

# Public Document Pack

**Date of meeting** Wednesday, 20th May, 2020  
**Time** 2.00 pm  
**Venue** Cabinet - Virtual Meeting - Conference  
**Contact** Geoff Durham



**NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Castle House  
Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Staffordshire  
ST5 1BL

## Cabinet

### AGENDA

#### PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

**1 APOLOGIES**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.

**3 MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)**

**4 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE AND RECOVERY PLANNING (Pages 11 - 18)**

**5 PRE-VALIDATION CHECKING SCHEME (Pages 19 - 26)**

**6 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER FOUR (Pages 27 - 46)**

**7 FORWARD PLAN (Pages 47 - 52)**

**8 URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**9 DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following reports, because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**10 ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS**

**Councillor attendance at Cabinet meetings:**

- (1) The Chair or spokesperson of the Council's scrutiny committees and the mover of any motion referred to Cabinet shall be entitled to attend any formal public meeting of Cabinet to speak.
- (2) Other persons including non-executive members of the Council may speak at such meetings with the permission of the Chair of the Cabinet.

**Public attendance at Cabinet meetings:**

- (1) If a member of the public wishes to ask a question(s) at a meeting of Cabinet, they should serve two clear days' notice in writing of any such question(s) to the appropriate committee officer.
- (2) The Council Leader as Chair of Cabinet is given the discretion to waive the above deadline and assess the permissibility if the question(s). The Chair's decision will be final.
- (3) The maximum limit is three public questions at any one Cabinet meeting.
- (4) A maximum limit of three minutes is provided for each person to ask an initial question or make an initial statement to the Cabinet.
- (5) Any questions deemed to be repetitious or vexatious will be disallowed at the discretion of the Chair.

**Members:** Councillors S Tagg (Chair), S. Sweeney (Vice-Chair), T. Johnson, H. Maxfield, P. Northcott and J Waring

## ONLINE COMMITTEE MEETING JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

The meeting of Cabinet will begin at 2pm on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

This meeting will be held virtually using Zoom.

### Watching the Meeting

You can attend the meeting in the following ways:

Web: <https://zoom.us/j/99643040515>

### Using the Zoom App

Telephone: 0330 088 5830 or 0131 460 1196

The Conference ID for telephone and Zoom App users is: 996-4304-0515

You do not require a password or pre-registration to access this committee meeting. Please note, as an attendee you will only be able to watch the meeting. You will not be able to vote, ask questions or discuss the materials presented to the committee.

### Questions and Representations

If you would like to ask a question or make a representation during the meeting, please inform our Committee Services team by emailing [geoff.durham@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:geoff.durham@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)  
All requests to ask questions or make representations should be submitted by mid day on

the day before the meeting.

In your email, please include details of the item you would like to speak on and, if you are asking a question, the question itself. If you cannot be identified to ask your question during the meeting, the meeting Chairperson will ask the question for you.

When joining the webinar using the App or Web link, please ensure that you enter your full name as your screen name, so that you can be identified during the meeting and asked to speak at the appropriate time.

If you will be joining the webinar by phone please ensure that you inform our Committee Services team of number you will be using and make sure that your Caller ID is not blocked – this will allow us to identify you during the meeting and facilitate you speaking to the committee.

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**CABINET**

Wednesday, 22nd April, 2020  
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

<b>Present:-</b>	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	S. Sweeney, T. Johnson, P. Northcott and J Waring
Officers	David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Geoff Durham, Simon McEneny and Daniel Dickinson
Apologies	Councillor(s) H. Maxfield

**Note:** In line with Government directions on staying at home during the current stage of the CV-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted by video conferencing in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Maxfield.

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 18 March, 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC UPDATE**

A report was submitted to Cabinet to inform Members of the actions being taken across the Council to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg stated that the Council had continued to provide services in the best way possible with many staff working from home.

Services at J2 and the Borough Museum had been suspended with relevant staff being redirected to other areas such as working in partnership to help the vulnerable within the community.

The homeless and rough sleepers had been taken off the streets and the Council would promptly react to others who became homeless.

The Waste and Recycling service was running almost as normal and there had been an increase in garden waste.

There had been a financial impact from the pandemic as there was no income from parking or J2.

The Leader thanked all staff at the Council for the part they were playing and stated that the Council was doing an amazing job providing key services. To residents

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney stated that the Council deserved credit for its handling of the £1.035m Hardship Fund received from the Government which would assist resident of the Borough with support for Council Tax. Any monies left over would help to support various extra groups.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 2.12 of the report which set out support offered to businesses.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Jill Waring stated that the Council was doing a fantastic job and thanked all staff for their loyalty and dedication.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott echoed everything that had been said and thanked staff. He was pleased that services had been maintained, particularly in respect of helping vulnerable people and the help offered to small businesses within the Borough.

Councillor Northcott added that the Planning team had been working as normal as possible with a virtual meeting held last week and stated that it was a great team effort.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson stated that the Waste and Recycling team had been nothing short of heroic during the pandemic. The tonnage of recycled waste was up by 20%. Most rounds were being operated by a driver plus one.

Bereavement Services have extended crematoria opening hours to include Saturday mornings.

The Leader reiterated everything that had been said and added that two local MP's had been lobbied in respect of money expected from the Government to help with the current crisis created by the pandemic.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted and that the work being undertaken to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic be endorsed.

## **5. BRAMPTON MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

A report was submitted to Cabinet to inform Members of the successful funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and to update Members on the Brampton Museum Redevelopment Project.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage advised Members that £248,700 had been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Funding had

also been received from other areas and a decision was awaited from the Landfill Communities Trust, which should be announced at the end of May, 2020.

A new member of staff had been appointed for a three year term whose task would be to produce an activity plan.

The Leader endorsed everything that had been said, adding that it was a great scheme to bring forward and would be an even greater asset to the Borough.

Councillor Sweeney endorsed everything that had been said and stated that it was a good example of where the Council was looking to continue with its projects during the current situation.

Councillor Northcott stated that this was excellent for the Borough.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund be accepted.
  - (ii) That the Executive Director for Commercial Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources and Support Services and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage be given delegated authority to approve the level of match funding required from the Council towards this project, once the outcome of further grant applications and final costs have been determined.

## **6. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE REFURBISHMENT**

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval of the development of the work package for full design and cost information prior to the awarding of a contract and the financing arrangements for the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.

The Leader advised Members that a lot of work had taken place since the previous Cabinet meeting and the Community Group had also been doing a lot of work. In addition, the SCAPE Framework was in place.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.4 of the report which identified the cost of the refurbishment at £5.6m. The Leader advised that £3.151m was already available.

Paragraph 8.1 of the report outlined the value for money offered when comparing refurbishment of the existing building against a total new rebuilt sports centre. Members' attention was also drawn to paragraph 8.2 which gave a funding summary.

Members were advised that within the last few days, a portacabin had arrived on site indicating that the project was moving forward.

Councillor Sweeney supported everything that had been said and totally endorsed the report.

Councillor Jill Waring agreed with the recommendations and stated that it was clear that the refurbishment option was the way forward and added that the reopening of the facility was important to the residents of Kidsgrove.

Councillor's Northcott and Johnson both welcomed the report and the Leader added that, once complete, it would be the jewel in Kidsgrove's Crown.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the development of the pre-contract work package for full design and cost information for the refurbishment and redevelopment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre and Swimming Pool, through the SCAPE Framework, in the sum of £479,500 be authorised.
  - (ii) That the Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Leader & Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree any reasonable variations to the pre-contract work package price required as a result of detailed and intrusive survey work being undertaken in April & May 2020
  - (iii) That it be noted that the cost of the project is now £5.6m of which £3.151m is currently included in the 2020/21 capital programme and that a supplementary capital estimate of up to £2.5m (and any necessary virements) be approved to cover the final all-inclusive capital cost of the project (based on the project appraisal).

## **7. FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan which listed upcoming key decisions to be made by the Cabinet.

**Resolved:** That the Forward Plan be received.

## **8. QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET**

A question to the Cabinet was submitted by Councillor Bert Proctor and concerned changes to Staffordshire Community First Responders.

Councillor Northcott thanked Councillor Proctor for his question and stated that he was shocked in the way that the changes had been announced as they had gone out in a newsletter rather than a public announcement.. This was a national problem and all areas had indicated that rural areas were most at risk.

The Community First Responders provide a critical role until the paramedics arrive and prompt arrival at the scene was essential. The removal of the blue light usage required more scrutiny.

Two of Newcastle's MP's had written to the ambulance service and Jonathan Gullis had received a reply which was distinctly unhelpful.

Councillor Northcott agreed that a letter needed to be sent to try and get the decision reversed. The letter should be sent to all MP's who represent the Borough and to Mr Nick Henry and Mr Anthony Marsh.



The Leader stated that he would write to the West Midlands Ambulance Service, the local MP's and the two gentlemen suggested by Councillor Northcott. The letter would ask that the decision to ban Community First Responder's use of blue lights and the carrying of certain vital drugs be reconsidered and reversed.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Leader of the Council write to and urge the West Midlands Ambulance service to reverse their decision to ensure that the residents within Rural communities can once again be served by an efficient and effective first responder service to supplement the Ambulance Service.
  - (ii) That the Leader of the Council write to all MP's who represent Newcastle-under-Lyme and to Mr Nick Henry and Anthony Marsh to ask them to make every effort to reverse the decision of the West Midlands Ambulance Service

**9. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

The Leader thanked all attendees and the Head of ICT and Digital Services, David Elkington for arranging the virtual meeting.

**COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.35 pm

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**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**20 May 2020**

**Report Title:**            **Coronavirus Pandemic Update & Recovery Planning**

**Submitted by:**       **Chief Executive**

**Portfolios:**           **All**

**Ward(s) affected:**   **All**

**Purpose of the Report**

To inform the Cabinet of the actions being taken across the Council to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for recovery.

**Recommendation**

- 1. It is recommended that Cabinet note this report and endorse the work being undertaken to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic and prepare for recovery.**

**Reasons**

To allow Cabinet to publicly consider the actions being undertaken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for recovery.

**1. Background**

1.1 The Coronavirus pandemic is the greatest single risk to the health and economic wellbeing of the country since the Second World War. In February 2020 the Council established an Incident Management Team to plan the Council's response, ensuring that support to local residents and businesses was provided, that Council services were maintained, and the welfare of officers and members protected. Informal Cabinet have been regularly briefed on the work being progressed, including a daily briefing with the Leader. The approach adopted is based on existing business contingency arrangements and has put the Council in a good position in terms of stepping up its response.

1.2 The Incident Management Team interfaces with a range of groups which have been set up countywide to co-ordinate the response to the pandemic, including the Strategic Coordinating Group, and working groups on mortality management and vulnerability.

1.3 Cabinet received a report at its April meeting which noted the work of the Incident Management Team. Since that work, the work to address the impact of the pandemic has continued, with emphasis steadily shifting to the recovery phase. The emphasis on recovery has intensified since the Government's announcement on 10<sup>th</sup> May of a plan to ease the lockdown.

**2. Issues**

2.1 This report addresses the current Council's response to the pandemic across five areas of work:

- Council Services
- Support for the most vulnerable
- Support for Businesses
- Impact on Council Finances
- Recovery Planning

### **Council Services**

2.2 Since the commencement of the lockdown, staff who have been able to effectively work from home have done so. The only staff not working from home are those whose role means that this is not practical, typically those involved in non-office roles such as waste management, streetscene. This has meant that services such as Planning, Economic Development, Customer Services, IT, etc have been able to carry on with minimal disruption. However, a number of services have been significantly impacted either due to the risk associated with continuing business as usual, the additional demands placed on the service, or due to Government guidance. The services experiencing the most significant change are:

- **J2** – Closed to public
- **Museum** – Closed to public
- **Castle House & Kidsgrove Customer Contact facilities** – closed to the public, with all services being provided online or by phone
- **Waste & Recycling Collection** – All waste streams are being collected, including Garden Waste. The collection schedule has been adjusted to make the best use of available resource, and to respect the guidance on social distancing. Service performance has been sustained despite a very significant increase in volumes of waste being presented.
- **Streetscene** – Service has been refocussed on priority areas to free up resource to support waste collection. The service has however increased its grounds maintenance activities over the last month, utilising practice which supports social distancing.
- **Bereavement** – Time allocated to each funeral service at the crematorium has been reduced from 40 minutes to 30 minutes to increase capacity, and the numbers able to attend funerals has been reduced to a maximum of 10.
- **Taxi Licencing** – the service is focusing on supporting existing drivers, with no new license applications currently being processed. Taxi testing has been suspended. Nevertheless, through holding remote licensing hearings and other measures in place there remains an appropriately licenced adequate taxi and hackney carriage fleet in operation.

2.3 In addition to the above, services which involve site visits (eg planning enforcement, environmental health) are continuing, but with risk assessments informing whether or not a particular site visit can be conducted.

2.4 Government guidance to facilitate the easing of the lockdown continues to encourage working from home wherever possible, but has provided specific guidance for employers to enable other work to recommence. Officers have prepared a suite of risk assessments based on this guidance to enable such work to commence. These risk assessments, which can be used as a core document refined to meet the needs of specific services, include:

- Visiting and enforcement staff – guiding activities which involve visits to homes or business premises and covers issues such as PPE, social distancing, pre-visit contact and advice, and cleansing;
- Undertaking outdoor working – Guiding activities such as streetscene and waste & recycling, and parking enforcement, and covers matters such as maintaining social distance between colleagues, the public and contractors, disciplines around sharing tools, PPE, and cleansing;
- Vehicle use – Guiding the use of vehicles for work, addressing issues such as avoiding mixing teams/vehicles; cleansing discipline, and social distancing;
- General Office Assessments – Guiding the arrangements which would need to be in place to enable office based working to be stepped up. This includes arrangements for cleansing, social distancing, etc. For each office building which is recommissioned, a certificate signed by the Chief Executive must be displayed, confirming that the premises are being managed in a way which is Covid Secure.

2.5 These risk assessments, prepared over the last week, are anticipated to enable some additional services to resume. Additional task-specific assessments will be completed by teams where their duties extend beyond those covered by the four above. Safe working practices will also be devised by each team to direct staff in safe methods of work. Services such as leisure and museums are not expected to be reopening until at least the beginning of July, by which time further guidance documents are expected to be released by Government which can be incorporated into further risk assessments.

2.6 The key elements of the democratic process are being facilitated via Zoom Video Conferencing, with Planning, Licencing and Cabinet meetings all taking place via this medium. Each of the three Scrutiny Committees will also hold meetings via Zoom during June/July.

### **Support for the Most Vulnerable**

2.7 There has been a significant national effort to ensure that the most vulnerable in society continue to have access to food, medicine and support despite the need for them to practice social distancing and, in many cases, not leave their homes. A national food distribution programme has been established to support the most clinically vulnerable; at county level, Staffordshire County Council has established a significant infrastructure to meet the needs of other vulnerable people.

2.8 Recognising that the Borough Council has a particular, and close, relationship with the communities that it serves, the Council has also set up a helpline and online facility for individuals to reach out for assistance. The helpline is staffed by colleagues from J2 and links into the national, and county support arrangements, as well as support arrangements established with the Realise Foundation and Support Staffordshire. Over the past two weeks calls to the helpline have steadily decreased (from c.150-200pw to c.40pw), suggesting that individuals are finding solutions to their needs either within their families or within their communities. Notwithstanding this, it is intended to keep this support function going, with the call handlers undertaking work on other telephony based work with the capacity released.

### **Homeless & Rough Sleepers**

2.9 In addition to the helpline, a significant resource has been allocated to supporting those at risk of homelessness. In March the Government required District and Borough Councils to provide emergency accommodation for any rough sleepers in their area and provided funds to support

this. The Council is currently providing emergency accommodation for 21 individuals. This includes 6 people in B & B, supported through daily contact and checks and 15 individuals and one family housed in a range of Temporary Accommodation, with support tiered according to need.

2.10A number of the first group of homeless people who were provided accommodation at the start of the lockdown have ceased to engage and some of these are reported to be rough sleeping again. The Rough Sleepers Team (RST) are out every day trying to get them to engage and we are also working with Police colleagues to consider escalation to enforcement if appropriate. There has also been a recent increase in the number of people persisting in loitering in the town and while not necessarily homeless they are breaching social distancing guidance. The Council is working closely with Police colleagues to address this issue, including taking enforcement action where necessary and appropriate.

### **Support for Businesses**

2.11 The Government has put in place a range of support packages for small businesses, as outlined below. For Newcastle-under-Lyme, these will be administered by the Borough Council:

2.12 Twelve month business rates holiday - Businesses with a rateable value of up to £12,000 are currently exempt from business rates under the Small Business Rate Relief scheme. The Government has now introduced a business rates retail holiday for businesses in the leisure, hospitality and retail sectors for 2020/21. The Council will receive a Section 31 grant to cover the loss in business rates income as a result of this measure, forecast to amount to £3.502m. This measure will be implemented by the Council through re-issuing National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) bills reflecting the reduction.

2.13 Small business grant funding of £10,000 for all businesses in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief.

2.14 Grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.

2.15 To cover two grant programmes, the Council has received £23.876m. To date the Council has paid out over £18.5m to over 1600 businesses. In order to encourage take up of the grant, those businesses which were identified as eligible, but which had not applied, have been contacted by telephone and/or email. Social media has also been used to encourage take up of grants.

2.16 The current grant programme is tightly focused on businesses which are registered for NNDR, resulting in some small businesses which are directly impacted by the lockdown being ineligible. These include, for example, businesses which are based in shared premises or business centres where a managing company pays the NNDR, with the individual businesses paying towards this within their overall rent. Recognising this, the Government has introduced an additional grant scheme with a greater degree of discretion to local authorities as to which businesses receive the grant, albeit with some restrictions. It is anticipated that the Council will be inviting applications to this fund in late May/early June.

### **Financial Impact**

2.17 The Pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's financial position through a mix of lost income and additional costs. Cabinet was advised in the April 2020 report of the

prospect of the Council's S151 officer needing to issue a S114 notice to Council unless the financial situation could be addressed in order to secure a balanced budget position.

