

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22nd November, 2017

Time of Commencement: 7.15 pm

Present:- The Mayor Councillor Simon White – in the Chair

Councillors:

Allport	Northcott
Bailey	Olszewski
Beech	Owen
Bloor	Panter
Burgess	Parker
Cooper	Pickup
Miss J Cooper	Reddish
Dillon	Robinson
Dymond	Rout
Eagles	Shenton
Fear	Snell
Frankish	Spence
Gardner	Stubbs
L Hailstones	Sweeney
P Hailstones	J Tagg
S Hambleton	S Tagg
Harper	Turner
Heesom	Waring
Holland	G White
Huckfield	Wilkes
Johnson	G Williams
Jones	J Williams
Kearon	Winfield
Loades	Wing
Mancey	Woolley
Matthews	Wright
Naylon	

Officers Executive Director (Operational Services) - David Adams, Executive Director (Development) - Neale Clifton, Phil Jones - Head of Communications, Chief and Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - Kelvin Turner

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors' Astle, Proctor, Simpson and Walklate.

2. **FORMER COUNCILLOR RAY ASTLE AND ALDERMAN ELSIE ASHLEY**

Following a minute's silence, Members paid tribute to former Councillors' Ray Astle and Alderman Elsie Ashley O.B.E. J.P. M.U. (Keele) had both recently passed away.

Councillor Hambleton had held many roles during his time with the Authority including that of Mayor.

Members described Ray as hard working, loyal, committed, and a gentleman who would be greatly missed.

Elsie was described as being like 'royalty'. She was a strict group leader, hardworking and a lovely lady who would be greatly missed.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor passed on condolences and best wishes to Councillor Margaret Astle and the families of both former Members.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Loades declared an interest in item ten – the Motion for Universal Credit as his company has involvement with it.

4. MINUTES

The Chair had been notified of an error in the previous Minutes at item 9 – Members' Allowances. Councillor Snell was reported to have foregone his Basic Allowance since May, 2017. This was incorrect as it was actually February, 2017.

An apology was given to Councillor Snell for the incorrect Minute and also to Councillor Simon Tagg who had been given inaccurate information prior to the meeting.

Resolved: That, subject to the month being amended from May to February, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September, 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Leader if any progress had been made in respect of item ten of the Minutes regarding advertisement hoardings. The leader confirmed that she would look into this.

6. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual Fun Fair and Fireworks Display held at Lyme Valley had raised £2000 for the Mayor's Charity Fund.

The Mayor's Civic Carol Service will be held at All Saints' Church, Madeley on 17th December, 2017 commencing 6.30pm.

Memorial services are to be held for:

Elsie Ashley, on 3 December, 2017 at 2pm at St Giles' Church, Newcastle.

Trevor Hambleton, on 7 January, 2018 at 6.30pm at St Barnabus' Church, Caudon Avenue, Bradwell.

7. LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer introduced the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Members were informed that it was the same as last year but some of the figures had changed.

Resolved: That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area, as detailed, is adopted for the financial year 2018/19.

8. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader submitted a report which provided an update to members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet together with the Forward Plan.

The Leader added that at the last Council meeting, Members had asked about an expected Elections report and it had been anticipated that it would be brought to this evenings' meeting. The Leader had not received a report as yet and assured members that once received, a special meeting of Council would be called.

Councillor Sweeney made reference to the Cabinet agenda of 26 September and the item regarding the subways. Councillor Sweeney commended Councillor Naylor on her work as Chair of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee and stated how beneficial working in partnership can be, referring to the work undertaken by this Council, the County Council and the B.I.D.

Councillor Simon Tagg raised a question from the 26 September Cabinet meeting regarding Business Rates and pooling in respect of the Innovation Centre 6 at Keele University. The item had been withdrawn from the previous Cabinet meeting and was showing as abandoned on the Forward Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer explained that Keele University had asked the Borough Council to waive £11,000 Business Rates for the next fifty years. This was not the best use of the Council's money which could be better spent on 'the citizens' of the Borough.

Councillor Loades referred to the item on Planning for Homes seeking assurance that the Plan had been updated and that Neighbourhood Planning would be kept informed.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, at the 8 November Cabinet meeting had been given delegated authority to agree the final consultation response with officers. Councillor Robinson had met with the Head of Planning and the consultation had been reviewed.

