

## CABINET

Tuesday, 4th June, 2024  
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

**Councillors:** Sweeney Fear Hutchison  
Heesom Skelding

**Officers:** Craig Turner Finance Manager / Deputy  
S151 Officer  
Geoff Durham Civic & Member Support Officer  
Simon McEneny Interim Chief Executive  
Anthony Harold Service Director - Legal &  
Governance / Monitoring Officer  
Paul Dutton Senior Media Officer  
Vanessa Higgins Policy and Strategy Business  
Manager

### 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 23 April, 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

### 3. **WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES**

The Leader introduced an update report on Walleys Quarry looking at the complaints, monitoring information, actions of the Environment Agency (EA) and the Borough Council.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that there had been a rise in complaint data during April and May. Most of the spikes in complaints had been made at weekends. The Council had been in talks with Walleys Quarry to see if the reason for this could be found.

Where there had been ten or more odour complaints in one day it was referred to as an 'odour event' and there had been 5 'events' in April with 25 complaints in one day on the 1st. There were 15 'odour events' in May with twenty nine complaints being received on the 21st.

Over the winter months there had been deterioration in the odour conditions and had that had continued into April and May.

Since the previous Cabinet meeting, the Council had written to the Secretary of State and were awaiting a response. In addition, leading environmental experts had been

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appointed to prepare expert evidence with our King's Counsel in preparation for the commencement of legal proceedings upon permission from the Secretary of State.

In terms of Scrutiny, the Working Group was continuing to meet and a Members Briefing Session was held on 1 May.

The data adjustment that the Council was expecting from the Environment Agency (EA) still had not been received to date and was still being chased.

Officers were continuing to monitor the site with sniff tests and monitoring equipment.

The Leader stated that there were three issues. The first being the upsurge in complaints regarding the increase in odours around the weekends which indicated that the operator was not running the site in a good way to stop the odours. The EA were not using the powers that they had to deal with the issues.

From the Council's point of view, a decision had been made to move forward on legal action and the Secretary of State had been written to. Unfortunately, the General Election had intervened in that and therefore it was likely that a response would not be received until after 4 July.

Regarding the Calibration issue and incorrect data, the Leader stated that the information had been awaited for many months. It was disappointing that the deadlines that were set kept being pushed back by DEFRA and the EA. The Council would continue to press for that information.

Councillor Fear suggested that the spikes in complaints at weekends could be down to more people being at home, depriving them of relaxation time.

Members were disappointed with the non-receipt of the correct data and that the change made in management at the EA had not brought about a better response to the requests made by the Council.

The Leader asked the Interim Chief Executive, at the next meeting with the operator, to express the Council's disappointment that the odours were rising again.

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

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## **4. REFRESH OF THE COUNCIL'S SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY**

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced a report regarding the refreshed and updated Sustainable Environment Strategy including progress with the Action Plan and Road Map to net zero.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.6 of the report where the Council was now 'on its way' and doing well on its journey to net zero.

Positive actions that were being commissioned and/or completed were highlighted at paragraph 2.3 of the report. The Council had made extensive progress in decarbonising its owned buildings and these actions were outlined at paragraph 2.6.

The Leader welcomed the Strategy and the road map setting out the route to net zero and also the wider carbon emissions for 2050. The Leader stated that it was key for the Council to work with its partners across Staffordshire to achieve this and to keep costs down.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth confirmed that there would be a considerable cost for these actions but it was all included in the Capital Programme.

Referring to paragraph 2.6 – bullet point 2, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage stated that J2 would make savings of £61,000 in the heating costs of its pools in the first year.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the refreshed Sustainable Environment Strategy and associated delivery plan be approved.
  - (ii) That the refreshed sustainable Environment Strategy and associated action plan be referred to the Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny and comments.

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**5. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE CASTLE CAR PARK PAYMENT SYSTEM**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth introduced a report seeking to delegate the awarding of the contract for the provision of the payment system at Castle Car Park.

Councillor Sweeney stated that as well as card and app payments there would still be the facility to pay by cash in order to cater for everyone.

The Leader stated that payments by card or app would not have been possible on the old Midway Car Park due to the way that it was set out.

- Resolved:** That the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to award a contract for the installation, management and maintenance of payment systems at Castle Car Park.

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**6. CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERIES RULES AND REGULATIONS UPDATE**

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced a report which enabled Cabinet to review key issues relating to Bereavement Services.

The Council did not currently offer scattering of ashes. The introduction of a scattering area would give another option for cremated remains and would be included in the cremation fee.

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The report also looked at the Welfare Funeral Policy. The Council was responsible for making funeral arrangements for anyone who died within the Borough where no other arrangements were in place. If the deceased passed away outside of the Borough boundary it would be the responsibility of the local authority in who's area they died. If the person died in hospital with no relatives or other arrangements it would be the responsibility of the hospital to arrange the funeral.

**Resolved:** That the following policies be adopted to be operated alongside the Crematorium and cemeteries Rules and Regulations:

- Scattering of Ashes Policy
- Welfare Funerals

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### **7. TAXI TARIFFS - PROPOSED INCREASE**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth introduced a report seeking to ratify a decision of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee to amend the Council set maximum metered tariffs for Hackney Carriages. The fares were last increased in 2019.

After midnight, Hackney Carriage drivers could charge a higher fare for journeys and had requested that the time be brought forward to 10pm. The Licensing and Public Protection Committee met them half way, agreeing on 11pm.

**Resolved:** That Members approve or amend the proposed variation of the table of metered fares charged by Hackney Carriages.

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### **8. STAFFORDSHIRE LEADERS BOARD**

The Leader introduced a report updating Cabinet regarding the latest position of the Staffordshire Leader's Board and the integration of Stoke on Trent City Council onto the Board.

**Resolved:** That the Staffordshire Leader's Board's Constitution be approved for a Joint Committee.

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### **9. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER 2023-24**

Cabinet considered the regular performance review report for Quarter 4, January – March 2024.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth reported that the Council's revenue budget was a £7,000 saving on the year.

The Leader stated that overall the Council was 72% on target with its performance indicators.

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

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10. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Leader went through the Cabinet Forward Plan.

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

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11. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

12. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There was no confidential business.

**Councillor Simon Tagg  
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 3.56 pm