

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **CABINET DECISIONS**

**TUESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor P Roberts (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, M Deaville, K Flunder and R Ward

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor L Swindlehurst

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Porter, S Scalise and M Worthington

43 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED)**

**DECISION:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

44 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY**

The following declarations of interest was made:

| <b>Agenda Item</b>  | <b>Member Declaring Interest</b>        | <b>Nature of Interest</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Agenda Item 8.3<br>Checkley Neighbourhood<br>Development Plan -<br>Regulation 15 Submission | Cllr. K Flunder<br><br>Cllr. M Deaville | Other Interest – Chair of<br>Neighbourhood Plan<br>Committee<br>Other Interest – Local<br>businessman |

45 **FORWARD PLAN**

**DECISION:**

That the Forward Plan be approved for publication.

46 **DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

The report notified Councillors of the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and plans for public consultation. Feedback on the document and plans for consultation was also sought. The report was considered by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 January 2023.

Options considered:

As detailed in the main body of the report.

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### **DECISION:**

1. That the findings of the consultation report and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report be noted.
2. That the Supplementary Planning Document and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report be approved for public consultation for a period of four weeks in May/June 2023.
3. That the Head of Planning be authorised, in association with the Leader of the Council, to correct any spelling, grammatical, typological or factual errors in the SPD or SEA Screening Report.

### 47 **CHECKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - REGULATION 15 SUBMISSION**

The report considered the Draft (Regulation 15) version of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan to determine whether it had followed the proper legal process and that the legal requirements for consultation had been followed.

Options considered:

Where the draft Neighbourhood Plan submitted to the local planning authority meets the requirements in the legislation, the authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of six weeks, invite representations, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft Neighbourhood plan to independent examination. The local planning has to consider the submission documents and conclude whether the proper process has been followed and the legal requirements for pre-submission consultation have been carried out.

If the local planning authority concludes that this has been done, they are required to launch the Regulation 16 consultation on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan group/forum. There is not an alternative, unless the process had not been followed correctly. If this were the case, then the local planning authority would advise those preparing the Neighbourhood Plan that the requirements have not been met and that they would need to remedy this and resubmit.

### **DECISION:**

1. That the Draft Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan be approved for public consultation for a six week period (Regulation 16).
2. That the commencement of the appointment of an Examiner be approved to prepare and organise the independent examination.

### 48 **CLIMATE CHANGE SIX MONTHLY UPDATE**

The report was withdrawn and would be presented to a future meeting.

49 **EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY UPDATE**

The report advised the Cabinet of progress in relation to the Empty Property Strategy. The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 February 2023.

Options considered:

Option 1- Proceed with the recommendations to approve the Empty Property Working Group Action Plan (Appendix B) and additional staff resource and capacity (Empty Homes Officer) – Recommended

Option 2- Not to proceed with the recommendation – not recommended. The Action Plan focused activity and without a dedicated resource the council lacked the capacity to support owners of empty homes and bring homes back into use.

**DECISION:**

1. That the contents of the report be noted and the Action Plan (Appendix B), Enforced Sales Policy (Appendix C) and additional staff resource and capacity (Empty Homes Officer) be approved.

**RECOMMENDED:**

2. That the removal of the discount for empty and unoccupied properties s7.3.3 and the removal of the uninhabitable discount s7.3.4 be recommended to Council for approval.
3. That the Council Tax premium on second homes outlined s7.3.9 and the empty property premium for properties that have remained empty for 1 year s7.3.10 be recommended to Council for adoption.

50 **EV CHARGE STRATEGY**

The report presented the newly drafted Electric Vehicle Charge Point (EVCP) Strategy to members and provided an update on the delivery plan and progress to date. The report was considered by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 January 2023.

Options considered:

Option 1: To approve the strategy as set out in appendix 1. Recommended. Adoption of the strategy would allow for the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report.

Option 2: Not to approve the strategy would prevent the delivery and roll out of EVCPs across the District. Not Recommended.

**DECISION:**

1. That Cabinet the adoption of the strategy be approved.
2. That the delivery plan be approved.

51 **REVISED LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

Following the approval to implement a banding scheme by The Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the purpose of the report was to provide an update to sections 6.3, 7.18, 7.19 (m) and to recommend Full Council approves the implementation of a revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 February 2023.

