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# Mayor bailed in corruption probe

**Stoke-on-Trent's elected mayor has been arrested in connection with an investigation into alleged corruption.**



Mark Meredith was arrested by police on Friday morning

Final months in power for mayor

Labour's Mark Meredith, 43, was arrested on suspicion of misconduct in a public office and complicity in corruption while in public office.

He was later released on bail to a date in June after being questioned.

It follows the arrest on 27 February of Stoke city councillor Roger Ibbs on suspicion of corruption in public office. He stood down on Monday.

Mr Ibbs had been the group leader of the Conservative and Independent Alliance on the council.

Mr Ibbs, who had also been the council's portfolio holder for education, said his arrest followed a complaint he made to the council.

In a statement, Staffordshire Police said its investigation was launched after the city council referred a matter to officers in December following an internal inquiry.

**“ The decision making of the council continues... and we will continue to deliver services for the people of Stoke-on-Trent ”**

Chris Harman, acting chief executive of Stoke-on-Trent City Council

The police probe is thought to be focusing on council proposals for a leisure centre which led to the authority carrying out a review after the plans were scrapped.

Officers said there had been a need to ask a second man to help them with their inquiries.

They earlier confirmed a man in his 40s was arrested being questioned.

Mark Meredith has been in the post of elected mayor since May 2005.

He was due to travel to Cannes in France next week to attend a regeneration conference on behalf of the council.

A West Midlands Labour Party spokesman said: "It would be inappropriate to comment on an ongoing police investigation; however, we always expect all Labour Party representatives and members to co-operate fully with the police."

In October, voters opted to get rid of the post of elected mayor in Stoke-on-Trent and Mr Meredith is due to stand down in June.

**'Not good news'**

The council is currently in the process of appointing a new chief executive.

Mark Fisher, Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central told BBC News that the arrests were "not good news for the city" but the interim chief executive would be able to "pick up the reigns" of the council.

Stoke-on-Trent South Labour MP Rob Ffello declined to comment on the police inquiry.

Chris Harman, acting chief executive, said he wanted to reassure people that its services would be unaffected.



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"The main message that I would like to get out is that it's business as usual," he said.


"The decision making of the council continues... and we will continue to deliver services for the people of Stoke-on-Trent."

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