- 2.18 The Council actively lobbied both through our local Members of Parliament and through national networks as part of sector wide lobbying, to press the case for appropriate Government support to address Covid-19 related costs and loss of income. Since the last report to Cabinet, the Council has been allocated additional Government support of almost £1.3m to support its delivery of Covid related activity and the impact of the pandemic on the Council's income. This additional funding is sufficient to return the Council to a balanced budget position and ensure that it has sufficient cash to meet its outgoings in the short term.
- 2.19 The Council's revenue budget relies on service income from fees and charges of c£850k per month across a wide range of services. A number of the Council's services have closed to the public, e.g. Jubilee 2, Markets and the Museum, there is also likely to be a significantly reduced demand for a number of other services. The Council has been actively monitoring the impact of the lockdown and the working practices required to ensure safe practice. Across the business, it is estimated that net income of c£300k will be lost during each month that the lockdown prevails. The majority of this income loss relates to J2 leisure memberships, parking, court fees and recycling income.
- 2.20 In addition to the loss of income, the Council is experiencing additional costs in some areas, with the most significant of these being in Waste & Recycling where additional costs of treating recycling product amounts to over £65k per month. Additional costs have also been incurred in vehicle hire and staffing in order to maintain the service whilst complying as far as possible with the Government's social distancing requirements. Additional costs are also being incurred in emergency accommodation for homeless people, rough sleeper and domestic abuse victims and interest costs.
- 2.21 Across the Council additional costs amount to c£134k per month.
- 2.22 In the longer term, any impact on either business rates collection (due to business failure) or Council Tax collection (due to non-payment) will materialise in 2021/22. A 10% reduction in the collection rate would cost the Council £180k per month in lost collection fund revenues.
- 2.23 The immediate consequences of the Coronavirus on the Council's financial position will depend significantly on duration of the lockdown and on the scale and timing of further Government financial support. The Council is actively lobbying our local Members of Parliament and through national networks as part of the wider public sector family, to make the case for further Government support to address Covid-19 related costs and loss of income.

### 3. **Recovery**

- 3.1 With the lockdown beginning to be eased, efforts are now increasingly focused on recovery, and ensuring that both the Council and the Borough get "Back on Track" – getting the economy back to its pre-lockdown position as swiftly and safely as possible. A recovery plan has been prepared, with six distinct work streams – two internally focussed and four externally focussed. Cabinet will oversee the implementation of the recovery plan, with portfolio holders working closely with the Executive Management Team colleagues leading on each work stream.

The work streams are:

- **The Immediate and essential foundations for recovery** – this element of the plan is a bridge between the response phase and the recovery phase, and is focused on ensuring that the Council, our communities, and the business sector are in the best possible position, in the very short term, to effectively engage with the recovery process.
- **Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres** – using the Government’s guidance as a focus, ensuring that Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres and the various district centres across the borough are able to re-open for business in June, and that the public can be assured that Covid Secure practice is in place and as such the locations are as safe as they can be, and that social distancing can be maintained. In addition, this work stream focusses on supporting businesses to be as successful as they can be under the new arrangements.
- **Supporting Health & Wellbeing** – ensuring that vulnerable people, and people made vulnerable by the pandemic, receive the support that they require.
- **Economic Recovery** – working with partners, ensuring that support is in place for businesses post Covid, and ensuring that the Council and its partners are well placed to deliver the major infrastructure and regeneration projects which will be critical to rebuilding the local economy. Future High Streets Fund and Town Deals will be central to this.
- **Stepping-up Council Services** – bringing Council services back to their original service capacities in line with Government guidance for re-opening the economy. It is anticipated that some services will experience significant spikes in demand once the economy begins to re-open, and such spikes will need to be carefully planned for within overall capacity. In addition, The Council’s new Recycling Service will be rolled out in the coming weeks building on the current operating model brought in response to the pandemic.
- **Financial Recovery** – development of a clear plan for the Council to build up its financial resilience following the Pandemic.

#### 4. **Proposal**

4.1 Cabinet are recommended to note this report.

#### 5. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

5.1 This report serves to brief Cabinet on the work being undertaken to address the Coronavirus pandemic, and the financial impact that the pandemic is having on the Council, and the recovery arrangements being put in place.

#### 6. **Options Considered**

6.1 N/A

#### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 Addressing the impact of Coronavirus locally has involved adjusting some service provision. When making such changes there are a number of legal and statutory implications to take into account. These are all appropriately factored into decision taking by the Incident Management Team.

#### 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 None directly arising from this report.



9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 The Council's General Fund balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 was £1.548m. As the country begins to move out of lockdown careful monitoring will be required over coming weeks and months of the emerging impact on both the local economy and the Council's finances leading to prompt corrective action where necessary. This may include formal action by the Council's s151 officer to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget in the current financial year and beyond.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 The Coronavirus Pandemic, in the round, represents a significant risk to the Council. This report sets out how that risk is being addressed.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 N/A

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This is not a key decision

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 None

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 None

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

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**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S**  
**REPORT TO CABINET**

**20 May 2020**

**Report Title:** Pre-Validation Checking Scheme

**Submitted by:** Head of Planning

**Portfolios:** Planning & Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** ALL

**Purpose of the Report**

To introduce a new pre-validation checking service which can be used by prospective applicants to ensure their applications will be validated with little to no delay, allowing consultation to commence at the earliest opportunity. This new checking service is an optional service for which a fee will be chargeable.

**Recommendation**

**That Cabinet approve the new pre-validation checking arrangements and associated charging scheme.**

**Reasons**

Residents, local businesses and developers will benefit from the new service which is designed to more precisely meet their needs.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Before a prospective planning application can be registered, assessed and a decision made on the merits of the scheme, it must be validated as a duly made application. To be classed as valid, an application must consist of a number of items of information set out in forms, reports and plans and also be accompanied by the correct fee. If an application is submitted without the necessary information, it will not be registered and issued for consultation until the missing information has been received.
- 1.2 Whilst the requirements for a householder application are limited in nature, a complex major application is likely to require far more information. To eliminate the risk of missing information at validation stage, resulting in delay to registration, this service seeks to give an applicant the option to confirm the necessary documents in advance of submission to ensure there are no last minute delays. This is an optional service for which a fee will be charged, but for applicants wishing to submit an application without using the pre-validation checking service, the standard service will remain available,

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The Council currently does not offer a validation checking service for developers seeking to submit planning applications and it can remove the risk of unexpected delays.
- 2.2 For some applicants, a delay in validation may not be too harmful to the project but for others, e.g. those bound into a contract to deliver development by a set date, even a day's delay can be critical.
- 2.3 At present, the Council does offer some advice to applicants on the documents required especially if pre-application advice is sought, but in most cases this can only be generic, high-level advice. This proposed process seeks to ensure that any response provided is considered and comprehensive in nature, engaging with the detail of the proposed application. This reduces as far as is practicable the risk that any supporting information required with the application is omitted. There is a caveat that if the nature of the proposed development changes or national or local planning policies change prior to the submission of the applicant then further information not previously identified may be required from the applicant.

3. **Options Considered**

3.1 **Do Nothing**

The Council could simply maintain their current ad-hoc service of providing free advice unless it is provided as part of a formal pre-application response. Whilst helpful, this approach is limited in nature and can miss items especially if not immediately apparent from the nature of development being proposed.

3.2 **Provide the New Service**

A new pre-validation checking service should minimise the number of applications received by the service which are then held over due to missing information and marked as invalid. Such applications place a burden on the operation of the planning service as they essentially require double handling, once when they first come in and again when the missing information is submitted. Whilst this does not result in a true doubling of the work involved, additional work is occurred by the Council at no cost to the developer as files have to be stored, retrieved and chasing correspondence sent. Whilst the time savings may be small in comparison to the overall planning processing timescales, week on week, month on month, such delays add up.

- 3.3 The provision of the service also allows applicants and agents to reduce uncertainty and programme manage their applications more effectively.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 Taking into account the options above, it is proposed to introduce a service (See Appendix 1). This service will be offered via our website and the pages will provides the customer information on how to apply.
- 4.2 Whilst this will incur some resourcing requirements, it is considered that the service should deliver a number of valuable outcomes. These include minimising the risk of a proposal being unexpectedly delayed. A proposed new fee structure is designed to cover anticipated additional costs.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The preferred solution provides a significantly more customer focused service, allowing an individual to choose the level of service and response they may want to receive as well as allowing the Council to introduce a fee structure to sustain the provision of that service by generating a more reliable and consistent revenue stream.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

6.1 The new pre-apps service will contribute to the Council Plan by providing a local services that work for local people, making a stronger contribution towards operating costs and assisting in delivering the Council's statutory functions as a Local Planning Authority.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.2 Local planning authorities may charge for providing discretionary services under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. Where charges are made they must not exceed the cost of providing the service. It is important that any charging does not discourage appropriate pre-application discussions. In this context, local planning authorities need to consider whether charging is appropriate in all cases, given the potential for pre-application engagement to save time and improve outcomes later in the process. Where possible, local planning authorities are strongly encouraged to provide at least a basic level of service without charge.

