

CABINET

Wednesday, 22nd April, 2020
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	S. Sweeney, T. Johnson, P. Northcott and J Waring
Officers	David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Geoff Durham, Simon McEneny and Daniel Dickinson
Apologies	Councillor(s) H. Maxfield

Note: In line with Government directions on staying at home during the current stage of the CV-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted by video conferencing in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Maxfield.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March, 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

4. CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC UPDATE

A report was submitted to Cabinet to inform Members of the actions being taken across the Council to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg stated that the Council had continued to provide services in the best way possible with many staff working from home.

Services at J2 and the Borough Museum had been suspended with relevant staff being redirected to other areas such as working in partnership to help the vulnerable within the community.

The homeless and rough sleepers had been taken off the streets and the Council would promptly react to others who became homeless.

The Waste and Recycling service was running almost as normal and there had been an increase in garden waste.

There had been a financial impact from the pandemic as there was no income from parking or J2.

The Leader thanked all staff at the Council for the part they were playing and stated that the Council was doing an amazing job providing key services. To residents

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney stated that the Council deserved credit for its handling of the £1.035m Hardship Fund received from the Government which would assist resident of the Borough with support for Council Tax. Any monies left over would help to support various extra groups.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 2.12 of the report which set out support offered to businesses.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Jill Waring stated that the Council was doing a fantastic job and thanked all staff for their loyalty and dedication.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott echoed everything that had been said and thanked staff. He was pleased that services had been maintained, particularly in respect of helping vulnerable people and the help offered to small businesses within the Borough.

Councillor Northcott added that the Planning team had been working as normal as possible with a virtual meeting held last week and stated that it was a great team effort.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson stated that the Waste and Recycling team had been nothing short of heroic during the pandemic. The tonnage of recycled waste was up by 20%. Most rounds were being operated by a driver plus one.

Bereavement Services have extended crematoria opening hours to include Saturday mornings.

The Leader reiterated everything that had been said and added that two local MP's had been lobbied in respect of money expected from the Government to help with the current crisis created by the pandemic.

Resolved: That the report be noted and that the work being undertaken to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic be endorsed.

5. BRAMPTON MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A report was submitted to Cabinet to inform Members of the successful funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and to update Members on the Brampton Museum Redevelopment Project.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage advised Members that £248,700 had been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Funding had

also been received from other areas and a decision was awaited from the Landfill Communities Trust, which should be announced at the end of May, 2020.

A new member of staff had been appointed for a three year term whose task would be to produce an activity plan.

The Leader endorsed everything that had been said, adding that it was a great scheme to bring forward and would be an even greater asset to the Borough.

Councillor Sweeney endorsed everything that had been said and stated that it was a good example of where the Council was looking to continue with its projects during the current situation.

Councillor Northcott stated that this was excellent for the Borough.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund be accepted.
 - (ii) That the Executive Director for Commercial Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources and Support Services and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage be given delegated authority to approve the level of match funding required from the Council towards this project, once the outcome of further grant applications and final costs have been determined.

6. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE REFURBISHMENT

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval of the development of the work package for full design and cost information prior to the awarding of a contract and the financing arrangements for the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.

The Leader advised Members that a lot of work had taken place since the previous Cabinet meeting and the Community Group had also been doing a lot of work. In addition, the SCAPE Framework was in place.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.4 of the report which identified the cost of the refurbishment at £5.6m. The Leader advised that £3.151m was already available.

Paragraph 8.1 of the report outlined the value for money offered when comparing refurbishment of the existing building against a total new rebuilt sports centre. Members' attention was also drawn to paragraph 8.2 which gave a funding summary.

Members were advised that within the last few days, a portacabin had arrived on site indicating that the project was moving forward.

Councillor Sweeney supported everything that had been said and totally endorsed the report.

Councillor Jill Waring agreed with the recommendations and stated that it was clear that the refurbishment option was the way forward and added that the reopening of the facility was important to the residents of Kidsgrove.

Councillor's Northcott and Johnson both welcomed the report and the Leader added that, once complete, it would be the jewel in Kidsgrove's Crown.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the development of the pre-contract work package for full design and cost information for the refurbishment and redevelopment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre and Swimming Pool, through the SCAPE Framework, in the sum of £479,500 be authorised.
 - (ii) That the Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Leader & Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree any reasonable variations to the pre-contract work package price required as a result of detailed and intrusive survey work being undertaken in April & May 2020
 - (iii) That it be noted that the cost of the project is now £5.6m of which £3.151m is currently included in the 2020/21 capital programme and that a supplementary capital estimate of up to £2.5m (and any necessary virements) be approved to cover the final all-inclusive capital cost of the project (based on the project appraisal).

7. FORWARD PLAN

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

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received.

8. QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET

A question to the Cabinet was submitted by Councillor Bert Proctor and concerned changes to Staffordshire Community First Responders.

Councillor Northcott thanked Councillor Proctor for his question and stated that he was shocked in the way that the changes had been announced as they had gone out in a newsletter rather than a public announcement.. This was a national problem and all areas had indicated that rural areas were most at risk.

The Community First Responders provide a critical role until the paramedics arrive and prompt arrival at the scene was essential. The removal of the blue light usage required more scrutiny.

Two of Newcastle's MP's had written to the ambulance service and Jonathan Gullis had received a reply which was distinctly unhelpful.

Councillor Northcott agreed that a letter needed to be sent to try and get the decision reversed. The letter should be sent to all MP's who represent the Borough and to Mr Nick Henry and Mr Anthony Marsh.

The Leader stated that he would write to the West Midlands Ambulance Service, the local MP's and the two gentlemen suggested by Councillor Northcott. The letter would ask that the decision to ban Community First Responder's use of blue lights and the carrying of certain vital drugs be reconsidered and reversed.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Leader of the Council write to and urge the West Midlands Ambulance service to reverse their decision to ensure that the residents within Rural communities can once again be served by an efficient and effective first responder service to supplement the Ambulance Service.
 - (ii) That the Leader of the Council write to all MP's who represent Newcastle-under-Lyme and to Mr Nick Henry and Anthony Marsh to ask them to make every effort to reverse the decision of the West Midlands Ambulance Service

9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

The Leader thanked all attendees and the Head of ICT and Digital Services, David Elkington for arranging the virtual meeting.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.35 pm