

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 20th November, 2019

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: The Mayor- Councillor Simon White (Chair)

Councillors:	J. Cooper	S Tagg	B. Panter
	J. Walklate	S. Burgess	R. Wright
	G Williams	M. Stubbs	G White
	J Williams	A. Rout	J Waring
	A. Fear	J Tagg	A. Fox-Hewitt
	T. Kearon	P. Northcott	B. Johnson
	P Waring	B. Proctor	A. Lawley
	M. Holland	S. Dymond	S. Moffat
	Miss J Cooper	T. Johnson	Mrs J Cooper
	M. Reddish	A. Parker	G. Burnett
	K. Robinson	S. Pickup	H. Maxfield
	E. Shenton	M. Olszewski	K.Owen
	G. Heesom	D. Jones	Hutton
	S. Sweeney	A. Gardner	

Officers:	David Adams	Executive Director Operational Services
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer
	Jan Willis	Interim Executive Director - Resources and Support Services and Section 151 Officer
	Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Caroline Elwood	Interim Head of Legal / Monitoring Officer
	Janet Baddeley	Communications Manager

Also in attendance:

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Wilkes.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **COUNCILLOR KEARON**

Councillor Kearon informed the Council that due to his selection to stand for Police and Crime Commissioner next year, he felt that he would not have the time to dedicate to his Group Leader role.

Councillor Kyle Robinson was announced as his successor.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Simon Tagg thanked Councillor Kearon for his work as leader of the Labour Group and welcomed Councillor Kyle Robinson into the role.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September, 2019 be agreed as a correct record subject to:

- (i) a clarification put forward by Councillor Brian Johnson regarding a comment made by Councillor Fear which had requested that the government be asked to make Brexit day a Bank holiday and a passing remark to put a large flag on Castle House.
- (ii) Page 11, under heading Paragraph 2 – third paragraph from the end, the 'Safer Newtown Panel' should be the 'Safer Neighbourhood Panel'.

5. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised Members of his Civic Carol Service at St Giles' Church on Sunday 22 December, 2019.

6. CLOUGH HALL PARK PETITION

Councillor Kyle Robinson spoke to the petition regarding the Clough Hall Park petition which had been handed in at the last Council meeting, in September.

Councillor Robinson stated that he was disappointed with the report in that he felt that more could have been done. He challenged the number of incidents that had been reported stating that the number of incidents had increased during the summer.

Residents had been proactive and the Clough Hall Park Action Group had carried out litter picks to make it look cared for.

Councillor Robinson said that, due to budget cuts faced by the Council, parks across the Borough had suffered and when they looked uncared for, anti-social behaviour takes place.

The temporary CCTV that had been provided had helped.

Councillor Robinson sought assurance from the Council that they would make a contribution to or match fund for CCTV in the Park.

In addition, a recent survey had been carried out and an update of responses was requested.

Councillor Mark Holland, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage stated that Clough Hall Park now hosted a Junior Park run which gives young people something valuable to do. Councillor Holland agreed that the petition should be

referred to the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations for future actions.

Councillor Jill Waring, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing thanked Councillor Robinson for taking the time to coordinate the petition. There had been a few incidents in the Park earlier in the year.

A number of organisations had been met with and the Council had been proactive with enforcing parental responsibility and there had been a successful SPACE programme. The police had provided high visibility in the area and individuals had been stop-searched.

There had only been a small number of complaints about the Park. People were encouraged to report all incidents and Councillor Waring stated that she received a weekly report from the police and Fire Authority and there had been two incidents in a seven week period.

Councillor Stephen Sweeney, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency had met with the Chief Inspector of Police, Claire Langley who had stated that Clough Hall Park was “no better – or worse than other parks in the Borough”.

Councillor Stubbs stated that 518 people had signed the petition who said there were issues in the Park.

Council Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg stated that a report in the Sentinel had stated that locking the Park would not be effective and agreed that it should be referred to the Scrutiny Committee. With reference to the CCTV, a meeting would be held with Kidsgrove Town Council in the new year to see how the two Councils could work together. All items would be taken into consideration by the Cabinet.

Councillor Proctor stated that he had sympathy with areas suffering from anti-social behaviour and said that it went on periodically in all areas. There are seven play areas in the Audley Ward and where CCTV had been needed and it had been installed through the Parish Council.

