

CABINET

Wednesday, 18th March, 2020
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors S. Sweeney, T. Johnson, H. Maxfield and J Waring
Officers David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Simon McEneny and Daniel Dickinson

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor P Northcott.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February, 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

4. LEADER'S STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CV-19

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg stated that the Council's main aim was to continue service delivery.

Over the last week, officers and Members had been preparing for staff absences, responding to daily government advice, and focusing on service delivery and that the democratic decision making process continues, using technology. A Government announcement was expected to assist with that, in particular removing the need for the Annual Council meeting in May.

The Leader and Cabinet expressed their thanks to the Executive Management Team led by the Chief Executive to keep the Council in readiness to respond and to keep services functioning. The Council would play a key role in assisting businesses in line with announcements and government support.

This was a worrying time for everyone and the Leader added that the Council would do what it could to re-assure, co-ordinate and assist.

Councillor Helena Maxfield reiterated all that the Leader had said adding that the Council was doing a good job and that officers had the full support of Cabinet moving forward.

Councillor Trevor Johnson stated that the situation was being monitored at the depot in respect of waste recycling day by day to respond and keep on track.

Councillor Stephen Sweeney echoed all that had been said.

Councillor Jill Waring stated that she was confident that the Council were doing a great job in this difficult time.

5. CCTV POLICY

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the adoption of a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy for the Borough Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Maxfield stated that it reflected good practice and was good for the residents.

Councillor Sweeney added that it was good for the protection of the public and fully supported it as did Councillor Waring.

The Leader stated that the Policy covered all CCTV use, not just in the town centre but across the Borough. The Policy also ensured that our use of CCTV (including body cameras) was appropriate and that the public and staff were protected.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the proposed CCTV Policy for introduction and implementation in the Borough be approved.
 - (ii) That Responsible Owners (ROs) be tasked to review and refresh the Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) in place for existing Council CCTV schemes to ensure that they comply with the approved CCTV Policy approach.

6. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

A report was submitted to Cabinet presenting proposed changes to the current Housing Allocations Policy which would introduce a joint policy with Aspire Housing ensuring a single policy and application process for customers.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing introduced the report advising that this would align systems and the policy and application process.

It would ensure a more streamlined service for the most vulnerable and everyone would get the same information/treatment regardless of how the services are accessed.

Councillor Waring stated that one joint policy made perfect sense. One set of rules was better for the customer, Council & Aspire and would make a positive contribution to homelessness.

Councillor Sweeney endorsed all that had been said adding that this was an example of the great leaps that the Council makes in partnership with Aspire.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Joint Housing Allocations Policy be approved.
 - (ii) That it be delegated to the Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing authority to amend the Joint Housing Allocations Policy as required to ensure that it accurately

reflects the processes that will apply once a digital housing register is developed

7. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY REVIEW

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the adoption of a revised Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and Procedure for the Borough Council following amendments made.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing informed the Cabinet that the Policy was reviewed every two years as good practice and it reflected updates in terminology. The Policy now referred to community triggers and complaints not to be investigated as key updates.

Councillor Waring stated that the Council had a really dedicated Partnerships team and a really clear Policy and Procedure and that the department was acting diligently. The Council now had an up to date Policy.

Councillor Sweeney endorsed all that had been said adding that the Council had an excellent Partnerships team. The Policy would tackle dog fouling, litter and ASB which were key issues particularly for elderly and vulnerable residents.

The Leader and Councillor Johnson endorsed everything that had been said.

Resolved: That the revised proposed ASB Policy and accompanying Procedure for delivery in the Borough be approved.

8. AIR QUALITY - A53 BUS RETROFIT CONTRACT

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking the approval of the awarding of a contract for the retrofit of buses operated by First Potteries Ltd to bring them up to Euro 6 emission standards.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson advised that a lot of work had been carried out over the last 18 months and he was delighted to bring forward concrete action to address the air quality issue.

The Leader stated that this was the start of a number of actions that needed to be taken in response to the ministerial direction. Funding would be provided by a government grant. This was a good start on the air quality journey to address air quality issues, to try and avoid a clear air zone by introducing other measures. The Council was now waiting for the Government to provide further information on other elements of the scheme required to meet direction requirements.

Councillor Maxfield stated that this was strongly positive with air quality and climate change linked adding that this was an important step.

The Policy was endorsed by Councillor Sweeney as everyone in the Borough deserved to breathe clean air.

