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2 December 2025

Dear Councillor,

**Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee**  
**6:00pm, Wednesday 10 December 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:

Aston, J. (Chair)  
Hughes, G. (Vice-Chair)  
Bishop, L.      Johnson, J.  
Bullock, L.     Johnson, T.  
Dunnett, M.    Muckley, A.  
Gaye, D.        Sutherland, M.  
Hill, J.O.

# **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 8 September 2025 (enclosed).

### **4. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2025-26**

Report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 4.1 - 4.10).

*The documents included are as considered by Cabinet on 4 December 2025.*

### **5. Vacancies and Capacity Issues - Position at 31 October 2025**

Report of the Head of Transformation and Assurance (Item 5.1 - 5.15).

### **6. Climate Change Action Plan - Progress Update**

Update from the Head of Regulatory Services.

### **7. Local Government Reorganisation - Progress Update**

Verbal update from the Head of Transformation & Assurance.

### **8. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025-26 Update**

Verbal update from the Head of Transformation & Assurance.

**Cannock Chase Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the**  
**Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee**  
**Held on Monday 8 September 2025 at 6:00pm**  
**In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock**  
**Part 1**

**Present:**

Councillors

Aston, J. (Chair)

Bishop, L.	Johnson, J.
Bullock, L.	Lyons, O. (Substitute)
Dunnett, M.	Muckley, A.
Gaye, D.	Sutherland, M.
Hill, J.O.	Thornley, S.

**Also in Attendance:**

- Councillor D. Williams - Deputy Leader of the Council and Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader.
- Councillor J. Preece - Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
- Councillor L. Wilson - Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader
- D. Wood-Allum - Managing Director, SLC

**8. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor G. Hughes (Vice-Chair) and Councillor L. Bullock.

Councillor O. Lyons was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Hughes.

Apologies were also noted for Councillor T. Johnson, Leader of the Council and Councillor J. Prestwood, Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader.

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

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

**10. Minutes**

Members raised the following queries / comments in respect of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 June 2025:

- **Page 1** - was there any update available on the workload/capacity issues?

*The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that it was intended to bring this item to the December meeting of the committee for consideration.*

- **Page 3** - in respect of the proposed review of debt collection procedures, it was understood at the last meeting information would have been provided to Members by now, but nothing had been seen so far.

*The Head of Transformation and Assurance advised that relevant information would be presented to the meeting of the task & finish group scheduled for 24 September. It had been intended to do so before tonight's meeting, but because of officer availability, the originally scheduled meeting of the group had to be cancelled.*

How far along was the debt collection work as it was understood the purpose of the task & finish group was to shape the initial process rather than scrutinising it?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that some members of the team had left so not much progress had been made. It was intended to find replacements so the process was still being worked through. If progress had been made, then Members would have seen write-off reports coming through.*

By way of reminder, bullet point 4 on page 5 set out that "this review will provide a perfect opportunity for Members to be involved in the design of the process from scratch and help shape/define how it should be developed moving forward."

What progress had been made in recruiting replacement staff and was there a timeframe for making the replacement appointments?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised the last update received was before the Revenues and Benefits Manager went on leave, so more would be known once he returned to the office, including the timeframe.*

Why wasn't an update available on the staff situation?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that there had to be a sense of reasonableness around workloads, and as mentioned, a catch-up needed to happen with the service manager.*

Who would be writing the new procedure, the service manager or the temporary staff?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that the Revenues and Benefits Manager and his team would be writing it in consultation with the task & finish group. The temporary staff would be delivering the required work. It also had to be kept in mind that the service was being provided for both councils, therefore the process had to be developed for both at the same time. This was a priority work area, but workload impact and staffing resources had meant it could not be taken forward as quickly as wanted.*

- Could an action log be included with the agenda for future meetings to clearly set out what actions had been agreed in meetings, who they were allocated to and when they should be completed by.

*The Chair indicated they were happy for this to be tried out.*

- **Page 2** - was an update available on the local government reorganisation (LGR) work?

*The Chair advised that this was included as an item later on in the meeting agenda.*

- **Page 2** - was an update available on the income received from the tennis courts charging?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that he didn't have the whole information to hand so would have to feed this back separately.*

A Member noted it was understood that in respect of Cannock park, any monies raised in it should be reinvested back into the park because of its Trust status.

- **Page 3** - what was the current position with recruitment to the vacant climate change officer posts?

*The Head of Regulatory Services advised that interviews were taking place tomorrow and it was hoped to be in a position to appoint to both roles.*

#### **Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 be approved.

### **11. Community Asset Transfer of the Prince of Wales Theatre**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Wellbeing (Item 4.1 - 4.202).

The Deputy Leader raised the following comments by way of introduction to the report:

1. The purpose of this agenda item was to examine the Cabinet's decision not to proceed with the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the Prince of Wales Theatre. It was not about the theatre closure which was decided at the February 2025 Full Council Budget meeting.
2. The passion and commitment of the Cannock Chase Theatre Trust (CCTT), who were present in the public gallery, had to be acknowledged. They had worked hard and cared deeply about our community. This was never going to be an easy conversation.
3. On 4 September 2025, Cabinet unanimously accepted the recommendation in the report not to proceed with the Community Asset Transfer. This was based on an independent evaluation by Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy (SLC), who were also present at this meeting and could speak to their findings in detail.
4. The Cabinet report set out the evaluation results clearly. SLC scored the financial submission 1 out of 5, which as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the Cabinet report meant this "results in automatic rejection under the Council's published evaluation criteria." The key concern regarding the mobilisation costs of £109,000, when the evaluation was taken, there was only £12,280 confirmed at the point of evaluation.
5. It was acknowledged that the CCTT had since improved that position, with approximately £35,000 now having been raised, with a letter of intent for additional/secured funding. That showed determination and that effort was recognised.
6. However, this came after the evaluation deadline and even with those improvements, there remained a substantial gap against that £109,000 just to get to the start line, monies required to just open the doors on the Theatre, before even considering the millions of pounds required for building works.
7. Whilst a letter of intent was welcome, it was not secure funding at this point and so the financial risk remained significant.

8. The methods statements achieved a score of 30.6% against a 60% threshold. The report identified specific areas of concern that SLC and officers could elaborate on, including delivery planning, risk management, operational readiness and financial resilience.
9. The context the Council was operating in had to be thought about. Section 3 of the Cabinet report set out the significant financial pressures faced by the Council, including a £1.3 million budget gap for this year, Government funding down 50% in real terms since 2010, and difficult decisions about statutory services. The Theatre building itself needed millions of pounds of urgent works over the next three years.
10. The risk management implications in report section 6.4 set out that “the risk of proceeding has been assessed as high. A risk at this level sits outside of the Council’s risk appetite.”
11. Councillors had a fiduciary duty to taxpayers and must be competent and responsible with public money. High-risk decisions with assets worth millions could not be taken when the Council’s own policy says we shouldn’t.
12. Additional information had been received since the evaluation, including fundraising updates, letters of support, the Moorland review and many different documents. But, as the report made clear, the evaluation had to assess what was submitted by the deadline. It was a snapshot. Could the Cabinet be assured that the CCTT could run the Theatre on an ongoing basis without subsidy?
13. Moving the goalposts after evaluation would not be proper governance. It would undermine the integrity of any future process, especially this one.
14. CCTT commissioned Rebecca Moorland to review their submission. We presume after receiving SLC’s evaluation. We could not be sure as there was no date on it, having studied this carefully.
15. Ms. Moorland was a respected professional, but this review, it is clear that it was advocacy and not independent assessment. The fundamental difference was this: SLC evaluated whether CCTT could deliver a sustainable theatre operation. Cabinet believed that Ms. Moorland evaluated whether they had potential.
16. In public sector governance, potential without a credible delivery plan just wasn’t enough, and even Ms. Moorland herself acknowledged significant concerns. She stated there was quite a difference between writing a business plan and actually operating a theatre. She noted that the CCTT had no track record in theatre operations, identified only five trustees currently in place, flagged concerns about catering projections, lack of theatre management experience and questionable income assumptions.
17. Where SLC identified gaps as material risks requiring evidence, Ms. Moorland excuses them as “typical for early-stage planning”. That was the difference between rigorous evaluation and supportive consultancy.
18. SLC were here to explain why. Even considering all late representations, including the Moorland review (and it was stressed to CCTT that this was not part of the Council’s evaluation), their fundamental conclusions remained unchanged.

19. The Council wanted this to work, I personally wanted this to work. The officers, who had been entirely professional and impartial throughout, had wanted this to work and worked hard to try and make it happen. But, wanting something just wasn't enough sometimes. Hope was not a business plan; good intentions did not guarantee success.
20. The evaluation bid was transparent, the criteria was published in advance, and it allowed different organisations to bid. The process was fair with the same opportunity for all interested parties. The process was professional; it was an independent expert assessment. It was a thorough, comprehensive review of all aspects.
21. The question tonight was not whether we, the Cabinet or the Council valued arts and culture. We did and would continue to support cultural activities across the district. The question was not whether the community cared. Clearly, they did, we did and we respected that.
22. The question was simple - given the independent evaluation results, given our financial position, given our risk management responsibilities - was Cabinet right to accept the recommendations not to proceed.
23. Based on the evidence in the report, based on our duty to be responsible custodians of public assets, based on the need to protect taxpayers from financial risk, the answer was yes.
24. This was a difficult decision, but I believe it was the right decision, a responsible decision, and one that Cabinet stood by. SLC were here to answer technical questions about the evaluation. Officers could speak about the process and obviously, Cabinet members were here to address any questions around the Cabinet decision-making.