Resolved: That the petition be referred to the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

7. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg introduced a report updating Members on the outcome of a consultation on the review of polling districts and polling places.

This was carried out annually and members were assured that these changes would not affect the upcoming General election in December but would be in place next May for the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor John Williams stated that some mobile polling stations were extremely cold and asked the Chief Executive, Martin Hamilton to ensure that there was adequate heating in all polling stations but especially portacabins.

Councillor Simon Tagg agreed with Councillor Williams' comment.

Resolved: That the amendments to the polling districts and polling places, as set out in appendix A to the report, be approved.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR OFFICERS**

The Leader introduced a report asking for Members to note the appointment of the senior officers set out at paragraph 3.4 of the report.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.1 which set out the start dates of three of the officers.

Paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4 gave Members further information on future appointees.

Councillor Robinson stated that the interview processes had gone really well with a representative from each Group on the panel. He added that it was an exciting time.

Resolved: That the decision of the Councils Appointments Sub Committee, to appoint those officers set out at paragraph 3.4 of the report be noted and that they be welcomed to the Council.

9. **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME'S COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES**

The Leader introduced a report which summarised changes to the Council and Committee Procedure Rules.

These had not been updated for some time and the Council's Interim Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer, Caroline Elwood was thanked for her work on this document.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.1 of the report and the Council and Committee Procedure Rules that were appended. The changes had been through the Constitution and Member Support Working Group.

Councillor Holland also thanked Mrs Elwood for the work that she had undertaken.

The document had been considered at the meeting of the Constitution and Member Support Working Group on 3 July, 2019 except for the Rules of Debate which had been carried out via email which were later fed into the document.

Councillor Brian Johnson referred to item 14.7 (Notices of Motion) on page 72 of the agenda, stating that he could not imagine anyone bringing a vexatious or inappropriate Motion. He added that Councillors may not be able to accurately word a Motion and it could sometimes be difficult to assess what may be deemed inappropriate.

Councillor Shenton also thanked Mrs Elwood for the work undertaken and said that they had worked to a tight timescale and that the document needed to be brought in line with current legislation.

The Leader advised Councillor Johnson that the Chief Executive would give advice with regard to the wording. The Constitution needed to be fit for purpose and Mrs Elwood had been working on it based on what other authorities were doing.

The Council's Chief Executive, Martin Hamilton advised that the Notice of Motion wording was used by other authorities. A check would be made for an alternative form of wording that could be backed up with good practice.

Councillor Stubbs asked Mr Hamilton to clarify whose decision was final in the acceptance of a Motion coming before Council.

Mr Hamilton confirmed that the Mayor sets the agenda on the advice of the Chief Executive. The ruling out of a Motion would only be done after the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer had given a lot of consideration. Members raising the Motion would be informed as to what the concerns were.

Councillor Holland stated that the Constitution and member Support working Group would be happy to look more deeply into the wording.

Councillor Robinson proposed that the document, barring paragraph 14 be accepted to allow a closer look to be taken of the wording issues and to be brought back to the next Council meeting. Councillor Jones seconded the proposal.

The Leader stated that the document had been through the relevant committees and the Chief Executive had clearly outlines what would happen to such Motions.

A vote was taken on Councillor Robinson's amendment:

For: 20 Against: 21.

The amendment was rejected.

A vote was taken on the original recommendation:

For: 22 Abstentions: 19

Resolved: That the amendments to the Council and Committee Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

10. **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES**

The Leader introduced a report summarising proposed changes to the Access to Information Procedure Rule.

Members' attention was drawn to the table at paragraph 3.1 which outlined the changes. In addition, an appendix containing tracked changes was attached to the report at page 87 of the agenda.

Item 10 of the table outlined changes to the cap for key decisions. Previously £50,000 it would now be £100,000 revenue and £250,000 capital expenditure which would bring Newcastle into line with other authorities. It would also help officers as certain items would not need to be brought to Council.

Councillor Holland advised that this had been through the Constitution and Member Support Working Group.

Resolved: That the proposed amendments to the Access to Information Procedure Rules be approved.

11. **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL, ITS COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

The Leader introduced a report summarising proposed changes to appendix 1 to the Constitution setting out the Responsibilities of the Council, its Committees and Sub-committees.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 3.1 of the report which outlines the changes.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Constitution and Member Support Working Group and the relevant Committees.

