

Chairman - Councillor W J Kemp

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

Councillors:

R J Barron	P A Leason
A G Cooper	B McKeown
B M Cross	G P K Pardesi
A S Harp	M Phillips

Also present:-

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

Cabinet Member - Councillor J M Pert - Community and Health Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs K Tierney	-	Head of Development
Mr R Simpson	-	Head of Operations
Miss M Smith	-	Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager
Miss J McCloy	-	Deputy Chief Accountant
Mr A Yendole	-	Planning Policy Manager
Mr J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer
Mr A Bailey	-	Scrutiny Officer

**EDP46 Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2020, as published in Digest No 271, were submitted and signed.

**EDP47 Apologies**

An Apology for absence was received from Councillors J A Barron (Substitute R J Barron).

**EDP48 Economic Recovery – Local Restrictions Grant Policy**

The Committee considered a report that updated progress made on the Economic Recovery workstream as part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the Local Restrictions Grant policy.

The Head of Development informed the Committee that there was a requirement for all local authorities to adopt policies to distribute a range of grants to business through periods of national and local restrictions. Within the package of support is £2.7m that had been allocated to Stafford Borough Council under the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme. This amount had been calculated as £20 per head of population and was intended to cover the period 5 November until 31 March 2022. Local authorities could use this funding for any business support activities but would primarily take the form of discretionary grants.

Continuing, the Head of Development explained that the Council's policy set out the different grants available and the qualifying criteria and application requirements. In terms of £2.7m Additional Restrictions Grant £2m allocation had been ringfenced for business grants for the duration of the period to 31 March 2022. A supplementary policy for the remaining £700,000 was being developed with the objective of providing targeted business support.

In conclusion, the Head of Development reported upon two amendments to the Policy related to the Phase 1 Additional Restrictions Grant and the Applications Process.

Following the introduction, the Committee discussed the following aspects of the report and Policy with the Head of Development, the Head of Operations and the Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager:-

- An explanation of what funding was available beyond the Government's Furlough Scheme
- Confirmation that as many businesses as possible were being contacted
- The time taken to process applications
- The effects of the grant on a building that had changed its use
- The need to ensure fairness in the distribution of the grant
- An explanation as to how the one-off payment of £1,334 was calculated
- Claims for accommodation related to education centres
- Indoor leisure activities during Tier 3
- The need to prevent fraud and duplicate claiming
- Clarification of when a second phase for applications could commence
- The Appeals process

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

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 Economic Development and Planning Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Economic Development and Planning 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 with the Head of Development, the Head of Operations, the Deputy Chief Accountant, the Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager and the Planning Policy Manager:-

- Management Support Employee Expenses
- Forward Planning Income
- Economic growth and strategic Projects
- Supplies and Services Variations
- Third Party Parking

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB128/20, regarding the draft detailed Economic Development and Planning Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the draft Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2023/2024, be noted.

EPD50 **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 forthcoming meetings up to February 2021.

The Committee discussed the phasing of future reports and potential items for their Work programme.

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

CHAIR