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

9. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Written reports had been submitted for all of the Scrutiny Committees. Councillor Naylor spoke on her report.

Councillor Loades made reference to the Health Select Committee and Councillor Simon Tagg congratulated the Health Scrutiny Committee with respect to their work on the Space Programme.

Resolved: That the reports for the Finance, Resources and Partnerships; Active and Cohesive Communities; Economic Development and Enterprise; Health and Wellbeing and Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committees be received.

10. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Written reports were submitted for Audit and Standards Committee; Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee.

A verbal update was given by the Chair of the Public Protection Committee. Although not much could be said as the biggest majority of reports were confidential, the Chair stated that the Committee had met on several occasions and many taxi drivers, littering offenders and noise offenders had been considered.

Officers were also looking at tightening up policies and guidelines for taxis.

Resolved: That the reports be received and the comments noted.

11. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR TO HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Nominations were received for:
Councillor Dillon
Councillor Northcott

Resolved: That Councillor Northcott be appointed Vice Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

12. MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

The Mental Health Challenge

The following motion was received, proposed by Councillor Gardner and seconded by Councillor Wright regarding the Mental Health Challenge:

"This council notes:

*1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, employment, family problems or debt.*

This council believes:

To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge rub by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.

We commit to appoint an elected member as "mental health champion" across the council.

We will seek to identify a member of staff within the council to act as "lead officer" for mental health.

The council will also:

Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, colleges, Keele University, neighbourhoods and workplaces.

Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community.

Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs.

Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community.

Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.

Sign up to the Time to Change Pledge".

Resolved: That the motion be carried.

Councillor Loades left the room during consideration of the following motion:

Universal Credit

A motion was received, proposed by Councillor Gardner and seconded by Councillor Olszewski regarding Universal Credit:

"This council notes:

That Universal Credit, the single monthly payment which replaces the six current working age benefits, is to be fully implemented in Newcastle in 2018.

This council also notes that within our area the number of people affected is likely to be in the thousands.

Council notes with concern that the move to a Full Service Universal Credit in other parts of the country has caused considerable financial hardship for many of those people moving onto this new system of benefit payments.

Before a full roll-out of Universal Credit the following problems need to be addressed:

- ***The six -week wait for claimants to receive their benefits.***
The idea that all workers are in jobs where they are paid a month in arrears ignores the reality for the 1.5 million workers who struggle on zero hours, insecure jobs or forced self-employment. Claimants need to be paid from day one.
- ***Payments going to one named member of a household.***
Many claimants struggle to budget and payments should be paid to the separate claimants within a household and on a fortnightly rather than a monthly basis. With the present policy there is real danger that if the whole benefit goes to one named

individual there is no guarantee that the money will be distributed fairly within the household.

- ***Claimants need to have their rent paid directly to landlords*** to avoid the unacceptably high levels of arrears and homelessness that have occurred in the areas where UC already exists.
Pushing claimants into debt adds to the stress and insecurity for the claimants.
- ***An end to benefit sanctions*** as there is no evidence that sanctioning helps people into work.
In fact taking away claimant's ability to feed themselves and their families prevents them from focusing on finding employment as they are too busy trying to survive. The evidence of the harm that sanctions cause is growing – they are an unnecessary cruelty in our benefits system.
- ***Allow all new claimants to apply for Universal Credit in job centres supported by trained job centre staff.***
Forcing new claimants to apply on-line causes real problems for many people who don't have either access or the IT skills to cope with the complex online application. The use of a paid helpline also needs to be abandoned as claimants cannot afford the expensive rates charged. The planned job centre closures also need to be reversed as claimants need face to face support to help them back into work and to deal with the complexity of Universal Credit.
- ***Abandon the in-work conditionality for part-time or low paid workers*** – the idea that there are extra hours or higher paid work for large numbers of those affected workers is simply not the case.
This clause of UC places the emphasis on individuals who often want greater number of hours of work – and not on the employers who benefit from short hours and insecurity.
- ***The overall level that UC is funded needs to be urgently increased.*** The rate at which some claimants will lose benefit is set at 63p in the pound which when compared with the top rate of income tax of 45% on incomes over £150,000 a year, demonstrates just how unfair UC is for the lowest income households.