Resolved: That the proposed amendments to the Responsibilities and Terms of Reference of the Council, its Committees and Sub Committees be approved.

12. **AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 AND TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT 1847**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney introduced a report advising Council of a recent decision of the Licensing and Public Protection committee in relation to amendments to the scheme of delegation in respect of taxi and private hire licensing.

Members were advised that this was considered by the Licensing and Public Protection Committee at its meeting on 22 October, 2019 and they had been happy with the changes. A copy of that report was appended.

Resolved: That the proposed amendments to the scheme of delegation at Appendix 4 of the Constitution as set out at paragraph 2.3 of Appendix A to the report, be approved.

13. **DELEGATIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE HIGH SPEED RAIL (WEST MIDLANDS- CREWE) ACT**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott introduced a report advising Council of two recent decisions of the Planning Committee in relation to new delegations to deal with future applications once the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill had been enacted.

Councillor Northcott referred Members to the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24 July where it had been agreed that Newcastle become a Qualifying Authority.

Members were advised that Newcastle had now signed the necessary Planning Memorandum.

At the Planning Committee held on 5 November, it was agreed to amend the scheme of delegation in respect of schedules 17 and 18 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill.

Councillor Northcott added that any burden imposed on the Council from HS2 would be reimbursed under a Service Level Agreement.

Resolved: That the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee be amended to include the following additional delegations:
a. To determine all applications pursuant to Schedule 17 of the High

- Speed Rail (West Midlands- Crewe) Act (once the Act comes into force)
- b. To determine all applications pursuant to Clause 21 Schedule 18 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands- Crewe) Act (once the Act comes into force)

14. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH PROTOCOL

The Leader introduced a report asking Council to adopt a Protocol in relation to granting Freedom of the Borough.

Members were referred to Appendix A which set out the Protocol and were advised that at paragraphs 2.2 and 6.4 it should read 'Mayor' and not 'Civic Mayor'.

The Leader advised the Council that Freedom was the highest honour a local authority could award and stated that the register dated back to 1900.

A Protocol was required and best practice had been used from other authorities. Mrs Elwood was thanked for her work on this document.

The Leader said that the specialness of the honour should be preserved and that it be awarded sparingly.

All of the Group leaders had seen the document and Councillor Kearon had put forward some amendments which had been incorporated.

Councillor Fear questioned whether at paragraph 6 it should read meeting and not meetings. This would be amended.

Resolved: That the Protocol and guidelines attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

15. GREAT CRESTED NEWT DISTRICT LICENSING SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Paul Northcott introduced a report seeking Council's agreement to join the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme.

This would help to remove delays that arise from the existing licensing system as there would be no need for Newt Surveys and no separate licence application to Natural England, offering developers a fast track. It would also remove unnecessary lobbying and petitions.

Joining the Scheme would save this Authority money in processing applications.

Councillor Brian Johnson queried the use of language under paragraph 9 – final line. It was felt that the word 'show –stopper' was not the correct word to use. Councillor Fear agreed with this stating that slang was not appropriate in documents such as this.

Resolved: That Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council sign a Memorandum of Understanding with NatureSpace Partnership to join the Staffordshire and Stoke-on Trent Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme.

16. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg submitted a report which provided an update to Members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet, together with the Forward Plan.

The statement was taken a paragraph at a time to allow for questions to be asked.

Paragraph 2:

Councillor Maxfield asked how the budget consultation process would be taking place this year.

The Leader advised that it would be carried out as last year, by online consultation. There had been 103 comments so far. The consultation would be promoted on social media.

Paragraph 3:

Councillor Proctor welcomed that the Council now had a Commercial Strategy and the benefits that would follow and requested an update.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Sweeney advised that an investment advisor had been appointed and a report was expected by the end of the year.

The work would be led by the new Executive Director - Commercial Development and Economic Growth, Simon McEneny.

Paragraph 4:

Councillor Burnett advised that the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group were pleased with the recent site visit that had taken place and they looked forward to working with the Council. Members were advised that the number of Trustees would increase from six to nine.

It was reported that a number of enquiries had already been received for block bookings and there had been some enquiries from swimming groups.

Councillor Paul Waring stated that plans were moving forward and there were firm proposals for the sports centre and pool. He urged all Members to continue to support the group.

