



**Please ask for:** Wendy Rowe  
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10 June, 2025

Dear Councillor,

**Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**  
**6:00pm, Wednesday 18 June, 2025**  
**Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock**

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

**T. Clegg**  
**Chief Executive**

To: Councillors:

Todd, D. (Chair)  
Mawle, D. (Vice-Chair)  
Bishop, L.    Hill, J.O.  
Bullock, L.    Lyons, O.  
Fisher, P.    Thompson, S.  
Haden, P.    Thornley, S.  
Hill, J.

## **Agenda**

### **Part 1**

**1. Apologies**

**2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**

- (i) To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

**3. Minutes**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025 (enclosed).

**4. Annual Scrutiny Business Report 2024-25**

Report of the Head of Law and Governance (Item 4.1 - 4.4)

**5. End of Year Performance Report 2025/26**

To receive the End of Year performance information for the Economic Prosperity Priority Delivery Plan (Item 5.1 - 5.6)

*The documents included are as considered by Cabinet on 5 June 2025.*

**6. Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26**

Report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 6.1 - 6.14)

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee  
Held on Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 6:00pm  
in the Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock**

**Part 1**

**Present:**

Councillors:

Todd, D. (Chair)  
Hill, J.O. (Vice-Chair)  
Haden, P.      Lyons, O.  
Hill, J.        Mawle, D.  
Lyons, N.      Prestwood, F.

**21. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors L. Bullock and S. Thornley.

**22. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations**

No declarations of interests in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests were made and no party whip declarations were received.

**23. Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 be approved.

**24. Quarter 3 2024-25 Performance Update**

Consideration was given to the Quarter 3 performance update for 2024-25 (Item 4.1-4.6). The Head of Economic Development and Planning explained that updates on the Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would be provided later on in the meeting and Members agreed that they would ask any questions at that stage. Members then had the opportunity to ask questions on the remaining actions, targets and the KPIs.

In relation to the Local Plan a Member asked whether it would need amending to take account of the new Governments proposal to build extra houses. The Head of Economic Development and Planning advised that the Local Plan had been agreed and submitted for examination, and the number of new houses had already been set. It was hoped that the Local Plan would be adopted after the examination, and it would then need to be reviewed soon after to account for the higher number of houses required.

In response to a further question, the officer confirmed that it was hoped that the Planning Obligations Working Group would be up and running within the next few months.

A Member asked for an update regarding the Exacom system, the purchase of which had been supported as part of a review undertaken by Members last year. It was explained that capacity issues amongst the various teams involved had delayed progress, and unfortunately other projects had taken priority. Stafford BC was currently using Exacom and officers from each Council had met and discussed the system. It was noted that investment in resources and time would be required in order to set up and populate the system, but it would save officer time in the long run. The project was slightly delayed; however, a meeting would be arranged with IT in the new financial year to discuss the Outline Business Case and support from other service areas would be required to progress the project. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that all Heads of Service put forward projects each year and these were assessed and prioritised as not all could be delivered. She referred to the new Land charges system which had now been brought in and confirmed this would now progress.

The performance in Quarter 2 was noted.

## **25. Updates on Scrutiny Reviews**

### **Town Centre Regeneration Review**

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 5.1 - 5.5 plus appendices). The Chair outlined the five recommendations proposed by the Working Group as detailed in paragraph 5.16 of the Briefing Note.

A Member commented that should the recommendations be agreed by Cabinet, capacity issues within the Council may affect the progress with the last two recommendations. The Head of Economic Development and Planning agreed that recommendations (4) and (5) would have a resource impact on the Economic Development Team and they would be an addition to any projects already being delivered. He therefore suggested that members may wish to include an additional recommendation to draw attention to the resource implications. Members agreed with this suggestion.

### **Resolved:**

That, based on the findings set out in the Briefing Note, the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group proposed the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet for consideration:

- (A) Propose a strategic dialogue with Staffordshire County Council in terms of public transport.
- (B) Propose a dialogue with local bus providers regarding the potential for service improvements.
- (C) Propose that the regular meetings between the Council and Town and Parish Councils be reinstated.
- (D) Propose a town centre wide consultation and engagement strategy.
- (E) Consideration of how the town centre regeneration priority projects can be resourced from development to completion.

