



COUNCIL SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

B U S I N E S S

8 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Pages 5 - 12)

- a) Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
- b) Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- c) Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee

9 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES (Pages 13 - 16)

Chairs are requested to submit written reports to the Democratic Services Manager at least two days before meeting.

- a) Audit and Risk Committee
- b) Planning Committee

10 QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR,CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Pages 17 - 18)

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

NOTICE FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Fire/Bomb Alerts

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs. Do not stop to collect personal belongings, do not use the lifts.

Fire exits are to be found either side of the rear of the Council Chamber and at the rear of the Public Gallery.

On exiting the building Members, Officers and the Public must assemble at the car park at the rear of the Aspire Housing Office opposite to the Civic Offices. DO NOT re-enter the building until advised to by the Controlling Officer.

2. Attendance Record

Please sign the Attendance Record sheet, which will be circulating around the Council Chamber. Please ensure that the sheet is signed before leaving the meeting.

3. Mobile Phones

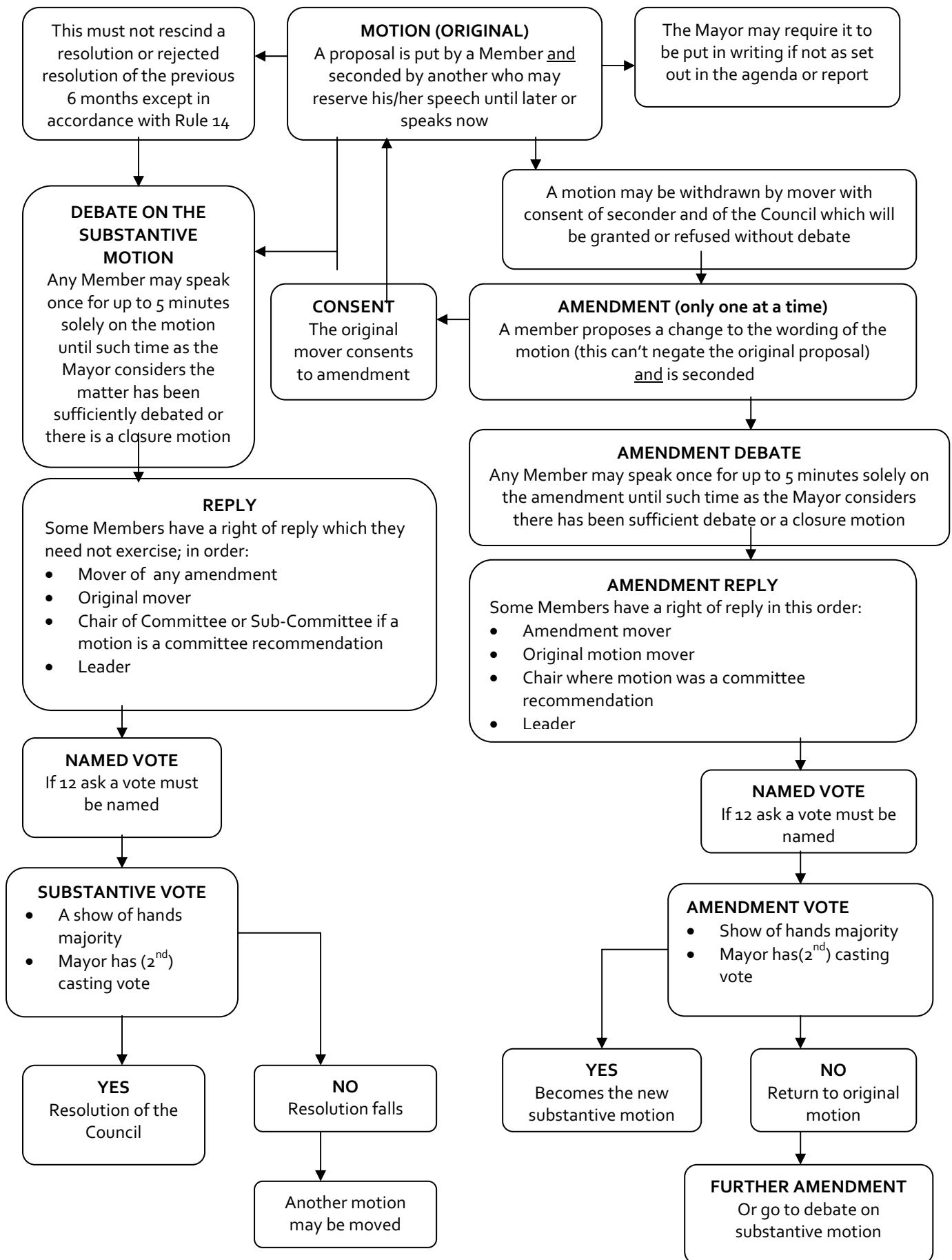
Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Council Chamber.

