

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 **Queen Elizabeth II & Astley Rooms - Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle, Staffs. ST5 1BL** on **Wednesday, 26th July, 2023** at **7.00 pm**.

B U S I N E S S

8 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (Pages 5 - 8)

9 STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 9 - 12)

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

11 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES (Pages 13 - 14)

Written reports are attached for the following:

- a) Licensing and Public Protection Committee
- b) Audit and Standards Committee(a verbal update will be given for the meeting held on 17 July, 2023)

A verbal update will be given for the Planning Committee

13 QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Pages 15 - 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..

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 B5, Rule 4 of the Constitution of the Council.

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

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Agenda Item 8

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

26 July 2023

Report Title: Changes to Committee Membership – Addendum to Agenda Item 8

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: All

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To advise Members of further changes to committee membership proportionality following a further change in political group membership.

Recommendation

That Council:-

- 1. Note the change in political proportionality on committees arising from the resignation of Cllr Sue Moffat**
- 2. Determine the appointments to committees as detailed in this report.**

Reasons

To ensure that vacancies arising on the Council's committees are appointed to on a politically proportionate basis.

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated regulations, seats on the ordinary committees of the Council are to be allocated to the political groups in a manner proportionate to the number of overall seats on council held by each group. A need has arisen to revisit the allocation of committee seats to the political groups, and to make an appointment to a newly acquired committee seat.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Notice has been duly received advising the Proper Officer that Sue Moffat has resigned her seat on the Council for the Audley Ward.
- 2.2 In accordance with Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated regulations, a calculation has been undertaken to reflect the change in group membership. That calculation has determined that there is a need to reduce by one seat the number of seats allocated to the Labour group, and increase by one seat the number of seats allocated to the Conservative group

2.3 In accordance with the council's Constitution, Council is to make appointments to committee seats. In accordance with the relevant legislation, it must do so in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.

2.4 As a result of the resignation of Sue Moffat vacancies have arisen on Planning Committee and on the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee. The proportionality calculation indicates that one of these seats should be allocated to a member of the Conservative group and one of these seats should be allocated to the Labour group. Group Leaders have been invited to make nominations to these vacancies and the following nominations have been received:

2.5 Nominations to the Economy & Place Scrutiny Committee - Cllr John Williams (Labour) and Cllr Mark Holland (Conservative).

2.6 Nominations to Planning Committee – No nominations have been received;

3. **Proposal**

That Council:-

- **Note the change in political proportionality on committees arising from the resignation of Cllr Sue Moffat**
- **Determine the appointments to committees as detailed in this report.**

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 To ensure that the proportion of seats on committees reflects the political proportionality of the Council.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 None.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 These are set out in the body of the report.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 There is no requirement for an EIA to be undertaken in connection with this decision. Nominations to committee seats are made by Group Leaders who will have regard to equality and diversity considerations when making their nominations.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 None.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 None.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 None.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is not a Key Decision.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Not Applicable.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Not Applicable.

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 Not Applicable.

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STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 26th JULY 2023

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 18th April, 6th June and 18th July 2023; detailed below is a selection of decisions and other actions of the Leader and Cabinet since the last Leader's Statement.

2. **Walleys Quarry – Odour Issues**

Cabinet has continued to receive regular updates on the ongoing gas odours from Walleys Quarry landfill.

The early part of the year saw a period of stability with both Hydrogen Sulphide levels and complaint levels associated with landfill trending downwards. Whilst the overall picture remains hugely improved since 2021, April, May, and June of this year saw an unwelcome increase in complaints about odours from the site. Officers used weather forecasts to predict the likely times of odour episodes and undertook out of hours odour tours and responded in real time to very early morning resident complaints.

Over recent weeks a fresh programme of permanent capping has begun on part of the site close to the Galingale Estate and Poolfields, and it is hoped that this will bring about further improvement. The data so far for July is indicating an improved position.

The Council remains committed to keeping the issues arising from Walleys Quarry under scrutiny and ensuring that all that can be done across agencies is being done. To this end, as Leader, I convened a meeting of the political leads of organisations associated with the multi-agency response to the odour problem so that those tasked with regulating the site could explain their work and be challenged on what more can be done to improve the situation for residents. A further meeting of this group will be convened in the autumn ahead of the winter period when historically odours have been most problematic.

