

Public Document Pack

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

DIANE TILLEY BSc., MRICS
Chief Executive
Tel (01543) 308001

District Council House
Frog Lane
Lichfield
WS13 6YY

8 February 2021

To: Members of the Lichfield District Council

In accordance with Paragraph 4(2) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972, you are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Lichfield District Council which will be held on **TUESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2021 at 6.00 pm.**

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and government advice on social distancing, the meeting will be held online and streamed live on the Council's [YouTube channel](#).



Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence (if any)
2. Declarations of interest
3. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting (3 – 12)
4. Chairman's Announcements
5. Report of the Leader of the Council on Cabinet Decisions from the Meetings held on 12 January and 9 February (to follow) and Cabinet Member Decisions (13 – 14)
6. Minutes of the Community, Housing & Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee (15 – 18)
7. Minutes of the Leisure, Parks & Waste Management (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee (19 – 22)
8. Minutes of the Economic Growth, Environment & Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee (23 – 26)
9. Minutes of the Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee (27 – 32)
10. Minutes of Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee to move that the proceedings of the meetings held on 14 December 2020 and 11 January 2021 be received and where necessary approved and adopted (33 – 36)

11. Minutes of Employment Committee

The Chairman of the Employment Committee to move that the proceedings of the meeting held on 15 December 2020 be received and where necessary approved and adopted (37 – 38)

12. Minutes of Audit & Member Standards Committee

The Chairman of Audit & Member Standards Committee to move that the proceedings of the meeting held on 3 February 2021 be received and where necessary approved and adopted (39 – 46)

13. Medium Term Financial Strategy

To agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-2025 and the Council Tax Resolution 2021-2022 (copy to follow)

14. Calendar of Meetings

To approve the Calendar of Meetings as submitted (47 – 48)

15. Questions

To answer any questions under Procedure Rule 11.2

COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Powell (Chairman), Cross (Vice-Chair), Anketell, Baker, Ball, Banevicius, Barnett, Binney, Birch, Checkland, Cox, Eadie, Eagland, D Ennis, L Ennis, Evans, Grange, Greateorex, Gwilt, Ho, Humphreys, Leytham, A Little, E Little, Marshall, Matthews, Norman, Parton-Hughes, Pullen, Ray, Robertson, Salter, Silvester-Hall, Spruce, Strachan, Tapper, Warburton, Warfield, Westwood, White, A Yeates and B Yeates

121 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Lax, Smith, M Wilcox and S Wilcox.

122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

123 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 October 2020 were approved as a correct record subject to the penultimate line of Minute 117 (B) being amended to read 'Councillor Gwilt and *Councillor Robertson* spoke in favour of the Motion as amended.'

124 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that, as in previous years, donations to the Chairman's Charity were invited in lieu of Christmas cards. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hoped 2021 would be a better year.

125 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER AND 1 DECEMBER AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Councillor Pullen submitted his report on Cabinet Decisions from the meetings held on 10 November and 1 December and Cabinet Member Decisions.

Councillor Pullen answered questions on the report and Councillor Ball said thanks should be recorded for the team implementing the Additional Restrictions Grant for moving so quickly and consulting with the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (O&S) Committee before submitting the emergency report to Cabinet.

126 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

Councillor Spruce submitted the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020.

Councillor Strachan thanked the Committee for its efforts in challenging and testing the draft procurement strategy. He noted that rather than buying in support, procurement would be done in house with a newly appointed team. This should raise the profile of procurement and

lead to better contract management. He confirmed that local procurement was high on the agenda.

In response to a question on the track and trace scheme, Councillor Strachan undertook to advise Councillor Ball if there had been any significant change in the funding situation.

Councillor Pullen advised he would be contacting Councillor Ball in response to his query about the review of the sports and leisure service.

Reference was made to the importance of the environmental impact section of reports and the digital innovation and procurement strategy reports were commended as good examples.

127 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

Councillor Leytham submitted the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020.

In response to a question about the Events and Festival Policy and the role of Regulatory & Licensing Committee, Cllr Eadie confirmed that the Street Trading Policy would still apply but it was proposed that the evaluation and approval of expressions of interest would be undertaken by an officer group and the relevant Cabinet Member.

128 MINUTES OF AUDIT & MEMBER STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Greatorox moved that the proceedings of the Committee be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted. Attention was drawn to the Committee's approval of updated Treasury Management Practices and it was proposed in submitting the Minutes that these practices, as previously circulated to all Members, be adopted by the Council.

Referring to the wording of the Minutes, Councillor Robertson said he had sought to emphasise that climate change was a strategic risk that should be considered as part of SR2. Councillor Greatorox said he was happy for the minutes to reflect that climate change had been identified as a strategic risk.

Councillor Norman said he would like to apologise for not having submitted his apologies in time for the meeting.

It was then seconded by Councillor Ho and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 be approved and adopted.

129 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor Marshall submitted the Minutes of Planning Committee held on 16 November 2020 and thanked his Vice-Chairman for taking the meeting.

It was then seconded by Councillor Baker and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 16 November 2020 be approved and adopted.

130 EVENTS & FESTIVALS POLICY

Councillor Eadie outlined the importance of events and festivals to the District and, following a period of consultation, submitted the recommendations of Cabinet made on 6 October 2020 in connection with the Events and Festivals Policy.

Issues discussed during the debate included the way the decisions would be made, the desire to protect historic and successful events that occurred the same time each year, the adverse effects that events had on some businesses and the need to be cognisant of the organisers of the various events and festivals and to work with them to facilitate their events.

In his responses Councillor Eadie advised that the guide that accompanied the policy should enable applications to be evaluated on an impartial basis but the policy would be kept under review. He noted that all applicants would be considered at the same time and it might also be possible to run different events on the same day. Councillor Eadie said it was important to ensure that local businesses benefited and the Council would work with event organisers to see how that could be achieved.

The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Humphreys and it was

RESOLVED: (1) That the Council's constitution be amended to formally acknowledge the formation of a cross-service officer panel for determining an annual events programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan.

(2) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be updated to include a supplementary budget of £20,000 per annum to help meet the costs of new events intended to support local communities across the District.

131 REVISION OF STREET TRADING POLICY

Councillor Eadie submitted revisions to the Street Trading Policy on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health.

It was noted that the Council's Street Trading Policy included a section on special events and festivals that overlapped with the recently approved Events and Festivals Policy. These areas of overlap had been removed and clarification provided on where the Street Trading Policy still applied. It was advised that some aspects of the policy had been removed and included in the Street Trading Procedure. A further review of the Policy would be undertaken in 2021.

Reference was made to the Environmental Impact section of reports and the need to ensure outcomes and benefits were set out.

It was seconded by Councillor Humphreys and

RESOLVED: That the amended Street Trading Policy be approved and the delegation in the constitution for Regulatory and Licensing Committee to determine expressions of interest be removed.

132 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY - LICENSING ACT 2003

Cllr B Yeates submitted the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2021 – 2026 for approval.

It was noted that on 28th September 2020 Regulatory & Licensing Committee recommended the retention and extension of the current Licensing Policy due to the impact of the

Coronavirus pandemic. A full policy review would be carried out during the extension period once the relevant licensing activity was resumed and a period of stability established.

Cllr Pullen seconded the proposal and it was

RESOLVED: That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021 – 2026 as submitted be adopted.

133 MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE BODIES

It was proposed by Councillor Pullen and seconded by Councillor E Little that Councillor Eadie be appointed to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation Partnership.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Eadie be appointed to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation Partnership.

134 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(A) Councillor Ho submitted the following Motion having obtained the consent of Council for amendments to the originally submitted text:

That Lichfield District Council:

(i) Notes the Slow Ways project and its goal to create a network of walking routes that connect all of Great Britain's towns and cities as well as thousands of villages.

(ii) Further recognises that safely walking local routes and public footpaths:

- can improve the health and wellbeing of the residents in the district of Lichfield.
- can help reduce carbon emissions in the district of Lichfield.
- can help tackle the climate change emergency that the council declared last year.

(iii) Will therefore encourage residents to:

- walk safely to their place of work.
- use safe and established public footpaths when visiting neighbouring settlements.
- review routes that have been drafted by the project.

Councillor Baker seconded the Motion.

Councillor Norman proposed the following amendment to the third bullet point of the Motion:

- can help tackle the climate change emergency that the council declared last year *and so we will offer appropriate financial and other support such as encouraging the County Council to provide safe footway improvements.*

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Evans.

Following a debate Councillor Norman withdrew his Amendment and submitted the following Amendment to the third bullet point of the Motion:

- can help tackle the climate change emergency that the council declared last year and so we will *explore financial and other support such as encouraging the County Council to provide safe footway improvements.*

The Amendment was seconded by Councillor Evans.

Following a vote **the Amendment was approved.**

Members then voted on the Motion as amended.

RESOLVED: That the Motion as Amended be approved.

(B) Councillor Pullen proposed the following Motion:

"This Council acknowledges the extraordinary efforts made by employees of Lichfield District Council in 2020, and notes that many will have their pay frozen in the year 2021-2022. In light of this pay freeze, it resolves that all Councillor Allowances are also frozen until May 2022 at the earliest".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Barnett.

In supporting the Motion Councillor Norman said it was a pity there had not been consultation since it was not a party political matter and represented a continuation of existing policy.

Following a vote **the Motion was approved.**

RESOLVED: That the Motion as submitted be approved.

(C) Councillor Ball proposed the following Motion:

"This Council deplores the very poor performance of the two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) covering our District, with South East Staffordshire CCG, recorded as "Inadequate" for the past three years, and East Staffordshire CCG performing slightly better, moving from "Good" to "Requires Improvement" over the last year, and resolves to write to our two local MPs, asking them what they personally have done over that period to push for improvements and what else they will do personally in the future.

In addition, this Council resolves to write to Staffordshire County Council, to ask what they have done over that period to push for improvements and what else they will do in the future. Finally, this Council agrees that the appropriate CCG representatives from both CCGs should be invited to the Community, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to inform members about both CCGs' performance and asked what plans they have to improve the situation."