4. Tea/Coffee

Refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the meeting, or in the event of a break occurring, during that break.

5. Notice of Motion

A Notice of Motion other than those listed in Standing Order 19 must reach the Chief Executive ten clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council. Further information on Notices of Motion can be found in Section 5, Standing Order 20 of the Constitution of the Council.



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Finances, Resources and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Report to Council (meeting 26th November 2014)

Meeting held 5th November 2014.

The first item for consideration was a report from the Constitution Review Working Group which has been reviewing a number of areas of the Constitution and was looking for feedback in relation to the following recommendations:

1. To incorporate a revised and updated code of conduct for members, to replace the current version from 2012 and provide more clarity.
2. The Protocol for Conferring the title of Honorary Alderman. This was discussed in some detail as members felt that there needed to be an element of flexibility in the selection criteria so that some former members would not be unfairly disadvantaged. Accordingly, some minor amendments were made to the wording.
3. To dispense with diarised meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs and for them to called on an ad-hoc basis.
4. To replace the two current sections of the Constitution relating to Urgency Provisions with a single, clearer and more simple section. Members felt that this was a significant improvement on the existing wording and considerably easier for members to understand.

It was agreed that, subject to a few minor amendments, members were happy to accept these recommendations.

Cllr Stringer then presented a report into the review of Concurrent Funding provisions from the Task and Finish group set up for this purpose. There was considerable discussion about the contents of the report and many opinions expressed relating to aspects of the current policy. The report will now be presented to Cabinet.

The Executive Director – Resources and Support, Kelvin Turner , presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2019/20. Various questions were asked about cost controls and efficiency savings but generally members felt comfortable with the strategy whilst being mindful of the significant reductions in funding expected over the coming years and the potential resultant consequences of these cuts.

Following a short presentation from Simon Sowerby, **Officer Title**, members reviewed the Financial and Performance Management report to the end of Quarter Two. It was noted by members that the method of reporting by exception is more efficient, whilst some still lament the removal of the “Smiley Faces”. Members expressed concerns in relation to the apparent difficulty experienced by

the Planning Department in meeting it's targets and the difficulties surrounding the availability and use of recreational facilities.

From a financial perspective, members expressed concerns that the current budget shortfall would continue and increase over the second half on the Financial year. However, it was reported that one of the main factors leading to the shortfall was expected to be resolved imminently and this would considerably reduce any overspend for the second half of the year.

The meeting scheduled for 4th December has been moved to 16th December, to follow on from the joint meeting of this committee and the Economic Development Committee.

Paul Waring

(Chair)

Health and Wellbeing Committee Meeting 21 October 2014

The main item on the agenda was discussing the implications of the Francis report on how the borough, as a district council, could/should scrutinise hospitals. Members agreed they should scrutinise hospitals where issues lay within the borough boundary and not duplicate scrutiny by Staffordshire healthy Select committee. It was felt the committee already worked closely with the county to this end and supplied detailed minutes of all committee. Additional training was felt important for members to carry out their role of scrutiny effectively. Although meetings are open to the public, they rarely attended and consideration was given to how this could be improved e.g. publicising more prominently on Borough website. Finally it was decided the current remit of the committee should be reviewed to reflect exactly what the committee were doing. It was proposed a member led working group be set up to consider the remits of the scrutiny committees.

