

Chairman - Councillor W J Kemp

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

Councillors:

C A Baron

J A Barron

B M Cross

A S Harp

E G R Jones

P A Leason

D McNaughton

M Phillips

M J Winnington

Also present:-

Cabinet Member - Councillor F Beatty - Economic Development and
Planning Portfolio

Councillor A T A Godfrey

Officers in attendance:-

Mr T Clegg

-

Chief Executive

Mr R Simpson

-

Head of Operations

Miss M Smith

-

Economic Growth and Strategic Projects
Manager

Mr A Bailey

-

Scrutiny Officer

EDP13 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 September 2021, as previously published on the Council's website, were submitted and signed.

EDP14 **Apologies**

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor J M Pert (Community and Health Portfolio). Apologies for absence were also received from The Head of Development and the Development Manager.

EDP15 **Development Management Update**

Considered the report of the Head of Development that provided an update on the Development Management service as requested at the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 7 September 2021 (Minute No EDP12/21 refers).

The key issues arising from the report were:

- A sustained increase in demand for the service (both planning applications and enforcement)
- Delays in validating planning related applications
- Higher officer caseloads (both planning applications and enforcement)
- Staffing
- Performance
- An increase in the number of complaints about the service

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Economic Development and Planning Portfolio), the Chief Executive and the Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager:-

- The implications of a forthcoming cross boundary planning application
- An explanation of planning application validation process
- Clarification of the staffing levels and career progression in Development Management, including the use of agency staff
- The implications of Nationally prescribed planning application fees
- The increase in Development Management staff working from the Civic Centre
- Clarification of the Development Management staffing structure
- Recruitment and retention of Development Management staff
- Concern over the abuse faced by Development Management staff
- Performance of the Council's determination of planning applications

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

EDP16 **Fees and Charges Review 2022**

This matter had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 4 November 2021 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance (V1 25/10/21) in relation to proposed Fees and Charges for 2022.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Head of Operations and the Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager:-

- Hire of area in front of Santander Bank
- Deletion of the cost of the rent of one stall at the Framers Market
- An update of the proposed works to Market Square

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB32/21, regarding the proposed Fees and Charges for 2022 be noted.

EDP17 Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring

The Committee considered the performance and financial management details for those areas within the remit of the Committee for the quarter 2 period up to 30 September 2021.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Economic Development and Planning Portfolio), the Head of Operations and the Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager:-

- Support for the Stafford Station Gateway Project
- The distribution of £47 million in grants to local businesses
- L112 – Number of new start-ups in commercial premises, shared space or domestic properties
- 1.3.2 – Delivery of the Stafford Station Gateway
- 1.3.3 – Supporting of the development of Meecebrook Garden Community
- 1.3.4 – Provide support for the Stafford Western Access Route
- 1.3.7 – Monitor land sales for potential new Gypsy and Traveller site
- 1.3.9 – Compliance with individual Project Plans
- 1.4.1 – Develop Stafford as a hub of productivity to help business develop, grow and thrive
- 1.5.2 – Ensure high quality design into Planning Policy to ensure that Stafford is an attractive place that people want to live in, promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting future investment
- Borough Markets expenditure
- Praise of the work of the Markets team in the support given to market traders both in the Indoor market and Farmers' Markets, particularly through the pandemic and during the current recovery stage
- Pearl Brook Path Improvements
- Gypsy and Traveller Site

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the performance and financial management data relating to areas of activity within this Committee's remit be noted.

EDP18 Work Programme – Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration, which presented the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming meetings up to February 2022.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme be approved, subject to the additions made at the meeting.

CHAIR