



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL
HELD ON 14th DECEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor M Oates (Mayor), Councillors M J Greatorex, D Box, J Chesworth, R Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, M Cook, S Doyle, A Farrell, R Ford, S Goodall, J Harper, T Jay, D Maycock, K Norchi, J Oates, S People, Dr S People, R Pritchard, S Pritchard, R Rogers, M Summers and P Thurgood

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), Nicola Hesketh (Monitoring Officer) and Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager)

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Bailey, A Cooper and B Price

36 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor Dr. S People and seconded by Councillor J Oates)

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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

The Chief Executive Mr Andrew Barratt made the following announcement I just want to inform Council formally that on 2nd December I received the resignation with immediate effect from Mr Paul Brindley.

The Leader - Councillor Jeremy Oates made the following announcement It has been nearly 7 months since the Council AGM and I've worked with the Cabinet since then. During that time I have watched the Cabinet members working, listened to their interests and looked at the skills and what they bring to

the table. Also during that time a number of the projects and pieces of work we are doing as a Council have changed in terms of their stage and where we are at with those. With this in mind Mr Mayor I have made some changes to the Cabinet and the Cabinet's responsibilities, which will come in effect on 15th December 2021. A copy has been passed to the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Executive has been informed of the changes.

The Leader's portfolio there are some minor amendments which move Member and Democratic Services into that Portfolio and there is the removal of Corporate Risk from the leader and delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Risk & Customer Services. You will see Mr Mayor that Reset & Recovery now refers to all Cabinet Members being on the board and responsible for their relevant elements. I would also ask the Chief Executive to make the necessary amendments to the outside bodies list to reflect the portfolio changes.

Updated Portfolio Holder's

Leader of the Council	
Cllr Jeremy Oates	
Portfolio	A.D.
Business Continuity	AD Assets
Emergency Planning	A.D. Neighbourhoods
MTFS	A.D. Finance
Organisational Development inc HR & Payroll	A.D. People
PR / Comms / Corporate Consultation	A.D. People
Marketing	A.D. People
Member Development & Democratic Services	E.D. Organisation
Partnership Development	A.D. Partnerships
Corporate Assessments	C.E.O.
WMCA Member	A.D. Growth
Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's)	A.D. Growth
Performance	A.D. People
Lead for Climate change & Green Agenda	AD Growth
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
FHSF	AD Growth
Town Centre Regeneration	A.D. Growth
Town Centre Master-planning	A.D. Growth
Finance, Risk and Customer Services	
Cllr Marie Bailey	

Portfolio	A.D.
Property Management Investment	A.D. Assets
GF Repairs	A.D. Assets
Commercial Property Portfolio	A.D. Assets
Asset Management	A.D. Assets
Revenues & Benefits	A.D. Finance
Treasury Management	A.D. Finance
Finance	A.D. Finance
Procurement	A.D. Finance
Audit & Governance	C.E.O.
Corporate Risk Management	A.D. Finance
Land Charges/Legal/Right To Buy	E.D. Organisation
FHSF Finance and Risk - including seat on the FHSF board	AD Growth
Customer Services and insight	A.D. People
Information Mgt/GDPR/Ombudsman	A.D. People
Techology	A.D. People
Climate change & Green issues, ethical procurement	AD Growth
Corporate Risk Management	A.D. Finance
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
Voluntary sector, Town Centre, Evening economy & Community Safety	
Cllr Danny Cook	
Portfolio	A.D.
Town Centre Relationships	A.D. Growth
Evening economy	AD Growth
Electric vehicle strategy and wider provision	AD Growth
Voluntary Sector	A.D. Partnerships
Environmental Health (all disciplines)	AD Growth
Licensing Policy	AD Growth
Corporate Health & Safety	AD Ops & Leisure
Taxi Licensing	AD Growth
PCC Engagement	A.D. Partnerships
Community Safety	A.D. Partnerships
Corporate ASB Strategy	A.D. Neighbourhoods
Safeguarding	A.D. Partnerships
E H Enforcement	AD Growth

