



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19th JANUARY 2022**

PRESENT: Councillor S Goodall (Chair), Councillors T Clements, R Claymore, A Cooper, D Maycock, Dr S People and B Price

The following officers were present: Anna Miller (Assistant Director – Growth & Regeneration), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Paul Weston (Assistant Director Assets), Lara Rowe (Castle Museum and Archive Manager) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

### **57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Summers and J Chesworth.

### **58 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 23 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

*(Moved by Councillor Dr S People and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)*

### **59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **60 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that he would be notifying the Chair of the requirements for an additional Committee meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

The Chair invited Councillor Dr S People to update the Committee on air quality / pollution which had been discussed at a recent West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Councillor Peale reported that work was underway to work collaboratively across the West Midlands area to model the air quality across the West Midlands to support the development of all air quality plan. It was reported that support, from Birmingham University who had been working in this area, was sought on modelling of air quality in the Tamworth area given the membership of Tamworth as a non-constituent part of the WMCA.

## **61 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE**

The Chair reported that the Vice-Chair had attended Cabinet on 2 December 2021 to present two sets of recommendations from this Committee:

On the Infrastructure Funding Statement report the recommendations from this Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2021 were agreed by Cabinet as part of their consideration of the Infrastructure funding Statement 2020/21 as follows:

- a. Agreed that Cabinet regularly review how to spend the funds accumulated;
- b. Agreed that the process for member involvement and the spend of CIL is clarified by the relevant Portfolio Holder and a process is created where members under the right criteria can apply for funding.

On the Dry Recycling Contract Update where this Committee had recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet take note of the need for all areas of Council activity to be looking for opportunities to be more green, noting this as an example of an area, at its meeting on 2 December 2021, Cabinet acknowledged the feelings of the Scrutiny Committee and committed to considering the green agenda in all decision making in all areas going forward.

## **62 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL**

No matters had been referred to this Committee by Cabinet or Council since the previous meeting.

## **63 RECOVERY & RESET**

The Chair introduced the Recovery & Reset Programme Director / Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods who provided an overview of the workstream allocation between the scrutiny committees and highlighted that this Committee would specifically scrutinise the Building Utilisation and Economic Development workstreams. The presentations from the Assistant Directors would focus on

1. The structure of their highlight reports and whether these were at the right level of detail for the Committee;
2. Highlighting key milestones and triggers in their workstreams to help inform the Committee's work plan.
3. Inviting questions and feedback to inform the programme.

The Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration reported that the Economic Development project was split into four workstream areas, the first three of which were linked:

1. Business Intervention, where the project was looking to establish an economic baseline, which reflects the impacts of the pandemic on the economy of Tamworth, through a desk based data gathering exercise which would allow the Council to make further decisions through the next two workstream areas.
2. Economic Recovery & Development, where the project would assess the strategy for economic development and assess whether the priorities were correct, whether we were resourced correctly across the authority and whether activities reflected the impact of the COVID pandemic, which would inform the tailoring of any services.
3. Town centre regeneration, which involved refreshing the masterplan for the town centre, to make the most to maximise the regeneration of the town centre and to attract inward investment.
4. Marmion Regeneration, which would focus on Marmion House and the potential regeneration of the site.

In terms of activities, a brief for the baseline had been produced and was ready to go out to tender, which was expected to provide the data required in terms of worklessness, employment levels, salaries and activity.

In terms of the Marmion House regeneration, it was expected that relocation from this site would be between the period April to June 2023. De-commissioning of the building and timing around regeneration plans coming forward would require arrangements to be put in place to avoid Marmion House adversely impacting on the Town whilst this is progressed. To support the decision to decant from Marmion House which was made in summer 2021 by Cabinet / Council, some high level feasibility work had been undertaken on the regeneration of the site. Further feasibility work on what could be delivered on the site was being pursued and was expected to be available at the end of January 2022:

1. the first piece of work was expected to cover further feasibility of housing led development options, the quantum of development, given neighbouring uses and access
2. A piece of work in terms of the constraints on the site, including the existence of a sub-station which could impact on development, and an understanding of costs and construction methods.

The work above would be expected to provide a framework for what could be undertaken on the site and potential costs for such regeneration. Work in terms of the costs of demolition as a precursor of regeneration was also reported to be in train.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. the reasons for the targeted decant date of April to June 2023, where the Assistant Director reported that there were significant interdependencies, in terms of looking and securing new sites to locate into and in terms of preparing the Marmion House for future steps.
2. Whether the Council had reached out to neighbouring properties to consider whether further areas could be included within the project, where

it was reported that the initial work had considered a broader area, however, currently the regeneration was focussed on the Marmion house site only. It was confirmed that the constraints and viability study were not seeking to rule anything out at this stage and details would form part of the Cabinet paper on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022, now on the forward plan.