The Motion was second by Councillor Evans.

During the debate, Councillor Norman proposed that the first sentence of the Motion be amended to read:

This Council *is saddened* by the very poor performance of the two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) covering our District, with South East Staffordshire CCG, recorded as "Inadequate" for the past three years, and East Staffordshire CCG performing slightly better, moving from "Good" to "Requires Improvement" over the last year, and resolves to write to our two local MPs, asking them what they personally have done over that period to push for improvements and what else they will do personally in the future.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Anketell and Councillor Ball offered to withdraw his motion in favour of the amended Motion.

Members debated the Amendment and following a vote **the amendment was defeated.**

Members then voted on the Motion as submitted and **the Motion was defeated.**

(Councillor Greatorex declared a personal interest in Motion C as a Member of Staffordshire County Council)

135 QUESTIONS

Q1. Question from Councillor Ball to the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development

Can the Cabinet Member tell us, please, how she feels the collapse of Debenhams, Edinburgh Woollen Mill (owners of Peacocks) and the Arcadia Group will affect plans for Lichfield City Centre?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development:

The sad news of the closures of well-known High Street brands, including Debenhams and the Arcadia Group, will no doubt have an impact on High Streets throughout the UK. The enthusiasm for online shopping, an inability or unwillingness to respond to changing patterns of demand on the part of certain retail groups and the effects of the CV19 pandemic has no doubt accelerated the changes which have been taking place in town and city centres for several years.

In October the Council endorsed the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan as a blueprint for the development and regeneration of Lichfield City Centre. This puts Lichfield ahead of the curve in terms of its plans to rejuvenate the city centre, with proposals in place for a mixture of uses and experiences for visitors and residents alike. Work has been ongoing in respect of commissioning detailed plans and strategies to inform the developments to come forward, with the start of the implementation of projects to take place in 2021. The Council is also working closely with the owners of Three Spires shopping centre to understand the impacts on the centre itself and the work that is being done to maintain a vibrant and active destination now and for the longer term.

Councillor Ball asked the following supplementary question:

Would the Cabinet Member agree to use some of the money agreed at the last Council meeting to have the Masterplan reviewed in the light of the collapse of Debenhams, Arcadia Group and Edinburgh Woollen Mill and work with the cross party working group set up by the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee as was the practice in drawing up the original Masterplan, using Members from the original working group in order to benefit from their experience on this.

The Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development responded:

The cross party working group has already been set up for the Masterplan and will be meeting in the new year. We are already commissioning in connection with some of the strategies in the report presented last month and as part of the Birmingham Road viability work we are having conversations with Railpen and Three Spires about the Debenhams building.

Q2. Question from Councillor Ball to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and Local Plan

Can the Cabinet Member, please, tell us whether he agrees with me that, in light of the increasing need for decent, genuinely affordable housing across Lichfield District, that, in our new Local Plan, we must insist of developers providing an absolute minimum of 20% affordable housing, ideally at social rents, on all Previously Developed Land sites and on all Strategic Development Allocations on greenfield land, and an absolute minimum of 30% affordable homes on all greenfield sites of from 10 to 500 dwellings, as I suggested at a recent meeting of the Local Plan Subcommittee and was agreed on at that meeting?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and Local Plan:

The Local Plan & CIL Viability Assessment that has been prepared as part of the evidence base for our emerging local plan, which Councillor Ball has seen as a Member of the Local Plan Sub-committee and the sub-committee agreed should be added to our published evidence base, indicates that Lichfield District Council should consider;

- 20% Affordable Housing on Previously Developed Land,
- 30% Affordable Housing on Greenfield land where sites provide between 10 and 500 dwellings,
- 20% Affordable Housing on larger allocated sites accommodating more than 500 dwellings

I would expect our emerging local plan and policies going forward to reflect this, as to do otherwise would not be in keeping with our own evidence base.

Councillor Ball asked the following supplementary question:

Can the Cabinet Member give assurance that the percentages given will be minimum percentages and whether he would consider looking at 35% affordable homes at some of the locations with between 10 and 500 dwellings as a minimum figure?

Councillor Eadie responded:

This would be a matter to go through scrutiny and the proper decision making processes of Council, it not being within my gift to give that undertaking.

Q3. Question from Councillor Ball to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health

Can the Cabinet Member, please, tells us how much of the £20 billion in multi-year investment, announced in the Spending Review, to underpin the Government's long-term housing strategy does she expect to come to Lichfield and also how much of the £254 million to support rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness during Covid-19 does she expect to come here?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health:

We have had confirmation that the general homelessness funding (flexible homelessness support grant and homelessness reduction grant) will be at least the same as this year and probably higher, although we will not have confirmation until January.

We will also have the opportunity to bid for additional funding through the RSI funding and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Fund.

The Protect programme (£15 million) will not be open to us, as it is targeted funding for those with more complex rough sleeper problems e.g. Birmingham, Manchester Bristol and London.

Councillor Ball asked the following supplementary question:

Could the Cabinet Member look at making a bid to the LGA housing advisors programme for some ideas on developing possible projects to use any funding that comes our way.

The Leader of the Council responded:

That is a very good idea and where we can learn best practice from other authorities we ought to be open to doing so.

Q4. Question from Councillor Ball to the Leader of the Council

Will the Leader of the Council tell us, please, how much he feels that we should bid for from the so-called Levelling Up Fund of £4 billion, which is to support investment in town centre regeneration and better transport infrastructure?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

The full details of this scheme are still not announced so this is difficult to answer - however, earlier this year we created a new officer role to focus specifically on accessing funding, and I know that she will, quite rightly, be incredibly ambitious in the bids which we submit.

Councillor Ball asked the following supplementary question:

I commend the fact that we will be ambitious in bids, have we any idea what percentage of any funding will go to Lichfield, what percentage to Burntwood and what percentage to the villages?

The Leader of the Council responded:

That is a good question but I think it approaches from the wrong angle; we will not be looking at setting aside various percentages for Burntwood and Lichfield but we will be looking across the District for opportunities for investment, wherever they are.

Q5. Question from Councillor Anketell to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health

I and other members have been contacted by residents concerned over the stress caused to their pets, wildlife and farm animals from fireworks.

The RSPCA wants the regulations on fireworks to be amended to reduce the stress to pets, other animals and vulnerable people namely:

- to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people — including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to write to the UK government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level to 90 dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display

Would the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health write to our two Members of Parliament urging them to use their influence to get a change in the law?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health:

Together with many of my fellow councillors I was contacted by concerned residents highlighting the campaign of the RSPCA over the issues around fireworks. The regulation of fireworks is governed by national legislation.

The local authority for the control of fireworks is Staffordshire County Council and their trading standards team works with retailers to ensure that the fireworks sold are safe, and they have powers to enforce against those who place non-compliant fireworks on the market, including those imported illegally or via the internet.

The regulation of fireworks, their sale and public displays is not something which comes under the remit of LDC. However, public displays for Bonfire Night are well advertised in advance locally, which is one of the aims of the RSPCA campaign.

With regard to the many and complex issues raised around fireworks I can do no better than refer members to the following report published on 20 March 2020 setting out the Government's response to the Petitions Committee's First Report of the Session 2019-21.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/421/documents/1566/default/>

This was debated before the petitions committee on 2 November 2020 and has cross party support. The following update was given by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in which he advised that he had commissioned a report by the Office for Product Safety (OPPS) to consider decibel levels and obtain evidence on the impact of fireworks on animal health to inform any changes in legislation. Separately the OPSS has commissioned a programme on the decibel levels of fireworks on sale to the public.

Many of our residents are concerned about animal welfare and vulnerable people being affected by fireworks. It is good to see Government will use the pending report to drive changes to the existing legislation. Therefore it makes sense to ask for our MP's support for a safe environment for the enjoyment of fireworks and address all the issues raised around fireworks once the report is published.

Q6. Question from Councillor Anketell to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and Local Plan

Given the acknowledged Climate Emergency, would the Cabinet Member make it mandatory that:

- photovoltaic cells are fitted on all pitched roofs and that electric vehicle charging points are fitted on all new housing and other buildings, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, and that this is included in the new Local Plan?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and Local Plan:

I would confirm to Councillor Anketell that our emerging local plan will recognise the need for appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points. Lichfield District Council will not however mandate charging points are provided on all new housing and other buildings, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, as such a policy would be disproportionate and take no account of the choice motorists may make in the future in terms of alternative fuels such as hydrogen.

As there are many forms of renewable energy available, for the same reasons Lichfield District Council does not expect to mandate that photovoltaic cells are fitted to pitched roofs of all new housing and other buildings, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings. The choice of renewable energy source should be one for the person(s) living in the dwelling.

(The Meeting closed at 8.28 pm)

CHAIRMAN

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CABINET DECISIONS – 12 JANUARY 2021

1. Disposal of Public Open Space - Land at Leyfields and Netherstowe, Lichfield

- 1.1 The Cabinet confirmed the disposal of the two pieces of land at Leyfields and Netherstowe, Lichfield, subject to securing planning consent, to Bromford Housing Association, for the provision of affordable housing.

(Councillor Cox declared an interest as a Member of Planning Committee and did not take part in the consideration of this item)

2. Lichfield City Centre Masterplan - Commercial Property Advisor Appointment

The Cabinet:

- 2.1 Awarded the contract as set out in the Cabinet Report.
- 2.2 Delegated to the Cabinet member for Major Projects and Economic Development in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development the authority to sign the contractual agreements and to authorise any minor variations in the contractual arrangements subject to the costs being within the agreed budget.

3. Contract for Place-Based Software Systems

- 3.1 The Cabinet approved the direct award to the incumbent supplier, IDOX for the provision of the place-based software to the approximate value of £284,303 for a three-year period from April 2021 to March 2024.

CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

4. Approval of an updated Homelessness Prevention & Assistance Policy 2021

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing & Health approved minor amendments to the Homelessness Prevention & Assistance Policy 2021 to reflect the additional duties placed on local authorities by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

5. Additional Restrictions Grant – Revisions to Qualifying Criteria

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Economic Development approved the criteria amendments detailed in the Cabinet Member Decision Report and updated the Additional Restrictions Grant Policy accordingly.

