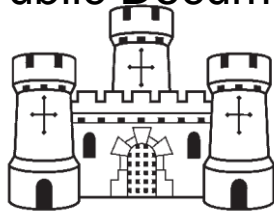


Public Document Pack



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRAYERS WILL BE HELD AT 6.50PM BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL.

THE MAYOR REQUESTS THAT ANY MEMBER WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN PRAYERS BE IN ATTENDANCE BY NO LATER THAN 6.45PM.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme to be held in the **Jubilee 2 - Dance Studio - (Second Floor) - Brunswick street, Newcastle, Staffs** on **Wednesday, 18th September, 2019** at **7.00 pm**.

B U S I N E S S

- 7a STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 5 - 8)
- 9a REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES (Pages 9 - 10)

A written report has been submitted for the Audit and Standards Committee.

- 11a QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Pages 11 - 12)

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..

Fire exits are to be found at the side of the room leading into Queens Gardens.

On exiting the building Members, Officers and the Public must assemble at the statue of Queen Victoria. DO NOT re-enter the building until advised to by the Controlling Officer.

2. Attendance Record

Please sign the Attendance Record sheet on entering the building. This will be located at the reception desk.

3. Mobile Phones

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

4. 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.

NOTE: THERE ARE NO FIRE DRILLS PLANNED FOR THIS EVENING SO IF THE FIRE ALARM DOES SOUND, PLEASE LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE FIRE EXIT DOORS.

ON EXITING THE BUILDING, PLEASE ASSEMBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING BY THE STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA. DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL ADVISED TO DO SO.

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL
18th SEPTEMBER 2019

Submitted by: Councillor Simon Tagg

Portfolio: All

Wards affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to Members on the activities and decisions of Cabinet, together with the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

That the statement of the Leader of the Council be received and noted.

Reasons

To update Council Members on the activities and decisions of the Leader and Cabinet and to allow questions and comments to be made on the Statement.

1. **Cabinet Meeting**

Cabinet met on 4th September 2019; a summary of the Decisions taken is detailed below along with other items of interest.

2. **Newcastle Town Centre CCTV Review Report Update**

Cabinet agreed a significant upgrade of the out-dated CCTV system in Newcastle Town Centre; this will include new state of the art cameras and live monitoring arrangements.

Newcastle Business Improvement District (BID) will support CCTV in the town centre with a major capital investment to enable the project to proceed.

There is an opportunity for other areas of the borough to be included in the upgraded CCTV system if, like the BID, partners in those areas can provide funding.

3. **Economic Development Strategy - Growing our People and Places**

The Council's Economic Development Strategy has been refreshed to reflect the priorities in the new Council Plan and the Growth Deal with the County Council; this includes proposals for delivery of infrastructure projects, support for local small businesses and help for people to upskill and improves their job prospects.

A detailed action plan for delivery is included within the Strategy.

4. **Digital Strategy and Outline Business Case**

To support the Council's drive to provide local services that work for local people, a wide-ranging Digital Strategy has been agreed by Cabinet.

This will take into account the fundamental changes in the way residents interact with the Council and their expectation of the level of customer service provided.

The digital agenda will provide a step change for the Council, revolutionising the way it works providing efficiencies and empowering Council staff.

It is recognised that not all residents will wish to access the Council's services online and there is no intention to 'turn off' traditional methods of communication.

The aim of the Digital Strategy is to be improve services to residents irrespective of how, or when, they contact the Council.

5. **Holiday Pay Entitlement**

Cabinet were pleased to approve the proposed additional holiday pay entitlement following issues with the calculation of holiday pay for those employees who work regular and voluntary overtime dating back to August 2017.

Constructive discussions took place with the unions to reach a satisfactory agreement which is a testament to the improved employer/trade union relations under this administration.

6. **Financial and Performance Management Report to End of Quarter One (April-June) 2019-20**

Cabinet reviewed the performance data for Quarter One and noted that 80% either met their target or were within acceptable levels.

This first quarter saw the introduction of a number of new indicators to reflect the ambitions for our borough as set out in the Council Plan.

Cabinet Members outlined measures that were in place where indicators were below target and actions taken to address those.

7. **Climate Change**

Following the motion to Full Council on 3rd April 2019 that declared a climate emergency, a detailed report on the next steps for action will be submitted to the Economy Environment & Place Scrutiny Committee on 25th September 2019.

Discussions have also taken place with the Vice Chancellor of Keele University relating to the involvement of the University in assisting the Council in taking this agenda forward and they have agreed to participate in the development of a Carbon Neutral Borough Action Plan.

8. **Future High Streets Fund and a new Town Deal**

Newcastle Town Centre has been named as one of the locations which could unlock millions of pounds of investment from the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF)

The FHSF bid submitted by the Council will focus on the redevelopment of the Ryecroft site.

The recent announcement made by the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, Robert Jenrick, gives the Council around £150,000 to develop a business case for the site. If successful, the Council could secure £5-10million to support redevelopment.

In further good news, both Newcastle and Kidsgrove have been included in a list of more than 100 towns which are set to benefit from the Government's new £3.6 billion Town Deal Fund.

It is anticipated that the new 'Town Deals' will improve broadband connectivity, provide vital social and cultural infrastructure and boost growth – with communities having a say on how the money is spent.

9. **Britain in Bloom**

In the 29th year of Newcastle in Bloom, the Council was awarded the coveted Gold Award in this year's Heart of England in Bloom competition. This is the 18th consecutive year the Gold Award has been secured.

The Borough was also awarded the discretionary Environmental Award for work to boost biodiversity, wildlife and habitat creation at Silverdale Country Park.

This is a great achievement and shows that the Council has maintained exceptionally high standards in this prestigious competition over such a long period of time.

These results are testament to the efforts by all sections of the community who once again worked together to showcase the borough at its best, with important support from all our sponsors which makes the entry to the competition cost neutral to the Council.

The judges commented that they 'were very impressed with the very high standard of the whole campaign' saying that 'The effort, innovation and dedication shown by the whole Newcastle team, and the communities that work with you, makes a real and tangible difference to the town.'

10. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan (1/9/2019 to 31/12/2019) can be found at:

<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=97&RP=118>

Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council

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Audit and Standards Committee

The committee met on 29th July 2019.

During the course of the meeting, the business dealt with was as follows:

Phil Jones of Grant Thornton gave a brief explanation of the progress of the 2018-19 Audit. He explained that due to the complexity of certain issues that had arisen during the Audit, it had not been possible to complete the work prior to the deadline. This was in part due to circumstances that were unique to this year and more emphasis being placed on pensions and property, plant and equipment valuations due to pressure from the regulator.

It was explained that the audit risks set out in the report impact on every authority. Similarly, the McCloud judgement handed down by the Court of Appeal in June, was also having far reaching consequences amongst numerous councils around the Country and Newcastle was by no means alone in this respect.

Councillor Stubbs asked if the retirement of a senior officer had led to these problems. The Interim Director of Resources and Support Services, Jan Willis, explained that a proper hand-over had taken place, but that it was inevitable that a certain amount of historic knowledge had been lost as a result of his retirement. Phil Jones acknowledged that the timing of his retirement had coincided with a particularly complex set of accounting issues and a number of external developments which had created "the perfect audit storm" this year. This, notwithstanding, no problem areas have been identified in the Accounts and he was confident that a clean Audit Report and a clean Value for Money report would be forthcoming in the near future.

Members Resolved to note the contents of the report and Resolved that the Chair be given delegated authority to sign the final Audited Accounts on completion of the Audit. (This did in fact, take place 5th September 2019).

The Head of Internal Audit at Stoke on Trent City Council, Clare Potts introduced a report giving details of the Internal Audit activity for the 2018-19 year, advising that 54 audit recommendations had been made during the year and that there were currently 7 audits in progress.

It was confirmed that recommendations had been implemented in relation to the two "high risks" identified and that details of the audits not required, would be provided later.

A Member asked if a glossary of abbreviations used, could be provided and this was noted.

Members resolved to note the contents of the report.

Next Meeting 23rd September 2019.

Paul Waring (Chair)

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QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To the Leader of the Council:

1. Can the Leader please say in his opinion, what adverse impact a no deal Brexit will have on the citizens of Newcastle under Lyme ?

Cllr Mark Olszewski

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency:

2. Can the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency confirm that the Audit of the Council's Accounts has been completed.

Cllr Andrew Parker

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency:

3. Please can the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency outline how the Council is spending the money provided by the government to prepare for Brexit on Freedom Day (31st October 2019)?

Cllr Andy Fear

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To the Leader of the Council:

4. Last Saturday I was informed by a number of distressed residents that Cultural Squatters Cafe and Community Hub in Merrial Street was closing down on Wednesday 18th September which is today having been given three weeks notice to leave by their Landlord RM LTD.
Cultural Squatters is an unofficial social enterprise and a valuable resource providing sanctuary for many vulnerable people including those with mental health issues, learning difficulties and homelessness.
It is non profit making and has a Be Kind ethos.
The previous agents were very supportive of the community benefits of Cultural Squatters but RM LTD took over the contract to manage the the Arcade a year ago and things have gone downhill since then as the company is not really interested in what they are doing.
There is no new tenant and the building will be left empty for the present time. Having been given such short notice they have two significant issues namely finding a storage facility ASAP and also finding new premises.
I am asking you as Council Leader if we as a caring Council can offer support and help for them to secure new premises within the Town Centre as a matter of urgency?

Cllr Ruth Wright

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To the Leader of the Council:

5. Will Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) be sustainable now the decision has been made by the council not to provide administrative support to them?

Cllr Kyle Robinson

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To the Leader of the Council:

6. Will the Leader assure me that any plans to spend the new Town Fund in Kidsgrove will be distributed fairly so that Talke Pits village and Butt Lane centre also receive some much needed investment?

Cllr Kyle Robinson

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