



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 27th FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Harper (Mayor), Councillors D Maycock, P Turner, T Jay, C Adams, C Bain, B Clarke, G Coates, C Dean, L Wood, D Cook, M Bailey, R Claymore, T Clements, A Cooper, S Daniels, S Doyle, J Jones, J Oates, B Price, R Pritchard, L Smith, S Smith, M Summers, P Thurgood and J Wade

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), Nicola Hesketh (Monitoring Officer) and Leanne Costello (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer)

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Kingstone, P Thompson, J Wadrup and L Clarke.

Apologies were also received from Councillor J Oates who was running late for the meeting and arrived at 19.37.

78 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor L Wood and seconded by Councillor T Jay)

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

80 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor, Councillor J Harper made the following announcement:

The Mayor's ball is forthcoming on March the 8th, we are looking forward to a really lovely night being held at the assembly rooms and we got a lot of civic dignitaries coming from surrounding councils throughout the county. Not too

many councillors I am afraid day it has to be said which is a shame because it's a really terrific evening which aims to raise funds for the Mayors charity, but I am sure everyone has their own reasons for not attending but it would have been nice to see a better turnout.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor T Jay made the following announcement:

Councillor Thompson will be taking a short step back from his portfolio and Councillor Cooper will be picking up the slack just in the short interim, thank you.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor S Smith, made the following announcement:

I just want to update you all on a recent achievement by the opening of the Home Hub which we successfully accomplished just a few weeks ago. This significant milestone would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of Lee Bates and other individuals associated with Community Together CIC, his clear vision and strong partnership with Tamworth Borough Council has been instrumental in making this initiative a reality. The Home Hub aims to go further to reach vulnerable people by working closely with the Council and community partners, a great example being the Heart of Tamworth partnerships, supporting rough sleeping arrangements for vulnerable people. This year was the first time we submitted a zero count to the government for rough sleeping. Home Hub offers support in various areas of life, such as, skills development, financial, debt advice, rent or mortgage arrears, addiction and recovery, family support, alcohol and substance misuse, mental health support and lots, lots more. All of this, you can get help from the Home Hub. If anyone needs support, please visit the Home Hub at the Community Together CIC website or contact directly on 08081754041. I just want to say thank you again to Lee Bates and all partners and the housing teams at Tamworth Borough Council in working together to help make this happen.

Secondly, I would like to inform you about recent developments regarding the planning application for the site near Moor Lane, Bolehall. Whilst Tamworth Borough Council requested the submission of this application, unfortunately the information provided to support it has been insufficient. As a result, the proposal lacks the necessary details for a full and detailed consideration, including elements that align with validation requirements and policies. In light of this, Tamworth Borough Council have made the decision to draft an enforcement notice, this notice will stipulate the following required actions from the developer; removal of the access track, the existing access track must be taken down; grass seeding, required the area to be re seeded with grass and waste removal, all material on site needs to be properly disposed of. Updates regarding the enforcement notice and its implementation will be provided as frequently as possible.

Lastly, but not least important I would like to update members of the leaseholder charges issue. Last August I stood here and acknowledged the unavoidable reality that our Councils approached to leaseholder charging required revaluation. This decision wasn't easy, it meant deviating from the status quo. In truth this

issue had languished for years lacking clarity and resolution. Since then, we have laid the groundwork for a fresh strategic review, emphasising collaboration as a way forward. Tomorrow marks the first meeting of the Leaseholder Collaborative Working Group, bringing together elected members, leaseholders tenant representatives, and independent consultants. We are delighted to share that we have already rescheduled re inspections of leaseholder roofs, which will take place in just a couple of weeks. Both our independent consultants and I, have been actively coordinating with leaseholders to arrange these visits, the upcoming survey process will be enhanced and thorough, offering clear guidance to the survey, crucial factors including roof life expectancy, necessary remedial measures and evidence related to renewal will be robustly considered. I look forward to working with all relevant parties to bring this matter ever closer to a conclusion, thank you.

The Portfolio Holder for Engagement, Leisure and Events, Councillor T Clements made the following announcement:

I just want to say about the Civic Pride Awards that took place a couple of Mondays ago; It was an amazing event to see so many inspirational people in one room, and a little disappointing that as you as you've already said Mr Mayor that only twelve Councillors submitted nominations out of 30. It was a perfect opportunity for everyone to nominate somebody in their ward but maybe next time.

This Thursday is the 29th of February and no I'm not proposing to anybody, it's the first female councillor get together, which I hope will be an ongoing meeting of female minds, so we can put the world to right, at least we'll try. This Sunday as well is the 3rd March and it's the fourth national COVID-19 reflection day in conjunction with Marie Curie and there will be a book in the foyer of St. Edithas Church for members of the public and everyone that visits the church to write their reflections, any memories that they have and then that book will be stored in the castle for future generations to open a later date bit of a time capsule really of people's memories from COVID-19, so I encourage members to go and sign that as well.