**DOUG PULLEN
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Eagland (Chairman), Evans (Vice-Chair), S Wilcox (Vice-Chair), Baker, Ball, Binney, Birch, Humphreys, Leytham, Parton-Hughes, Silvester-Hall, Tapper and M Wilcox.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Lax and Pullen attended the meeting).

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and agreed as a correct record.

39 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was circulated and it was noted that information was awaited from Staffordshire County Council regarding Stroke Pathways and if necessary, would be moved to the next Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

40 STANDING ITEMS

The Committee received a presentation from Wayne Mortiboys from Staffordshire County Council (SCC) on progress made at the new GP facility being built at the Greenhouse site, Burntwood.

It was reported that it had been considered and agreed that it would be easier and more cost effective to put in deeper foundations that would enable a first floor extension, if needed, now at the build stage than try and do this in the future.

It was also reported that the building would have a life of 60 years before requiring any major refurbishment. Rent for the GP practice had been agreed between SCC and the NHS for these 60 years on a peppercorn rate however the pharmacy element to the build would not be at peppercorn and for period of 15 years so it was noted that there could be up to five changes/re-contracts for the life of the building.

The Committee were pleased to hear and see the progress made especially in a short period from agreement. It was felt that it had taken some time to get an agreement and it was hoped that there would be some lessons learned moving forward. It was agreed that this was especially important as the Health & Wellbeing Centre was still deemed a temporary structure

and a permanent one much needed. It was reported that the finite temporary planning permission would help focus the project.

Drainage at the site was discussed and it was asked whether anything else could be done with the water tank instead of discharging it in to the water system. It was reported that the building was being built to a BRIAM excellence and it had been investigated in reusing that water collected for other means eg toilet flushing however there would still be a requirement to clean that water to an extent and it was agreed not to proceed.

Wayne Mortiboys was thanked for his presentation and it was agreed to invite him back for an update when appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the information received be noted.

The Committee then discussed other health matters that needed to be raised at the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee via the Council's representative, Councillor Leytham.

The news that the George Bryan centre would not reopen was discussed and there was some disappointment as the Committee felt they had been assured it would remain open by the NHS Foundation Trust at previous meetings. It was felt that mental health help was more important in current times due to effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and it was felt that there should be a request to review this decision at SCC made.

It was also requested that there be a review of the poor performance of South East Staffordshire CCG.

It was requested that SCC consider the need for a permanent Health Centre in Burntwood to replace the current temporary one.

It was requested that information be sort as to whether beds at the two Community Hospitals in the District were being used as Covid-19 recovery beds and if so, if there was any risk to other non-covid related patients or whether those non-covid related patients were able to access beds if required. It was reported that Community Hospitals had reverted back to their original requirements of taking more elderly patients in need of medical care and unable to return home and many currently would be covid-19 patients. It was discussed that the Together We're Better team assured the Committee previously that the Community Hospitals would continue to be operable and GPs be encouraged to use the facilities available including the underused maternity service at Samuel Johnson. It was suggested that the TWB team be invited back to give an update although it was noted that there was no requirement for them to attend unlike the SCC Committee.

RESOLVED: That the information given be noted and Cllr Leytham raise these matters at the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee.

41 HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received a report setting out the type of assistance offered to residents with disabilities or vulnerable to allow them to stay on their own home. It was reported that the policy had not been updated significantly since 2013 and the Committee were asked for their views on various options that could be considered for offering further assistance. It was noted that there was an underspend on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) due to a number of reasons and it would be unlikely to fully spend that grant through statutory offerings only.

The following areas were discussed

Increase of discretionary top up grant for Mandatory DFG work

This was welcomed by the Committee as it would help ensure adaptations were not withheld or delayed for funds to be found by the residents. It was felt that affordability should prevent anyone from accessing a grant however potentially an assessment of hardship could be considered if required.

The Introduction of a Palliative Care Grant

The Committee were in favour of this grant which would be similar to DFGs but fast tracked to enable urgent works for terminally ill patients. It was felt that this should not be means tested. Also it was felt it should be an easy process to apply for to ensure these very ill patients are not “bogged down in paperwork” and any barriers are identified and dealt with. It was agreed that there should not be partners for this as it would slow the process. Rachel Frondigoun from Cherry White consultants did inform the Committee that they would have to consider how to define terminally ill as this can affect the grant and has been of a challenge elsewhere. Some terminal diagnosis have been from 6 weeks to years and there would not be a risk of this grant being used to take advantage of the fast track route or bypass means testing.

Hospital Discharge Grant

It was felt this should be considered further and the details presented in the report were deemed acceptable. It was noted that Occupational Therapists were important in this process as they would assess need for appropriate and necessary work.

Relocation Grant

It was felt that people may not choose to move but have which can take up savings that could have been used towards adaptations.

Emergency Home Repair Grant (HRA)

It was agreed that there should be a grant to ensure sub-standard housing was addressed however it was agreed that the equity release promotion option should not be pursued.

It was felt that issues seen with DFGs and underspends were happening from recently and many other Local Authorities were dealing with similar and any changes introduced would be welcomed and only beneficial to residents.

It was felt that resources to implement these measures should be considered and any blockages with providers etc investigated. It was also suggested that, if possible, a peer review of the service may be of an advantage.

It was felt and requested that there be more detail in the environmental impact section of the report and how the use of grants could promote carbon reduction or whether there could be any energy efficient measures in adaptations.

The Cabinet Member and Officers were thanked for bringing the draft policy to the Committee at this early stage to allow for their views on options to aid develop it into its final version.

The Committee were thanked for their views and comments and it was agreed that options would be considered further and a draft brought back to Committee in March.

RESOLVED: 1) That the current policy be reviewed and views recorded on the options identified;

2) That the outcomes achieved by the Emergency Housing Repair Assistance Grant (HRA) and Energy Efficiency Grant (EE) be reviewed and comments recorded on options; and

3) That comments be noted on other minor amendments recommended to the policy.

42 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): RECOVERY PLAN SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report on the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan updating them on the activity and ongoing issues around recovery and provide a narrative regarding the progress and achievements against the plan developed and issued in May 2020. It was reported that whilst this had been a significant body of work, the longer term impacts of the pandemic on both the authority and the district as a whole were yet to be fully quantified.

The recovery plan was split into four areas of focus; maintaining key services; helping those in need; supporting our businesses and keeping you informed and to support scrutiny of the plan, and due to its broad and overlapping nature, each committee dealt with relevant topics and areas under their remit.

The Leader of the Council answered questions and advised on matters raised.

The Committee were pleased to receive the report and praised all involved especially Officers in aiding the recovery of the Council and District of a whole. Staff across the authority were thanked for their very hard work and this Committee thanked the Housing Service and Environmental Health Service especially. It was asked whether there was help provided to Officers if stress levels were having an effect and it was reported that there was an agreement in place with The Listening Centre on a self-referral basis.

It was noted that the voluntary sector had been invaluable during this time and it was hoped that the information gathered on who they were and the services they could provide to communities would be maintained in the future. These groups were also thanked for all their work and efforts in the area. It was hoped that these organisations were being picked up by Support Staffordshire.

It was reported that the LGA had worked with many Council's in looking at recovery models and it was also noted that there had been challenges especially financially and it was hoped that central government would not pass that burden onto Local Authorities as with the help in reaching the shielding or distribution of grants, it was obvious that it was Local Authorities that could get the job done.

It was felt that those rough sleepers that had not engaged with the Council attracted more media attention and it may be useful to communicate what help was offered in the future especially as weather may be a factor soon.

It was reported that response received by the Corporate parenting Panel when all Members were asked for suitable places could be found to allow contact between families and children in care could be maintained was very positive and thanks was given for that.

It was asked whether the impact of the relocation of disabled parking from city centre streets to car parks and it was asked if that would be included in the forthcoming Equality Impact Assessment. It was reported that it was a difficult decision to take and the EIA will cover all it needs to.

The recently launched Community Lottery was discussed and it was requested that some communications be released to confirm that the Council was not getting any revenue from the scheme contrary to some comments seen and it was agreed to do this.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 8.03 pm)

CHAIRMAN

LEISURE, PARKS & WASTE MANAGEMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Matthews (Chairman), Silvester-Hall (Vice-Chair), Westwood (Vice-Chair), Baker, Barnett, L Ennis, Ray, Salter, Tapper, Warfield, M Wilcox and B Yeates.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Cox, Eadie, E. Little and Pullen attended the meeting).

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Banevicius.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Baker declared a personal interest in Item 5 – New Leisure Centre Update as the Chair of the Member Task Group

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated, agreed and signed as a correct record.

39 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was circulated to the Committee. It was noted that any request for additions onto the work programme should be sent to the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

40 NEW LEISURE CENTRE PREFERRED SITE

The Committee received a report on the proposed outline configuration for the new Leisure facility to allow for feasibility to be progressed and then outline planning permission. It was noted that Cabinet had agreed Stychbrook Park as the preferred site. It was noted that the Member Task Group had considered different options for the design of the site and mix of facilities to bring forward for the Committee to consider. It was also noted that this configuration was not as yet final and was a holistic view.

It was reported that the Task Group had considered evidence on what the leisure centre should offer however it became quickly apparent that it would require too much of a significant outlay in build costs so the configuration proposed was one that would offer the best for residents providing the required swimming pool and fitness suite as well as an additional 3G pitch. It was reported that the costs for this proposed configuration was estimated at £12m with £5m set aside in the MTFs and other funding sources identified. However, it was noted that there would still be a funding gap. It was noted that the original and more ambitious proposals were estimated at £17m costs.

It was asked if any lost trees or hedges would be replaced or replanted especially in light of the noted climate emergency. It was reported that the Cabinet Member for Waste was considering a District wide approach and this would be part of it.

It was asked whether a 100 station fitness suite was required as the ANOG stated that this would be a surplus and if not, if this space could be used differently for example a further community room. It was reported that the suite could be configured and reduced if wished. It was noted that the junior suite that would be incorporated was currently lacking in the district.

