



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, 24th July, 2024** at **7.00 pm**.

BUSINESS

- 7 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.
- 8 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Pages 9 - 10)**
Reports are attached for the following:
- a) Health, Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
 - b) Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee
 - c) Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee
- 9 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES (Pages 11 - 14)**
Reports are attached for the following:
- a) Audit and Standards Committee
 - b) Planning Committee
 - c) Licensing and Public Protection Committee
- 10 QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Pages 15 - 16)**

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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STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 24th JULY 2024

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 23rd April, 4th June and 16th July, detailed below is a selection of decisions and other actions of the Leader and Cabinet since the last Leader's Statement.

2. **Walleys Quarry Update**

Our communities continue to be affected by foul gas odours emanating from Walleys Quarry landfill. June and July have seen a resurgence of odour complaints higher than for the same period in both 2022 & 2023. Council officers continue to proactively undertake monitoring of odour and hydrogen sulphide levels and responding to residents' complaints.

Following correspondence with previous Ministers, I wrote to the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed OBE MP, requesting that he prioritise the Council's request for permission to take legal action against Walleys Quarry Limited for breach of the Abatement Notice and inviting him at the earliest opportunity to visit Newcastle to discuss the impacts first hand.

In light of the continued blight on the lives of residents shown by the complaint data, and following a unanimous decision of Cabinet on 16th July, I have again written to the Secretary of State to reaffirm our call for a Public Inquiry into the actions of the Environment Agency as the primary regulator and its failure to bring forward a prosecution under its powers.

The Council has established a cross-party Committee of Inquiry which has now commenced its work taking evidence from key stakeholders, agencies, representative groups and others affected by the ongoing issues at Walleys Quarry. This process will complete later in the summer, with a further session with the Environment Agency and UK Health Protection Agency. The Inquiry's finding will be reported to the Scrutiny Committees and Full Council in due course.

3. **Town Deal & Future High Street Fund (FHSF) Update**

Work continues to deliver the £50 million investment in the Borough as part of the previous government's Levelling Up agenda via the Newcastle and Kidsgrove Town Deals and FHSF funding.

The new Castle Car Park continues to take shape and cabinet agreed to award a contract for the new Car Park Payment System. Work on the development of York Place will commence shortly and the market improvement work is well underway. Work continues to fit out 'Keele in Town', Keele University's new base in the town centre, which will open its door in the autumn.

Plans are being prepared for the redevelopment of the Midway and McCarthy & Stone have now acquired part of the Ryecroft for their residential development and Capital & Centric are working on plans for the remainder of the site.

Cabinet received a progress report on the development of the Shared Service Hub in Kidsgrove relating to ground conditions at the preferred site. The Hub will provide a one stop shop for local services which will be run by Kidsgrove Town Council and will provide a base for delivery of a range of community led services and groups. It will also create a new gateway into the town when accessed from the railway station or canal tow path.

4. **Sustainable Environment update**

Cabinet endorsed the refresh of the Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy which sets out the road map to enable the Council to reach carbon net zero by 2030.

The Council has already reduced emissions from its HGV fleet by 90 per cent, planted over 19,000 trees and moved to renewable energy for its electricity consumption. Over the next 6 years the road maps identified works include upgrading walls, windows and roofs, installing solar panels and LED lighting in council buildings, modernising heating systems and moving towards powering the crematorium with green energy.

Cabinet also received reports on the pilot of a new Grassland Management Strategy, Keele Sustainable Solar Energy Business Case and joint work with partners on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Six green spaces in the Borough are Green Flag Award winners for 2024: Bradwell Crematorium, Brampton Park, Keele Cemetery, Lyme Valley Park, Queens Gardens and Wolstanton Park. These complement the Boroughs status as reigning overall champion of the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom awards.

Well done to everyone involved in the maintenance of our wonderful green parks and open spaces and good luck to the town centre Business Improvement District (BID) that has entered the BID category in this year's Britain in Bloom awards.

5. **Borough Tree Planting Strategy - Phase 6**

Eight more Council owned green spaces, including two in the rural villages, are set to benefit from tree planting this autumn as the 6th phase of the Strategy gets underway.

Since the protection of over 60 council owned green spaces as carbon capture areas, over 19,000 trees have been planted including at the 850 Lyme Forest in Silverdale.

It should be noted in the context of the Borough Local Plan that will be discussed earlier on the Full Council agenda that many of those 60 green spaces were considered for housing development previously at various stages of the now defunct Joint Local Plan with Stoke-on-Trent. The lower housing target in the new Borough Local Plan and the use of brownfield sites such as Ryecroft and Midway has allowed us to protect acres of much-loved public green spaces across the Borough.