This council notes with concern, therefore, that the implementation of a Full Service Universal Credit in the borough is likely to prove seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of thousands of its local residents.

The council therefore resolves:

To request all its political group leaders to jointly write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions asking that the system of Universal Credit is redesigned in such a way that it removes the inherent risks that this council has expressed its concerns over.”

Subsequently an amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Holland and seconded by Councillor Simon Tagg:

“Amendment to Motion to Council: Universal Credit

This council notes:

That Universal Credit, the single monthly payment which replaces six current working-age benefits, is to be fully implemented in Newcastle in 2018.

Universal Credit is a major reform that will have a transformational effect on the benefits system in Britain.

This council notes that within our area the number of people who could receive Universal Credit is likely to be in the thousands.

The council also notes the submission in bullet points below from Councillors Gardner and Olszewski relating to the Labour Party campaign to halt the full roll-out of Universal Credit:

- ***The six -week wait for claimants to receive their benefits.***

The idea that all workers are in jobs where they are paid a month in arrears ignores the reality for the 1.5 million workers who struggle on zero hours, insecure jobs or forced self employment. Claimants need to be paid from day one.

- ***Payments going to one named member of a household.***

Many claimants struggle to budget and payments should be paid to the separate claimants within a household and on a fortnightly rather than a monthly basis. With the present policy there is real danger that if the whole benefit goes to one named individual there is no guarantee that the money will be distributed fairly within the household.

- ***Claimants need to have their rent paid directly to landlords to avoid the unacceptably high levels of arrears and homelessness that have occurred in the areas where UC already exists. Pushing claimants into debt adds to the stress and insecurity for the claimants.***

- ***An end to benefit sanctions as there is no evidence that sanctioning helps people into work. In fact taking away claimant’s ability to feed themselves and their families prevents them from focusing on finding employment as they are too busy trying to survive. The evidence of the harm that sanctions cause is growing – they are an unnecessary cruelty in our benefits system.***

- ***Allow all new claimants to apply for Universal Credit in job centres supported by trained job centre staff.***

Forcing new claimants to apply on-line causes real problems for many people who don’t have either access or the IT skills to cope with the complex online application. The use of a paid helpline also needs to be abandoned as claimants cannot afford the expensive rates charged. The planned job centre

closures also need to be reversed as claimants need face to face support to help them back into work and to deal with the complexity of Universal Credit.

- **Abandon the in-work conditionality for part-time or low paid workers**

The idea that there are extra hours or higher paid work for large numbers of those affected workers is simply not the case. This clause of UC places the emphasis on individuals who often want greater number of hours of work – and not on the employers who benefit from short hours and insecurity.

- **The overall level that UC is funded needs to be urgently increased.**

The rate at which some claimants will lose benefit is set at 63p in the pound which when compared with the top rate of income tax of 45% on incomes over £150,000 a year, demonstrates just how unfair UC is for the lowest income households.

Cllrs Gardner & Olszewski believe that the implementation of a Full Service Universal Credit in the borough is likely to prove seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of thousands of its local residents.

The council believes:

That it is vital the Government takes proper account of the concerns expressed about the roll-out of Universal Credit, and continues to revise and improve the system as it is being fully introduced in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The council therefore resolves:

To request all its political group leaders to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ask the government to continue to listen to views expressed from all quarters and to take account of the experience from pilot areas, to ensure that Universal Credit is a success.

A copy of this motion should also sent to the Secretary of State”.

Members debated the motion and amendment and named votes were requested for the motion and the amendment to the motion.

Vote on the amendment to the motion.

