

# 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 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER BY NO LATER THAN 6.45PM.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme to be held in the ***Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG*** on ***Wednesday, 22nd November, 2017*** at ***7.15 pm or immediately following conclusion of the Special Council meeting.***

## **B U S I N E S S**

### **1 APOLOGIES**

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of interest from Members on items contained within this agenda.

### **3 MINUTES**

**(Pages 5 - 14)**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting(s)

### **4 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **5 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

**(Pages 15 - 22)**

### **6 STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**(Pages 23 - 24)**

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 25 - 34)**

The following reports are attached:

- a) Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
- b) Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee
- d) Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee
- e) Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- f) Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**8 REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

**(Pages 35 - 40)**

Reports are attached for the following:

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

A verbal report will be given for the Public Protection Committee.

**9 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR TO HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Nominations:

Councillor Laura Dillon

**10 MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

**(Pages 41 - 46)**

A notice of motion, under Appendix 7 – paragraph 12 other than those listed in Appendix 7 – paragraph 10 of the Constitution must reach the Chief Executive at least ten clear days before the relevant Meeting of the Council.

**11 QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**12 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

To receive from Members any petitions which they wish to present to the Council.

**13 STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any communications which pursuant to Appendix 7 – paragraph 7 of the constitution are, in the opinion of the Mayor, of an urgent nature and to pass thereon such resolutions as may be deemed necessary.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. M.', is written over a horizontal line.

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. Do not stop to collect personal belongings, do not use the lifts.

Fire exits are to be found either side of the rear of the Council Chamber and at the rear of the Public Gallery.

On exiting the building Members, Officers and the Public must assemble at the car park at the rear of the Aspire Housing Office opposite to the Civic Offices. 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 Porter's lodge.

### **3. Mobile Phones**

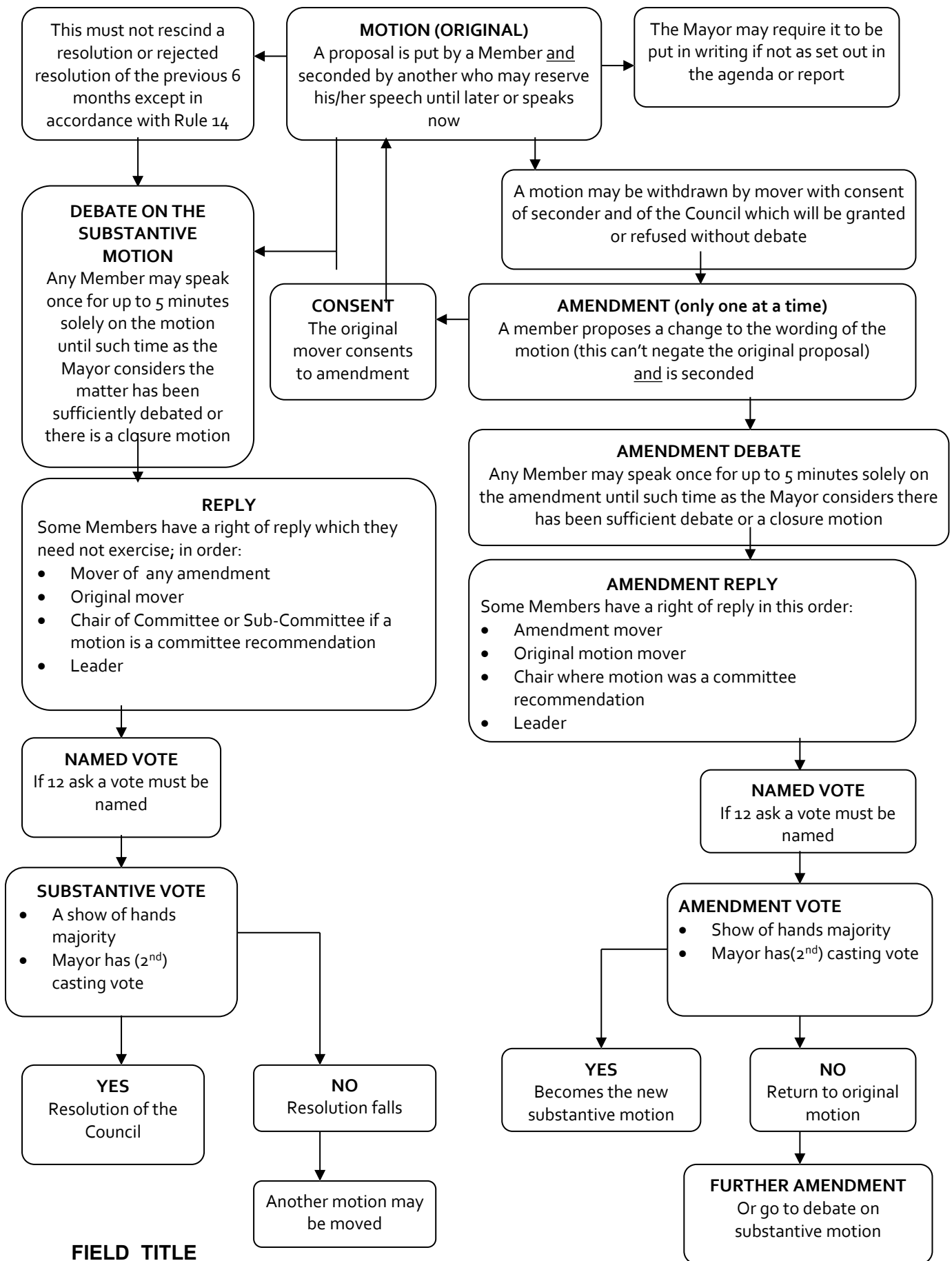
Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Council Chamber.

### **4. Tea/Coffee**

Refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the meeting, or in the event of a break occurring, during that break.