7.3 To ensure transparency, where local planning authorities opt to charge for certain pre-application services, they are strongly encouraged to provide clear information online about:

- the scale of charges for pre-application services applicable to different types of application (e.g. minor or major and other)
- the level of service that will be provided for the charge, including:
- the scope of work and what is included (e.g. duration and number of meetings or site visits)
- the amount of officer time to be provided (recognising that some proposed development requires input from officers across the local authority; or from other statutory and non-statutory bodies)
- the outputs that can be expected (e.g. a letter or report) and firm response times for arranging meetings and providing these outputs
- It is also helpful for local planning authorities to provide links to any charges that statutory consultees may levy for pre-application advice, where this is known.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 No issues arising.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Increased revenue expected. The revised service will also place an increased focus on planners and consultees to respond to paid enquiries in a timely manner. That additional demand will be supported by the anticipated increase in revenue.

9.2 The proposed introduction of standard charges for agreeing to offer pre-validation checks at the rate suggested would ensure that the necessary funding to allow for the delivery of this enhanced service is available. It will also ensure a financial return to the Council, at the current time this has not been built into budget assumptions for 2020/21 in light of uncertainty regarding the take up of the enhanced service and the levels of planning applications that may be received during 2020/21.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 As with any advice given, there is the possibility that an application submitted at a later date following receipt of that advice cannot be supported by the Council for example, if national policies change in the intervening period. It is also possible that the response given contains factual errors. In cases where the value of the response has become limited in nature either due to internal or external factors, there is the potential for complaints to be generated.
- 10.2 In these instances, officers will look at the circumstances surrounding the complaint and in discussion with a senior officer, a response will be provided to the complainant explaining the background to the case and the implications arising. If a complainant is unhappy with the Council's response then they will be able to escalate their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 10.3 Such instances are, thankfully, exceptionally rare and it is considered that the risk of giving poor quality advice or a view on a proposal that becomes outdated is considerably outweighed by the gains to be achieved in offering the service. Furthermore, where the Local Government Ombudsman has received complaints about advice given by a Council, these have often not been upheld as the LGO recognises that the advice is that only and not a formal decision of the Council concerned. It is for applicants to make their own judgements on the value of any advice given by the Council and not to rely on it unquestioningly.
- 10.4 Nevertheless, as the quality of this Council's advice has been of a high level in the past, it is not envisaged that this risk would be of such a substantive nature to decline to offer the service.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 Whilst it is recognised that planning is one of the mechanisms for the delivery of sustainable development and assisting in addressing climate change issues, it is not envisaged that this service will have an impact on sustainability or climate matters.

12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the Forward Plan as it is not anticipated to generate savings or expenditure of over £100k (revenue) or have a significant effect on communities living in two or more electoral wards.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 13.1 None

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix 1: Current pre-app guidance and fees (Web pages)

15. **Background Papers**

- 15.1 None

## **APPENDIX 1: PRE-APPLICATION VALIDATION - PROPOSED SERVICE WEB PAGES**

### Pre-validation checks

Validation of applications can be a highly complex and involved process, particularly with the regard to larger or more sensitive types of development. As a result, getting an application to be made valid can often prove to be a slow and laborious process involving a significant amount of 'toing and froing' between the Validation officer and the applicant or their agent. This wastes significant amounts of time for both the Council and the Applicant alike and ultimately slows down the application process which is in no one's interest.

As a consequence, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council offers a fee paying pre-validation checking service which allows you to pre-submit plans and documents before formally submitting your application. The plans and documents will then be checked to ensure the appropriate standards of details and supporting information is provided.

#### What are the benefits?

By pre-submitting plans and documents the authority will have the chance to review what you are intending to submit to ensure that everything necessary for the application to be made valid is received. Feedback and guidance will be provided ensuring that the submission contains the necessary information to meet:

1. the National application requirements;
2. the Council's local validation list requirements (See Link);
3. the correct fee requirements for the proposed development.

If additional information is required or amendments/changes are needed, the Council will contact you and advise you as to what needs to be done.

By using the pre-validation service the Council will guarantee that the subsequent application is made validated immediately upon receipt, obviously subject to the inclusion of any suggested additions, changes or amendments. This save both time and money and allows the application to be processed through to determination far more quickly.

#### Fees

Major applications - £100

All other application - £50

There is no charge for Householder application submitted by a member of the public for their own property. If the application is submitted by an Agent then this will attract a £50 charge.

There is no charge for all applications which are exempt from planning fees for whatever reason.

### How to submit

To seek a pre-validation check please submit your proposed submission to **email address**. Once the submission has been received a dedicated officer will deal with your submission.

### Timeframes

In terms of timeframes, the Council will provide you with a pre-validation response as follows:

Major applications - within 4 working days

All other applications (including householder) – within 2 working days

The response you will receive will state either:

- The submission is acceptable and that the application will be validated upon receipt, or
- Provide you with a response identifying where the submission is deficient and detail what needs to be done to enable any subsequent application to be made valid upon receipt.

### What the pre-validation service does not cover

The pre-validation service is purely an administrative function. The advice that it provides simply reviews what has been submitted and whether additional information needs to be submitted to enable the application to be made valid. It does not:

- Convey any acceptance as to the suitability or otherwise of the proposed development from a planning perspective. This is obviously the subject to a separate planning assessment through the planning application process;
- Check the quality or detail of supporting professional reports and assessment being submitted. For example, if a Flood risk assessment has been submitted in support of an application the check would not review the actual detail of the report itself or whether it is fit for purpose.
- Negate the need for additional information which may need to be submitted subsequently as a result of the planning application process. This necessity may come as a result of site visits by the planning officer or additional information being required by consultees to the application process.



**What happens if you receive guidance and advice which suggests that additional information is required or changes need to be made to the proposed submission which you disagree with?**

The guidance given is advising that if the application were submitted in its current form the Council would be unable to validate it. The Council would obviously be happy to discuss the reasons for suggesting the changes but, if agreement cannot be reached this does not stop you submitting the application. In the event that the pre-validation advice were not followed and the application submitted in its unamended form, it would be made formally invalid and you would be notified of this outcome. In this eventuality you would then have the ability to follow the non-valid application procedure as detailed under Article 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures) (England) Order 2015.

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## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

20 May 2020

**Report Title:** Financial and Performance Review report – Fourth quarter (Jan-Mar) 2019-20.  
**Submitted by:** Executive Management Team

**Portfolios:** Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships, Finance & Efficiency

**Ward(s) affected:** All

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Cabinet with the Financial and Performance Review report – fourth quarter 2019-20.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Members note the contents of the attached report and continue to monitor and challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.**

#### **Reasons**

The Financial and Performance Management monitoring reports provide information on a quarterly basis regarding the performance of individual council services and progress with delivery against our priorities, alongside related financial information on the organisation.

It should be noted that certain activities from 20 March 2020 were impacted by Covid 19 and the resulting actions taken by the Council to protect and ensure support is available to everyone.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the fourth quarter 2019-20 by presenting performance data and progress summary set within a financial context.
- 1.2 This report provides broad financial information (Appendix A) and also details performance (Appendix B) for the fourth quarter of 2019/20.
- 1.3 A summary of the overall performance picture is presented in section 4 of this report and members will note that performance is generally progressing well.

## **2. 2019-20 Revenue and Capital Budget Position**

- 2.1 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £13,050,020 on 20 February 2019. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.

## **3. Development of the Financial and Performance Report**

- 3.1 The performance section –Appendix B was reviewed and updated for 2019-2020 and the indicators continue to reflect the priorities in the Council Plan.
- 3.2 In addition to eleven new indicators, the report includes a progress summary for each priority, detailing the progress with the delivery of planned activities.
- 3.3 Additional performance information is provided, not only to ensure the monitoring of the corporate activities of the council, but also to inform Members, businesses and residents of performance in their local economy.

- 3.4 The format and content of the report will continue to be reviewed and developed in order to reflect the progress of the planned aims of the Council Plan 2018-2022, with a final report in 2019-20 providing a detailed report including more annual results of our achievements and outturns.

#### **4 Performance**

- 4.1 The latest performance information for quarter four has been analysed and all indicators monitored for this period are listed in the table found in Appendix B.
- 4.2 Any indicators failing to meet the set targets include a comment explaining why the indicator has not performed well, and what steps are being taken to ensure improvement in the future.
- 4.3 The layout for Appendix B has undergone further development for 2019-2020.
- 4.4 For this report a total of 21 indicators were monitored, and the proportion of indicators which have met their target (where set) or are within tolerance levels during this period stands at 86%.
- 4.5 There are 3 indicators off target this quarter, and officers consider that the performance against these indicators does not give rise to serious cause for concern at present (see commentary provided at Appendix B). The management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to deal with under achievement of targets where possible and/or appropriate.

Further quarterly updates will be provided for Members in future reports.

- 4.6 Positive performance can be seen in a range of services and members will note that some services are affected by both seasonal and external factors. It should also be noted for consideration that some indicators have stretched targets set and local targets that are higher than the national ones.
- 4.7 Progress on delivery of planned activities is summarised for each priority and no concerns are highlighted.

#### **5. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty to set targets for performance of a range of functions and needs to monitor these closely.

#### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this monitoring report.

