

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 26th November, 2014

Present:- The Mayor, Councillor Mrs Linda Hailstones – in the Chair

Councillors Miss Walklate, Mrs Heames, Welsh, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Burnett, Cooper, Becket, Mrs Beech, Matthews, Wemyss, Wilkes, Mrs Williams, Williams, Fear, Hailstones, Eagles, Kearon, Taylor.J, Waring, Loades, Holland, Bailey, Miss Cooper, Jones, Miss Reddish, Robinson, Mrs Shenton, Mrs Heesom, Sweeney, Tagg, Mrs Bates, White, Miss Mancey, Mrs Burgess, Eastwood, Baker, Mrs Peers, Plant, Stringer, Stubbs, Turner, Mrs Winfield, Rout, J Tagg, Harper, Huckfield, Naylor, Northcott, Owen, Mrs Braithwaite, Wallace and Woolley

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Hambleton, Cllr Hambleton, Cllr Proctor and Cllr Mrs Simpson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that the recent funfair and fireworks display held in the Lyme valley had raised £1550 and a country and Western evening held at Wye Road Community Centre had also raised £1550. The Mayor thanked the management committee at the centre for their support.

5. LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

A report was submitted requesting Council to approve a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the borough area for the financial year 2015/16.

The Welfare Reform agenda replaced Council Tax Benefit with Localised Council Tax Reduction with effect from 1 April 2013. Localised schemes needed to be approved by the 31 January before the start of the new financial year to which the scheme applies.

Resolved: That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed in the report be adopted for the financial year 2015/16.

6. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

A report was submitted to report on the review of polling districts and polling places that has been carried out.

Resolved:

- (a) That the changes to the Thistleberry polling districts I0001 and I0005, as outlined in the report, be approved.
- (b) That the existing polling districts be confirmed as per the maps provided during the consultation exercise.
- (c) That Council refer the recommendations relating to polling stations to the Returning Officer for consideration.

7. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader opened his report by expressing his sadness over the death of former Cllr George Cairns which was echoed by all members present.

A question was raised regarding progress with the Newcastle BID process and it was confirmed that the paperwork was currently being processed and a consultant had been appointed. It was anticipated that the BID ballot would be held in June 2015.

Members also requested that a written update on progress with the Ryecroft be provided. The Leader stated that a report would be going to a meeting of the Cabinet in two weeks regarding this.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

8. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Verbal and written updates were received from the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

9. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Verbal and written updates were received from the Chairs of the regulatory committees.

10. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The following questions and responses were discussed:

Question 1

Submitted by Cllr Kearon:

Do you share the concerns of residents of my ward and residents from elsewhere in the borough about the downgrading of many local Post Offices? Can residents facing the downgrading of their much valued local Post Office depend on the support of this council in their fight against downgrading, and can I ask that the you work with residents and our MP to apply pressure directly on the management of Post Office Ltd in London?

The Leader responded that Post Offices were important in pulling the Borough together and that he supported residents in fighting to retain their post offices as they were now.

Question 2

Submitted by Cllr Sweeney

RMW pulled out of the negotiations to run Keele Golf Course in Christmas 2013. Apart from a plan for a proposed masterplan what has the council done to find a long term use for the site?

The Portfolio Holder for safer Communities states that the matter had been discussed in Cabinet meetings and that the process was on-going and would involve the public. It was also understood that a community led plan was in due to be submitted.

Question3

Submitted by Cllr Sweeney

We understand the delay in the community centre cabinet panel completing its findings but can the portfolio holder still confirm that no community centres will close?

The Leader confirmed that the programme of repairs was continuing and that the Council was committed to working with each community centre to ensure that local demand was met. It was however made clear that this process would be kept under review and that a report would be submitted to December Cabinet.

Question 4

Submitted by Cllr Sweeney

Does the leader agree that the eight months to negotiate the agreement with the unions over overtime has resulted in a significant impact on the Council's budget?

The Leader was did not agree that the time to negotiate the agreement with the unions over overtime had resulted in a significant impact on the Council's budget.

Cllr Sweeney asked a supplementary question and stated that there must have been an impact as £100,000 savings had been budgeted for. The Leader confirmed that the majority of these savings had been met.

Question 5

Submitted by Cllr David Loades

Does the Portfolio holder agree that it is taking advantage of the Councils failure to supply a 5 year housing plan by applying for outline planning permission on sites out of the Village envelope?

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Assets stated that a report had been to Cabinet in October in relation to the Council having to fund the capital programme through land sale receipts and sites had been identified that met the criteria in the Core Spatial Strategy which included low grade agricultural land.

Question 6

Submitted by Cllr David Loades

As the portfolio holder has now finished his call for sites for the implementation of the local plan, can he confirm that the seven sites removed for political gain by the

Labour party will now be reinstated as a disposable asset of this council as part of the plan?

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Assets stated that no, the sites had not been reinstated but would be assessed through the current call for sites consultation exercise that was still on-going.

11. MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

No motions had been submitted.

12. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by Cllr Mrs Naylor in relation to Horse Riders in Staffordshire.

13. STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MRS LINDA HAILSTONES
Chair