### **5. 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.



## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 6th September, 2017

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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

**Councillors:**

Bailey	Olszewski
Beech	Owen
Bloor	Parker
Burch	Pickup
Burgess	Proctor
Cooper	Reddish
Miss J Cooper	Robinson
Dillon	Rout
Dymond	Shenton
Eagles	Simpson
Gardner	Spence
L Hailstones	Stubbs
P Hailstones	Sweeney
S Hambleton	J Tagg
Heesom	S Tagg
Holland	Turner
Huckfield	Walklate
Johnson	Waring
Jones	G White
Kearon	G Williams
Loades	J Williams
Mancey	Winfield
Matthews	Wing
Naylon	Wright
Northcott	

**Officers** Executive Director (Operational Services) - David Adams, Executive Director (Development) - Neale Clifton, Chief Executive - John Sellgren and Executive Director (Support Services) - Kelvin Turner

### 1. COUNCILLOR TREVOR HAMBLETON

Following a minute's silence, Members paid tribute to Councillor Trevor Hambleton who had passed away in July. Councillor Hambleton had held many roles during his time with the Authority including that of Mayor.

Members described Trevor as hard working, committed, knowledgeable and a true gentleman who would be greatly missed by colleagues and the people of Bradwell.

Councillor Sandra Hambleton thanked Members for their kind words and read out a passage that had been left for her by Trevor.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor passed on best wishes to Sandra and her family.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors' Allport, Astle, Fear, Frankish, Panter, Snell and Woolley.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

**4. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July, 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

**5. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor stated that this would be the last Full Council meeting held at the Civic Offices. Members would be invited to comment on the Civic Offices and Castle House at the November meeting.

**6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2016/17, which had been produced in line with legislative requirements.

Councillor Sweeney queried the £0 total debt figure at paragraph 3 of the report and asked when this Council may need to start borrowing.

Councillor Turner explained that the figures were for the previous financial year where no debt was incurred. Temporary borrowing may be required in the near future for Castle House.

Councillor Sweeney also asked about the position of the Land Sales Programme and Councillor Turner advised that there was currently a problem with land not selling. The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development would be looking in depth at why prime sites were not selling. Members were assured that looking into this was a priority.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2016/17 be received.
- (ii) That the actual Prudential Indicators contained within the report be approved.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

**7. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance IT and Customer introduced an item on Governance arrangements in respect of employment matters. The future of the Staffing Committee and Employee Consultative Committee had been discussed several months ago and the Council's Chief Executive was asked to look at best practice to keep in line with other authorities.

Councillor Holland requested a correction to the first recommendation that the two existing committees be replaced by an employment committee and not a staffing committee as printed in the report.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Staffing Committee and Employees Consultative Committee be disbanded to be replaced by an Employment Committee with the delegations as set out in the report.
  - (ii) That a Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee be established with the roles as set out in the report.
  - (iii) That the Council reaffirms that the formulation of operational HR policies is a delegated function of the Cabinet.
  - (iv) That the necessary amendments be made to the Constitution to give effect to the recommendations.

## **8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Portfolio Holder for Policy, People and Partnerships introduced this item advising Council of an addition to be made to the Leisure and Amenities Scheme of Delegation in respect of the scattering of cremated remains on Council-owned land.

- Resolved:** That the consequential change to the Constitution, as set out in the report, be noted.

## **9. MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

The Portfolio Holder for Policy, People and Partnerships introduced this item which would enable Council to make arrangements for an Independent Panel to be convened to recommend a new scheme of Member allowances to come into effect at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2018.

Councillor Tagg proposed some amendments to the recommendations which were tabled at the meeting. The amendments highlighted that Members had received no increase in their allowances since 2006. In addition, a recommendation was proposed relating to the publication of Members Allowances.

The additional recommendations were accepted.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the resolution made by the Council on 11 July, 2012 that 'there be no panel until such time as it is required by law' be rescinded.
  - (ii) That the Council requests the Chief Executive to

make arrangements for an Independent Panel to be convened to review the scheme of Member Allowances and to make recommendations in sufficient time for a new scheme of allowances to be considered by the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, 2018.

- (iii) That the Council notes that there has been no increase in the Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility allowance since 2006.
- (iv) That the Council also notes that all Councillors since 11 July, 2012 resolution entitled to receive the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance have done so with the exception of Councillor Gareth Snell who has foregone his basic Allowance since May, 2017.
- (v) That Officers ensure that Council complies with the local authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Act – Regulation 15(3) relating to publication of Members' Allowances.

**10. 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.

Members were advised that the next meeting of Cabinet had been moved from 13<sup>th</sup> September to 26<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that there twelve items to come forward for the next Cabinet meeting and asked for agenda management so that each item would be given fair hearing.

Councillor Tagg also drew Members' attention to an advertisement hoarding within the town which was promoting Trentham Estates which he stated as being self defeating.

The Leader stated that the advertisement hoardings were more to do with marketing and brought revenue into the Council. However, she would speak with officers to see what, if any, restrictions there were and pass this information on to Members.

Councillor Bailey asked the Leader if the Forward Plan was publicly available.

The Leader confirmed that it was on the Council's website and would ask Councillor Turner to show staff at the Kidsgrove Office where it can be located.

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

**11. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**



Councillor Naylor gave a verbal update on the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee advising Members that the report on the Borough's subways had now been signed off and would shortly be going to Cabinet.

An extra meeting of the Committee would be held on 27 September, 2017 which would look at traveller incursions and flytipping.

Future areas of work would include a review of the council's Waste and Recycling Service, a review of the cloth nappy service, parking impacts resulting from Lyme Valley restrictions and town centre overnight parking charges. The quality of air in the bus station would also be looked at and Councillor Hambleton asked that the impact of the new 'D' road be considered.