- (F) To acknowledge the additional resource implications that recommendations (D) and (E) above would place on the Economic Development Team, as they would be an addition to any projects already being delivered.

### **Staffordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Review**

The Economic Development & Regeneration Manager advised Members that the Review Group had met on two occasions and had received a presentation from the LVEP team at the first meeting to get an understanding of the work they do. At the second meeting the Group agreed to provide the Chair of the Review Group with a list of priorities/ideas/suggestions. The Officer would contact the Chair and look at arranging a further meeting of the Group to progress the Review. A report on the review findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

### **26. Cannock Town Centre Regeneration (LUF) Update**

Members received a presentation from the Head of Economic Development and Planning on the Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund scheme. They noted the agreed scope for the two phases of the projects as follows:

#### **Phase 1:**

- Multi-storey car park demolition
- Northern Gateway delivery; new public realm, improved connectivity and café building
- Beecroft Road car park refurbishment
- Highway works – new pedestrian crossing / subway infill
- **£9m permission to spend agreed by Cabinet on 28 March 2024**

#### **Phase 2:**

- Acquisition and demolition of the Forum
- Acquisition and partial demolition of Cabot buildings
- Public realm improvements
- Development platforms ready for private sector investment
- **£8.75m permission to spend agreed by Cabinet on 12 June 2024**
- Further phases to be confirmed and subject to Cabinet / MHCLG agreement

Members noted that the programme had been extended by MHCLG to 31 March 2026 and could potentially be extended to 31 March 2027.

Photographs of the progress of the demolition works so far were displayed. Members were then provided with the following progress update on Phase 1/1A:

- Demolition works started on site January 2025
- Highway works; works set to commence in mid-May 2025
- Phase 1A Northern Gateway – Spellar Metcalfe appointed to proceed under a pre-construction services contract (Design & Build) in December 2024
- Planning Decision secured at Committee – 15 January 2025
- Northern Gateway works - target date for start - August 2025

In terms of Phase 2 it was noted that acquisition of the Forum shopping centre and retail units along Church Street and Market Hall Street had been completed in February 2025. The target date for submission of the Planning application for the next phase of demolition works was April 2025. It was anticipated that the demolition works for phase 2 would start on site in the summer of 2025.

It was explained that the Cannock town centre prospectus was being prepared and would be presented to developers in time for UKREiiF 2025 which was being held between 20 and 22 May. This would enable positive conversations to be had with potential developers in terms of development opportunities for the town centre. There would be further engagement with the public in the summer to outline the vision for the town and what could be created following the demolition works.

With regards to the Prince of Wales Theatre it was confirmed that it would close at the end of April 2025. Discussions were ongoing with organisations interested in running it and further detail would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

Following the presentation Members were offered the opportunity to ask questions. A Member sought confirmation over which of the Cabot buildings were to be demolished in Phase 2. The Head of Economic Development and Planning advised that the units along Market Hall Street (all of which had tenants) would remain, and the units along Church Street would be demolished. It was confirmed that no date had been set for the demolition of these units, but there would be more certainty later this year and further detail would be brought to the next meeting.

A Member commented that he was pleased that the units along Market Hall Street would remain so that the artwork at the end would not be lost. Additionally, he considered there was a more positive outlook in respect of the Prince of Wales Theatre given the ongoing discussions with interested organisations. He added that some of his constituents had asked for disabled parking bays to be provided near to the Theatre, if it stayed open.

## **27. Update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Thriving Communities Project**

The Economic Development & Regeneration Manager provided an update on the UKSPF/Thriving Communities Project. In respect of the West Midlands Grant Programme she advised that a Business Advisor had been employed to review all the grants submitted, visit applicants and to move the projects forward. She confirmed that all the money would be fully spent by the end of the month.

In terms of the Thriving Communities Project, she advised that, in January each year each area was asked for a plan on how they wished to spend their allocated £30k. She confirmed only a small amount remained, and this would be spent by the end of the month. She confirmed that a further 12 months of funding had been made available for 2025/26, and a plan would therefore be developed to set out the projects that could be delivered on time, as there would be no time extension allowed.