Options considered:

The alternative to introducing a new scheme for Council Tax Reduction from 2023/24 was to leave the existing scheme in place. This would be a short-term option; lead to continuation of increasing costs of administration; and in the longer term, significantly affect the collection of Council Tax and the effectiveness of the scheme to support households within the Council's area. If the existing scheme remained, our proposal would be to remove the calculation letter that accompanies the bill and set a monetary limit on the changes to Universal Credit reported by the DWP, so that there were fewer changes to Local Council Tax Reduction. In addition, we would allow using the amount of Income advised by DWP without any adjustment, in order to aid automation and increase the allowable time for backdating where good cause was shown to 6 months.

**RECCOMENDED:**

The Council is asked to approve the amendments in section 7.18, 7.19 (m) and the introduction of a new income banded / grid scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, to increase the overall level of support for the lowest income families and reduce the administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit.

52 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FUND 2023-24**

The purpose of the report was to advise the Cabinet of the details surrounding the Council Tax Support Fund Scheme 2023-24 announced by Government in December 2022. The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 February 2023.

Options considered:

There were no other reasonable options given the tight parameters and small amounts of money.

**DECISION:**

That the award of up to £25.00 to reduce council tax bills for vulnerable households on Local Council Tax Support (LCTS ) s7.1 and to direct the remaining funding during 2023-24 in line with the proposal at s8.1 be approved.

53 **THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2022/23**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> December ("Third Quarter 2022/23").

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The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 February 2023.

Options considered:

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

### **DECISION:**

That the Third Quarter 2022/23 financial, procurement and performance position detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at 3.3 of the covering report be noted.

### 54 **2023/24 BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2026/27**

The purpose of the report was to present the proposed Budget for 2023/24, updated Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27, Capital Strategy 2023/24, proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24 and Procurement Forward Plan 2023/24. The report was considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 February 2023.

Options considered:

The report recommended a Council Tax level and associated budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy (and future capital programme) and Fees & Charges for 2023/24 designed to best deliver the Council's corporate priorities within a balanced budget. Other options were feasible, but any alternatives would need to robustly identify the service and financial implications, in order to satisfy the Council's Section 151 Officer (under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, section 114) of the need to deliver a balanced budget.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

That Cabinet makes the following **recommendations** to Council:

- Approves the General Fund Budget for 2023/24 as detailed in **Appendix A (section 9)**
- Approves the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan (2023/24 to 2026/27) as detailed in **Appendix A**, including the revised Capital Programme (attached at Annex A)
- Approves the Capital Strategy 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix B**
- Approves the proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24 as detailed in **Appendix C**
- Approves the proposed Procurement Forward Plan for 2023/24, providing the authority to procure based on procurement activity detailed in **Appendix D**
- Approves a Band D Council Tax of £163.14 for 2023/24 (0% change from 2022/23)
- Approves a Band D Council Tax of £52.92 for Leek and £10.64 for Biddulph for 2023/24 (0% change 2022/23) in respect of Special District Expenses

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- Notes the Chief Finance Officer's view that the level of reserves are adequate for the Council based on this budget and the circumstances in place at the time of preparing it (**Appendix A, Annex C**)

### 55 **TOURISM STRATEGY**

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the development of the Tourism Strategy and action plan for tourism delivery in the Staffordshire Moorlands over the next five years. The report was considered by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 January 2023.

Options considered:

To reject the draft Tourism Strategy.

This was not considered the preferred option. Baseline data and consultation provides evidence to suggest that the Staffordshire Moorlands lacks destination brand awareness. A long-term strategic vision was required and a framework for service delivery to aid economic recovery following Covid and more recently with the Cost of Living Crisis. Not recommended

Approve draft Tourism Strategy.

Under this scenario, the Council would acknowledge the Baseline data findings to date and approve the proposed Tourism Strategy and action plan for the next five years, this would support and align with the work of DMO's and reflect and build upon the work already achieved. The main aim being to develop the Staffordshire Moorlands as a destination and a brand. Promote the area nationally and internationally and deliver long term sustainable growth in the value of Staffordshire Moorlands' visitor economy. Recommended

#### **DECISION:**

1. That the Tourism Strategy be approved.
2. That the actions taken for the effective delivery of this Strategy be noted.

### 56 **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.

57 **LEISURE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND OPERATING MODEL PROPOSALS**

The Cabinet approved a report that outlined the progress made in developing a transformational plan for the Council's Leisure Centres, including capital investment proposals and review of the future operating model for these facilities.

The meeting closed at 11.31 am