**Resolved.** That the reports for the Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee be received.

## **12. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

Written reports were submitted for Planning Committee and the Public Protection Committee.

The Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Proctor requested to make a verbal comment to his written report regarding a serious error that had occurred at the last meeting of the Planning Committee.

Following the meeting, the decision notice for an application had been sent out with the omission of a paragraph which had been requested by committee members. Although the decision notice cannot be changed, the true position had been confirmed with the applicant and the Minutes of the meeting, containing the correct wording would be agreed at the next Planning meeting. Members were assured that the Council's position had not been jeopardised and that it would not affect the Council's position should an appeal be lodged.

Councillor Proctor suggested that, to ensure that this did not happen again, future meetings of the Planning Committee should be recorded. Members agreed with this – suggesting that all meetings should be recorded, but it was stated that recording the meetings would only help if it was listened to afterwards.

The Leader took the comments on board with the view that the move to Castle House would be an excellent opportunity to action this. Councillor Turner was asked to look into whether any constitutional amendments would be required.

Councillor Turner agreed with all of the comments and stated that the recording of Planning Committees would be brought in as a matter of urgency.

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

## **13. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Nominations were received for:  
Councillor Reddish  
Councillor Winfield

**Resolved:** That Councillor Winfield be appointed Chair of the Licensing Committee.

The above appointment created a vacancy for Vice-Chair on this Committee.

A nomination for Councillor G Williams was received. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved:** That Councillor G Williams be appointed Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee.

#### 14. **MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

##### **Joint Local Plan**

A motion was received, proposed by Councillor Simon Tagg and seconded by Councillor Loades regarding the Local plan and the five year supply of deliverable housing. Subsequently an amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Turner.

Members debated the motion and amendment and, following a vote in favour of a motion that the question be now put, a vote was taken on the amendment as set out below:

*After "This Council..." delete all text and replace with.*

*"...notes the importance of having an up to date Local Plan and five year land supply to replace the outdated Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011.*

*The Council:*

- (i) Notes the intention to pursue a Joint local plan with Stoke on Trent City Council, which was announced in December, 2013.*
- (ii) Further notes the importance of producing a robust, evidence-based and properly consulted on Joint local Plan in order to help minimise risk during examination by the Planning Inspector.*
- (iii) Resolves to ensure appropriate officer resources continue to be committed to the process of producing the joint local Plan with adherence to the stated timescale wherever possible.*
- (iv) Whilst Council recognises the effect the lack of a five year housing supply has on both rural and urban communities, the implementation of a Local Plan may only be a temporary respite as land that is identified and developed has to be replaced to sustain the five year supply. Also, if development does not take place the council is penalised by an increase in the figure. These are matters to a large extent beyond the control of Councils. The council should lobby Government to ask them to review the regulations given the detrimental effect it has on authorities such as Newcastle under Lyme".*

**Resolved:** That the above amended motion be carried.

### **Motor Neurone Disease Charter**

The following motion was received, proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor Kearon, calling for the adoption of the Motor Neurone (MND) Charter by the Borough Council:

*“This Council resolves to adopt the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter, which sets out the care and support that people living with MND and their carers deserve and should expect.*

*The MND Charter is made up of five points:*

- (i) The right to an early diagnosis and information.*
- (ii) The right to access quality care and treatments*
- (iii) The right to be treated as individuals and with dignity and respect.*
- (iv) The right to maximise their quality of life.*
- (v) Carers of people with MND have the right to be valued, respected, listened to and well supported.*

*By adopting the MND Charter, this Council agrees to promote the Charter and make it available to all Councillors, Council staff, partner organisations and health and social care professionals who deliver services for the Council.*

*The Council will raise awareness of MND and what good care looks like for those living with this devastating disease, as stated in the Charter, and do everything we can as the Council to positively influence the quality of life for local people with MND and their carers living in our community.*

*This Council requests the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to consider the issue of how local services are geared to support people suffering from this rapidly progressing disease and to make recommendations about improvements that could be made in support of the MND Charter’s five principles.*

**Resolved:** That the above motion be carried.

### **15. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Councillor Gary White asked the Leader if she and her Cabinet were familiar with the potential of a longer, deeper tunnel for HS2 south of Whitmore and just north of Madeley.

The Leader confirmed that she was aware of the suggestion for the potential option but that it was not an option considered by HS2 who are proposing two tunnels. This option had not been worked up, costed and assessed but the Leader had been advised that an HS2 representative estimated that it would add approximately £100 million to the cost of the scheme. To advance this option it would have to be demonstrated to be both feasible and necessary and any adverse impacts of the

existing proposal. The parliamentary petitioning procedure would be the appropriate time for Cabinet to determine whether this would be an appropriate action to take.

Councillor Gary White asked the Leader for an update on the latest progress on Castle House.

The Leader confirmed that the work was nearing completion and the practical completion would be Monday 25 September, 2017 when the keys would be handed over to the County and Borough Councils. Following this, during a two week period, Borough Council teams – predominantly ICT and Facilities Management would carry out preparatory work in the building.

The first Borough Council employees would start to move across, week commencing Monday 9 October and this should be completed by Friday 20 October, 2017. Castle House would open to the public on Monday 23 October, 2017.

Regarding the official opening, discussions were underway between the respective Councils.

Councillor Gardner asked the Leader if the Council had been advised on the implications of the proposed cuts to bus subsidies in the Newcastle and Kidsgrove areas and had the Council been asked to contribute to the current consultation.

The Leader confirmed that neither herself, the Chief Executive or the Executive Director had received any notification concerning this matter. The Leader expressed her disappointment that the Council had not been involved in an important and potentially detrimental matter.

Councillor Gardner then asked if the Leader agreed that the loss of bus subsidies would have a negative impact on companies such as D and G.