Resolved: That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, be authorised to enter into a contract with First Potteries Ltd to:-

- (i) Secure the retrofit of exhaust abatement technology to 25

buses and the replacement of hydraulic fan systems to 18 of these buses with electrically driven fan systems to ensure that buses operating on the A53 Etruria Road achieve compliance with Euro 6 emissions standards.

- (ii) Jointly promote the benefits of using the Euro 6 complaint buses to further reduce traffic related roadside N02 levels.

9. ADOPTION OF SCHEDULE 2 OF THE NOISE AND STATUTORY NUISANCE ACT, 1993

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking the adoption of Schedule 2 of the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993 to enable the Council to issue consents to permit the use of loud speakers in the street after 9pm.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling explained that to enable community, out-door events involving amplified sound or music to be played, the Council must adopt this Act. The Act would enable the Council to licence performances that would otherwise be prohibited.

The Leader advised that this was tied to town centre events, such as VE Day celebrations. The Council wanted to be able to support properly managed events and adopting this framework would enable that to happen.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That Schedule 2 of the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act, 1993 be adopted for application across the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
 - (ii) That it be delegated to the Executive Director of Operational Services, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Recycling, authority to amend the Council's policies to set out a framework against which applications for consent will be determined.

10. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE UPDATE

A report was submitted to Cabinet updating Members on the progress made regarding the re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.

The Leader advised that the Council had been working with the community group for over 18 months now to get the sports centre refurbished and opened to the public. Scoping works had been undertaken and a circa £5.6m cost had been identified. A facilities mix to be provided at centre had been agreed by the community group. Funding had largely been provided in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (£3.1m). This report was being taken to the community group meeting for consideration this evening. £362k demolition costs and the building had been gifted to the Council and confirmation was being sought from Sport England in respect of their £100,000 contribution.

In addition, the Leader was lobbying the Sports Minister for support and was due to attend a meeting in London. Officers were working hard to bring this forward. The Leader recommend that Cabinet accept the scope agreed by the community group; accept the current valuation of £5.6m and note the outside contributions due and those being sought. This report would be recommended to the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Refurbishment Cabinet Panel this evening.

Councillor Waring stated that hopefully the re-opening was one step nearer. This was important for Kidsgrove residents for the next 25 years.

Councillor Maxfield agreed with everything that had been said adding that the sports centre had been very much missed.

Councillor Sweeney stated that 25 years usage would give the return on tax payer's money adding that the sooner things got underway the better

Leader thanked the Executive Management Team, in particular the Executive Director of Commercial Development and Economic Growth and also the officers involved.

Resolved: That the work that has occurred to date since the last Cabinet meeting on this matter be noted and further endorse:

- (i) The scope of work that has been put forward by the Kidsgrove Community Interest Group in line with the expected 25 years life for the facility.
- (ii) The value of the target cost of £5.6m for the scheme that has been worked up with the building contractor, Willmott Dixon, and the Kidsgrove Community Interest Group.
- (iii) That an All-Party Cabinet panel will be convened on the 18th March, 2020 to consider and comment on the scope of works and the revised cost estimates.
- (iv) That further work is being undertaken to confirm the affordability and value for money offered by the scheme including consideration of whether the additional scheme costs can be accommodated within the 2020/21 capital programme through a combination of deferring or viring funding from other capital approved schemes. The local MP is also arranging a meeting with the Sports Minister to discuss additional funding that might be made available for the scheme.
- (v) That officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships will review all of the above with a view to making a recommendation for a contract award in a final decision report.

11. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS

A report was submitted to Cabinet to consider the writing off of debtor accounts which were deemed irrecoverable.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney explained that this was an annual report. It was not ideal to be writing off debts, but it was a necessary measure undertaken with a stringent, careful approach.

The Leader added that the Council was doing everything it could to ensure that the list does not grow on account of CV-19 impacts and this would be done in line with government advice and support, to help the people of Newcastle moving forward.

Resolved: That the items detailed at Confidential Appendix A be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and written off.

12. **FORWARD PLAN**

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Consideration was given to the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. The Plan was subject to review in light of the CV-19 situation but the Council would continue democratic decision making.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received.

13. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

14. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration if the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

15. **IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**

The contents of the confidential appendix referred to in item 10 of the agenda were considered in detail.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency clarified for Members the background behind some of the items listed. The Council was writing off less than it had anticipated in the budget provision made for irrecoverable items and was in an enviable position compared to very many Councils.

Resolved: That the information contained within the confidential appendix be

received.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.25 pm