

## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 21st November, 2018

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

**Present:-** The Mayor - Councillor Mrs Gill Heesom – in the Chair

**Councillors:**

S. Burgess	B. Panter
G. Burnett	A. Parker
Miss J Cooper	B. Proctor
Mrs J Cooper	M. Reddish
J. Cooper	K. Robinson
S. Dymond	A. Rout
A. Fear	E. Shenton
A. Fox-Hewitt	C. Spence
D. Harrison	M. Stubbs
M. Holland	S. Sweeney
E. Horsfall	J Tagg
B. Johnson	S Tagg
T. Johnson	J Waring
D. Jones	P Waring
T. Kearon	G White
A. Lawley	S White
H. Maxfield	I. Wilkes
S. Moffat	G Williams
P. Northcott	J Williams
M. Olszewski	R. Wright

**Officers**

Executive Director Operational Services- David Adams,  
Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) - Neale Clifton,  
Geoff Durham - Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer,  
Phil Jones - Head of Communications,  
John Tradewell - Acting Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service and  
Interim Executive Director - Resources and Support Services - Jan Willis

**Also in Attendance**

Mr Martin Hamilton

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors' Gardner, Pickup and Walklate.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lawley declared an interest in item 7 of the agenda as an employee of BET 365. Councillors Jones and Kearon declared interests as employees of Keele University.

3. **MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Special Council meeting and Council meeting held on 5 September, 2018 be agreed as correct records.

**4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended the Remembrance Day Parade and also, those who had supported her Christmas Craft Faye at the Guildhall which had raised £400 for her charity fund.

Members were advised of three upcoming events; the Chinese Banquet Charity Night, a Charity Backpack at Morrisons and the Civic Carol Service at Saint Andrew's in the Westlands.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Leader introduced a report seeking Council's agreement to appoint a Chief Executive.

The Leader introduced Martin Hamilton who had held many senior roles and was an experienced Local Government Director.

Members who had been on the selection panel all welcomed Martin and were looking forward to working with him.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That Martin Hamilton be appointed as the Council's Chief Executive (including the roles of Head of paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration officer) such an appointment to commence from a date to be agreed between Mr Hamilton and the Leader of the Council.
  - (ii) That Mr Hamilton be appointed on a salary of £105,000 per annum (plus election expenses).

**6. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING SECTION 151 OFFICER**

The Leader introduced a report seeking Council's agreement to appoint an Acting Section 151 Officer. Ms Jan Willis had been appointed as Interim Executive Director – Resources and Support Services in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader. The leader assured Members that this appointment did not affect the position of the suspended officer.

The Leader thanked the Council's Head of Finance – Dave Roberts who had stepped up to the role for a short period.

Councillor Sweeney seconded the Leader's recommendation stating that Jan was an experienced officer and an excellent choice for the role.

Councillor Kearon raised concerns about the appointment process whilst stating that it was not a criticism of Ms Willis.

The Leader stated that any financial implications would come from the Director's role.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That Jan Willis be appointed as the Council's Acting

Section 151 Officer while the permanent post holder remains suspended.

- (ii) That, for the purposes of the Council's Financial Regulations, Jan Willis be authorised to take any decisions or actions or issue any authorisations that would normally be carried out by the Executive Director – Resources and Support Services or that may normally only be undertaken by an employee of the Council.

For: 24  
Abstentions:18

## **7. GAMBLING POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney introduced a report on the Gambling Policy 2019-2021 which had to be reviewed every three years. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.1 of the report which listed various amendments.

**Resolved:** That the Gambling Policy 2019-2021 be approved.

## **8. PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency introduced a report on Public Protection Sub-Committee Arrangements.

Members were advised of an amendment that was required to the report. Paragraph 3.2g should read as a quorum of three.

Amendments had been requested to the timetable as the current arrangements clashed with other meetings and commitments of Members.

Councillor John Williams asked the Chair of the Licensing and Public Protection committee and the Leader of the Council to monitor this as the Committee had changed in a fundamental way with three Members making a decision. Councillor Williams asked for training to be given to Members on how the meeting should be conducted.

The leader agreed that the meetings would be monitored and as the Annual Council approached, further changes could be considered if required.

**Resolved:** That the arrangements for the Public Protection Sub-Committee be approved.

## **9. REVISED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency introduced a report on the Revised Financial Regulations. Members were advised that these needed to be reviewed regularly and revised as and when necessary. The post of Head of Business Improvement, Central Services and Partnerships had now been removed from the structure with the role being passed to the Chief Executive.