Elizabeth Jarrett, Healthwatch, gave a short feedback on the GP access project the organisation was carrying out. It was originally intended to run from August to September in North Staffordshire, but due to it being extended to other areas it has not been completed yet. It is hoped Elizabeth will be able to attend the next meeting in November if the project has been completed.

Colin Eastwood

Chair Newcastle Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust gave a presentation and answered questions on the proposed change to the Enhancement of community Older People's Mental Health Outreach Team. The key role is to support patients in their own homes as an alternative to hospital admission and in supporting discharge. This will be extended to support more complex patients – which could include people in residential or nursing homes. This will allow for a vacant ward to be developed, to support patients who currently require out-of-area placement. This is in line with reducing reliance on hospital based inpatient services by making the appropriate investment in community outreach services. The main points raised were the ward closure should not be rushed and concerns about the level of care in some homes with the need to avoid another "Bristol care home scandal". It was agreed NSCH would give a progress report in four months and flag up earlier if they encounter any issues which would affect patients care.

With NSCHT already attending it was an ideal opportunity to focus on issues around alcohol. It should be remembered this week is Alcohol Awareness Week and Newcastle has an above average number of identified residents with alcohol problems than Staffordshire and nationally. Sarah Moore and Trevor Smith gave a presentation on the work undertaken locally as a partnership around preventing and dealing with alcohol related issues in the Borough. Some of the projects mentioned were Purple Flag, Reducing The Strength, First aid Triage and Street Chaplains and alcohol education in schools. A presentation was also given by Debbie Moores from One Recovery, who are part of Addiction Dependency Solutions (ADS) a national charity. She explained previously drugs and alcohol were commissioned separately to a mixture of statutory and voluntary agencies in North Staffordshire, but ADS were now the lead provider working with NSCH who sub contracted out work to other organisations. The overall aim with service users is to achieve stability, set goals for the future, improve physical and emotional wellbeing, improved social awareness/functioning, prepare for employment and help others to achieve. Dr Derrett Watts from NSCHT then gave an overview of the work the organisation provided for patients with alcohol problems. He highlighted the objective of providing a caring, trusting environment which enabled service users to feel accepted and achieve their goals, and their families and carers were listened to and supported. He mentioned the success of the Intoxication Observation Unit where drunken patients were diverted from being sent to A&E to a place they can be properly treated. Whilst having produced identified success rates, there is still a long term issue over funding. He also stated the importance of working as a partnership and identified the 3rd sector, UHNS, GP's, local commissioners, other service lines within NSCHT and service users/carers. NSCHT recognised the role the Borough played in prevention and would meet with officers to play an active role in the Newcastle Partnership.

Colin Eastwood, Chair Newcastle Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

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Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting dated Monday 6th October 2014

Allotments review update report - approved.

Fishing licence agreements within the borough -
Recommendation

That a standard type of fishing licence is prepared for each fishing pool within the borough and terms are negotiated and agreed with each party involved, based on the area and environment of each respective pool.

Keele golf course update report - approved.

Staffordshire libraries consultation - Ongoing.

Meeting dated Thursday 20th November 2014

Kidsgrove sports centre working group report - approved to go to cabinet for the December meeting.

Kidsgrove Sports Centre Working Group

List of meeting.

Group meeting Wednesday 13th August 2014.

Site visit Monday 18th August 2014 and Tuesday 26th August 2014.

Group meeting Wednesday 27th August 2014.

Group meeting Monday 15th September 2014.

Land site visits Saturday 4th October 2014.

Group meeting Monday 6th October 2014.

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Group meeting with Clough Hall School Wednesday 15th October 2014.

Group meeting Thursday 16th October 2014.

Group meeting Wednesday 22nd October 2014.

