

CABINET

Wednesday, 8th September, 2021

Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	Stephen Sweeney, Gill Heesom, Trevor Johnson and Paul Northcott
Officers	David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Simon McEneny, Daniel Dickinson, Denise French and Sarah Wilkes
Apologies	Councillor Jill Waring

146. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jill Waring.

147. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

148. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July be approved as a correct record.

149. **REVIEW OF COVID IMPACT**

Cabinet considered a report outlining the overall impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the council; its services and the borough along with the priority actions being taken to ensure the borough was well placed to recover.

Cabinet had been kept updated throughout the pandemic with regular reports on how the council had responded and the recovery measures in place. There had been multi-agency work in which the Leader and Deputy Leader had been involved. The report outlined the economic impact on the borough and the impact on the community.

The pandemic had impacted council services to varying degrees as outlined in the report. There had been income loss due to closure of services such as J2 and lack of car park income, there had been increased costs due to a requirement to undertake additional activities to support communities; the council had secured over £5m funding from government to cover income losses and additional activities to mitigate the impact.

The council had resolved to grant the Freedom of the Borough to the Royal Stoke Hospital in recognition of the hard work of all hospital staff, that was still ongoing. There would also be work with partners to ensure a fitting memorial to those who had lost their lives to Covid.

Resolved: That:

- (a) The impact of the Covid19 Pandemic on the community of Newcastle under Lyme, and on Council services, be noted.
- (b) The Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee be invited to review the impact of the pandemic on Council services

150. WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES

Cabinet considered an update report on the latest position regarding problematic odours in the borough associated with Walley's Quarry.

The Chief Executive explained that an Abatement Notice had been served on 13 August on Walley's Quarry Ltd; the Notice had subsequently been appealed. Complaints had reduced slightly with current figures showing 2329 complaints to the Environment Agency and 833 to the council during August. In relation to Air Quality monitoring the site at Galingale View was consistently producing the highest readings. The council had procured two Jerome hand held monitoring devices to be deployed in selected residents' homes or businesses for extended periods of time.

The Chief Executive explained that the map showing the 'Nuisance designated zone' was part of the Abatement Notice which required that the council define the area within which the nuisance was required to be abated.

Resolved: that Cabinet notes that:

- (a) despite the further works that have taken place at Walleys Quarry landfill site, a significant level of complaints continue to be received from residents of the Borough and air monitoring data continues to show odour levels in exceedance of annoyance levels;
- (b) officers have served an Abatement Notice on Walleys Quarry Ltd in relation to the Statutory Nuisance caused by the site;
- (c) an appeal against the Abatement Notice has been lodged in the Magistrates' Court;
- (d) the ongoing work being taken to address the issues being experienced by residents and businesses.

151. LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for a period of not less than 6 weeks to undertake public consultation on the draft Local Plan Issues and Strategic Options Paper.

Following the decision to produce a Local Plan for Newcastle under Lyme work had progressed and the council was now ready to seek views on issues of concern to the plan area and how local and national development needs could be met. This was the first key stage in developing a Local Plan. The draft Issues and Strategic Options Paper was structured around the vision and 12 strategic objectives as set out in the report. This stage was not site specific; a later stage in the Plan process would include a call for sites.

Resolved: That:

- (a) Delegated power be granted to the Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, to finalise the public consultation arrangements and associated documentation for the Issues and Strategic Options Paper.

- (b) A period of not less than six weeks public consultation be approved to conclude no later than Tuesday 14th December 2021 on the draft Issues and Strategic Options Paper and the publication of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
- (c) A report be submitted to a future meeting summarising the findings of the consultation event.

152. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2021

Cabinet considered a report setting out a proposed Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2021. The purpose of the statement was to set out how and when consultation would be undertaken by the planning department; this included consultation with local people as well as businesses, land owners and developers plus statutory agencies and local interest groups.