**Resolved:** (i) That the revised Financial Regulations and Procedures be approved.

- (ii) That, on an annual basis the financial regulations and Procedures be reviewed and presented to the Constitution and Member Support Working Group for consideration.

**10. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg submitted a report which provided an update to Members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet together with the Forward Plan.

The Statement was taken a paragraph at a time to allow for questions to be asked.

Councillor Robinson raised a point from the 7 November Cabinet meeting regarding the underperforming of the Planning function and asked if this was the result of a lack of staffing.

The Leader agreed that there was a long term shortage of staff and a deal was currently being put together in relation to market supplements. The Leader stated that the section had recently acquired a new member of staff.

With regard to the Council Plan, Councillor Holland said he was happy that one of the Council's Corporate Priorities had changed from being a 'Co-operative Council' to 'Council Services Working for Local People'.

Councillor Panter was pleased to see that this Council was committed to working with the County Council and Councillor Jones suggested working with the County Council to find a solution regarding the loss of school crossing patrols across the Borough.

The Leader agreed that the corporate priority – Council Services Working for Local People was what this Council was all about. In addition, it removed a costing as the Council no longer needed to pay a subscription to a related organisation.

The Council Plan sets our working with the County Council to enhance the two-tier system. The two Authorities were working together on the growth and regeneration of the Borough which included Kidsgrove, Knutton and the University site.

Councillor Olszewski asked, in relation to the future recycling strategy – which had been called-in, what changes had been made to the scheme following the scrutiny process.

Councillor Robinson asked the Leader if consideration had been given regarding the impact that charging for garden waste collection on low income families.

Councillor Fox-Hewitt asked if a Quality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and if so, could this be circulated.

The Leader stated that the call-in had been listened to and felt that it was clear that there was to be more member involvement. Changes to the recycling service would take between eighteen and twenty-four months to implement and the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) would be involved in the process.

Regarding the garden waste collection, the public would all be informed on the Council's Recycling Collection's 'Christmas Card' giving charges and full terms and conditions.

Concerns had been raised about the introduction of a charge for collecting garden waste resulting in fly tipping. Councillor Proctor stated that he had contacted other local authorities who already charged for this service and it had not resulted in any fly tipping of garden waste.

Councillor Brian Johnson had been contacted by residents within his ward – many of whom were on low incomes, who had concerns about the charge. Councillor Johnson asked if it was a fair charge – being the same for families on low/high incomes.

Councillor Kearon asked whether any consultation had taken place with Aspire Housing before the plan was introduced as there were a large number of Aspire properties with large gardens.

Councillor Trevor Johnson, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling pointed out that there had only been twenty one letters of concern received and that 5000 households had registered an interest in the scheme.

Councillor Jones raised a question on the University Growth Corridor, stating that the majority of the golf course fell within the Silverdale ward. The development would almost double the population of the village and asked how would any affects be mitigated.

Councillor Harrison asked if removal of this land from the Green Belt would put all Green Belt land at risk.

Councillor Kearon said that it was an ambitious plan that would create growth and jobs. The average cost of the houses in the development would be beyond the price range of university staff and would put more traffic on the roads.

The Leader Stated that the County Council/Keele University and the Local Enterprise Partnership were all signed up to this. The views of Parish councils and transport impacts on the wider area not just Keele and Silverdale would be included in future discussions on this site.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth said that this was an exciting opportunity and the Local Authority planning process would look at the infrastructure for the site. The process of removing the land from the Green Belt would not affect other Green Belt land in the Borough as each was considered on its own merits. To remove such land has to satisfy various criteria such as would it create high quality jobs or be of economic benefit.

Councillor Stubbs enquired about the new version of the Pilot that the Council's yield would fall and what was the reason for this.

Councillor Sweeney stated that the figure had always been £200,000.

Councillor Julie Cooper asked the Leader if he felt that the free parking on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November after midday had contributed towards the success of the Christmas Lights switch on event.

Councillor Kearon welcomed any reduction in parking charges and asked if the former Civic offices car park could be charge free every Saturday and Sunday.

Councillor Sweeney agreed that it did help the event which had been highly successful bringing thousands of people into the town.

With regard to free parking on the former Civic Offices, making it free on a Saturday would lose £300 income per Saturday. The carpark was free of Charge on a Sunday already.