#### **7. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 Any positive variance for the full year on the General Fund Revenue Account will enable that amount to be transferred to the Budget Support Fund and will be available in future years for use as the Council considers appropriate. Conversely, if there is an adverse variance, the amount required to cover this will have to be met from the Budget Support Fund.

#### **8. Major Risks**

- 8.1 The ongoing changing market conditions represents the greatest risk to the revenue budget, particularly with regard to the impact it may have upon income receivable in relation to services where customers may choose whether or not to use Council facilities or in the case of the waste/recycling service where the volume of recycled materials is liable to fluctuate.

The impact of Covid 19 will be more apparent in the reporting in the next quarter and the situation will be monitored through the normal budget monitoring procedures.

8.2 The capital programme will require regular monitoring to identify any projects which are falling behind their planned completion dates. This will be carried out by the Capital Programme Review Group, which meets on a monthly basis together with quarterly reports to Cabinet.

8.3 The above represents a high level view of risk. There are detailed risk registers available if members wish to see them.

9. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

9.1 N/A

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 Included on the Forward Plan

11. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

11.1 N/A

12. **List of Appendices**

12.1 Financial information (Appendix A), and Performance (Appendix B).

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.

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## **Financial Position Quarter Four 2019/20**

### **1. General Fund Revenue Budget**

- 1.1 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £13.050m on 20 February 2019. The actual position compared to this budget is continuously monitored by managers, EMT and Portfolio Holders in order to detect any significant variances of expenditure or income from the approved amounts contained in the budget.

### **2. Capital Programme**

- 2.1 A Capital Programme totalling £5,606,298 was approved for 2019/20. Of this total £3,606,298 relates to the total cost of new schemes for 2019/20 together with £1,000,000 for schemes funded by external sources (Disabled Facilities Grants), £1,000,000 contingency. In addition £1,326,573 was brought forward from the 2018/19 Capital Programme, resulting in a total Capital Programme of £6,947,871 for 2019/20.

### **3. Revenue Budget Position**

- 3.1 At this point in the financial year, we would have expected to have spent the approved General Fund Revenue Budget amount of £13.050m; we have actually spent £13.258m. Therefore, as at the end of the fourth quarter, the general fund budget shows an adverse variance of £208,000. It should be noted that this is the position as at period 12 and further work is being completed in order to inform the final outturn position for the year.

- 3.2 The main reasons for the overall adverse variance to date are:

- a. Jubilee 2 is operating at a net overspend. This is predominately in relation to high levels of staff sickness which are required to be covered for and a shortfall in income received by the centre. Due to Covid-19 the Centre closed on 21 March in line with Central Government guidance which further impacted on the financial losses of the Centre.
- b. Income from car parking is below the budgeted amount, this is due to a drop in off street parking. Again due to Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the public's movements by Central Government, this further impacted on the income losses.
- c. Income from planning application fees is below the budgeted amount, this is due to the number of major planning applications received to date– this may fluctuate during the final quarter of the financial year.
- d. The provision of temporary cover for Senior Management posts.

- 3.3 An action plan to address the adverse variance was devised to mitigate this variance and it was forecast that the actions identified would reduce the adverse variance to a balanced year end outturn, however due to Covid-19 further work is having to be completed regarding the financial impact this will have.

#### 4. Capital Programme Position

4.1 The Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2019 has been updated to take account of amounts brought forward from 2018/19 where planned expenditure did not occur. This has been added to the budget for 2019/20 (apart from cases where costs have been reduced or expenditure will no longer be incurred). The revised budget for capital projects in 2019/20 totals £6,947,871.

4.2 The Capital Funding required for the 2019/20 programme includes £3,508,298 of capital receipts. The receipts received during the year amounted to £763,000, £2,290,000 expected to be received during 2019/20 will now be received in 2020/21 due to completions delays and Covid-19. The remaining £455,298 relates to two assets which will need to be re-listed due to withdrawal of interest from the purchaser and change in circumstances.

4.3 The position at the end of the fourth quarter is expected to be as follows:-

	£
Budget	6,947,871
Actual Expenditure	2,709,470
Committed orders and carry forwards for existing projects	3,233,460
Capital Contingency Reserve	1,000,000
Variance	4,941

It should be noted that this is the position at period 12 and further work is being completed to inform the final outturn position for the year together with the impact of Covid-19.

#### 5. 2019/20 Outturn Position

5.1 Work is currently being completed on the final outturn position in respect of both the revenue and capital budgets. This year end work has been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis, therefore full details on the outturn will be provided at the next meeting.



# How did we do in Quarter 4 2019 - 20



PLANNING APPLICATIONS  
(NON-MAJOR)  
**ISSUED**  
**95.6%**

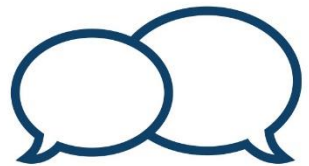


LEISURE USERS  
**118,667**



MUSEUM VISITORS  
**8,599**

NUMBER OF CONTACTS  
FACE TO  
**FACE**  
**4,027**



TELEPHONE  
**35,330**



(JADU)

**DIGITAL**  
**ON-LINE**  
TRANSACTIONS  
**20,581**



INVOICES  
PAID ON TIME  
**95.03%**

**UNIQUE**  
WEBSITE  
**USERS**  
**107,005**



**HOUSEHOLD** RECYCLING  
**COLLECTIONS** AND FOOD  
**728,260**  
GARDEN  
**WASTE** REFUSE  
**120,000** **364,130**



## Priority 1: Local Services that Work for Local People

### Progress Summary

Overall, our performance with a combination of monitoring and target driven indicators for this priority is positive in this quarter but work is underway to impact on the result. Seven new indicators which were added in Qtr 1 to track progress with our outcomes for the priority, continue to be monitored.

A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority One from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Increase Access to Information;**

- **Website**

During this quarter, and due to the COVID-19 coronavirus lockdown, we have seen access to the website increase significantly with 107,005 unique users in this quarter compared to 104,714 the previous quarter. The website has been the go-to place for residents and businesses to access both information and support during the current crisis. Pages have been created and updated for all Business Support Grants, business support information, vulnerable people, voluntary community groups as well as a dedicated COVID-19 page.

Every effort has been made by the team to keep residents and businesses informed online at all times and to make access to crucial support, online applications and information quick and easily available during this crisis.

- **Press and media**

From January to the end of March we only received 10 media enquiries, the results of which were 70 per cent positive. The low numbers can be explained as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown. There are currently 25,679 people following Council social media accounts – 10,940 on Twitter and 14,739 on Facebook. For the corporate Facebook account there are 5,293 followers and we received 4,826 likes in quarter 4. Social media has seen a huge increase in use during the lockdown and since the COVID-19 emergency was declared and is key to communicating with residents and businesses.

- **Budget consultation**

Consultation has continued during the crisis and has proved itself essential in providing information to target and support vulnerable people, with data sets being analysed and the results used by various Council services to identify potential financial or physical support requirements using demographic 'hot-spots' within the borough's population.

- **Improve Customer Satisfaction;**

- **Secure "Customer Service Excellence"**

In this quarter it was agreed that we would look towards achieving Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the Customer Services section in the first instance, with work commencing in May with the aim of applying for the accreditation in September 2020. Then the focus will be to work with and apply this standard with all other front facing services delivered from other sites, such as the depot, Jubilee 2, museum, crematorium and cemetery.

- **Develop customer & citizen surveys**

The Customer and Digital Services Team continue to work on ways to collect citizen feedback more effectively. Automatic surveys are offered to customers at the end of telephone calls and online forms, asking customers to provide feedback. There is a continued approach to look at how we can improve on the gathering and interpretation of this data.

## Progress Summary continued

- **Digital Delivery**

The Council's Digital Strategy was formally agreed by Cabinet in December 2019 and the Digital Team are currently concentrating on developing a 1<sup>st</sup> phase work plan and detailed business case. The work plan is being prioritised to focus on services that are heavily used by customers or support the Council's commercial ambitions. However, the Digital Team will not only be concentrating on improving basic digital services, but on fundamental service re-design; to take advantage of everything that digital can offer. The team will also focus on digital inclusion and has already started to engage with partner organisations to encourage a joined up approach.

- **Complete migration from Lagan to JADU Customer Relationship Management System**

In September 2019 the Council successfully migrated all of its Customer Support forms away from the Lagan CRM platform and completed the transition to the replacement JADU system. The Digital Team are currently looking at how these services can be developed and improved now that the initial deadline driven migration has been completed. The Lagan system was successfully decommissioned by the Staffordshire Connects partnership and data protection was the key factor in how this was done.

Current improvements scheduled for launch in early 2020 include improved forms for Licensing and Environmental Services alongside the integration of the Revenues and Benefits portal application. The latter is a significant development, as this was previously a separate service which will now become part of our general customer portal – removing the need for multiple authentication details. The service will also introduce an e-billing option for the first time, potentially making significant savings for the authority with regards to postage costs.

- **Deliver new Recycling and Waste Service:**

During this quarter the fine tuning of the route modelling have been completed. Plans remain on target, however Covid 19 has impacted the service, and a decision was made to convert the current operation into a fully comingled collection system, to provide more flexibility and an easier collection system, which can operate with fewer staff and vehicles required, meaning staff absences as a result of Covid 19 can be covered more effectively. Currently service change is still planned for September 2020.