ALLPORT	NO	HEESOM	YES	SHENTON	NO
ASTLE	ABSENT	HOLLAND	YES	SIMPSON	ABSENT
BAILEY	NO	HUCKFIELD	YES	SNELL	NO
BEECH	NO	JOHNSON	YES	SPENCE	NO
BLOOR	YES	JONES	NO	STUBBS	NO

		KEARON	NO	SWEENEY	YES
BURGESS	NO	LOADES	NOT IN DEBATE	JOHN TAGG	YES
COOPER	YES	MANCEY	YES	SIMON TAGG	YES
MISS COOPER	YES	MATTHEWS	YES	TURNER	NO
DILLON	NO	NAYLON	NO	WALKLATE	ABSENT
DYMOND	NO	NORTHCOTT	YES	WARING	YES
EAGLES	NO	OLSZEWSKI	NO	G WHITE	NO
FEAR	YES	OWEN	NO	S WHITE	NO
FRANKISH	YES	PANTER	YES	I WILKES	NO
GARDNER	NO	PARKER	YES	G WILLIAMS	NO
MRS HAILSTONES	YES	PICKUP	NOT PRESENT	J WILLIAMS	NO
MR HAILSTONES	YES	PROCTOR	ABSENT	WINFIELD	NO
HAMBLETON	NO	REDDISH	NO	WING	NOT PRESENT
		ROBINSON	NO	WOOLLEY	YES
HARPER	YES	ROUT	NO	WRIGHT	NO

In Favour - 22

Against - 29

Abstain – 0

Vote on the original motion:

ALLPORT	YES	HEESOM	NO	SHENTON	YES
ASTLE	ABSENT	HOLLAND	NO	SIMPSON	ABSENT
BAILEY	YES	HUCKFIELD	ABSTAIN	SNELL	YES
BEECH	YES	JOHNSON	NO	SPENCE	YES
BLOOR	NO	JONES	YES	STUBBS	YES

		KEARON	YES	SWEENEY	NO
BURGESS	YES	LOADES	NOT IN DEBATE	JOHN TAGG	NO
COOPER	NO	MANCEY	NO	SIMON TAGG	NO
MISS COOPER	NO	MATTHEWS	NO	TURNER	YES
DILLON	YES	NAYLON	YES	WALKLATE	ABSENT
DYMOND	YES	NORTHCOTT	NO	WARING	NO
EAGLES	YES	OLSZEWSKI	YES	G WHITE	YES
FEAR	NO	OWEN	YES	S WHITE	YES
FRANKISH	NO	PANTER	NO	I WILKES	YES
GARDNER	YES	PARKER	NO	G WILLIAMS	YES
MRS HAILSTONES	NO	PICKUP	NOT PRESENT	J WILLIAMS	YES
MR HAILSTONES	NO	PROCTOR	ABSENT	WINFIELD	YES
HAMBLETON	YES	REDDISH	YES	WING	NOT PRESENT
		ROBINSON	YES	WOOLLEY	NO
HARPER	NO	ROUT	YES	WRIGHT	YES

In Favour - 29

Against - 21

Abstain - 1

Resolved: That the original motion be carried.

Pressures on the Provision of Acute and Sub-acute Beds in North Staffordshire.

The following motion was received. Proposed by Councillor Gardner and seconded by Councillor Jones regarding a decision made by the North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group:

“This Council notes:

That North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (NSCCG) took the decision in October 2016 to remove the funding of community step-down and rehabilitation beds, resulting in the closure of 64 community beds at Bradwell Hospital.

That in October and November 2016 Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council resolved to 'refer-back', under the Health & Social Care Act (2012), the decision to close these community beds to the Secretary of State for Health for consideration.

That a motion passed at the 23rd November 2016 meeting of council resolved to support the 'refer-back' of the decision to close the community beds at Bradwell hospital, and that until a decision had been made, the beds should remain open.

That since November 2016 a further 84 Community beds have been closed in Cheadle and Leek Moorlands hospital. Whilst the UHNM trust is working to increase the number of beds at the Royal Stoke University Hospital, against significant funding pressures, investing £2 million to open an additional 45 acute care beds.

That during a recent debate on healthcare in North Staffordshire in the House of Commons, the Health Minister confirmed that the 'refer-back' has been passed onto the independent referral panel for investigation.

That the UHNM trust has made a formal request to the NSCCG to re-open community beds in the build up to, and over the winter period, in anticipation of increased pressures on the provision of acute beds.

That the NSCCG has administered circa. £10 million pounds in fines to the UHNM trust for failure to meet specified unrealistic targets, and that the NSCCG retains the ability to forgive these fines given the financial pressures the UHNM trust faces.

This Council believes:

That community hospitals provide an essential health care provision to ensure that residents can recuperate outside of an acute setting in a location close to their home and families.

