

# INFORMAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

14 DECEMBER 2021

## PRESENT:

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

## 44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eagland, Parton-Hughes, Smith and Tranter.

## 45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 46 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

## 47 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair informed Members that former Councillor, Sheriff and Mayor of Lichfield, Brian Bacon, had sadly passed away and led the Council in a Minutes' silence.

Members gave their condolences and Councillors Pullen, Norman, Baker, Cox, Marshall and M Wilcox remembered former Councillor Bacon and the contribution he had made.

## 48 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER AND 7 DECEMBER AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Councillor Pullen submitted his report on Cabinet Decisions from the meetings held on 9 November and 7 December and Cabinet Member Decisions.

Councillor Robertson questioned whether the street trading policy would be reviewed to minimise bureaucracy and constraints on economic growth across the district.

Councillor Pullen confirmed that the policy was in the process of being reviewed and would be considered during the first part of 2022. Given that the policy was inextricably linked with the Street Trading Policy neither would be considered in isolation.

Councillor Ray referred to delays experienced in receiving legal advice. He welcomed the additional resource that had been proposed but asked for assurance that the shared legal service would continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure the standard improved and that if necessary an alternative service provider would be found.

Councillor Pullen gave assurance that the service would be kept under review by the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing & Health. He said the agreed approach was to invest in the service to get it right rather than lurch from one model of delivery to another.

#### **49 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Leytham submitted the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 November

Councillor Norman advised that he had shared an amendment to the Minutes with the Chairman and relevant officers and hoped Members would agree it when approving the final Minutes.

Councillor Robertson stressed that the Council must ensure that the shopmobility service fulfils its obligations under the Equality Act to make sure that disabled people are not being unfairly disadvantaged by the pedestrianisation of the city centre.

Councillor Pullen advised that a consultancy firm had been employed specifically to look at mobility issues as the Council worked to pedestrianise the city centre.

Councillor Robertson asked for confirmation that the Community Grant Scheme Task Group would be considering the governance and administration of the grant scheme. Councillor Leytham confirmed that all issues would be scrutinised.

#### **50 MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Baker and

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning Committee held on 1 November and 29 November 2021 be approved and adopted.

#### **51 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND MEMBER STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce, seconded by Councillor Ho and

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Member Standards Committee held on 11 November 2021 be approved and adopted.

#### **52 MINUTES OF THE REGULATORY AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor B Yeates, seconded by Councillor Checkland and

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 1 December 2021 be approved and adopted.

#### **53 AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

##### **A) LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

It was reported that the City Centre Car Parking Strategy aligned with the Council's aspirations and ambitions as set out in the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan. It was supported by a Project

Delivery Action Plan, detailing the proposed projects for implementation, the resources required and responsibility for their delivery.

It was proposed by Councillor Pullen, seconded by Councillor Strachan and

**RESOLVED:(1)** That the allocation of an additional £650,000 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (£630,000 in the Capital Programme and £20,000 in the revenue budget) for the delivery of interventions contained in the Project Delivery Action Plan be approved.

**(2)** That the funding for these projects would be provided either through external funding or in the event this is not available, from the car park earmarked reserve.

## B) **DUAL STREAM RECYCLING - PROCUREMENT OF RECEPTACLES & ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Councillor A Yeates advised that Dual Stream recycling would be introduced in Lichfield and Tamworth in spring 2022 and Cabinet and Council had agreed the policy and the financial implications.

However, the procurement process for the kerbside recycling bags had identified an increase in procurement costs reflecting tightening international market conditions.

It was advised that the proposed budget increase was precautionary, and the impact should be less than originally predicted.

It was proposed by Councillor A Yeates, seconded by Councillor Strachan and

**RESOLVED:** That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be updated based on the additional financial implications of Dual Stream Recycling, specifically:

To increase the Capital Programme in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the purchase of bags/bins in 2021/22 by £100k from £229k to £329k. This will be funded by a contribution of £41,000 from Tamworth and the Council's share of £59,000, both from the Joint Waste Service's Property Growth Reserve.

## 54 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Councillor Lax introduced a report on a proposed community governance review.