The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that SLC had been originally appointed to help the Council understand the leisure contract and review with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL). The outcome of that review was presented to Members and officers a while back, with Members then asking officers to work with the community on any bids put forward in relation to the Theatre. SLC was appointed through a framework. There was no conflict of interest in this work as the original process was separate for this work.

The SLC Managing Director advised he was present to answer any questions and reiterated their position as an independent evaluator in the process. SLC was passionate about participation in sport, wellbeing and the arts. A sector specialist had been used to evaluate the process, designing a rigorous and tough process as an asset transfer was a significant piece of work. It was designed to ensure on a very rigorous, robust and de-risked proposal made it through. Despite a lot of time, effort and hard work put in by the sole bidder, the outcome was that SLC could not recommend the transfer took place. The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) monies required a robust business case to be provided also. The business case provided by CCTT was not robust enough for SLC to recommend that the funding be put into the Theatre.

Members then raised the following questions / comments in relation to the report:

1. Why was there such a disparity in scoring between the SLC report and the Moorland report? The income proposals sounded pretty robust, so could SLC explain why there were not considered to be so?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the proposal was not backed up by evidence on how the figures were arrived at. Having that level of confidence in ticket sales, income and sponsorship was unsubstantiated, with very little evidence provided to back up the figures. We wanted to mark any bid as constructively and fairly as possible. The business plan set out what the CCTT would like to do but was extremely ambitious to the point of being reckless.*

2. What evidence was used to make that assessment?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the evidence was the proposal as put through, with industry and public sector experience and benchmarked against the previous operational performance of IHL. It was expected for any bidder to say what income they could make and what costs would be covered to operate at zero subsidy.*

*The proposed approach from CCTT was delved into deeper using the method statements. We had tried to give CCTT every opportunity to show how they would achieve the figures but unfortunately there was very little meat on the bone.*

*A range of data had been used, including ticket sales for a theatre of this size in the market. It was believed that projections were over ambitious based on SLC's own experiences. Sales and income would not have been achieved in the first year and the asset would have been returned to the Council.*

3. What analysis was done on the post-pandemic figures?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the Theatre was included in the original LUF bid and it was worked up as part of that bid and always included the closure period and retention of the Theatre, so it had to be assumed the Council did due diligence on keeping the Theatre open.*

4. What discussions happened on the original LUF bid and evaluation?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the evaluation team learned a lot from the post-pandemic reopening. From a standing start it did take time to get up to a steady bid, and we would have expected this to be reflected in the bid by not being too over-ambitious in the first year given the CCTT had not run a theatre operation before.*

*The business plan suggested more income would be taken in the first year than IHL had done in 2024/25 and this would be after two-years of closure. It was felt that the CCTT would have demonstrated some maturity and understanding of theatre operations to perhaps not be as bullish early on.*

5. Visitor numbers to the Theatre increased post-pandemic, did you specifically look at these numbers?

*The SLC Managing Director advised they were aware of the figures based on previous work as mentioned by the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources, so this was a good base to work on. We wanted to assess the bid on its own merits and what the CCTT had set out seemed overly optimistic which increased risk levels.*

*A lot of feedback had been provided in the report and where it was felt that areas were overstated, we tried to steer them in meeting to areas which we felt were not set out clearly enough.*



6. Had an analysis of visitors to the Theatre been factored into the evaluation report?

*The SLC Managing Director confirmed this was the case.*

7. It was understood that the method statements were required, had very stringent word counts and only one appendix allowed. Was this correct?

*The SLC Managing Director confirmed this was the case.*

8. The business plan and method statements were very different.

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the bidders were provided with a spreadsheet to set out the business plan financially on common cost and income areas to compare each bidder's proposal fairly and consistently. This had been shared with the CCTT and explained to them how to work and fill it out.*

*The business plan was based on a template provided to all bidders and the approach taken on how to manage costs and break even. The method statements were split into fifteen different elements to articulate different areas of a business plan to test robustness and credibility of figures and provide feedback halfway through the process on which areas were not being achieved and help them to design in the final bid.*

9. Was the first meeting referred to the 30-minutes 'Teams' meeting?

*The SLC Managing Director advised he could not recall if the meeting was that time-length.*

10. The first meeting was 30 minutes, and the second meeting was 60 minutes. There was concern from the CCTT that they were being asked to provide figures and there was no interest in the wider detail.

*The SLC Managing Director advised that he had a copy of the evaluation process which was shared with all bidders. SLC was one of the largest evaluators in the UK, running eight live evaluation assessments. We wanted to make sure the process was as fair, transparent and robust as possible and wanted to share the process in a short meeting so as not to cause confusion. This meeting was not the start of the evaluation process. The CCTT had the chance to ask follow-up questions after that initial meeting.*

*A three-stage process had been set out. Stage 1 was to meet with the evaluation team, stage 2 was the evaluation process, with the Excel spreadsheet being provided for completion. We could not accept something preprepared as we needed to assess fairly against any other bids that came in.*

11. This seemed to be an antithesis of what was suggested and did not seem to be fair to other parties coming forward and two other parties had dropped out.

*The SLC Managing Director advised that Members needed to ask why the two other parties had dropped out of the process. It was our view that no bidders could run the Theatre at no subsidy even with the £6m of LUF income. It also had to be noted that no professional theatre operators had put themselves forward.*

12. The Cabinet report mentioned that the reason for the Theatre closure was that the Council could not reduce the subsidy provided. As such, why was IHL able to run it at a loss for a long time and why able to put forward a reduced subsidy?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that these were conflating issues. The IHL subsidies were at a different time in the Council's life and budget processes. The leisure element was being a greater part of overall expenditure and thus not sustainable going forward.*

13. Still in a conundrum about the application process. A paper exercise was done as nobody could come in and run a sustainable offer, so why enter this process knowing nobody could do this? It was felt the decision made last Thursday by Cabinet was rushed. The National Theatre Trust's response to this process was also intriguing. Did SLC have any aware of this body and work with them?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that SLC was aware of the national body but did not regularly interact with them. The evaluation process had been co-designed with the Council based on having designed fair processes previously.*

*It had to be ensured that the risk did not fall back onto Council taxpayers as the Council had already decided it could not keep the Theatre running with subsidy funding.*

*We understood that it was painful to lose a cultural asset but had to ask if it could be run for the next three years, and even twenty years. If nobody met the minimum standards then the recommendation was that no-one would go forward as this would also protect those applying as any financial liabilities would fall on them.*

14. Given the points raised, there had to be concern why the Council went down this process given the predictability of the outcome based on the criteria set out.

*The Chief Executive advised that the Council had been running the Theatre for many years with a subsidy despite it being operated by a professional body. The recommendation to full Council to close the Theatre was based on the financial position and full Council took that decision.*

*Subsequently, Members asked that community groups be given the opportunity to put forward interests/proposals on running the Theatre at no subsidy. The process had been run given the passion from those who wanted to retain the Theatre provision.*

*The Council's statutory officers had to provide robust advice to ensure funding was protected and that the Council was not put into a financially disadvantaged position. The only bidder that came forward could not demonstrate they could run the Theatre at no extra cost. Officers had done what Members asked.*

*The Deputy Leader advised that it was considered the right process to take given the strength of feeling about the Theatre closure. Additionally, the Council could not go out and get funding/grants to support the Theatre, whereas community groups may have been able to source such funding. It was not a fault of the process to find out that it was very difficult to run the Theatre. This was probably a good thing and made clear to Cabinet and Members the position in now.*

15. One of the criticisms about SLC was that they had not been available enough to the Trust for consultation, so could they evidence they had been?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that this could be evidenced as the evaluation process set out how we would engage with bidders. A contact email address was provided and one of the bidders had contacted the Council directly and re-directed to us. Response times were typically less than 24 hours on areas of clarification. A log was in place of emails received and response times.*

*The advice given was not about writing the business plan and coaching those to do so. This would be a conflict of interest and damage the integrity of SLC. The process was designed fairly and robustly, and it was absolutely not SLC's position to write the bid for the CCTT.*

16. The Cabinet made a very difficult and hard decision. What if the Cabinet had disagreed with SLC and wanted to go ahead with the asset transfer. What would the position be then?