Community Wardens	AD Neighbourhoods
CCTV	AD neighbourhoods
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
Climate change & Green Agenda	AD Growth
Skills, Planning, Economy & Waste Cllr Stephen Doyle	
Portfolio	A.D.
Local Plan Development/Implementation	A.D. Growth
Development Control (Planning)	A.D. Growth
Building Control (Planning)	A.D. Growth
Conservation (planning)	A.D. Growth
Heritage Assets - maintenance, upkeep	A.D. Growth
Dry Recycling Disposal Contract	C.E.O
Waste Management	C.E.O
Joint Waste Board with LDC.	C.E.O
Economic & Business Development	A.D. Growth
General Regeneration opportunity	A.D. Growth
Education / Educational Attainment	A.D Growth
Career Skills and Training	A.D Growth
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
Climate change & Green Agenda	AD Growth
Environment, Entertainment and Leisure Cllr Robert Pritchard	
Portfolio	A.D.
TIC	A.D. Growth & A.D. People
Litter/Car parking Enforcement	A.D. Partnerships
Street Scene / Tamworth in Bloom	A.D. Op's & Leisure

Cemeteries	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Community Leisure / Sport	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Public Toilets	A.D. Assets
Nature Reserves, Parks and Play	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Entertainment - Assembly Rooms, Castle Operations, Outdoor events, Arts, Culture, Heritage experience, Street Markets	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Sports Development	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Tourism / Destination Tamworth	A.D. Growth
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
Town Centre Car Parks	A.D. Growth
HRA Green Spaces and Neighbourhoods	A.D. Op's & Leisure
Climate change & Green Agenda	AD Growth
Homelessness Prevention and Social Housing Cllr Alex Farrell	
Portfolio	A.D.
Chairman of Shadow Housing Committee	
HRA Repairs standards /performance	A.D. Assets
HRA Business Planning	ED Communities
HRA Regeneration	A.D. Assets
Tenant Regulation / enforcement	A.D. Neighbourhoods
HRA Community contribution	A.D. Neighbourhoods
Homelessness Prevention	A.D. Neighbourhoods
Private Rental Sector (including private sector enforcement)	A.D. Partnerships
HRA communal buildings	A.D. Assets
Social Landlord Providers	A.D. Neighbourhoods
HRA Strategy	A.D. Neighbourhoods

Disabled Facilities Grants and Disabled Facilities Adaptations	A.D. Assets
Reset and Recovery programme - Cabinet members form the board & responsible for each element	ED Communities
Climate change & Green Agenda	AD Growth

39 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 10. Mr Huw Loxton, of Tamworth will ask the Leader Of the Council, Councillor J Oates, the following question (in his absence the Chief Executive read the question out):-

In July 2020 the Audit and Governance Committee decided to proceed with the process to appoint up to two independent members to the said committee.

Could you please provide an update of what steps have been taken since then to appoint said independent members, what is currently being done, and the timescale for when those appointments will be made?

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

This question relates to the decisions of Audit and Governance committee which operates independently of the cabinet and so decision and process of recruitment of independent members sits with that committee. I will make the request of the chairman of that committee to write to Mr Loxton with an answer.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Dr. Simon People will ask the leader of the Council, Councillor Jeremy Oates, the following question:-

“As the GBSLEP’s latest report shows that unemployment in Tamworth is the highest amongst Staffordshire districts and rising; what is Tamworth Borough Council going to do to assist local people to find work.”

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply-

Whilst the report you refer to was accurate at the time the latest updated figures show unemployment is falling. Unemployment and universal credit claimant rates in Tamworth are dropping, with both being below West Midlands and Great Britain averages. Based on experience from the previous challenges. Tamworth traditionally has high levels of unemployment initially but recovers quickly. Indications seem to show this is the case currently, with Tamworth having the third best improvement in uc claimant numbers in Staffordshire based on October 2021 figures.

Unemployment: Tamworth currently estimated to be around 4.0% of economically active, WM 5.4%; GB 5.0%

Universal credit: Tamworth currently 4.5%, WM 5.9%, GB 4.8%
Dropped from 6% in October 2020 – approx. 700 people difference.

With regards assisting local people to find work, the Borough currently plays a significant coordinating role in ensuring partners with responsibility for this area of work are connected, in particular Job Centre plus; Employment Skills Board – both LEPs; agencies directly contracted with the Department of Work and Pensions.

Funded by the GBSLEP until end of March 2022 Tamworth Borough Council provide an officer to support the operation of the Southern Staffordshire Employment & Skills Board. This board comprises leading individuals from business, local authorities, education and training providers with a purpose of identifying skills and employment opportunities, ultimately aiming to reduce unemployment within our area.

The board joins up the relationships between employers, schools, colleges and all stakeholders involved in skills and employment throughout our area.

Playing a central role in this board, allows TBC to directly identify opportunities, connect opportunities for jobs and training to local businesses, build key relationships with stakeholders and get intelligence on local activity and employment trends.