The Leader agreed with this statement and stated that such cuts to services would further isolate the most vulnerable residents of our communities. In addition, if the vulnerable residents were unable to leave their homes, it could increase their need for social care. Also, the loss of public transport would limit educational and job opportunities amongst the young.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Leader for an update on the future of sport and leisure provision in Kidsgrove following the resolution at the last Council meeting.

The Leader stated that good progress had been made in that the consultation with residents regarding the dry side interim provision had now been completed and discussions were taking place with a potential venue where activities could be set up.

A meeting had been held with the Leader, Councillor Turner and a community group looking to take on and manage the building and officers had met with representatives of this group providing advice and information on the building and its management.

The Council had approved the application for the building to be placed on the Register of Assets of Community Value.

The Leader had also met with the Leader of Staffordshire County Council and the Leader was now awaiting a formal response from Councillor Atkins.

Councillor Stephen Sweeney asked the Leader to confirm the cost, so far, of the independent review into the 8 June General Election and the daily rate charged by the Association of Electoral Administrators who were undertaking the review.

The Leader confirmed that the review started on Monday 26 June, 2017 and therefore was in its third month and not fourth as suggested.

The review was still in hand but the Leader understood that it was nearing completion. A total cost could not be calculated at the present time as it was calculated on a daily basis at £900 per day.

The Leader intends for the review to be brought before Full Council in November, 2017.

Councillor Trevor Johnson asked the Leader to explain why the Council had failed to respond adequately to public concern relating to the recent traveller incursions on Wolstanton Marsh.

The Leader confirmed that the latest group had moved onto the Marsh on the morning of 31 August, 2017. Within three hours, officers had prepared paperwork, liaised with the Police, visited the site and had served 'Directions to Leave' notices on all those present.

Following refusal to leave, an application was prepared and submitted to the Magistrate's Court the next day and the hearing date was also served on the travellers the same day.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September, officers attended the court and secured the 'Removal Order' which was served on the travellers the same day. The travellers left the site on 5<sup>th</sup> September. This was all done within three working days.

The Leader stated that this showed that this matter was dealt with as a high priority and was dealt with swiftly.

Councillor Simon Tagg asked the Portfolio Holders for Finance, IT and Customer – Councillor Turner and Town Centres, Property and Business – Councillor John Williams how much money in extra Business Rates had been raised by the Business Improvement District (BID) since its creation.

As the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business was a BID Board Member, the Chair asked for a response from Councillor Turner.

The requested figures were for the invoiced BID levy figures on behalf of Newcastle BID:

The first 6 months of	
2015/16	£147546.00
2016/17.	£306922.00
2017/18	£310672.00

Total to date. £765140.00

Collected. £671984.00

The BID were happy with the figures to date.

**16. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

**17. STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR SIMON WHITE**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 9.25 pm

## **COUNCIL 22 NOVEMBER 2017**

### **1. LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

**Submitted by:** Benefits Manager

**Portfolio:** Finance, IT and Customer

**Ward(s) affected:** All

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To approve a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the borough area for the financial year 2018/19.

#### **Recommendations**

**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.**

#### **Reasons**

The Welfare Reform agenda replaced Council Tax Benefit with Localised Council Tax Reduction with effect from 1 April 2013. Localised schemes need to be approved by the 31 January before the start of the new financial year to which the scheme applies.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, substituted by section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires each billing authority in England to make a Localised Council Tax Reduction scheme, specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of Council Tax payable by persons or classes of person whom the authority consider are in financial need.
- 1.2 Any scheme needs to be approved by the 31 January before the start of a new financial year or a default scheme prescribed by regulations will be imposed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. A default scheme would involve expenditure at a higher level than the available central government funding.

### **2. Issues**

- 2.1 Payments made by local authorities under Council Tax Benefit regulations were fully funded by central government and paid via the Department of Work and Pensions to local authorities. Localised Council Tax Reduction has been the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Local Government since April 2013 when funding for localised schemes was cut by approximately 10% of the previous amounts available. Funding levels are set centrally for Council Tax Reduction, so there is no increase in 2018/19 for inflationary factors over and above 2017/18.
- 2.2 In 2011/12, the last full year for which figures were available to make the calculation for the first year of a Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme, £8,348,768, was paid in Council Tax Benefit to residents of the borough, the cost of which was attributed proportionately as follows:

• Staffordshire County Council	70.5%
• Staffordshire Police Authority	12.2%
• Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	12.1%
• S-o-T & Staffordshire Fire Authority	4.6%
• Parish Councils	0.6%

The value of Council Tax Benefit paid in respect of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council in 2011/12 was therefore £1,010,201. The proposed 10% reduction in funding therefore costs this Council in the region of £100,000. The other bodies will be affected in proportion as shown above. Overall, a 10% reduction for all these organisations equates to approximately £835,000.