She advised that community governance reviews provided an opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. It involved consulting those living in the area and other interested parties and making sure they have a say in how their local communities are represented.

Councillor Baker highlighted the importance of the consultation in establishing residents' requirements and views in relation to community cohesion, parish representation, boundaries and names. She encouraged everyone to engage with the consultation.

Councillor Robertson underlined the importance of the community governance review. He referred to discrepancies in the ratio of councillors to electors between some wards, and stated that he would like the review to ensure the same level of representation for all residents.

Councillor Cox agreed with Councillor Robertson and expressed his hope that the review would consider the future growth in the district.

It was proposed by Councillor Lax, seconded by Councillor Baker and

**RESOLVED:** That the Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review and the Formal Notice of Community Governance Review be approved.

## **55 GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES 2022 - 2025**

Consideration was given to the Statement of Principles (2022-2025) that outlined the principles the Council would apply when exercising its functions under the Gambling Act 2005.

It was proposed by Councillor Lax, seconded by Councillor B Yeates and

**RESOLVED:** That the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2022-2025 be approved.

## **56 APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER**

Councillor Lax advised that the Local Government and Housing Act (1989) obliged the Council to nominate one of its officers as its Monitoring Officer.

The current Monitoring Officer, Christie Tims had been appointed as Chief Operating Officer. As a consequence it was no longer compatible for Ms Tims to hold the statutory position of Monitoring Officer.

Consideration had therefore been given to the appointment of an interim Monitoring Officer, and Wendy Trainor had been approved by the Appointments Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Lax, seconded by Councillor Eadie and

**RESOLVED:** That Wendy Trainor be appointed as the Council's interim Monitoring Officer

## **57 PUBLIC SECTOR AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS LTD - NATIONAL SCHEME FOR AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS**

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce, seconded by Councillor Strachan and

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendation of the Audit and Member Standards Committee, that the Council accepts the invitation from Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments in accordance with the regulations for the five-year period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028, be approved.

## **58 MOTION ON NOTICE**

The Chair advised that the Motion would not be brought forward at the present time.

## **59 QUESTIONS**

### **Q1. Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of the Council**

"Earlier this year members expressed their concern over the operation and oversight of the Community Fund Scheme, where elected members could support up to £300 in grants for local organisations, particularly over the initial proposal for the grant money to be paid into a Councillors' personal bank account to be then paid out to the applicant. Now recent events with the operation of the County Council's own Climate Change grant scheme have prompted some

members to want an early review of the scheme rather wait until the end of this Council term. Can I ask the Leader if he would support an early report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?"

**Response from the Leader of the Council**

"The Lichfield District Council Community Grant Scheme has boosted local good causes with over £10,000 of funding, decided by locally elected councillors and awarded directly to voluntary organisations. If the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny wishes to bring a report on the success of this scheme, and to assure members that the governance is robust, he would have my full support in doing so."

**Councillor Norman asked the following Supplementary Question:**

"I'm grateful for the reply although the figure should be well over £13,000 not £10,000. I wonder though if Cllr Pullen agrees with me that the task group can always benefit from bad examples as well as good examples. For example, on one of the Climate Change Fund applications from the County, the questions was: 'how long will the benefits of the project last' and the answer was: 'as part of an ongoing project for 20 years which we hope will expand.' One more question is: 'if the project will need to be maintained on longer terms, please give details of how the project will be maintained' and the answer was: 'it will be part of a wider education, to encourage people as part of a sustainable forestry school and the development of the natural environment; it'll be part of a community orchard'. And the last one I'll just quote from this application form: 'project cost - please provide a breakdown of the different project elements and the respective costs', and the answer was given: 'the costs are estimated to be a thousand pounds after the planting of trees, digging up and putting root stock down.' What we want to do is make sure that we as a district council avoid that sort of lack of accountability"

**The Leader of the Council responded:**

"Through you Chair I think Councillor Norman would probably agree with me that 'would you agree with me' questions are not proper questions. Can we always learn from best practice? Absolutely we can and I'm in no doubt through our Overview and Scrutiny Committee will ensure that we have a robust system in place in Lichfield District Council."

(The Meeting closed at 6.51pm)

CHAIRMAN