CABINET

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Jonathan Gullis (Chair)

Councillors:	Gullis	Fisher	Rogerson
	Shaw	Renshaw	Simpson

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Nesta Barker	Service Director - Regulatory Services
	Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance
	Roger Tait	Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Paul Dutton	Senior Media Officer
	Craig Turner	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Joanne Halliday	Service Director - Commercial Delivery
	Olwen Brown	Interim Service Director- Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer
	Allan Clarke	Interim Head of Service - Planning Policy

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Leader declared an interest in agenda item 5 – Adoption of the Borough Local Plan (2020-2040), the landowners of proposed AB2 site were client of a company that the Leader worked with in a private capacity as a senior advisor.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 March, 2026 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **WALLEYS QUARRY UPDATE**

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery presented a report updating Cabinet on the latest position regarding Walleys Quarry.

The data focussed on the period March-May, 2026. To date, in 2026 there had been seven complaints of odour received. Monitoring undertaken by officers had revealed two occasions of a distinct odour being observed on Cemetery Road and Barnacle

Place in April. Hydrogen sulphide monitoring also recorded a zero level and there was only one week in March where the WHO odour annoyance level was exceeded.

There was now only the one MMF which was sited at Galingale.

The site would continue to be monitored and there were proposals to establish a cross-party working group.

The Leader asked what the current position was, at the present time, regarding legal proceedings.

The Service Director advised that at present, the Council was not involved in taking any legal proceedings. The Environment Agency had identified that they were looking at legal proceedings.

The Leader asked for clarification in respect of the monitoring stations.

The Service Director advised that there was currently one monitoring station which was measuring a wide range of pollutants on the Galingale estate.

The Leader thanked the officers for their hard work over the years and congratulated the previous administration for their hard work. It was now important that justice be sought for residents. The Leader asked if there was any indication that the government would engage in a public inquiry.

Requests had been made for a public inquiry but there was no support for that at this moment in time.

The Leader stated that once the EA had completed its legal proceedings, the Council would reaffirm its commitment to push for a public inquiry.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted

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4. **ADOPTION OF BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (2020-2040)**

The Interim Head of Service – Planning Policy presented a report considering the adoption of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (2020-2040). The local plan had ben submitted for examination in December, 2024.

The development of the plan had involved a number of consultation stages and had been informed by a significant evidence base. Local plan examination hearing sessions were held throughout May and June, 2025, following which, changes were made and those were consulted upon in November/December, 2025.

The Inspector issued a final report on the plan in May, 2026 which marked the end of the local plan examination. The Inspector concluded that the plan could provide an appropriate basis for planning in the Borough and could be found sound and legally compliant, subject to a list of main modifications – summarised at paragraph 2.2 of the agenda report. No further changes could now be made to the plan.

Options available to the Council presented a binary choice; to adopt the plan with the modifications or to not adopt.

The Leader stated that the Council had written to the Planning Inspector following the final report in May, seeking to make amendments in terms of certain policies and also to open up the possibility of certain sites being removed and replaced if viable and asked the Interim Head of Service what the response had been.

The response had confirmed that the examination had ended and there was no way of changing any aspects of the plan.

Referring to recommendation 2, the Leader asked the Chief Executive if a change could be made, as he felt that there was still time to discuss the issue further with his group and to seek reassurances from other group leaders, particularly the Conservative group leader who instigated and delivered the draft local plan in the hope that he would second any motion coming before full council. The Leader then proposed an amended recommendation (ii).

The Chief Executive stated that he would look at the amended recommendation wording, and what it would entail before the publication of the full council papers next week.

The Service Director – Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer urged the Council to be careful if it did not accept the plan as it stood because it could leave the Council open to potential litigation.

The Leader asked, with the number of sites that were currently proposed within the local plan, how many currently had applications sitting or waiting and what would the likely outcome be if the local plan was not adopted and planning applications were put in for those sites. Could the Council reject them or would appeals and costs be faced and, if so, what costs would be associated with such appeals.
The Interim Head of Service advised that applications had already been made to locations included in the plan and the Council was aware of other proposed developments in the pipeline.

The Leader asked what would be the risk to all green spaces and green belt sites if the local plan was not adopted.

Not having an up to date policy context within the local plan may expose the Borough to speculative development in order to meet identified development needs. The Council could not currently identify a five year supply of homes and also the possibility of direct intervention from the Secretary of State who had powers to approve the plan.

The Leader referred to a number of local authorities who had had their powers in relation to planning taken. Would this council be at risk of that happening should the local plan not be adopted.