Group meeting Tuesday 4th November 2014

COUNCILLOR REGINALD BAILEY
(Chair)

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Chairs Report of the Audit & Risk Committee – 29 Sept and 17 Nov 2014

The committee has met twice since the last council on the 29 September and 17 November

29 September 2014

Quarterly Risk Report –this report looked at the new risks that had been identified between April and June 2014. It was also noted that since the last meeting of the Committee, officers had rolled out an updated version of the 'Governance Risk and Control Environment' (GRACE) system. The updated system is a web-based version of GRACE that allows easier access for users.

Statement of Accounts – The Statement of Accounts for 2013-14 were approved following the receipt of a report submitted by the Councils External Auditors, Grant Thornton. The External Auditors are also required to provide a Value for Money (VFM) conclusion and report on the arrangements that the Council has in place for ensuring financial resilience and VFM in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Overall the auditors were satisfied with the arrangements that the council had put in place for VFM and use of resources during 2013/14.

Internal Audit Quarterly Reports on progress and recommendations- These were presented to the committee in relation to progress against the audit plan for 2014/15 and also any recommendations that were outstanding at the end of the first quarter. No major issues were identified however some concern was expressed by the committee in relation to Community Centres. The Audit Manager confirmed that this was an on-going process and would continue to be monitored and reports would be brought back to the committee in due course.

17 November 2014

Quarterly Risk Report -this report looked at the new risks that had been identified between July and September 2014.

Internal Audit Quarterly Reports on progress and recommendations relating to Quarter 2 were presented to the Committee. No major issues or concerns were identified.

Treasury Management Half year report – this provided an update on the half year position in terms of the Treasury Management function for the authority. The full report detailing the economic background and forecasts was provided by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Sector.

Health & Safety Half year report – an update on the half year position in relation to Health and Safety was provided. It was reported that the council had seen a reduction in the number of days lost to sickness as a result of accidents at work, this was due to the fact that the long term sickness cases previously reported had now returned to work. In addition the report also covered the actions that had been taken at Birchenwood Pavilion following the identification of Legionella which had been picked up as part of routine testing.

Annual Audit Letter –This provided a summary of the conclusions from the audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2013/14. A copy of this will be sent to all members of the council.

The Planning Committee has met 3 times since the last full council meeting and has determined a range of applications. Minutes of the meetings are available and information regarding specific applications is available on the Planning Portal online.

The committee has also had several opportunities to reflect and give input into the Planning Peer Review Action Plan including running 2 cross party workshops which were open to every member of the planning committee to attend. External bodies that were consulted as part of the Peer Review process such as parish councils and developers were also provided with the opportunity to comment on what should be included in the Action Plan. As the Planning Peer Review Action Plan has been called in it would be unconstitutional to discuss the content of the plan and I would hope to bring updates on this to a future meeting.

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Question 1

Submitted by Cllr Kearon:

Do you share the concerns of residents of my ward and residents from elsewhere in the borough about the downgrading of many local Post Offices? Can residents facing the downgrading of their much valued local Post Office depend on the support of this council in their fight against downgrading, and can I ask that the you work with residents and our MP to apply pressure directly on the management of Post Office Ltd in London?

Question 2

Submitted by **Cllr Sweeney**

RMW pulled out of the negotiations to run Keele Golf Course in Christmas 2013. Apart from a plan for a proposed masterplan what has the council done to find a long term use for the site?

Question3

Submitted by **Cllr Sweeney**

We understand the delay in the community centre cabinet panel completing its findings but can the portfolio holder still confirm that no community centres will close?

Question 4

Submitted by **Cllr Sweeney**

Does the leader agree that the eight months to negotiate the agreement with the unions over overtime has resulted in a significant impact on the Council's budget?

Question 5

Submitted by **Cllr David Loades**

Does the Portfolio holder agree that it is taking advantage of the Councils failure to supply a 5 year housing plan by applying for outline planning permission on sites out of the Village envelope?

Question 6

Submitted by **Cllr David Loades**

As the portfolio holder has now finished his call for sites for the implementation of the local plan, can he confirm that the seven sites removed for political gain by the Labour party will now be reinstated as a disposable asset of this council as part of the plan?