The SCI had been reviewed and updated in September 2020 to ensure it complied with current legislation and reflected the circumstances around the Covid pandemic. It had previously reflected the situation whereby a joint Local Plan was being produced with Stoke on Trent City Council. Since the council had decided to produce its own Local Plan the SCI had been amended to reflect that decision. The draft had been consulted on for 6 weeks closing on 31 May 2021.

Resolved: That the Newcastle-under-Lyme Statement of Community Involvement 2021 be approved and adopted.

153. CAR PARKING STRATEGY - 2019-2029 UPDATE

Cabinet considered an update on the council's Car Parking Strategy 2019 – 2029, setting out the plans and ambitions for car parks for the ten year period. The current strategy had been adopted in 2019 but it was considered appropriate to review and refresh it to ensure it supported both the users of car parks and town centre businesses while also ensuring operational costs were met. The council was working with partners including the Business Improvement District and was maximising the use of technology.

It was noted that new ticket machines had been installed to enable users to pay by card; there was also the option to pay by phone. It was proposed that free parking be offered at Midway in the run up to Christmas from 9.00am – 1.00pm and thereafter the charge would be £1; this was suggested to be in place from 1 October 2021 – 5 January 2022.

The council had written to the Secretary of State to request Business Rate Relief for car parks in the borough to promote the back to business following the impact of the pandemic but a response was still awaited.

Resolved: That:

- (a) The update to the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2019-2029 be noted.
- (b) The recommendation for Christmas Car Parking charges be approved and includes the Town Centre Covid Recovery free car parking on the Midway as noted within the report and authority be delegated to the Executive Director – Commercial Development & Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth to implement these charges.

154. JUBILEE2 UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report on Jubilee2. The report outlined the governance arrangements for the project management of the build, the key supporting services and the procurement process which saw Morgan Sindall appointed as the main contractor. The building had been signed off in December 2011.

The report outlined the background to the various defects and issues that had arisen since 2012 and the measures to address these. The report also listed the lessons learned during that process.

Cabinet was informed that an intrusive building survey would take place between 16 – 18 September and the results would be available at the end of the month.

Resolved: That:

- (a) It is noted that since 2012 there have been a number of long standing and/or significant building defects that have had an adverse impact on the reputation of Jubilee2. It is further noted that since 2017 significant progress has been made to resolve some long standing building issues at Jubilee2
- (b) That Officers of the Borough Council alongside Morgan Sindall complete the intrusive Building survey to identify any other unknown building defects that may cause future failures of the fabric of the building or failure of fixed electrical and mechanical plant or equipment prior to their normal life expectancy.
- (c) Officers of the Borough Council alongside Morgan Sindall having completed the above survey establish and agree appropriate corrective actions where building defects are identified.

155. PROCUREMENT OF A CUSTOMER E-PAYMENT SYSTEM

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to enter into a new partnership contract for a customer e-payment system. The system enabled customers to make payments online, over the phone or face to face. It was maintained by Capita and the council was in partnership with a number of other local councils to minimise costs.

Resolved: That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Finance (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to enter into a new partnership contract for a Customer E-Payment System.

156. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FIRST QUARTER (APR-JUN) 2021-22.

Cabinet considered a report outlining the finance and performance review for the first quarter of 2021-22. Performance for the quarter showed a positive picture overall. The environmental health service was facing challenges due to the need to prioritise Covid activities. Separate food waste collections were increasing. The customer contact centre performance had improved from the previous quarter and the service had been busy with queries relating to various services including elections and grants. The average number of days per employee lost to sickness continued to be low despite Covid. Staff turnover rates were also low. There was increasing footfall in town centres and in Newcastle it was hoped that the specialist markets and the activities organised by the BID would see a continuing improvement.

Resolved: That the contents of the report and Appendices A and B be noted and Cabinet will continue to monitor and challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.

157. **FORWARD PLAN**

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

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received.

158. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 3.50 pm