- **Ensure Workforce has the right skills, at the right time, in the right place:**

- **Deliver workforce plan**

Following a review of the Executive Management structure, it has been agreed to remove the post of Executive Director Resources and Support Services. As part of the council's commitment to staff development, the S151 duties will now be undertaken by the Head of Finance, with the Deputy S151 duties being undertaken by the Finance Manager.

- **Develop organisational culture**

High on the list of priorities is the engagement of staff in the development of organisational values and behaviours; from which recognition and reward, development and learning and leadership strategies will be developed. Work was paused on this toward the end of quarter 4 due to significant resource channel to the COvid-19 response, however in Q1 work is recommencing with the intention of distributing a staff survey and values realisation process in Q1. This will then enable the Chief Executive to work with his senior management team to outline the Council's expectations which will underpin the culture. In the meantime, the HR team are continuing to work with all departments to outline what is expected of them as managers and employees (the psychological contract) and providing positive challenge as and when required. HR are continuing to work with all managers to coach and mentor them through all the HR policies to embed good practice and develop their skills in managing staff successfully to enable a positive working culture.

**Progress Summary continued**

- **Review, update and implement HR Policies**


Ongoing discussions with the Trade Unions on Organisation Change and Redeployment have continued to take place however currently are paused given the Covid-19 outbreak. Work continues to develop other key People Policies which are designed to promote equity of practice, engagement, wellbeing and commitment to continuous improvement.








- **Improve Employee relations**







Regular and ongoing discussions with the Trade Unions around policies, processes and ways of working have been achieved between the Council and its recognised Trade Unions. In quarter 4, HR continued to work closely with Trade Union colleagues, and transitioned quickly to support staff to work safely and flexibly during lockdown. As the current situation progresses, staff relations will be key to recovery phases moving forward throughout 2020-21. Relations are currently very positive and dialogue remains open and honest.

- **HR Shared Service Centre**

The Shared Service for Payroll went live on 1st November 2019 which included the new self-service portal. Payrolls since the transition, were completed on time with minimal disruption to staff. A £25,000 saving will be delivered for 2020-21. Work is continuing to support optimum service delivery and the rationalisation between payroll systems and flexitime.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
1.1	Environmental Health	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating	Low	1.16% (13 out of 1,122 published premises)	0.97% (11 out of 1135 published premises)	088% (10 out of 1138 published premises)	5%	The figure remains well within target this quarter.	
1.2 New	Environmental Health	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Percentage of category A and B food business inspections completed on time	High	100%	100%	97%	-	This work stream is high priority and almost fully completed, however delivery reduced due to impact of Covid -19.	-
1.3 New	Environmental Health	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	No. Accidents/Incidents reported (RIDDOR)	Low	-	1	1	-	There was one incident which was slip, trip, fall and no further action required. There is no target set as it would be inappropriate to set a target in this respect.	-

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
1.4a	Recycling & Fleet	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Household collections from the kerbside (%):- • Dry Recycling	High	18.97%	21.63%	20.24%	20%	Dry Recycling and food collection performance stayed within target for quarter 4, targeted communications continue to be undertaken.	
1.4b			• Food	High	5.87%	5.93%	5.86%	5%		
1.4c			• Amount of residual Waste per household	Low	109.26 kg's	102.36 kg's	103.64 kg's	107.5kgs (per household) cumulative		
1.4d New	Operations	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Number of missed kerbside collections:- Total (per 100,000 collections)	Low	-	55	76.54	80 (per 100,000 collections)	In this quarter there were a total of 1,212,390 collections of residual, garden waste, recycling and food. There were missed collections of Residual - 261, Garden Waste – 124 and Recycling -928.	
1.5	Operations	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	High	93.14% 93.14% 99.83% 100%	92.03% 91.4% 99.5% 100%	93.77% 93.56% 99.78% 100%	91% 91% 97% 99%	The results for the second and third survey undertaken for 2019-20 are detailed here, and the first survey reported in Qtr 2 with all on or exceeding the target.	
1.6	Customer & ICT	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	High	98%	98%	99%	97%	An excellent result, exceeding the target set in Qtr. 4.	
1.7	Customer & ICT	Cllr. Simon Tagg	% Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)	Low	14.82%	5.80%	12.15%	10%	The target has not been met. The customer contact centre now includes Revenues & Benefits. Factors such as a restructure and year end billing has impacted service delivery.	
1.8 New	Digital Delivery	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Total number of digital on-line transactions (Jadu).	High	-	14,453	20,581	-	The result has continued to increase this quarter due to Garden Waste subscriptions 2020 and the availability of more online forms.	-

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
1.9 New	Communication	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Total number of unique users to the website	High	-	104,714	107,005	79,500	There was a surge at the end of March which is understandable, with a total of 42,674 unique users in this month.	
1.10	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Time taken to process Housing/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	Low	4.36 days	5.00 days	2.56 days	10 days	This result is well below target and much improved on last year's result. Due to the impact of Covid 19 the result for the next quarter is expected to be higher.	
1.11	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Percentage of Council Tax collected	High	97.70%	77.4%	97.3%*	97.5%	The result is down on last year by 0.4% and slightly below target of 97.5% due to no recovery being pursued during March.	
1.12	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	High	98.90%	83.7%	99.47%	97%	The result is above target of 97% but it is difficult to compare with last year due to many changes in reliefs and discounts now available.	
1.13	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Average number of days per employee lost to sickness	Low	10.03 days	6.98 days	8.62 days	8 days annual (cumulative)	The Qtr 4 sickness figure of 2.09 days is just over the target. Work is ongoing to ensure consistency of application of attendance management policy. It is anticipated that sickness absence will increase due to global pandemic	
1.14 New	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Staff turnover	Low	-	8.58%	4.19%	10%	Annual turnover is 9.44%	
1.15 New	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Staff vacancy rates	Low	-	11%	5.08%	-	Turnover remains within target.	-

\*The result is within tolerance

## Priority 2: Growing our People and Places

### Progress Summary

For this section, we had the introduction of four new indicators for planning in the second quarter which measure the speed and quality of decisions. A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority 2 from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Deliver Joint Local Plan**

In February 2020, the Councils agreed to produce the Joint Local Plan in two parts; Part One Strategy and Policies and Part Two Site Allocations. There were due to be two consultations this year, with Part One being subject to consultation in April/May 2020 and Part Two in the Autumn of this year. Due to the impact of Covid 19, consultation on Part One of the Plan must now be postponed as it is not possible to carry out the consultation in a way which would have met the Councils obligations set out in the Joint Statement of Community Involvement. Work will continue on the Draft Joint Local Plan aiming to minimise any potential delay to the overall plan timetable. As such, it is proposed that both parts of the Draft Plan will be subject to one 6 week public consultation in the Autumn.

- **Progress University Growth Corridor**

The University Growth Corridor (UGC) Programme meetings have taken place, including workshops with Silverdale and Keele Parish Councils.

- **Deliver appropriate housing to those in need:**

- **Retender Housing Advice service –**

Newcastle housing advice (NHA) service delivers the Council's homelessness, housing advice and housing register services in the Borough. The Council has made the decision to bring the service back in-house by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, over the forthcoming year the Council will be working with the current contractor Midland heart to transfer the service effectively. The Council has been successful in securing funding from the MHCLG for the appointment of a Rough Sleeper Navigator, this 12 month post will be established in April 2020 within the NHA team.

- **Joint allocation policy and procurement of a Choice Based Lettings system**

The Council has adopted a new Joint Housing Allocations Policy in-conjunction with Aspire Housing. This joint policy will allow customers of the Borough to access social housing owned and managed by Aspire Housing and other Private Registered Providers to whom the Council has partnerships within the Borough. The Council and Aspire Housing will procure a joint Choice Based Letting (CBL) system during 2020/21 that will deliver the platform for the administration function of the housing register. This will allow our customers to make one application for social housing, a greatly improved approach compared to our current systems requiring 2 applications.

- **One Public Estate**

The Borough Council have received a sum of £50,000 from 'One Public Estate', (a body set up to encourage public agencies to work together to make better use of their property assets), to cover the cost of undertaking the masterplanning of Knutton Village. This will involve preparing proposals for the use or development of a number of cleared sites around the centre of Knutton in the ownership of the Borough and County Councils and Aspire Housing with the objective of bringing forward new housing development in the area and to assess the potential for investing in the improvement and consolidation of community facilities. Aspire Housing is also contributing to the resources of the Study with a view to it reviewing its role as a provider of affordable housing in the area, including that of housing for the elderly. In this quarter, White Young Green have completed a draft final report on the study and this is now being reviewed by the Borough and County Councils and Aspire Housing (all of which are significant landowners in the area). This has taken into account physical and financial practicalities regarding the viability of development proposals being considered and the views of local stakeholders and ward members. In quarter 1 of 2020/21 the key partners will need to feedback on the draft report so that it can be finalised. There will be financial implications for the Council and our partners which will need to be considered. The bid for Town Deal funding may consider helping to address some of the abnormal costs of bringing forward a suitable scheme.



