

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Coltman VC Room at the Town Hall, Burton upon Trent on Tuesday 14th February 2023.

Present:

Councillors G Allen (Chairman), Mrs B Ashcroft, A Clarke, R A Faulkner and S Sankey.

Officers Present:

The Chief Executive, the Heads of Service (Sal Khan, Mark Rizk and Thomas Deery), the Monitoring Officer; the Chief Accountant; the Corporate and Commercial Manager; the Enterprise Manager; the Marketing Officer; the Housing Options Manager and the Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present:

Cabinet Support Member Councillor M Metcalfe.
Councillor R Lock, Chairman of the Scrutiny (Value for Money Council Services) Committee.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B G Peters.

PART II

343/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations at the commencement of the meeting.

344/23 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor G Allen		
Councillor Mrs B Ashcroft		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor S Sankey		

345/23 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business prior to the commencement of the meeting.

346/23 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period 1st February 2023 to 31st May 2023 was submitted for information.

NOTED

347/23 **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MAYORALTY**

The report of the Scrutiny (Value for Money Council Services) Committee on the review of the Mayoralty was considered. The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: Mayoral Budget and Expenditure
- Appendix 2: Mayoral Engagements
- Appendix 3: Benchmarking Results

Councillor R Lock (Chairman of the Scrutiny (Value for Money Council Services) Committee) presented the report.

Resolved:

That the report and recommendations be accepted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor G Allen		
Councillor Mrs B Ashcroft		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor S Sankey		

348/23 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 ONWARDS**

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period covering 2023/24 to 2025/26, including the Council's Capital Programme and the Asset Management and Capital Strategy was considered.

The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix A: Detailed Budget Summary 2023/24 – 2024/25;
- Appendix B: Capital Programme;
- Appendix C: Reserves Forecast;
- Appendix D: Asset Management and Capital Strategy 2023/24

The reasons for making the decision below were set out in the report.

Recommended to Council:

- 1) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26 be approved, which includes the revenue budget, capital programme and the asset management and capital strategy; and that the level and appropriateness of reserves be noted;

- 2) That the revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme be approved, effective from 1st April 2023, as outlined in Section 11 of the report.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor G Allen		
Councillor Mrs B Ashcroft		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor S Sankey		

349/23

PLACE NARRATIVE AND MARKETING APPROACH FOR BURTON UPON TRENT

The report of the Head of Service (Thomas Deery) on the Place Narrative work commissioned earlier in the year as part of Corporate Plan target CR34 was considered.

The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1 Stakeholder list;
- Appendix 2 Steering Group membership;
- Appendix 3 Place Narrative;
- Appendix 4 Place Branding Visuals.

Cabinet noted that the Place Narrative project had been awarded to Thinking Place to re-position the brand of Burton upon Trent through a Place Based approach that would provide focus for the attraction of inward investment, tourism, business start-ups, people to work in the town and business retention. Due to the focus and resources Staffordshire were putting behind their place brand and the success they were having in its implementation, it was felt this was good timing for Burton upon Trent to do something similar, as the Council would be taking forward various regeneration initiatives in the town. Cabinet noted that the work to date involved the development and delivery of a programme of community and stakeholder engagement (including “place conversations”; focus groups; steering group; and online survey) and the development of a place narrative.

The design and development of “visual language and a visual identity” for Burton upon Trent would be based on the place narrative. The next steps for the project would include the development of a Burton upon Trent storybook and a Place Branding exercise in March. It was noted that Thinking Place would be involved for a further 6 months to help bed-in the work, including setting up Ambassador events to encourage key local stakeholders to help share the message of the new place narrative.

The reasons for making the decision below were set out in the report.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be endorsed.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor G Allen		
Councillor Mrs B Ashcroft		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor S Sankey		

350/23

EMPTY HOMES UPDATE REPORT AND ENFORCEMENT PROPOSAL

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the performance report identifying the reduction in empty homes was considered.

Cabinet noted that in March 2022 a decision was made to target 8 empty homes that had reached the top of the escalating approach, and had either not responded or had provided inadequate responses to bring the empty home back into use. In April and May 2022 the Council utilised its powers under the Housing Act 2004 section 239, which allowed authorised officers to inspect the selected empty home both externally and internally.

Following inspection in November 2022, 1 empty home was to be demolished as a part of a wider development; 1 had been sold, and therefore would likely be brought back into use; 3 owners had engaged with the team conducting the inspection, but had not made significant progress since May; and 3 owners had not allowed the Council access to inspect their empty home. It was highlighted that the only remaining means by which the Council could seek to bring the empty home back into use would be to pursue a warrant, and thereby the owner would see a demonstrable intent by the Council to pursue legal action. Cabinet noted that the costs incurred from this process would be met from S106 funds.

The reasons for making the decision below were set out in the report.

Resolved:

That a warrant be obtained to gain access to the 3 empty homes as indicated within the report whose owners have not allowed the Council to inspect their condition.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor G Allen		
Councillor Mrs B Ashcroft		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor S Sankey		

351/23

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