- 2.3 Although termed a 'localised scheme', central government still stipulate in respect of certain classes of claimant the level of entitlement they should receive. For example, claimants of pension age must continue to receive assistance at the same level under the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme to that which they received under the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme. Newcastle has a 51% pensioner caseload meaning the cost of any reductions made within the local scheme will fall on the remaining none protected claimants.
- 2.4 To avoid making cuts in other service provisions to finance the budget shortfall between the old Council Tax Benefit scheme and the proposed local scheme, savings were made in the amount of help some claimants received in the financial years since 2013/14 and this will need to be continued in 2018/19.
- 2.5 Before establishing a local scheme, billing authorities were required to consult with major precepting bodies and other interested organisations and individuals. If any fundamental changes are to be considered, there would be the need for further consultation, either on the change if it were fairly minor or on any proposed new scheme if the changes were complex or wide ranging.
- 2.6 This Council meeting is the last scheduled meeting to obtain approval for a local scheme for 2018/19. Should there be any material announcements around this subject area following this meeting, in consultation with the Mayor and the portfolio holder, there would be the opportunity to convene a further special meeting prior to the 31 January deadline if required to further review the position.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 The original intention had been to introduce a common reduction scheme across the whole of Staffordshire including Stoke-on-Trent. Unfortunately, the different demographics of the various city and district councils meant this was not achieved. A framework of options for individual authorities to choose those areas best suited to their own requirements was devised.
- 3.2 From this framework, officers considered the impact of each option for claimants within the borough area and a scheme was established that offered a package of measures that generated the required budgetary savings whilst impacting as little as possible on claimants and offering the necessary incentives to encourage claimants back into work.
- 3.3 In considering a scheme for the 2018/19 financial year the Council could continue with the same scheme as 2017/18, to modify it by either relaxing some of the qualifying criteria or introducing further restrictions on entitlement, or could consider adopting the central government default scheme but this option would be at significant extra cost because it would not recoup any of the 10% cut in central government funding.



4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The schemes approved for the last five financial years were based on sound principles following analysis of previously held Council Tax Benefit data and an extensive consultation exercise around exactly what was possible within the financial limits available.
- 4.2 Elements of assessment criteria are based around central government applicable amounts. Applicable amounts are elements of benefit entitlement to cover various specific claimant circumstances based on essential core needs. These are normally linked to increases in the Consumer Price Index but are currently limited to 1%.
- 4.3 The proposal for 2018/19 would therefore be to continue with the previous years' scheme with the updated applicable amounts. The outline of the proposed 2018/19 scheme is shown at Appendix A to this report.

5. **Reasons for the Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To make fundamental changes to the scheme would entail further consultation. The extent of any further consultation would be a judgement call based on the level of change anticipated.
- 5.2 Based on information currently available, the modest increase in applicable amounts would still be affordable within the financial constraints of reduced central government funding and current claimant levels.
- 5.3 Whilst representing a significant change for many claimants, the introduction of Council Tax Reduction has not seen the widespread challenges to its introduction that were anticipated. Many claimants have pro-actively adjusted their circumstances by entering into payment arrangements to cover any shortfall in assistance to that previously given. Obviously, there have been increases in claimant contact to facilitate this but with sympathetic treatment, the majority of people are aware of the wider welfare reform agenda and are attempting to adapt. For those who have some underlying grievance, there are two appeal routes available, these are by the Tribunal Service where a claimant thinks an assessment has been made contrary to the adopted scheme regulations and through the courts by means of judicial review where a claimant believes the scheme is incorrect in some material way. So far, only one claimant has challenged the current scheme and this was via the Tribunal Service route. This appeal was heard at a hearing on 23 January 2014 and found in favour of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. This is in line with previous appeals traffic considered under Council Tax Benefit regulations which would indicate there are no major points of concern with the current scheme within the environment claimants now find themselves.
- 5.4 The statistical information available to date does not indicate the need to make any significant alterations to the current scheme. The scheme is within budget and is running at a capacity that still provides a small margin of resilience.
- 5.5 Continuing with a basically unaltered local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19 enables a degree of stability for claimants in what is very much a changing environment for the wider welfare reform agenda. Future changes to the Welfare Benefit system may result in a need to reconsider the Council Tax Reduction scheme. This will mean a consultation period will be required before the revised scheme can be implemented.
- 5.6 Central government funding constraints do not allow for any relaxation in the sums available for Council Tax Reduction for 2018/19. The funding situation for 2019/20 is currently unknown. When these details do become known, a better picture will emerge on any changes that will then be required. It is worth noting that future funding is unlikely to become

more generous than that currently available. This may mean further constraints on entitlement levels.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 A Localised Council Tax Support Scheme contributes towards creating a healthy and active community.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, substituted by section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires each billing authority in England to make a Localised Council Tax Support scheme.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 In designing the Council Tax Support scheme, consideration was given to the implications for vulnerable people, with particular attention to

- Equality and Diversity
- Child poverty
- Homelessness
- Disability

- 8.2 A detailed Equality Impact Needs Assessment identified any adverse implications for particular groups. It was recognised that the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme would have an impact on some of the most vulnerable households in the district. This impact continues to be monitored, and extra help is available for those households that are in greater need, in the way of a discretionary award

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 Localised Council Tax Support is treated as a discount on the Council Tax bill, much like Single Persons Discounts. This means that the Council Tax base will be smaller than would otherwise be the case. In order to avoid significant increases in the Band D figure arising from having a smaller tax base, the government funding will be treated as income that reduces the amount to be raised from Council Tax. However, this government funding is 10% lower than the equivalent amount received under previous Council Tax Benefit regulations.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 Any scheme which does not fully pass on the loss of government grant to claimants will require the Council to identify alternative funding. The choice of scheme could, therefore, impact on the Council's future budget plans.
- 10.2 Council Tax payers could see their bills increase if the funding loss is not passed on to claimants.
- 10.3 Any increase in the number of Council Tax accounts to be administered could result in additional administrative costs, particularly in relation to debt recovery. This could have a knock on effect on the overall Council Tax collection rate.

- 10.4 Failure to adopt a Localised Council Tax Support scheme by the 31 January 2018 will result in the default scheme being imposed, resulting in financial loss to the Council and all its precepting bodies.

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 Cabinet 19 September 2012:  
(a) That the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Council Tax Support Scheme be approved for consultation purposes.  
  
(b) That the Executive Director – Resources and Support Services be authorised to initiate the statutory consultation process.
- 12.2 Cabinet 12 December 2012:  
(a) That the consultation results be noted and used to help formulate the Localised Council Tax Support scheme for the borough area.  
  
