

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet Decisions

Tuesday, 1st December 2015

PRESENT: Councillor S.E. Ralphs (Chair)
Councillors, M. Bowen, A.S. Forrester and D.A. Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillors Johnson and Wain

29. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER 2015**

The Minutes of the above Meeting were approved.

30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

31. **FORWARD PLAN**

DECISION: That the Forward Plan for the period November 2015 to January 2016 be approved for publication.

32. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE & FINANCIAL REVIEW 2015/16**

The report informed members of the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 30th September 2015 ("Second Quarter 2015/16"); and sought to agree a set of actions to address the issues identified in the report. The position can be summarised as follows:

Subject	Headline	Reference
Performance	<p>The performance headlines for the Fourth Quarter were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 69% of the key performance indicators were 'on track' to meet their target;• Of the 18 Priority Actions within the Corporate Plan, three were rated 'Amber', the remainder being classified as 'Green'; and• The Council received 70 complaints, 66 comments and 54 compliments in the First Quarter. 91% of complaints were responded to within 10 Days with 65% satisfaction with the way complaints were handled.	Appendix A

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Subject	Headline	Reference
General Fund	<p>The General Fund budget for 2015/16 was projected to under spend by £399,520</p> <p>The overall efficiency target was £970,740 for 2015/16, together with the £90,920 of unachieved savings rolled forward from 2014/15. At this stage, it was anticipated that there would be a draw on the earmarked reserve set up specifically to offset some of the one-off and short term costs arising out of the Efficiency Programme.</p>	Appendix B Sections 2 and 3
Capital Programme	<p>The Capital Programme budget for 2015/16 was £9.178million following the carry forward of capital underspends from 2014/15.</p> <p>The projected outturn was £2,578,040 which represented an underspend of £6,599,670 (the majority relating to a £6 million drawdown of the Ascent loan – which was not likely to be required during 2015/16).</p>	Appendix B Section 4 and Annex A
Treasury Management	<p>Cash investments held at 30th September 2015 totalled £11.4 million.</p> <p>The Ascent loan and debenture currently stood at £14 million.</p> <p>Council borrowing at 30th September 2015 totalled £16 million (£14 million of which relates to the Ascent loan)</p> <p>The Council's net interest receipts budget was projected to be exceeded by £133,720 at the Second Quarter stage.</p>	Appendix B Section 5
Revenue Collection	<p>57.2% of Council Tax due for 2015/16 was collected by 30th September 2015 compared to 57.3% at the same stage in 2014/15.</p> <p>55.8% of Business Rates due for 2015/16 was collected by 30th September 2015 compared to 58.7 % at the same stage in 2014/15 (expected to equalise over the remainder of the year)</p> <p>At 30th September 2015 the value of sundry debt over 60 days old was £301,470</p>	Appendix B Section 6
Creditor Payments	<p>The Council paid 94.04% of its invoices within 30 days during the year, with 73.99% paid within 10 days.</p>	Appendix B Section 7

Options Considered:

Detailed analysis was contained within the main body of the report.

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- DECISION:**
- (a) That the Second Quarter 2015/16 performance and financial position detailed in Appendices A and B and summarised at 3.3 of the covering report be noted.
 - (b) That the updated position against the approved Action Plan for the First Quarter (Appendix C) be noted.
 - (c) That the actions detailed in Appendix D which had been identified to address the performance and financial issues highlighted in the report be noted.
 - (d) That the proposed write-off of debts as set out in Appendix E be noted.

33. UPDATED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2018/19

The Cabinet received a report with regards to the Council's updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP placed the Council's priorities in the context of the likely resources available, providing a financial context to future decision making.

Options Considered:

The report was a statement of fact. As such there were no options to consider.

- DECISION:** That the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (Appendix A) be endorsed and that it should proceed to Council for approval.

34. UPDATE ON POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF NORTHERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT ZONE (NGDZ) AND ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP

The report appraised members of a rapidly emerging discussion among the Local Enterprise Partnership and the local authorities representing areas in North Staffordshire and Cheshire about the potential opportunity to establish a high-growth development zone predicated on HS2 investment in the area supported by a form of economic partnership.

Options Considered:

- 1 Option 1 – to not engage with the emerging NGDZ partnership. This option was not considered a preferred option. The NGDZ proposal presented potential opportunities for infrastructure improvements in Staffordshire Moorlands that were worth exploring in detail. Not being part of the NGDZ partnership could leave the Council isolated and we may lose out on any future opportunities for infrastructure development within the district. Not recommended
- 2 Option 2 – to engage with the emerging NGDZ partnership. Provided that the Council's representatives operate within existing policy parameters then it was better to be a partner at this stage to help in

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shaping of any Growth Strategy and programme / project delivery formulation. There was no formal commitment required from SMDC at this stage to be part of a 'deal'. Recognising the potential benefits for the district, it was better to continue a dialogue with the NGDZ partnership without prejudicing the SMDC policy position on growth and housing. Recommended

- DECISION:**
- (a) That the report and the actions undertaken so far be noted.
 - (b) That the signing of a concordat by the LEP of Stoke and Staffordshire as well as Cheshire and Warrington be noted.
 - (c) That the Leader of the Council and relevant officers be authorised to continue discussions regarding the Northern Gateway Development Zone (NGDZ) initiative and the potential partnership that may arise.
 - (d) That officers report back on the progress of this initiative at appropriate times.

