

CABINET

Tuesday, 7th November, 2023
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Hutchison Skelding
Heesom Fear

Officers: Martin Hamilton Chief Executive
Geoff Durham Civic & Member Support Officer
Simon McEneny Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Wilkes Service Director - Finance /
S151 Officer
Anthony Harold Service Director - Legal /
Monitoring Officer
Nesta Barker Service Director - Regulatory
Services
Craig Jordan Service Director - Planning
Georgina Evans-Stadward Service Director - Strategy,
People and Performance
Paul Dutton Senior Media 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 17 October, 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **WALLEYS QUARRY UPDATE REPORT**

The Leader introduced a report on Walleys Quarry odour issues. This was the monthly report giving an update on issues at Walley's Quarry.

The Chief Executive presented the report and confirmed that there was still a downward trend of complaints to the Environment Agency (EA). October saw 87 complaints compared to 206 for the same month last year.

There had been the issue of the EA's calibration of the three MMF machines. On 19 October, the two MMF's, on sites one and two had been calibrated. Gallingle had been done in September so the report now had data from all three monitoring stations.

MMF one was showing that it was recording Hydrogen Sulphide above the annoyance threshold for almost fourteen percent of the time during the last week of October.

Due to the problems encountered with MMF data, the Council had been deploying officers to try and witness the odour and carried out assessments. During October, approximately 54 assessments were done and odours were picked up on some visits. The assessments and using the hand held monitoring devices did not find odours that were above the annoyance threshold.

The EA were continuing to check if the data over the last few years could be corrected so that a truer picture could be seen of what the Hydrogen Sulphide Levels should have been.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning stated that it was a shame that a lot of the past data had been lost but hoped that the data available now was reliable. Concerns were raised regarding the MMF 1 site's large rise in recording instances and the rise in complaints through October. The Chief Executive confirmed that the data was monitored closely and that it did fluctuate with weather conditions.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth asked if there was any way that Walleys Quarry could be put on notice for this and ask them what their plans were for dealing with it. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had regular dialogue with Walleys Quarry and any complaints were passed through with the Council's comments. The Leader asked if there was a possibility, through the agreement with Walleys Quarry and the Abatement Notice process, of sending a warning to them regarding the increasing figures. The Chief Executive confirmed that Walleys Quarry had been written to in the past raising concerns and would continue to do so as part of the process followed.

The Leader stated that there was still a lot of concern in the community about the EA's failure on the monitoring and it was hoped that the Council would see retrospective amended data. Also, at the previous Cabinet meeting the Leader had mentioned that there would be a Staffordshire County Council Health Scrutiny meeting held in Castle House and Newcastle Councillors would be invited to attend. This would look into health issues associated with the Quarry, which was a main concern for a lot of people and to talk to the health agencies.

It was understood that, at present, the EA had said that they would not be attending but may send in a report. The Leader asked, through the SCG, that the EA be asked to attend the meeting.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. NEWCASTLE TOWN DEAL - PROJECTS IN KNUTTON

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report providing an update on the progress with Town Deal Funded projects in Knutton.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.1 which outlined the project elements. Reference was made to a confidential appendix, giving financial details which would be considered at the end of the meeting in closed session.

The Leader stated that the multi-million pound redevelopment as part of the Town Deal showed that it was not just Newcastle town centre that was receiving attention.

These were ambitious proposals, working with partners to put the heart back into Knutton.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress on the delivery of Knutton Village Masterplan be noted.
 - (ii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be authorised to complete the disposal of land in Knutton village at High Street as indicated in Appendix B to Aspire Housing for the purposes of building new housing within the village.
 - (iii) That the the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be authorised to complete the disposal of land at Knutton village as indicated in Appendix C to Staffordshire County Council to enable the expansion of Newcastle Enterprise Centre.
 - (iv) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be authorised to develop proposals for a new Village Hall at Knutton on land adjacent to the Aspire site, as indicated on Appendix D and to submit a planning application.
 - (v) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to seek expressions of interest from organisations interested in undertaking management of a new Village Hall in Knutton and to complete any such agreements required to enable the lease or management of the new Village Hall to be agreed.

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5. **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing introduced a report seeking approval of a Temporary Accommodation Policy.

Temporary accommodation requirements were rising both locally and nationally, due in part to the lack of affordable housing and the cost of living crisis. Members were referred to Section 4 of the Policy which outlined the types of temporary accommodation.

Temporary accommodation costs were rising, both in the cost of the accommodation and the higher numbers of homeless presentations.

Reference was made to paragraph 2.3 which showed the number of people being dealt with.

The Council was working with housing providers to increase the supply of suitable accommodation and funding had been given for a homeless hub.

The Leader stated that the Council had signed up to the Government's commitment to enable as many people as possible to not be in difficulty.

Resolved: That the proposed Temporary Accommodation Policy be approved.

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6. **FUTURE DELIVERY OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report seeking authority to procure a renewed Internal Audit service.

The service was currently being delivered by Stoke on Trent City Council which had now ended and therefore a new supplier was required.

The Leader stated that this was a necessary process to ensure that the Council had an internal audit service in place.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the requirement of an Internal Audit Service be noted.
 - (ii) That officers be authorised to conduct a procurement exercise to tender for an Internal Audit Service to provide the function.
 - (iii) That authorisation to award contract following tender evaluation be delegated to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Service Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and the portfolio holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth.

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7. **REVISED AGENCY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL**

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced a report seeking to include agency provision across the organisation and to enter into contract with WM Temps (in partnership with West Midlands Employers and Opus).

In May/June 2023 the Sustainable Environment Portfolio had staffing issues. The shortage of drivers led the Council to look at dual driver/loader roles which was instigated and has proved to be a success. The Council looks to employ students in the summer and winter holiday times. This had been used in the past but sickness and other issues had meant, at times the number of additional staff did not have the desired impact. Agency staff were more efficient to call upon to cover peaks in demand for recycling and waste and streetscene.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.3 which outlined the procurement process.

The Leader stated that it was important to have the correct procedures in place to address any issues as they arose.

Resolved: That it be agreed to contract with WM Temps for the Temporary Agency Provision.

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8. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - SECOND QUARTER 2023-24

Cabinet considered the financial position for Quarter Two and the regular performance review report for the same quarter – July – September 2023/24.

At the end of the second quarter the general fund budget showed a positive variance of £7000 had been achieved and the projected outcome on the General Fund Revenue account for the year was £16.836m. This represented a positive outturn of £21,000 for the year.

The performance report had been produced using new business intelligence tools in order to automate and improve the monitoring, analysis and reporting of Council performance. The Council was up to 79% on target with the new indicators. More information was given in paragraph 1.6.

The Leader went through the report which showed the performance indicators against the Council's priorities, bringing in the Portfolio Holders as and when appropriate.

Resolved: That the contents of the attached report and appendices be noted and the Council's service and financial performance for this period continue to be monitored and challenged.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. FORWARD PLAN

The Leader went through the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

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10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

11. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

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12. PROJECTS IN KNUTTON - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Consideration was given to the confidential appendix attached to the Newcastle Town Deal – Projects in Knutton report.

Resolved: That the confidential appendix be received and noted.

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.53 pm