A Member commented that Parish Councils were limited as to how they could spend their £5k allocation. The Officer confirmed that the rules were set by the Government and were quite complex. The Economic Development team had to ensure that none of the money spent deviated from these detailed rules. Officers would work with the Parish/Town Councils to ensure the schemes put forward were suitable.

The Member advised that he had contacted the MP regarding the funding and to ascertain if there could be any changes made to how Parishes were able to spend their allocation. Officers welcomed any lobbying of the MP on the future landscape of funding, as there was uncertainty over 2026/27 funding streams.

The Head of Economic Development and Planning added that there would be a presentation at the next meeting to outline what had worked well and to highlight the projects and schemes that had been funded by UKSPF money and the impact this had on communities.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6:51pm.

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**Chair**

## Annual Scrutiny Business Report 2024-25

**Committee:** Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee / Council

**Date of Meeting:** 18 June / 23 July 2025

**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance

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### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the business conducted by the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committees over 2024/25.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council note the report and the work of the Committee over 2024/25.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To make Council aware of the scrutiny activity that has been undertaken over the last municipal year.

### 3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Scrutiny is an important function in every council operating executive arrangements. It is important that members understand the role of scrutiny and that Council is kept informed of the work undertaken by Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee over the last municipal year. Full details of committee agendas and reports can be found on the Council's website.

### 4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Good scrutiny can enhance decision making across all Council priorities. In particular it supports Priority 4: Responsible Council, to be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council.

### 5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council operates Executive arrangements through the election of a Leader and Cabinet. Every local authority operating Executive arrangements is required to establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee to act as a check and balance to the Executive.
- 5.2 Scrutiny Committees are cross party committees each reflecting the overall political balance of the Council. They are not decision making bodies, but allow elected members who do not sit on the Cabinet to scrutinise and influence Executive decision making. This can take the form of scrutinising decisions that Cabinet are planning to take (policy review and development), those it plans to implement (through use of call-in procedures) and those that have already been implemented (through performance review).



- 5.3 National guidance advises that scrutiny work should be based upon four principles. It should:
- Provide constructive “critical friend” challenge
  - Reflect the voices and concerns of the public
  - Be led independently by members who take responsibility for their role, and
  - Drive improvement in services and strategic decision making
- 5.4 The Council has established three scrutiny committees, each with its own terms of reference and areas of oversight. The three areas are Responsible Council, Economic Prosperity, and Health, Wellbeing and The Community. Details of each committee’s remit, and the procedure rules for the scrutiny function, are set out in the Council’s Constitution.

### **Performance Review**

- 5.5 Each committee regularly monitors Council performance, within its area of scrutiny, through the review of quarterly performance information. Information reported includes progress against delivery plans and key performance indicators, and enables members to identify whether the Council is achieving its corporate plan objectives. Effective monitoring helps the Council to identify good and poor performance and to take action where needed to put things right.
- 5.6 Senior officers attend committee meetings to answer any questions, or respond to requests for clarification, and committees have the power to call senior officers and Cabinet members to account.
- 5.7 In addition to playing an important role in reviewing performance, each committee sets its own scrutiny work programme for the year. The following additional scrutiny work was carried out by each committee during 2024/25.

### **Economic Prosperity**

- 5.8 The Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee’s agreed work programme items for 2024/25 were:
- Staffordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership review task & finish group.
  - Town Centre Regeneration review task & finish group.
  - UKSPF / Thriving Communities project update.
  - Levelling Up Fund scheme update presentation
  - Rugeley Power Station site development update.
- 5.9 Representatives of the Staffordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) attended the first meeting of the review task & finish group to provide an overview of the work of the Partnership. At the second meeting Members agreed to provide the Chair with a list of priorities/ideas/suggestions. A further meeting of the group would need to be arranged in order to progress the review. As such, the review was proposed to be carried over to 2025/26.
- 5.10 Four meetings of the Town Centre Regeneration review task & finish group were held. Members assessed current projects/activities relating to town centre regeneration delivered by the Council, future opportunities including potential sites

for regeneration and funding streams. Members engaged with Hednesford Town Council and Norton Canes Parish Council and discussed UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding. Members also discussed issues relating to the provision of bus services within the District and linking town centres. Upon completion of the review, the task & finish group made several recommendations which were agreed by the Committee and Cabinet.