(b) That it be recommended that protection be drawn into the final scheme regarding protection for recipients of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.
- 12.3 Council 23 January 2013:  
That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2013/14.
- 12.4 Council 27 November 2013:  
That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2014/15.
- 12.5 Council 26 November 2014:  
That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2015/16.
- 12.6 Council 25 November 2015:  
That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2016/17.
- 12.7 Council 23 November 2016:  
That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2017/18.

13. **Recommendations**

- 13.1 That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area as detailed is adopted for the financial year 2018/19.

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix A – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Tax Reduction Scheme Summary

15. **Previous Reports**

- 15.1 Cabinet 19 September 2012 – Localised Council Tax Support
- 15.2 Cabinet 12 December 2012 - Localised Council Tax Support Consultation
- 15.3 Council 23 January 2013 – Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- 15.4 Council 27 November 2013 – Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- 15.5 Council 26 November 2014 – Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- 15.6 Council 25 November 2015 – Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- 15.7 Council 23 November 2016 – Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme

## **Appendix A**

### **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**

#### **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19**

<b>Claim Type</b>	<b>Council Tax Support Scheme</b>
<b>Pensioner Claimants</b>	
No scope for changes within LCTS	Up to 100% of Council Tax Bill
<b>Working Age Claimants</b>	
Claims will be based on a max of 80% Council Tax Liability (unless in a protected group)	Up to 80% of Council Tax Bill
Properties in bands higher than Band D will be based on 80% Band D Council Tax	Up to 80% of band D rate
Second Adult Rebate will not be retained in the Local Scheme	Nil
Capital Cut off at £6K (non-passported)	No Council Tax Support if capital exceeds £6K
Earnings Disregards	Flat rate of £25 if claimant working.
<b>Claimants who are eligible to Severe Disability Premium (SDP)</b>	
May allow up to 100% LCTS as protected group	Up to 100% of Council Tax Bill
<b>Claimants who are eligible to receive War Disablement Pensions, War Widow's Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Payments</b>	
May allow up to 100% LCTS as protected group	Up to 100% of Council Tax Bill

### **Discretionary Payments**

The Council has discretion to award Council Tax Support, in excess of the amounts determined by this framework, where it is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

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## **STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 22ND NOVEMBER 2017**

**Submitted by:** Councillor Elizabeth Shenton

**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 Cabinet and to allow questions and comments on the Statement to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

#### **1. Cabinet Meetings**

Cabinet has met three times since the last meeting of Full Council on 6th September 2017.

Minutes for two of these meetings are available online, as follows:

Cabinet Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017

<http://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=2933&Ver=4>

Cabinet Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

<http://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=3063&Ver=4>

Cabinet Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017

##### **a) Financial and Performance Management Report to End of Quarter Two**

Cabinet noted the report, which was presented in a slightly different format, and contained additional information on action plans. Further improvements to the report were also suggested.

##### **b) Future Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants**

Cabinet approved the participation of the Council in the procurement of a new service to support independent living, including the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants in the Borough. This will enable a wider range of services to be delivered within the allocated funding, and ensure enhanced value for money for our residents.

c) **Update on Asset Management Strategy and Delivery Plan**

Cabinet approved the update on the Asset Management Strategy and Delivery Plan, and agreed in principle to the disposal of three sites. These will be subject to consultations being carried out, with the outcomes being reported back to Cabinet.

d) **Planning For Homes Consultation Document**

Cabinet noted that the consultation had been taken to Planning Committee on the previous evening, plus additional feedback that had been received from individual members and the public. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing was authorised to agree the final consultation response, taking account of the additional representations that had been received.

e) **Delegation for Neighbourhood Planning**

Cabinet agreed that all decisions relating to Neighbourhood Planning be delegated to the Executive Director, Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for the Planning and Housing Portfolio. However it was also agreed that if the Neighbourhood Planning process had resulted in significant public objection and/or the decision is publicly contentious in the opinion of the Cabinet Member; and/or the decision was considered to be a 'Key Decision'; then it would be delegated to the Cabinet Member responsible for the Planning and Housing Portfolio.

2. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan covering the period from 01/11/2017 to 28/2/2018 can be found at:

<http://sviam/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=77&RP=118>

**Councillor Elizabeth Shenton**  
**Leader of the Council**



## **Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee (FRAPS)**

### **Report to Council November 22nd 2017.**

At the meeting on 5th October 2017 the Committee scrutinised the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Members asked for explanations, clarifications or assumptions in a number of areas within MTFS.

Including:-

Employee incremental increases. Pay Awards, Superannuation and National Insurance Increases, Fees and Charges, New Pressures, Other costs i.e. energy.

Executive Director responded and addressed each of the points raised.

Discussion about Credit Cards.

Use of Credit Cards to pay council tax. The Council charges 1.3% on credit card transactions which generates about £8,000 of income annually. This amount will be lost post January when new regulations come into force.

A member raised the slightly confusing representation of increased collection of rates and how this resulted in a budgetary pressure. The Executive Director clarified reasons and agreed this item should receive a more detailed explanation in final report to Cabinet,

Questions asked about savings following the move to all out elections. Executive Director responded that this would be reported back as part of the overall savings plan.

#### Work Plan.

With regard to the report of investigation by Association of Election Administration into June 8th election process. This had not been received and clarified the role of the Scrutiny Committee would be to examine any recommendations.

Date of the next meeting Monday 27th November at 7.00 p.m.

Agenda will include

Revenue Budget Savings 2018/19.

Scales of Fees and Charges.

Explanation/Scrutiny of the process of how complaints are investigated following

first contact via web site.

Chair of FRAPS Councillor Joan Winfield.

## **Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee**

Monday 8th October 2017

The consultation for Leisure Provision in Kidgrove.

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services submitted a report which presented the outcomes of the consultation undertaken from the 17th July to the 14th August 2017 on interim sports activities provision in the Kidsgrove area.

