

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Coltman VC Room at the Town Hall, Burton upon Trent on Monday 20th May 2024.

Present:

Councillors D F Fletcher (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), A A Chaudhry, R Hawkins, S Slater and P Walker.

Officers Present:

The Chief Executive, the Head of Environment and Corporate Services, the Chief Finance Officer, the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer, the Environment Manager, the Environmental Health Manager and the Principal Democratic Services Officer.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M T Fitzpatrick.

PART II

91/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor A A Chaudhry declared an interest at minute number 95/24, as he was a landlord. He left the meeting at that item and did not participate in any discussion thereon.

92/24 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor A A Chaudhry		
Councillor D F Fletcher		
Councillor R Hawkins		
Councillor S Slater		
Councillor P Walker		

93/24 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business prior to the commencement of the meeting.

94/24 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan from 1st May 2024 to 31st August 2024 was submitted for information.

NOTED.

95/24

SUPPORTING DAMP AND MOULD ENFORCMENT: HEALTHY HOMES PROJECT

At this juncture Councillor A A Chaudhry declared an interest and left the meeting and did not partake in any discussions thereon.

The report of the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services on the Healthy Homes Project that East Staffordshire had been selected to participate in was considered. The following Appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: DLUHC Healthy Homes Project;
- Appendix 2: MOU

Cabinet noted that the project would be run in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to understand the impact of housing interventions on health and wider societal outcomes. The Council would be allocated up to £130,000 to spend in 2024/25 to deliver the following interventions to support robust damp and mould enforcement:

- Additional resource in the team;
- Standardised training across the existing team;
- Improved communications and engagement with landlords and tenants;
- Improved equipment, i.e. tools to measure damp and mould; and
- Improved data collection tools and support.

Cabinet noted the expected outcomes included:

- Support local authorities in tackling damp and mould hazards in private rented properties in the areas of greatest need;
- Build greater understanding regarding the impact on enforcement activity, when funding specific interventions;
- Build an understanding of best practice in housing enforcement teams when it comes to damp and mould;
- Assess the impact to benefit expenditure associated with non-decent housing in the private rented sector relative to the supplied funding;
- Evaluate the impact of better enforcement of damp and mould in the home on health outcomes;
- Increase awareness of the health impacts of damp and mould with landlords, and the implications of not dealing with it quickly. • Build understanding of the effects that poor quality housing (damp and mould hazards) has on labour market activity; and
- Build understanding of landlord behaviour as it pertains to repairs and maintenance (particularly with regards to damp and mould hazards).

NOTED.

96/24

CONSIDERATION OF A SUBSCRIPTION BASED GARDEN WASTE SERVICE

At this juncture Councillor A A Chaudhry rejoined the meeting.

The report of the Head of Corporate and Environment Services on the consideration of the introduction of a subscription based garden waste collection service was considered.

Cabinet noted that nationally, nearly 70% of local authorities in England had already implemented a subscription based service, with annual charges ranging from £25 to over £90 per bin. Across Staffordshire, seven of the nine waste collection authorities already charged their residents for the service, with their respective prices indicated in Table 1.0a as indicated at section 3.2 of the report the annual service prices range from £38.50 to £43.60 per bin, with an average of £40.01. Comparison had also been made with the Council's CIPFA 'Nearest Neighbours', indicating that all, but one, local authorities currently charge their households, with annual prices ranging from £36 to £56. The average price for those that charge is £45.71. The Council's auditor in its Annual Report for 2022/23 stated that the Council needed to develop a formal plan for income growth and savings in the longer term because it was potentially missing out on significant sources of income that other councils were benefitting from in order to become sustainable. Charging for green waste collection had been specifically mentioned as a missed opportunity.

A chargeable scheme would be introduced on an 'opt-in' subscription basis so that only those residents that use the service would be required to pay for it. It was proposed that residents would utilise their existing brown bins. Those that subscribed to the service would be recorded on the Council's back-office system and issued with an annual identification tag (e.g. permit sticker or bin tag) for their brown bin. Therefore, in order to receive the service, the resident's property must be recorded in the system and be displaying the necessary identification on their wheelie bin. The introduction of a chargeable service would have an impact on resource requirements and the logistics of delivery. This will need to be reviewed regularly to reflect both participation rates and the location of participating households. It is possible that some wards will experience high take-up rates, whilst others will be low. Furthermore, subscription rates are likely to increase during the year, so resources would need to be balanced against these fluctuations.

Cabinet noted that Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 required local authorities to consult when making decisions on achieving best value. Therefore, it was proposed to undertake a public consultation on the potential charging structure, including any possible concessions for certain groups (e.g. elderly, disabled, those in receipt of certain benefits) to help guide the best outcome.

The reasons for making the decision below were set out in the report.

Resolved:

- 1) That a subscription based garden waste collection service be implemented with the charging rate being subject to the outcome of a public consultation;
- 2) That the implementation of a subscription based garden waste collection service commence in January 2025, with subscriptions opening to households in October 2024.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor A A Chaudhry		
Councillor D F Fletcher		
Councillor R Hawkins		
Councillor S Slater		
Councillor P Walker		

97/24

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor A A Chaudhry		
Councillor D F Fletcher		
Councillor R Hawkins		
Councillor S Slater		
Councillor P Walker		