It was then asked if there had been any consultation with Stakeholders as this would be vital and it was reported that it was part of the communications plan and it would be better to approach them with an outline design and configuration in mind to gain their views that could then feed into the planning process as well as pitches for funding.

It was noted that there was a process to follow and many things could change along the way. It was agreed that any of these changes be reported to the Committee to consider.

It was then asked whether there was an intention to keep the car park at the site and it was reported that it was subject to Highways and planning approvals.

Accessibility was discussed and it was noted that disability access, family access and transportation to and from the site would be part of the agenda for the next Task Group meeting as it was deemed important. It was also reported that the group would be continuously considering funding opportunities.

It was felt that the wish list could be revisited and facilities added that would not raise the costs to that highest level reported. It was reported that the one element that would have been most benefit and desire would have been a separate teaching pool and not a floating floor in the one main pool however the costs for that were just too much. Other facilities including squash courts are not used enough to warrant inclusion.

It was requested that any physical design of the building be sympathetic to the area and this was agreed however it was noted that planning would be outline to begin with.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report be noted;

2) That the proposed outline configuration for the new leisure centre be supported; and

3) That the work of the Member Task Group in developing the proposed outline configuration for the new leisure centre be acknowledged.

41 LEISURE CENTRES RE-OPENING UPDATE

The Committee received a report giving an update to the reopening of the current leisure centres as well as the essential work at Friary Grange.

It was reported that operating had been very challenging due to the pandemic and since the last update, there had been a further three Covid-19 tier changes and two further national lockdowns. However there was some limited information that could be gathered from the three months that the centres were open and all three key activities of swimming, fitness and group exercise showed positive signs of recovery. Social distancing and the need to book all activities made like for like comparisons difficult. It was reported that Freedom Leisure were able to deliver a credible and well received covid secure operation and Officers and customers were reassured that government guidelines were covered. It was then reported that the third national lockdown was likely to straddle the peak trading months and this was of concern and

extend the impact on attendance and revenue for the whole of 2021 and potentially beyond. The Committee was informed that Officers continued to work with Freedom Leisure to model this impact and performance but this would be of restricted value until out of the current situation and because of this, the Cabinet Member requested that Leisure Centre Performance become a standing item on the Committee's work programme to monitor.

It was then reported that progress had been greatly made on repair works at FGLC and contractors were doing a good job in challenging circumstances. It was noted that the majority of works had been completed and it was expected to be completed before the current lockdown ended meaning there would be no or very little disruption for customers when reopened.

It was asked if there was any update on the final level of support from the Council to Freedom Leisure and it was reported that there were ongoing discussions between the two parties and at the moment the Council had not exceeded the £407k but noted that there was a third national lockdown and this would have a bearing and were working with Freedom to calculate what, if any additional costs there would be. It was noted that any updates would be reported to the Committee. When asked where the figure of £1.03m came from it was reported that at the outset when anticipating the reopening of centres a broad spectrum of what costs may be and worse case scenarios were given.

It was asked what would happen to FGLC after the Council left, especially after the money spent on works, and it was felt it was too far in the future to consider at this point.

It was noted that the government had recently announced the National Leisure Recovery Fund giving Authorities the ability to claim back lost income but only applied from December 2020 to March 2021 and it was asked if a claim from Lichfield would be submitted and it was reported that the application had already been submitted and it was noted that Sports England was the body evaluating it. It was noted that the LGA were trying to get funds backdated for Leisure centres backdated to the summer months when the effects were first being experienced.

It was then reported that the Cabinet Member and Officers attended a LGA event on reimagining the future of public leisure services and it been very useful.

The reported risk of Freedom Leisure ceasing trading was discussed and it was suggested that this be further managed through financial due diligence monitoring. It was reported that this could be undertaken and Officers had sight their organisational cash flow and were currently reassured. It was noted that Freedom Leisure operated 100 sites and so unlikely that the two from Lichfield would have a big impact on their viability as a business alone. It was also reported that the Council was in communications with the other client Authorities that Freedom Leisure and all were taking a similar approach.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report be noted; and

2) That leisure centre performance be a standing item for the Committee for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

42 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): RECOVERY PLAN SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report on the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan updating them on the activity and ongoing issues around recovery and provide a narrative regarding the progress and achievements against the plan developed and issued in May 2020. It was reported that whilst this had been a significant body of work, the longer term impacts of the pandemic on both the authority and the district as a whole were yet to be fully quantified.

The recovery plan was split into four areas of focus; maintaining key services; helping those in need; supporting our businesses and keeping you informed and to support scrutiny of the plan, and due to its broad and overlapping nature, each committee dealt with relevant topics and areas under their remit.

The Leader of the Council answered questions and advised on matters raised.

The Committee wished to record their thanks to all staff across the Council and specifically to the Waste, Operational, Parks and Leisure departments personnel who have continued throughout this difficult time and provide much valued services to residents.

It was noted that planning applications had increased during the pandemic and that it showed residents were spending the time on home improvements and it was asked if there were any plans to expand the service team to accommodate this increase in work. It was reported that the spike seen in applications was similar in all authorities so recruitment would not be as easy so it managing expectations of residents was just as important.

It was then asked if there would be a review of the Additional Resource Grant discretionary criteria to ensure all that could be supported were. It was reported that a process of review of that criteria was indeed happening. It was also reported that there was an additional grant for training and start-up businesses coming shortly.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN

**ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW
& SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

26 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Leytham (Chairman), Ball (Vice-Chair), Warburton (Vice-Chair), Binney, D Ennis, Gwilt, A Little, Marshall, Parton-Hughes, Ray and Robertson.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Cox, Eadie, Pullen, Smith and A. Yeates attended the meeting).

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ho and S. Wilcox

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and agreed as a correct record.

20 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the work programme and it was agreed to remove items on the LEP's and Lichfield BID. It was asked if the Committee could receive an update on the Planning White Paper and it was reported that it would be some time before there was word from central government on this matter. Thanks was given for the distributed Climate Change briefing paper and it was asked if the remit of the item could be widened to the district as a whole and not just the Council. It was also asked if there could be a review of the Taxi Policy especially regarding climate change and the use of electric vehicles and it was noted that this could be discussed with Officers however this may be for the Regulatory & Licensing Committee to consider.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted and amended where agreed.

21 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2040 PUBLICATION (REGULATION 19) CONSULTATION

The Committee received a report updating them on the progress of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040 and seeking their views before consideration at Cabinet and then public consultation. It was noted that there had been three previous consultations with residents and interested parties. The document before this committee was a draft version and would be further updated for cabinet, but that this stage of the plan was intended if approved to be the settled view of the council and the last version to be consulted on before an examination. It was reported that it had taken a number of years of work to get to this point and all Officers current and who had since moved on, were thanked for all their efforts and input.

It was reported that the housing target shown in the plan was considered to be the minimum required at this time and made up of two parts. These parts were the local housing number, a fixed formula set out by government and then an additional duty to cooperate provision to help

meet the needs of other housing areas in accordance with the NPPF. The target included a buffer in case any sites did not come forward in the time period of the plan. It was reported that the target would be met by existing approved housing applications and four Strategic sites which were North East Lichfield, Fazeley, Whittington and Fradley. It was reported that these allocations had been chosen as they were extensions to existing settlements, Green Belt take up would only be in the region of 9% and because they would provide for housing growth and much needed infrastructure growth to the areas. The proposals would seek to deliver housing types based on need and to deliver on affordable housing.

It was reported that the government had advised Councils to continue to proceed with Local Plans and it was felt this was the better option than wait for any result of the Planning White Paper and the unknown that that could bring. This point was considered by the Committee and a councillor stated his views that this was not the right approach and a delay would be more beneficial and to follow the process laid out in the new rules when introduced. It was reported by the councillor that other Councils had taken this approach and had challenged the government's advice to carry on the process to get a Local Plan now. He felt that the final Green Belt review going forward hadn't been taken into account and to ignore this was in essence rushing. It was felt that as consultation would be difficult due to the pandemic restrictions and because of the Election purdah period that this was another reason to delay the whole process. While this was discussed, others on the Committee felt differently and that it could be worse to delay the process and have to provide more housing anticipated in the white paper.

The settlement at Fazeley was discussed and it was noted that there had been a large number of representations and objections received from residents as well as from the Parish Council and neighbouring Tamworth Borough Council. Some felt that these views had been ignored but the Cabinet Member assured that they had not and agreed to meet with Ward Councillors and a Member of Fazeley Town Council to address the concerns. Concerns had also been raised that the proposals would mean a complete loss of greenbelt in the area. In response, it was reported that the development of the area was planned for the later part of the plan period so if other sites came forward then this could reduce the numbers required in Fazeley.

The proposal called Whitemoor Village proposed by Tarmac for their quarry site and which Members had received recent correspondence on from the company was also discussed. Some asked if this proposal could be included and then this could reduce the housing numbers at Fazeley. In response, it was reported that the site was not considered to be an urban extension but a new settlement and was neither as sequentially preferable as the sites allocated in the plan, or as deliverable as yet, given the ongoing quarry extraction and conditions on the consent, but it could be considered in the next Local Plan review. Some Committee Members still felt it could be included in the Plan as an option even if not delivered in time. There were further concerns that the Transport modelling had not been completed around Fazeley and there would be a significant traffic impact in the area especially with traffic at peak times also going to Drayton Manor. It was requested that any modelling be completed when out of the Covid-19 situation to give a truer picture out of lockdowns.

It was agreed that infrastructure was needed in in the District including in Fazeley, however, there was scepticism from some Members that this would be delivered when needed which was before development and not after. It was felt that many developers were not held to account in doing this. It was noted that proposals may be more acceptable for residents if they could see these improvements. In response, the Committee was advised that delivery of infrastructure was more likely with larger sites due to the better economy of scale rather than lots of small applications where small developers may not make the margins required to deliver major improvements. It was felt that local rail transport should be prioritised as this would help take vehicles off the road. It was reported that the Council, with other neighbouring Authorities were working with Highways England and other organisations to improve the highway network and public transport for the District. This also included the cycle network which was also considered very important by the Committee.