The results which will inform future plans and activities of the Council and its Sports and Active Lifestyle Services following the closure of Kidsgrove Sports Centre. The role of the committee was consider the outcomes of the consultation exercise and to make recommendations to Cabinet on sports activities to be delivered to the local community.

A total of 238 responses were received with 97% seeing the provision of swimming as important more than half said they would use a gym, family leisure events and group exercises.

Members considered the distribution of the questionnaire and commented that the number of respondents was disappointingly low.

Mr Ray Williams from the Kidsgrove Leisure Centre Action Group was present at the meeting and commented the results were similar to the information that their group had collected.

It was agreed by all of the Committee that we recommend to Cabinet the dual use gym and fitness studio in partnership with a suitable education provider.

This venue should be suitable for and capable of accommodating family leisure events.

We also received a briefing report from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services on the Actions that the Borough is taking to support Stoke on Trent City Council on their bid to be nominated as the UK City of Culture 2021.

Dementia Friendly Swimming.

We received a recommendation by the Cabinet to approve the development of an appropriate action plan to implement Dementia Friendly Swimming at Jubilee 2 within existing resources and in partnership with appropriate local partners.

The next meeting is December 12th 2017. 7pm.

Chair Cllr Gill Williams.

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*From the Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee.*

The Committee met last on Monday 18 September 2017. There were three main agenda items:

**1. The Gold Standard for Homelessness Services - Diagnostic Peer Review;**

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets presented in this report which provided an update on the DCLG Gold Standard Peer Review Assessment. Participation of the Gold Standard Process is considered to be a key process to support the continuous improvement of the homelessness/housing services at the Council. The Council passed the first stage with an overall score of 67%.

As part of the process a number of key recommendations were identified for the council to consider and implement prior to pursuing the further challenges which concerned the website, reception and interview facilities, homelessness case files and the overall quality of the housing options.

The Committee agreed to support the option whereby the Council will consider and implement actions from the improvement plan prior to pursuing the challenges.

**2. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets submitted a report based on The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 which was predicted to be enacted in April 2018.

As the full details of the legislative changes were not known it was confided sensible for the Scrutiny Committee to retain this item on the work programme and to examine it again when appropriate.

The Committee agreed that this item be retained on the work programme and that clarification be sought from the DCLG on the implications for Local Authorities of The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**3. Draft Economic Development Strategy**

A meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Sub Group was held on 19 July to inform the first draft of the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2018 – 2023. The draft EDS, subject to revision by this Committee will be used as a basis for consultation with partner organisations, local businesses and wider community.

Overall it was agreed that the aspirations expressed in the draft strategy should be accompanied by targeted outcomes, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, that the housing assessment was in line with the Borough Strategy and that reference be made in the document to the major changes which would occur during the life of the strategy 2018-2023 such as the impact of Brexit and HS2. Members also requested there should be reference to work with the rural communities and more detail on SMEs (Small and Medium enterprises).

Mark Olszewski

Chair of Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

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Chairs Report - Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

At our meeting on 19 October members welcomed feedback on the quarterly meeting with the CCG, particularly the research commissioned at Keele University around what works best for patients based on evidence. Non-clinical services such as the programmes at Jubilee2 were identified for further discussions.

The Space Programme was scrutinised from the perspective of the Borough and the types of activity which were well attended both in terms of the universal offer and the targeted places.

Following Cabinet approval members are working with officers on the introduction of dementia friendly swimming into Jubilee2, supported by our partners at Approach.

Councillor Ruth Wright  
Chair

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## Cleaner Greener Safer Scrutiny Committee Report for November 2017

Since the last Council CGS met on 4 October

THE AGENDA included:

- A request by a Member for a review of the 'cloth nappy service'.
- Examination of air quality at the town bus station following a Member request.
- A further review of the Council's Waste and Recycling service following the adoption of recommendations in the Davis Report - December 2016.
- The work plan was agreed for the next few months.

Nappies. Local statistics say that disposal costs £500,000 per annum in the County - a total of 13,000 tonnes to landfill.

Newcastle Borough Council website offers advice and information about a cloth nappy service operated by North Staffs Real Nappy Service (NSRNS). In light of the cost of the nappy service to the Council which was discussed at the meeting it was the view of Members that Cabinet be requested to signpost residents to the service offered by the NSRNS.

Air Quality in the Borough is monitored constantly as a statutory duty and committee members were given a comprehensive report from Nesta Barker - Head of Environmental Health Services (details of this report can be seen in the minutes of the last meeting). Scrutiny reveals that monitoring stations need only to be near housing, the nearest to the bus station is right down Barracks Road.

Our particular concern however is the bus station and the very poor quality of air on still warm days. Under these conditions bus engines left running even for relatively short periods of time create noticeably poor air. Having scrutinised current practice, we agreed to follow up with a request to Cabinet to enable 'anti idling' notices at the bays for the advice of drivers. These notices would be in the view of bus users with reference to the existing complaint channels.

Waste and Recycling services were the subject of an in depth analysis in 2016 (The Davis Report). Cleaner Greener and Safer Communities scrutinised the report and its recommendations in detail on its publication. The meeting of October 4<sup>th</sup> reviewed the 6 key recommendations for action and implementation.

Further proposals to refine and improve the Service were presented in September this year. A number of those are likely to be of particular interest to Ward as follows: A Collection Team steering group is now set up to meet quarterly to assess issues regarding rounds. End of lane collection and assisted collection policies are currently under review. Other aspects of upgrades in data collection, operation of fleets and improving communications between the Council, residents and Councillors were presented in detail. These can be seen in the minutes of Oct 4 meeting of Cleaner Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee.

