

CABINET

Wednesday, 17th March, 2021
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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

86. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

87. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Northcott declared an interest in item 8 “Aspire Housing – Prospectus for Joint Working” on the grounds that he is a non-Executive Member of the Aspire Board. There were no other declarations of interest stated.

88. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

89. **BACK ON TRACK UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a report on actions being taken across the Council in response to the Coronavirus restrictions in the Borough and to ensure the Borough was well placed to recover from the pandemic.

Councillor Simon Tagg, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which noted that at the time of writing, there were 75 cases per 100,000 population. This was a marked decrease since the start of the year.

The Council continued to administer the financial support to businesses through the Local Restrictions Support Grant. There were also preparations for the phased re-opening of the town centres.

Work was taking place to re-open some services in J2 on 12 April, namely the pool, gym and climbing wall.

The Council had set the budget for 2021/22. It was anticipated that a balanced outturn would be achieved by year end. There would be further Government support to assist with Covid related pressures.

Members noted that a current issue related to Walley's Quarry for which the Council had received over 2,000 complaints during the weekend of 27th – 28th February. There had been an extra budget allocation of £50,000 for this issue included in the budget and an extraordinary Council meeting would take place on 18th March.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the work being undertaken in response to the Coronavirus restrictions be endorsed.

90. KIDSGROVE TOWN DEAL

Cabinet considered a report on the award of funding for the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan and outlining proposed next steps in delivery. The report listed the projects that would be progressed relating to enhanced enterprise infrastructure through the employment site at Chatterley Valley; upgraded facilities at Kidsgrove Station; canal enhancements; bringing services into one hub; leisure and sports facilities improvements including Kidsgrove Sports Centre and a new Pump Track.

Resolved: That:

- (a) Cabinet accepts the award of £16.9m for the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan submitted in October 2020, as announced on the 3rd March 2021 in accordance with the Offer Letter now submitted.
- (b) Officers are authorised to continue working with the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development and delivery of projects in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan in line with the timescales set out within the award criteria and within the allotted funds.
- (c) The multi-disciplinary officer group established to support delivery of the Advance Town Deal Projects continues this role to support delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.
- (d) The Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships, are authorised to pursue delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

91. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE REFURBISHMENT

Cabinet considered a report on progress with the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre. The report listed areas of progress since the last update in November 2020 including transfer of the site from Staffordshire County Council and transfer of funding; commencement of works to build the new 3G pitch; fast track funding through the Town Deal board. The Project Steering Group was expected to shortly receive final costings from Willmott Dixon the contractor. The Sports Centre was scheduled to re-open in Spring 2022.

Resolved: That:

- (a) Cabinet notes the progress made on the project since the September 2020 Cabinet meeting in terms of scope, design and budget in consultation with the Kidsgrove Leisure Centre Community Group.
- (b) Notes that the Kidsgrove Town Deal funding allocation announced by MHCLG on the 3rd March includes up to £2.3m towards the overall cost of the project.
- (c) Notes the further work to be undertaken to secure the release of the Town Deal funding and authorises the Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships and the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board to progress the work with all haste to maintain momentum with the project.

92. **REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a report on progress with the delivery with the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan. The Plan had been revisited in the light of a number of issues including Brexit; the Coronavirus pandemic and the new opportunities arising from Future High Street funding; Town Investment Plans for Kidsgrove and Newcastle and accelerated Town Deal monies. The updated Action Plan was attached to the report and outlined the current position with each action including timescale, resources and any partnership working taking place.

Resolved: That:

- (a) The changed circumstances in which progress against the Economic Development Strategy has been made are noted.
- (b) Progress on delivering the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan is noted.
- (c) The opportunities presented by Future High Street Fund and Town Deal are noted and that these continue to be prioritised for delivery against Council Priorities in the next 12 month period

93. **ASPIRE HOUSING - PROSPECTUS FOR JOINT WORKING**

Cabinet considered a report on a proposal by Aspire Housing for the development of formal working arrangements with the Council. The Leader noted that Aspire had taken over management of the Council's housing stock in 1998. The Council owned various parcels of land and the report proposed a formal partnership approach with Aspire for joint working to progress future developments.

Resolved: That

- (a) Cabinet accepts in principle that the Council will work in partnership with Aspire Housing in the delivery of residential developments throughout the Borough.
- (b) The Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth is authorised to work with the Leader of the Council to deliver the projects on a case by case basis.
- (c) Further Cabinet updates will be presented to highlight progress on the working arrangement.

94. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for the Local Development Scheme which was a project plan setting out the key documents and development milestones in the process of producing the Borough Local Plan. The LDS would be made available on the Council's website and must be kept up to date.

Resolved: That approval is given for the Local Development Scheme (LDS) comprising the timetable for the production of the Local Plan and that approval is given for publication of the LDS on the Council's website.

95. **DRAFT NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2021 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Cabinet considered a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was part of the process of developing a Borough Local Plan. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that a SCI be adopted when preparing or revising a local plan and such a document must set out how an Authority would consult people with an interest in the development of the area. The SCI comprised 4 sections – introduction to the planning system; policy documents and key stages; the

key stages of Neighbourhood Plan development; and types of planning applications and who, when and how people would be consulted.

Resolved: That:

(a) The Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2021 is approved for public consultation.

(b) Officers in consultation with the portfolio holder for Planning and Growth be authorised to make minor editorial changes prior to the publication of the Draft SCI for public consultation.

(c) Cabinet agree to receive a future consultation report setting out the recommendations of the Planning Committee, and the results of the public consultation before considering the adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement.

96. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS 2020/21

Cabinet considered a report listing items deemed irrecoverable. There were three categories of irrecoverable items:

- Debtors, which totalled £156,742; this cost would be partly met using the Equipment Replacement Fund of £126,742;
- National Non Domestic Rates which was a cost shared between the Council; Staffordshire County Council; Central Government; and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service - the Council's share amounted to £118,227. The report also noted the Company Voluntary Arrangement entered into by New Look and with the Government's compensation towards Council's losses in Business Tax, the amount owed to the Collection Fund by the Council amounted to £169,984 and would not be repayable until 2022/23;
- Council Tax, again shared between the Council, Staffordshire County Council; Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner; and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The Council's share was £4,765.

Resolved: That the items detailed in the confidential appendix be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

97. 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.

98. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

99. 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 1 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

100. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Cabinet considered the confidential appendix listing details of irrecoverable items.

Resolved: That the information within the confidential appendix be received.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.47 pm