The officer leading this project regularly passes on and promotes relevant employment / training opportunities to partners and businesses that lead to employment. They also attend the local Employment Action Group which brings together very localised stakeholders that focus purely on Tamworth.

Jobs 22 recently opened in Ankerside, as part of 3 year project to proactively support those furthest from the labour market back in to work. Through the TBC employed Skills Officer, the Council is able to actively promote this activity and support Jobs 22 with local intelligence and connections in order to make the most impact.

TBC are also part of the Mercia Park Employment Action Group for the Mercia Park development at Junction 11 of the M42 and through the Employment and Skills Board, they have promoted opportunities such as:

- a Recruitment Fair
- training opportunities that have been running at the site
- encouraging local schools and colleges to make use of free facilities so that local students can get a feel for what it's like to work on a construction site.

I appreciate you would not have previously been aware of the cabinet changes I have just made so I will re iterate. Skills now features in the Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste Portfolio with a direction to push the skills, especially NVQ level 3 equivalent for post 16's.

Councillor Dr S People asked the following supplementary question -

Would the Leader agree with me that if he wants to answer a question about what the council is going to do then it would be better to focus on that, would it also be better to focus on unemployment? The stats that I quoted were only a week and half old from their publication so I'm not sure how easy it is to know what else we can judge it by on this claimed drop in UC (Universal Credit) claimants which is a very different thing to whether people are back in work properly. So can I ask the Leader in future to ask officers of the Council what they can do, for example by increasing the amount of local value put into council contracts, which as not happened enough in the past we were told it was down to Europe and now it isn't so can you pick up on that and other methods for finding the best possible routes for giving people work experience because one of the biggest hurdles is that they haven't got work experience to demonstrate and the council could do more to do that so I ask him to arrange to see me to discuss those ideas.

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply-

As Councillor People knows I am happy to meet him and discuss matters. The figures I refer to are actually dated on the 13th so these are figures that came out yesterday so that is the latest update.

In terms of what we can do directly as a council and local value, Council People refers to the procurement rules that we operated with particularly when we were part of Europe. Members will be aware that the Future High Street fund project does have a number of targets in there for local value in terms of tendering and in terms of the construction part of the project that the local value does appear in those terms and in that offer, so we have listened and we have built that in to that particular project, I am more than happy to meet Cllr People and we can have that discussion.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 2

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Dr. Simon People will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeremy Oates, the following question:-

Following his announcement today (Thursday), that Tamworth Borough Council is supporting the bid for a County Deal for Staffordshire, would the Leader of the

Council explain to members what evidence he has that this will enhance the delivery of services for Tamworth residents?"

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply-

Thank you Councillor Peale for your question on this exciting matter.

This is not just about delivery of services this is about tackling wider maybe even national issues that affect Tamworth.

This County Deal is in its very early stages but is about Collaboration. We have a track record to prove how we already work well together.

- Covid-19– our unified response along with community groups protected the most vulnerable and supported those in need locally, Notable successes include supplying food to the most vulnerable in our communities, PPE support to care providers, targeted action in hotspot areas, from vaccinations in mosques, to testing migrant workers on fruit farms

- Creating jobs and opportunities –Supporting businesses and our economy to recover from Covid, through a countywide package of support– Staffordshire Means Back to Business.

- Town Centre regeneration –reimagining and reshaping our High Streets and Town Centres through the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund.

- Waste – we can proudly boast zero waste to landfill in Staffordshire thanks to our strong Waste Partnership. The Partnership has led local efforts to reduce waste, and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling. It has also, through joint procurement exercises, produced significant efficiencies and economies of scale across Staffordshire.

This track record, and the solid foundations in place across our two-tier system, mean Staffordshire is perfectly positioned to turn central government’s Levelling Up agenda into reality.

If I may Mr Mayor I would like to add a couple of points.

This deal is about keeping our two tier structure, building an argument against and blocking an unitary suggestion, whilst keeping sovereignty of our decisions at Tamworth, this is about additionality with a unified offer to call upon government and draw down extra powers and funding as the levelling up white paper and devolution white paper (sometime next year). The additional areas we would like to target are

Staffordshire County Deal – Proposed Focus

We believe a County Deal should not be a one-off bid, but the start of a new, ongoing dialogue with central government, that builds on Staffordshire’s strengths, and addresses national challenges at a local level. We believe a County Deal will accelerate our ambitious programme, improve public services and deliver excellent returns for both the people of Staffordshire and the UK. We are proposing that we focus our County Deal on the following priorities:

- Climate Change – The UK has set its ambition as an international leader in Climate Change; with further powers and funding, we can accelerate our plans, and place Staffordshire as a leading location for the green economy.

