development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit - £144,000 under Investment Theme E8
- The development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy - £180,863 under Investment Theme E17

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

3.7 In November 2023, VisitEngland approved Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's joint application to become an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP).

3.8 As we move forward, it will be a priority to link the SMDC Tourism Strategy, including the Tourism Partnership Forum, to the work of the LVEP.

Moving Forward – Tourist Information Provision

- 3.9 Leek Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is located in the Nicholson Institute. Two tourism officers are employed to operate the Leek Tourist Information Centre (TIC) located in the Nicholson Institute and support other activity connected with the Museum and Gallery, including providing cover for Cultural Services, as required.
- 3.10 Over recent years, there has been a marked shift in customer habits related to tourism. The role of digital and social platforms has become a far more important a factor influencing planning and booking trips than traditional media, TICs and brochures.
- 3.11 The Nicholson Institute is undergoing a refurbishment later this year, supported by grant from the Levelling Up Fund. The scheduled refurbishment is an opportunity to evaluate the changing landscape in relation to the provision of tourism and visitor economy services and consider what model would be most appropriate for the future.
- 3.12 Over recent months, the Council has taken a more holistic and agile approach to support tourism and the visitor economy district-wide to reflect the change in customer behaviour. This includes focusing more time on developing digital platforms as well as investing time in promoting a clear narrative for Staffordshire Moorlands – what makes us a unique destination for visit.
- 3.13 It is proposed that the Tourist Information Centre will not re-open following the refurbishment. It is considered that staff resource would have greatest impact being directed into relationship management of tourism / hospitality businesses and key stakeholders, marketing material including digital content and social media activity and development of events and itineraries. It is proposed that the existing staff will continue to be accommodated within the Nicholson Institute post-refurbishment, in back-office accommodation. This will help to ensure the ongoing alignment of tourism and cultural services and supportive arrangements in place to provide cover are maintained, as required.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Tourism Strategy supports delivery of the following aims of the Corporate Plan:
- Aim1: Help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work.
 - Aim 2: Effective use of resources and provide value for money.
 - Aim 3: Help create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages.
 - Aim 4: Protect and improve the environment.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The report does not seek a decision from the Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel. As such, there are no alternative options to consider.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Long -term sustainable growth to the local economy will benefit the local community by reducing unemployment and crime.

6.2 Workforce

None at this stage. The TIC is operated by two tourism officers, employed by SMDC, through the Regeneration Service. A decision to close / not re-open the TIC following refurbishment of the Nicholson Institute would not affect staffing numbers. As set out, the staff would remain in employment and undertake tourism duties including relationship management of tourism / hospitality businesses and key stakeholders, marketing material including digital content and social media activity and development of events and itineraries. The Job Description and Person Specification for the role would be reviewed as roles and responsibilities develop.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This Tourism Strategy prepared in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies.

6.4 Financial Considerations

There are no budgetary implications connected to this report. There is no reduction or increase in staffing resources as a result of this report.

6.5 Legal

None at this stage.

6.6 Climate Change

The Tourism Strategy has been developed with consideration given to the local and regional plans to support Climate Change.

6.7 Consultation

Key stakeholders were consulted in the development of the Tourism Strategy.
Staff affected by and changes to location or roles and

responsibilities would be consulted in line with HR procedures.

6.8 Risk Assessment

None at this stage.

Mark Trillo **Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)**

Web Links and Background Papers	Location	Contact details
Tourism Strategy	Moorlands House, Leek	Mark Trillo Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)

7. **Detail**

7.1 **Tourism Strategy Progress Update**

7.1.1 Towns and Villages

Towns and villages are key to the success of the Tourism Strategy.

The Strategy advocates the development of bespoke plans for each of the three main towns of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph which will show how each town can support the delivery of the Tourism Strategy, meet visitor needs and benefit local communities. As part of the development of the Strategy, each town agreed high level objectives following feedback provided by the local community and businesses.

Town Action Plan Groups have now been set up to include town council representatives. Further monthly town meetings have been established with Biddulph Town Council and the recently formed Cheadle Town Council Committee (BTEC – Business, Tourism and Environment Committee). Following the last meeting with Leek Town Council, it was agreed that a sub group would be set up to feed into this meeting and tourism strategy action plan.

7.1.2 Tourism Partnership Forum

The aim of the Tourism Partnership Forum is to ensure that stakeholder and key organisations involved in Staffordshire Moorland's visitor economy work together. It will aim to align priorities, programmes and activities, identify and take opportunities to enhance and build on what each organisation is doing, work to avoid duplication, and potentially establish new collaborations or projects which cut across geographical or organisational boundaries.