That Bradwell Hospital wards should be re-opened permanently, funded by NSCCG.

That provision of sub-acute beds, where patients who are medically fit for discharge from an acute setting, but not yet medically fit to return to their own homes, is essential to a sustainable patient discharge system.

That the NSCCG has failed to demonstrate appropriate, transparent, and accountable leadership regarding the consultation process over the closure of community beds at Bradwell hospital and across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent authorities.

That the NSCCG has failed to appropriately respond to the request by the UHNM trust to reopen community beds, on the basis of increased pressures, and in doing so put the safety of residents at risk.

This Council resolves:

That the Leader of the Council write to the Borough's four Members of Parliament and ask that they use their platform within the House of Commons to apply pressure on the Secretary of State for Health to intervene over the closure of community beds whilst under a Health & Social Care Act (2012) 'refer-back' mechanism and ensure the long-term opening of Bradwell Hospital wards.

That the Leader of the Council write to the Director of NHS England and the Secretary of State for Health, raising this councils concerns regarding the leadership of the NSCCG.

That the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Accountability officer of the NSCCG, the Chief Executive of the UHNM trust, and the Director of NHS England, raising this councils belief that the circa. £10 million in fines levied against the trust should be forgiven."

Resolved: That the above motion be carried.

13. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Councillor Gary White asked the Leader for an update regarding the position with Castle House.

The Leader stated that it was a County Council project which was being led by them and at the last time of speaking, they did not have a definitive date for moving across. Councillor Atkins was, however, committed to providing updates when available.

Councillor Gary White felt that not enough pressure was being put onto the County Council and more should be applied.

The Leader confirmed that she had met with Councillor Atkins at it was not just Councillors being affected - it was officers and the public too. Councillor Atkins had been made aware of the concerns.

Councillor Waring asked the Leader what progress had been made with the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group regarding taking on and managing the existing building.

The Leader confirmed that the viability of the business case would need to be assessed and the County Council would be making their decision soon.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Leader if the Borough Council had submitted a response to the Staffordshire Subsidised Bus Review Consultation.

The Leader confirmed that she had checked her emails and had not receive the email that Councillor Tagg referred to. However, it was confirmed that an email had been received by the Chief Executive and a response was sent on 16 September, 2017.

Councillor Tagg asked which of the three options from the consultation was the preferred one.

The Leader stated that the Consultation was limited and the only viable option for Newcastle was option one as it was the only one that retained a bus subsidy in the Borough.

Councillor Sweeney asked the Leader what cuts would be made to cover the shortfall of £200,000.

The Leader confirmed that an action plan had been developed.

Last year's budget had balanced and the Leader stated that new ways of delivering all of the Council's services had had to be explored.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Leader why a room would not be provided for a Mayor's Parlour in Castle House.

The Leader explained that the cost of incorporating a Mayor's Parlour into the new building would be £45,000 for a 15m² room, excluding any alarmed cabinets. To provide a room the same size as the existing (Civic Offices) one would cost in the region of £100,000.

Use of the 'red' room at the Borough Museum had been agreed for certain functions.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Leader to agree to work with Group Leaders to identify a room within Castle House that could be used as a Mayor's Parlour.

The Leader stated that she had researched the use of the existing Parlour and in 2013/14 there were 15 visits, in 2014/15 and 2015/16 there were 18 visits in both years, in 2016/17, ten visits and in this current year, six visits to date.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business to provide details of the Performance Indicators put in place by the Business Improvement District (BID) to ensure value for money and performance.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he was obtaining information on the Performance Indicators and once it had been received it would be passed on to Members.

The BID had been successful in bringing people into the town with various events.

Councillor Simon Tagg thanked the Portfolio Holder for his response and asked if there was a current Town Centre Manager. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was a temporary manager.

14. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

No Petitions were received.

15. STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS

Approval of Absence.

The report was submitted as an item of urgent business due to there not being another Council meeting until February 2018 and a decision being required by 20 January, 2018.

The Leader of the Council sought an extension to the approval of absence for Councillor Margaret Astle under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to 28 February, 2018.

Resolved: That approval of an extension of absence for Councillor Margaret Astle be approved on the grounds of ill health.

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THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR SIMON WHITE
Chair

Meeting concluded at 9.21 pm