



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5th MARCH 2025**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Couchman (Chair), Councillors L Wood, C Adams, L Clarke, J Oates and B Price

**CABINET:** Councillor Ben Clarke  
Councillor Sarah Daniels

The following officers were present: Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Annabel Chell (Staffordshire County Council), Mark Evans (Staffordshire County Council) and Leanne Costello (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer)

### **99 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Bailey, M Clarke and N Statham.

### **100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

### **101 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR**

There was no update.

### **102 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE**

The Chair advised the Committee that they attended Cabinet on the 20<sup>th</sup> February to present the committees recommendation from the meeting on the 29th January 2025 To 'Develop a Policy for Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's)' and received the following response –

Cabinet thanked the members of Infrastructure Safety & Growth Committee for bringing the recommendation to Cabinet. Cllr B Clarke confirmed that work was ongoing on the new Local Plan and the HMO's are one element of the Housing part of the plan that would be included. Cllr Clarke gave assurance that this would be included. It was noted that Cllr Couchman was also a member of the Local Plan Working Group.

**103 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL**

There were none.

**104 TAMWORTH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE 2025**

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director, Partnerships and the Chief Inspector to present the report to consider the 2025 annual refresh of the Tamworth Community Safety Partnership Plan 2023-2026, priorities, and action plan.

The Assistant Director provided a summary of the report before handing over to the committee for questions.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. What action/information did they have about the spike in car thefts on the north side of the town?

It was confirmed that there was a recurring trend of an increase in motor vehicles thefts and whilst no specific reason had been identified policing activity was targeting this type of criminality included cross border work (specific details could not be shared). It was confirmed that that there was no evidence to suggest that the north was being targeted.

2. It was highlighted that there seemed to be little action around littering and fly tipping.

It was confirmed that littering needed to be witnessed to be prosecuted and that information from the public was welcomed. The use of deployable cameras could be acting as a deterrent. It was noted that action can be taken under a duty of care for household waste, but that education was important before jumping straight into prosecution.

3. With waitlists for prosecutions being up to six years in circumstances, how do we engage with the judiciary to ensure that police work on the ground is followed up.

Firstly, it was highlight that in terms of sentences there are schedules in place that determine these. It was confirmed that investigations that were not complex were not taking this long however there were delays due to national problems. It was highlighted that investigations can appear lengthy, but this is to be able to demonstrate the impact of a crime. It was confirmed that some issues such as low level anti-social behaviour, breach of PSPO can go to a magistrate's court which only have about a six-week

delay, and where emergency action is needed (e.g. for an emergency injunction) this can usually be resolved the next day. For littering and fly-tipping you have up to six months to complete the prosecution.

The committee highlighted that they would have more questions when they had heard the responses to the piece of work around honest conversations in response to the events of August 2024.

**Resolved** that the committee

1. Endorsed the 2025 annual refresh of the Community Safety plan and related actions

*(Moved by Councillor L Wood and seconded by Councillor L Clarke)*

## **105 ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN TAMWORTH**

The Chair welcomed Mark Evans and Annabel Chell from Staffordshire County Council and noted that apologies were received from the Councils officers.

The Officers ran through a presentation highlighting the following –

- Slide 2 - The new local transport plan for 2025 has six main themes set out in slide 2. They will be moving into a new funding period and are looking at the funding was required from Government to meet the needs of the County moving forward., as well as giving the long-term vision up to 2050. Priorities would be identified for the rail and bus networks including what infrastructure is required. Road networks were covered, as well as land use, transport installation and improving the environment for walking and cycling.
- Slide 3 – the plan has been in development for over a year and it is to be evidence based. The district data report has been shared with the Council. The maps show key congestion areas identified such as Upper Gungate, Watling Street and the A5 corridor.
- Slide 5 – there is a chapter on the road network and there has been collaboration with National Highways to look at what can be done to improve how traffic performs on the A5. Key priorities are to keep the existing network running smoothly and no major works are proposed, the aim being to create an efficient, safe and sustainable traffic network. Alongside vehicle improvements they are aiming to reduce the number of miles driven and the condition of the network, as well as improved network management to cut delays when works are being carried out.
- Slide 6 – the County have provided advice to Tamworth on their new local plan. There are challenges to delivery with housing and employment growth changes and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) means that a vision-led approach is required to identify transport solutions.

- Slide 7 - the local transport plan is a statutory document required by law. The County Council are a consultee in the planning process and paragraph 114 of the NPPF identifies what should be considered when assessing developments.
- Slide 8 – it was highlighted that all major developments should include a detailed Transport Assessment (TA). It is recommended that the scope of the TA is agreed at pre application stage to make the process easier. Where a development shows an impact, developers should show mitigation measures. The County would then make a recommendation to the borough on whether they would object or approve the application with any conditions. If an application is refused and then won on appeal this can be costly to the Council and an example was given. There are two main reasons for saying no to a development; due to a severe impact on highways or a highway safety issue.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. The Council has been told in the past that the borough was close to capacity for developments, how much longer before that capacity was reached?  
Officers confirmed that the Government requirement for more housing has encourage more developers to put in planning applications.  
Sites have been reviewed and identified as being good for development as part of the local plan and the local transport plan will say that sites need to be able to promote travel sustainable and a reduction in the need to travel.  
Members noted that the new college site was a good example of this.  
The importance of infrastructure was noted to reduce the need to travel and the committee commented that it would welcome developments where the infrastructure was put in place first.
2. Clarification around who was consulted for the transport plan?  
It was confirmed that a wide range of stakeholders were consulted including local communities and the NHS. The draft plan was due to be out by the end of March ready for consultation after the elections, with a view for adoption to be in September.
3. Discussion were held around the importance of the local plan to the development process.
4. It was highlighted that there was also an impact from neighbouring boroughs.
5. How much did they expect it to cost to get the roads up to standard?  
Officers confirmed that they did not have exact figures but gave estimates in the tens of thousands which included maintenance of roads, bringing bridges up to satisfactory standards and to upgrade the bus network. It was highlighted that they were trying to work smarter by coordinating works along a highway corridor to address other issues and inviting utility providers to complete their works at the same time to limit disruption.
6. Clarification around the state of bridges?  
It was confirmed that there are approximately 5000 structures that need maintaining and they would like to have a sustainable development

program to maintain bridges to avoid more bridges getting to a critical condition and becoming dangerous.

The committee thanked the officers for attending.

## **106 INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Chair of the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee to provide the Committee with a draft of the Committee's Annual Report for 2024/25 (Appendix 2) together with a draft of the Introductory Report (Appendix 1) which will be presented to full Council in the 2025/26 municipal year. Following the Committee's consideration, the draft Annual Report will be updated and following the agreement of the Chair will be presented to full Council together with the Annual Reports for the other scrutiny committees and the Introductory Report.

**Resolved** that the committee

1. considered and commented on the draft Annual Report and Introductory Report and thereafter endorsed the draft Annual Report and Introductory Report for submission to full Council, following agreement by the Chair of any final amendments and updates to reflect the final meeting of the 2024/25 municipal year

*(Moved by Councillor B Price and seconded by Councillor L Wood)*

## **107 JOINT WASTE SERVICE - OPERATIONS PERFORMANCE UPDATE (MARCH 2025)**

Report of the Operations Manager to provide the Committee a quarterly update of the Joint Waste Service. This is a shared service that Lichfield District Council (LDC) deliver on behalf of both authorities.

**Resolved** that the committee

1. Endorsed the progress and updates provided

*(Moved by Councillor B Price and seconded by Councillor L Clarke)*

## **108 NATURE DECLARATION BRIEFING PAPER**

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Sustainability, Recycling and Waste to update the Committee on the authority's work around the Nature Recovery Declaration that was made in November 2023.

**Resolved** that the committee

1. Endorsed the progress and updates provided with regards to work towards the authority's nature declaration

*(Moved by Councillor L Wood and seconded by Councillor L Clarke)*

#### **109 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

There were no updates.

#### **110 FORWARD PLAN**

There was nothing new identified from the Forward plan.

#### **111 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Chair confirmed that this was the last meeting of the year, and thanks the Members and officers for their contribution over the year. They advised that a work planning session would be arranged for the new municipal year.

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Chair