

CABINET

Wednesday, 14th October, 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, Simon McEneny, Daniel Dickinson and Denise French
Apologies	Councillor(s) Jill Waring

29. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jill Waring

30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

31. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September be agreed as a correct record.

32. **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 Leader noted that the Borough was currently in Tier 1. He explained that a letter had been sent to businesses and a separate letter was to go out to households thanking them for the sacrifices made so far in response to the pandemic and reminding them of the need to continue following the rules to keep the virus under control.

He is a member of the County Council's Local Outbreak Board which was now meeting weekly. Councillor Sweeney as Deputy Leader is chair of the Multi Agency Board which was particularly focusing on young people due to the number of students recently arrived in the Borough. Councillor Sweeney advised that the Multi Agency Board included representatives of the Students' Union as well as Borough and County Council representation and the Police.

The Leader commended the work of the Environmental Health Team in ensuring local hospitality venues operated with Covid safety measures. There had also been Government funding used to provide Covid Marshalls in the Borough using a low level approach.

The written report outlined the 5 areas of the Recovery Plan:

Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney, outlined that the Castle Artisan Market was to take place on Sunday 18th October and all stalls were now fully booked. The Leader also noted that there was free parking on Sundays in the Council car parks. Councillor Maxfield reported on increased footfall in Kidsgrove showing good support for local businesses.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Helena Maxfield, reported that there were currently 19 people in emergency accommodation and further information on the services for homelessness would be outlined later in the meeting.

Economic Recovery

The Leader referred to the major regeneration and growth schemes as set out in the report. The two Town Investment Plans for Kidsgrove and Newcastle were scheduled for submission to the Government – this would be October for the Kidsgrove Plan with the Newcastle Plan targeted for submission in January. The latest unemployment figures showed the Borough as being slightly below the Staffordshire average. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Northcott, reported on work with the Skills and Training Group to manage the employment situation including skills matching; part of the funding through the Advanced Town Deals would be used for a Training and Skills Enterprise Centre.

Stepping-up Council Services

A number of services had reopened including J2 and the Brampton Museum. Councillor Sweeney reported that the backlog with taxi licensing was being cleared and should be up to date in a few months. Councillor Northcott noted the important work of the food hygiene inspection service as more restaurants and pubs reopened. The Environmental Health Team had increased workload and responsibilities which was kept under review by Executive Management Team and Cabinet.

Financial Recovery

Councillor Sweeney referred to the additional funding received from Government amounting to £1.743 to date. There was also funding for income losses after the first 5% at the rate of 75p in the pound. Councillor Northcott referred to business rates and that there were currently low numbers of vacancies in business units.

Members expressed thanks to officers of the Council for their hard work during the ongoing pandemic.

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

33. **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION FROM 1ST NOVEMBER 2020 - 31ST MARCH 2021**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to let two short term contracts for temporary accommodation for homeless people. Councillor Maxfield explained that a review of Temporary Accommodation had been undertaken following rising demand for homelessness services, escalating costs and the Governments “everyone in” policy in response to the pandemic. The Review had recommended a mini procurement exercise be undertaken and the results were presented in the report. One tender had been received for each of the two lots; it scored highly on ‘project purpose’ and ‘impact and project outcomes’ and was from the current supplier and therefore represented continuation of the current service and costs.

Resolved: That:

- 1) Subject to finalising the legal agreement with the Specialist Homeless Advisor at Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:
 - a. A five month (1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021) contract be let to Open Door Stoke-on-Trent for the provision of supported accommodation for rough sleepers from the street with complex and high level support needs.
 - b. A five month (1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021) contract be let to Open Door Stoke-on-Trent for the provision of shared houses to provide lower level supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs.
- 2) The financial needs regarding the above services for 2021/22 be noted and that subject to successful allocations of Central Government funding the above contracts be extended for 2021/22.
- 3) Officers bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 funding for medium term self-contained supported accommodation for homeless people with complex needs.

34. **JUBILEE 2 UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a report on the ongoing building defects at Jubilee 2 and the actions being taken to resolve the issues. The building had been constructed by Morgan Sindall and opened in 2012 but had experienced a number of issues that had compromised both effective service delivery and reputation. Some issues had been addressed but three longstanding building defects were highlighted in the report – leaking roofs, defects within the aqua sauna and the failure of the main pool circulation system. Works to repair the roof leaks had been completed in September 2020 but there were still some issues which Morgan Sindall had given a commitment to work with the council to address along with any future issues. The closure of the Aqua Sauna had given an opportunity to review its use with the preferred solution being to repurpose as a Pilates Studio; the tender process was now underway. The main pool had been closed on 18th August 2020 due to a significant loss of water; the likely cause had been identified and repairs were due to be completed shortly with the aim to reopen the main pool by the end of October 2020.

Members suggested a review of the historical issues be undertaken and reported back to Cabinet and Scrutiny noting it was important to ensure any lessons were learned.

Resolved: That

- (i) the information and the approach outlined in the report be noted and endorsed to address the ongoing building defects and further reports be received to update Members on progress made.
- (ii) the Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth arrange for further survey work to be undertaken to identify any further undiscovered defects; and

(iii) a review of the historical issues with the building since the opening of Jubilee 2 in 2012 be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet and Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

35. 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.

36. URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to take the following item of business as urgent:

Resolved: That Cabinet supports the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism and Officers be asked to prepare a report for the next Council meeting to enable this definition to be endorsed for inclusion within the Council's policies and practices.

37. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There were no items in Part 2.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.36 pm