The Assistant Director, Assets reported that the Building Utilisation project was split into three workstream areas.

Work had been undertaken to scope out the Council's assets and the utilisation of those, where it was reported that, other than in the case of Marmion House, the Council's space was largely well utilised, and there was not much office or meeting space available. Discussions were ongoing with our tenants in Marmion House. In terms of the most leases on Marmion House there was a formal process to follow involving some specialist advice, and this risk had been identified.

The next phase was to identify potential accommodation to relocate into. Potential premises within the town centre had been identified, but this was at an early stage. Once a property was identified and negotiations concluded and the lease agreed, take occupation and then start fitting out the site, IT equipment and furniture moved in, staff trained up, ready for an April opening. There would also then be the decommissioning of the Marmion House site to complete. There remained interdependencies with the SMART working workstream, which would impact on the space requirements.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. The type of masts located at Marmion House, where it was confirmed that there were telecoms masts.
2. The energy efficiency of any new accommodation, where it was reported that we were looking to lease any property and therefore the fabric of the building could influence this, and any fit out would have to meet current regulations and reflect the term of any lease taken. This would be considered as part of the negotiations with the landlord(s).
3. The accommodation of the IT infrastructure in any new property and the space required to accommodate that, where the Assistant Director reported that the Head of ICT was involved and the requirement for space was expected to be less given the move to cloud based technology.
4. Whether we were looking for one site or more than one location and the length of any leases sought, where it was reported that Cabinet had expressed a preference for all our operations to be located in one place, however, this would depend on negotiations, as to whether this was feasible. In terms of the length of the lease the preference was for around 5 years. It was confirmed due to the commercial nature of the negotiations the locations were not disclosed at this point.
5. The meaning of SMART working, where it was reported that this meant different ways of working, including some home working, hybrid working (which included some working from home and some working from office space) and site workers, which was where such staff could not undertake their work from home.

6. Financial assumptions utilised for the accommodation requirements, where it was reported that the costs presented to Council in August 2021 were desk based, and would require market testing, and were established on an assumption that the Council would require approximately the equivalent floor space to 2 floors of Marmion House. These financial assumptions had made some provision for the ICT infrastructure requirement for SMART working.
7. Premises location, where it was clarified that the Cabinet preference was for a town centre location, however, if there was nothing suitable this could mean that alternative sites would be considered.
8. With regard to the new buildings being acquired under the Future High Street Fund, including part of Middle Entry, and whether these would become Council assets, where it was clarified that the Council would take interim stewardship before they were repurposed. Further clarification was sought on what the future use of this area of the site could be, where the Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration reported that the future design for this remained at this point under debate, and would be likely to be a flexible space managed by the Council and could include entrepreneurial activity and potential links with the college and would be run commercially.

The Chair reported that he would like to see these reports on a quarterly basis, and that at appropriate times would be considered confidentially.

## **64 CASTLE CURTAIN WALL TENDER**

The Chair introduced the Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration and the Castle, Museum and Archive Manager to the Committee who were in attendance to provide an update on the Castle Curtain wall tender which was a report to be considered by cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Assistant Director reported that a 2019 Condition Report had identified that there were a range of remedial works required to the Castle, and an urgent piece of work due to health and safety concerns, was required to the curtain wall that extends around the castle. As a result, the area around the wall, including a path, had been cordoned off.

A capital budget to carry out the urgent work had been previously identified and the architects had drawn up the necessary plans to go out to tender for the works. The report to Cabinet was seeking the necessary approvals to go out to tender, and to release some additional funding and to delegate authority to appoint the relevant contractor.

It had been identified that some additional works which were also required, could be delivered in tandem with the initial scope of works, and by delivering these together overall cost savings through minimising scaffolding costs would be expected.

The Committee sought clarification in the following areas:

1. What contingency was contained within the budget, where it was confirmed that there was a 10% contingency. The Committee noted that in the current environment, this contingency could be considered low.
2. The duration, timing and extent of the disruption expected whilst the works were undertaken, where it was reported that there would be minimal disruption to the main hall if all the works were carried out utilising the external scaffolding, and that the works would be expected to take around six months. It was further reported that if the tender exercise went well, the aim would be to start the works in Spring / Summer this year, however, it should be noted that this was a specialist piece of work for which there were limited contractors.
3. How the project would be managed and monitored to ensure a high quality of work was delivered, where it was reported that monitoring the quality of the job would be a core requirement in the tender evaluation.
4. Whether an external quality assurance check could be built into the project, where the Assistant Director reported that Council had contracted Castle architects whose remit could include this assurance activity.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that:

1. Cabinet instruct that the contracted castle architects act as external quality assurance for the works;

*(Moved by Councillor Andrew Cooper and seconded by Councillor Simon Goodall)*

2. previous contractors performance be taken into account in the tender appraisal.