The Council also played an active role in a community engagement event held at Newcastle Fire Station in June to hear directly from residents their current experience, and to explain the work of the Council. Approximately 50 residents attended and had the opportunity to talk with the Environment Agency, UK Health Protection Agency, and the Borough Council's Environmental Health team. It is clear from this event that whilst the situation has improved since 2021, it remains a significant problem for some residents living close to the site. In responding to those concerns, the Council remains ready to take such action as it can within its powers to secure improvement, including action to enforce the Abatement Notice if necessary.

3. **Town Deal and Future High Street Fund**

It has been a busy period as we move to the delivery phase on more projects associated with Town Deal and Future High Street Funds. Cabinet has received several reports which jointly form part of a £30 million regeneration of the Ryecroft and wider town centre, including the contract award for the replacement Castle Car Park, York Place Development (Award of Demolition Contract) and Ryecroft Hotel (Design & Build Contract and Brand Procurement).

Cabinet has also agreed to the acquisition of land to facilitate a Kidsgrove Shared Service Hub, a key part of delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Deal, and awarded the contract for the Wammy football changing room development to provide excellent sports facilities for residents in Knutton and Cross Heath.

Lastly, confirmation has been received that the Philip Astley Performing Arts Centre business case has been accepted by the Government confirming a £1.9 million spend on this heritage project.

4. **Sustainable Environment Update**

Cabinet has received several reports relating to the Council's sustainable environment agenda including the adoption of Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy, Hydrated Vegetable Oil (HVO), Spot Market Fuel Purchasing and a separate Food Waste Processing Contract. These initiatives will help the Council as it works towards its goal of Net Zero by 2030. Increasing recycling levels will also enable us to mitigate the effects of Climate Change.

Cabinet agreed a procurement of the transportation of recycling and waste material and for temporary agency staff to ensure the continued efficient running of the Council's waste and recycling service.

5. **Active Lifestyles Strategy**

Cabinet endorsed a new five-year Active Lifestyle Strategy which sets out three aims: -

- to enable residents to participate in regular activity, including at sports centres, informal sports settings and outdoor space;
- to provide opportunities and targeted support for those with health needs, and
- to work in partnership to provide a wide range of quality sustainable leisure and sporting opportunities.

This new Strategy builds on recent success such as the reopening of Kidsgrove Sports centre, the construction of a pump track in Newchapel, improvements at J2, including the gym, and refurbished tennis courts at Westlands and Wolstanton.

6. **Financial & Performance Review Report 4th Quarter 2022-23**

Cabinet received a report detailing Quarter 4 performance. At the end of March 2023, the Council had 80% of measures on track to meet the 2022-23 target and 69% of all measures show improved performance, or no change, compared to Q4 of last year.

Performance is strong in key areas of the Council including planning, recycling, sports and leisure, car parking income and town centre footfall.

A key focus for improvement is around levels of sickness absence. Although this is a national problem affecting the public, private and voluntary sectors, the Council's HR team are supporting staff back in to work and to remain in work. Several external matters are impacting absence rates, including NHS waiting times and a rise in national instances of mental ill health due to the cost of living and related stresses, as well as legacy issues from the Covid pandemic and lockdowns. The Council is supporting staff in a range of ways with its health and wellbeing initiatives as well as enhanced training for teams and managers around supporting colleagues with mental health issues.

The Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee has requested a report at its next meeting so that it can scrutinise further the Council's response to tackling sickness absence.

7. **Corporate Peer Challenge Outcome and Action Plan**

The Council formally received the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge report and Action Plan earlier on this Agenda. I would like to thank the Council's senior officers and Cabinet and all staff and elected members for the part they have played in achieving an excellent report.

8. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan can be found at: -

<http://svmma/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=147&RP=118>

Councillor Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council

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Audit and Standards Committee

The Committee met on 17th July 2023.

Members reviewed the Q4 Corporate Risk Management report 2022/23 and were advised that there were no risks more than 6 months overdue requiring further information, but there had been one risk level increased from medium C to medium D. However, it is likely that this will go back to its original classification following receipt of further information. One new risk has also been added in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Clare Potts, Chief Internal Auditor, introduced the Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23, which detailed work carried out during the year. It was noted that the program follows a continuous cycle and consequently there are areas of work that remain incomplete at the year-end. 51% of the recommendations made had been implemented by the year-end.