*The Chief Executive advised that the evaluation process was not intended to be a single stage process. It set out that the CCTT fell at the first hurdle. If they had been able to pass that stage, then there would have been a further detailed evaluation, but the documents received back were not of good enough quality.*

*The three statutory officers had to provide Cabinet and Council advice on the best interests of the Council based on professional advice and also had to demonstrate to the Government a robust proposal and effective business case. If Cabinet had made the decision to proceed with the transfer, then discussions would have been held with the Leader and Cabinet about next steps.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that as the S151 Officer, he had to sign off on the budget and grant funding, being personally accountable for this. Based on the evaluation outcome, it would have been difficult to sign this off. If it had gone forward, a savings programme would have been presented to Members for other areas of the Council to cover the cost of such a decision.*

*SLC did the evaluation work so we would have to work with Cabinet on whether to take the required level of risk and difficult decisions needed to cover the financial viability of the Council. The issues of fairer funding 2.0 and LGR also needed to be considered in the round on this issue. The Council had suffered from double-digit funding reductions for several years and so work would be needed with Members to try and reach a satisfactory decision.*

17. Had SLC been involved in any successful asset transfer processes?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that they had worked with North Kesteven District Council, securing £1.5m to create a multi-art cultural space facility, working within the financial parameters set at the time. We were one of the country's largest bodies in creating partnerships with community organisations.*

*Asset transfers were not as frequent as partnering exercises, but advice had been given on some in the past. For this Council, Members wanted to invite any organisations with relevant experience to bid.*

18. The community aspect mattered, and it felt like it was being missed in all of this, and felt like a disheartening position to be in.

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that in this circumstance, several million pounds of Government money would have to be spent, including some LUF money. Most asset transfer were usually for low-value items.*

*The SLC Managing Director advised that the culture and leisure industry was in a very difficult position with funding for such bodies being the lowest it had ever been. The Theatre also fell outside the scope of the Council's statutory funding requirements.*

19. At the beginning of the process Members were told that support would be given to any bids coming through, but it was not quite sure this had been done. Was it correct that officers said consultancy time would be offered to the bidders and was this ever done?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that feedback had been offered throughout the process which was that element of the time. A huge amount of help would not usually be offered in the procurement process, and more time had been offered than usually would do.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that since the initial meeting, Members had asked for officers to provide resource to support this work and that had been done.*

*The Chief Executive further advised there may have been a misunderstanding of the offer. The framework SLC provided to enable the CCTT and others to submit their business plan was support as it gave clarity on what the process was.*

*The problem was that if the Council and/or SLC worked too closely with any bidders then that would have to be done for all bidders as an advantage could not be given to one group or another and this would be a difficult legal position for the Council to be in. The Council also had a lack of officer resource, and we needed those with bids to be robust to put them forward.*

20. It was felt there had been a miscommunication on this issue.

21. The Deputy Leader had referred to groups putting out interest for submissions. It was clear the CCTT had difficulty approaching national funding bodies as they were not yet a registered charitable trust. The Charity Commission required confirmation of this status from the Council so that bids could be applied for.

Did the Cabinet feel it would be a reasonable expectation in terms of contingency planning and working reserves given that the CCTT only had three weeks to pull the required information together.

*The Deputy Leader advised he could not answer this question as he was not a qualified expert. The Cabinet would take advice from officers and experts and come to a decision.*

22. How did the aforementioned timeframe come together and when was the process co-designed?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that SLC had designed it and approached the Council who then reviewed it and made some minor amendments. The timeframes were designed based on a need to make decisions early and get through to the second stage for the really hard work to happen. The other factor was the LUF monies. At the time the Council had to report back to the Government on whether it could put its name to a credible bid for the money to be spent.*

*The Chief Executive clarified that the Council signed off on the evaluation process before it went out.*

23. In respect of capital costs, what expectations were set out to the CCTT on this aspect of the bid?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised it was understood that the CCTT would not be experts in this field and so they had been provided with income information and also had the CBRE report about health and safety and the physical condition of the Theatre.*

*The SLC Managing Director further advised that the Council had provided as much information as possible on capital costs and what elements were to be excluded. The bidder's expectations seemed to be that more money would be provided by the Council than could be. This would affect how to evaluate the bid, and it was not clear that the CCTT had gone away to think more about the investment aspect and how those could be picked up during the next stage.*

24. Wouldn't the capital bid have come in after the initial process had taken place and a better understanding gained on the financial need set out?

*The Head of Wellbeing advised that the CCTT met with the Council's Economic Development team and provided basic assumptions on what could be expected so that the bid was drafted on that basis. The detail would have come in the latter stages of the process.*

25. The timescales referred to in a previous response seemed extremely short given that none of the organisations involved had knowledge of running theatres.

With short timescales and stringent rules being placed on bidders, did the Council and SLC meet their own timescales put in place?

*The SLC Managing Director advised that SLC had submitted all of its evaluation reports on time.*

26. It was understood that the CCTT were advised they would be told of the outcome by a certain deadline, but this did not happen. As such, there was concern that the delay came from the Council in submitting its decision to the CCTT.

*The Head of Wellbeing advised that deadlines very clearly set out timescales for SLC and the CCTT but there were no timescales for when Council decisions would be made.*

27. Who made that decision?

*The Head of Wellbeing advised that it was unknown what would come in and how long any review would take. The evaluation process would also set out time-frames on what was to be done.*

*The SLC Managing Director further advised that the submission deadline was extended to 16 June 2025 to enable the CCTT to engage with their own consultant and the CCTT submitted their proposal by that deadline. SLC then evaluated the proposal with the timescales set out in the process and initial draft feedback was provided to the CCTT and 30 June 2025.*

28. When was the decision communicated to the CCTT?

*The Chief Executive advised this would need to be checked, but it was felt important to meet the CCTT to discuss the outcome in person and give them an opportunity to read the report and answer any of their questions.*

*The Deputy Leader confirmed that the meeting took place on the morning of Friday 8 August 2025.*

29. In respect of the LUF monies allocations, we were aware that the Government had changed the deadline date to 31 March 2028 prior to the Cabinet decision being made. As such, it was disappointing that the Cabinet had not accounted for this in its decision at last week's meeting.

On this basis, could the decision not be overturned and referred back to Cabinet for re-consideration?

*The Chief Executive advised that the letter advising of the change had been received by the Government either on, or the day before, the Cabinet meeting. This was not however material to the Cabinet's decision as the CCTT business case was not considered robust enough.*

(Councillor Bishop left the meeting at this point and did not return.)

*The Chief Executive further advised that the extension of the timeframe for the LUF monies did not change greatly the overall timescales for decision-making owing to the complexities of the decision to be made.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources further advised that it would take years to design the necessary procedures and processes, so the Council did not have until 2028 to deliver all of these things, including getting scheme design, build and scheme delivery.*

30. It was understood that at last week's Cabinet meeting it had been recommended to defer the decision until the October Cabinet meeting.

*The Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader advised that this was not correct, he had asked that the Council continue to talk to any interested parties about the future of the Theatre.*

*The Deputy Leader further advised that the extended LUF deadline did not change Cabinet's decision as it had been made based on viability issues, not timeline pressures.*

31. As referred to earlier, the extent of the consultancy support provided to the CCTT was a 30-minute and 60-minute meeting with SLC and a meeting with the Economic Development team.

Members had been told by the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources that SLC would put time aside to support the development of the business plan, with £100,000 being ring-fenced for this purpose.

It was not believed that this was a misunderstanding of the offer made, as suggested earlier by the Chief Executive. It was felt the full Council decision was made on the basis of this promise being made. As such, it turned out that the promise was either miscommunicated or not true.

There was concern that the whole process had lacked transparency or robustness and the CCTT had only just been constituted as a new body. Where was the robustness of what the Council promised, where was the sustainability and where was the £100,000 that was ringfenced? Where had this money gone and where was the consultancy support provided that was promised?

There had to be reasonableness and fairness, the whole process was littered with contradictions.

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that the process had been designed to be as fair as possible to the CCTT, with the Council needing to be cognisant of the use of public funds. A huge amount of documents had been provided to the CCTT. It had not been an easy thing for officers to do to support the process. SLC ran a fair and transparent process.*

*The SLC Managing Director further advised that the process had been designed to save the Theatre, but it needed someone with a viable and risk-backed solution to do so. The current market position made it difficult for anyone to put a credible bid forward, which was reflected by only one bid being submitted.*

*The Deputy Leader further advised he could not remember exactly what he said at the 12 February budget Council meeting, but the Green Group's alternative budget proposal to that meeting was to ringfence £100,000 for alternative delivery models for the Museum of Cannock Chase.*

32. It was important to be clear and accountable what was being said as a Council. The Green Group was specifically told that the £100,000 could not be ringfenced just for the Museum as it had to be available for the Theatre element too.

*The Chief Executive considered that the Member perhaps had misremembered what was said at that Council meeting. The discussion was around whether funds were available for the process, and it may have been assumed the money was for consultancy support. Whilst money was available, not all of it had to be spent.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources further advised it was considered the £100,000 did not need to be ringfenced as the money was already in reserve funding and could be used for such purposes. Separate work was also being done in respect of the Museum.*

*The Deputy Leader noted that the aforementioned Member had talked about reasonableness in the process but did not feel they were being so on this and felt that they had misquoted what was said at the time. Fundamentally, the Cabinet's decision had not changed or had changed based on what needed to be thought about in this meeting. The figures quoted were immaterial and not at the crux of the decision to be made by Members.*

33. The crux was that promises were made and those promises had not come to fruition. All of the concerns were that promises were made and not followed through on.

It was noted again when considering the minutes of the previous committee meeting that information had been asked for, but officers could not provide it. There was constant miscommunication and when specifically asked questions, such as wanting to know whether money was available for consultancy, Members were told this would be the case and so the whole process was based on that decision.

The CCTT had been set up to fail, and this was a genuine concern. The Cabinet decision was based on mistruths or misunderstandings. As such, a sound decision could not be made on that basis.

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that part of the miscommunication was perhaps about clarity on what the funds could be used for. If there were reservations about the process it would have been helpful to pick these up at the time. The Council did not want to make the process more difficult than it needed to be.*

34. At last week's Cabinet meeting the Cabinet said they were still open to the idea of other bidders coming forward, but the SLC Managing Director has indicated there was no industry appetite to do so. What would therefore happen to the £6m LUF monies if no bid came in?

*The Chief Executive advised it had to be clear that any process would have to be completed before looking at funding provision. There was no plan b in place at the moment, and should the Cabinet decision be confirmed, colleagues would need to bring forward a separate report on how the money could be used, such as enhancing the town centre.*

*The £6m figure was volunteered as monies not yet committed but now wholly available for the Theatre. It was however felt there would be no struggle for options on how to spend that money if it was available.*

35. Did the Cabinet members present feel they had all the information available to make a decision at last week's meeting.

*The Cabinet members present confirmed this was the case.*

36. As previously advised at full Council, the full Council meetings were audio recorded. Therefore, the audio recording of the 12 February 2025 meeting could be shared.

37. The SLC report answered a lot of own questions and the officer report set out the summary of the facts from the SLC report. The CCTT now had increased reserves and more formal arrangements and the LUF timescale extension had been announced. This was also significant extra information to consider alongside the SLC report.

The Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader had in minuted at the Cabinet meeting that discussions around the Theatre would continue and a similar statement had been seen from the Cannock Chase MP. As a scrutiny committee, could we have an understanding please of what options were available to us for consideration?

*The Head of Law & Governance advised that the committee:*

- *Could not alter the Cabinet's decision.*
- *Could allow the decision to continue with comments back to Cabinet.*
- *Determine that no further action be taken, with no comments back to Cabinet.*
- *Refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration.*
- *In exceptional circumstances, refer the matter to full Council. This was usually only for matters related to budget or policy framework decisions, which was not necessarily relevant in this circumstance. The Council meeting would operate as a further scrutiny meeting.*

The same Member then advised they had submitted 28 questions for consideration by Cabinet, so sought clarification on when responses would be received.

38. Based on the additional information referred to and Cabinet's openness for further discussions and support, it was reasonable to refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration. This proposal was duly moved and seconded.



39. 28 questions had been submitted for consideration by Cabinet on this issue. When would the responses be received?

*The Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader advised that not all of the questions were suitable for response in the Cabinet meeting and some had been answered in this meeting.*

*The Deputy Leader advised that written responses would be provided by the end of this week.*

40. It was considered that one meeting of this committee was insufficient to scrutinise the Cabinet's decision effectively and it was felt that other Member may also still have questions on the report.

As such, it was felt that further meetings of the committee should be arranged to discuss this matter given it was a crucial decision for the Council and vital to the community.

Committee members needed to be given ample opportunity to scrutiny the decision if they wanted to operate as a 'responsible council' scrutiny committee. To not review the decision properly risked giving the Council a bad reputation.

A Member moved that the Question now be Put.

A vote was then taken to refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration. This vote was lost.

A vote was then taken that no further action be taken and the Cabinet decision stand. This was vote was approved.

**Resolved:**

That no further action be taken in respect of the 4 September 2025 Cabinet decision on the Community Asset Transfer of the Prince of Wales Theatre and that the Cabinet decision stands.

(The SLC Managing Director, Head of Regulatory Services, Head of Wellbeing and the Cabinet members all left the meeting at this end of this item.)

(The meeting was adjourned at for a comfort break at 8:02pm and reconvened at 8:12pm.)

## **12. Quarter 1 Performance Report 2025-26**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 5.1 - 5.10).

The Head of Transformation and Assurance advised that only two actions were due for completion in quarter 1, one of which had been done, and the other was on target. In respect of the key performance indicators, all had either achieved or been above target with two exceptions, these being percentage of National Non-Domestic Rates collected and response times for freedom of information requests.

*(Councillor Muckley left the meeting during the presentation of this item, citing concerns that the scrutiny process was not working or effective and would therefore be resigning from the committee.)*

*(Councillors O. Lyons and Sutherland also left the meeting during the presentation of this item, citing the same concerns raised by Councillor Muckley.)*

A Member advised they would be remaining in the meeting but referred to previous concerns raised about the chair position of the scrutiny committees being held by the Administration and the political balance being in favour of the majority group on the Council.

### **Resolved**

That the quarter 1 2025/26 performance update be noted.

## **13. Local Government Reorganisation - Progress Update**

Verbal update from the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive reported the following:

- The challenge set by the Government had been to develop reorganisation proposals in accordance with the white paper published late last year. Following submission of a draft proposal in March this year, the final version had to be provided to the Government by 28 November 2025.
- This Council was working with five other Staffordshire authorities on that proposal, with each Chief Executive leading a different workstream.
- It was expected to have a first draft of the final proposal ready for Members to consider later this month, but this had been delayed owing to required information not being received from Staffordshire County Council.
- Other councils within Staffordshire were also making their own decisions, but all involved had to consider not just their own specific area but the wider County. It was expected that more than one submission would be submitted for consideration.
- Following the departure in the last week of the Secretary of State and the Local Government Minister for their roles, it remained to be seen whether that would result in any changes to the overall reorganisation timetable and process to be followed.

Members then raised the following queries / comments in respect of the update:

- Was the reorganisation programme well funded and was it going to happen?

*The Chief Executive advised that the Government had provided a sum of money to Staffordshire to support development of the proposals, but this was split across each council in the area. The amount provided would not cover the full costs, but as this Council was sharing the costs with five other authorities, the cost would be a modest amount.*

*Furthermore, the survey carried out during the summer received circa 17,500 responses, with the most being received from Cannock Chase and Stafford Borough. The outcome of the responses was not yet known.*

- Some of the councils involved in the process did not have such a good financial standing as this Council, so how would those debts be managed and would this Council pick up any responsibility for those debts?

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised that the Government had made clear it would not bail out any authorities with existing debts and therefore the resources of all councils involved in the reorganisation process would have to be used to cover those debts.*

*The Chief Executive further advised that there would also be significant costs in setting up and establishing the new authorities which would also have to be funded by the existing councils.*

- Could the Council spend its own reserves now before this had to happen?

*The Chief Executive advised that there would also be significant costs in setting up and establishing the new authorities which would also have to be funded by the existing councils. As such, spending reserves now would put any new authority in a difficult position.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources further advised that the Council was facing even more pressure on its existing resources, with staffing levels being at the lowest level they had ever been. This meant it was difficult to serve the needs of Members and deliver services and this may get worse.*

- What was the general consensus of other councils involved in the process?

*The Chief Executive advised it was expected there would be proposal covering Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands to form one authority, however Staffordshire Moorlands have designed their own proposal which would include north of Stafford and all of Uttoxeter to balance numbers. For Stafford Borough councillors, the proposal to split the Borough was a red line as they wanted to see it stay together. Additionally, the Leader of Lichfield District Council had suggested two smaller authorities be created for the south and east of the County, one being Lichfield, East Staffordshire and Tamworth and the other being Cannock Chase, Stafford and South Staffordshire.*

- Given the general turmoil at the moment, how was this affecting shared services and the financial position of the Council etc?

*The Chief Executive advised it had limited the amount of transformation work that both Councils had anticipated doing, partly because of finance, staff capacity and overall workload. It was not felt right to TUPE transfer all staff when the same thing would have to be done again in two years' time. More limited transformation work was being done instead and a focus on reorganisation and other issues as raised in this meeting.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources further advised that budget funding was an issue owing to uncertainty around fair funding 2.0, business rates and the Government's Budget not taking place until 26 November which would make it very difficult to prepare the budgets for both Councils within the statutory timeframe.*

- This Council was very lucky to have its own housing stock, how was it envisaged this might be different under the new arrangements?

*The Chief Executive advised that the white paper had been silent on the future of council owned housing and what should be done with it. Of the areas involved in the six-council process, Tamworth was the only other council with its own housing stock. An initial meeting had been held with colleagues there to discuss the impact on the Housing Revenue Account and housing stock provision going forward. The service design workstream had been asked to initial a specific discussion on this issue for inclusion in the final submission paper.*

- There was a worry from a planning point of view that under a larger authority, councillors from Tamworth, Staffordshire Moorlands or elsewhere would be making decisions that affected Cannock Chase.

*The Chief Executive advised that it was expected planning decisions would be taken by a larger authority, but work was taking place with the Head of Law & Governance to consider neighbourhood area committees as the Government had recognised there would be a democratic deficit with larger authorities. The involvement of parish and town councils, local businesses and community groups would also have to be accounted for in local level decision making.*

**Resolved**

That the update be noted.

**14. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26 Update**

Verbal update from the Head of Transformation & Assurance

The Head of Transformation & Assurance reported the following:

- The first meeting of the task & finish group for the review of the Revenues and Benefits debt recovery process would be taking place on Thursday 25 September.
- At the December committee meeting, updates were due to be provided on the climate change strategy and action plan and organisational capacity.

**Resolved**

That the update be noted.

The meeting closed at 8:31pm.

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**Chair**

## Quarter 2 Performance Report 2025/26

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	4 December 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Transformation and Assurance
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Resources and Transformation

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### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans and the performance at the end of the second quarter of 2025-26.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress at the end of the second quarter relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities and the corrective action as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

### 3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-26 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. The plan is supported by Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) which set out the key projects and actions for delivery each year. The PDPs were revised last year to reflect changes at an operational level and limitations on capacity.
- 3.2 Overall, 87% of the projects have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in Appendices 1a to 1d.
- 3.3 With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 69% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found in section 5 and in Appendix 2.

### 4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Annual Delivery Plans set out key strategic and operational projects which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

### 5 Report Detail

#### Background

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-26 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. There are four overarching priorities:
1. To reinvigorate the economy and create a District that thrives.





2. To encourage and support residents to lead healthy and independent lives.
3. To ensure Cannock Chase is a place that residents are proud to call home.
4. To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council.

- 5.2 The priorities are supported by a number of objectives that set out what the Council is aiming to achieve, how we will deliver these and how we will measure our performance.

### Priority Delivery Plans

- 5.3 The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in Appendices 1A to 1D to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council's performance reporting framework. The PDPs were revised last year to reflect changes at an operational level and limitations on capacity.
- 5.4 A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the projects/actions set out in the PDPs is given in Appendices 1a-1d. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in the table below.

**Table 1: Summary of progress in delivery of key projects/actions for Quarter 2 2025-26**





Performance Rating	Action completed	Work on Target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Actions due to end of Quarter 2	Actions not yet due	Total Number of Actions
Corporate Plan Priority						N/A	
Economic Prosperity	4		2		6	11	17
Health and Wellbeing	3				3	3	6
Community	5	2			7	9	16
Responsible Council	3	3	1		7	10	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56</b>

- 5.5 At the end of quarter 2, of the 23 actions planned for delivery in this period:
- 20 (87%) have been completed or are on target;
  - 3 (13%) are behind target.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- 5.6 In addition to the Delivery Plans, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in Appendix 2 and are summarised in Table 2:

**Table 2 - Summary of key performance indicators for Quarter 2 2025-26**

Corporate Plan Priority					N/A	Total Number of KPIs
	Performance exceeds target	Performance on target	Performance < 5% below target	Performance > 5% below target	Not Applicable / Annual	
<b>Economy Prosperity</b>	5		2			<b>7</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>					1	<b>1</b>
<b>Community</b>	3	2	2	2	3	<b>12</b>
<b>Responsible Council</b>	4	2	1		6	<b>13</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>

5.7 Of the 23 indicators due to be reported on in quarter 2:

- 12 (52%) indicators show performance above target;
- 4 (17%) indicators show performance on target; and
- 7 (31%) indicators show performance below target

The reasons for underperformance and the corrective action to be taken is set out in Appendix 2.

5.8 It should be noted that the actions and performance relating to the Housing Service have been removed from this report and are now being reported separately as part of the arrangements to support the work of the new Housing Board.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

### **6.2 Legal**

None.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

None.

### **6.4 Risk Management**

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

## **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

## **6.6 Health**

None.

## **6.7 Climate Change**

None.

## **7 Appendices**

~~Appendix 1a: Economic Prosperity PDP~~

~~Appendix 1b: Health and Wellbeing PDP~~

~~Appendix 1c: The Community PDP~~

Appendix 1d: Responsible Council PDP

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators (*Responsible Council priority only*)

## **8 Previous Consideration**

None.

## **9 Background Papers**

Corporate Plan 2022-26 - Council 27 April 2022

4-Year Delivery Plans 2022-26 - Cabinet 15 September 2022

**Contact Officer:** Judith Aupers

**Telephone Number:** 01543 464 411

**Report Track:** Cabinet 04/12/25

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee: 10/12/25





**Key Decision:** No



## Priority Delivery Plan for 2025/26

### Priority 4 - Responsible Council

#### Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 2

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
3	3	1		10	17

#### Summary of Successes as at Quarter 2



The report to Cabinet setting out the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on the plans for transformation work has been drafted and discussed with the Leadership Team. It is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet in November. The report also sets out the preparatory work needed for LGR.

#### Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 2





Whilst work is underway on the upgrade of the IT infrastructure, this will not now be completed until Q4 due to other work having taken priority.







**Priority 4 - Responsible Council**

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Closure of the Accounts	Audit of the Accounts for 2023/24			X			
	VFM review 23/24			X			
Transformation Strategy & Plan	Report to Cabinet setting out impact of LGR on Shared Services /Transformation work and agree proposed approach		X			The report has been drafted and considered by Leadership Team. It is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in November.	★
Digital Strategy (inc replacement of IT Systems)	Installation of new switches	X	X			Work on replacing the core switches has been completed. Work on the switches for each floor has been delayed and will now be completed by the end of Q4.	▲
	SharePoint File Migration - development of business case and work plan		X			Approximately 40% of files have been migrated. A plan is being developed to migrate the remaining files by the end of Q4.	✓
	Development of new Shared Services Intranet		X			Platform has been developed. Work programme to populate it and migrate information from existing intranet sites to be developed in Q3.	✓
Climate Change Strategy	Climate Change Strategy to be adopted	X				Council adopted the Strategy	★
	Climate Action Board in place			X			

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	Data gathered for reporting to Climate Action Board		X			Q1 data collected. Q2 data in process of being collated with aim to report to first Climate Action Board in November	
	Climate Action Board reports to Cabinet			X			
Strategic asset management including the review of key assets	Building Condition Surveys - Budget to be allocated to undertake essential remedial works				X		
	Statutory Compliance for all Council owned buildings: • Complete Insurance Reinstatement Valuations for outstanding buildings				X		
	Complete Lease & Asset Reviews:						
	• Appoint Agency Estates Surveyor		X			Interim Estates Surveyor Appointed	
	• Compliance of Leased Buildings				X		
	• Lease Reviews Lease Negotiations				X		
	• Asset Reviews				X		
	Implement TIO to record Compliance Data across all buildings				X		

## KPIs for Priority 4 - Responsible Council

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
	Performance exceeds target	4	4			
	Performance on target	1	2			
	Performance < 5% below target	1	1			
	Performance > 5% below target	1				
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	6	6			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>			

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
<b>Local Taxation and Benefits</b>									
Days taken to process new HB/CT Claims	17.4	20 days	18	19.7					
Days taken to process new HB/CT change of circumstances	4.3	9 days	2.2	2.1					
% of Council Tax collected annually	97%	98% by year end	28%	54.7%					
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98.3%	98% by year end	26.1%	53.8%					Target was 54.9% As expected, performance is below last year as Retail, Leisure and hospitality premises have had significantly increased bills due to government relief being reduced.
<b>Transformation &amp; Assurance</b>									
% of calls answered	94.5%	95%	96.2%	96.7%					
Average call wait time	90 secs	90 secs	44 secs	32 secs					
Number of calls answered	86,466	N/A	20,602	17,404				N/A	

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
<b>Law &amp; Governance</b>									
FOI requests within time i.e. 20 working days	84.6%	85%	74%	91.2%				★	
<b>Corporate Assets</b>									
% of buildings with a valid annual landlord Gas Safety Record	100%	100%						N/A	Annual Target
% of buildings with a valid Electrical Certificate (within 5 years)	100%	100%						N/A	Annual Target
% of passenger lifts that have a valid 6 monthly thorough examination record	100%	100%						N/A	Annual Target
% of buildings that have a current Legionella risk assessment	100%	100%						N/A	Annual Target
% of buildings that have a current Fire risk assessment	100%	100%						N/A	Annual Target

## **Vacancies and Capacity Issues - Position at 31 October 2025**

**Committee:** Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 10 December 2025

**Report of:** Head of Transformation and Assurance

**Portfolio:** Resources and Transformation

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### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise Members on the vacancies and capacity issues affecting all services as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the vacancies and capacity information provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To consider if any further information is required.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2.3 As part of the Committee's work programme, Members requested information on the vacancies and capacity issues facing services.

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 Members of the Committee requested information on the Council's vacancies and capacity. In total there were 47 vacancies as at 31 October 2025 and details of these are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Council has been facing challenges in recruitment to professional roles for a number of years due to a combination of more competitive salaries being offered by other organisations and insufficient suitably qualified and experienced staff in the market.
- 3.3 Whilst vacancies have an obvious impact on capacity to deliver services, an increase in demand for some services and the delivery of a range of complex, high profile and time sensitive projects is also putting a strain on already stretched services.
- 3.4 The capacity issue facing the Council is acknowledged in the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Vacancies and capacity affect the delivery of all of the Council's priorities.

### **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 As at 31<sup>st</sup> October there were 45 vacant posts across the Council. These are summarised by service area in the table below:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of Posts Vacant</b>
Economic Development & Planning	4
Health & Wellbeing	2
Corporate Assets	2
Operations	8
Regulatory Services	11
Resources	7
Law & Governance	5
Transformation & Assurance	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>

The Council has a full establishment of 349 posts (excluding Housing) so 45 vacancies amounts to 13% of this.