Commercial infrastructure was discussed and there was concern that with the loss of retail and factories in the area, more and more people were living only in the district and travelling out for work.

Affordable Housing was considered and the Committee were pleased to see the proposals as it would be of benefit to the area. It was requested that the 20% definitely be a minimum requirement and no negotiations below this amount be allowed by developers. The provision of rental properties in the district was also discussed as it was felt there was a shortage in the district. A Member felt there could be greater mention in the plan and it was noted that Policy H1 did cover this matter and would be supported by evidence of need.

There were concerns regarding central government's green energy strategy as it could be deemed as industrialising the countryside with such things as photovoltaic farms and anaerobic digesters. Concern was expressed at the impact these proposals could have on the roads around such sites adding to the problem. It was confirmed in response that the Plan set out the priority for the use of Brownfield sites for photovoltaic farms and not prime agricultural land. It was also reported that Planning Officers needed to consider a number of aspects including biodiversity with any such application.

Members were pleased to note provision had been included in the draft Plan for a Traveller site as it was a known need in the area.

The plans proposals for Burntwood were discussed. Support from members was indicated for the inclusion of the proposed Burntwood Area Action Plan. Some Members requested it be started sooner rather than later to ensure development does not take over and creep up from plan provision. In response, the committee were advised it would be produced immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan. The Committee agreed with this approach. It was reported that Local Plans were subject to reviews with the next one scheduled in five years, and future housing requirements would, by then, be under different methodology to the current plan.

Some concern was expressed that some evidence to support the Local Plan remained incomplete. In response, it was noted and agreed that the Local Plan Sub Committee would continue to meet to consider all data prior to consultation on the plan and the plan would be brought back to Cabinet in the unlikely event that significant new evidence came to light requiring Cabinet review of the plan.

It was asked if the Secretary of State could overrule any part of the Plan to grant permission for an application as this had happened before and it was confirmed that they did have that power.

It was requested that the full Cabinet should agree the dates and strategy for the consultation, make any changes to the appearance, format and text of the Local Plan 2040 publication document or the supporting documents prior to consultation in the interests of clarity and accuracy and no delegation be given to ensure full transparency and accountability to the public.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Local Plan 2040 publication document and accompanying policy maps for the purposes of public consultation with dates for public consultation yet to be decided due to current restrictions around Covid-19 and submission for Examination in Public thereafter. Consultation will take place as soon as is practicably possible in the spring, taking into account ongoing restrictions due to Covid-19 be noted; and

2) That the Local Plan 2040 publication document will be brought back before Cabinet if future evidence indicates the need for significant changes to

the Local Plan 2040 publication document for further detailed consideration by members be noted.

22 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RECOVERY PLAN SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report on the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan updating them on the activity and ongoing issues around recovery and provide a narrative regarding the progress and achievements against the plan developed and issued in May 2020. It was reported that whilst this had been a significant body of work, the longer term impacts of the pandemic on both the authority and the district as a whole were yet to be fully quantified.

The recovery plan was split into four areas of focus; maintaining key services; helping those in need; supporting our businesses and keeping you informed and to support scrutiny of the plan, and due to its broad and overlapping nature, each committee dealt with relevant topics and areas under their remit.

The Leader of the Council answered questions and advised on matters raised.

It was reported that there were many social and working men's clubs that were not eligible for the Government's Wet Led Pubs Grant and this was affecting many establishments in the District which relied on that type of drinks sales to operate. It was reported that Councillors D. Ennis and Robertson had written to many of those organisations to make contact and see what else could be done to get them the much needed support. It was also reported that they had contacted the Leader of the Council regarding this concern and to see if the District Council could also help. It was reported that it had been challenging to distribute grants given the criteria imposed by government, even when discretionary, and associated guidance was at times released at the same time if not after the announcement. It was also reported that there would be an update to the scheme and it was hoped that these establishments would be incorporated. It was noted that it may be difficult to make contact with pubs and clubs with no staff on premises during closure and so local knowledge of Ward Members may be vital. This was deemed especially important as it was noted that the Wet Led Pub Grant had only been taken up by 14 premises across the district.

The Committee wished to express their thanks to all the Officers involved in distributing grants especially in the knowledge that it was a small team from a cross section of service areas in the Council. It was noted that priorities had been reconsidered to ensure this task was undertaken as effectively as possible. It was noted that the feedback from organisations in the grant process had been very positive.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Councillor D. Ennis declared a personal interest as the volunteer treasurer for Grangemoor Working Men's Club

(The Meeting closed at 8.41 pm)

CHAIRMAN

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Norman (Vice-Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Warfield and Westwood.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Cox, Eadie, Lax, Pullen, Strachan and A. Yeates attended the meeting).

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were given by Councillor Gwilt and White.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

58 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and subject to the inclusion of Cabinet members in attendance and a typo, were agreed as a correct record. It was asked if there was any update to the funding availability for the Test and Trace support scheme and it was reported that the Council had received a second tranche of money for payment for self isolation so will have sufficient funds to carry on the discretionary scheme and meet statutory requirements through to the end of April but will be reviewed constantly.

RESOLVED: That the subject to amendments, the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

59 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered and it was requested that, dependant on the outcome of the Committee Review, and item be added to review the Constitution and specifically the Scheme of Delegation in light of concerns of the processes followed with a recent sale of land. It was reported that a separate external investigation had been commissioned for that matter however it was noted that if the Committee structure were to change, it would require substantial amendments to the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

60 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (REVENUE AND CAPITAL) 2020-25

The Committee received a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2020-25. It was reported that there was a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and to calculate the level of Council Tax for the district. It was also reported that the Chief Finance Officer (Head of Finance & Procurement) had a duty to ensure all figures provided for estimating and financial planning were robust and stand up to Audit scrutiny.

It was reported that guiding principles had been previously approved by Council on 15 October 2019 to guide the preparation and development of the MTFS.. It was noted that there had been a large reduction in planned contributions towards general reserves due to the

projected impact on the pandemic. It was reported that the Council would be able to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 and in the central scenario, with the use of general reserves would also be able to continue to do so up to 2024/25. It was noted that the MTFS had been subject to budget consultation and the results were contained within the report.

It was reported that the government provisional finance settlement for 2021/22 had been published on 17 December 2020. It was noted that given the level of uncertainty presented by the pandemic, it was for the second year running a one year settlement as projected in the report to the Committee on 19 November 2020. It was also noted that there would be no negative revenue support grant for 2021/22.

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Finance and Procurement and it was reported that the government used the concept of Core Spending Power to determine the notional level of funding available to each Local Authority to deliver services. It was reported that Core Spending Power consisted of Council Tax income (based on government assumptions), Retained Business Rates (the government baseline excluding growth) and core grants (including New Homes Bonus). It was reported that since 2011/12 that the proportion of Core Spending Power funded by Council Tax would increase from 46% in 2011/12 (with a low point of 42% in 2013/14) to 62% in 2021/22. The increased funding of Local Government services through Council Tax was presenting issues for the Government with a similar increase in different areas producing very different levels of income even though the same services were required to be delivered. This issue was something the Government would need to address moving forward as part of Local Government Finance Reforms. Core Spending Power comparisons with nearest neighbour authorities for 2021/22 was provided and it was noted that Lichfield was funded by 67% Council Tax, 19% by Business Rates and 14% by other grants which was similar to the average of all Districts (63%, 24% and 13%) and that would provide assurance that we were not an outlier in terms of the potential impact on funding levels that could result from finance reforms.

The key headlines of the MTFS was then reported to the Committee including how the assumptions were formulated, the Provisional Finance Settlement in more detail and the recommendation of a £5 increase in Council Tax. The funding gap for 2022/23 based on a central scenario was also reported but it was noted that c60% of the Funding Gap could be attributed to Covid-19 assumptions such as an ongoing impact on sales, fees and charges income such as car parking which have a high degree of uncertainty.

An outline timetable for Local Government Finance Reform was reported including potential dates of each element although these dates are subject to significant uncertainty with the pandemic which will present the Council with ongoing financial planning uncertainty..

It was asked if there was any news of Negative Revenue Support Grant being cancelled and it was reported that it had been abated again for this 2021/22 settlement. The reasons for its introduction in the first place was reported i.e. a number of Councils no longer had any Revenue Support Grant to reduce as a result of national funding reductions. It was noted that external Local Government Finance experts believed that the principles used in its calculation would form some part of the funding regime moving forward. Therefore a reduction in the Baseline Funding Level for Retained Business Rates had been assumed in the MTFS from 2022/23 onwards.

There were differing views regarding the recommended £5 increase in Council Tax with some feeling that it helped keep the budget balanced and now knowing the value of Council Tax in the overall mix of the Council's funding of services. Others however felt there should be more consideration of the struggles and uncertainty of residents during the pandemic also and felt uncomfortable in raising Council Tax when there are reserves and there would be a balanced budget. It was noted that 99% of budget consultation responses stated that delivery of services was important to them and so it was felt that where spend could be preserved to provide these services, it should be and this would require the increase in Council Tax. The

ongoing funding gap was also noted as well as Lichfield District having a lower than average Band D Council Tax.

The Capital Receipts were discussed and it was asked why there was a gap between the District Valuer's assessed value of Netherstowe and Leyfields to the budget as set out in the Capital receipts because inflation and indexation would be expected to increase the receipt with the passage of time. It was reported that the estimate was likely a prudent one based on a value at a point in time. However the detailed information was not available and a commitment was provided that it would be provided to the Committee after the meeting.

It was asked why the revenue budget investment in the Developing Prosperity Strategic Priority was reducing year on year. It was reported that the Strategic Priority was presented as net income and this position was largely attributable to income from car parking. The budgets assumed no increases in car parking charges, an ongoing impact on income from the pandemic and costs would increase so overall, the net income figure would reduce each year. It was felt that there should be some further investment in projects that to develop prosperity. A commitment was provided to the Committee to provide the detailed financial information by activity that was attributed to this Strategic Priority.