### Progress Summary continued

- **Consideration of a property investment model**

Consideration is being given to the Borough Council taking a more active role in developing its sites (i.e. by way of forming a property development company or similar) either on its own or in a partnership arrangement. The Commercial Strategy 2019-24 was approved by Cabinet in Qtr 3 and the commercial investment advisors appointed to review and advise in respect of the Council's commercial portfolio. In Qtr 4 the work was undertaken by the advisors as agreed and this review will be completed in the next quarter.

- **Masterplan of land at:- Chatterley Close area by Bradwell crematorium; off Liverpool Road, Keele Golf Course and Birchenwood**






This quarter has seen the development of specifications for the masterplan of land in the Chatterley Close area, Bradwell, with tenders submitted in Qtr. 4 to ensure a qualified and experienced consultant can undertake the work. Keele masterplan was approved in principle last year and is subject to consideration as part of the development of the Joint Local Plan. Following the Phase 1 environmental impact assessment for Birchenwood, a preliminary ground investigation survey will be commissioned in the next quarter, but progress is delayed due to the impact of Covid 19.

- **Planning Consent – Sidmouth Ave**

Planning consent was granted in Qtr 3 for;

- Demolition of the post 1950's building extensions, making good external walls on the existing (i.e. remaining) building;
- Change of use of the existing building to residential;
- Three substantial 4-5 bedroomed detached houses, each having integral garages – being on the area of cleared land arising from the demolition referred to a point (i) above.

In Qtr 4 alternative options were considered in respect of developing the site and a decision on how to move forward with this project will be taken in the next quarter of 2020/21.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
2.1	Property	Cllr. Paul Northcott	Percentage of investment portfolio vacant (NBC owned)	Low	8.9%	7.6%	8.3%	12%	This indicator remains well within target.	
2.2	Planning & Development	Cllr. Paul Northcott	Speed of major development applications (P151a)	High	-	76.8% (Jan 2018 – Dec 2019)	80% (Apr 2018- Mar 2020)	60%	These indicators remain well within target and are improving or being maintained at an acceptable level.	
2.3			Quality of major development applications (P152a)	Low	-	1.3% (Oct 2016 - Sept 2018)	1.6% (Jan 2017 – Dec 2018)	10%		
2.4			Speed of non-major development applications (P153)	High	-	84.9% (Jan 2018 – Dec 2019)	87.5% (Apr 2018 – Mar 2020)	70%		
2.5			Quality of non-major development applications (P154)	Low	-	0.8% (Oct 2016 - Sept 2018)	0.9% (Jan 2017 – Dec 2018)	10%		



## Priority 3: A Healthy, Active & Safe Borough

### Progress Summary

Overall the performance for this priority advises the progress within this area, and considering the impact of a problem with the J2 facility at the moment, there are many users with leisure and cultural activities.

A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority 3 from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Secure J2 Remedial works**

The scheme to replace the Aqua Sauna has been re-designed to offer improved commercial opportunities by increasing the capacity of the sauna and steam cabins and introducing a treatment room. The design for the Aqua Sauna has been costed through the SCAPE Framework and these costs have been reviewed in line with available budget and further work requested of the designer and building contractor.

- **Secure J2 commercialisation**

The contract awarded to Alliance Leisure for marketing support has driven up membership sales and improved retention in January and February to close to 3,000 members. Additional advertising income began to be generated at Jubilee2 through an agreement with Strategi Solutions Ltd, through marketing the advertising screens. However in line with Government instruction, Jubilee 2 closed on 20 March 2020, due to the Covid-19 Coronavirus situation. All memberships were frozen at the end of March 2020.

- **Kidsgrove Sports Centre**

Designs developed with the Community Group for remodelling the sports centre have been passed to Willmott Dixon to secure a tender price for the works to be commenced in Summer 2020. At the same time solicitors continue working on the transfer of the sports centre to the Council in readiness for the redevelopment works, along with an agreement to lease to the community group.

- **Secure funds for Museum Extension**

- Plans for improving the resilience of the museum by creating separate gallery and education spaces and expanding the retail and craft sales area have been granted planning permission. A grant application submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been successful and the result of an application to the Landfill Communities Trust is expected in June. The project also received financial support from Newcastle-under-Lyme Civic Society and Friends of the Museum. Along with donations £442,000 has been raised towards the project so far and a further £100,000 is anticipated. Tender documentation has been prepared for the capital work and is to be priced through the SCAPE procurement framework contractor.

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- **Open Space Strategy**

Due to the pandemic, the Heart of England in Bloom campaign and all local Newcastle in Bloom competitions and activities have been suspended for 2020 – the intention is to roll most of the planned activities forward to 2021. The Green Flag Awards scheme has been reviewed and will proceed in 2020 on a desktop assessment basis with a mystery shop site visit later in the year. The Council has entered 7 sites.

- **Streetscene Fleet procurement**

Procurement of fleet and equipment for the insourcing of the Bereavement Services Grounds Maintenance was successfully completed, allowing grounds maintenance at the cemeteries and crematorium to continue at a time when these sites are very important to bereaved families.

- **Feasibility study for Crematorium extension**

An officer working group has been established to progress the feasibility study and this work is linking into the masterplanning for the Chatterley Close area which has been commissioned. A workshop to discuss initial findings is scheduled for late April 2020.

## Progress Summary continued

- **Affordable Funeral Scheme**

A suite of tender documents has been prepared for issue to local suppliers. However, the pandemic has meant there is a delay due to other priorities and capacity issues across the whole sector so the timeline is being reviewed.

- **Deliver Capital Programme projects**

Work was completed on a number of sites to install deterrent measures to discourage unauthorised encampments, refurbishment of children's play areas, footpath resurfacing and railing/fencing repairs.

- **Protect our communities by delivering priority community safety, food safety & licensing projects:**

- **Taxi Licensing Policy**

In the first quarter members of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee approved the content of the taxi policy. The policy document is a wide scale reform of the current policy, to ensure that the Council has a policy that is fit for purpose in respect of the legislative framework and administration of the service. Members of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee approved the policy and agreed that the policy has been implemented on 1st November 2019 with two exceptions noted to be undertaken in January 2020. The equality training and completion of a new knowledge test has now been completed in quarter 4 resulting in full implementation of the policy.

- **Commission new CCTV Service**




Following approval by Cabinet and the Business Improvement District Board for the commissioning of the CCTV service with Stoke City Council significant work has been undertaken to make the service live by 1st April 2020. A new CCTV Policy has also been approved alongside the development of a range of documents which form the legal contract with Stoke City Council. The replacement CCTV cameras in the town centre and Midway have been successfully installed and are operational. The new cameras in Bridge Street need additional electricity supply which unfortunately was not completed prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. This will be picked up by the relevant contractors once the businesses are back operating.

- **Town Centre ASB enforcement**

A range of Partnership activity continues to be co-ordinated this quarter, including; the CCTV review and recommissioning; working closely with partners to identify individuals in need of support, working with the rough sleepers team to ensure that appropriate support is provided, utilising the Council's civil enforcement powers such as Community Protection Notice Warnings (CPNWs), CPNs and Injunctions, introduction of PSPOs for the Town Centre and Queen Elizabeth Park, working with the Police to encourage use of Section 34/35 powers (criminal powers), and developing a range of community safety projects to improve the aesthetics of the town centre and contribute to improving perceptions of safety. The council has recently appointed a Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator to assist in galvanising partnership activity with some of our vulnerable residents. As part of the Covid-19 response the Council has provided additional accommodation and support to Rough Sleepers to ensure they are not in the town centre.

- **Air Quality Local Development Plan**

Work is continuing with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council to create the Air Quality Local Development Plan to bring about improvements in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels. This quarter has seen progress with development of the business cases, in particular the strategic, commercial and management cases. Work on the economic and financial cases has also progressed and an air quality questionnaire has been launched on the website.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
3.1a	Community Safety	Cllr. Helena Maxfield	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases:- -New cases received during the quarter	Low	162	59	71	-	There are currently 6 cases discussed at the ASB, Youth Violence and Gangs Case conference.	-
3.1b			-Current open cases at the end of the quarter	Low	14 (31/03/19)	7	6	-		-
3.1c			-Cases closed in the quarter	High	156	64	71	-		-
3.2 New	Community Safety	Cllr. Helena Maxfield	Number of referrals made regarding vulnerability by participating organisations at the Daily Hub	High	41	33	27	-	A total number of 27 referrals were made from Daily Hub meetings that have taken place over the period 1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020.	-
3.3	Culture & Arts	Cllr. Jill Waring	Number of people visiting the museum	High	13,152 Qtr 4 (68,229 cumulative)	10,498 Qtr 3 (48,701 cumulative)	8599* Qtr 4 (57300 cumulative)	10,000 Qtr 4 (59,000 cumulative)	Numbers are on target for the year. The museum closed due to COVID-19 on March 20 <sup>th</sup> so there were no visitors from 20-31 March 2020.	
3.4	Leisure	Cllr. Jill Waring	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	High	149,137 Qtr 4 (612,257 cumulative)	139,241 Qtr 3 (426,849 cumulative)	118,667 Qtr 4 (545,516 cumulative)	150,000 Qtr 4 (600,000 cumulative)	The ongoing closure of the aqua sauna has impacted this year on visitor numbers. However for this final quarter, the impact of Covid 19 on footfall to the centre, and closure of the J2 Leisure centre on 20 March 2020 has further reduced the figures.	
Page 5 New 43	Leisure	Cllr. Jill Waring	Net growth in J2 Membership (Quarterly)	High	-	-6.67% (2853 members)	-5.17% (2899 members)	Qtr4 (3,250 members) 6.31% Annual	The annual target is 3250 members and is being impacted on as detailed above.	

