

CABINET

Tuesday, 2nd December, 2025
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Skelding
Heesom Hutchison

Apologies: Councillor(s) Fear

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Deputy Chief Executive
	Nesta Barker	Service Director - Regulatory Services
	Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Craig Turner	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Simone Harris	Marketing and Communications Officer

Also in attendance::Hammy the Elf Portfolio Holder for Christmas

The Leader welcomed Hammy the Elf who had been observing Council Services. To date he had visited J2 and the Homelessness Hub.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 November, 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

3. WALLEYS QUARRY ODOURS ISSUE

The Leader introduced a report updating Cabinet on the latest position regarding the problematic odours associated with Walleys Quarry.

A milestone had been reached this month – it being one year since the closure of the site.

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The Chief Executive referred to section 2 of the report. Section 2.1 referred to complaint data and, as at today's date, no complaints had been received by the Council or the Environment Agency (EA). The past three months had also seen very few complaints compared to the same time last year.

The report included an update from the EA which outlined their immediate actions to prevent serious pollution.

Multi-agency meetings continued to take place and would continue to happen until, at least, early next year after which the multi-agency groups would assess the next phase/activity.

The Leader stated that there had been media interest, marking the first anniversary of closure of the site. The Leader had spoken to Radio Stoke and been on Midlands Today regarding the Council's position that the local tax-payer should not fund the restoration of the site and that it should be funded by Government money. In addition, there was still the call for a public inquiry, although there had been a further knock-back from the government minister.

The Deputy Leader, referring to section 1.6.3 of the report, was disappointed that the local MP had not responded to two letters sent to him requesting assistance in this matter and still calling for a public inquiry.

The Leader stated that the local MP, although having not responded to the letters, had commented on Radio Stoke indicating that restoration was underway. The Chief Executive was asked to confirm that the works that had taken place over the past twelve months were not restoration of the site but actually works to enable it to remain an odour free site. In addition, the MP had claimed that a public inquiry should take place after restoration of the site had been completed. The Chief Executive was also asked to confirm the length of time for restoration to take place which was believed to be up to twenty years.

There was no government money to restore the site. Over the past year, it had been the bond money – put aside by the previous company to keep the site going and not creating odours.

The Chief Executive stated that the last update received from the EA showed clearly that their work was to prevent serious pollution under their powers.

It was believed that the bond had, or was about to expire and the EA were working on their resource plan under their powers to carry on the works.

The restoration would be to the previous plan set out in the original planning permission and the process could take decades to complete. This would be a key phase of the next multi-agency discussions – what the restoration would look like and how it would be funded.

Regarding a public inquiry, the Chief Executive was of the view that an inquiry was not dependent upon the end outcome of the site but should focus on lessons to be learned in terms of preventative activity in the future.

The Leader thanked Council officers for the work that was being put in – working with the EA to ensure that the preliminary works paid for through the bond, were carried out correctly.

Following last weeks Health, Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee, the Leader and the Chair of the Committee had again written to the local MP asking him to clarify his position.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

[Watch the date here](#)

4. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2026/27 - FIRST DRAFT SAVINGS PLANS

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report presenting the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which included the first draft savings being considered to balance the 2026/27 revenue budget and the proposed capital programme for 2026/27 to 2028/29.

The proposed savings and funding strategies, to address a £1.752m budget gap were outlined at paragraph 2.4 of the report. The Portfolio Holder announced a below inflation increase in Council Tax of 1.99% which amounted to ten pence per week or less for 95% of households in the Borough.

The identified savings would enable a continued contribution of £250,000 to the Borough Growth Fund which would continue to enable investment in the Council's priorities including significant investment in boosting the sustainability of the environment within the Borough by supporting town centre development.

The draft proposals would assist in formulating a financially robust budget for the council which would continue to ensure financial sustainability whilst also protecting the Council's services.

The Leader stated that again, the proposed savings were a result of a very rigorous Efficiency Board process – which, since they had been introduced in 2018 had saved over £10m. The results showed that this Council could balance budgets and was a well run council which could keep Council Tax down.

Councillor Hutchison welcomed the MTFS and stated that in his Portfolio (Sustainable Development), £10,000 efficiencies had been found in Bereavement Services; £8,000 in Neighbourhood Delivery; £293,000 in Recycling and Waste and £20,000 in Streetscene.

Councillor Sweeney added that he had earlier learned that the number of Council's that had had their accounts signed off and completed for last year was one in fifteen and Newcastle was one of those councils.

The next stage for the revised MTFS would be to present it to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee in January.

Resolved: (i) That the first draft savings proposals as set out in Appendix

A and Appendix B to the report be noted.