A work plan was discussed and Members proposed the following: Impact of overnight charging on Council owned car parks and the impact on the introduction of parking restrictions on the Lyme Valley. These will be considered at the February meeting, the Chair will be accepting issues from all Members of concerns for consideration and scrutiny by our Committee.

Wenslie Naylor

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## Report from Chair of Audit and Standards Committee

### Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017

At the meeting, the following reports were presented:

- **Corporate Risk Management Report for Quarter 1 2017-** It was noted that there were no overdue risks and 2 new risks were identified during the quarter under the profiles of Corporate Health and Safety and Environmental Protection. These related to recycling of batteries causing a fire risk at the depot and delays with the revision of Air Quality management plan.
- **Statement of Accounts and External Auditors Audit Findings-** The final accounts were presented by the External Auditor, Paul Harvey from Grant Thorntons. They advised that the accounts were in order. The accounts were approved and the letter of representation signed by the Chair and Executive Director – Resources and support Services.
- **Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter.** This is a report previously presented to the Standards Committee as an information only item. It was reported that complaints referred to the Ombudsman had fallen to 30 in the last year. Of these, 28 decisions were made, 2 which were upheld and 3 not upheld. Overall the report considered that the Council was performing well
- **Internal Audit Progress report Quarter 1 2017/18**–This was a verbal report delivered by the Head of Audit, Liz Dodd who confirmed that audits are progressing as expected in line with the Audit plan. There was nothing significant to report
- **Quarterly Report. Summary of Assurance and High Risk Recommendations 1 April to 30 June**  
Assurance was given on internal controls and an update that the Pentana Management system was working well.

### Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017

At the meeting, the following reports were presented:

- **Health and Safety 6 monthly report-** It was noted that has been an increase in accidents in 2017/8 to the 6 months point, but of these only 2 were reportable. This increase in, “near miss”, accidents was viewed as a positive as it is alerting officers to potential problem areas before they become RIDDOR incidents. Brampton Museum and Jubilee 2 have both had Health and Safety inspections in this period. There has been a fire in the bailing shed at the Knutton Depot, caused by household batteries being mixed in with recycled paper. Additional fire extinguishers have been provided at the waste transfer station as a result and training provided on the operation of these

- **Corporate Risk Management Report** – There were no overdue risks to report or new risks identified. The issue with the Fire Risk at the Depot was discussed and officers informed the committee that residents would be encouraged to recycle batteries in the retail store of purchased and the council will cease collection of these going forward.
- **Treasury Management half yearly report**- This is a statutory financial report. At the 30 Sept 2017 the Council had no investments but also no borrowing. The prudential borrowing anticipated towards the end of 2016/17 is now expected to occur towards the end of the current financial year.
- **The Annual Audit Letter from Grant Thornton**- Paul Harvey from Grant Thornton delivered this report. This is a statutory requirement and no different to the findings of the Audit Report. The rules state that both the Audit report and the Audit letter have to be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee
- **Internal Audit Progress report Quarter 2**– All areas were adequately or well controlled. 35% of planned Audits had been completed to date against a target of 25%
- **Internal Audit Quarterly report**- Members were updated on the areas of risk outstanding following Internal Audit reviews. There were no significant recommendations outstanding and no Audit issues to report with any of the Directorates
- **Audit and Standards Training**- members discussed the need for refresher training and new training for members on the Standards Committee. It was resolved that Liz Dodd would devise some training in January and that it would be mandatory for all members of the committee to attend. The committee also asked for a demonstration of the Pentana system as part of the training.

Cllr Sarah Pickup

Chair of Audit and Standards Committee

14/11/2017

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Since the last Full Council Meeting the Planning Committee has met on three occasions.

Following is a breakdown of what was considered at each of the meetings:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 12.09.17. | 2 Major planning applications.<br>5 Minor planning applications.<br>1 Other development.<br>Quarterly report on extension of time on 106 payments.<br>Report on list of local validations.  |
| 10.10.17. | 5 Major planning applications.<br>4 Minor planning applications.<br>1 Other development.<br>Quarterly report on actions taken on enforcement cases.<br>Report on open enforcement cases.<br>Reported appeal decision.                         |
| 07.11.17. | 3 Major planning applications.<br>2 Minor planning applications.<br>1 Other development.<br>Report on Government consultation document.<br>2 Applications for financial assistance (Historic Buildings Grants)<br>2 Tree preservation orders. |

Cllr Bert Proctor  
Chair - Planning Committee.

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## LICENSING COMMITTEE REPORT.

There have been no Full Committee Meetings since the last Council

We have had two sub-committee hearings.

The Crewe Arms. Madeley Heath, Newcastle under Lyme.

The Licensee applied for an application to vary the premises licence. Representations were received from other persons on the basis that to grant the application would undermine the licensing objectives relating to the Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, The Prevention of Public Nuisance and the Protection of Children from harm.

Several years ago there had been many problems at the Crewe Arms and the pub was closed for a time.

The new tenants were granted a Licence and no complaints have been made. There have been several Temporary Events and no complaints were received from local residents.

After careful consideration, the sub-committee we agreed to allow a variation to the Licence.

Application for New Premises License under Section 17 of The Licensing Act 2003.

No 14, 14 Brunswick Street, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5 5TH.

Application for a late licence for light refreshments and alcohol.  
Premises to be a Noodle Bar.

One person objected to the Application. The sub-committee could find no reason to reject application therefore it was granted.

Chair Councillor Joan Winfield.

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## **Motion to Council**

### **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

Proposed: Cllr Allison Gardner

Seconded: Cllr Ruth Wright

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## Motion to Council

### 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.

Proposed: Cllr Allison Gardner  
Seconded: Cllr Mark Olszewski

## **Motion to Council**

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

#### **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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Proposed: Councillor Allison Gardner

Seconded: Councillor Dave Jones