Councillor Robinson stated that the Cross Party Working Group had proved very helpful and he asked the Leader if a report would be going to the Full Council meeting in January 2020 in connection with the borrowing of funds for the project.

The Leader thanked Members for their comments and stated that there was a lot of work to be done to firm up the proposals which he hoped would be brought to the Full Council meeting in January, 2020.

Also in January, 2020 the Cabinet would look at the proposals and there would be a further Kidsgrove Sports Centre Refurbishment – Cabinet Panel meeting early in the new year.

Paragraph 5:

Councillor Panter asked when the Council would begin to install vehicle charging points in the Borough.

The Leader advised that the Council had been successful in obtaining £780,000 funding to enable the roll out of CCTV. A report would be brought to the December Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Gary White welcomed the initiative stating that it had been discussed at the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee and he looked forward to it coming into fruition.

Councillor John Williams raised concerns regarding the cleanliness of the Midway car park and asked the Leader when the structure would be decorated and CCTV upgraded.

The Leader welcomed the comments stating that it was important to have the Car Parking Strategy in place. The comments regarding the Midway would be taken on board. The long term future of the car park would also be considered.

Paragraph 6:

Councillor Brian Johnson stated that Stoke on Trent City Council had reported a shortfall of 230 of 'move on' properties. He asked if Newcastle currently had a shortfall of 'move on' properties and whether Stoke on Trent's shortfall had been considered in the proposed joint strategy and what impact Stoke on Trent's shortfall would have on services in Newcastle.

Councillor Hutton asked for an update on the outreach work helping those having to sleep rough.

Councillor Shenton asked for an update on the number of rough sleepers.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Jill Waring advised that the current arrangement with the City Council would expire on 31 March, 2020 and officers were working to recommission the service.

The last count of rough sleepers had revealed 9 individuals which was an increase on last year. A number of those persons had moved across from Stoke on Trent.

Members were advised that rough sleepers were counted every eight weeks at 4am. The next count would take place in January 2020.

Councillor Holland stated that the commissioning of services with the City Council was important as there were cross-border issues.

Councillor Stubbs asked the Portfolio Holder if the first question a rough sleeper should be asked was what their hierarchy of needs was.

Councillor Brian Johnson requested a written response to his question.

Councillor Pickup asked if figures were available for rough sleepers in the surrounding villages.

The Leader advised that the figures available were for the Borough but a check would be made and Members would be informed. In respect of Councillor Stubbs' question the Leader stated that there was a need to know why they had come to Newcastle in order to find out the best ways of supporting them.

Paragraph 7:

Councillor Panter commented that, as Champion he had liaised with the Royal British Legion, Tri Services and SSAFA and had received a positive response.

Councillor Brian Johnson welcomed this and stated that he would like to see the same done for the blue-light services.

The Leader stated that he would take Councillor Johnson's comments away for consideration.

Paragraph 8:

Councillor Parker asked for an update on the town centre CCTV.

The Leader stated that, following the call-in work had begun and was progressing well. Site visits had been carried out to look at the proposed locations.

New cameras had been ordered and they would be installed in January, 2020. Recording would commence in April, 2020. Until that date, the existing system would continue operating.

Councillor Robinson asked for an update on the Ryecroft site.

The Leader advised that there was a backstop date of Spring 2020 and nothing could be done until then. However, the council was working with the developer and the County Council to look at residential and a business based scheme.

Councillor Wright asked for an update on the Markets and was advised that this would be covered in detail later in the meeting.

Paragraph 9:

Councillor Heesom commended the Cabinet for protecting the Council's green spaces and asked if the Leader would confirm that funding for this was brought in from outside of the Authority.

Councillor Julie Cooper welcomed that stumps had been put around Wolstanton marsh advising that there had only been the one incident there this year.

Councillor Reddish asked the Leader for a progress report on areas still needing attention.

The Leader thanked Councillors' Heesom and Cooper for their comments and advised that the incidents on Wolstanton Marsh had fallen from 5 or 6 in previous years to just one this year. The Police had moved them on.

Money for the stumps had come from outside the Authority, from the Police and Crime Commissioner and from County Council and LAP funding.

The Leader thanked officers for their work adding that the measures were working and eviction times were being brought down.

The Leader appreciated the concerns with The Butts and Howard Place. The Butts had wooden stumps installed recently and Howard Place had been put into the work programme to be done before next Spring.