Referring to the Ryecroft –Future Development Options, Councillor Reddish asked about the cost of keeping the former Civic Offices site and asked if a written report could be done to all Members detailing these costings.

Councillor Paul Waring was pleased that the site would be used for short term events and asked what sort of events could be held on the site.

Councillor John Cooper asked if the small car park at the front of the former Civic Offices could be used as a pay and display car park in the short term. Members were advised that this was currently in progress.

Councillor Sweeney agreed that the building looked awful boarded up. He advised Members that Gandey's Circus would be using the site of the former Sainsbury's for a short period and other events which could be attracted are fairgrounds etc.

Councillor Kearon was pleased that the land was to be made use of in the short term and asked if there were any plans for use of the building.

The Leader advised that a report was going to the relevant Scrutiny Committee in respect of car parking. With regard to use of the Civic Offices building, it had been decommissioned of all services and it was not therefore useable. The new Chief Executive would be working closely with Members on proposals for the site.

Councillor Sweeney stated that the rough figure for maintaining the former Civic Offices for this year had been approximately £300,000 with £200,000 of that being for Business Rates. The possibility of paying empty building business rates was currently being investigated.

Councillor Wright asked what the long term vision for the town centre market was.

Councillor Sweeney advised that the Council's communications team were currently doing a survey for people's ideas. People who did not use the market could be asked for their reasons why.

Councillor Brian Johnson asked if any recreational use was planned on the former recreation site in Knutton.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Northcott stated that a joint approach between the County and Borough Council would unlock land for new homes and recreational facilities if appropriate and if the bid was successful.

Regarding Kidsgrove Sports Centre, Councillor Robinson welcomed the investment from the County Council and the recent report regarding transfer of the freehold from the County Council to the Borough Council.

Councillor Burnett said that the commitment between the County and Borough meant that things could get underway and thanked the Leader for taking this forward.

Councillor Waring said that all groups needed to find some common ground to take this forward.

The Leader said that it was good news that the site would be given to the Borough for a 'peppercorn' fee. An officer from the County council would advise on community involvement and volunteering. The scheme required all Kidsgrove Councillors to get behind the scheme.

Councillor Dymond asked about the Sports Centre Business Plan. The Leader said that it had been publicly available online but that he would ask the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group to contact all Members from the Kidsgrove area to offer a meeting to discuss the business plan..

Members thanked and congratulated the Executive Director for Operations and his staff for their input and hard work in the recent success at the Britain in Bloom National Finals.

Councillor Shenton congratulated the Mayor on the success of her Christmas Craft Fayre held at the Guildhall stating that it was important use of an historic building.

Councillor Shenton asked for fuller details of the community and voluntary groups that had applied for short term use of the Guildhall for up to twelve months.

Councillor Kearon suggested that the Newcastle Housing Advisory Service could use the Guildhall to provide a central and appropriate service to clients.

The Leader stated that the Craft Fayre at the Guildhall on 17 November had attracted 1000 people. Councillor Tagg would send the details requested by Councillor Shenton. Ten organisations were looking to go in, including the Friends of the Guildhall and Philip Astley Project.

Councillor John Cooper, the Chair of Bradwell Lodge was willing to offer advice to any community groups that wanted to use the Guildhall.

Councillor Burgess asked about the possibility of holding further craft fayres/ workshops in there.

The Leader paid tribute to Councillor John Cooper and former Councillor Trevor Hambleton for getting Bradwell Lodge to where it is today. Councillor Cooper's offer of help and advice would be passed on.

In the short and long term, space should be given over for craft type events and it was assured that the building would have capacity for fundraising events.

Councillor Moffat asked the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jill Waring, in respect of Universal Credit what reserves provision had been made for vulnerable people in the Borough.

Councillor Kearon asked Councillor Sweeney if the management company that had previously been interested in taking over the markets had pulled out or if it had been the Council's decision.

The Leader referred to the presentation that Members had received on Universal Credit. A handout of the presentation held on 21<sup>st</sup> November would be forwarded to all Members.

The decision regarding the management company not taking on the market was a mutual one. The new Chief Executive would be working with Members to focus on the future of Newcastle's market.

**11. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Written reports had been submitted for the Scrutiny Committees which had met since the last Council Meeting.

**Resolved:** That the reports be received.

**12. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

Written reports were submitted for the Committees that had met since the last Council meeting except for the Planning Committee where the Chair gave a verbal update.

Councillor Fear, Chair of the Planning Committee advised that the rules public speaking at committees had varied slightly in that speakers could now speak with plans of proposed developments up on the screens. These plans would, however, be restricted to the official ones that had been submitted with the application.

More regular updates on enforcement had also been requested by planning committee members.

**Resolved:** That the reports be received.

**13. MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

A Motion was received on the use of Single-Use Plastics, proposed by Councillor Holland and seconded by Councillor Jennifer Cooper.

Members debated the Motion all welcoming its contents. A query was raised regarding single-use plastics that were necessary for medical proposes. The Motion was aimed more towards the plastic packaging on foodstuffs, drinking straws rather than necessary usage.

**Resolved:** That the Motion be carried.

**14. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Councillor Maxfield asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth about background work on the Joint Local Plan.

Councillor Northcott stated that the Joint local Plan would show where housing development would take place and would be a safeguard for development when they came forward. In July, a revised National Planning policy Framework had been produced which meant that Newcastle had to revisit its policies. Originally the



second round had been due to begin in the next few weeks but this had been put on hold to look at our Policy.

Councillor Fear asked The Leader of the Council for an update on his work with the Business Improvement District (BID).

The Leader outlined his work with the BID since December, 2017 and stated that the Council would continue to work closely with them in terms of the Ryecroft site, markets and carparking.

Councillor Rout asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency about the withdrawal of the contract from the Borough's churches for servicing and Maintenance of the clocks.

Councillor Sweeney stated that there were three clocks involved and the Council continued to support the servicing contracts. The maintenance contracts would need to be discussed.

Councillor Kearon asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency for an update on the commissioning process for demolition of the former Civic Offices.

Councillor Sweeney advised that officers had prepared a brief to undertake a survey to assess the amount of asbestos within the building. The commissioning process would cost £30,000 and information should be available around Easter 2019. Councillor Sweeney assured that he would share the information with Members when he received it.

The former Civic Offices is a 1960's building – full of asbestos so it was difficult to work out costs of demolition without full information of its extent. Demolition of the former Sainsbury's building had cost two to three hundred thousand pounds to demolish.

Councillor Shenton asked the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing what plans were in place for a no deal Brexit.

The Leader answered this question as it affected all Council services. A Local Government Association report had been sent to all Council's. The Council's Acting Chief Executive would be attending an event on 13 December and would report back on this.

Councillor Shenton asked about the "reasonable worst case scenarios" for a no-deal Brexit and what discussions the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing had had with the multi-agency tactical coordination groups in the event.

Councillor Jill Waring would do a written response on this.

Councillor Robinson asked the Leader of the Council why the recent appointment of the Head of Human Resources had not been an internal one.

The appointment had been made on advice given by an HR Officer from South Staffordshire District Council who advised to bring in extra capacity and an Interim Head of Human Resources.

Councillor Robinson asked what training was being given to officers to encourage career progression.

The Leader replied that progression training would be provided and it was a shame that this had not been thought of by the previous administration. Figures on the costings for the HR support would be sent out to Members.

Councillor Robinson asked the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing what plans were being put into place to reduce the amount of rough sleepers this winter.

Teams went out offering support and at the end of November the Lyme Trust would be participating. In addition, up to the end of March, 2019 there would be a Serious Weather-Rough Sleeper Protocol in place.

Councillor Robinson said that there was a large amount of rough sleepers in all areas who were not getting the support that they needed. Councillor Robinson asked how much of the Emergency B&B budget had been used.

Councillor Waring advised that the amount of rough sleepers per night in Newcastle had reduced by one from last year – from five to one.

With regard to the budget, Councillor Waring would consult with officers and get back to Councillor Robinson.

**15. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

Councillor Ian Wilkes handed in a Petition from the residents of Scot hay in connection with traffic calming measures. The Petition would be forwarded to the County Council as requested by Councillor Wilkes.

**16. STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS**

**17. MR NEALE CLIFTON**

The Leader led tributes to the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development, Neale Clifton who was retiring at Christmas.

Mr Clifton was described as a credit to the Borough for his professionalism, hard work and loyalty. Members wished he and his family well.

Mr Clifton thanked Members for their kind words and for their support through some challenging times. He said that he had enjoyed being a public servant.

Mr Clifton received a standing ovation.

**THE MAYOR - COUNCILLOR MRS GILL HEESOM**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 9.50 pm

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