



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 11th NOVEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J Oates (Chair), Councillors R Pritchard (Vice-Chair), M Bailey, D Cook, S Doyle and A Farrell

The following officers were present: Anica Goodwin (Executive Director Organisation), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Gareth Youlden (Head of Technology and Information Services) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

67 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

69 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO. 1 Under Schedule 4, 13, Mr H Loxton asked the Leader of the Council Councillor J Oates, the following question:-

What was the full financial cost to Tamworth Borough Council of hosting the annual fireworks display on Saturday 6th November 2021?

Councillor Jeremy Oates gave the following reply:-

Thank you Mr Loxton.

The total direct cost of the event was £37,153 less income. That was the expenditure for the event. I would like to say I consider that money well spent.

You will be aware that last year families missed out on this annual event as we had to cancel it along with many other things due to the Covid restrictions. So I am really pleased to see that 2021 saw the largest crowd we have ever seen at this free community event. It is estimated 24,000 people in the castle grounds and estimates suggest there were 10,000 people elsewhere in the town centre watching the fireworks, so per head the cost was a little over £1.

With many firework displays cancelled this year, we expected numbers to be high and reports have been received that people travelled across the region from Leicester, Derby, Nuneaton, Lichfield, Coventry, Warwickshire, Birmingham and even London. Which is a phenomenal feat.

Many of the spectators arrived earlier in the day by road, rail and bus, and they enjoyed shopping at our market within the town centre as well as Ventura Park. Local pubs and restaurants reported a very busy day trading beforehand and some after the event in the castle grounds. We also had over 200 visitors to the castle on Saturday which is a significant increase on the average Saturday.

Boosting the economy is paramount and all our community arts events are held in the town and castle grounds, including the annual fireworks display are our contribution to helping the local economy. Tamworth is one of the few places that still has a free fireworks display and it is one of the largest ones in the Midlands. I am proud that we are doing this, we have been doing this for over a decade and our contribution, I think, really is well received.

With every event we learn as we go on, we are constantly evaluating ourselves and our event management. We are currently undertaking a full debrief as we do with all events and that will happen in the next couple of weeks.

I have seen some negative comments on social media. I don't recognise these as problems, I see larger problems on the motorway network every time the NEC has a large event, every time there is a large football game or there's a large sporting event, let's not even start to discuss V fest or Glastonbury and the mess that leaves the M6 or A5 in, or in the case of Glastonbury the M5 too.

I would like to congratulate the organisers and staff who were involved in pulling off this event. My sympathy is also with them. Within minutes of the end of the fireworks display they were taking their phones out of their pockets and seeing negative comments on social media. It's like a slap in the face. A minority of people eager to pick out the negatives and drag people down. These guys and girls worked really, really hard to put on what was a successful event for tens of thousands of people to enjoy.

As far as I am concerned this was a huge event and we will continue to invest in our outdoor events, we will continue to invest in them because they have wider benefits to the economy and the community.

Mr Loxton asked the following Supplementary Question:

I do have a supplementary and if you'll bear with me it's at the end of what I am going to say.

So we know the financial pressures facing the council, with a £7m shortfall over the next 5 years, we've been told about that. The £37,000 I think you said, that's not going to make a difference to that budget it's not going to be the breaking point to that budget one way or another. It's not a massive amount to spend but if you look at it over a 15 minute display it's about over £2,000 per minute and there's probably not much Tamworth Borough Council spend at £2000 per minute. The outdoor events programme is good, it's fantastic the council should be applauded for keeping the events going especially in the current financial climate and as you've said what we've put up with COVID. The outdoor events is what I have singled out regularly as one of the top things the council does. However with regards to fireworks there are a vast range of opinions. There will be opinions on whether the financial outlay is worth it. I agree with you I think it is. But there is also opinions on what type of display is wanted. We've heard Councillor Brindley mention drone displays. We've had the option of silent fireworks, so there are options around the type of display. On top of the financial spend, there is obviously also the safety aspects. The actual firework display itself no one can argue with that it's a fantastic display year after year but there was safety issues around that display with the way cars were parked and I know that's not your fault but it seemed to me nothing was being done about it. Only 4 tickets were issued that night, 4 tickets. When pavements were blocked, people pushing wheelchairs were having to go in the road, you couldn't get across Town Drive without going onto a 40 mile an hour road. Now you talk about the motorway, people tend not to walk up the motorway to be fair.

People want to engage on this topic. I have asked four questions on social media about the display and I have had nearly 100 responses to those questions, people want to give their views and they are not all negative. There is a fireworks working group on the council, its been on the council for some time now. All I would ask is that you engage with the public on this to see what they want, to see what type of display they want. I am sure that the vast majority of people want it to go ahead and to carry on going ahead but I would just ask you to let the public to get involved with the type of display especially with environmental issues and things like that, just so we get it right for everybody, around the financial cost, as well as the type of display and the safety around it. Little things perhaps that could be done; you could have parking notices up like you have for Food Gusto, directing people, you could perhaps use Lichfield Road Industrial Estate, direct people down there.

Just my question basically is, will you please engage directly with the public on what they want? Thank you.

Councillor J Oates responded

In response to your direct question, will we engage with the public, absolutely, however, there are limits to what we can deliver. We purchase a display from a professional company, we haven't got our own guys popping down Asda and

buying a couple of boxes of this, that and the other, so it's also what is available in the market. I've got no issue with engaging with the public in terms of their desires, I've got no issue in listening to the public's feelings.

