

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 Monday 20th December 2021.

Present:

Councillors D Goodfellow (Chairman), G Allen, Mrs B Ashcroft, R A Faulkner and B G Peters.

Officers Present:

The Chief Executive, the Heads of Service (Sal Khan and Mark Rizk), the Deputy Monitoring Officer, the Chief Accountant, the Programmes and Transformation Team Leader, the Housing Options Manager (via Zoom), the Environmental Health Manager (via Zoom) and the Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present:

Cabinet Support Members Councillors M Metcalfe and S Sankey.

PART II

223/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations at the commencement of the meeting.

224/21 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

225/21 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business for consideration at the meeting.

226/21 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022 was submitted for information.

NOTED.

227/21

QUARTER 2 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2021/22

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the forecast outturn position in relation to the Council's revenue budget, capital programme of expenditure and treasury and risk management activities was considered.

The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix A: Forecast variances against budget at outturn 2021/22;
- Appendix B: Investments at 30th September 2021;
- Appendix C: Corporate and Strategic Risks – Quarter 2 2021/22.

Cabinet noted that there remained significant forecast net pressures against the pre-covid-19 service budgets and that after taking into account corporate budgets, including the provision for Covid-19 pressures, this resulted in an overall reduction in the need to draw down from reserves of £0.7m (from £1.1m to £0.4m).

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

Resolved:

- 1) That the forecast financial position at quarter two of 2021/22 in relation to revenue and capital budgets together with the financial impact and uncertainty that continues to exist due to the Covid-19 Pandemic be noted;
- 2) That the additional capital funding of £27k from in year capital receipts to support the purchase of waste vehicles (paragraph 6.2) be approved;
- 3) That the latest position in respect of the Council's investments and borrowing be noted;
- 4) That the corporate and strategic risks, together with actions being taken to manage these be noted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22 QUARTER 2

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the update on progress halfway through the 2021/22 financial year towards achieving the priorities set out in East Staffordshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan was considered.

The following Appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: Comprehensive data on all Corporate Indicators;
- Appendix 2: Comprehensive data for Quarter 2 2021/22 from the benchmarking exercise coordinated by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

Cabinet noted that out of the 129 targets, 102 were green status; 4 were amber status; 1 was red status; 21 were not yet due to be reported and 1 had been deferred and that of the 107 "live" targets, 95.33% were green status; 3.74% were amber status and 0.93% were red status.

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

Resolved:

- 1) That performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2021/22 financial year towards achieving the Council's Corporate Priorities be considered;
- 2) That the target for VFM65 be deferred to September 2022;
- 3) That a target of February 2022 be set for VFM 57.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

229/21

BEYOND COMMUNICATIONS: A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the Council’s proposed Communication, engagement and consultation strategy was considered.

The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: Beyond Communications: A strategy for communication, engagement and consultation;
- Appendix 2: Equality and Health Impact Assessment.

Cabinet noted that effective communication was vital to bring the Council and the community together and that this was the responsibility of everyone at the Council including members and officers. The strategy would guide the Council on how to build trust and enhance engagement with its stakeholders and consider how it engaged and consulted with its residents and demonstrated how effective communication was linked intrinsically to stronger engagement and consultation.

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

Resolved:

- 1) That the Communications, engagement and consultation strategy be approved;
- 2) That the Strategy be reviewed following the completion of the place branding exercise.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

230/21

YEAR ONE PARKS REVIEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The report of the Head of Service (Mark Rizk) on the first year review of the Parks Development Plan was considered. Appendix 1: Parks Development Plan had been circulated with the report:

Cabinet noted that 2021-22 had been the first delivery year of the Parks Delivery Plan and great progress had been made in the first twelve months. Scores at “It’s Your Neighbourhood” Park awards had increased by 39%, with

the Borough Council and its partners receiving many accolades. Volunteering opportunities had continued with successful links forged with public and private sector organisations. Wildflower, tree and sustainable planting had not only created visual enhancements but had been very well received by the public. Marketing had been a cross-cutting theme that impacted positively upon open spaces and the utilisation of Section 106 monies had helped to “fast track” improvements that may have been delayed had they been funded from internal budgets.

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

Resolved:

That the year one progress on the plan be noted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

231/21

REVIEW OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2021-25

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the review of the Housing Strategy adopted in December 2020 was considered. Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Review Table had been circulated with the report.

Cabinet noted that the Housing Strategy 2021-2025 was being reviewed for accuracy and relevance and that no specific concerns had been raised about the strategy, with the review exercise providing additional assurance. There were 10 items ‘On Track,’ 3 items experiencing ‘Mild Deviation’ and 0 items experiencing ‘Deviation.’

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

Resolved:

That the finding that the Housing Strategy 2021-2025 remained accurate and relevant be noted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

232/21

REFRESHED HOUSING ALLOCATIONS AND HOUSING REGISTER OVERVIEW

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the revised Housing Allocations Policy and an update on the performance of the East Staffordshire Housing Register was considered.

The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: Allocations Policy 2021 with Amendments Tracked;
- Appendix 2: Summary of Changes;
- Appendix 3: Equality and Health Impact Assessment;
- Appendix 4: Allocations Policy 2021 proposed version.

Cabinet noted that the Allocations Policy had been functioning well overall, and had been providing appropriate recognition of relative housing need in the allocation of social rented homes. A handful of simplifications & updates had been proposed to the policy, including the removal of Alternative Ranking Criteria in relation to larger homes.

Cabinet noted that applications to join the East Staffs Housing Register had taken place online since 22 September 2020 and that this change had dramatically improved access, resulting in an almost 2 fold increase in the number of applications on the Housing Register in the past 13 months. As the volume of applications remained a concern, it was proposed to provide an update on this matter in 2022.

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

Resolved:

That the revised Housing Allocations Policy shown at Appendix 4 be adopted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

233/21

THIRD ANNUAL DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT REVIEW

The report of the Head of Service (Mark Rizk) on the annual review of the Disabled Facilities Grant Service was considered. Appendix 1 – Disabled Facilities Grants and Adaptations Policy 2018 had been circulated with the report.

Cabinet noted that the performance of the Disabled Facilities Grant service had been continually monitored and corrective action taken for any challenges that had arisen and that as a result, the timescales associated with the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants had significantly reduced, despite a slight increase due to Covid-19 in 2020/21 and an increase in the number of Disabled Facilities Grants being granted and completed.

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

Resolved:

- 1) That a temporary 1 FTE Housing Adaptations Officer and 1 FTE support officer post for 2 years be approved, funded using the Disabled Facilities Grant received;
- 2) That the amendments to the Disabled Facilities Grants and Adaptations Policy be approved, to provide clarity for client referred works and to increase the amount of discretionary top up funding to £20,000 and £50,000 for exceptional children's adaptations and increase relocation funding to £10,000;
- 3) That the contents of the report be noted.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against	Those abstaining
G Allen		
Mrs B Ashcroft		
R A Faulkner		
D Goodfellow		
B G Peters		

Chairman