

CABINET

At a meeting of Cabinet held on
27 January 2021

(Present) **Councillor Baines (Chair)**
Councillors Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns, Charlton,
Gomez-Aspron, Groucutt, McCauley and Quinn

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

36 MINUTES

* **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on
6 January 2021 be approved and signed.**

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No declarations of interest from Members were made.

38 COVID – 19 GRANT FUNDING

A report was submitted which provided a summary of the specific COVID-19 related funding streams made available to the Council during 2020-2021 and sought approval of delegation in relation to decisions around the application of future COVID-19 related funding streams.

COVID-19 had been the most challenging emergency that the Council had ever faced and, alongside its partners and communities, there had been a vital need for the Council to react at speed for a number of reasons, including:

- to limit the spread of the virus
- to protect the health of our residents
- to ensure that the most vulnerable persons remain safe and properly cared for
- to ensure business continuity
- to support business survival
- to continue to provide the series of vital support services to/for individuals and businesses.

The outbreak brought with it both additional expenditure pressures and significant losses of income across a range of council services, which were either required to close or have experienced vastly reduced levels of activity. The Financial Monitoring Report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 6 January 2021 provided further detail in relation to those pressures, alongside the funding that had been made available from Government Emergency Funding and its Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme.

This report concentrated on the other specific funding that had been made available to the Council or routed via the Liverpool City Region (LCR) during 2020-2021. The funding was largely ringfenced for spend in accordance with grant conditions and directed at specific programmes of work.

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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the various funding streams and activity as detailed in the report be noted;**
- (2) retrospective approval to the application of specific funding streams be approved where necessary; and**
- (3) the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Corporate Services be delegated authority in relation to decisions associated with the application of any future COVID-19 related funding streams where timescales and/or deadlines determine.**

39 TOWN DEAL – TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

A report was submitted which provided Cabinet with the completed Town Deal – Town Improvement Plan (TIP) for consideration and approval to submit to Government in advance of the 31 January 2021 deadline.

On 6 September 2019 the Government established the Town Fund with the aim of driving the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth. To achieve the aim each of the 100 selected towns (including St Helens) were asked to develop proposals to bid for up to £25m of the Town Fund.

In January 2020 the Council established a 'Town Deal Board' to develop the TIP in accordance with the guidance detailed in the Town Fund Prospectus 2019. The Board included local businesses, MPs, members from the local community and other partners committed to improving the town. The Board had met each month to oversee the development of the TIP, together with the Council as the accountable body, with an agreed focus on developing a set of projects to address challenges in the Town Centre.

The completed TIP was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet was informed that the decision was a Key Decision and details had been published in accordance with the provisions within the Constitution.

* **Resolved that the Town Improvement Plan for submission to Government be approved.**

40 ST HELENS BOROUGH ARTS STRATEGY

A report was submitted which sought approval of an Arts Strategy for the Borough. Cabinet were informed that this was a place-based Strategy which presented an ambitious and energising vision for the arts and established a sustainable, pragmatic and engaged framework for delivering, promoting and inspiring the arts and culture in the Borough.

This was a St Helens Borough Arts Strategy and not solely a Council Strategy and was co-owned with the Arts Sector. This had resulted in a shared recognition of the challenges and opportunities ahead and a shared commitment to the Strategy's vision and priorities for the arts in St Helens as well as a

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recognition of the role of the arts in supporting the wider regeneration of the Borough.

The Strategy reflected that the ambitions and priorities for the Arts should not be planned and delivered in isolation, but rather that delivery of the Strategy would be progressed as part of a coordinated place-based approach bringing together the recommendations of the Heritage Opportunities document and linking to the regeneration work of the Town Centre Deal and the Council's Covid-19 reset and recovery plans.

The Strategy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet was informed that the decision was a Key Decision and details had been published in accordance with the provisions within the Constitution.

- * **Resolved that the St Helens Borough Arts Strategy be approved for public consultation for a period of six weeks.**

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