- 5.11 In addition to the two reviews, the Committee received update presentations on the Levelling Up Fund scheme and the UKSPF/Thriving Communities project.
- 5.12 Representatives from the Staffordshire County Council Local Transport team attended a meeting of the Committee to provide a presentation on the new Local Transport Plan for Staffordshire.
- 5.13 An update presentation for the Rugeley Power Station site development scheme was provisionally scheduled for the March 2025 Committee meeting, but did not take place as officers had no matters to report at that time.

### **Future Work Programme**

- 5.14 Each committee sets its initial annual work programme at the first business meeting of the new municipal year, taking into account any outstanding matters from the previous year and any new priorities for the upcoming year. The work programme is reviewed as a standing item at every meeting.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

None

### **6.2 Legal**

As set out in the report.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

None

### **6.4 Risk Management**

None

### **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

None

### **6.6 Health**

None

### **6.7 Climate Change**

None

**7 Appendices**

None

**8 Previous Consideration**

None

**9 Background Papers**

None

**Contact Officer:** Ian Curran





**Report Track:** Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee: 18/06/25  
Council: 23/07/25

**Key Decision:** N/A

### Priority Delivery Plan for 2024-25

#### Priority 1 - Economic Prosperity

#### Summary of Progress for the year 2024/25

Quarter					Total Number of Projects
	Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	
1&2	3		1		4
3	7		0		7
4	1		1		2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11 (85%)</b>		<b>2 (15%)</b>		<b>13</b>

#### Summary of Successes for the Year 2024/25

- Cannock Town Centre Regeneration (LUF) - commencement of phase one demolition works and acquisition of properties for phase two
- UKSPF programme - completion of 2022-2025 programme and full utilisation of grant allocation.
- Submission of Local Plan to Planning Inspectorate





#### Summary of Slippage as at the end of 2024/25

- Delay in setting up Planning Obligations Working Group
- Exacom system - decision on whether to proceed with purchasing new system

## Priority 1 - Economic Prosperity

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of major economic growth regeneration projects	<b>Cannock Town Centre Regeneration - Phase One (Levelling up Fund)</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire commercial interests to facilitate the development of the Northern Gateway</li> </ul>		X			Surrender of lease linked to Units 1 to 3 Cannock Shopping Centre was completed in July 2024.	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure planning consents for demolition for phase 1 and Northern Gateway (reserve matters)</li> </ul>			X		Planning application reported to Committee 15 January 2025 and permission was granted.	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commence demolition works to facilitate phase one of Town Centre regeneration scheme</li> </ul>			X		Contractors Connell Brothers started on site week commencing 6 January 2025 with removal of the glass canopy in Cannock Shopping Centre	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commence highway works as part of the Northern Gateway scheme</li> </ul>				X	Multi agency project team set up and meeting regularly to co-ordinate the highways works and associated regulatory approvals, works set to commence Q1 2025/26.	▲
	<b>Cannock Town Centre Regeneration - Phase Two (Levelling up Fund)</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision on whether to proceed with phase two of scheme, subject to approval of the Project Adjustment Request from MHCLG</li> </ul>			X		Clarification from MHCLG was received 17 January 2025.	★

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linked to above, conclude negotiations to acquire commercial interests to create regeneration opportunity for the town centre</li> </ul>			X		Acquisitions were concluded during February and March 2025	★
	<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement and deliver the UKSPF projects in year 3 of the Council's approved Investment Plan, working towards full allocation of spend by 31 March 2025 and delivery of outputs - CCDC and SBC.</li> </ul>				X	Project delivery completed on time and full budget allowance spent.	★
<b>Local Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Local Plan to Examination</li> <li>Complete Local Plan Evidence Base               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Quality</li> <li>Viability Update</li> <li>Heritage Impacts Assessments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			X		Local Plan submitted to PINS 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2024. Air Quality update complete. Viability update complete Heritage Impact Assessments being finalised.	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised Local Development Scheme</li> </ul>		X			Approved at Cabinet 26 <sup>th</sup> September and Full Council 9 <sup>th</sup> October.	★