Sarah Wilkes, S151 Officer summarised the Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23, noting that the council had not needed to undertake any borrowing during the year. Due to the Town Deal and other funding streams, instead it was holding substantial cash reserves and had received substantial interest payments during the year.

Members were asked to consider the Health and Safety Report 2022/23. There were some concerns about the level of accidents occurring during the year, but members were reminded of the reduced levels of activities during recent years, due to covid, and the emphasis on reporting accidents during training sessions, which is likely to have lead to increased reports.

The Chair asked members to note the revised date of the next meeting, which has been put back approximately two weeks to fit in with reporting from the Auditors.

Paul Waring

Chair of Audit and Standards Committee.

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QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To the Leader of the Council:

1. The publication of the draft Local Plan, which highlights the importance of residents having access to public transport, coincided with the decision by First to axe the bus service between Audley and Hanley. The frequency of services on other routes has also been reduced.

Does the Leader of the Council agree that the time is right to: a) reconsider the current arrangements for operating bus services across the Borough; b) for the Borough Council to work with the City Council and other authorities across Staffordshire to put in place a new structure for providing bus services which could involve services being run by new bus operators?

Cllr Richard Gorton

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To the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment

2. In the Leaders statement it expresses that the administration will continue to improve the recycling and waste service, can the portfolio holder for sustainable environment please tell the residents and members what his action plan is for this service to improve? It also states that agency staff will be employed to help with the service, can the portfolio holder also inform members how many agency staff will be employed?, how much this is costing the council? and how many colleagues in the waste and recycling service are currently off on long term sickness?

Cllr Joel Edgington-Plunkett

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To the Leader of the Council

3. Can the Leader give members an overview of the performance of jubilee 2 since the opening of JD Gym and provide us with the current membership figures compared to this time last year?

Cllr Joel Edgington-Plunkett

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth

4. I note that the outturn for 2022/23 shows a favourable variance of £8,000 against the budget.

Given the financial pressures that the Council is under, how did you achieve such a positive outcome?

Cllr Amy Bryan

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To the Leader of the Council

- 5. This year, Love Parks week runs from 28 July to 6 August. This annual campaign celebrates parks, green spaces, and the dedicated volunteers and workers that look after them all year round. These vibrant, living spaces bring communities together and provide an opportunity to connect with nature in the heart of our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods.

Can the Leader provide council with an update and explanation as to why council has decided not to support this initiative?

Cllr Jacqueline Brown

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre’s and Growth

- 6. The Office of Budget Responsibility has predicted that “Real Household Disposable Income” (The Measure of Real Living Standards here in the UK) per person, is expected to fall by a cumulative 5.7 per cent over the next two financial years. Would the Portfolio Holder for Finance update us how the Borough Council will step in to protect the most vulnerable here in the Borough who are facing the largest two-year fall since records began in 1956-57.

Cllr Mike Stubbs

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre’s and Growth

- 7. Nationally, the Conservative Government have crashed the Economy leaving Newcastle Residents to pick up the pieces. Does the Portfolio Holder for Finance agree with the Prime Minister that my residents in Talke and Butt Lane, and residents across the Borough, should “hold their nerve” when it comes rising interest rates and stubborn inflation, or does he agree with me that the Prime Minister is simply out of touch?

Cllr Mike Stubbs

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre’s and Growth

- 8. End Child Poverty is an organisation that highlights the real impacts that poverty has on the daily lives of Children across the UK. Would the Portfolio Holder care to comment on the latest figures for Newcastle under Lyme suggesting that around 7,829 children are currently living in abject poverty?

Cllr Mike Stubbs

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To the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centre's and Growth

9. According to the Office for National Statistics, the average family in Newcastle-under-Lyme has seen the price of the weekly food shop rise by a staggering £700 per year – given there will be an estimated 30,200 households within the Borough directly affected by this, that is a further £21.1M being absorbed by struggling families with minimal help. Given this question, and indeed my previous questions, would the Portfolio holder agree to join with me in writing to our Local MPs to demand more support from a Government that is currently failing our residents?

10. Cllr Mike Stubbs

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