Cllr Matt Swindlehurst will chair the Forum and Cllr Mike Gledhill will be the Vice Chair. The Forum will commence in Spring 2024; the Terms of Reference have been developed and a calendar of quarterly meetings to be agreed in the new year.

Areas of focus to include:

- Marketing
- Visitor management –including transport, dispersal, pressure points etc
- New capital or infrastructure developments
- Business support and engagement
- New funding streams, bids and opportunities for larger scale initiatives and projects

Membership of the Board is summarised below:

- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce
- Staffordshire Moorlands Partnership Board
- Support Staffordshire
- Destination Staffordshire
- Visit Peak District & Derbyshire
- Peak National Park Authority
- Buxton & Leek College

7.2 STEAM Data

7.2.1 STEAM stands for Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor.

STEAM Data provides a destination with annual tourism data on areas such as visitor numbers, spend, overnight stays, numbers employed in tourism sector and importantly the economic impact of tourism to a Destination.

STEAM data 2022 shows a significant impact on the tourism sector. Recovery has however been extremely positive in the SMDC area and much of this can be attributed to the 'outdoor offer' we have and visitors still wanting to explore the outdoors following the pandemic.

Headline results comparing 2021 with 2022 results:

- Number of visitors - 5.9 million in 2022 showing 86.3% increase on 2021 and 3.5% up on 2019 pre pandemic. (5.72 million visitors in 2019, 5.92 million visitors in 2022).

- Economic Impact of the visitor economy in 2022 - £498million, up by 62.5% on 2021. To compare this figure to pre pandemic figures (2019) for a more realistic comparison we have seen an increase of 19.2% on economic value. These figures exceed the County average of 15.6% increase.
- Jobs (both direct and indirect) are up 46.5% on 2021 and up 3.3% on 2019 pre pandemic.

In addition, staying visitor figures are up 18.3% on 2021, with an average stay of 2.5 days. Comparing against 2019 pre pandemic figures, STEAM data shows an increase of 6.7% on all staying visitors.

7.3 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

7.3.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been allocated funding through the UKSPF for the purposes of:

- The development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit - £144,000 under Investment Theme E8
- The development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy - £180,863 under Investment Theme E17

7.3.2 Enjoy Staffordshire were the successful consultant appointed to deliver the outcomes and outputs of the UKSPF which are set out in the tables below:

2023/2024

UKSPF Intervention	Number of people reached	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support
E8 Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit	2500	0
E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy	5000	5

2024/2025

UKSPF Intervention	Number of people reached	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support
E8 Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit	2500	0

E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy	5000	5
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UKSPF Outcomes to date: Business Support

7.3.3 Five tourism businesses were supported by Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark – two of these businesses will be presented with an award at the Staffordshire Tourism Conference in January - The Black Lion Inn and Winnow Barns. Other businesses supported include:

- Cathy Bower Photography
- Studio One, Foxlowe Creative Hub
- The Foxlowe Arts Centre
- Upper Hurst Farm, Hulme End (Camping and caravan)
- Foxtwood Cottages, Froghall (Self-catering)
- Peak Wildlife Park

Staffordshire Tourism Conference 19th January, Alton Towers

7.3.4 The Staffordshire Tourism Conference will be held on the 19 January 2024 at Alton Towers. The event is aimed at tourism business to learn all about how Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are working directly with VisitEngland as a newly accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership. The day will offer workshops, including the UKSPF programme and activities planned to support the hub towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek, attract more visitors to stay longer, enjoy more and return often.

7.3.5 The Conference will include two business workshops and will launch of the campaign graphics and business toolkits High street visits will be carried out to encourage businesses to sign up to Enjoy Staffordshire membership, this will commence 11 January 2024.

7.3.6 To date, 44 tourism businesses have registered attend; 22 of these are Staffordshire Moorlands based tourism businesses and listed below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hales Hall • Tittesworth Water • Blackshaw Grange • Madrenaline • Ballfields Barn • Cottage Delight • Simply Great Britain • The Beehive, Oakamoor • Winnow Barns • Outside Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tawny • Rose Cottage • Cheadle Arts Festival • Peak Gift Experiences • Cathy Bower Photography • Foxfield Railway • Foxtwood Cottages • Swainsley Farm • The Black Lion Inn • Peak Wildlife Park
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• Top Dog Days	• Alton Towers
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The event is almost at full capacity with 168 people registered (against a maximum capacity of 180).

Marketing Activity (UKSPF)

7.3.7 Enjoy Staffordshire have been consulting a range of stakeholders (including Staffordshire Moorlands Walking Festival, high street retailers and businesses and representatives from the three Town Councils) to collate walking and cycling content. They are preparing to have all this content uploaded onto the Enjoy Staffordshire website, including the campaign landing page by February 2024.

7.3.8 'RH Advertising' have been appointed by Enjoy Staffordshire to run a marketing campaign. They have started to collate some video content and photography for key towns. The bulk of the photography and videography will be done in the new year when the weather improves and the Christmas decorations have gone to give the footage longevity.

7.3.9 Further, recruitment has taken place for a consumer panel to give feedback on the campaign. The feedback from the panel will help to shape marketing plans moving forward.

7.3.10 The core marketing messages are set out below:

- Promote the festival events Staffordshire Moorlands April 2024 - September 2024.
- Showcasing the range of walks and cycle trails.
- Encouraging visitors to start their walks from key towns and villages, driving footfall to those high streets and raising awareness of 'hidden gems'.
- Highlighting the walking and cycling offer creating a campaign that can be shared with local businesses.
- Promote the destination as a great place to 'get active' - promoting the wellbeing and mindfulness benefits of outdoor activities.

7.3.11 The following monitoring will be undertaken as part of the activity:

- Measure web searches, reach & engagement
- STEAM data to monitor visitor spending - spring 2024
- mobile data to monitor visitor numbers and footfall evidence

7.3.12 Key dates / milestones are set out below:

- Jan-Feb 2024 Toolkit will go out to businesses
- Mar 2024 Walking Festival launch
- Apr 2024 Digital marketing to start
- Jan-Mar 2025 Evolving walking festival branding and marketing collateral to include a wider outdoor offer

7.4 Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

7.4.1 In November 2023, VisitEngland approved Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's joint application to become an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP).

7.4.2 As well as achieving a nationally recognised official status, LVEPs will provide strong leadership and management of their destinations, taking responsibility for the growth, prosperity and sustainability of the visitor economy. The partnerships will work together with the public and private sector and help shape and deliver national strategy and activities.

7.4.3 LVEP is a Partnership between the Destination Management Organisations and District Councils. It will work in collaboration locally, regionally and nationally on shared priorities and targets. Their mission is to support and grow the visitor economy through robust destination management, strong stakeholder relationships and clear planning.

7.4.4 Recruitment of a Chair is underway. This is a voluntary role and will be announced in January, to coincide with the Staffordshire Tourism Conference. There will also be a Partnership Agreement completed, setting out the scope of the LVEP activity.

7.4.5 Moving forward, it will be a priority to link the SMDC Tourism Strategy, including the Tourism Partnership Forum, to the work of the LVEP. As a District, we can nominate / identify strategic operators for the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Star Operators Group.

7.5 Tourist Information Provision

7.5.1 The Tourism Service sits within the Regeneration Service at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. Two tourism officers are employed to operate the Leek Tourist Information Centre (TIC) located in the Nicholson Institute and support other activity connected with the Museum and Gallery, including providing cover for Cultural Services, as required.

7.5.2 The function of the service is largely centred on the delivery of tourist information and is largely servicing visitors who are already in the destination. The tourism officers also work with local tourism businesses providing support in the form of links to funding or training opportunities, leaflet requests, capturing event information and disseminating it via the respective Destination Management Organisation (Destination Staffordshire and Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire).

7.5.3 Over recent years, there has been a marked shift in customer habits related to tourism. The role of digital and social platforms has become a far more important a factor influencing planning and booking trips than traditional media, TICs and brochures. Given the growth in mobile devices that trend is only going to grow and market research shows that the majority of information is obtained online. Hence, it is important to ensure that staff resources are targeted on activities which will have the greatest impact. As set out in this note, over recent months, we have taken a more holistic and agile approach to support tourism and the visitor economy district-wide to reflect the change in

customer behaviour. We have started to focus on developing digital platforms (the microsite), are investing time in promoting a clear narrative for Staffordshire Moorland and creating content about things to see and do, unique experiences, events, news stories and amazing imagery as well as developing itineraries for different audiences (walking and cycling routes; Walking Festival).

7.5.4 The Nicholson Institute is undergoing a refurbishment later this year, supported by grant from the Levelling Up Fund. The scheduled refurbishment is an opportunity to evaluate the changing landscape in relation to the provision of tourism and visitor economy services and consider what model would be most appropriate for the future.

7.5.5 It is proposed that the Tourist Information Centre will not re-open following the refurbishment. It is considered that staff resource would have greatest impact being directed into relationship management of tourism / hospitality businesses and key stakeholders, marketing material including digital content and social media activity and development of events and itineraries. It is proposed that the existing staff continue to be accommodated within the Nicholson Institute post-refurbishment, in back-office accommodation, to undertake the activities outlined thereby ensuring the continued alignment of tourism and cultural services and supportive arrangements in place to provide cover, as required.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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