6. **Crematorium and Cemeteries Rules and Regulations Update**

Cabinet has updated the Council's Crematorium and Cemeteries Rules and Regulations with the adoption of additional policies relating to the Scattering of Ashes and Welfare Funerals. The introduction of a scattering area for ashes will provide an additional option for cremated remains providing a natural burial area of meadowland and wildflowers.

Though the Council has operated welfare funerals for many years, the new Policy seeks to confirm the approach towards these going forward.

A procedure has also been put in place to ensure that requests for burials to be completed within a short period of time are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.

7. **Staffordshire Leaders Board**

The Council has been working with Staffordshire County Council and the fellow District & Borough Councils via the Leaders Board for the last few years. The Board was created to enable collaboration on areas of mutual interest such as climate change and economic development. It also provides the foundation for exploring the potential of a deal with government on the devolution of powers and funding to the area.

Although Stoke-on-Trent were not one of the original members of the Leaders Board, it was always hoped that they would join the Board at some point, and agreement has now been reached to enable this to happen. Cabinet agreed that the Terms of Reference of the Board be amended to allow their inclusion.

In recent days the new Government has written to Councils about its emerging policy on local devolution and I will be meeting with fellow Staffordshire Leaders to discuss a response. I will of course keep the Council fully updated.

8. **Delivery of Electric Vehicle Charging through the County Council's Local Government Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Funding**

The Council is working with Staffordshire County Council and the wider County Electric Vehicle Partnership to deliver Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding in the Borough.

The Council has several EV charging points on its car parks which support residents and visitors, EV charging bays will also be included in the new Castle Car Park.

The County Council's successful bid for LEVI funding to deliver EV chargers across Staffordshire is specifically targeted at areas where residents find it difficult to directly charge their vehicles.

Cabinet received a report regarding availability of publicly owned land which could accommodate the next phase of EV charging facilities and gave delegated authority to progress feasibility of the locations and delivery of EV chargers.

9. **Award of Short Form Services Contracts to a Consortium of Architectural Service Providers relating to DFGs**

Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in a timely and efficient way to those in need is vitally important. Over the last few years, the Council has revamped the DFG process by the introduction of a new Housing Assistance Policy.

Cabinet has now given approval for the Council to enter into legal agreements and short form services contracts with a consortium of suitably qualified architectural service providers to support and further improve the DFG process when adaptations require significant alterations or the building of an extension.

10. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan can be found at: -

<https://modern.gov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=160&RP=118>

Councillor Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES CHAIR'S REPORTS

Health, Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 3 June, 2024 and the following matters were considered:

- The regular reports from the County Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and notes of a meeting with the Integrated Care Board were considered.
- The Committee considered the latest report to Cabinet on odour issues at Walleys Quarry including plans for inquiry days.
- A presentation was received from the Service Director for Commercial Delivery at J2 about their services to reduce child excess weight. The Active Life Programme and school swimming lessons were discussed.
- A report was received from the Chief Fire Officer and his Deputy about the three person crew trial which has been ongoing. They presented the positive findings and will be extending the trial.
- The Work Programme was discussed

Cllr Rupert Adcock

Chair

Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee

The Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee has met twice since the Annual Council meeting; on 20th June, 2024 and at a Special Meeting on 11th July, 2024.

At the 20th June meeting the committee considered the following:

- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update
- Borough Local Plan Update
- Work Programme

Following a number of questions being asked by Members, all of the recommendations set out in the report were agreed.

At the Special Meeting, held on 11th July, the following items were considered:

- Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Local Plan 2040
- Questions from Members of the Public
- Work Programme

Following a lengthy debate on the Local Plan, the recommendations as set out in the report, were agreed.

The Committee received 3 questions from members of the public, which were answered by the Council's Planning Policy Manager.

Cllr Andrew Parker

Chair

Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 27 June to consider an update on the Town Deals and Future High Streets Fund projects.

The Committee will meet again on 18 September.

Cllr Mark Holland
Chair

Regulatory Committee's Chairs' reports

Audit and Standards Committee

The Committee has met on two occasions:

22nd April 2024.

As of 1st April 2024 the council has new contracts in place for both internal and external auditors and representatives from Staffs County Council (Internal Auditor) and KPMG (External Auditor) were in attendance to introduce themselves and the relevant reports.

Following agreement of the minutes, Deborah Harrison of SCC introduced the Internal Audit Charter 2024. Members were happy to approve the document.