## Priority 4: A Town Centre for All

### Progress Summary

For this quarter, the results demonstrate a varying level of activity and further comments are detailed in this report.

A summary of progress with planned activities for this priority from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Prepare a Town Centre Strategy**

The Council has been successful in progressing to the next stage of the Future High Street Fund and has been invited to take part in the Town Deal. As part of the Future High Streets Fund the Council has commissioned Stantec to assist in the development of the Business Case in line with MHCLG requirements, initial plans were submitted to MHCLG for in quarter 4 and comments are expected over the forthcoming weeks to direct the development of the bid in 2020/21.

Partners have come together to establish the Town Deal Board, which has had a couple of meetings in Quarter 4. See further update below in Kidsgrove Town Centre Investment Plan.

- **Market**

The Service Improvement Plan for the market was presented at the June Cabinet and also for consideration at the Economic Development & Enterprise Scrutiny meeting where it was approved with recommendations noted and for delivery in 12 months. A new Town Centre Officer has been appointed and progress is being made in delivering on the improvement plan, this has included moving some of the stalls to the southern side of the Guildhall where there is greater footfall and the stalls can be used in conjunction with the farmers market, plans have been made to focus on specialist markets such as the successful Continental Market, the Antiques Forum has also trialled trading on a Saturday morning on the lower end of the market this was due to recommence in April 2020 but all market activity is currently on hold due to the Covid-19 lockdown. A contactor has been appointed for the provision of lighting to market stalls in the upper market area.

- **Business Support**

Work continues in signposting business queries to the Growth Hub and maintenance of Business support pages on website. The 2019 Business Boost competition has been completed with over 20 businesses taking part in 4 prize categories. This quarter the Business pages on the website have been updated in the light of Covid-19 to signpost businesses to sources of information and support and an online enquiry form has been established for businesses to use. To date approximately 450 businesses have contacted the Council for business advice. During March, the Resources and Support directorate staff spent much time preparing for the implementation of the Business Rates relief scheme and for retail, hospitality and leisure and Covid-19 business grants.

- **Parking Policy**

A review and strategy has been produced, this was considered by the Environment, Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee in September. Cabinet endorsed the Strategy in October and following further consultation with the Business Improvement district and the Town Centre Board the strategy has been adopted. The Council is working to establish card payments on the pay and display car parks which has included the purchase of 12 ticket machines, these were due to be installed at the end of March however the manufacturer has unfortunately placed production on hold until the Covid-19 lockdown has ended.

- **Property diversification**

The Council has produced a specification for a commercial review of our stock which has been out to procurement; next quarter specialist consultants will be working to complete the review and give recommendations on future options appraisals for our commercial stock in the town centre.

**Progress Summary continued**

▪ **Establish Town Centre Communications Group**

The New Vic Theatre has now joined the core group which consists of the Borough Council, Business Improvement District, HitMix Radio, Newcastle College and Newcastle-based information platform BaBaBaboon. The group seeks to meet on a regular basis and the goal is to share and jointly promote positive messages and information about Newcastle town centre.

• **Develop a Kidsgrove Town Centre Investment Plan**

Partners have come together to form a Kidsgrove Town Deal Board which has met several times in Quarter 4. A readiness checklist has been submitted to MHCLG outlining the town’s preparedness to develop new plans. The Board have moved forward to commission appropriate consultants to meet the requirements of the Town Deal Investment Plans in line with MHCLG guidance. To that end AECOM have recently been commissioned to lead and develop both the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove Town Investment Plans. AECOM will be working in partnership with the two Town Boards, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, wider organisations and the area’s communities to deliver the Town Investment Plans. These Investment Plans will review and build on existing plans where appropriate; create the conditions for further investment; and realise lasting and sustainable benefits for the area’s residents and businesses.

Since the mobilisation of AECOM and their subcontractor BE Group progress have been made to engage with the two Boards including a Vision survey and development of the baseline socio-economic context. The key next steps are for the consultants to attend the Newcastle and Kidsgrove Boards to identify key opportunities and a long list of project ideas.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 4 2018-19	Result Qtr 3 2019-20	Result Qtr 4 2019-20	Target Qtr 4 2019-20	How have we performed?	Status
4.1 New	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Car parking usage:- Number of tickets purchased	High	-	114,813	100,209	-	The figure shown is for an 11 weeks period only instead of the normal 13 week period.	-
4.2 New	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Footfall	High	810,236	826,648	675,820	-	The footfall figure has decreased this quarter due to the Covid 19 impact.	-
4.3	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Average stall occupancy rate for markets	High	41%	43%	-	60%	Unable to provide the figures at this time.	-

**N/A** Performance information not available at this time or due to be provided at a later date



Performance is not on target but direction of travel is positive

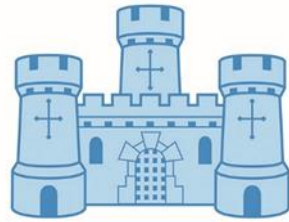


Performance is not on target where targets have been set



Performance is on or above target

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**NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Cabinet Forward Plan: Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council**

#### **Notice of Key Decisions to be taken under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings & Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

This Plan gives 28 days' notice of Key Decisions which we are expecting to take over the next few months. Councils cannot take Key Decisions without first giving 28 days' notice, unless an urgent decision is required. Urgent Key Decisions may be taken under the urgency procedures set out in the Council's Constitution. A decision notice for each Key Decision made is published within 6 days of it having been made.

"Key decisions" are defined as those Executive (Cabinet) decisions which are likely:

- a. to result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings of £100,000 or more (in the case of Revenue) and £250,000 or more (in the case of Capital); and/or
- b. to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

This Forward Plan also contains details of other important Cabinet decisions that we are expecting to take even if they do not meet this definition.

Whilst the majority of these decisions taken at meetings held in public, some decisions may be taken in private meetings because they deal with confidential information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If we intend to take a decision in private, that will be noted below with reasons.

If you object to a decision being taken in private, you can tell us why by emailing [DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or contacting the address below. Any representations received at least 8 working days before the meeting will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be reported verbally to the meeting.

The Cabinet is made up of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members with the following portfolios:

Leader of the Council (Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships)	Councillor Simon Tagg
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Finance & Efficiency)	Councillor Stephen Sweeney
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Community Safety & Well Being)	Councillor Helena Maxfield
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Environment & Recycling)	Councillor Trevor Johnson
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Leisure, Culture & Heritage)	Councillor Jill Waring
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Planning & Growth)	Councillor Paul Northcott

#### Exempt Information Categories under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals an authority proposes;
  - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime

Copies of the Council's Constitution, agendas and reports relevant to any key decision may be accessed on the Council's website [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or may be viewed during normal office hours. Copies or extracts can be obtained on payment of a fee (unless the publication contains exempt information).

For all enquiries, please contact:-

**The Chief Executive's Directorate, Castle House, Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1BL  
Telephone 01782 742222 Email: [DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)**



<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Brief Description of Report</b>	<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	<b>Intended Decision Date</b>	<b>Relevant Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Reason for Determining in Private Session (if applicable)</b>
Planning Advice and Support Changes	To review charges for the provision of pre-application advice to prospective developers	Planning and Growth	20 May 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Q4 Finance & Performance Report	To report on Q4 Finance & Performance	Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships	20 May 2020	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A
Local Enforcement Plan	To review the existing plan and identify new targets for prioritising planning enforcement work	Planning and Growth	10 June 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
CV-19 Update and Recovery Plan	To report update on financial impacts and service delivery, response & recovery	Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships	10 June 2020	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A
Provisional Financial Outturn 2019/20	To report on the provisional financial outturn	Finance & Efficiency	8 July 2020	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A

Knutton Masterplan	To consider a report on the master planning of Knutton village.	Planning and Growth	8 July 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	Knutton and Silverdale	N/A
Crematorium Grounds Extension	Proposal to design an extension to the existing Crematorium Grounds	Environment and Recycling	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	Bradwell	N/A
Town Centre Plans	To update on Future High-street Fund and Town Deals	Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Open Space Strategy Addendum	An addendum to the existing Open Space Strategy is required to ensure that the strategy remains current through the life of the Joint Local Plan.	Environment and Recycling	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Affordable Funerals	To consider introducing affordable funerals.	Environment and Recycling	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Air Quality OBC	To authorise the submission of an air quality outline business case	Environment and Recycling	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Gym Refurbishments	To authorise refurbishments of the	Environment and Recycling	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and	Town	N/A

	J2 gym facility			Place		
Q1 Finance and Performance Report	To receive a report in relation to Q1 of 2020	Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships	9 September 2020	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A
Self-Build Register	To receive a report on the publication of a register of land for Self-Build opportunities	Planning and Growth	9 September 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22	To receive proposals for the 2021/22 MTFS	Finance & Efficiency	9 September 2020	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A

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