

CABINET

Wednesday, 9th September, 2020

Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	Stephen Sweeney, Trevor Johnson, Helena Maxfield and Paul Northcott
Officers	David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Daniel Dickinson and Denise French
Apologies	Councillor Jill Waring

16. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jill Waring.

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

18. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

19. **BACK ON TRACK - CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a report on actions being taken across the Council to recover from the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The report outlined the 5 areas of the Recovery Plan:

Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney, referred to the successful opening of Newcastle town centre and that positive feedback had been received from the Police. The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg, noted that the town centre was busy and social distancing was being maintained.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Helena Maxfield, explained that support remained for homeless people and rough sleepers. The service was now making preparations for the winter weather including instances of severe weather when the temperature fell below zero.

Economic Recovery

Councillor Sweeney outlined the focus on longer term recovery through the Future High Streets Fund and Town Deals. A separate item on the agenda would give more details.

Stepping-up Council Services

The Leader referred to the successful reopening of both J2 and the Brampton Museum, with Covid secure measures in place and limited access to both facilities. The pool at J2 was out of use due to an issue which was being looked at. Councillor Sweeney referred to the reintroduction of some Customer Services facilities at Castle House while still offering phone and online services.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson, reported that he was pleased that there was now an increase in numbers of mourners able to attend funerals while still maintaining social distancing.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott, referred to the excellent performance of the Planning department in determining 100% of planning applications, both majors and minors.

The Council had taken on a new responsibility for managing any local Covid outbreaks associated with businesses or high risk premises. The Council had received £50k of Government funding and was expected to take a proactive approach of visiting high risk premises to identify potential issues and help to address them.

Financial Recovery

The current forecast was for a net revenue overspend of £321k this financial year based on an assumption of no further lockdown measures being imposed. The financial position would continue to be monitored and work was continuing on the development of a financial recovery plan.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the work being undertaken to recover from the pandemic be endorsed.

20. **ADVANCED TOWN DEAL FUNDING**

Cabinet considered a report outlining that the Council had been invited to develop proposals for the Government's Advanced Town Deal Funding for both Newcastle and Kildgrove and some funding had been awarded towards the development of the proposals. Members welcomed the opportunity to develop projects in the two towns.

Resolved: That Cabinet supports the development of proposals for the Government's Advanced Town Deal Funding for both Newcastle and Kildgrove and that the Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships is authorised to:

- (i) Continue to work with both of the Town Deal Boards to develop the proposals for Newcastle and Kildgrove Advanced Town Deal Funding and to make any minor alterations to funding allocations.
- (ii) Negotiate the terms and any contracts for accelerated funding payments to external delivery partners where they will be the lead partner in delivery.

- (iii) Negotiate on any property matters including purchase, lease or sale relating to the accelerated funding projects.
- (iv) Assess the procurement options linked to the delivery of each of the accelerated funded projects, and should this be required that they have the authority to finalise the specification, undertake the tendering process, if required to complete any post tender negotiations and award the contract.

21. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE REFURBISHMENT

Cabinet considered a report on the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre. The report outlined that since May 2020 a series of intrusive surveys had been undertaken which had provided detailed information on the condition of the building and enabled cost estimates to be firmed up. Following a number of meetings with the Community Group, Wilmott Dixon and their leisure architects had produced a new design which made the most of the existing layout, satisfied anticipated users requirements and provided a 25 year lifespan for the building. The costs of the project had now increased from £5.6m to £5.998m. The confidential Appendix 1 comprised the RIBA Stage 2 report summarising survey findings and setting out the cost plan. The timescale would see a transfer of the building from Staffordshire County Council to the Borough Council in October 2020.

Members noted the cross-party Cabinet Panel had met regularly and supported the project. There was a plan of the layout on the Council website.

Resolved: That

- (i) The progress made on the project since April 2020 Cabinet in terms of scope, design and budget in consultation with the Kidsgrove Leisure Centre Community Group be noted;
- (ii) It be noted that following detailed survey work, the target cost of the project is now £5.998m;
- (iii) The submission of a bid under the Town Fund Advance Funding for a contribution towards the refurbishment of the Centre be noted;
- (iv) A supplementary capital estimate be approved of up to £400,000 to be drawn down from the Council's 2020/21 capital programme contingency in the event that external funding contributions cannot be secured; and
- (v) The Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth, conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships, continue to work with the Community Group to progress the refurbishment.

22. DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S NEW RECYCLING SERVICE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Cabinet considered a report on the introduction of the new recycling service, subscribed garden waste service and proposed future developments for the development of recycling services for flats, schools and businesses.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson, explained how a decision had been taken to accelerate the introduction of the new service on a phased basis from the end of May to the middle of July. The report outlined that communication with residents was important as the service swapped from a weekly collection to fortnightly. In addition training and briefing sessions were undertaken with Customer Service and Operational staff. The separate food waste service

recommenced in mid-August. The levels of take up for the garden waste collection service had increased to 52% of eligible households in 2020. Councillor Johnson explained that the future service would focus on the service to flats, schools and commercial waste.

Members welcomed the successful introduction of the new service, noting that few complaints were received and any issues were addressed swiftly.

Resolved: That:

- (i) The report be noted.
- (ii) The further steps in development of the recycling service for flats, schools and businesses be approved.
- (iii) The proposal to enter into a joint procurement for a contract to commence from April 2022 for the processing of dry recycling materials collected with the Staffordshire Waste Partnership (SWP) be approved.
- (iv) Cabinet place on record its thanks to all members of staff involved in the implementation of the new Recycling Service.
- (v) Cabinet place on record its appreciation of local residents' patience during the transition phase to the new arrangements.

23. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Cabinet considered a report on the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke on Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement which set out the policy for how residents and the wider community, such as businesses and land owners, could be involved in the planning process.

Resolved: That

- (i) The review and recommended changes to the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement be noted; and
- (ii) The amended Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement be approved and adopted as detailed at Appendix A.

24. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER ONE

Cabinet considered a report detailing the financial position and Council performance for quarter 1. The report looked at the General Fund Revenue Budget and the impact of Covid-19. During this quarter the pandemic had impacted the Council's finances both due to lost income and increased costs although there had been £1.573 funding from Government secured to date. The Government had also advised that they would be sharing income losses incurred as a result of Covid 19. The report outlined that a review of the Capital Programme had taken place and how the revised Programme now looked.

The report detailed service performance for Quarter 1 and set out monitoring information for 16 Performance Indicators. The data showed that 87% of indicators had met their target (where set) or were within tolerance levels.

A number of council priorities were highlighted – Customer and ICT had performed well and the target exceeded in one area; the Revenues and Benefits target could not be met due to the suspension of recovery action; staff sickness levels were just over the target which was a much better performance than expected within the context of Covid-19. For Property Services the vacancy rates for Council owned property were low and planning and development services had performed well.

Incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour were low, the new CCTV in the Town Centre was effective in helping visitors to feel safe. Both J2 and the museum had remained closed during Quarter 1 but had reopened in a Covid secure way in Quarter 2. The market was successful with a number of themed markets taking place and high occupancy among stall holders.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted and Members will continue to monitor and challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.

25. FORWARD PLAN

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

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received.

26. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

27. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

28. KIDSGROVE LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT -CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Cabinet considered the RIBA Stage 2 report for Kidsgrove Leisure Centre. The Leader explained that a report on the Kidsgrove Leisure Centre project would be submitted to Council to enable all Members to be updated on the details of the project.

Resolved: That the report be noted and endorsed.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 3.00 pm