

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **CABINET DECISIONS**

**TUESDAY, 29 JUNE 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor S E Ralphs MBE (Chair) - via video link)

Councillors M Bowen, M A Deaville, T Hall, A Hart, J Porter,  
S Scalise and E Wain

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

**DECISION:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY**

There were no declarations made.

3 **FORWARD PLAN**

**DECISION:**

That the Forward Plan be approved for publication.

4 **LEEK MILLS MASTERPLAN APPRAISAL**

The purpose of the report was to set out a revised approach to addressing the longstanding issue of vacant and under-used mills in Leek.

Options considered:

The options were:

Do nothing – the Mills are in private ownership and their maintenance is the responsibility of the owners and development could come forward with no Council input other than planning support. However, if left to commercially led investors, there was a risk that they might not recognise potential re-development options in Leek and could also miss opportunities for gap funding which may help deliver objectives. A do-nothing approach would therefore maintain status quo and could result in missed opportunities to expedite re-development and/or dereliction of buildings which form a key part of Leek's built heritage. NOT RECOMMENDED

Do Stage 1 Demand analysis and options appraisal. This would help inform Council members and investors on viable options and help re-commence a dialogue with owners and other funding parties regarding the proposed next steps for these buildings. It would be a discreet relatively low-cost piece of work which can be managed alongside works to support Covid economic recovery plan.

RECOMMENDED

**DECISION:**

1. That the approach identified in the report to help support regeneration of empty or under-used buildings be approved.
2. That a financial contribution of £30,000 to appoint consultants to deliver a commercial demand analysis and options appraisal to understand potential future uses, viability of proposals and identify barriers to re-development be approved.
3. That the development of a Community Renewal funding bid as part of a Peak District wide project to assess opportunities for redundant and underused heritage buildings to be used for commercial uses to help provide workspaces and stimulate the economy be noted. If successful, the grant would complement and increase funding available to support Leek Mill demand assessment.

**5 LEEK MARKET HALL UPDATE**

The purpose of the report was to set out the findings of the Leek Market Hall Options Appraisal progress, undertaken by Quarterbridge Market Consultants and sought authority to commence the full business case for capital investments to improve the facilities and establish permanent retail, food and beverage units in Leek Market Hall.

Options considered:

Do Nothing - Under this scenario, the Council could acknowledge feasibility report's findings and note that no identified options are unlikely to cover the cost of refurbishment and close project. Not recommended

Undertake Full Business case - Under this scenario, the Council would acknowledge feasibility report's findings to date and undertaken appropriate additional works to build a full business case for works so that wider factors can be considered alongside a more detailed understanding of refurbishment costs and longer term management overheads. Recommended

**DECISION:**

1. That the findings on the public consultation exercise and preferred options for future investment be noted.
2. Preparation of a full business case to inform the delivery of capital investment to Leek Market Hall for the purposes of improving facilities to support the establishment of permanent units for retail, food and beverage uses be approved.
3. That a further report to Cabinet on the full business case and the proposals for capital investment be required.

**6 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The purpose of the report was to re-appoint a representative of the Council to the Cheadle Arts Forum and the Cheadle and District Sports Council.

Options considered:

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The Cabinet could consider other councillors to be the Council's representative for this appointment.

### **DECISION:**

That the appointment of Councillor Ellis to the Cheadle Arts Forum and the Cheadle and District Sports Council be approved.

## **7 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION**

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval for the appointment of an elected member to the role of Member Development Champion to lead the Council's Member Development Working Group.

Options considered:

The Cabinet was recommended to select an elected member to the position of Member Development Champion.

### **DECISION:**

That Cabinet Cllr D. Shaw be appointed to the role of Member Development Champion.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN (PART 1)**

The report presented the Council's 2021/22 Climate Change Plan (Part 1) 'Towards Carbon Neutrality 2030'. The report was considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 21 June 2021 which made suggestions for inclusion in the plan together with feedback received from the UK 100 Countryside Climate Network and a Senior Policy Advisor from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

A number of amendments were proposed that included reference to:

- The need for adaptation and resilience to climate change, specifically a 5 yearly adaptation programme and the importance of adapting and resilience to be considered when managing and responding to climate change risks.
- The latest Climate Change Committee report to Parliament issued 26 June 2021
- The Council's approach to offsetting with particular consideration to local schemes.
- Additional data to be added with regards to transport emissions for 2018
- Promotion of use of bike racks for council staff
- That the proposed measures have wide co-benefits such as improved health, improved air quality, addressing fuel poverty and new economic development opportunities.