Councillor Robinson asked if there had been any progress with the Joint Local Plan – providing a new site for travellers and, if so, where it would be placed.

Councillor Brian Johnson referred to the previous meeting and asked if any consultation had taken place with official groups representing travellers.

The Leader made reference to the permanent traveller site in Cemetery Road, Silverdale and added that in the Local Plan there was a need to increase the number of places and negotiations would need to take place.

Paragraph 10:

Councillor Northcott declared an interest in this item and took no part in the discussions.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Sweeney praised Aspire for their hospitality at a recent meeting.

Councillor Sweeney added that he had reported a flooding issue which had been promptly resolved.

Councillor John Williams welcomed the initiative and asked the Leader if Aspire could be invited to a future meeting to explain their policies as more information was required.

The Leader thanked Members for their positive comments adding that there would always be issues of concern. Residents approach Councillors with matters that affect Aspire so it is therefore good to work together.

Paragraph 11:

Councillor Fear asked the Leader for an update on garden waste collections and asked if cases of fly tipping had fallen across the Borough.

The Leader stated that in previous years there had been over 1000 fly tipping incidents. The Council was now into its ninth month of charged garden waste collections and fly tipping cases have dropped significantly.

Officers would continue to monitor the situation but it appeared that the scare stories put around that fly tipping would increase because of charging for garden waste collection have been found to be untrue.

Councillor Pickup asked if one of the reasons for the overspend was the corporate management posts and whether it was provided for with the interim posts.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Sweeney would issue a written response to this question.

17. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Written reports had been submitted for the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

A verbal update was given for the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Fear as he had chaired the previous meeting.

Councillor Fear stated that the Committee had looked at the Car Parking Strategy where valuable contributions had been made.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

18. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES

A written report had been submitted for the Audit and Standards Committee.

Verbal updates were given by the Chairs of the Planning Committee and Licensing and Public Protection Committee.

Councillor Fear advised that the Committee had met on its regular cycle and there had been a site visit that had taken place on 2 November where varied planning control issues had been dealt with.

Councillor Olszewski advised that at its last meeting, the Licensing and Public Protection Committee had reviewed the updated guidance on the Licensing Act and the Gambling Act. These items had come to Full Council tonight.

The DEFRA database had also been discussed, to provide monthly updates on all of Newcastle's licensed vehicles.

Also, the door signage on Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles was discussed.

The Public Protection Sub Committee and the Licensing Sub Committee had continued to meet on their regular cycles.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

19. **MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

There were no Motions.

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

Question 1:

Councillor Fear asked for an update into the investigation into foul odours believed to be coming from Walley's Quarry.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson advised that the site was regulated by the Environment Agency. The Council had launched its own investigation into this which had shown a clear linkage of the site with the odour.

Over the past six weeks, complaints had risen and the complainants were being asked to keep records in order to build up a picture.

Officers of the Council were liaising with the Environment Agency and a meeting had taken place with RED Industries.

The Leader had written to the Secretary of State and had sought the support of the sitting MP. The Council's Chief Executive had recently written to the Environment Agency to ensure that the issue remained high on the agenda.

Question 2:

Councillor Kearon asked for an update on current and proposed plans to ensure good quality and safe private rented accommodation in the Borough.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Jill Waring advised that the Council received 600 requests each year identifying problems with damp, cold.

The Council was working with partners and runs a North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme which was self funding. A new website would be launched in 2020.

Councillor Kearon asked for assurance that any external cladding used on new builds was not flammable.

Councillor Waring advised that she would put this response in writing.

Question 3:

Councillor Jones asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling if the landfill site at Walleys Quarry was producing hydrogen sulphite and if so, the quantities and finally a guarantee that this was not harmful to residents living near to the site.

Councillor Trevor Johnson advised the Environment Agency was undertaking air monitoring. The Environment Agency had, in 2017 carried out a study and concluded that the concentrations met the objectives. Another study was carried out earlier this year and those results were awaited. Members would be provided with the details once they were available.

Councillor Jones asked Councillor Trevor Johnson if he supported the concerns over health and the further investigation by Public Health England.

Councillor Johnson advised that he did support this and advised that the results of the Environment Agency investigation were expected by the end of the year.

Question 4:

Councillor Robinson asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth about a delay to the Joint Local Plan.