There had been recent examples in relation to powers in determining major applications and another authority had a direct intervention from the Secretary of State asking then to take certain actions in respect of their local plan.

The Leader was happy to take the first recommendation for the report but again asked the Chief Executive if the Administration could confirm on 3 July of its intention.

The Chief Executive suggested wording that the Administration wished to see productive and engaging conversation with all groups, ahead of a decision and there was a wish from the Administration to have that in place ahead of the next full council meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the outcomes of the Inspectors report into the examination of the Borough Local Plan 2020-2040 (appendices 1 and 2 to this report), be noted.

(ii) Notes that the Administration seeks positive engagement and, where possible, agreement with opposition groups on the respective positions towards the adoption of the Borough Council Local Plan (2020-2040) in advance of the meeting of Full Council.

Watch the debate here

5. **NEW LOCAL PLAN: COMMENCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Leader introduced a report which was to confirm the formal commencement of a new Borough Local Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Leader stated that there was now a situation where the government had introduced an additional 2000+ housing target requirement for the Borough. Therefore, as the current draft local plan did not meet the revised housing target, the Council would be expected to put a new plan forward

The Interim Head of Service – Planning Policy advised that arrangements in the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework introduced a new method for calculating housing need which increased the Borough's requirement for housing to around 559 dwellings per year compared to the 400 per year in the emerging plan. As the Council's local plan provided for less than 80% of the required figure, the Authority was required to start preparing a new local plan.

Published regulations stated that the Council must start preparing a new local plan by issuing a notification of commencement by 30 June, 2026 alongside a timetable to complete the plan. The timetable anticipated that the local plan would be submitted for examination in October, 2028.

The Council had been successful in acquiring additional funding from the government to support the early stages of plan making but further additional funding would be required.

The Leader stated that this council being asked, at a time of uncertainty- with local government reorganisation, to utilise thousands of hours of officer time and approximately £1m of taxpayers money into a local plan that potentially would not see the light of day - if the reorganisation went ahead, would be foolish.

The Leader therefore felt that Cabinet could not approve the preparation for a new local plan. A letter had been written to the Secretary of State advising that, whilst a decision on local government reorganisation was awaited, it would be sensible to, at the very least, pause the process. No response had yet been received. The Leader would write a further letter making it clear that this council refused to take part in any local plan process going forward. The Leader asked what the risks would be of refusing to take part in the process.

The Interim Head of Service advised that preparation of a local plan was a statutory requirement and regulations published at the end of March noted that councils through transitional arrangements such as this council were required to start the local plan making process by the end of this month. There was also a risk financially that the money provided by the government to start the process would have to be returned and intervention from the Secretary of State on any decision not to move forward at this stage.

Regarding the money provided by the government, the Leader asked the Service Director – Finance/ Section 151 Officer if that money was still unused and could be sent back to the government if required.

The Service Director confirmed that was correct.

Resolved: That work on the new Local Plan not be taken forward until the outcomes and implications of Local Government Reorganisation is known.

Watch the debate here

6. **NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES UPDATE**

The Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery presented a report which provided an update on the performance of the Community Safety Partnership for 2025/26 and the Night Time Economy Strategy.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.2 of the report which outlined the findings of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment.

The Community Safety Partnership worked to deploy resources into areas where there were localised issues – particularly in Newcastle town centre.

The report set out a detailed review of data along with a comprehensive list of the Partnership's activities and operations in progress to identify priorities. Those identifies for 2026/27 were listed at paragraph 2.3 of the report.

Issues local to Newcastle that were being addressed were business crime, shoplifting, domestic abuse and drugs and County Lines.

The Local Police and Crime Plan was appended to the report which set out the response to the issues.

The Deputy Leader asked if there were any rotas for visible policing in Newcastle town centre.

The Service Director stated that, for obvious reasons, the focus was on the night time economy. There was a rota for safer policing at weekends. The police did have a presence in the town centre during the day time but it was dependent upon what came in during the course of the day.

The Deputy Leader stated that a zero tolerance policy was needed in respect of anti-social behaviour (ASB), especially in the town centre. He had not seen many police visible and suggested that crime rates may be dropping because they were not always being recorded.

The Service Director stated that he could ask the police for information on rotas for day time policing, which was then agreed.

The Leader stated that traders and the Business Improvement District (BID) had raised this, particularly regarding early mornings with rough sleepers or street drinkers and something needed to be done. The Leader referred to Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) and asked how successful they had been. Reference was made to Stafford, which had included face coverings in their PSPO and it would be good to include that in Newcastle's Order.