*(Moved by Councillor Dr Simon Peaple and seconded by Councillor Simon Goodall)*

The Committee thanked the Officers for their attendance.

## **65 UPDATE ON COUNCIL HOUSING REPAIRS POLICY**

The Chair reminded members that a report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 where Cabinet approved, in principle, the updated Council Housing Repairs Policy, delegated authority regarding the final policy, and approved consulting with residents.

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director, Assets who provided an overview of the current position to this Committee.

The Assistant Director reported that the outline draft Policy was a refresh of the existing 2016 approved Policy, and work in this area was looking at:

- building safety aspects, in anticipation of future regulation,
- to reflect additional qualitative data which was now received following the decision to bring back in house the repairs call centre; and
- the proposed move to a repairs process based on price per property.

The next steps were to go out to consult with the Tenants Consultative Group, and also to engage more widely with our tenants and the Communications team was providing support in this area.

The Committee supported the plan to engage more broadly and through different means with our tenants.

The Assistant Director reported that the aim would be to be able to implement the new policy from April 2022.

The Chair requested that the Assistant Director report back to the Committee at an appropriate date.

## **66 FIREWORKS WORKING GROUP**

The Chair reported that a Fireworks Working Group had been set up, chaired by Councillor Clements, following the full Council decision on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to refer to Scrutiny for further discussion two recommendations which had been made to full Council in a Motion to Enjoy Fireworks Responsibly.

The Chair invited Councillor Clements to update the Committee with the Working Group's conclusions.

Councillor Clements reported that following a couple of working group sessions the three main points that resulted were:

1. That the emphasis should be on the authority to lead by example and look at what we could do with our own displays.
2. That the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Council as a whole, should write to the Government Minister responsible for fireworks legislation.
3. To review the legislation applicable to the regulation of the sale of fireworks online, and to look at the impact on animals and how we could help.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to make two recommendations to Council.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommend to full Council that:

1. the Council look at all options with regards to visual aerial displays; and
2. the Leader of the Council write to the Minister with regard to:
  - online sales of fireworks and that this reflects the same legislation as shop sales of fireworks are guided by; and
  - the decibel level of fireworks available for the public's purchase be reviewed.

*(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peaple)*

## **67 FOCUS HALF DAY**

The Chair reported that an all Councillor focus afternoon on community safety had been scheduled in February to which expected guests included the Staffordshire Police Crime and Fire Commissioner, Local Police Commander and

relevant Officers. This would allow further time for discussions. It was anticipated that following this afternoon session, a meeting of this Committee would consider the outcomes and any recommendations which the Committee felt were appropriate to make.

The Chair reported that he would circulate a list of agenda items to all Councillors for comments and any additional items to be raised.

Members of the Committee requested that the agenda include:

- E-Scooters;
- SMART Alert App

## **68 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan.

## **69 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

The Chair reported that he had met with Officers regarding the information requested to support the activities of the Travellers Working Group and that whilst this was delayed, it was expected.

## **70 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee updated the Committee's Work Plan as follows:

### **Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Work Plan**



<b>Work Plan 2021 - 2022</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
<b>Quarterly updates</b>	Future High Street Fund (Growth) – Quarterly updates – starting March 2021
<b>Date to be confirmed 2021/22</b>	Review of Taxi Licensing Policy – Points System
<b>16<sup>th</sup> February 2022</b>	Economic Development Service Workplan
<b>February 2022</b>	Community Safety overview to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to Tamworth Police Commander</li> <li>• Invitation to Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner</li> <li>• CCTV update</li> <li>• E-Scooters and E-Bikes</li> <li>• Modern Slavery update</li> <li>• Business Crime Reduction Partnership Update</li> </ul>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>	Future High Streets Fund update
<b>24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (tbc)</b>	Waste Management update
<b>24<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>	Community Safety Plan
<b>Date to be confirmed - 2021 /22</b>	Garage Sites
<b>Date to be confirmed</b>	Review of policy / engagement with stakeholders relating to Travellers
<b>July 2022 (tbc)</b>	Fire Safety Update
<b>Date to be confirmed - 2022</b>	EV Charging update
<b>Quarterly updates commencing pre 31.12.21</b>	Waste Management
<b>Quarterly</b>	Reset & Recovery updates
<b>Date to be confirmed</b>	Council Housing Repairs Policy

<b>Working Groups</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Possible WG Members</b>	<b>Target IS&amp;G Com meeting date</b>
Fireworks		Completed
Review of policy / engagement relating to Travellers		
Facilities for HGV Drivers in Tamworth	Cllrs B Price (WG chair) Dr S Peale and R Claymore	
Joint Task Group – Waste	To be confirmed	

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Management (with Lichfield District Council)		
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<b>Upcoming Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>
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16 <sup>th</sup> February 2022 (new meeting)
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24 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
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Chair