Councillor Northcott advised that it had been necessary to revisit the number of houses needed. This had been stabilised and the number revised.

The time period therefore needed adjustment. It had commenced in 2013 and the housing supply would need recalculating to take into account the extended period. The Plan period had been changed from 2013-33 to 2013-37 as Local Plans must cover a period of fifteen years from adoption.

The Policy work would be finalised for Spring 2020 and it would be more robust if adopted.

Councillor Robinson asked for assurance that there would be no further delays and asked the Leader if he was certain that the Council had a full functioning/resourced Planning Department to deal with any issues.

Councillor Northcott had received assurances from officers.

Question 5:

Councillor Robinson asked the Leader what was being done with regard to a culvert face at Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove following the recent flooding of the Canal Tavern pub.

The Leader advised that Staffordshire County Council were the lead flood authority. The Borough and County Council were working together what measures could be taken on the culvert. Regular weekly clearing of the gratings was being looked into to remove silt. The Borough Council also provided sand bags where necessary and some had been provided to the Canal Tavern.

A new Lidl store was to be built in Kidsgrove and this would replace part of the culvert and may alleviate the situation.

Councillor Robinson stated that he was a big believer in climate change and said that this Authority took the matter seriously. Councillor Robinson asked the Leader if he would consider looking at the culvert face to see if it could be changed and asked if local ward members would be kept up to date with any progress.

The Leader stated that this Council was taking proactive measures and advised that Councillor Robinson should contact officers at the Borough and County Council with the details of his concerns.

Question 6:

Councillor Fox-Hewitt asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency if he was confident that civil contingencies and emergency planning for the Borough were adequately financed, supported and fit for purpose.

Councillor Sweeney advised that this was all supported by a dedicated scheme and that the Council could draw on the expertise of the Civic Contingencies Unit that was available 24 hours per day. The Council also had a dedicated link officer.

The Council had sufficient finances for such emergencies but could also apply for funding from the Belway Scheme.

Councillor Fox-Hewitt asked if a cross-party working group could be set up to work with partners.

Councillor Sweeney stated that there was no need to have a cross-party working group as there was already the Civic Contingencies Unit. Councillor Sweeney suggested that the civil contingencies and emergency planning be taken to Scrutiny.

Question 7:

Councillor Parker asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency to outline future plans for Newcastle's market which would help with its revitalisation.

Councillor Sweeney advised that there had been themed markets and food markets. Other events were being arranged.

A late market was planned for 2020 which would operate between 3pm and 9pm with food, entertainment and displays.

There had been a good take up of the £5 per day for a stall.

Councillor Parker welcomed the idea of a late market and asked the Portfolio Holder what lighting provision would be available for opening late evening.

Councillor Sweeney advised that electricity feed to the market stalls was being investigated.

Question 8:

Councillor Jenny Cooper asked the Leader to outline the latest position regarding the Ministerial direction relating to air quality in the Borough.

The Leader advised that Basford Bank was an issue in the Borough and stated that buses, suitable for retro-fitting had been identified. This would be funded by national government and would be delivered by the summer of 2020.

The Council was working with the City Council and County Council with regard to an Air Quality Local Plan. In addition, the Council's were pursuing options for traffic management focussing on the A53. The Council did not want a 'chargeable clean air zone'.

A business case was being put together and the target for this was 2021.

The Leader referred to odours from Walleys Quarry and stated that he would like to see the relevant Scrutiny Committee looking into this in more detail.

Question 9:

Councillor Dymond asked the Leader if he would consider supporting the RSPCA in asking the Government for tougher regulations around the private use of fireworks.

The Leader suggested that there was a Motion put together by the RSPCA which could be brought to Council and that the relevant Scrutiny Committee could look at the issue in more detail. The findings could then be put to the Government.

21. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

There were no Petitions.

22. EMILY HORSFALL

Councillor Kearon stated that he had worked closely with Emily and found her to be an enthusiastic campaigner.

Emily had moved on to work with the training of guide dogs.

The Leader wished Emily all the best and wished prospective candidates well in the by-election taking place on 12 December in that ward. The Leader also wished the candidates well in the upcoming General Election on that date.

Members sent their best wishes to Emily for the future.

23. STANDING ORDER 18 - URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR SIMON WHITE
Chair

Meeting concluded at 9.40 pm