There was some disappointment in the return rate from the consultation which resulted in a 0.2% representation of the population and it was asked what value this gave. It was reported that there is a legal requirement to undertake budget consultation however there had been an impact from the pandemic in terms of improving engagement although there had been extensive communications encouraging people to respond. It was noted that best responding questionnaire was only 2-3% and so response numbers were always traditionally low in the district.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet consider the comments and suggestion made on the following items

- 1) The 2021/22 Revenue Budget, including the Amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxpayers of £11,951,000 and proposed level of Council Tax (the District element) for 2021/22 of £185.07 (an increase of £5.00 or 2.78%) for Band D equivalent property;
- 2) The MTFS 2019-24 Revenue Budgets;
- 3) The MTFS 2020-25 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme;
- 4) Requirements and duties that the Local Government Act 2003 places on the Authority on how it sets and monitors its Budgets, including the Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of Reserves;
- 5) The 25 year financial planning; and
- 6) The results of the Budget Consultation.

61 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee received a report from the Committee Review Member task group that was created at the last Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee to investigate options to support effective decision making better use of the resources available especially with Overview & Scrutiny. It was noted that a large amount of research was carried out by the Task Group and

they came to a unanimous view which was set out in their findings and gave recommendations based on them. It was reported that it was felt that a single Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a wider use of Task Groups would deliver a more efficient and effective function.

The Committee were in agreement with the suggestions of the Task Group and thanked them for their work over an intensive period of time.

It was requested that there be some flexibility written into the Constitution regarding this new structure as there may be need for small adjustments if issues arise and it would prevent constant Council approval. It was agreed that a review of the new structure would be beneficial and that this should be after the next Local Election.

It was asked that there be clear and explicit ways of measuring the success of the new structure and it was agreed to hold another Task group meeting to consider this further before proceeding to the next step of Cabinet consideration.

The Committee also agreed that the removal of Parish Forum and District Board from the list of Constituted Committees and be held in a more informal setting would be of benefit not just for the Council but those external attendees.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations be presented to Cabinet and then Council

- 1) That Parish Forum is removed as a constituted committee and become informal meetings to aid information flow and training;
- 2) The District Board is removed as a constituted committee. Any statutory function carried out by this meeting is delegated to officers and relevant, plans and decisions notified to Cabinet members and committees where appropriate;
- 3) That the structure for Overview & Scrutiny be changed to a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- 4) That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider items earlier on to aid policy development and review whether stated outcomes from decisions, strategies and policies have been achieved via effective use of member task groups;
- 5) That clear role descriptors and mandatory training is developed for scrutiny chair, vice chair and task group chair roles and used to ensure effective recruitment and performance; and
- 6) That an Independent Review Panel (IRP) is commissioned to assess the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payable to any roles affected by this review.

62 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): RECOVERY PLAN SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report on the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan updating them on the activity and ongoing issues around recovery and provide a narrative regarding the progress and achievements against the plan developed and issued in May 2020. It was reported that whilst this had been a significant body of work, the longer term impacts of the pandemic on both the authority and the district as a whole were yet to be fully quantified.

The recovery plan was split into four areas of focus; maintaining key services; helping those in need; supporting our businesses and keeping you informed and to support scrutiny of the

plan, and due to its broad and overlapping nature, each committee dealt with relevant topics and areas under their remit.

The Leader of the Council answered questions and advised on matters raised.

The Committee commended Cabinet and Officers in getting grants distributed quickly and efficiently to support businesses and individuals without duplicating the national system.

It was noted that there was some kickback regarding the Covid-19 crisis and the government advice given and that there should be awareness of this in case it caused some issues.

It was asked if those Officers who were required to work from the District House felt safe and not resentful against those working from home. It was reported that all staff had a suite of resources available to support their health either physically or mentally. It was reported that many working from home were missing being in the office. It was also reported that the asymptomatic testing was being promoted especially for those working in the office and all testing had been carried out at the depot. It was noted that additional pressures had been put on some Officers with childcare and home-schooling and the Council was being as flexible as possible whilst still delivering services and where there were gaps, expectations were being managed and if required additional resources considered.

It was asked what had been planned going forward as there was more than likely further fallouts expected for example in retail and redundancies. It was reported that there were several strands of activity taking place now that would help prepare for what may happen in the future. It was reported that retail vacancy rates were low compared to nationally with high business start up rates and employment rates although that did not mean being complacent. It was noted that the Economic Development team were still being reactive to still get those grants out where needed but in the future the Council will need some strategy to deal with things coming forward however there wasn't available resource and "fighting the fires" was still priority.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

PLANNING COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Marshall (Chairman), Baker (Vice-Chair), Anketell, Barnett, Birch, Checkland, Cox, Eagland, L Ennis, Evans, Ho, Humphreys, Leytham, Matthews and Tapper

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence received.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Anketell made the committee aware in relation to application no. 20/01207/COU that he is a frequent customer to the neighbouring hot food takeaway businesses and had received emails from neighbours opposing the application to which he had made no comment.

Councillor Checkland declared a personal interest in application no 20/01207/COU as he knows the Applicant's neighbour.

Councillor Eagland declared a personal interest in application no 20/00722/SCC as she is the Staffordshire County Council Ward Division Member for Lichfield Rural North including Alrewas.

Councillor Ho declared a personal interest in application no 20/01207/COU as the Applicant is a potential competitor as his family own a hot food takeaway business in Lichfield and he agreed to not take part in the debate and the vote.

Councillor Marshall declared a personal interest in application no 20/01207/COU as the Objector is known to him.

15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 November previously circulated were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Applications for permission for development were considered with the recommendations of the Head of Economic Growth and Development and any letters of representation and petitions of observations/representations together with the supplementary report of observations/representations received since the publication of the agenda in association with Planning Applications 20/01207/COU, 20/01459/FUH & Staffordshire County Council Consultation (L.20/03/867 M) our ref: 20/00722/SCC

20/01207/COU – Conversion of former retail unit into hot food takeaway and associated works
R and J Angling Supplies, 32 Swallow Croft, Lichfield, Staffordshire
For: Mr Jahed Ahmed

RESOLVED: That the planning application be REFUSED for the following reasons:-

The proposals are contrary to policies CP3, BE1, ST1 and ST2 of the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029. This is due to impact on residential amenity from traffic generation, noise, light, fumes, odour and other general disturbance and that the proposals are unacceptable on highway grounds due to parking and access problems. The proposals are also not sustainable for such reasons.

(Prior to consideration of the application, representations were made by Ms Sandra Bradburn (Objector) and Councillor Joanne Grange (Ward Councillor))

20/01459/FUH – Single storey link extension to side, part garage conversion with 2no roof lights to front and removal of chimney stack on dwellinghouse
5 Paskin Close, Fradley, Lichfield, Staffordshire
For: Mr & Mrs McNeill

RESOLVED: That the planning application be approved subject to conditions contained in the report of the Head of Economic Growth and Development.

Staffordshire County Council Consultation (L.20/03/867 M)

Our ref: 20/00722/SCC - Proposed sand and gravel extraction, the erection of associated plant and infrastructure and creation of new access, in order to supply the HS2 project with ready mix concrete with exportation of surplus sand and gravel
Land South of the A513, Orgreave, Alrewas, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire

The Committee considered the amended/additional information submitted to Staffordshire County Council and noted the extension of the consultation period until 18 December 2020 to receive comments. The committee heard and noted the concerns of the Ward Councillor and agreed with them.

The committee wished to reiterate their previous concerns raised to the proposals, as they felt these concerns had not been addressed by the additional information. There was also concern raised about the need for the proposal and its relationship to the construction of HS2; as it was noted that HS2 had advised there has been no communication with the applicant. There was additional concern raised about the long term impact of the proposals on the rural area and impact on residential amenity/noise disturbance by virtue of 24/7 working and it was considered that the proposals are not needed and do not meet social, economic or environmental requirements. It was agreed that a robust objection to the changes be sent from LDC for the reasons stated.

RESOLVED: That an appropriate consultation response be sent to Staffordshire County Council raising the concerns expressed.

(Prior to consideration of the application, representations were made by Councillor M Wilcox (Ward Councillor)).

(The Meeting closed at 8.31 pm)

CHAIRMAN

PLANNING COMMITTEE

11 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Marshall (Chairman), Baker (Vice-Chair), Anketell, Barnett, Birch, Checkland, Cox, Eagland, L Ennis, Evans, Ho, Humphreys, Leytham, Matthews and Tapper

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Marshall declared a personal interest in application no. 19/01736/FULM as he knows a Director of AB Farms.

Councillor Ho asked to place on record that the objector and ward councillor had sent an email to all members of the planning committee with images prior to tonight's meeting.

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 December 2020 previously circulated were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 PLANNING APPLICATION

An application for permission for development was considered with the recommendation of the Head of Economic Growth and Development and any letters of representation and petitions of observations/representations together with the supplementary report of observations/representations received since the publication of the agenda in association with Planning Application 19/01736/FULM

19/01736/FULM – Erection of 1 No. Agricultural building for cold storage with lean-to canopy, private way/track to serve potato grader, hardstanding and associated works (part retrospective)

Barn Farm, Cranebrook Lane, Hilton, Lichfield
For: Mr A Horsfield

RESOLVED: That this planning application be **deferred** to allow the submission of further information and clarification with regard to a number of issues, including related to the following. The consideration of all relevant planning matters will then be given due consideration when the application is brought back to committee for consideration and determination:-

- flooding/drainage;
- noise assessment;
- site access arrangements;
- routes of traffic to/from the site.

(Prior to consideration of the application, representations were made to the Committee by Ms Catherine White (Objector), Councillor Silvester-Hall (Ward Councillor) and Mr William Brearley of CT Planning (Applicant's Agent)).

(The Meeting closed at 7.20 pm)

CHAIRMAN

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Humphreys (Chairman), Barnett (Vice-Chair), Birch, Grange, Greatorex, Robertson, Silvester-Hall and Warburton

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gwilt and S. Wilcox.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record.