Lastly and the same day as the Mayors Ball unfortunately, Friday the 8th of March is International Women's Day. 12 noon at the assembly rooms I will be hosting an event that all Councillors have had a meeting invite to. I'd like some Councillors to respond if that's OK at least to say I can't make it if nothing else. And just as a female councillor of 14 years, I want every female councillor in this room and there's not many of us, to be proud of what they do, to be proud of their achievements and to be proud of standing for election, putting their head above the parapet because it's not easy and in a male dominated world, as you can say there are a few females that have done that, so be proud of what you've achieved ladies, thank you.

The Chief Executive, Andrew Barratt made the following announcement:

I'd like to formally introduce Stephen Gabriel, who will be taking over as our chief executive from the beginning of April to the meeting and also ask, as you know

you've given me support over the years, I would ask you to extend the same courtesy to Steven in his role, and formally for the record wish him all the best in his in his future endeavours.

81 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 10, Simon Tracey, of Tamworth will ask the Portfolio Holder Housing and Planning, Councillor Samuel Smith, the following question:-

The question was read out by the Mayor in Mr Tracey's absence:

Why do Tamworth Borough Council NOT enforce their Zero tolerance policy on the misuse of drugs by council tenants? We have had (and still are) having an issue with a resident who smokes drugs on a daily basis . We have been in our sheltered accommodation since October 2022 and these issues with this resident were being reported to the council even before we moved in.

Councillor S Smith gave the following answer:

The Council is aware of an allegation and are in touch with the complainants at one of our sheltered housing schemes. As you may know, Tamworth Council prides itself on services to our council housing sheltered housing residents Every Sheltered scheme as both an on-site scheme manager who supports residents along with provision of a 24hr community lifeline service – where residents can activate the service if they have emergency concerns. In this particular instance the Scheme Manager and Housing Manager will be visiting to reiterate that where evidence exists of ASB we will take swift and decisive enforcement action.

The Council does have a zero-tolerance approach to Anti-Social Behaviour and our new Neighbourhood Impact Service will be dropping in to all schemes to explain the nature of the service and where we can support residents in using our range of prevention, enforcement, and witness support tools. This will be scheduled over the coming months – please speak to your scheme manager for more details.

In the meantime, any resident experiencing any kind of anti-social behaviour has a number of options. If they believe they are at risk and a crime is in progress, then they should ring 999. If they believe it is less urgent but still requires a police response, then they should report it to 101. If it is to progress any other type of ASB complaint, then residents can contact the Neighbourhood Impact Service on 01827 709709 – details are on the Councils website.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor L Smith will ask the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Recycling and Environment, Councillor A Cooper, the following question:-

I was contacted by residents regarding damage to the access gate onto the field at Selker Drive. The original damage took place at the start of this year and a few days ago the gate was completely cut down. I have emailed the council several times, not demanding for the gate to be fixed but simply asking for an update on the timeline so I can inform residents who have asked me about the issue. During this time, I have been told that it has been escalated to the street scene management team twice and I am yet to hear a response. So, my question is, how long are people expected to wait before the council takes action?

Councillor A Cooper gave the following answer:

The gate is not in place because it has unfortunately been vandalised several times by someone with a stihl saw; the vandals cut the hinges off the gate. The gate has been repaired several times, however unfortunately every time repairs are made to the gate it gets vandalised again.

A decision was made to have a concrete block put in place to secure the open space from unauthorised access, but to still enable access to the area. Work has been commissioned to install further site security and a height restriction barrier will be in place before March 31st.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 2

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor L Wood will ask the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Recycling and Environment, Councillor A Cooper, the following question:-

I have been approached by residents who are concerned about the wooden bridge near the Snowdome, and how hazardous it is during the cold & wet weather.

What measures has the Council taken to ensure that residents concerns on health & safety are met?

Councillor A Cooper gave the following answer:

The bridge near the Snowdome has had work undertaken to it to support the ongoing usage of this thoroughfare. The bridge has been surfaced with chicken wire and a number of holes have been drilled to allow the bulk of rainwater to get away. As with other flat surfaces, there may be some areas of standing water in extreme weather conditions.

There is a line in the budget to replace the bridge in the long term.

Councillor L Wood asked the following supplementary question:

I originally contacted Members Enquiries on behalf of the residents on the 15th October last year but I haven't had a response from the Officer who deals with that area. How long do residents have to wait for a response when it concerns Health and Safety?

