

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

R P Cooke	-	Resources Portfolio
I D Fordham	-	Environment Portfolio
J Hood	-	Community Portfolio
G P K Pardesi	-	Leisure Portfolio
A N Pearce	-	Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio
A F Reid	-	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

Also present - Councillors A P Edgeller, J M Pert and M J  
Winnington

Officers in attendance:

C Forrester	-	Deputy Chief Executive - Resources
G Stott	-	Deputy Chief Executive - Place
J Aupers	-	Head of Transformation and Assurance
J Presland	-	Head of Operations
D Piper	-	Head of Economic Development and Planning
A Nevin	-	Head of Wellbeing
W Conaghan	-	Press and Communication Manager
J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer

## **CAB26 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2024 as published on 4 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

## **CAB27 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Kenney and Mr Tim Clegg, Chief Executive.

## **CAB28 Notice of Motion - Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty**

The above Notice of Motion proposed by Councillors J M Pert and A P Edgeller as set out in the agenda had been referred from the Council meeting held on 10 September 2024 as provided for under rule 13.5 of the Council Procedure Rules.

Councillor J Hood, Community Portfolio holder made the following statement in response to the motion:-

“It is imperative that residents, families, local organisations and businesses help us to spread the message about how older people could find out if they are entitled to pension credits. Even if you are only entitled to £1, it means you can get other allowances such as Housing Benefit if you rent a property, a free TV licence if you are aged 75 or over, help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and hospital appointment costs.

The local authority are already promoting this, by:

- Putting details on every page of their website to signpost to where residents can find out more on how to claim
- Adding information to emails from Councillors and staff
- We have shared government messages through our social media channels
- And, Leader, I know that you have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to voice our concern and to ask that the Government does all it can to make sure those entitled to help during the winter months don't miss out.

Anyone who is unsure if they qualify for the WFA can go to [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit) or contact the Department of Work and Pensions dedicated helpline on 0800 99 1234 between Monday and Friday from 8am to 6pm.

We don't want people to miss out on this allowance - so we encourage people to get in touch with the DWP to find out what they are entitled to. There are also local organisations, like Age Concern and the Citizens Advice Bureau, that can help you do this if you need support”.

RESOLVED:- that Cabinet accept the associated cost implications resulting from the motion and the matter be considered at a future meeting of Council.

## **CAB29 Priority Projects for 2024-25**

Considered a report setting out the priority projects and key performance indicators that would form the basis of the Council's performance management framework for 2024/25.

The Leader of the Council noted that the report set out the priority projects for 2024/25 pending the development of the new Corporate Plan. The Council's overarching priorities remained unchanged, but a review had been undertaken of the underpinning projects, commitments and emerging work areas. The review had been important in allowing focus to be placed on key workstreams in order to make the best use of the resources available.

The Council was ambitious to deliver significant change to Stafford town centre, to deliver its shared services agenda and ensure value for money in service delivery. These 3 themes would be central to the Council's priorities going forward.

In total 18 projects had been identified, which were a mix of strategic and operational, contributing to the 4 Corporate Priorities.

Delivery plans had been established for each of the priority projects and performance delivery of said plans would be monitored.

Councillor Godfrey concluded his comments by asking Cabinet colleagues to approve the list of priority projects as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report, and the key performance indicators as detailed in the associated appendix 4.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Leader of the Council be approved as follows:

That the list of priority projects as set out in paragraph 3.6 and the key performance indicators set out in appendix 4 of the report be approved.

### **CAB30 Statement of Licensing Policy 2025-30**

Considered a report setting out the draft 'Statement of Licensing Policy' under the Licensing Act 2003 ('the Act') following consultation on statutory review.

The Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 be approved and be recommend to Council to adopt and publish the Statement as detailed in appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) the Head of Regulatory Services be authorised to make any amendments to the Policy required due to changes in legislation or government guidance and minor variations to the Policy in the interests of operational efficiency.

Councillor Fordham expressed his thanks to Officers of the Environmental Health Licensing Team for their efforts in preparing the Policy.

### **CAB31 Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Principles 2025 - 2028**

Considered a report dealing the revised Statement of Principles (Policy Statement) in respect of functions under the Gambling Act 2005 (the Act), following consultation on statutory review.

The Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the Gambling Act 2005 Policy Statement 2025 as set out at appendix 1 of report be approved and recommended to Council for adoption and publication;
- (b) the Head of Regulatory Services be authorised to make any amendments to the Policy required due to changes in legislation or government guidance and minor variations to the Policy in the interests of operational efficiency.

### **CAB32 Streetscene Vehicle Replacement Permission to Spend**

Considered a report informing Cabinet of proposed investment to vehicle replacement for the Council's Streetscene service and requesting approval to spend £976,609 on vehicle replacement and the installation of two electric vehicle charging points at Riverway Nursery.

The Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Environment Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the project be supported;

- (b) expenditure of up to £976,609 (including 10% contingency) from the Streetscene sinking funds be authorised to enable replacement vehicles, sweepers and ride on mowers to be purchased and the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

Councillor A N Pearce commended the report, in particular the content of paragraph 6.6 (climate change).

### **CAB33 Housing Assistance Policy 2024-28**

Considered a report requesting approval for the adoption of the Housing Assistance Policy for the period 2024 - 2028.

The Cabinet Member, Community Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 and concluded her comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Community Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the Housing Assistance Policy 2024-2028 (as set out in appendix 1 of the report) be approved;
- (b) authority be delegated to the Head of Wellbeing (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community) to revise, prioritise or withdraw discretionary assistance as appropriate, considering the council's available resources and annual funding allocations.

Councillor A N Pearce praised the report which would see the process for awarding of said grants improved.

### **CAB34 Development Management Action Plan and Resources Request 2024/25**

Considered a report updating Cabinet on performance in Development Management, and setting out actions to maintain service delivery in Development Management and Planning Enforcement during 2024/25 and the associated resource/budget implications.

The Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the proposals for Development Management and Planning Enforcement for 2024/25 which will maintain current service delivery be agreed;
- (c) it be noted that an external independent review of the Development Management service had been commissioned, with the conclusions of this report to be reported back to Cabinet with detailed recommendations and an improvement plan in line with budget availability;
- (d) the drawdown of £500k from planning/development management reserves to maintain current service levels as agency staff are released be recommended to Council.

Councillor Reid passed on his thanks and congratulations to Officers of the Development Management team in preparing the report.

### **CAB35 Final Accounts 2023/24**

Considered a report presenting to the final outturn position for 2023/24.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the final outturn position for the year ending 31 March 2024 be noted;
- (b) the financing of the capital programme as outlined in the report be approved.

Councillor Cooke passed on his gratitude to Officers of the Finance Department for their efforts in preparing the report.

**CAB36 Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:- that pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting whilst the next following items of business be discussed, on the grounds that they included the disclosure of exempt information of the type specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

*Recording of the meeting was suspended at this point.*

**CAB37 Revenues and Benefits Computer Systems - Confidential**

Considered a report advising Members of the need to upgrade the computer systems used by the Revenues and Benefits department to a cloud-based hosted solution and informing members of the steps to be taken to ensure that best value is achieved by this process and how the procurement is to be funded.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposals as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) the approval of the funds required to upgrade the Revenues and Benefits computer systems and the inclusion of this in the capital programme be recommended to Council;
- (b) approval to spend on the replacement of the Revenues and Benefit system be granted;
- (c) the Section 151 officer be authorised to agree the details of the contracts required to affect the upgrades.

**THIS ITEM IS NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN AND WILL BE REFERRED TO COUNCIL ON 3 DECEMBER 2024.**

**CAB38 Proposed Purchase of Civic Centre, Stafford - Confidential**

Considered a report setting out the business case to purchase Stafford Civic Centre.

The Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio, introduced the report noting the detail as set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 and concluded his comments by recommending that the proposal as set out in paragraph 2 be approved.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposal of the Cabinet Member, Resources Portfolio be approved as follows:

That the purchase of the Civic Centre and the consequential increase in the authorised and operational borrowing limits in the treasury strategy, equivalent to the purchase price, be recommended to Council.

The Deputy Chief Executive - Resources, noted that a full business case relating to the above matter would be presented to Members in due course.

**THIS ITEM IS NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN AND WILL BE REFERRED TO COUNCIL ON 3 DECEMBER 2024.**

CHAIR