Details of each vacancy are set out in Appendix 1.

- 5.2 Details of vacancies and capacity for the Housing Service have not been included in the summary above or Appendix 1 as this is being reviewed separately and any issues will be considered in the first instance by the Housing Board.

### **Recruitment**

- 5.3 The Council has for a number of years been facing challenges in recruiting to a number of professions e.g. building control, corporate assets, finance, legal. This is due to increasing competition in the market, higher salaries being paid by the private sector/larger public sector bodies, the retirement of experienced officers and insufficient replacements being trained across the various professions. Some services have also experienced challenges in recruiting to operational roles. As can be seen from Appendix 1, the post which has been vacant longest dates back to 2019 and is for a planning lawyer. There are also a range of posts which have been vacant since 2022-2023.
- 5.4 The first step in recruiting is to advertise vacant posts on the Council's website, West Midlands (WM) Jobs Portal, Indeed Jobs, Find a Job (DWP) and LG jobs. As a Disability Confident Employer, we also advertise all vacancies on the Disabled Workers Co-operative website. Senior management and professional roles may also be advertised in a relevant professional journal or national newspaper/publication. Some posts may be advertised internally first.
- 5.5 For those vacancies which are hard to recruit to managers have the following options:
- (i) the use of agency staff;
  - (ii) outsourcing specific pieces of work;
  - (iii) the use of market supplements to enhance the salary of the post to assist with recruitment; or
  - (iv) the use of recruitment agencies to assist with identifying potential suitable candidates



- 5.6 Use of agency staff - this is often the most expedient way to cover vacant posts, particular on a short-term basis however it tends to be more expensive than the cost of the post being covered. Each service area is currently responsible for making their own arrangements for the appointment of agency staff but we are looking at other options for managing this and improving data..
- 5.7 Outsourcing work - this can work well for the delivery of specialist pieces of work. For example, Legal Services tend to use this option for the drafting of specialist contracts where there is insufficient capacity or expertise within the internal team. But this doesn't tend to be suitable for covering the full duties of a vacant post and generally is also more expensive.
- 5.8 Market supplements - these have been used to aid the recruitment to a small number of professional posts. The supplements provide a fixed term enhancement to salary in an attempt to match current market salaries. However, when determining the value of the supplement, due regard has to be given to the salaries of other posts in the team and it is not always possible to sufficiently enhance the salary for a vacant post to make it attractive to potential applicants as Building Control have experienced (see Appendix 1). The market supplement also has to be applied to equivalent posts within the team, not just the one being recruited to; depending on the number of other posts this can make it an expensive option.
- 5.9 Recruitment agencies - traditionally these have tended to be used to support recruitment to senior posts within Leadership Team. But agencies are increasingly being used to assist with the recruitment to a range of professional posts which have proved difficult to recruit to. Agencies have the resources to attract a range of professionals seeking new positions and can reduce the timescale of the recruitment process. Agencies will charge a fee for their services but this is a one off cost.

### **Capacity**

- 5.10 Vacant posts create capacity issues for services, with essential duties having to be covered by other team members and less important tasks are paused or it may take longer them to be carried out, items processed etc.
- 5.11 However, it is not just vacant posts that are creating capacity issues for the Council. The majority of services have faced a reduction in staffing due to budget constraints over the last 15+ years. At the same time we have seen an increase in demand for some services e.g. homelessness.
- 5.12 Furthermore, the Council is ambitious in what it wishes to achieve for the district and a number of significant projects are currently being delivered (as set out in the Corporate Plan and the supporting priority delivery plans). These projects are often complex and time sensitive and they put additional pressure on services which are already at capacity. In some instances, additional resources may be brought in to support project delivery especially for those which we receive government funding for but this rarely covers all of the additional work created. For example, part of the funding for the regeneration of Cannock Town centre is being used to fund additional capacity to support the Economic Development Team with the management of the project and some to outsource legal work on specialist contracts. But the project also creates additional work for a range of other services which is not funded e.g. corporate assets, finance, communications, insurance.

- 5.13 Last but not least, time has to be spent on managing the delivery of services and our workforce. This includes, supporting staff development, managing absence, health and safety; dealing with Freedom of Information Requests and complaints; preparing business cases and reports for new projects or policy updates; performance management and reporting; and the provision of advice to Members, attendance at meetings etc. Whilst the corporate services provide advice, guidance and support on these issues, managers are responsible for the delivery of them alongside the delivery of their services.
- 5.14 The combination of vacant posts, increases in demand for services and the delivery of complex projects has stretched all services to their capacity. This is reflected in the Council's strategic risk register - see extract at Appendix 2. The risk register sets out the actions that are being taken (largely focussed on managing priorities and expectations) but acknowledges this is about maintaining the risk at the current level and it is not expected that this will reduce.
- 5.15 The capacity risk references the impact that the work on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is likely to have on service delivery and officers and there also is a separate risk for LGR that sets this out in more detail. We are already seeing an impact from the additional work that LGR is creating and so far this has been limited to corporate/support services. It is expected that the impact will increase once we know the Government's preferred unitary model for Staffordshire and work commences on preparation for setting up the new Council and transferring our services and workforce to it. In addition to the work that this will create, it is also anticipated that LGR will exacerbate the current recruitment challenges with prospective candidates being wary of moving to roles in Councils due to be abolished.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

### **6.2 Legal**

None

### **6.3 Human Resources**

These are referred to throughout the report.

### **6.4 Risk Management**

As referred to in the report, capacity has been identified as a Strategic Risk and is included in the Council's Risk Register.

### **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

None

### **6.6 Health**

None

**6.7 Climate Change**

None

**7 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Summary of vacancies and capacity issues as at 31 October 2025

Appendix 2: Extract from Strategic Risk Register re Capacity

**8 Previous Consideration**

None

**9 Background Papers**

**Contact Officer:** Judith Aupers

**Telephone Number:** 01543 464 411

**Report Track:** Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee: 10/12/25

**Key Decision:** No

## Cannock Chase Council - Vacancies and capacity issues as at 31 October 2025

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &amp; PLANNING</b>								
<b>CCDC Development &amp; Policy</b>								
Planning Policy Manager	37	July 23	New role at another LA	Agency Planner	National shortage of planning officers	Team submitted Local Plan to examination and undertook examination process with limited capacity,	Increased workload for team leading to prepare Local Plan for submission and examination	Existing team manages work priorities with adjustments to other areas.  SPD's and other policy documents / advice have been put back.
Senior Planner	37	Sept 23	Postholder secured Principal Planner role at CCDC	None	National shortage of planning officers - also vacancy saving contributing to Interim PPM cost	Vacant posts impacting on Local Plan submission and examination as well as evidence base preparation.	Increased workload for team leading to prepare Local Plan for submission and examination	Existing team manages work priorities with adjustments to other areas.  SPD's and other policy documents / advice have been put back.
Technical Assistant	37		Post not filled to allow budget to be held to bring in temporary agency support when needed to assist Local Plan Review and evidence preparation. Also contributed to temporary Planning Policy Manager.	Interim support as needed	Team restructure necessary and post to be redesignated	Responsibilities fall to other team members	Increased workload for existing team members.	Existing team manages work priorities with adjustments to other priorities
Customer Service Assistant	37		Post holder obtained new position at CCDC	Casual role	Team restructure necessary,	Reduced support to Development Management Team and Enforcement.	Increased workload for existing team members. External validation may not be cost effective in future.	External Company procured via framework to provide validation support to 25/26.  May need to continue this arrangement
<b>TOTAL VACANT POSTS</b>	<b>4</b>							
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>								
<b>Housing Assistance, Health &amp; Leisure</b>								
Senior Housing Officer (Adaptations and Assistance) - Cannock	37	Jun-25	The officer has got another job elsewhere	The team will have to report directly to the Service Manager until an officer has been appointed	The JD and PS is to be reviewed to ensure it is fully focussed on delivering the DFG service and therefore eligible to be funded through the DFG grant.		This putting additional pressure on the Service Manager until a person is in post and trained to do the role.  This comes at a time when the Service Manager is already at full capacity.	