Attention turned to the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 as prepared by the S151 Officer (due to the change-over) and it was agreed that this had the potential, should it be felt necessary, to be amended later in the year. After a brief discussion Members agreed to approve the plan and accept quarterly updates at future meetings. Sarah then detailed the counter-fraud arrangements and Members were asked to note the following documents:

Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework

Fraud Response Plan

Whistleblowing Policy

Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Anthony Harold, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal, lead Members through the Corporate Risk Policy Statement and Strategy 2024/25. The Committee agreed to accept and approve the document and also note that Policy Statement would be signed the Chief Executive and the Leader. Members noted their responsibilities in relation to risk management.

KPMG now introduced the External Audit Plan & Strategy 2023/24 and gave some brief details as to the background KPMG had in auditing public bodies and how it proposed to carry out the Audit of the past year's Accounting Statements. They did not anticipate any difficulties in keeping to prescribed timetables.

Members were informed that Ernst and Young had now signed off the Staffs County Council Pension Fund Audit and as a result of this, Grant Thornton will provide the 2022/23 Final Audit Report (unchanged from earlier draft reports) for members at the May meeting.

Attendees were thanked for their attendance.

28th May 2024.

Members were first asked to consider and note the contents of the Auditors Report and Closure of the Audit 2022/23 which had been awaited subject to completion of the pension scheme audit.

Approval was then sought in relation to the proposed accounting policies, critical accounting judgements and sources of estimation uncertainty used in the preparation of the accounts for 2023/24.

The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was now introduced by Craig Turner (Finance Manager and Deputy S151 Officer). Members approved the document.

Craig now also briefed members on the salient points contained in the draft accounts in order that approval be given for their Audit and Publication. Members were also asked to note the outturn and key financial issues for the year ended 31st March 2024.

15th July 2024.

Clare Potts, Internal Audit Manager for Stoke-on-Trent City Council, briefed Members and asked them to consider the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24. It was explained that this year, as it was the final year of a 4 year contract, they had carried out further work to complete audits in progress at the year end, after the year end, to ease the hand over to Staffordshire County Council.

The S151 Officer, Sarah Wilkes, took members to the Corporate Risk Management Report, and covered various points. It was noted that at the time of writing, the council had no borrowing and was receiving significant interest from its current deposits. It was agreed that the report be received and reported on to full council in September.

The Corporate Risk Management Report was presented to Members by Anthony Harold and it was noted that there were no risks more than 6 months overdue, no risk level increases and no changes to the corporate risk register. There were no specific requests for in-depth scrutiny of any specific areas.

Cllr Paul Waring

Chair

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee have met twice since the last Full Council meeting

21st May 2024

One major application was considered for residential development at Knutton and a minor application for an extension to a dwelling.

An update report was given on land at Doddlespool, Betley.

18th June, 2024

An application for Major Development was considered for a Great Crested Newt habitat at Talke. An application for Minor development was also considered for a new village hall in knutton.

An application for financial assistance was granted for works at Audleys Cross Farm and an update report was given on 5 Boggs Cottages, Keele.

Cllr Paul Northcott

Chair

Licensing and Public Protection Committee

The Licensing and Public Protection Committee met on the 11th June, 2024.

At the meeting Members, received the following Licensing report:

- CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The Committee discussed a number of aspects of the report and agreed to the proposed recommendations that were set out in those reports.

The Committee also received the following Public Protection reports:

- PROPOSED CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER
– CAR CRUISING

Members had a brief discussion on those reports and the Committee agreed and agreed that the consultation be carried out.

Since the last Full Council meeting the Licensing Sub Committee has met once and the Public Protection Sub Committee has met twice.

The minutes for the Public Protection Sub Committee held on 22nd May, 2024 were received and noted as a correct record

Cllr Joan Whieldon

Chair

QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning:

1. Having attended a meeting on Wed 17th July at Silverdale WMC organised by Acre Allotments Association, could the borough council explain the reasoning behind the selection of Traveller and Gypsy Site 8 (T&G 8) in the amendment to Draft Borough Local Plan 2024 as submitted to the Special Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee on 11 July as apparently, suitable for a Traveller and Gypsy site for 5 pitches?

Cllr. Jacqueline Brown

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To the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment:

2. Will the Portfolio Holder confirm when the abandoned waste bins and other miscellaneous discarded items currently littering part of Orchard Street, Wolstanton will be removed? Despite requests from Wolstanton councillors last month and assurances by Street Scene that the bins and rubbish would be removed, as at 11.00 am yesterday (23rd July), no action appears to have been taken.

Cllr. Richard Gorton

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