In terms of the safety issues that you referred to earlier, council's cannot control people's behaviour. I left my house in my car 2 hours before the display. I drove my car for about 3 and a half minutes and went I ain't getting to town in this. I turned my car round, went back home, parked outside my house and walked into town. People that struggled to park or struggled to get into town, created their own issue and in doing so they impacted on other people. I would suggest with a few exceptions everybody had the opportunity to leave earlier, everybody had the opportunity to use a different mode of transport and in doing so they help each other out. Those that leave late or rush and try and find a space immediately before a firework display are creating the problem. The bottom line is with upward of 30,000 people in the town centre, there's only 1000 car parking spaces and we are not going to invest in car parking spaces for the sake of a 3 hour event it's just not going to happen. So I would implore anybody who has the ability to use a different mode of transport, to do so. That said, I appreciate not everybody can make the 40 minute walk that I did. But if those that can, do, those that can't, have got a better chance of being able to get where they need to get to. So this is about everybody looking at themselves and their own behaviour and how that impacts on other people.

I do want to pick up the point on the £37,000 and the suggestion that's £2000 per minute. This is the cost of the whole event. There were other things going on in the castle grounds and other entertainment, there was the fair and there was other elements. The fireworks themselves were not £37,000 this was a 4 hour, a 3 or 4 hour event so I would argue this wasn't about just, as you suggest, the £2000 per minute for a firework display.

In terms of pressures I think you hit the nail on the head. This isn't going to fix the £7m gap in the budget. This is about our contribution.

What would fix the £7m gap in our budget is if this council did not have to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds every year picking up litter because some dirty, disrespectful individuals continue to drop it on our streets, that would make a massive saving to the Borough Council.

In terms of should we do a firework display, I hear what you're saying about the public would support it. Should we do other outdoor events? It's all about, we can do these because we want to invest in our economy and our communities. This is why we have these outdoor events, it's not to feel good, because they're a lot of work and a headache. This is about investing in our communities and we will continue to do that. But in terms of your substantive supplementary question, happy to listen to different people's opinions. The working group you refer to is within a scrutiny committee which I have no influence or involvement in but I will pass the message on to those people on that committee that you have raised these points this evening.

Thank you.

70 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

None.

71 INVESTMENT IN TOWN HALL ICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

The Report of the Leader of the Council updated Cabinet on progress made with regards to facilitating on-line meetings and informed members of the increase required in Democratic resources to continue to deliver on-line meetings.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the findings within the report and progress to date in relation to work already delivered.
2. Continued to commit to livestreaming of Council meetings.
3. Continued to ensure all committee meetings were recorded and published in order to maximise transparency of decision making and electoral accountability.
4. Supported the policy change to increase the current establishment within Democratic Services.
5. Requested that the Appointments and Staffing Committee consider the staffing resource implications associated with this report.
6. Receive a further report once final costs for ICT investment were received.

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor A Farrell)

72 REPLACEMENT BACKUP SYSTEM

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services requested approval for replacement of our current network backup system including the release of £15,000 from capital contingency to part fund the replacement of our current backup system and the re-purposing of existing capital scheme for Mobile Phones of £20,000, which was no longer required to fund the Mobile Phone contract, to part fund the replacement of our current backup system and the addition of a new scheme to the capital programme - Replacement Backup System with a total capital budget of £51k, funded by the two elements above and a contribution from existing ICT capital budgets.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the release of £15,000 from the General Fund capital contingency budget to part fund the replacement Backup System.

(Moved by Councillor M Bailey and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

73 CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Community Safety to approve a revised and updated Corporate Enforcement Policy.

RESOLVED that:

1. The revised Corporate Enforcement Policy attached as Appendix 1 be approved
2. The Assistant Director Partnerships, in conjunction with appropriate Heads of Service, be authorised to make minor editorial changes to the Policy as required that do not materially change the scope or meaning of it
3. A full review of the Policy be undertaken every three years with update to the Audit and Governance Committee.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

74 TENANCY MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Social Housing and Homelessness Prevention set out the arrangements for the Tenancy Management Policy for council housing, specifically to deal with fixed term tenancies, following fundamental changes to case law as detailed in the report (shown at Appendix B).

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approved the revised `Flexible Fixed Term Tenancy Agreement 2021` (Appendix A) which included the required forfeiture clause needed for all **new and renewable flexible fixed term tenancies** and delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Social Housing & Homelessness Prevention to approve any final amendments to the tenancy agreement as necessary.
2. Accepted the recent High Court of Appeal decision on flexible tenancies in the case of Croydon London Borough Council V Kalonga (Appendix B), which had forced Councils to review their tenancy management policies.
3. Endorsed consultation on the basis of the tenancy management options for fixed term tenancies, detailed within the report, starting with the Housing & Homelessness Sub Committee and the Tenant Consultative Group.
4. would receive a further report on the future of fixed term tenancies in March 2022, as part of an updated Tenancy Management Policy (2022-2025).

(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor M Bailey)

75 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and /or 3 of

Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

76 HOMELESSNESS WINTER RELIEF 21/22 UPDATE

RESOLVED that the recommendations within the Report be approved.

(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)

Leader

DRAFT