REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY – STAFFORD HOSPITAL JOINT ACCOUNTABILITY SESSIONS – ADDITIONAL NOMINEES

1.0 Summary of Report

1.1 This report sets out the suggested appointment of two further Council nominated representatives to the Staffordshire Hospital Joint Accountability Sessions.

2.0 Recommendation to Council

2.1 That Council nominates two members of the Health Scrutiny Panel, who each represent a ward covered by Stafford Hospital, to attend the Stafford Hospital Joint Accountability Sessions alongside the two members of the Staffordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee from South Staffordshire Council (currently Councillor Mrs. J.A. Johnson and County Councillor Mrs. K.M. Perry) and Councillor Mrs. I.G.A. Ford.

3.0 Background Information

3.1 Staffordshire County Council has established Joint Accountability Sessions to hold to account the Chief Executive of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust regarding performance improvement and patient care at Stafford Hospital.

3.2 At the August meeting of Staffordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee consideration was given to the introduction of additional single item meetings called Health Accountability Sessions, at which the Chief Executives of NHS Trusts in Staffordshire would be invited to attend to give a self-assessment of their performance and Health Scrutiny Committee members would have the opportunity to challenge each Trust’s assessment and raise issues of concern. The intention was to give priority to holding Mid Staffordshire NHSFT to account given ongoing public concerns.

3.3 Mindful of the arrangements in place for District/Borough Council involvement in health scrutiny, the County Council required the need for health scrutiny committees to work together to minimise duplication and overlap of health trusts being called to several health scrutiny committees to give similar explanations with differing degrees of challenge. A code of joint working between local authorities (which has been adopted by South Staffordshire Council explains these arrangements).

3.4 Following discussion the Leaders of Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council and the Chairmen of the two Health Scrutiny Committees it is proposed that a joint mechanism be developed to permit effective scrutiny of performance improvement at Stafford Hospital. The intention being to bring together evidence provided by the Trust and intelligence from members from across the health scrutiny committees most closely responsible for the scrutiny of Stafford Hospital. This is to provide a single mechanism for representatives of the Trust to attend to account for their performance.

3.5 The purpose of the Joint Accountability Sessions is to hold to account the Chief Executive of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust for the delivery of improvements in patient care and performance at Stafford Hospital.
meetings could also be used to question the local authorities’ representatives on the Trusts’ governing bodies about their role and influence in respect of performance improvement of the Trust. These sessions will be held in public and potentially could be webcast. They will be based around agreed priorities for the hospital and will consider current performance information and patient feedback.

3.6 To aid the scrutiny investigation the Trust will be asked to provide a self assessment, setting out performance against key objectives. They will be asked to evidence this with relevant performance and financial information. This will be provided to Members prior to the meeting to enable them to develop their own lines of enquiry and areas for detailed investigation.

3.7 In addition a wider range of performance information will be presented to Members as well as Members having the opportunity to bring forward trends in concerns raised with them, and corresponding evidence to support this.

3.8 The meetings, which will be co-ordinated by Staffordshire County Council, will be special single item agendas. The sessions will take place 4-5 times a year and will take place in the evening. Meetings will take place at the Council Chamber at County Buildings purely on the basis that it has the capacity to accommodate the number of Members and the public that may attend. The chairmanship of the meetings will be rotated between the local authorities, with each Chairman chairing a maximum of 4 meetings in succession. The ongoing role and impact of the joint meetings should be reviewed periodically.

3.9 Council, at its meeting on 14th December, 2010 nominated Councillor Mrs.I.G.A.Ford to attend the accountability sessions (alongside Councillors Mrs. K.M.Perry and Mrs.J.A.Johnson who were nominated by SCC as Members of that Council’s Heath Scrutiny Committee). The County Council has now invited this Council to nominate two further Members to attend the sessions.

3.10 As previously, Membership is being sought from those sitting on the respective Health Scrutiny Committees and must not include Executive Members.

3.12 The South Staffordshire Health Scrutiny Panel currently comprises, Mrs. M. Bond, Mrs.J.M.Burton MBE, D.J.Clifft, B.J.W.Cox, Mrs.P.A.Griffin, M.R.Hampson, Mrs.B.Heath, Mrs.S.M.Oatley, R.Perry, Mrs.E.D.Ray, Mrs.K.A.Williams; in addition to the Members already participating in the Accountability Sessions Councillors Mrs.I.G.A. Ford, Mrs.J.A.Johnson and Mrs.K.M.Perry.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The alternative option for this Council not to be represented on this body is not considered to be in the best interests of the Council.

5.0 Reasons for Decision

5.1 To comply with the request from Staffordshire County Council for the nomination of a representative from this Council as Council with residents attending Stafford Hospital for treatment.

6.0 Links to Corporate Aims and Objectives

6.1 This proposed decision supports and furthers the aims and objectives of the Council’s Corporate Strategy, primarily Aim 5 – To be a well managed Council and Community Leader.
7.0 Scrutiny Powers

7.1 Not applicable – decision to be made by Council.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this decision.

9.0 Legal Powers for Proposed Action


10.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

10.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, places a duty on a local authority to consider crime and disorder implications and to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.

10.2 Unless otherwise stated below this proposed decision is not considered to have any adverse impact for the purposes of the Crime and Disorder Act and all matters have been considered in relation thereto.

11.0 Equal Opportunities/Diversity Implications

11.1 Unless otherwise stated below this proposed decision is not considered to have any adverse implications to and is considered to comply with the Council’s equal opportunities/diversity policies.

12.0 Sustainability Issues

12.1 South Staffordshire Council is committed to the principles of sustainability. Tackling climate change is a strategic priority and protection and enhancement of the local environment is at the heart of the Council’s vision for local communities. As such, the Council is committed to:

- Use resources efficiently.
- Minimise pollution and waste.
- Protect and enhance the local natural and built environments.
- Provide services which meet current local needs whilst ensuring the local environment is protected for future generations.
- Lead by example and consider the environmental impact of its decisions.

12.2 Unless otherwise stated below, this proposed decision is not considered to result in any significant adverse impact on sustainability or substantially contribute to the causes of climate change.

13.0 Health and Wellbeing Issues

13.1 Representation on the Joint Accountability Sessions may have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those in need of treatment by Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust.
14.0 **Risk Assessment**

14.1 There are no significant risk management/assessment implications arising from this proposed decision.

15.0 **Consultation Undertaken**

15.1 The Executive was consulted on this proposal at its meeting on 7th December, 2010.

15.2 This report was considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 8th March, 2011, when the recommendation at Paragraph 2 was supported.

16.0 **Category of Exempt Information (where applicable)**

16.1 This matter is not exempt information for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act, 1972.

17.0 **Background Documents (Schedule)**

17.1 None.

18.0 **Policy/Budgetary Compliance**

18.1 This proposed decision complies with and, indeed, supports the Council’s overall policies and corporate aims and objectives and does not give rise to any change in policy relevant to this service area or new expenditure not falling within the approved budget.

19.0 **Key Decision Information**

19.1 This is not a key decision as it does not involve expenditure or savings in excess of £300,000 nor is it significant in its effects on two or more wards or electoral divisions within the Council’s area and has not therefore been included in the Forward Plan.

20.0 **Conflicts of Interest Declared (if any)**

20.1 None declared.

21.0 **Dispensations granted by the Standards Committee (if any)**

21.1 None granted.

22.0 **Appendices**

22.1 None.

Councillor B. R. Edwards  
Leader of the Council