(ii) That the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap (Appendix C) be noted.

(iii) That the commencement date of the Budget Consultation

period as mid-November to mid-December 2025 be noted.

- (iv) That the first draft savings proposals be referred to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views (Appendix A and Appendix B).
- (v) That the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Appendix D) be referred to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views.
- (vi) That the Mid-Year Capital Estimates for 2025/26 be approved.
- (vii) That the proposed setting of Council Tax at 1.99 per cent for 2026/2027 be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. DRAFT HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2026-30

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing introduced a report seeking approval for the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2026-2030 to be issued for public consultation prior to formal adoption in 2026.

The Strategy would focus on three housing priorities which were outlined at paragraph 2.2 of the report and their objectives were set out at paragraph 2.3.

The consultation would enable key stakeholders and those affected by the strategy to make their observations.

The Strategy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Leader stated that this was an important document and therefore appropriate to have an up to date Strategy taking into account changes that had taken place.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2026-2030 for an eight-week public consultation, be approved.
 - (ii) That the Service Director- Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing be authorised to agree the final version for publication following the public consultation stage.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. NEWCASTLE TOWN DEAL UPDATE

The Leader introduced a report updating Cabinet on the progress of delivering projects within the Newcastle Town Deal and seeking Cabinet approval to progress legal agreements to enable delivery of the remaining projects yet to be awarded.

The key projects, taking place were as the reconstruction of Astley Place to residential, shopping and café area and the Ryecroft redevelopment. In addition, work was underway on the former Midway car park – being transformed into high quality residential accommodation which had received significant backing from Homes England.

The former Zanzibar site had now been unlocked for development by Aspire Housing – with enterprise units on there, owned by the Council.

The Town Deal also covered other areas such as Knutton where there had been a residential development and enterprise centre extensions and enterprise village hub. The changing rooms on the Wammy were now also completed.

The County Council had been delivering their sustainable travel scheme in the town centre with new pedestrian and cycle crossings and real time passenger information.

There had also been roll out of the superfast broadband hubs.

The Deputy Leader commented on the workmen carrying out the development on York Place who, on Remembrance Sunday, stopped work and paid their respects during the two minutes' silence. Councillor Sweeney stated that all of the developments were starting to come together and it was really exciting.

The Leader stated that real change was being delivered to the town centre through the Town Deal and people could now see the schemes coming to fruition through new homes, jobs and opportunities.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress made with the schemes in Newcastle as part of the Newcastle Town Deal be noted.
 - (ii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships, progress the necessary legal agreements to enable continued delivery of projects.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - SECOND QUARTER 2025-26

The Deputy Leader introduced the Financial Performance report. At this point in time the Council was £69,000 underspent and was budgeted to be at around £19,000 at the end of the year.

The Leader then went through the corporate performance indicators, asking portfolio holders to comment as required. It was pleasing to see that 82% of the Council's indicators were achieving their target.

Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People

There were a number of good targets in this section.

The total number of digital transactions had come in below target but was not necessarily a bad thing. The Council's new website had online forms for which a drop in usage was expected at this time of year. In addition, fewer clicks were required to get to the required areas.

Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

These targets had all been met.

Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

On items collected that went to recycling and composting, the target was met and the dip was attributed to garden waste having gone down over a very dry summer.

On the percentage of fly tipping incidents, where sufficient evidence gathered to formal enforcement -there had been 582 incidents in the Borough over the last six months. The target was 1.5% but it was slightly below at 1.37. At an incident, every effort was made to go through the rubbish to gather evidence. Eight fly tipping Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued.

Regarding the Museum, visitor access continued to increase and was receiving a steady stream of awards.

J2 had steady and sustainable growth with membership now at 4,184.

There had been fewer cases of anti-social behaviour than the same period in the previous financial year – possibly due to targeted training being delivered. Work with Staffordshire Police continued to be built upon.

The last rough sleeper count on 14 November had reduced to twelve from the previous count. Three had a Stoke connection, one with Staffordshire Moorlands and one unknown – six rough sleepers had a Newcastle connection. The Homeless Outreach Team were picking the people up and working with them to get them into accommodation.

Priority 4: Town Centres for All

Car parking was going on an upward trend. Around 30,000 tickets per month were needed to hit the targets and the last four months had achieved that.

On town centre footfall, there had been some big events in the town centre bringing people into the town.

Market stall occupancy was doing well with speciality markets doing very well.

Resolved: That the contents of the attached report and appendices and continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. FORWARD PLAN

The Leader presented the Forward Plan

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

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9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business from Members, officers or Hammy the Elf.

10. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There were no confidential items

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.39 pm