40 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

IN PRIVATE

41 REDUNDANCY

The Committee received a report on compulsory redundancies as a result of a service review and no viable options for redeployment were available.

RESOLVED: That the redundancies as set out in the report be approved.

(The Meeting closed at 5.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

AUDIT AND MEMBER STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillors Greateorex (Chairman), Ho (Vice-Chair), Checkland, Grange, A Little, Norman, Robertson, Spruce and White

Observers: Councillor Strachan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services and Revenues & Benefits

Officers in Attendance: Mrs L Fowkes, Mrs J Irving, Miss W Johnson, Ms R Neill, Mr K Sleeman, Mr A Thomas and Ms C Tims

Also Present: Mr J Gregory, Ms L Griffiths, Mr A Sohal & Mr D Rowley – Grant Thornton

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Grange declared a personal interest in any discussion relating to the Friary Grange Leisure Centre as she was a Friend of the Friary Grange Leisure Centre.

Councillor Grange also declared a personal interest in respect of GDPR/Data Protection as she was working with a technical company in the GDPR area.

26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2020 previously circulated, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

An update was given by the ICT Manager, Kevin Sleeman. All laptops had now been successfully encrypted and USB sticks cleared and a further update on GDPR would be discussed under agenda item no 6 – Internal Audit Progress Report, following concerns at the previous meeting.

27 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STATEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

Mr Anthony Thomas (Head of Finance and Procurement) delivered a Presentation on the Treasury Management Statement and Prudential Indicators, which covered the financing and investment strategy for the forthcoming financial year.

The Capital Strategy shown at Appendix A was explained and key updates were:-

Capital bidding forms part of service and financial planning process;

Proposal for early repayment of Burntwood Leisure Centre capital investment of £979k to generate annual savings of £140k – would mean that at the end of March 2021, external debt would temporarily exceed borrowing. However, over the 3-year period, the Council was compliant;

Refocus in the Investment in Property section from the Property Investment Strategy to enhanced information on the current portfolio;

In line with the action included in the CIPFA FM Code assessment a longer-term capital investment plan has been incorporated; (25 years)

This plan is currently based on “broad brush” assumptions which include population growth and demographics.

Mr Thomas explained following Council approval, the Capital Programme had removed the Property Investment budgets which has a significant impact on the balance sheet and projections but also the treasury management strategy and budget. The renewal of the waste fleet and the new Leisure Centre would increase the borrowing need, and this was currently being budgeted to be funded through a lease type arrangement and external borrowing. Graphs illustrated the capital programme comparisons from last year to this year and also capital funding graphs and cumulative borrowing needed to reflect the much lower capital programme recommended.

The Chief Financial Officer's Assessment was highlighted and although the removal of the Property investment Strategy by the Council means the overall level of risk has significantly reduced there were, in his opinion, still risks and so he has assessed the current risk as a material level of risk.

Mr Thomas explained the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2021/22 at Appendix C which sets out the Council's policy of using the asset life method for making prudent provision for debt redemption. He said each year the Council must approve this statement which would include an allowance for finance leases that appear on the Council's balance sheet i.e. Waste Fleet was in this category.

The Treasury Management Statement / Annual Investment Strategy at Appendix D & E was clarified and very little had changed from last year, Mr Thomas said the only proposed change was on the investment holding limits based on Arlingclose advice to remove the overall Money Market fund limit of £21m. They recommend that this limit be removed because at present the risk of moving into other sectors was higher. Mr Thomas said the four strategic fund investments total £8m at this time and as there was a prudential indicator for longer term investments of £10m, it was proposed that a further investment of up to £2m to achieve higher returns is made to take the Council up to the £10m limit. Further strategic investments would only be undertaken after taking advice from Arlingclose and with the agreement of the Cabinet Member.

Balance sheet projections were illustrated, with key messages, and Mr Thomas said although it was projected there would be a large deficit on the collection fund at 31 March 2021 (due to the impact of Covid-19 and the award of business rate reliefs), this would be transferred to the revenue budget over a 3 year period. The statutory nature of Collection fund accounting was explained and, after taking into account Section 31 grants, should have a minimal impact on the Council's revenue budget.

Mr Thomas explained that IFRS16 for leases has been deferred until 1 April 2022. He added that the Secretary of State and Government had made a lot of announcements recently regarding the level of commercial income, predominantly to do with borrowing to invest in property. Basically, Government wanted to see local governments reduce its dependence on commercial income from these sources and so there were a number of initiatives to achieve this aim e.g. the PWLB consultation response which had been announced. Mr Thomas said we would be asked to confirm there was no intention to buy investment assets that were primarily for yield in the current or next 2 financial years. As S151 Officer he would need to confirm he was content with plans and they were within acceptable use of PWLB. Local councils could be prohibited from accessing the PWLB if they planned debt for yield activity

and Her Majesty's Treasury could restrict local authorities from borrowing and had powers to issue penalties, suspend access, insist on repayment of loans with penalties or even review the prudential framework in its entirety. Mr Thomas also said it was announced the previous day there was to be a consultation on the prudential code which was also aimed at strengthening provisions. It stated clearly that borrowing for debt for yield investment was not permissible which was another indicator that CIPFA and the Government were looking to stop this type of activity.

Prudential and local indicators were illustrated for information and prudence measures.

Questions were received relating to the capital receipt of Leyfields and Netherstowe which had been referenced in the Capital Strategy although its receipt was subject to planning approval being granted. Mr Thomas said if this sale did not happen, the Capital Strategy/Capital Programme would have to be reviewed and alternatives sought. Mr Thomas said a recommendation had been included in the Cabinet MTFS report to delegate to the Head of Finance & Procurement and the Cabinet Member to identify alternative funding in the event the land was not sold.

The level of general reserves was discussed as three scenarios had been prepared. Mr Thomas said the central scenario was, in his opinion, a realistic and deliverable scenario and he was comfortable with the level of reserves. He also said that within that budget there were a number of risk contingencies built into the MTFS i.e., contingencies for sales, fees and charges and business rate estimates, because of risks around retail rent income. The retail risks were discussed as the Council owned properties in the Lichfield city centre and the values have reduced quite significantly because of lower income streams and these would need to be subject to ongoing monitoring. It was highlighted that a number of the Council-owned properties were relatively new which would mean maintenance obligations/liabilities would start to accrue and so these had been built into the plan.

RESOLVED:- That Members consider the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and highlight any changes or recommendations to Cabinet in relation to:

- (1) The Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, outlined in Appendices A & B;
- (2) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2021/22, at Appendix C, which sets out the Council's policy of using the asset life method for making prudent provision for debt redemption;
- (3) Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021/22 including proposed limits shown at Appendix D. The only change being proposed is based on Arlingclose advice to remove the £21m overall investment limit for Money Market Funds to manage credit and liquidity risk;
- (4) The plan to undertake a further Strategic Fund Investment up to £2m;
- (5) The Investment Strategy Report (Appendix E) including the proposed limits for 2021/22;
- (6) The Capital and Treasury Prudential Indicators for 2020-25 in the financial implications section;
- (7) The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator shown within the financial implications section.

And that Members also note:

- (8) The Public Works Loans Board (PWLb) response to the consultation on changes to lending terms.

28 REDMOND REVIEW REPORT

Mr Anthony Thomas (Head of Finance and Procurement) delivered a presentation on the recently published Redmond Review Report which was an independent review of Local Authority financial reporting and External Audit. Mr Thomas advised that initially the report

was to be an update on the review, its findings and recommendations. However, during the report drafting, the Government had announced its response as part of its finance settlement and therefore this had also been incorporated into the report.

The key issues/key findings and recommendations and the Government response were illustrated by Mr Thomas. The main issues were highlighted:-

- The level of accounts signed off by the deadline;
- External Audit fees;
- Sustainability of the Audit market – 3 firms hold 80% of market.

Mr Thomas said he had looked at the implications for the Council and felt they were likely to be:-

- Higher External Audit fees – the Council had already included a budget pressure of £8k p.a. from 2021/22;
- There was a risk of moving the audit deadline to 30 September which was a concern as it could become a competing demand for the finance staff as the MTFS development work commenced July/August to be completed by the following February and this would be problematic;
- The potential use of Internal Audit as an assurance tool, which could reduce duplication and lead to more effective use of audit resources.

Discussions took place around the External Audit market generally and Mr Thomas said the audit framework and financial reporting of accounts were meaning a lot more complex work was expected of the External Auditors. He felt this would continue until the audit framework was addressed. It was agreed that auditing Local Authority accounts was not like any other audits: they were prepared in line with accounting standards but they were also subject to a number of statutory elements and therefore demanded different skillsets and expertise. Mr Thomas said that having more smaller companies may potentially reduce fees but they would need to recruit and train staff and therefore a significant investment would be required.

Mr Gregory from Grant Thornton advised that the PSA Ltd. procurement process had made the deliberate choice of awarding the External Audit market 40% Grant Thornton, 25% to another and 15% to another and that is why only three firms have the 80% of the market. Overall Grant Thornton welcomed the Redmond Review Report.

Members agreed that Local Government finances were notably more complicated now with layering IRFS on top of statutory requirements and it was noted that public objections can cause further work, delay and expense. It was agreed that External Audit requirements were reactive and often in response to corporate issues and therefore there was a sector wide problem.

RESOLVED:- The committee noted the contents of the report.

29 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Ms Rebecca Neill (Shared Head of Audit) presented the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 31 December 2020 (Quarter 3). She advised that the audit opinion remained reasonable at this three-quarter stage of the year. She advised that 67% of the audit plan had been completed which remained a strong performance against audit's main KPI which was to deliver 90% of the plan by year end. She added that Covid-19 was still having an effect on services and their ability to respond to audits which is in turn impacting on other audit performance measures at Section 5 of the report. She reminded the committee that these were new PI's introduced with challenging targets, but that they should continue to be strived for in normal times. Members agreed that, in what had been an interesting year, it was heartening to see how far the audit programme had come.

