

CABINET

Tuesday, 10th September, 2024
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)		
Councillors:	Sweeney	Skelding	Hutchison
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Heesom and Fear		
Officers:	Gordon Mole Anthony Harold Sarah Wilkes Andrew Bird Geoff Durham Paul Dutton	Chief Executive Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Service Director - Sustainable Environment Civic & Member Support Officer Senior Media Officer	

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as listed above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR UPDATE**

The Leader introduced the update report on the latest position regarding the problematic odours associated with Walleys Quarry. The Chief Executive provided an overview of the current situation with highlights on the scrutiny work carried out by the Committee of Inquiry, information published by the Environment Agency and a recent landfill fire incident.

The Leader referred to a meeting held with the operator the previous day where it had been suggested to give better consideration to CCTV on site and for policies in place to be reviewed. The Environment Agency would need to be involved and changes reported to the liaison committee.

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The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment gave further insights on the work of Committee of Inquiry, with contributions from the Leader along with former MP Aaron Bell, the Borough Council Regulatory Services, and the Health, Environment and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. The County Council Director of Public Health as well as Dr Scott from Silverdale and Ryecroft Practice were also involved. A report would be submitted to full Council on 25th September.

The Deputy Leader asked about paragraph 2.37 of the report. The Chief Executive confirmed that the operator had reached out to the County Council for a pre-application meeting towards complete restoration of the site and subsequently issued a statement.

The Leader commented on the opportunities and options referred to and questioned for whom these would be. The fact the operator was intending further development was concerning and the Borough Council would remain committed to a full closure of the site. An update on the process in relation to legal action would be made available at the end of September.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

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5. ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Leader introduced the Annual Report for 2023-24 on the progress made during the second year of the Council's Plan for 2022-26 including contextual information on the financial challenges and operating environment for the Council's priorities.

The publication of an annual report was accepted good practice and a key element in the Council's governance and assurance framework providing transparency to stakeholders on progress made, the handling of key risks, the financial outlook of the authority and evidence-based strategy development.

Challenges and achievements were highlighted including Walleys Quarry, Britain in Bloom, the 850th anniversary of the Borough, the Council's transformation programme and regeneration plans, the Vulnerability Hub and the appointment of a new Chief Executive.

Members commented as follows:

- The Deputy Leader expressed his satisfaction over the way the Council was managing its finances and the speed at which funds were allocated towards agreed developments.
- The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment shared his contentment on food hygiene inspections, recycling and waste management, dog control and alcohol prohibition in local parks and the draft Local Plan.
- The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage was pleased with Britain in Bloom outcomes, the Brampton Museum's involvement in the 850th anniversary's celebrations and notably the many events organised and awards received by the museum, and the management of the Jubilee 2 facility.

Resolved: (i) That the Council's Annual Report for 2023-24 be received.

(ii) That the 2023-24 Annual Report be referred to Full Council's 25th September 2024 meeting.

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6. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2023/24

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the provisional financial outturn for 2023-24, drawing members' attention to the £505,000 shortfall in housing benefits subsidy grant for which full subsidy was not claimable.

Resolved: That the General Fund outturn and key issues in respect of the Council's financial position as at 31st March 2024, be noted.

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7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial pressures facing the Council for the period 2025-26 to 2029-30.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment commented that he would be meeting with the four officers in his portfolio and would be reporting his finding to the Efficiency Board later in the month.

The Leader provided background information on the Efficiency Board process set to achieve savings as part of the budget which would be submitted to Full Council in February 2025.

The Leader also reminded members of the commitment for the Council Tax increase to remain not higher than 1.9% which the Council had so far managed to deliver. This was particularly relevant considering the current situation in terms of cost of living and a loss of allowances for 23,000 pensioners in Newcastle.

Resolved: (i) That the funding pressures of £1.429m in 2025/26 and £5.251m over the 5-year period covered by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), be noted.

(ii) That the approach regarding the development of savings and income generation proposals in the medium-term, be agreed.

(iii) That the continued uncertainty regarding the medium-term impact of local government funding, be noted.

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8. BRADWELL DINGLE PLAY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment presented the report on the Bradwell Dingle play and recreational facilities' improvement project.

The following question had been received from The Friends of Bradwell Dingle:

"Can the agenda specification include a requirement for the contractor who will oversee the works to work throughout the project with the Friends of Bradwell Dingle on community

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engagement? This would be with the aim to reduce antisocial behaviour at the park including reducing the risk of damage to the newly installed facilities.”

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment suggested that the Landscape and Community Team Leader and himself meet with the organisation to scope out what was feasible in this regard in the view of incorporating something affordable and appropriate into the contract.