Options considered:

1. To approve the Climate Change Plan (Part 1).
2. To amend or delay approval of the draft Climate Change Plan (Part 1) pending further development (Not recommended – by its nature the Plan needs to be

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dynamic with further actions to be developed and included as more analysis is completed and in response to opportunities such as may arise from new Government policy initiatives).

### **DECISION:**

To approve the 2021/22 Climate Change Plan (Part 1) subject to the suggestions made on the draft plan at the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 and feedback received from external expert agencies as referred to above.

### 9 **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW AND REFRESHED COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY**

The District Council was required by statute to work in partnership with other listed organisations to tackle community safety problems in Staffordshire Moorlands. The Council's corporate plan committed the Council to 'Review the Council's community safety arrangements in order to maintain strong partnerships with community groups'. This report supports the delivery of that commitment. The report was considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 21 June 2021.

Options considered:

There were none identified.

### **DECISION:**

That the Community Safety Partnership's strategy and plan; and the contributions that the Council makes towards community safety be noted.

### 10 **CHEADLE TO CRESSWELL DISUSED RAILWAY – POTENTIAL ASSET TRANSFER**

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet authority to begin the process of Asset Transfer of the Cheadle to Cresswell Disused Railway line from the Department for Transport to the ownership of Staffordshire Moorland District Council. The report set out the due diligence process that needed to be undertaken which would identify the costs of the asset transfer, the liabilities and potential revenue implication of ownership and maintenance, and the legal obligations the Council would become responsible for, including managing existing leasehold agreements.

Following the conclusion of the due diligence process a further Cabinet report would be prepared setting out these conclusions for the Cabinet to decide whether or not to proceed with the Asset Transfer.

Options considered:

Option 1 (Recommended) - To proceed with the government's Protocol For Transfer of Assets. This was required if the Council wanted to own the railway, however undertaking the due diligence steps under the protocol do not commit the Council to that decision but do guarantee that a fair price for the asset will have been identified as well as the future costs and liabilities of ownership. However the due diligence process would mean the Council incurs costs of the process.

Option 2 (not recommended) – To not proceed with the government’s Protocol For Transfer of Assets the Council would not be in position to decide whether to own the railway or not. However, the due diligence costs associated with the Protocol would be avoided.

**DECISION:**

1. That the Council engages with the Department for Transport to assess the potential transfer of the Cheadle to Cresswell disused railway line to the ownership of Staffordshire Moorland District Council, to undertake all necessary legal, financial and technical assessments to understand the full costs, legal liabilities and ongoing maintenance liabilities associated with any potential Council ownership of the disused railway.
2. That a further Cabinet report be prepared on the results of the due diligence process and recommendations on whether to proceed with the Asset Transfer.

11 **BIDDULPH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER**

To consider and approve the draft Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order for consultation purposes.

Options considered:

Option 1 (recommended) – that the recommendations outlined in Section 2 of the report are supported.

Option 2 (not recommended) - to find that the proposals do not comply with the requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order and thus to recommend that the plan is not taken forward for publication and examination. If Councillors were minded to refuse the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Order, the authority is required to notify the Town Council of the reasons for the refusal and to publicise its decision. The report concluded that the requirements have been met to enable the documents to be published for consultation.

**DECISION:**

1. That the proposals set out in the draft Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan, Neighbourhood Development Order and supporting documents be noted.
2. That the publication of the Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order for consultation purposes be approved.
3. That the Head of Development Services be approved to appoint an independent examiner in consultation with Biddulph Town Council.
4. That the process and estimated timescales for taking the documents forward in line with the regulations be noted.

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The meeting closed at 3.46 pm

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman