

Public Document Pack



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 **Garden & Astley Rooms - Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle, Staffs. ST5 1BL** on **Wednesday, 6th July, 2022** at **7.00 pm**.

B U S I N E S S

6 STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive a statement by the Leader of the Council on the activities and decisions of Cabinet and items included on the Forward Plan.

7 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Pages 9 - 10)

Chairs Reports are attached for the following:

- a) Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee
- b) Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
- c) Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

8 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES (Pages 11 - 14)

Chairs Reports are attached for the following:

- a) Audit and Standards Committee
- b) Licensing and Public Protection Committee
- c) Planning Committee

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin T. Handley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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. Mobile Phones

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

3. Notice of Motion

A Notice of Motion other than those listed in Procedure Rule 14 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.

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

This page is intentionally left blank

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 6th JULY 2022

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 Meetings

Cabinet met on 7th June; detailed below is a selection of decisions and other actions of the Leader and Cabinet since the last Leader's Statement.

2. Climate Change – Sustainability Base Pledge

The Council has joined with local authorities across Staffordshire to work collaboratively to reduce the County's carbon emissions to net zero. Through membership of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB), the Council has committed to ten base 'pledges' including: baseline reporting, carbon literacy training, green travel planning, joint communications, move to low carbon fuelled fleet vehicles, energy reduction and use of green energy.

In 2020 the Council adopted its own Sustainability Environment Strategy containing measures that are already under way in the Borough. These include: nature recovery plans, habitat protection measures, designation of carbon capture areas and the installation of electric vehicle charging points in Council owned car parks.

As part of its Urban Tree Planting Strategy, the Council is committed to planting thousands of trees on green spaces and this programme is well under way.

Emission mitigating policies and sustainable development goals will also be introduced as part of the new Borough Local Plan.

3. One Council Programme Update

Cabinet received an update on the One Council Programme which continues on track with the projected overall savings of £1 million a year.

Work continues to embed digital improvements to how residents can access Council services as well as being careful as we progress with this transition to ensure that no resident is excluded from accessing the Council. The processes and practices used by officers to complete transactions with residents are being redesigned to ensure officers' efforts add value at every stage of their work.

The next phase will be a review of support services processes and back office structures to bring the teams' outputs in line with the One Council principles. Further savings through better ways of working are anticipated in these areas alongside the creation of a more efficient and streamlined service for the public.

4. Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

Cabinet endorsed a new policy that puts in place a scoring mechanism for assessing National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief applications.

The new policy means that the Council can go further to assist relevant organisations such as charities, and to help as many as possible with up to 100% rate relief where appropriate.

Organisations such as those operating from the Guildhall and Kidsgrove Sports Centre benefit from this discretionary relief.

5. Newcastle-under-Lyme 850th Celebrations in 2023

In 2023, the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme celebrates its 850th year and the Council wants to make it a year to remember for residents. It was in 1173 that Newcastle was first recorded as a town and borough and around this time was granted its first charter protecting the rights of its people.

A programme of commemorative & heritage events, to take place throughout the year, is being worked up following suggestions by a cross-party & partner Heritage Working Group, formed in 2019.

Cabinet has appointed Deputy Mayor Councillor Simon White as Heritage Champion who will oversee development of the programme and explore sponsorship opportunities.

6. Finance and Performance Review Report – Fourth Quarter (January - March) 2021 - 22

Cabinet reviewed the performance data for Quarter four and noted that performance across the Council remains strong, with 81% of targets being met or within tolerance.

The percentage of dry recycling and food waste have both increased and are above target and, as a consequence, the volume of residual waste collected is down approximately 10% on the same period last year.

Quarter 4 is the busiest time for calls to the Council's Customer Services, with contacts increasing as Council Tax, Business Rates and Town Centre BID bills are issued, together with benefits notifications and also this year, elections communications. Nonetheless, performance by the team is well within target as residents took advantage of online, by phone or in person options to interact with the Council.

Jubilee 2 continues to grow its membership as we aim to reach and exceed pre-pandemic levels. Since the Q4 figures were published the Gym at J2 has been refurbished, which will hopefully support further membership uptake.

7. Air Quality Ministerial Directive Etruria Road, Basford

Following a report in the local media and comments by Councillors from Stoke-on-Trent the Council has issued a statement to clarify its position related to the Ministerial Directive imposed by the government on both the City and Borough Council relating to air pollution on a small stretch of Etruria Road in Basford.

The Council is continuing to work together with the City and County Councils, as the Government Directive requires us to do, through the cross-agency Joint Advisory Group (JAG) for air quality, chaired by Stoke-on-Trent.

In October 2021 Cabinet asked for new modelling to be carried out to measure current/future post-Covid traffic patterns to ascertain if there has been any reduction in the pollution levels that would negate the need for the proposed bus gate - in other words natural compliance.

The Council has also lobbied local members of parliament to raise our concerns that are shared many residents about the implications of traffic problems on other roads potentially caused by an Etruria Road bus gate restriction.

JAG is continuing to monitor traffic volumes in Basford and current pollution readings are below the minimum safe level, as they have been for the last year.

8. Kidsgrove Sport Centre

The refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre has now been completed and the centre has been handed over the Community Group who will aim to reopen to the public by the end of July.

The refurbished centre boasts a 25m, six lane swimming pool, reception area, sports hall, enlarged gym, dance studio, spin studio and physio room along with updated changing areas. This is the culmination of a £7.5 million project funded by the Borough Council, Town Deal with support from Staffordshire County Council and Sport England.

The Community Group have also brought in £360,000 in match funding from outside sources for the project.

9. Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Celebrations to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee took place across the Borough over the special four-day Bank Holiday Weekend in June. Events were held in the town centre & Brampton Park, including special markets, outdoor cinema and activities in the Guildhall. Numerous street parties were held.

A number of beacons were lit to mark the Queens 70 years on the throne including a Jubilee Beacon at Apedale Country Park, by the mining wheel, which could be seen across Newcastle.

To commemorate the long service of Her Majesty I have asked Council officers to consult with fellow users of Castle House about changing the name of the Garden Meeting Room to Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Room.

10. Diary of Cabinet Meetings & Forward Plan

To facilitate the attendance of Cabinet Members, Cabinet meetings have been moved from Wednesday to Tuesday. The Council's calendar of future meetings will be update according.

The Forward Plan of items to be discussed by Cabinet can be found at:
<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=132&RP=118>

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council**

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES CHAIR'S REPORTS

Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee

The Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee met on 15th June 2022.

We reviewed the work that HS2 intend to carry out in our Borough during the next calendar year. There was a presentation given by the Senior Engagement Manager.

We then reviewed the Policing presence in the Town Centre and also the new Policing model due to comment the end of June, present was the Town Centre Policing Sergeant.

We went on to review the public consultation feedback for the Borough Local plan and received the report.

Lastly we had an update on progress on the Town Deal investments for Kidsgrove and Newcastle and the Future High Street Fund.

Our next scheduled meeting is 1st September

Cllr Gary White
Chair

Health, Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 23 June 2022 and the following matters were considered:

- Update on Walleys Quarry – this was the first meeting of the committee following the inclusion of environment in the committee's remit. A comprehensive report and presentation was received on the odour issues at the quarry including the current position with the appeal against the Abatement Notice served on the operators by the council, air quality monitoring data, complaint data and the multi-agency work taking place.
- Sustainable Environment Strategy – the committee considered the Sustainable Environment Strategy Annual Report and noted the 4 priority areas and how the action plan would monitor progress.
- Integrated Care Hubs – the committee received a brief update on Integrated Care Hubs. There would be an opportunity to undertake some joint scrutiny work with the County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands DC regarding the proposals which included a Hub based at Bradwell Hospital.
- Report from the recent meeting of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel
- The Digests outlining the work of recent meetings of the County Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Work Programme was discussed and Members proposed items for the next meeting on 5 September including an invitation to the new Police Commander, proposals by Tri-Services to set up a hub to support mental health and a further update on Walley's Quarry.

Cllr Ian Wilkes

Chair

Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

The committee met on 30 June to receive an update from Cabinet and to consider a report on the 2021/22 Q4 financial position and corporate performance. The committee will meet again on 8 September.

Cllr Mark Holland

Chair

REGULATORY COMMITTEES CHAIR'S REPORTS

Audit and Standards Committee

The Committee met on 25th April 2022 and 27th June 2022.

25th April 2022 meeting

Harkamal Vaid of Grant Thornton presented two documents to members, the first being, Informing the audit risk assessment 2021/22, a document designed to contribute to the mutual understanding of the audit process between auditor and client. The Audit plan 2021/22 was then reviewed, based on the information gleaned from the previous document.

Members then considered the Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22 and Audit Opinion as presented by Clare Potts, Chief Internal Auditor. Clare reported that there had only been one negative opinion, relating to GDPR and that this would be the subject of further audit work in 2022/23, to ensure that changes to practises had been implemented to an appropriate standard. The Audit Opinion was found to be "satisfactory" meaning that the council was deemed to have an adequate, effective and reliable framework of internal control.

Clare then presented the Internal Audit Plan and Charter 2022/23 (noting that a key area for audit would be the One Council programme). Members approved the Audit Plan and Charter and agreed the continuation of quarterly reports to the committee.

The Finance Manager presented policies relating to various counter-fraud arrangements as follows, which were noted by members.

Anti-fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework
Fraud Response Plan
Whistleblowing Policy
Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Members then took an in-depth look at the risk profiles relating to cyber risk and data breach as requested by the committee at the previous meeting.

27th June 2022 meeting

Prior to the meeting, an in-depth training session was held for members and substitutes of the committee. The training was carried out by Clare Potts (Chief Internal Auditor) and Sarah Wilkes (s151 Officer).

Members received a zoom presentation of the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22 which showed no undue increases in the number of accidents and reflected the Council's good control of Health and Safety.

Sarah Wilkes then presented the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22, which was largely similar to previous years. This was approved by members.

Members then reviewed and approved the Proposed Accounting Policies, Critical Accounting Judgements and Sources of Estimation Uncertainty for the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. Authority to make future changes to these, as a result of new or updated guidance, was given to the S151 Officer on the proviso that any such changes would be brought to the attention of the committee at the first available opportunity.

The Draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22 was then presented to members who approved the document for Audit and Publication. The final version of the Audited Accounts and Audit Report will come back to the committee at a later date.

The Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 was presented and it was noted that the council currently has no borrowing, but in the light of various large-scale projects, this may be a likelihood in the future.

Cllr Paul Waring
Chair

Licensing and Public Protection Committee

Since the last Full Council there has been one main Licensing and Public Protection Committee which was held on Tuesday, 28th June 2022

In this meeting Members received updates on new pieces of Legislations for Taxis and Private hire vehicles (safeguarding and road safety) Act,2022 and Taxis and Private hire vehicles (disabled persons) Act,2022.

The following items were discussed and all were resolved that the contents of the reports were noted-

1. TAXI BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE CONSULTATION
2. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER PUBLIC CONSULTATION UPDATE
3. APPEALS UPDATE
4. DRINK SPIKING

There have been three sub-committees held since the last Full Council meeting and the Minutes made available to the main committee.

Cllr Andrew Parker
Chair

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee have met for the first and second time of its new cycle , on the 26th of May and 21st of June respectively - since being formed at Full Council.

The Chair welcomed all new members and those returning who had been reappointed to the Committee.

The new times and dates of potential site visits were agreed for the municipal year. 2022/2023.

Business over the two meetings had been lighter than usual but members have deliberated on three Major and two Minor applications. Members have received updates on enforcement items brought to the Committee and resolved to keep monitoring this area with further updates to be provided to the committee over the next two meetings.

Members discussed and received several reports to the committee the main one being, the Planning area Annual Development Management Performance Report 2021/2022 and were pleased to see that that performance relating to Major and non-Major applications targets had remained on track and were in the top percentile compared to some authorities despite the challenges from the effects of a national pandemic in 2021. Officers were able to carry on working exceptionally efficiently towards meeting the Council's targets during this time. It was noted that the number of enforcement cases reported had increased significantly during lockdown as more residents became more aware of what was happening in terms of planning activities in their areas. Officers across the planning area had made a concerted response to bring the overall total number of open cases down which was shown to have been effective but still needs to be compounded and monitored moving forward.

The Chair and committee commended and thanked officers for their excellent work across all areas which will hopefully provide the benchmark for this in the future.

Updates were received on the recent appeal ruling on the enforcement action being taken on land at Hazeley Paddocks, Keele Road, Keele, and a breach of Planning obligations at the former Silverdale Station and Goods Shed site.

The Chair stated that there had been some good debates on items considered at the two meetings which boded well for future meetings.

Cllr Paul Northcott
Chair

This page is intentionally left blank