The Leader expressed his support to both the project and the suggestion.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage commented that antisocial behaviour had faded away since the build of the facility which was well used and very much needed.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment added that two surveys had taken place in the recent years and residents could be contacted again to share their opinion.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the principles of the scheme for play and recreational facilities at Bradwell Dingle be approved.
 - (ii) That officers be authorised to appoint a consultant to undertake further consultation, detailed design, and delivery of the project.
 - (iii) That the use of the allocated £492,419.00 Section 106 funding for the delivery of the project be approved.
 - (iv) That the approval of the detailed design be delegated to the Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment.
 - (v) That officers be authorised to seek and accept the best value tender for the delivery of the project.

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9. STAFFORDSHIRE WIDE AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE PLANNING POLICIES

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment presented the report on a Staffordshire-wide agreement on climate planning policies produced jointly by the local planning authorities in Staffordshire.

The Leader welcomed the project and stated that the Council would be one of the first ones on board. The agreement would set a standard on what the net zero emission target meant for the borough and for the new developments coming with regeneration projects.

- Resolved:** That Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council become a signatory to the Staffordshire planning policy commitments shared statement annexed as Appendix 1 and support the policy directions and future evidence requirements to support the transition towards achieving net zero carbon emissions for the borough by 2050.

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10. **NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP - RENEWAL OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Leader introduced the report on the renewal of the shared building control service between Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council which allowed for a resilient and sustainable service at a financial cost which was appropriate to both local authorities.

The Deputy Leader commented that the 5 years rolling regime worked well.

Resolved: (i) That the renewal of the shared building control service between Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to discharge the statutory building control functions for the Borough Council to 2029, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of the agreed deed, be approved.

(ii) That the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning in consultation with the Service Director for Planning, be given delegated authority to finalise the specific terms and conditions and sign the updated partnership agreement on behalf of the Borough Council including any necessary data sharing requirement agreements.

(iii) That the Service Director for Planning be given delegated authority to oversee delivery of the building control services provided by Stoke-on-Trent City Council to the Borough Council in accordance with the partnership agreement; review the Annual Business Plan and fee setting proposals; attend quarterly meetings with Stoke-On-Trent City Council to review performance including in terms of finance; and, report on performance to the relevant Scrutiny Committee at the Borough Council.

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11. **NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AIR QUALITY PLAN (NSLAQP)**

The Leader introduced the report on the progression of plans for tackling air quality related to road traffic pollution on the A53 Etruria Road at Basford Bank. The project of a bus gate had been rejected by the Council, taking away the risk of traffic being transferred to local roads.

An alternative proposal was to be discussed as exempt business during the closed session, which the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment was looking forward to. A close monitoring of the air quality in the area had been undertaken through receptors placed on lamp posts.

Resolved: (i) That the options for addressing air quality in line with a Ministerial Direction, be considered.

(ii) That the details and the progression of a plan which is an alternative to the A53 bus gate be noted and agreed. Details of which are set out in the Restricted Report, which is not for publication by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Information relating to the financial or business

affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

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12. Q1 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

The Deputy Leader introduced the Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Report for 2024-25 on the performance of individual council services and progress with delivery against priorities and financial information.

The Leader then went through the Performance Indicators, 82% of which had met their targets. Portfolio holders were invited to comment.

Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People

Stage 1 complaints processed within twenty working days had almost met the target of 85% being at 83.33%.

The percentage of food premises that had a zero or one national food hygiene rating met the target being well below 3% at 0.73%.

The staff turnover and vacancy rate were heading in the right direction.

The percentage of the council tax collected met the target.

Online transactions were slightly down compared to the previous year's figures.

Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

The percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of actions to be taken regarding breaches of planning control was below target, which seemed to be related to the implementation of a new enforcement policy and structure.

Street scene and recycling met the target, with notably 53% for recycling and 44.5% of household participating in food waste collections which were then used to generate energy. The byproduct was pasteurised and going back to farmland and Staffordshire infrastructure as nutrient rich fertiliser.

Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

The number of people accessing the museum's collections in person was still well above targets. National awards had been received.

The Jubilee 2 sports centre membership growth was a massive achievement.

Antisocial behaviours had seen a massive drop and the Community Safety Action Plan was being updated based on priorities identified in strategic assessment. Operational work was continuing in the town centre.

Work was being done to address the increase of emergency homeless cases and applications.

Priority 4: Town Centres for All

The number of parking tickets purchased was slightly below target due to the closure of some parking spaces, to allow regeneration projects to progress.

Data relating to the town centre footfall normally provided by the BID was under review and would be provided at a later date.

Stall occupancy was also under review.

Resolved: That the contents of the report and appendices be noted and that Cabinet continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period.

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13. **FORWARD PLAN**

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

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14. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

15. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

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

16. **NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AIR QUALITY PLAN (NSLAQP) - CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**

17. **NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP - RENEWAL OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 3.24 pm