

**CABINET**

**7 MARCH 2023**

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**STAFFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

**1. Decision:**

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 Noted the progress of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board in developing a unified 2023 programme of activity across the county and eight district and borough councils, to tackle climate change and work towards our net zero targets.
- 1.2 Approved the Staffordshire Sustainability Board joint communications plan (attached as Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report), which sets out our 12-month programme of climate change awareness-raising and behaviour change activity.

**2. Statement of Reasons:**

Lichfield District Council has pledged to become a net zero organisation by 2035, and help Lichfield as a District become net zero by 2050. The Staffordshire Sustainability Board was established in January 2022. The aim of the Board is to encourage and support greater partnership working between the county's local authorities to tackle climate change and reduce Staffordshire's carbon emissions towards net zero targets. The plan proposes a joint and, aligned calendar of communications and behaviour change activity throughout the year, to be delivered in partnership with the other district, borough, and County councils in Staffordshire.

**3. Any Alternative Options:**

Lichfield District Council could not deliver the joint countywide communications plan to pursue, create and share its own messages separately. It was decided that a joint approach with the rest of the county makes the best use of resources and makes sure we promote consistent messages countywide.

**LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORTING POLICIES**

**1. Decision:**

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approved the Council Tax Discretionary Policy (see Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report).
- 1.2 Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Commissioning, in liaison with the Assistant Director for Customer, Resident and Business Services and the Council's S151 officer, to make minor amendments to the policy, and to create appendices to the policy that enable the council to award reliefs to individuals or classes of individuals in circumstances such as COVID or other emergencies, where the relief is fully funded by government.

**2. Statement of Reasons:**

The council has discretionary powers to provide support to council taxpayers who are in financial hardship or other crisis where no other legislative discounts, reductions or reliefs are available.

To enact these powers, the council needs to have a Council Tax Discretionary Policy approved that sets out the delegated authority to award reliefs and establishes an appeals procedure for customers to appeal a decision.

A policy has been developed a Council Tax Discretionary Policy for approval (see Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report).

**3. Any Alternative Options:**

None.

**BEING A BETTER COUNCIL - ONE YEAR REVIEW**

**1. Decision:**

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 Reviewed progress to date of the programme and in particular the indicators of success set.
- 1.2 Agreed the need to become 'entrepreneurial' in order to continue our improvement in Being A Better Council, and achieve our place shaping ambitions for the district.

**2. Statement of Reasons:**

In November 2021, Cabinet approved the organisational change programme, Being a Better Council 2021 – 2024. The programme (strategy) was designed to help us become the council we recognised we need, and want to be, a council that is more responsive to the changing needs and expectations of our residents.

In approving the programme, Cabinet recognised a need to rethink how services are structured and managed, to introduce new technologies and improve access to those services for our residents and businesses and to challenge how and what we do. It recognised the need to make these changes based on our 'invisible competition', the organisations against whom our residents compare and benchmark the way our services are organised and provided. This programme is our response, a plan for substantial and sustainable changes to our organisational structures, performance, and culture.

Cabinet set a timeframe for its implementation between December 2021 and March 2023, with improvements to services and measures of success realised between April 2022 and March 2025.

This paper provides Cabinet with a first review of progress to date of the Being A Better Council programme at the end of the first year of implementation and the impact it has had on the overall performance of the council.

**3. Any Alternative Options:**

Do nothing – This would not enable us to systematically challenge what we do and how we do it. It would not enable us to tackle long term place shaping priorities. It would not enable us to respond to financial pressures we are facing.

(Councillor Eadie declared a personal interest in this item as a Director of LWM Traded Services Ltd)

(Simon Fletcher, Chief Executive, declared a personal interest in this item as a Director of LWM Traded Services Ltd)

(Kerry Dove, Chief Operating Officer, declared a personal interest in this item as a Director of LWM Traded Services Ltd)



