

CABINET

Tuesday, 14th March, 2023
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Johnson
Heesom Fear

Apologies: Councillor(s) J Waring

Officers:	David Adams	Executive Director - Sustainable Environment
	Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer
	Simon McEneny	Executive Director - Growth and Development
	Daniel Dickinson	Head of Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer
	Sarah Wilkes	Head of Finance / S151 Officer

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 7th February 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **WALLEYS QUARRY UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented an update report on the current position regarding odours associated with Walleys' Quarry including Key Performance Indicators provided by the operator. Complaints data and air quality monitoring records showed that the situation had been steadily improving compared to two years ago with consistent figures being recorded.

The period afforded to Walleys Quarry to comply with the requirements of the Abatement Notice had just ended. Officers were liaising regularly with Walleys Quarry and monitoring the site carefully to detect and deal with problematic odours.

Cabinet - 14/03/23

The Leader thanked officers, seconded by the Deputy Leader who added that while progress made were encouraging the efforts should be sustained as the odours were still being reported by residents. This was echoed by Cllr Fear.

The Leader reminded the meeting that information and reports referred to could be found on the Council's website. A meeting of the Walleys Quarry Liaison Forum scheduled on the 16th March would also be available to watch online.

Resolved: that the contents of the report be noted.

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4. HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY 2023

The Community Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder presented a report on the Housing Assistance Policy which sets out how the Council will offer financial assistance towards improving and adapting homes when these do not meet residents' needs. The policy is aimed at improving residents' health and wellbeing, and ensure they can stay in their own home for as long as possible.

The Leader expressed his satisfaction over the policy.

Resolved:

- (i) that the proposed Housing Assistance Policy 2023 as set out in appendix A, be approved;
- (ii) that authority be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to make minor amendments to the policy;
- (iii) that authority be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing to revise, prioritise or withdraw discretionary assistance as appropriate, considering the council's available resources and annual funding allocations.

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5. ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME (EBSS) ALTERNATIVE FUNDING AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FUND 2023

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the current government grant support schemes in relation to the cost of living crisis.

While the Council Tax Support Fund was previously approved and has now been spent, the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) Alternative Fund and Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund are two new schemes aimed at supporting people who were unable to benefit from the former.

All necessary information is available on the Council's website.

Resolved: that the acceptance and distribution of the EBSS Alternative Funding, Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund and Council Tax Support Fund 2023 grants be approved and Officers, in consultation with the

Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be authorised to distribute the grants via the mechanisms prescribed by the government in support of households in the Borough impacted by the cost of living crisis.

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6. FUTURE DELIVERY OF DEBT AND BENEFIT ADVICE SERVICES

The Community Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder presented the report on the Future Delivery of Debt and Benefit Advice Services recommending that the Council continues to offer financial wellbeing and debt advice to vulnerable residents.

The Leader welcomed the proposal commenting that there had been an increase in people seeking advice in the borough and more particularly so with the current cost of living situation and rise of energy bills.

Resolved:

- (i) that the proposal to re-procure the Financial and Wellbeing Service be approved; and
- (ii) that the Head of Legal and Governance Services, in consultation with the Community Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, be delegated authority to award the contract arising from the procurement.

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7. PROCUREMENT OF FLEET - SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

The Environment and Recycling Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the Procurement of Fleet proposing to replace the current street sweeping and refuse collection vehicles with larger capacity alternatives. Electric vehicles are to be considered in the procurement process.

The Leader and Deputy Leader welcomed the proposal, commenting on current litter picking initiatives and the importance of not dropping litter in the first place.

Resolved:

- (i) that the scheduled replacement of vehicles within the Streetscene and Recycling & Waste service, namely street sweeping, and refuse collection vehicles, be approved;
- (ii) that the use of the Hertfordshire NEPO frameworks for the procurement of 7 Street Sweepers and the ESPO NEPO frameworks for the procurement of 14 Refuse Collection vehicles, be approved, delegating authority to the Head of Sustainable Environment in consultation with Portfolio holder For Recycling & Environment for the award of contract on the completion of the procurement and evaluation process.

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8. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS 2022-23

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on Irrecoverable Items for the financial year 2022-23 highlighting key figures:

- the debtors proposed for write off total an amount of £51,812; the bad debt provision allowing for £36,071, the balance will be met through budgeted contributions;
- the National Non Domestic Rates accounts proposed for write off total £180,026, of which the Council's share amounts to £72,010; this is within the estimated balance declared and less than last year.

The Leader commented on the figures being lower than usually and the Council's efforts to make these as low as possible.

Resolved: that the items details at appendix 1 be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

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9. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - 3RD QUARTER 2022-23

The Deputy Leader presented the Financial Position Balance Report highlighting major projects funding received. The revenue budget and capital budget at the end of the year will be balanced.

The Leader then introduced the Performance Monitoring Reports providing indicators of the performance of individual council services against set priorities:

- priority 1 – One Council delivering for Local People;
- priority 2 – A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough;
- priority 3 – Healthy, Active and Safe Communities;
- priority 4 – Town Centres for All.

80% of indicators are meeting their targets. The Leader went through each set of priorities, inviting portfolio holders to comment. As information appeared to be missing for quarter 4 the Leader requested that the reports be updated in readiness for the Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader also commented on progress made in priorities and actions showing the Council is pushing ahead for the regeneration of the town, trying to make the borough safer, cleaner and greener.

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

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10. FORWARD PLAN

The Leader went through the list of items scheduled for upcoming meetings.

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be received.

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11. URGENT BUSINESS

The Leader wished to bring to members' attention that it was the last Cabinet meeting for Operational Services Executive Director Dave Adams who is leaving the Council – thanking him on behalf of the Cabinet and Council as a whole for his work and dedication over the years.

The Deputy Leader seconded the Leader, adding thanks on behalf of the residents of Newcastle for the great service provided to the borough.

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12. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

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13. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Resolved: that the confidential appendix be noted.

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.50 pm