

## **CABINET**

Wednesday, 20th May, 2020  
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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| <b>Present:-</b> | Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair  |
| Councillors      | S. Sweeney, T. Johnson, H. Maxfield,<br>P. Northcott and J Waring                                  |
| Officers         | David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan<br>Willis, Geoff Durham, David Elkington<br>and Daniel Dickinson |

**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**

There were no apologies.

### **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 22 April, 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

### **4. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE AND RECOVERY PLANNING**

A report was submitted to Cabinet to inform Members on actions taken across the Council in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for recovery.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg introduced the report advising Members that the report looked at the issues that had been encountered as a result of the virus and also the recovery process that would take place afterwards.

The Leader thanked the staff for their ongoing work during the crisis and referred Members to paragraph two of the report which outlined the work being carried out.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Jill Waring echoed thanks to the staff and felt reassured with all of the Council's services.

Councillor Waring stated that Jubilee 2 (J2) and the Borough Museum had both been closed since the lockdown had begun in March and that staff from J2 had been redeployed to assist with the Council's helplines.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson stated that the Streetscene team had performed brilliantly. They had been flexible and reactive in carrying out their duties.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney stated that taxi licencing was continuing although no new licenses were being issued at this time.

The Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott and for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Helena Maxfield thanked the staff for all that they were doing and made reference to those who had been redeployed and kept services going.

Councillor Maxfield referred to the work being carried out to identify the vulnerable members of the community and stated that the number of enquiries had begun to decrease as people were finding their way around the support mechanisms that were available. The Vulnerability Hub was still there for people who may need to make contact as the crisis continued.

Councillor Northcott stated that everyone should be aware of vulnerability during lockdown and that the Council needed to ensure that all areas were covered, working with partners and the County Council.

The Government had put a package in place to help with businesses and this Authority had received funding to administer to local businesses to help them to get through the current crisis.

Councillor Sweeney confirmed that, to date £18.935m had been given out to local businesses and that this Council had received a grant of £1.3m from the government to help with the effects of the crisis.

The Leader thanked the officers who had been administering the funding to local businesses, working late into the evening and even at weekends to ensure that the funding was distributed. In addition, a new scheme was about to start which would include businesses that were not previously eligible.

The Council had lost income through the temporary closures of J2 and the Museum and also the loss of car parking revenue. The grant received from the government would help with these losses.

The Leader referred Members to paragraph 3 of the report which focussed on the recovery throughout the Borough as the lockdown eased. A recovery Plan had been prepared with six work streams.

Councillor Johnson referred to the recycling and waste services advising Members that during the lockdown, the use of the new model for the recycling service had been so successful that it had now been brought forward with the distribution of the new containers to commence towards the end of next week. All residents would be on the new service by August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The existing collector vehicles may still need to be utilised in the meantime until the new ones had arrived.

Councillor Waring advised Members that work was ongoing to reopen J2 and the Museum which would not be until 1 July at the earliest. The Museum project had been considered and risk assessments and health and safety checks would be undertaken to ensure that the services would be safe to reopen.

Councillor Sweeney advised that the Council was working with the BID and the traders in respect of smaller shops and the market and would await guidance from Central Government as to when these could reopen.

Councillor Northcott added that this would need to be carried out on a scale that had not been seen before and would need to be done at the pace of the individual businesses.

The Leader concluded that this would be the start of a long process and stated that the matter would be referred to the Council's three scrutiny committees to ask them to assess the actions already taken and to give advice on the recovery plan going forward.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the report be noted and that the work being undertaken to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic and prepare for recovery, be endorsed.
  - (ii) That the Council's three Scrutiny Committees receive a report at their special meetings taking place in June to enable them to review and challenge the recovery planning related to their remit.

## **5. PRE-VALIDATION CHECKING SCHEME**

A report was submitted to Cabinet advising Members of a new optional pre-validation checking service for Planning applications which would help to speed up the process. The service would be chargeable.

Councillor Northcott introduced the report advising Members that the process would give equality and cut down on the overall time in deciding applications.

The Leader added that the process would also help with the recovery process after lockdown in getting things moving again.

- Resolved:** That the new pre-validation checking arrangements and associated charging Scheme be approved.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER FOUR**

A report was submitted to Cabinet providing the Financial and Performance review Report for Quarter Four 2019/20.

Councillor Sweeney introduced the first part of the report, drawing Members' attention to page 31 of the agenda which outlined the current financial position. Councillor Sweeney made reference to paragraph 3.2 which outlined the reasons for the variance.

The Leader introduced the performance part of the report, commencing at page 33 of

the agenda. Members were advised that the last quarter had been hit by the Coronavirus and therefore the targets were looking back before lockdown.

**Priority 1. Local Services that Work for Local People**

Councillor Johnson stated that all indicators at 1.4 and 1,5 were looking excellent during that period.

The Leader made reference to the indicators at 1.6 to 1.9 adding that Customer Services had been assisted by J2 staff during lockdown.

Councillor Sweeney referred to indicators 1.10 to 1.13 stating that the figures were excellent prior to the current crisis.

**Priority 2. Growing our People and Places.**

Councillor Northcott referred to the indicators at 2.2 to 2.5 stating that he was impressed with the Planning team and the new Head of Planning.

**Priority 3. A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough**

Councillor Maxfield referred to the indicators at 3.1 and 3.2 and stated that she had high praise for the teams dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Vulnerability during this time, maintaining the connections with the Council's partners whilst working from home.

Councillor Waring referred to the indicators 3.3 to 3.5 adding that the Museum and J2 had been severely impacted by the Coronavirus. New memberships for J2 was currently frozen.

**Priority 4. A Town Centre for All.**

The Leader stated that the town centre had also been severely hit by the Coronavirus. Councillor Sweeney added that the High Streets Fund and Town Deals were going through and a date was awaited as to when businesses could start opening up again.

**Resolved:** That the contents of the report be noted and that the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period continue to be monitored and challenged.

**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. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

**COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG**  
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.50 pm