35. **PROPOSAL FOR A COMMERCIAL RECYCLING SERVICE**

The reported advised the Cabinet of the proposal for a commercial recycling service, following the revised Waste Framework Directive (rWFD) compliance assessment previously undertaken, which identified the need to introduce a recycling service for commercial premises of the four target materials.

Options Considered:

Detailed analysis was contained within the main body of the report.

- DECISION:** That the introduction of a chargeable commercial recycling service for the Moorlands as detailed within the report be approved.

36. **SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME**

The report updated Cabinet on the Council's contribution to the national programme for the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

Options Considered:

Participation in the resettlement programme was voluntary although Home Office officials had suggested that mandatory quotas could be set in the event there were not enough places available nationally. It would therefore be

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possible for the Council not to participate, taking the risk that a quota could be imposed at a later date.

DECISION: That the content of the report be noted and the steps outlined in the report to assist with the resettlement of up to five family households of refugees within Staffordshire Moorlands be approved.

37. COUNCILLORS' COMMUNITY INITIATIVE FUND UPDATE

The report provided an update on the year's operation of the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund and proposed an amendment to the criteria designed to provide Councillors with greater flexibility in the use of the Fund.

Options Considered:

1. That Members note the report and support the piloting of the proposed additional CCIF criteria (Recommended).
2. That Members do not support the piloting of additional CCIF criteria.

DECISION:

- (a) That the spend to date on the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund be noted.
- (b) That the proposal to add an additional criteria to the purposes to which the fund can be put – as set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.5 of the report be approved.

38. LOCAL PLAN - CONSULTATION UPDATE AND REVISED TIMETABLE

The report provided an update to the site options consultation held between 6th July and 14th September 2015 and a revised timetable to allow additional time to respond to comments.

Options Considered:

Option 1 – Agree the timetable

Recommended – Agreeing the timetable would allow officers to deal properly with the significant amount of representations received to the consultation and respond to any issues raised. It would also allow Councillors adequate time to consider the detail of each site.

Option 2 – Do not agree the timetable.

Not recommended – If the Council decided not to make changes to the timetable this may not give enough time for issues raised at this stage to be adequately considered before the Preferred Options stage. This could result in

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inadequate consideration of the views expressed by respondents and increase the risk of the Local Plan being found unsound, or delayed as rounds of consultation may need to be repeated at a later stage.

- DECISION:**
- (a) That the consultation update be noted.
 - (b) That the timetable for the Local Plan (Appendix A) be approved.

39. PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS AT OAKAMoor AND RUDYARD, CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND INTRODUCTION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

It was proposed to designate Oakamoor and Rudyard as Conservation Areas. Boundaries had been prepared together with Conservation Area Appraisals. These documents required Cabinet Member approval in order to engage in public consultation. It was also proposed to consult on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to dwellings within these proposed Conservation Areas to control certain categories of permitted development which would continue to harm the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, if adopted.

Options Considered:

1. The measures covered by the recommendations of the report were all linked and the options for the Council were:
 - (a) To consult on the designation of Oakamoor and Rudyard as Conservation Areas, adopting the accompanying character appraisals and the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. Consultation on this option would offer the greatest protection to the character and appearance of these historic settlements and is in line with best conservation practice.
 - (b) To consult on the designation of Oakamoor and Rudyard as Conservation Areas and adopt the accompanying character appraisals but leave the planning controls as they were. Consultation on this option would allow the significance of the settlements' heritage to be recognised and for planning applications to have regard to the character and appearance of the areas but it would leave the Council limited as to what it could protect against minor alterations to dwellings.
2. Given that the principle of the designation of conservation areas at Rudyard and Oakamoor in order to preserve and enhance their special character had already been agreed in the Churnet Valley Masterplan, officers were recommending that Option (a) above was accepted. This would give greater protection to the two areas by increasing the ability of the Council to manage and control changes to the appearance of dwellings which make up the majority of buildings within both Rudyard and Oakamoor.

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- DECISION:**
- (a) That the draft Conservation Area boundaries for Oakamoor and Rudyard for the purposes of consultation with the public be approved.
 - (b) That the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Oakamoor and Rudyard for the purposes of consultation with the public be approved.
 - (c) That the proposal to consult on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction affecting dwellings in Oakamoor and Rudyard be agreed so as to remove the classes of permitted development as set out in Appendix E of this report.

40. **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DESIGN GUIDE – DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Cabinet considered a draft Design Guide that had been completed for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The document required Cabinet Member approval in order to engage in public consultation.

Options Considered:

Detailed analysis was contained within the main body of the report.

DECISION: That the draft Design Guide for the purposes of public consultation be approved.

41. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

_____ Chair _____ Date

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SUMMARY OF EXEMPT ITEM

42. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE & FINANCIAL REVIEW 2015/16 – APPENDIX E - WRITE OFF OF NON- RECOVERABLE DEBTS**
(Paragraph 7 - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.)

The Cabinet noted the proposed write-off of debts as set out in Appendix E of the report.