Ms Neill summarised the positive direction of travel in audit follow-up implementation rates, highlighting 107 actions outstanding in comparison to the 230 outstanding actions which were in place at the start of the new system for follow up, last year. Members' attention was drawn to the Appendix of the report which was a summary of all the detailed audit reports the members receive.

Matters raised at the last committee were discussed, namely the high priority finding in the Remote Working Audit, regarding unencrypted laptops and the GDPR limited assurance follow-up audit. Ms Neill summarised the progress to date, which was that a position statement was sent to members from management in November 2020 and that an audit follow-up report had been sent to members in January 2021. She said that there were 9 unencrypted laptops at the last follow-up and that this had now reduced to zero. In terms of the GDPR follow-up, there were now 4 High and 2 Medium priority actions outstanding. Ms Christie Tims, Head of Governance and Performance, provided an update and was pleased to report that, subject to verification by the internal audit staff, 99% of all actions as of the previous day had been completed. There were only 2 items outstanding on the project plan which related to the medium priorities on the audit and everything else had been completed by the end of January. She thanked the IT staff involved as all actions were now in place and she assured members that a forward plan to maintain datasets was now to be implemented. Ms Neill assured the actions would be followed up until all the recommendations were implemented. Members requested that a progress report come back to the next committee meeting.

The number of high priority actions were discussed, and members requested more information on which of the high priority actions had been outstanding, post January 2020. Ms Neill said she would provide more detail for the committee.

There was a query on the payroll audit report, relating to the transition to a new payroll provider, as there was only 5 months to go on the current contract. Councillor Strachan said a report was on the Cabinet agenda for the forthcoming week and Ms Tims confirmed that there was a preferred supplier and reassured the committee that they could meet the deadline.

Ms Neill was asked if the Capital Strategy audit also looked at disposals and if they were involved with the issue regarding the disposal of Land at Netherstowe and Leyfields open spaces. Ms Neill said she would check the scope of the audit and report back but internal audit was not reviewing that particular issue. Ms Tims advised that she was currently in the final stages of awarding the procurement of this independent external investigation and this item would be added on to the Work Programme for the March or April meeting.

The Procurement audit was discussed as the only limited assurance report. Mr Thomas gave assurance that the new procurement team were working through this plan. Mr Thomas said one of the actions was the approval of a procurement strategy, which had been done. He believed the other high priority was to update the contract register and he knew the team were engaging significantly with services to get the contract register updated. Ms Neill assured the members that the same process for procurement would apply as to GDPR and a follow-up of the audit would be provided.

RESOLVED:- The committee noted the contents of the report.

30 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Ms Rebecca Neill (Shared Head of Audit) presented the report which provided the committee with their routine risk management update. She said there was an update to SR2: Resilience Risk (at the request of the previous committee meeting) to include flooding and climate change within the mitigating controls section. She explained that an update to this risk

description had been made to account for Covid variants and the third national lockdown. This risk was already at the highest score and so could go no higher.

Ms Neill reported there were no changes in other scores to report this time. She went on to say that SR1: Finance and SR2: Resilience remained the two highest risks and remain out of “risk appetite”. Members’ attention was drawn to the potential emerging risks, i.e., forthcoming elections/turnover of staff in key posts/transition to new payroll provider and potential of no sunset clause on regulations allowing remote council meetings going beyond early May 2021.

Ms Neill said a lot of positive work had been undertaken in terms of the sub-strategic risks, which were the risks at head of service level. Draft risk registers were now in place which mirrored the strategic risk register, bringing in the three lines of assurance linking back to the service plan objectives and the strategic objectives.

Members raised concern about the emerging risks associated with running the May 2021 elections during the pandemic, in terms of not only potential disenfranchisement of the electorate but the effect on staff, volunteers and potential candidates. Examples were of nomination papers not being signed due to self-isolation, not being able to visit people for canvassing, front line staff needing training, volunteers not having their vaccines, polling stations being unsuitable, emergency proxy votes being required for the newly diagnosed etc. Ms Tims said the matter was heightened and the team were investing a lot of time in planning for this election, making sure it had contingencies in place to mitigate as much risk as possible. She advised there was a risk register and project plan developing and agreed it was a massive undertaking for such a small authority with limited resources and that further national guidance was expected.

RESOLVED:- The committee noted the risk management update and received assurance on actions taking place to manage the Council’s most significant risks.

31 THE ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR LDC

The Chairman introduced Mr John Gregory from Grant Thornton who advised that both he and Ms Laurelin Griffiths were leaving their External Audit roles for Lichfield District Council and he introduced Mr Avtar Sohal as the replacement Engagement Lead and Mr David Rowley as the replacement Manager.

The Annual Audit Letter for Lichfield District Council year ended 31 March 2020 was presented by Mr Gregory of Grant Thornton. He said members would be familiar with the content as it was a summary of the audit findings report tabled in the autumn. He advised that it was a relatively smooth audit again this year and gave credit to Mr Thomas and his finance team for providing a good set of accounts. He advised that although they had identified Covid as a significant risk this did not have much impact on the audit.

RESOLVED:- The committee noted the Annual Audit Letter for Lichfield District Council year ended 31 March 2020.

32 CERTIFICATION WORK FOR LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Ms Laurelin Griffiths from Grant Thornton provided a verbal update on the Certification Work for Lichfield District Council for year ended 31 March 2020 which was the certification for the housing subsidy claim. Ms Griffiths stated that this was usually an update given in November but because of Covid the deadline had been extended to end of January and so the certified subsidy claim was submitted on 18 January and was for just over £14m. The certification was after an adjustment of £122 and contained an extrapolated error of £10. Ms Griffiths thanked

Pat Leybourne and the benefits team for all their help over the last couple of months as it did take longer than it would normally.

33 AUDIT COMMITTEE LDC PROGRESS REPORT AND UPDATE - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021- KEY MESSAGES

Mr John Gregory from Grant Thornton provided a verbal progress report and update and explained that it was a relatively quiet time in terms of the Local Authority audits, so not much to report. He said Mr Sohal and Mr Rowley would be starting to plan the 20/21 audit very shortly and work towards this year's timescale which was 30 September deadline. Mr Sohal explained there would be a few changes in terms of their approach this year which were driven by the new accounting and audit standards. This included more value for money conclusion work and reporting and looking more in to ISA540 (which was around estimates) and advised members that they would see a lot more work and reporting going forward around these topics, which represented additional work. This was noted and the Chairman thanked Mr Gregory and Ms Griffiths on behalf of the committee for all their hard work and wished them well and welcomed Mr Sohal and Mr Rowley.

34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme for the Audit & Member Standards Committee 2020/21 was considered, and it was agreed to add both GDPR and the Netherstowe & Leyfields independent external investigation to next month's agenda items.

(The Meeting closed at 7.37 pm)

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS (Version 1)
May 2021 – June 2022

Date	Meeting
Monday 7 June 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 8 June 2021	Cabinet
Wednesday 16 June 2021	Provisional Date
Thursday 17 June 2021	Parish Forum
Tuesday 22 June 2021	Planning Training
Thursday 1 July 2021	Employment Committee
Monday 5 July 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 6 July 2021	Cabinet
Tuesday 13 July 2021	COUNCIL
Thursday 15 July 2021	O&S Committee
Tuesday 20 July 2021	Member Training
Thursday 22 July 2021	Audit & Member Standards Committee
Monday 2 August 2021	Planning Committee
Monday 30 August 2021	BANK HOLIDAY
Monday 6 September 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 7 September 2021	Cabinet
Thursday 16 September 2021	O&S Committee
Tuesday 21 September 2021	Planning Training
Wednesday 22 September 2021	Provisional Date
Monday 27 September 2021	Regulatory & Licensing Committee
Monday 4 October 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 5 October 2021	Cabinet
Tuesday 12 October 2021	COUNCIL
Thursday 21 October 2021	Employment Committee
Monday 1 November 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 9 November 2021	Cabinet
Thursday 11 November 2021	Audit & Member Standards Committee
Thursday 18 November 2021	O&S Committee
Monday 22 November 2021	Joint Waste Committee
Monday 29 November 2021	Planning Committee
Tuesday 30 November 2021	Member Training
Tuesday 7 December 2021	Cabinet
Wednesday 8 December 2021	Planning Training
Tuesday 14 December 2021	COUNCIL
Thursday 16 December 2021	Provisional Date
Monday 27 December 2021	BANK HOLIDAY
Tuesday 28 December 2021	BANK HOLIDAY
Monday 3 January 2022	BANK HOLIDAY
Monday 10 January 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 11 January 2022	Cabinet
Thursday 20 January 2022	O&S Committee
Wednesday 26 January 2022	Member Training
Wednesday 2 February 2022	Employment Committee
Thursday 3 February 2022	Audit & Member Standards Committee
Monday 7 February 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 8 February 2022	Cabinet
Thursday 17 February 2022	Provisional Date
Tuesday 22 February 2022	COUNCIL

Thursday 24 February 2022	Regulatory & Licensing Committee
Tuesday 1 March 2022	Member Training
Monday 7 March 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 8 March 2022	Cabinet
Tuesday 15 March 2022	Planning Training
Thursday 17 March 2022	O&S Committee
Monday 21 March 2022	Joint Waste Committee
Thursday 24 March 2022	Audit & Member Standards Committee
Monday 4 April 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 5 April 2022	Cabinet
Thursday 14 April 2022	Provisional Date
Friday 15 April 2022	BANK HOLIDAY
Monday 18 April 2022	BANK HOLIDAY
Tuesday 19 April 2022	COUNCIL
Wednesday 20 April 2020	Audit & Member Standards Committee
Monday 2 May 2022	BANK HOLIDAY
Thursday 5 May 2022	ELECTIONS
Monday 9 May 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 10 May 2022	Cabinet
Tuesday 17 May 2022	ANNUAL COUNCIL
Thursday 26 May 2022	O&S Committee
Monday 30 May 2022	BANK HOLIDAY
Tuesday 31 May 2022	Regulatory & Licensing Committee
Monday 6 June 2022	Planning Committee
Tuesday 7 June 2022	Cabinet
Thursday 16 June 2022	Provisional Date