Councillor Cooper gave the following answer:

I agree that it should be better, and I will take that away and have a chat with the team to understand it. I think that what they have been looking at is various measures to put in place before feeding back a response. I take your concern and if you do have a concern about a Health and Safety matter, please raise them up to me so that I can deal with them, lets' not just sit and wait until can come in here and speak about it; Health and Safety is key and something I take very seriously.

82 CORPORATE VISION, PRIORITIES PLAN, BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25

Report of the Leader of the Council, Finance and Governance approved the recommended package of budget proposals (attached at Appendix 2) to enable the Council to agree the:

- General Fund (GF) Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2024/25;
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25;
- 5 Year General Fund Capital Programme (2024/29);
- 5 Year HRA Capital Programme (2024/29);
- 3 Year General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2024/27); and • 5 Year HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2024/29).

To comply with the requirement of the Council's Treasury Management Policy in reporting to Council the proposed strategy for the forthcoming year and the Local Government Act 2003 with the reporting of the Prudential Indicators (attached at Appendix 3) and the requirement to prepare an annual Corporate Capital Strategy (Appendix A of the MTFS).

Resolved that Council approved

1. the proposed revisions to Service Revenue Budgets (Policy Changes) (Appendix E of the MTFS);
2. the sum of £27,070 be applied from Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses in reducing the Council Tax demand in 2024/25 (Table 16, Section 7.8 of the MTFS);
3. the sum of £1,151,630 be applied to Business Rates Collection Fund deficits in 2024/25 (Table 16, Section 7.8 of the MTFS);
4. that on 14 December 2023, the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the whole Council area as

23,479 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];

5. that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 is £4,759,193 (Appendix F and Appendix H of the MTF5);
6. the following amounts as calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a. £4,759,193 being the amount calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act);
 - b. £202.70 being the amount at 6 (a) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (at 4 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
7. the Council Tax level for the Borough Council for 2024/25 of £202.70 (an increase of £5.81 (2.95%) on the 2023/24 level of £196.89) at Band D;
8. an aggregate Council Tax (comprising the respective demands of the Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority) of £2,107.68 at Band D for 2024/25 be noted (£2,012.94 in 2023/24) (Appendix H of the MTF5);
9. the Council Tax levels at each band for 2024/25 (Appendix H of the MTF5);
10. the sum of £1,134,859 be transferred from General Fund Revenue Balances in 2024/25 (Appendix F of the MTF5);
11. the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25 (Appendix F of the MTF5);
12. the Provisional General Fund Budgets for 2025/26 to 2026/27, summarised at Appendix F of the MTF5, as the basis for future planning;
13. minimum level for balances of £500k to be held for each of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, General Capital Fund and Housing Capital Fund;
14. Cabinet be authorised to release funding from the General Contingency budget and that the release of funding for Specific Contingency items be Page 20 delegated to the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Leader of the Council;

15. proposed HRA Expenditure level of £18,674,610 for 2024/25 (Appendix J of the MTFS);
16. rents for Council House Tenants for 2024/25 be set at an average of £107.50 (2023/24 £99.66), over a 49 week rent year (including a 7.7% increase in line with the Government's updated Rent Standard for 2024/25);
17. rents for Council House Tenants due for 53 weeks in 2024/25 be collected over 49 weeks;
18. the HRA surplus of £1,053,800 be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account Balances in 2024/25 (Table 18, Section 8.8 of the MTFS);
19. the proposed 5 year General Fund Capital Programme of £6,120,580, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the MTFS;
20. the proposed 5 year Housing Capital Programme of £45,436,220, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the MTFS;
21. to delegate authority to Cabinet to approve/add new capital schemes to the capital programme where grant funding is received or there is no net additional cost to the Council;
22. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy and Annual Investment Statement 2024/25 (as detailed at Appendix 3);
23. the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27 contained within Appendix 3 to the MTFS;
24. the detailed criteria of the Investment Strategy 2024/25 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy; and
25. the Corporate Capital Strategy and associated Action Plan (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the MTFS).

(Moved on block by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor S Smith)

Named Vote

Named vote takes place in accordance with Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a recorded vote on decisions which approve the budget or set the council tax.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
C Adams	R Claymore	J Harper

M Bailey
C Bain
B Clarke
T Clements
G Coates
A Cooper
S Daniels
C Dean
S Doyle
T Jay
J Jones
D Maycock
B Price
R Pritchard
L Smith
S Smith
M Summers
P Turner
J Wade
L Wood

D Cook
P Thurgood

83 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider excluding the Press and Public from the meeting by passing the following resolution:-

“That in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meeting and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, and Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public”

At the time this agenda is published no representations have been received that this part of the meeting should be open to the public.

(Moved by Councillor B Price and seconded by Councillor C Clements)

84 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

Councillor J Oates arrived at 7:37pm

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Projects.

Resolved that Council

1. Approved the six recommendations in the report.

(Moved by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

The Mayor