

CABINET

Wednesday, 23rd March, 2022
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Sweeney Paul Northcott
Gill Heesom Jill Waring

Apologies: Councillor(s) Trevor Johnson

Officers:	David Adams	Executive Director of Sustainable Development and Operations
	Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Executive Director of Growth and Development
	Daniel Dickinson	Head of Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer
	Denise French	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Sarah Wilkes	Head of Finance / S151 Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3. WALLEY'S QUARRY UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report updating on the current position with odour issues at Walley's Quarry.

Following the last meeting, the Chief Executive had written a formal letter of complaint to the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the effectiveness of their regulatory response to the problems at Walley's Quarry; the EA Chief Executive had rejected the council's complaint. The council had then sought the support of the Newcastle-under-Lyme MP, Aaron Bell, in raising a complaint with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Aaron Bell MP addressed the meeting regarding his support for making a complaint to the Ombudsman.

The appeal against the Abatement Notice served by the council on the operators was now likely to go to trial in autumn rather than summer; this was due to each party seeking additional documents.

Resolved that:

- (a) The update report be noted; and
- (b) Cabinet notes that the council's complaint about the effectiveness of the regulatory response to Walleys Quarry is being escalated to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

4. RYECROFT NEXT STEPS

Cabinet considered a report on progress with the development of the Ryecroft site. The report sought authority to negotiate the sale of two acres of land to Aspire Housing to construct a new headquarters, which would house around 200 employees; there would also be a new multi storey car park on the site and a 90 unit residential block for the Over 55s. The council was also exploring the feasibility of developing a mid-range hotel next to the car park.

Resolved: that

- 1. The progress made on the development of the Ryecroft site be noted and the Blueprint attached at Appendix 1 be endorsed.
- 2. The Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth be authorised to negotiate (subject to contract) the sale of approximately two acres of the site to Aspire Housing for its new Head Quarters Building and a 90 unit over 55s residential block; and
- 3. In the event of a successful negotiation, Cabinet will receive a further report seeking authorisation to enter into a contract for sale with Aspire.

5. FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND - PURCHASE OF YORK PLACE - APPOINTMENT OF A CONTRACTOR

Cabinet considered a report on progressing the York Place project following the council's acquisition of York Place.

Resolved: that:

- 1. The progress made on the York Place project, through the Future High Street Fund grant monies be noted.
- 2. The Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, be authorised in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Finance, Town Centres and Growth to take such actions and enter such agreements with the successful bidder for support to review redevelopment options, submit any necessary statutory planning applications and work with the Council on the future of a redeveloped York Place.
- 3. The Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, be authorised in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Finance, Town Centres and Growth to take such actions and enter such agreements for the appointment of consultants to assist in the development of the final designs and business cases for the development.

6. NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY - ANNUAL REPORT

Cabinet considered the Annual Report of the Sustainable Environment Strategy. The Strategy contained 4 Priority Outcomes:

- Reduce the reliance on the use of fossil fuels.
- Reduce carbon and other damaging emissions.
- Minimise waste and increase recycling.
- Offset residual carbon emissions.

The Strategy was delivered through an Action Plan.

Resolved: that:

1. The progress made in the various facets of the Council's Sustainable Environmental Strategy and other linked initiatives be noted; and
2. The progress update and 2022/2023 Action Plan be noted and referred to the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny and comments.

7. COVID 19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF POLICY

Cabinet considered a report proposing a policy to determine the level of discretionary relief payable under the council's COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) scheme.

Resolved: that the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy be approved.

8. SUPPORT FOR ENERGY BILLS - THE COUNCIL TAX REBATE AND DISCRETIONARY FUND 2022 - 23 POLICY

Cabinet considered a report on a policy to provide support to households who were in need of support towards the rising cost of household bills in 2022/23 but were not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, this support was known as the Discretionary Fund.

Resolved: that

1. The Support for Energy Bills Council Tax Rebate Discretionary Fund 2022-23 Policy be approved.
2. The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Finance, Town Centres and Growth, to update the Energy Bills Council Tax Rebate Discretionary Fund 2022-23 Policy should further guidance be received.

9. ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE FUNDING 2022 - 25

Cabinet considered a report on a funding bid that had been submitted for Government funding towards support for Rough Sleepers. The outcome would be known in April and if successful, approval was sought to accept the funding.

Resolved: that the Council accepts the funding awarded by the Government as part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2022-25 for the projects outlined in the report.

10. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - THIRD QUARTER (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER) 2021 - 2022

Cabinet considered the regular performance review report for Quarter 3, October – December 2021.

Resolved: that the contents of the report and Appendices A and B be noted and Cabinet will continue to monitor and challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.

11. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS

Cabinet considered a report on irrecoverable items.

Resolved: that the items detailed at confidential appendix 1 be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

12. 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.

13. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

14. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration if the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

15. RYECROFT NEXT STEPS - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Cabinet considered a report on the next steps for the Ryecroft project.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

16. FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND - PURCHASE OF YORK PLACE - APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Cabinet considered a report on the purchase of York Place.

Resolved: that

1. Progress made on the York Place project, made through the Future High Street Fund grant monies be noted.
2. The Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to take such actions and enter such agreements with Willmott Dixon for support to review redevelopment options, submit to any necessary statutory planning applications and work with the Council on the future of a redeveloped York Place.
3. The Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to take such actions and enter such agreements for the appointment of consultants to assist in the development of the final designs and business cases for the development, up to a limit of £500,000.

17. 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 3.13 pm