The Service Director advised that the PSPO for Newcastle town centre had been successful in terms of hotspot activity times in the night time economy, which was when the bulk of the breaches occurred. The current PSPO would need to be checked in respect of face coverings to see if there was any interpretation and if that was not the case, to see if it could be included in the next scheduled review in three years. Regarding the early morning issues, a lot of the people had complex needs and a lot of work went into engaging with people and trying to support them. However, for individuals who refused to engage, the Council did have powers to start looking at moving them on.

The Leader had concerns about those who were persistent and refused any assistance which endangered the wider public and a good strategy on communication was needed to get reporting levels up.

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Governance and Organisational Performance stated that, if there were not any rotas, would it be possible to look at whether there was a presence in the town centre. He had found it quite intimidating walking in the town at lunchtime and there had been a visible odour of drug smoke in the air. A police presence would pick up on that and check and search. People could be asked to be more responsive in reporting the matters.

The Leader suggested that it would be profitable to meet with the Local Policing Commander, looking at the strategy and seeing where the Council could work in corroboration with them. There needed to be a clear partnership update in terms of demands on the officers and what was expected in terms of the Council working with them to provide things such as CCTV coverage, Rangers and reporting systems. It was hoped that the Night Time Economy Pilot Town status bid would be awarded for up to three areas.

The Service Director stated that, in terms of the bid, the Council should hear very soon if it had been successful. It would include a 'twilight zone' in the town between schools and colleges finishing until the pubs became busy – which was when ASB was experienced. Having legitimate activities occurring during that time would help with natural surveillance.

Resolved: (i) That the report be received and the outcomes for 2025-2026 and the work of the Community Safety Partnership in continuing to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as the work in progress to continue to tackle identified priority issues, be noted.

(ii) That the Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery be authorised to formally accept project funding for the Night Time Economy Pilot Town status, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Residents Services and Neighbourhoods, if the bid is successful, and to implement the project.

Watch the debate here

7. **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME COMMUNITY FUND**

The Service Director – Finance (Section 151 Officer) presented a report seeking to establish the Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Fund enabling Councillors to respond directly to priorities within their wards.

The Fund would provide each Councillor with up to £2,500 per year and aimed to strengthen community wellbeing, encourage local collaboration and support projects which delivered tangible benefits for residents. Details of how the budgets could be used, and how they should not be used were shown in the protocol at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Service Director for his help in initiating the Fund and asked for clarification as to where the money for the project had come from.

The Service Director stated that the £110,000 Fund (£2,500 each for 44 Members) had come from the previous 'Civic Pride Investment Fund' which was £22,000. The remaining £88,000 would be vired from a previous contribution to the Civic Growth Fund for Sustainable Environment and Town and Place.

The Leader stated that this was exciting and for wards with more than one Member it would mean more money to spend on local projects and, with County Councillor contributions a Borough Councillor could, for example purchase a grit bin and it would then be the County Council's responsibility to keep it full and maintain it.

Resolved: That the establishment of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Fund which allocates Councillor's a maximum of £2,500 per annum to address local priorities within their wards, as identified by their local communities, be approved.

Watch the debate here

8. **BRAMPTON MUSEUM APPLICATION TO THE NATIONAL LOTTERY FOR MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS**

The Service Director – Commercial Delivery presented a report updating Cabinet on the museum's proposed 2027-29 National Lottery funding bid and to seek approval to apply for up to £150,000 funding.

The project would seek to make improvements which were outlined at paragraph 1.4 of the report.

The bid would require minor match funding which could be delivered through the Conservation and Exhibition budget.

The Leader stated that Brampton Museum was a very important community asset.

Resolved: (i) That an application to the National Lottery of up to £150,000 to deliver a project between April 2027-March 2029, be approved.

(ii) That the museum be approved to use its previous public fundraising and forthcoming public fundraising to provide the 10% match funding.

(iii) That, to meet the additional grant match funding, the use of £500 from the museum's existing annual conservation budget and £1,000 from the annual exhibition budget to carry out preventative conservation and create a high-quality exhibition celebrating the history of Newcastle high street, be approved.

(iv) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader & Cabinet Member for Planning & Town Centres be authorised to accept and utilise any funding allocated in line with the bid, including any necessary contracts.

Watch the debate here

9. **PET CREMATION PROGRESS REPORT**

The Leader introduced a report regarding the updated Business Case for the Pet Crematorium and seeking approval to proceed with the necessary contracts including delivery of the cremation unit. He asked for clarification on the service being offered by Stoke on Trent City Council.