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
<b>Planning Obligations - Review of Policy and Allocations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charging schedules for Section 106 and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring fees               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet approval</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		X			<p>BNG monitoring fees approved at Cabinet.</p> <p>S106 charging schedule approved March 2025</p> <p>Implementation approved from 1st April 2025.</p>	  
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning obligations Working Group               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish group and terms of reference</li> <li>Agree governance and schedule of meetings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		X			<p>Presentation provided to Leadership Team 15 April 2025.</p> <p>Working Group to be established. Terms of reference have been developed.</p> <p>Governance and meeting schedule to be developed for 25/26.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business case for Exacom system</li> </ul>			X		<p>Business Case prepared and outlined at 15 April 2025 Leadership Team meeting.</p>	

## KPIs for Priority 1 - Economic Prosperity

Symbol	Description	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
★	Performance exceeds target	5	3	6	5
✓	Performance on target		1	1	
▲	Performance < 5% below target		1		2
✗	Performance > 5% below target	2	1		
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable		1		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>



Indicator	Year End 23/24	Target 24/25	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 24/25	Rating Symbol	Comments
<b>Planning</b>									
Major Planning Applications determined within time	100%	60%	None determined	100%	100%	100%	100%	★	
Non-major Planning Applications determined within time	94.8%	70%	95%	97.7%	98.3%	98.5%	97.4%	★	
Major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	N/a	< 10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	★	
Non-major Planning Applications overturned at appeals as percentage of no. applications determined	N/a	< 10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	★	
<b>Building Control</b>									
Applications registered and acknowledged within 3 days of valid receipt	98%	95%	93%	89%	93%	95%	92%	▲	Performance was affected by staff absences.
Full plans applications with initial full assessment within 15 days of valid receipt	90%	80%	64%	88%	71%	81%	77%	▲	Performance was affected by vacancies
Customers satisfied or very satisfied with the service	85%	90%	100%	80%	100%	100%	95%	★	

## Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025-26

<b>Committee:</b>	Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 June 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Economic Development and Planning

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### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the draft work programme for the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for 2025-26.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee review the draft work programme for 2025-26 and advise on what they wish to include for the forthcoming year (see Appendix 4).

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The scrutiny committee is responsible for ensuring effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's priorities and strategic objectives as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26.

### 3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the element of the Corporate Plan that relates to the priority for Economic Prosperity. An extract from the Corporate Plan for 2022-2026 setting out details of the priority and strategic objectives is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The services or functions of the Council falling with the remit of the Committee are set out at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to identify corporate issues and/or ones that are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider.

The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Guidance on selecting reviews is included in Appendices 3A and 3B.

- 3.4 Members are invited to comment on the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 4. Members are also encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme may be revised during the year as necessary.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

- (i) It provides for effective scrutiny of the Council's priority for "Economic Prosperity".

## **5 Report Detail**

### **Background**

5.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan for 2022-26 was approved by Council on 27 April 2022. The Plan sets out 4 priorities and this Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising Priority 1 - Economic Prosperity.

5.2 The Economic Prosperity Priority has 5 objectives:

- (i) Attract investment to develop the District's economy.
- (ii) Encourage entrepreneurs, promote apprenticeships, and support businesses.
- (iii) Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs.
- (iv) Rejuvenate our town centres.
- (v) Support the development of the visitor economy.

An extract from the Corporate Plan setting out details of the priority, the strategic objectives and actions is attached at Appendix 1.

5.3 The Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility for scrutinising the services of the Council as set out in Appendix 2.

### **Developing the Work Programme**

5.4 To support Members in their Scrutiny role and in particular in developing a work programme a Scrutiny Toolkit has been produced; a copy of this has been circulated separately to Members. An extract from the toolkit relating to developing a work programme is attached at Appendix 3A and an extract from the LGA's guidance is attached at Appendix 3B.

5.5 In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- Is the matter a concern to local people (you may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing)?
- Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?
- Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance?
- What difference could scrutiny make?
- What would happen if you did not look at this issue?

5.6 The work programme can be revised during the year to reflect emerging priorities, but it is important to plan ahead and allow time for reports to be prepared and invitations to be sent to relevant parties.

- 5.7 Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they want to include in the Work Programme, a draft work programme is attached at Appendix 4 to this report which includes some standing items (e.g., performance progress reports) and suggestions as to potential reviews.

### **Undertaking the Scrutiny Reviews**

- 5.8 Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Committee. A template to assist with scoping the review is also attached at Appendix 5.
- 5.9 Members may wish to:
- Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice).
  - Invite expert witnesses to give their views.
  - Seeking the views of service users and/or the general public.
- 5.10 Members should also consider what they can do to support the review e.g.:
- Undertaking research e.g., via the internet.
  - Seeking the views of ward members or specific interest groups.

### **Reporting on Scrutiny Reviews**

- 5.11 In addition to reporting to the Committee on the outcome of any reviews, the Committee may wish to make recommendations to Cabinet or another Committee.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

Any costs to be incurred in undertaking any review will need to be contained within existing budgets.

### **6.2 Legal**

None.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

None.

### **6.4 Risk Management**

None.

## **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

The Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact.

Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

## **6.6 Health**

None.

## **6.7 Climate Change**

None.

## **7 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Extract from the Corporate Plan – Priority 1 Economic Prosperity

Appendix 2: Overview of services falling with the Committee's remit

Appendix 3A: Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Appendix 3B: Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Appendix 4: Draft Work Programme 2025/26

Appendix 5: Template for Scoping a Scrutiny Review

**Cannock Chase Council - Corporate Plan 2022-26**

**PRIORITY 1 - ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

**“To reinvigorate the economy and create a District that thrives”**

We aim to:

- **Attract investment to develop the District’s economy.**
- **Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business.**
- **Attract modern, green, and skilled industries and create jobs.**
- **Rejuvenate our town centres.**
- **Support the development of our visitor economy.**

We want to create an environment that support’s and encourages growth and people’s ambition to set up and run their own businesses. Our aim is to attract investment and businesses that will create skilled jobs for local people and businesses that use green technology to support our commitment to reducing the impact of climate change. We want to encourage businesses and people into our town centres and attract visitors to the District.

Over the next 4 years we will:

- Deliver the Levelling Up Fund regeneration scheme for Cannock Town Centre, creating a new cultural hub and high-quality public realm.
- Work in partnership to secure investment in major projects to create confidence in our District.
- Seek to identify and promote employment sites for new and growing businesses.
- Work with established Growth and Skills Hubs to streamline and simplify access to business support services, access to training and apprenticeships.
- Continue to work with partners to secure additional funding to be able to continue business growth and start-up schemes.
- Work with our Colleges and training providers to equip young people and all residents with skills they need to access employment opportunities.
- Work with partners to identify and support businesses to become more carbon efficient and identify opportunities to create green jobs in our District.
- Identify opportunities to improve public realm in our town centres.

## **Item No. 6.6**

- Work with town/parish councils, local businesses, and traders to support the development of initiatives to increase vibrancy of our town centres and increase footfall.
- Work with Destination Staffordshire to promote our key attractions, accommodation providers and events.
- Maximise the legacy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games by using the event to help boost the District's profile.
- Identify a pipeline of future projects to support economic growth opportunities and the rejuvenation of our town centres across Rugeley, Hednesford, Cannock and the surrounding villages and maximise investment and funding into the District.

**Services / Function Falling Within the  
Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Remit**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Sub Area</b>
<b>Economic Development &amp; Planning</b>	<b>Economic Development &amp; Regeneration</b>
<b>Dean Piper - Head of Economic Development &amp; Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Prosperity Strategy</li> <li>• Town Centre Regeneration</li> <li>• Development of McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village</li> <li>• Re-development of Rugeley Power Station</li> <li>• Promoting the development of key investment sites</li> <li>• Working with partners to increase skills of local people and reduce unemployment amongst 18-24 age groups</li> <li>• Engaging with local businesses; encouraging expanding businesses to employ local people; support new businesses to start and grow</li> <li>• Business support grants to local companies</li> <li>• Work with the West Midlands Combined Authority</li> </ul>
	<b>Development and Policy</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the Local Plan</li> <li>• Conservation Area policy guidance and management plan</li> <li>• Administration of Community Infrastructure Levy</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>• Monitoring implementation of planning policy</li> <li>• Transport related issues</li> <li>• Development Management and Support</li> <li>• Planning Enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<b>Commercial Services</b>
<b>Joss Presland - Head of Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council owned car parks</li> <li>• Car parking strategy</li> <li>• Market operations</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Services</b>	<b>Building Control</b>
<b>Gabrielle Whitehouse - Head of Regulatory Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking of plans and inspection of work on site</li> <li>• Dangerous structures</li> <li>• Control of demolition</li> </ul>



### Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

#### Developing the Work Programme

Members have a key role to play in developing the work programme for the Scrutiny Committees and it is important that manageable programmes are developed. The Scrutiny Committees will need to filter potential items of work; to be selective and to prioritise.

Given the limited resources available, in particular the constraints on member and officer time, it is unrealistic to select more than a few items for intensive review. Realistically, a single committee cannot undertake more than two in-depth reviews per year.

In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

**Public interest** – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen. Things to think about include:

- Any issues raised with you when canvassing.
- Have any surveys or research undertaken by the Council identified any concerns.
- Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?

**Ability to change** - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence. Think about what difference Scrutiny could make and what would happen if you did not look at this issue.

**Performance:** priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well. You should consider, the scale of the underperformance, whether it is a one off or whether there is an ongoing issue. Has the service been flagged up in an external inspection report for poor performance?

**Extent:** priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the District

**Replication:** work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort

Work programmes should be determined at the start of each municipal year and reviewed and revised regularly. Any reviews not started or completed by the year end can be referred for consideration as part of the following year's work programme. The best advice is to start small, learn what works well and what does not and then be more ambitious. It is far easier to add items to the workload than to remove them

#### Stage 1: Agree the Issue

The first step is for scrutiny members to be sure that the subject to be reviewed is significant. Undertaking in-depth reviews is resource-intensive – of member and officer resources. Investing such a high level of resources should only be undertaken for **high priority issues**. The following are criteria which could be used to 'check' a topic against, to ensure that it would make a worthwhile review:

- Issue identified by members as key issue (through members' surgeries and other constituency activities).
- Performance issues within a service (e.g., significant under or overachievement of targets).
- Service considered to be important by the community (through market research, citizens' panels and so on).
- High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service.
- Public interest issue highlighted in local media.
- High level of budgetary commitment to policy/service area.
- Persistent financial issues e.g., significant under or overspends.
- Council corporate priority area.
- Central government priority area.
- Issue raised in Inspection Reports.
- Issue referred by the Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee.
- New government guidance or legislation.

### **Stage 2: Determine the nature of member involvement**

The committee will need to decide how members will drive the review. There are three possible approaches to member involvement:

- The whole committee investigates the issue.
- A task and finish working group is established to drive the investigation.
- Individual or paired members drive the review.

Vital to the whole review activity is that members take full control of which policy problems and solutions are explored and how that exploration takes place. Members need to take responsibility for, and ownership of, the outputs and outcomes of reviews.

### **Stage 3: Scoping Exercise**

There are 4 key issues to consider when scoping the review:

- What are the core questions the review is seeking to answer? (**no more than 3**)
- What is the purpose of the Review? (**in one sentence**)
- What will **not** be included?
- What is the timescale?

## Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

### Work programming

The role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures. However, it is not possible to examine every service in detail, so it is important for the scrutiny committee to prioritise and plan its workload. Some councils do this at the beginning of each year, and some do it on an ongoing basis.

### Planned scrutiny

Work programming is the process for determining which topics scrutiny will look at over the coming year, either at committee meetings or in task and finish groups. This involves evaluating several factors to decide which topics are to be investigated and when. The process will typically involve long-listing and then shortlisting topics before making a final decision.

### Responsive scrutiny

The priorities for scrutiny need to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. This makes sure scrutiny can be flexible and responsive to high priority issues or policy changes that occur throughout the year.



### The scrutiny topic selection process

Each council has its own method for selecting topics for scrutiny; in some councils there may be a very structured selection process, while in others it may be more informal. Whatever level of detail is involved, the general process should include the following activities.

### Identify issues

You can identify potential issues by:

- consulting with a range of stakeholders, both internal and external to the council – this would include all elected members and senior officers, as well as relevant outside bodies
- looking at corporate priorities, business plans and the forward plan of the council (and the council's neighbouring councils)
- considering events and decisions in the council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
- reviewing council performance information and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
- conducting work to engage with local people, for example, through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.

### Prioritise topics

Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

## Plan scrutiny work

Decide which scrutiny topics to review and include them in the work programme for consideration and updating at each scrutiny meeting.

## Review and evaluate

Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added by scrutiny.



### Criteria for prioritising scrutiny topics

The following criteria provide a useful guide for identifying which topics are suitable for scrutiny to review, and prioritising them.

#### Topics are suitable for scrutiny when:

- scrutiny could have an impact and add value.
- the topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people.
- the resources are available that would be required to conduct the review, in terms of manpower and budget.
- it avoids work duplication elsewhere.
- the issue is one that the committee can realistically influence.
- the issue is related to an area where the council, or one of its partners, is not performing well.
- the issue is relevant to all or large parts of the local area.
- the review would be in the council's interests.

#### Topics are not suitable for scrutiny when:

- the issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent.
- the topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there).
- scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact upon outcomes.
- the topic may be 'sub judice' or prejudicial to the council's interest.
- the topic is too broad to make a review realistic.
- they do not relate to executive matters, for example, planning or licensing decisions.
- new legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- the topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

## Defining scrutiny topics

For every item on the work programme / new referral, answers to the following questions should be made clear:

- What is the issue / activity / project under consideration?
- What is scrutiny being asked to do?
- What are the reasons for / expected benefits of involving scrutiny in the matter?
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?



### **Challenge 1 – Prioritising topics**

Consider the issues that are important to the people you represent in your ward.

List the five issues you think are the most important, then put them in order of priority; make a note of your reasoning.

Think about how you would translate these into strategic issues which might be appropriate for scrutiny. Here is an example:

#### **The issue**

Several residents have been complaining that the trees in the local area are not being pruned regularly enough, becoming a hazard, and presenting a potential danger to the public. Complaints include difficulty in walking on the pavement, damage to tall vehicles, trip hazards from tree roots and gardens being overshadowed by trees.

#### **Strategic considerations**

The council needs to consider how it allocates its environmental services' resources so that it can be efficient while also meeting the needs of residents.

It can look at:

- how services are procured, commissioned, and contracted.
- which are the most hazardous streets and where the biggest improvements can be made.
- prioritising and planning a programme of work for tree pruning.

Having done so, consider how you would translate this into the scope for a scrutiny committee review.

**Proposed Work Programme for 2025-26 for the  
Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
18 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny Annual Business Report 2024-25</li> <li>• End of Year Performance Report for 2024-25 for the Economic Prosperity PDP</li> <li>• Determine Review Programme for 2025-26</li> </ul>
16 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Prosperity PDP – Qtr 1 Progress Report April to June 2025</li> <li>• Scrutiny Review (to be determined)</li> </ul>
9 December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Prosperity PDP – Qtr 2 Progress Report July to September 2025</li> <li>• Scrutiny Review (to be determined)</li> </ul>
12 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Prosperity PDP – Qtr 3 Progress Report October to December 2025</li> <li>• Outcome of Scrutiny Review(s)</li> </ul>

**Suggested Items for Reviews:**

- Staffordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (carried over from 2024/25)
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### Scrutiny Review Template

<b>Review Title</b>
<b>Scope of the Review / Terms of Reference</b>
<b>Reason for Scrutiny</b>
<b>Membership of the Review Group</b>
<b>Key Tasks / Review Plan</b>
<b>Sources of Evidence</b>
<b>Timescale</b>