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
<b>Strategic Housing &amp; Homelessness</b>								
Lead Officer Housing Options	37	Mar-23	Postholder left, permanent replacement is on maternity leave	Agency support has been in place from March 2023 until 16.05.25		Current agency support has not been effective and from previous experience there aren't good interim candidates out there to take the role.	The service is not performing as it should.	The permanent officer is back part time and will resume full time from January 2026.  In the meantime the two senior officers are taking on some of the duties of the lead officer and the service manager is covering the rest. It means neither team is performing as well as it could.
<b>TOTAL VACANT POSTS</b>	<b>2</b>							
<b>CORPORATE ASSETS</b>								
Corporate Asset Manager (shared)	37	Jun 24 and Nov 24	Retirement and Resignation	Shared Interim Manager Appointed (13.05.2025). The Deputy Corporate Asset Manager (SBC) was also undertaking additional responsibilities. The Deputy Corporate Asset Manager at SBC is currently Managing the Caretakers and Cleaners at CCDC.	Post initially advertised - no suitable applicants. Post readvertised May 2025 but no suitable candidates. Appointed Recruitment Agency in July 2025 to source suitable candidates – one interview in September 2025. Candidate not suitable for the role.  Post re-advertised October 2025 – closing date 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2025.  If not successful will have to consider re-advertising the post with a market supplement.	Regeneration - Management of units and leases, including additional recent acquisitions. This has generated significant additional work for the Corporate Asset Teams. Transfer of Caretakers / Cleaners into Corporate Assets Team (December 2024) - no additional resources allocated to manage this additional workload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asset Management Reviews on hold.</li> <li>Invoices not being raised for tenants.</li> <li>Reactive Response - Property Dilapidations (leased &amp; council owned buildings) Dilapidations Claims</li> <li>Stock Condition Surveys - Analysis of Findings and recommendations; development programme of works - disposals</li> <li>Asset Management Strategy not being progressed.</li> <li>Oversee Compliance - no 2nd party checks.</li> <li>Audit Recommendations delayed.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Corporate Assets covering some elements. Interim Corporate Asset Manager started on 13th May through recruitment agency but this is only affordable to January 2026.  Agency Building Surveyor appointed to undertake building condition surveys - this work was completed in July 2025.  Additional £100k funding allocated to support delivery of compliance work including Lease & Asset Reviews
Principal Estates Surveyor	37	May-25	Retirement	Interim Principal Estates Surveyor appointed via Agency started 01.09.2025	Post advertised twice, no applications received.  Appointed Recruitment Agency to source suitable candidate	Unable to fill specialist role	All duties undertaken by this role have been put on hold.	Some duties have been picked up by the Interim Corporate Asset Manager and Head of Service.  October 2025 – role offered to a candidate sourced via the Recruitment Agency.
<b>TOTAL VACANT POSTS</b>	<b>2</b>							

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
<b>OPERATIONS</b>								
<b>Streetscene</b>								
Cleansing Operative	37	Mar-25	Post holder finished on medical incapacity	Role has been covered by agency / other colleagues for some time due to length of sickness absence.	Market availability	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs and programmed work delays in cleansing operations	Recruitment process
Channel Sweeper Driver	37	Mar-22	Post holder retired	Have trained up and are successfully using a cleansing operative to cover	Looking at the possibility of restructuring workload / post as part of shared services	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs and programmed work delays in cleansing operations	Recruitment process
Cleansing Team Leader	37	Mar-25	Post holder finished on medical incapacity	Role has been covered by agency / other colleagues for some time due to length of absence.	Looking at the possibility of restructuring workload / post as part of shared services	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs and programmed work delays in cleansing operations	Awaiting restructure
Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer	37	Jan-21	Post holder passed away	Work distributed around existing Parks and Open Spaces Team	Several attempts have been made to recruit into the post including the restructuring of the role since it became vacant.  Finally, it was decided that the role would be restructured as part of the operations shared service programme.	Vacant post / failure to successfully recruit suitable applicant into the post	Reduced works outputs around parks and open spaces management and supervision. Significant impact upon the former Parks and Open Spaces team and its supervision of operatives.  Management and supervisors have suffered from capacity issues at times which has impacted upon performance	Awaiting restructure
<b>Waste &amp; Commercial Services</b>								
Waste & Recycling Officer	37	Feb-25	Post holder left the organisation	Part-time casual appointment - remaining work temporarily distributed around other officers	Waiting on an opportunity to restructure Operations under the shared services.	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs across waste and recycling. Work having to be picked up by other officers in turn impacting upon their work areas.	Recruitment process
Vehicle Mechanic	37		Post holder left the organisation	Agency cover	Skilled employee availability / employee required to be qualified as an DVSA MOT inspector.	Vacant Post	Reduced work outputs and income for the vehicle workshop.  Limits ability to carry out internal vehicle repair, servicing, and public MOT functions.	Recruitment process

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
<b>Natural Environment</b>								
Tree Officer - Community Trees and Tree Team	37	May-24	Post holder left to future his own business	Managed by the Parks Team Leader on an interim basis since June 24 until Sept 25. Currently covered by consultant tree officers – two to three days per week	Skilled employee market / availability. Delayed restructure Operations under the shared services.	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs around tree related matters and tree preservation orders (TPO's) / Work not always being undertaken in the most efficient manner.	Awaiting restructure
Tree Officer - Community Trees and TPO's	37	Nov-25	Post holder left organisation for another authority	Working being covered by consultant tree officers. TPO's applications only.	Skilled employee market / availability.	Vacant post	Reduced work outputs around tree related matters and tree preservation orders (TPO's) / Work not always being undertaken in the most efficient manner.	Recruitment process
<b>TOTAL VACANT POSTS</b>	<b>8</b>							
<b>REGULATORY SERVICES</b>								
<b>Building Control</b>								
Principal Building Control Surveyor (PBCS)	37	Apr-24	The incumbent left for a job with the LABC	The manager has been covering the work alongside the other PBCS. In the last few months, a consultant has been brought into support.	Recruitment and retention is challenging for BC nationally- for a number of reasons. 1) New BC regime has come into force from 1/4/24 requiring all BCS to be validated and registered with the Building Safety Regulator. 2) BC is a deregulated profession, salaries in the private sector for similar jobs are approx 1/3 higher. 3) There is a national shortage of BCS- over 50% are age 50 of over.	Post has been advertised x2 with no successful outcomes. Market supplement applied. Advertised x2 and no suitable candidates. Agency engaged to assist but zero candidates	Additional pressure on the team, the service manager and other PBCS	Covered by staff within team with other PBCS doing O/T and the Manager. P/T consultant from Apr to Sept partially helped but no further budget for this.
Senior Building Control Surveyor	37	May-25	Incumbent retired	Other officers covering case load including service manager	As above	Post advertised x2 with zero applicants. Agency engaged to assist but no suitable candidates	Delays in service delivery and additional pressure on remaining team members, PBCS and Service Manager	Contractor engaged to assist but this is very expensive.
Principal Climate Action Officer	37	New post	New post	Covered by HoS- with support from others	Recruitment successful new post holder in post from Jan 2026			Currently being covered by HoS until Jan 2026
Land Charges & Street Naming Team Leader	22.5	Revised post to replace Support Services Team Leader		External Consultant is covering some for this role- manager covering the rest.	JD Agreed. Awaiting Final approval from Finance			



VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
<b>Environmental Health</b>								
Environmental Health Officer (Housing)	37	May 25	Incumbent left post.	Currently team is being supported with consultant cover since November 2025.	Attempt has been made to recruit without success and we will be repeating.			As per interim arrangement.
Environmental Protection Officer	37	Oct 25	Incumbent left post	Work is being covered by rest of the team	We are interviewing for the post 25/26 Nov.	The previous post holder covered certain areas of EP work that the rest of the team lack competency to currently fully undertake. These include detailed contaminated land requests and air quality work.	There is a risk of inadequate response to a request for information or planning consultation	Currently these requests are few, with other areas covered by the team. Where appropriate, external advice is sought
Apprentice EHO	37	Sep 25	Incumbent took EHO post at SBC	None	Lack of senior /Principal EHOs in post to support development	The role requires support from the officer cohort to provide mentorship, advice and guidance as well as direct work activities to support the team and development. Until those supporting posts are filled, this role is not able to be advertised.	Recruitment of EHOs is difficult, and it is felt that training our own staff and developing students is a sound course of action, but can only take place with day to day management support.	There is a plan to recruit Principal EHOs to cover the four key areas of service delivery and from that will allow advertisement into this role.
Senior EHO (Env. Protection)	37		Incumbent left post	Post has been left empty, with some supporting duties carried out by Senior EHO for Housing Standards.	Post is being deleted to allow for shared Principal EHO roles across CCDC and SBC to be created. There have been delays in creating these replacement posts; aim to recruit in the new year.			
Senior EHO / Housing Officer	37	July 25	Incumbent left post	Post empty, pending confirmation of new structure prior to determining capacity and nature of role required.	Likely significant competition for such posts going forward given the increasing emphasis on private rented sector housing compliance and enforcement.	Decision on role has been subject to confirmation of, and recruitment to, revised management structure within Environmental Health.		There is a plan to recruit Principal EHOs to cover the four key areas of service delivery and from that will allow review of this role.
Senior EHO (Food & Safety)	37	Mar 24	Incumbent left post	Post empty, pending confirmation of new structure prior to determining capacity and nature of role required.	Post is being deleted to allow for shared Principal EHO roles across CCDC and SBC to be created. There have been delays in creating these replacement posts; aim to recruit in the new year.	Delay in confirming new structure and available funding.	Service Manager and more experienced officers are currently overseeing team and dealing with operational queries etc.	There is a plan to recruit Principal EHOs to cover the four key areas of service delivery and from that will allow advertisement into this role.
Licensing Officer	37	Oct 24	Incumbent commenced acting up to Senior Licensing Officer (SLO) position	SLO role has been permanently recruited to. Agency support has been used on a temporary interim basis.	SLO role is potentially subject to change during the forthcoming consultation exercise within EH;	Delay in confirming new structure and available funding has meant present incumbent of Senior role had had to manage significant additional workload, supported by effective triaging by support team.	Significant additional work pressure on incumbent and likely fall in customer response / satisfaction.	New Principal role will be recruited to shortly, which will then allow review of supporting structure / roles.
<b>TOTAL VACANT POSTS</b>	<b>11</b>							



VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
RESOURCES								
Finance								
Senior Finance Business Partner x 2 posts	37	The 2 posts that these have replaced have been vacant for 12+ months (Sept 23 and Apr 24)	New posts - part of agreed £300k investment in Finance team structure to support capacity issues within service	1 x agency member of staff covering 3 days per week since November 2024	<p>There was a delay in recruiting due to a restructure and lack of capacity to push ahead with the recruitment. Roles advertised September 2024. 2 applications received. All candidates unsuitable for interview.</p> <p>Market suggests that salary of post is insufficient to attract calibre of candidate required</p>	<p>The Finance Team has been struggling with capacity issues for the last 2+ years.</p> <p>This is due to a combination of vacancies, difficulties experienced in recruiting experienced staff and an increase in workload as a consequence of new projects being taken on by front line services.</p>	<p>There is significant pressure on the Deputy s151 Officer due to the problems in recruiting to the 2 key senior roles that should support her in managing the team and delivering the service.</p> <p>In addition, there has been a significant increase in the number of projects being delivered across the Council which require input from the Finance Team.</p> <p>At the same time operational matters such as restructures, service changes, new contracts, commenting on committee reports all require support from the Finance Team.</p>	<p>The Deputy s151 Officer consistently works in excess of her contracted hours.</p> <p>Some support has been brought in to assist specifically with the closure of the accounts. 2 additional senior temps have also been brought in to assist with specific pieces of work</p>
Finance Business Partner - Capital, Projects & Assets	37	Not yet advertised	New post - part of agreed £300k investment in Finance team structure to support capacity issues within service	None	Have recruited to 2 management accountants at this level. Once these post holders are settled in post, will look at recruitment for this 3rd role at the H grade.			
AAT Trainee x 2 posts	37	Not yet advertised	New posts - part of agreed £300k investment in Finance team structure to support capacity issues within service	None	No capacity to support the appointment and development of trainees until the Senior Finance Business Partner posts have been filled.			
Revenues & Benefits								
Benefits Visiting Officer	37	New post	Post created by merging part time vacancies	N/A	None - post to be advertised shortly.			
Benefits Officer	37		Post holder transferred to another Benefits Team	N/A	None - post to be advertised shortly.			
Benefits Officer	37	Dec 24	Post holder resigned	N/A	None - post to be advertised shortly.			
TOTAL VACANT POSTS	7							

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
LAW & GOVERNANCE								
Legal Services								
Principal Solicitor (Planning)	37	Aug 22	Retirement of previous post holder	Part time locum in place	Role advertised unsuccessfully on multiple occasions.	The legal services team has been struggling with capacity issues for the last 2+ years. This is due to a combination of vacancies. Difficulties experienced in recruiting experienced staff and an increase in workloads as a consequence of new projects being taken on by front line services.	Increased legal costs (agency staff and outsourced work). In-house staff carry a heavy personal workload. Waiting times for some work areas (e.g. contracts).	Prioritisation of work. Vacancies being covered partially by locums and increase in outsourcing of legal work.
Planning Lawyer	37	Nov 19	Resignation of previous post holder	Part time locum in place	Role advertised unsuccessfully on multiple occasions.			
Paralegal	37	Sept 22	Resignation of previous post holder	N/A	Recruitment to junior posts suspended until sufficient senior posts filled and budget freed up from locum spend.			
Senior Legal Officer	37	Jun 23	Resignation of previous post holder	N/A	Recruitment to junior posts suspended until sufficient senior posts filled and budget freed up from locum spend.			
Democratic Services								
Electoral Services Assistant (CCDC)	22.5		Recruitment on hold pending shared service transformation and consideration of the impact of a reduction at service manager level as part of shared services	Interim senior support brought in for elections	Recent market testing has shown an absence, or limited number, of candidates with senior electoral services experience (experience that is particular to local government and therefore candidates would need to be attracted from other councils).	Whilst the shared service manager is able to oversee the electoral registration service and planning for elections, there is a need for more senior expertise and capacity on site to support the delivery of elections	Overall there is less resilience in the elections service	Consultant support has been engaged in recent elections. Further recruitment needs are being assessed. Interim arrangements are in place to develop internal supervisory capacity. These arrangements will be monitored and reviewed further, particularly in light of the potential impact of LGR on permanent recruitment options.
TOTAL VACANT POSTS	5							
TRANSFORMATION & ASSURANCE								
Corporate Business Support Officer	37	Apr-23	Post was being held vacant pending start of transformation work. In light of LGR, this has been revisited and post is to be used to provide support with risk management, procurement and performance management.	Work has been covered by the Head of Service	None - new job description drafted and is being evaluated	Post has been held vacant pending start of transformation work, with work being covered by the Head of Service	Delays in clearing reports from managers and behind schedule in delivering some actions from the Governance Improvement Plan	Priorities are kept under regular review with time sensitive ones prioritised

VACANCIES						CAPACITY / WORKLOAD ISSUES		
Post Title	Hours/ week	Vacant from	Reason for vacancy	Interim arrangements	Explanation of barriers to recruitment	Cause of capacity issue	Consequences	How this is being managed
Human Resources								
HR Services Manager	37	Aug-23	Post vacant since post holder began covering the HR & Payroll Manager post which was unoccupied due to the previous post holder being absent due to sickness from May 2023	Cover provided internally between interim HR & Payroll Manager and one of two Senior HR Advisers	Restructure of service undertaken. In the interim period a further agency resource has been sourced to assist in covering the operational work within the service	Former HR & Payroll Manager left the authority in May 2024 with the Interim Manager appointed permanently following selection from September 2024.  Capacity issues arising from the vacancies themselves along with increased workload have further delayed restructuring of the HR team.	The HR team has continued to deliver all day-to-day employee relations support as needed to Managers and employees and supported larger scale projects as required.  However, some service related changes and improvements have been delayed during this period.	2 interim Senior Advisers in place providing day to day support on case work, Restructure completed.  2 new Principal Officer posts have been offered following recent interviews
HR Services Manager	29.6	Aug-23	Post vacant from August 23 - post holder resigned.	As above	As above	As above	As above	As above
Senior HR Adviser	37	Sep-24	Post unoccupied since September 24 due to the absence of previous post holder followed by resignation from February 25	Interim agency cover in place from November 24	As above - restructure pending	As above	As above	As above
Internal Audit & Risk								
Senior Auditor	37	July 25	Post holder resigned	Some audits have been contracted out to an external firm	Have had difficulty previously in recruiting to internal audit posts.			
Technology								
Technician	37	Nov 25	Post holder has successfully interviewed for an internal position	N/A	None – Post to be advertised shortly			
TOTAL VACANT POSTS	6							

## Extract from Strategic Risk Register - Capacity Risk

<b>Risk Ref</b>	2025-06
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Risk Name</b>	Corporate capacity is insufficient to maintain provision of core services and deliver major projects
<b>Risk Description</b>	The inability to recruit and retain staff particularly in statutory and other core areas threatens service delivery across the Council. This risk is exacerbated by other factors such as the number of high priority projects, large procurement exercises, demand for new software, competing priorities and Local Government Reorganisation.
<b>Consequences</b>	Projects are delayed or not implemented Operational services are delivered to a lower standard, backlogs arise or service not delivered at all Complaints / damage to reputation Wellbeing of staff who are under pressure to deliver
<b>Corporate Objective CCDC</b>	Responsible Council
<b>Main Risk Category</b>	Capacity / Service Delivery

<b>Inherent Impact</b>	<b>Inherent Likelihood</b>	<b>Inherent Risk Score</b>
4	4	16
<b>Residual Impact</b>	<b>Residual Likelihood</b>	<b>Residual Risk Score</b>
4	3	12
<b>Target Score</b>		12
<b>Comment on Target Score:</b> Due to the limited market in key professions such as Finance, Legal, Planning etc, the uncertainty created by Local Government Reorganisation and the volume of major projects in progress, it is considered that the residual risk score cannot be reduced further and actions planned are focussed on maintaining the current position.		

<b>Controls</b>	<b>Assurances</b>
Corporate Plan sets out priorities and key projects	Performance reporting
Use of agency staff and contractors to cover posts which are difficult to recruit to	
Market supplements to enhance salary to attract candidates	
Management of absences	Oversight by HR

**Actions**

<b>Actions Planned</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Progress/Comments</b>
Assessment of capacity, pinch points and reductions in workload consequentially	Leadership Team	Quarter 3 2025/26 (Revised from Q1 Sept 2025)	Assessment of current vacancies completed. Review of work plans / major projects has commenced but is expected to be completed until Q3.
Management of expectations / discussion with Cabinet	Chief Executive / Leadership Team	Quarter 2 2025/26 and ongoing	Discussion has been delayed as the review of major projects has not been completed.

**Progress Updates**

Current Position	<p>Whilst work has started to assess capacity and workload issues, this has not yet been completed. It is now estimated that will be done in Q3.</p> <p>As flagged previously, the focus is on managing capacity within the current resources and maintaining the current position so that this does not deteriorate.</p>
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