The Service Director – Commercial Delivery presented the report and stated that the new service would be totally separate to the existing one. The Pet Cremation service would be a personal service where all pets would be treated with dignity on an individual basis.

A planning application had been submitted and the tendering process for the cremator had been completed. The result of the tendering process would be discussed in closed session at the end of this meeting. The Business Case had been reviewed and updated and that too would be discussed under closed session.

The report showed the proposed fees and charges for the service and those were listed at paragraph 8.6 of the report.

The service would trade as 'Loved and Loyal Pet Crematorium' and web addresses had been purchased.

Stoke City Council had a scattering area for cremated remains of pets within Carmountside Crematorium grounds and should a resident of Newcastle or Stoke use the pet cremation service they could scatter the ashes at Carmountside if wished.

The proposal had received positive feedback from residents.

The Leader asked if the planning application was currently live online and therefore open for people to make comments. This was confirmed.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Green Spaces asked if residents would be expected to take their pets to the crematorium themselves.

The Service Director confirmed that that would be the intention, although if corporate contracts with veterinary practices existed, they could deliver the pet to Bradwell.

The Leader asked what type of pets would be accepted at the crematorium.

The Service Director stated that there would be two chambers in the cremator – one would accept up to a large dog and a smaller one for ‘hamster sized’ pets.

The Leader stated that this had a strong business case and would be an asset to the Borough.

Resolved: (i) That continued support be given to the development of a pet cremation service to provide residents with a local caring service when needed.

(ii) That the progress made in relation to the planning application and the procurement of the necessary products to deliver the service in line with the up to date business plan, be noted.

(iii) That the Service Director for Commercial Services in consultation with the Leader & Cabinet Member for Planning & Town Centres be delegated authority to complete all necessary contracts to ensure the effective delivery of the project in line with the legislative requirements.

(iv) That the fees and charges as set out in the report and marketing commences at the appropriate time, be adopted.

Watch the debate here

10. **RENEWAL OF THE POOL WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS & MOVEABLE FLOOR/LIFT SERVICING & MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT JUBILEE 2**

The Service Director – Commercial Delivery presented a report seeking authority to enter into a new contract for the planned and reactive maintenance and servicing covering the pool filtration/chemical and moveable floor/lift components in support of the safe operation of both pools at J2.

The Current Contract would end on 30 September this year so it was recommended to go out to tender. It was essential that the contract and service were in place, as, without it the safe clean water could not be guaranteed or that the moving parts of the pool were safe and useable. The contract would be for two years with a one year extension subject to successful service delivery.

The Leader asked if the current contract could just be extended or was the Council just abiding by normal procurement process.

The Service Director advised that the usual extensions, as set out in the original contract had been used and therefore, to be compliant with the procurement regulations, the Council should go back out to re-tender which enables the current contractor to bid again.

The Cabinet Member for Residents Services and Neighbourhoods asked why the Council was looking at a two plus one year contract. Was this due to regulations or the framework that was used.

The Service Director advised that a longer service could be sought but a lot of the current contracts had been set up this way on the basis of waiting for a decision on local government reorganisation.

Resolved: That, subject to the successful procurement process of a new contract, it be approved that the Service Director Commercial Delivery in consultation with the Leader & Cabinet Member for Planning & Town Centres, to enter into a contract with the successful provider for a period of two years with an option to extend the term by a further year.

Watch the debate here

11. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER 2025/26

The Service Director – Finance/Section 151 Officer presented the financial aspect of the report which provided figures for the fourth quarter of 2025/26.

The Council ended 2025/26 an a stable financial position, achieving £115,000 revenue surplus against a £19.7m balanced budget. Strong planning income, investment interest and reduced borrowing costs had helped to offset income pressures in leisure, parking and bereavement services.

Capital investment had remained a major focus, with over £27m spent on regeneration, town deals and community projects. Whilst capital expenditure was below the planned £36m most of the variance reflected projects being reprofiled into 2026/27.

The Audit and Standards Committee would be presented with the Council's draft Statement of Accounts at its next meeting on 29 June for review and publication approval.

Overall, sound financial management was demonstrated and there had been compliance with all statutory deadlines and there was continued momentum on key regeneration priorities.

The Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance presented the performance figures for the fourth quarter. Forty nine indicators had been measured and 70% of those were on target. For the 30% that were not on target the report contained narrative as to the reasons for that.

There was consistently good performance across the services and the purpose of the report was to see where improvements could be made.

