

Chair - Councillor J Hood

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

C A Barron	A P Edgeller
R J Barron	A D Hobbs
A R G Brown	R M Sutherland
A G Cooper	M J Winnington

Cabinet Member - Councillor J M Pert - Community and Health Portfolio  
Cabinet Member - Councillor C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

Mr R Simpson	-	Head of Operations
Mrs E Fullagar	-	Chief Accountant
Dr T Redpath	-	Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager
Mrs A Nevin	-	Health and Housing Manager
Mr R Wolfe	-	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Mr J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer
Mr A Bailey	-	Scrutiny Officer

**CWB64 Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 November 2020, as published in Digest No 271, were submitted and signed.

**CWB65 Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J K Price (Environment Portfolio).

**CWB66 Members' Item**

Councillor L Nixon has submitted the following items under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

"I would like to ask the Committee to regularly look into all aspects of Safeguarding within our Borough. I fully understand the County Council have the lead role in this area but I believe Stafford Borough Council has a major role to play.

I would like to request a Task and Finish review to look into the role of SBC in the many aspects of Safeguarding within our area.

This is an extremely important issue and needs to be monitored and commented on by this Committee on a regular basis”.

The Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio) provided the following response to the Members’ Item:-

- Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 placed duties upon Local Authorities and their partners to co-operate, to make arrangements and to ensure that they improved and safeguarded the welfare of all children
- The Council’s Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse or Neglect Protection Policy provides a huge range of detail with regards to the role and responsibility of the Council, which could be obtained from:  
[https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cme/DocMan1/Policy%20and%20Plans/Safeguarding\\_Children\\_and\\_Adults\\_at\\_Risk\\_of\\_Abuse\\_and\\_Neglect\\_Policy\\_and\\_Procedures\\_0.pdf](https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cme/DocMan1/Policy%20and%20Plans/Safeguarding_Children_and_Adults_at_Risk_of_Abuse_and_Neglect_Policy_and_Procedures_0.pdf)
- The Council’s webpages <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/safeguarding-children-and-vulnerable-adults> contained additional detailed information around our responsibilities, points of contact, safeguarding boards and partnerships, serious case reviews etc.
- The work on safeguarding was broad and covered a range of issues such as:
  - Safeguarding children and adults
  - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
  - Child Sexual Exploitation
  - Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
  - Prevent
  - Hidden Harm
  - Domestic and Sexual Abuse
  - Criminal Exploitation
- There were partnership boards in place which officers attended on a regular basis and any issues arising for Stafford Borough were dealt with at multi-agency case conferences, multi-agency risk assessment conferences or the vulnerabilities HUB.
- There were three Designated Safeguarding Officers in place for Council
- The work on safeguarding for the council was already subject to internal and external audit and a key element of the Council’s governance arrangements also concerns safeguarding
- Stafford Borough Council had both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults across its services
- The Council was committed to ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Council, including:-

- Having a Child & Adult Protection Policy and procedure in place endorsed by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Staffordshire and Stoke Adult Safeguarding Partnership
- Having child & adult protection processes which give clear, step-by-step guidance if abuse is identified
- Safeguarding training programme in place for staff and members
- Carrying out the appropriate level of DBS checks on staff and volunteers
- Working closely with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board & Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership

The Cabinet Member (Resources Portfolio) and the Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager provided the Committee with a background to the Council's involvement in the safeguarding of children and how the legislation was developed in this area and transferred responsibility to Staffordshire County Council.

The Committee discussed then following aspects of the Members' Item:-

- A Staffordshire Safe and Strong communities select Committee was due to be held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 6 January 2021, which was a public meeting that included annual report of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board, and that the Council contributed to the reports for that board and also that of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children's Board
- The Council had the relevant officer expertise to deal with the relevant statutory duties for safeguarding
- There was a lot of work undertaken in this area already
- It was important that any Task and Finish Reviews focussed upon work that it had the responsibility for and did not duplicate what was already in place

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members' Item be noted.

#### **CWB67 Members' Item**

Councillor L Nixon had submitted the following items under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

"I would like to request the Committee looks into the whole area of bereavement and loss during this present crisis and beyond.

Many families during this dreadful pandemic are suffering greatly by not being able to visit relatives in care homes and hospitals. Heartbreakingly, many families cannot even say goodbye when their loved one's time comes.

I believe there are many mental health challenges to be faced in the coming years due to awful situation. I'd like to ask the committee's opinion on how Stafford Borough Council can help with this very sensitive and important issue”.

The Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio) and the Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager provided the following response to the Members' Item:-

- The Council had made a commitment in their Corporate Business Plan to ensure that the health and wellbeing of local people was paramount in everything it did
- There was increasing evidence to show how 'wider or social determinants of health' such as a person's living conditions, environment, and social connections over a long term, had a far greater impact on their health and wellbeing than medical health care
- The Council was supportive of an approach to its services where health and wellbeing was seen as everybody's business and where mental health was considered to be just as important as physical health
- There were a number of approaches from people with undiagnosed mental health problems, who struggled with emotional wellbeing and had poor coping strategies to manage activities of daily living
- For these households, the Council refer into emotional wellbeing services (often through the GP) and turn to community groups to improve social inclusion within the community
- The Council had a Health and Wellbeing Community Support Officer within the Health and Housing Team
- This role took an asset-based approach to community development and was funded to deliver key programmes which aimed to increase social connection, reduce isolation and loneliness and improve physical health through walking and active travel
- The Council was responsible for the Stafford Borough Community Wellbeing Partnership, which was a multi-agency partnership that had responsibility for improving outcomes in relation to community safety and wellbeing
- The partnership revised their strategy at the beginning of the year to broaden the focus around health and wellbeing
- The partnership priorities, as identified by the strategic assessment focus upon prevention and early help support, which were:
  - Anti-social behaviour
  - Criminal exploitation
  - Substance misuse
  - Mental health
  - Domestic abuse
- Progress against these priority areas was already reported through to the Scrutiny Committee
- There had been a huge amount of work reported to scrutiny in terms of the response to Covid and the support provided to communities

- As part of the recovery work, webinars had been produced and one relating to Mental Health and Wellbeing was already available on the Council's website at <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/talk-to-us>
- This work was supported by ReSolv, Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, Support Staffordshire and Starfish Health and Wellbeing.

During the discussion of the Members' Item, the Head of Operations praised the work of the Bereavement Service and highlighted how money raised from the sale of recycled material by the Service had been donated to charitable counselling services such as the Stafford and District Bereavement and Loss Support Group.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members' Item be noted.

#### CWB68 **Members' Item**

Councillor A D Hobbs had submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:

"I would like to ask the committee to look at ways Stafford Borough Council can help vulnerable people who get themselves into financial difficulties, especially Council Tax arrears. Also can I request our financial colleagues explain to the committee how vulnerable people are asked to pay outstanding bills".

The Cabinet Member (Resources Portfolio) and the Revenues and Benefits Manager provided the following response to the Members' Item:-

- The Members Item was more relevant to Resources Scrutiny Committee
- Referred to a Government Scheme that ended and was superseded by a Local Council Tax Reduction scheme
- There were copious amounts of information available for assistance with payment of Council Tax during the Pandemic
- The staff dealing with Revenues and Benefits were very well trained
- Enforcement Agents were fully regulated through Statutes
- This particular area of work had been fully reviewed by the Resources Scrutiny Committee

A motion was then subsequently moved by Councillor A P Edgeller and seconded by Councillor R M Sutherland that the Members' Item be forwarded to the Resources Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

On being put to the vote, the motion was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members' Item be forwarded to the Resources Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

**CWB69 Community and Health Portfolio - General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024**

This matter had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3 December 2020 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance regarding the draft detailed Community and Health Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Community and Health Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The report set out the variations between the indicative budgets for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, as set last year, and the proposed budget for 2021/2022 and the draft budget for the following years to 2023/2024, as well as the proposed Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report:-

- Proposed Improvements to Glover Street

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB129/20, regarding the draft detailed Community and Health Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Community and Health Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024, be noted.

**CWB70 Environment Portfolio - General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024**

This matter had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3 December 2020 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance regarding the draft detailed Environment Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Environment Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The report set out the variations between the indicative budgets for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, as set last year, and the proposed budget for 2021/2022 and the draft budget for the following years to 2023/2024, as well as the proposed Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report:-

- Efficiency Variations

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB130/20, regarding the draft detailed Environment Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and

the draft Environment Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024, be noted.

**CWB71 Leisure Portfolio - General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024**

This matter had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3 December 2020 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance regarding the draft detailed Leisure Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Leisure Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The report set out the variations between the indicative budgets for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, as set last year, and the proposed budget for 2021/2022 and the draft budget for the following years to 2023/2024, as well as the proposed Capital Programme 2020/2021 - 2023/2024.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report:-

- Leisure strategy Employee Expenses
- Stone Leisure Strategy Part 2
- Stafford Castle Health and Safety Works
- Stafford Gatehouse Theatre Ticket refunds

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB131/20, regarding the draft detailed Leisure Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Leisure Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024, be noted.

**CWB72 Work Programme - Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration, which presented the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming meeting in March 2021.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme be noted.

CHAIR