- Social Care Workforce – Nationally and locally, we are facing a crisis in recruiting and retaining social care staff. We want to use devolved powers and

funding to help us produce an exemplar, in order to recruit, develop and retain more staff, improve care and ease pressure on the NHS.

- Logistics – UK supply chains are fragile and disjointed. Our central location, excellent transport links, and existing strengths in the sector, means we are already a national centre for logistics, but we believe this sector can offer more to our local and national economy. Bringing all of the instruments at our disposal to bear, along with devolved powers and funding, will allow us to further grow develop the sector and support our logistics sector to be innovative, cleaner, greener and higher value.

Key powers we are seeking from central government, to allow us to achieve the above, include:

- Access to a single, devolved investment fund for growth, that is managed and delivered locally
- Devolved powers and funding for the post 16 skills agenda
- Responsibility for a single devolved transport budget, and powers to develop an integrated transport network

Councillor Dr S People asked the following supplementary question -

Can I thank the Leader for his detailed response. Councillor Jeremy Oates and I share the view that a two tier well worked system is actually the right one and I wanted the council as a whole to hear what the issues are about. Would he therefore take back to the Leaders meeting that Tamworth and the other borough's/districts will be keeping a close eye on what this means because what we want is real opportunities to deliver more for the local people as we so eloquently spoke about earlier on and in particular I am keen to see that the skills agenda that's been devolved to mayoral authorities will also get devolved here and therefore give us the chance to address the needs of local people not on some one size fits all basis but on the basis of local need and I have asked the leader to take those points back as this will be debate that goes on longer than tonight but I wanted the issues out there. So can I thank the Leader and ask him to take those points there.

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply-

Thank you Mr Mayor whilst I welcome the progress and discussions on the County Deal I am always the first to jump up at the Leaders and Chief Executive meeting if I am not happy with something or if I feel there is a suggestion that this would take anything away from us as a Borough Council in Tamworth or any of the other Districts. Yes I am more than happy to feedback particularly as Councillor People as asked me these questions in public and therefore it's not just about the Leaders in the room it's about the rest of the Council's and other elected members keeping an eye on things and making that challenge.

In reference to the specific point around skills there a number of priorities that the County Deal focusses on Climate change, Social Care workforce and Logistics but the key powers from Government that we are currently seeking is to allow us access to devolved investment funds for growth, devolved powers for funding for post 16 skills and this is the one that Councillor People raised. This is for us is about being able to behave and compete on an even keel with elected Mayors

and MET's and those who have devolved powers. The other responsibility that we are particularly pushing for in terms of seeking powers is the responsibility for single devolved transport budget and powers to develop integrated transport networks. The whole thing for us is about having a Staffordshire County and District offer that rivals the Manchester's, Birmingham's of the world in terms of the powers that they have available to them and we believe we should have those powers available to us rather than Whitehall making the decisions and telling us how transport should work in Staffordshire

40 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2021/22

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services to present to Members the Mid-year Review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy.

RESOLVED: That Council

approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2021/22.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

Council congratulated the Officers for compiling the report.

41 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2022/23

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services to advise members that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age customers for 2022/23 should include continued alignment to Applicable Amounts with those of Housing Benefit.

RESOLVED That Council

1. considered and endorsed the proposed recommended changes detailed below
2. That the planned review for the introduction of a banding scheme for Council Tax Reduction be deferred until 2022 and that the current scheme for working age customers continues to be aligned to Applicable Amounts with those of Housing Benefit for 2022/23.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor T Jay)

42 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR - RE: ACCOUNTS COMMENCING 2023/2024

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services to advise Members of the options, process and legislative requirement to appoint External Auditors for the Accounting Periods from 2023/24 and to seek Member endorsement of the recommended option for Council approval.

RESOLVED: That Council

1. agreed that the Authority opts into the appointing person arrangements made by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors, and
2. Endorsed the Executive Director Finance confirms our interest in undertaking the opt in process following ratification by Council and has delegated powers in relation to the appointment process.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor S Pritchard)

43 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 2 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 J Oates and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

44 NOMINATION FOR FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH

Report of the Chairman of the Nominations and Grants Committee to consider the Nomination received, considered and supported by the Nominations and Grants Committee.

RESOLVED That Council

1. Considered the recommendation from the Nominations and Grants Committee; and
2. Agreed to confer the Title of Freeman of the Borough to Marc Albrighton

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

The Mayor

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