The Cabinet Member for Legal, Governance and Organisational Performance stated that he would rather see actual figures rather than percentages for the performance figures.

Referring back to the finance figures, the Leader asked for clarification that there were changes to pension contributions and also interest secured from Town Deal investment which had aided the Council's finances.

The Service Director – Finance/Section 151 Officer confirmed that pension contributions would have help to bridge the gap in 2026/27 and the receipt of Town Deal monies in advance of spend had generated interest which had also helped to offset some income shortfalls throughout the year.

The Leader ask what the plan with the finances where Town Deal money was starting to be spent and would therefore no longer be in the accounts – how would potential shortfalls be dealt with, going forward.

The Service Director advised that the Council had not relied on any of the interest for the budgets, so for 2026/27 the budget for interest receivable would be nil. In terms of income areas where losses had been experienced going back to Covid, in each year of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Council had had a reduction in terms of income levels. By the end of the current financial year it was hoped that the Council would be in a much better position in terms of income.

The Leader referred back to fly tipping, the Council had averaged 4.77 days which was within target but enforcement was not.

The Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery advised that enforcement had previously been measured in such a way that it looked like action was not being taken in relation to every single fly-tip. Going forward, every fly-tip incident would be investigated in such a way that the Streetscene team would go out and look through the rubbish for evidence of the offender. Evidence would then be passed to the Neighbourhood Delivery team to pursue any enforcement action that could be taken. The actual investigation was an enforcement action and therefore almost 100% of incidents had some kind of enforcement action associated with them.

Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecution can only be proceeded if evidence was found at the fly-tip and, at present that level of evidence was not being acquired. However, there was currently funding to employ some mobile re-deployable CCTV cameras to place at hotspots. These could act as a deterrent and also gain evidence.

The Leader referred to planning enforcement and stated that the year to date figures for informing complainants within the required timescale was 68.1% and below the 75% target – although the Quarter Four figure was 82.4%. The Leader asked why the annual target was missed.

The Chief Executive stated that the planning enforcement team had been working on actions to improve the figures. It was an evidence-led process and reporting-led process. There were limited resources in the enforcement area which the Council was keen to look at going forward to ensure that there was the right balance in place.

The Leader stated that he was keen to ensure that the Council was using its enforcement officers to be proactive and aggressive in enforcement in terms of issuing fines or seeking legal action against landlords or land owners who were not maintaining or looking after their property. He referred to some work that the Service Director – Regulatory Services was undertaking regarding vape shops and barber shops that the Council had concerns about.

The Leader asked what the Council Tax increase would be for the years going forward.

The Service Director -Finance/Section 151 Officer stated that, in the currently approved MTFS, there was an assumption that it would remain at 1.99%. The figure would be refined during the budget setting process in September.

Resolved: That the contents of the attached report and appendices be noted and the Council's service and financial performance for this period be continually monitored and challenged.

Watch the debate here

12. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Chief Executive advised that the Forward Plan would be published on the first working day of July which would cover up to four months' activity. Areas of work had been given by Cabinet and the Administration and those would be added prior to publication.

Resolved: That the update on the Forward Plan be noted.

Watch the debate here

13. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Leader asked the Chief Executive if he could add an item of Urgent Business.

An encampment had been set up near to Aldi and the Leader asked what action had been taken.

The Chief Executive advised that the site was on private land and the Mobile Multi-Functional Team had been working with the site owners and with other agencies. It was the responsibility of the private landowner to lead and it was understood that they were seeking enforcement by the court for removal of the encampment.

The Council had limited powers in private land situations but the Council was closely monitoring the situation. Advice would be offered by the Council to the landowner in respect of securing their property.

The Leader asked if the Council was confident that the landowner had started the process of taking action to bring the situation to an end.

The Service Director- Neighbourhood Delivery stated that the Council was awaiting a report back from the landowner today but indications were that they were pursuing it as best they could.

The Leader asked if there was any indication on timescale.

The Service Director advised that this would not be known until the landowner engaged with the court. A court date would need to be set to secure an eviction order or possession order for the land to enable an eviction.

The Leader asked what action the Council could take against the landowner if it was felt that they were making insufficient effort to clear the site.

The Service Director stated that there were two possible actions. Firstly, the Council could serve a Community Protection Warning because of any nuisance that was being caused and secondly, it was on the police radar so if there were any issues or criminality associated with the site it would open up another avenue for action.

14. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration if the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

15. **PET CREMATION PROGRESS REPORT**

Cllr Jonathan Gullis
Chair

Meeting concluded at 3.05 pm