CABINET

Tuesday, 4th August, 2026
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Jonathan Gullis (Chair)	
Councillors:	Shaw Fisher	Renshaw Simpson
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Rogerson	

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Deputy Chief Executive
	Roger Tait	Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery
	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
	Sam Clark	Service Director - IT & Digital

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Renshaw declared an interest in item 5 as a former Housing Officer of the Borough Council and now leads a homelessness charity in Stoke on Trent.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 23 June, 2026 be agreed as a correct record.

3. WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR UPDATE

The Chief Executive introduced a report updating Cabinet on the current position in respect of Walleys Quarry.

Only one complaint was received in July and overall complaints remained extremely low.

The works being carried out on site by the Environment Agency (EA) and their contractors was continuing to prevent serious pollution.

A number of questions had recently been raised at the last Health, Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee and answers to those were shown paragraph 5.9 of the report.

The proposed Cross Party Working Group was being established with the objective of ensuring regular political oversight, information sharing and regular scrutiny of progress. The initial meeting would be held in September and would be added to future reports.

Referring to the Cross Party Working Group, the Leader asked for an update on the intended Members. The Chief Executive advised that it would consist of The Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme, the Leader of the County Council, the Leader of Newcastle Borough Council, and the Conservative Group and Labour Group Leaders of Newcastle Borough Council. There would be officer presence from Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle Borough Council, the EA and any others as the group wished to invite as it progressed.

Resolved: That the update report be received and noted.

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4. **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2026-30**

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced a report seeking approval and publication of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2026 -2030.

The current Housing Strategy had been adopted in 2021 and the current Homelessness Strategy was adopted in 2020. Both documents had been reviewed and merged into the one document.

The Draft Strategy had been considered by the previous Cabinet, subject to public consultation and reviewed by the current administration, with any amendments now having been incorporated into the document attached to the report. It was structured around three priorities which were outlined at paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report.

The new Administration had stated that they wished to provide greater prominence to four areas within the document. Those were outlined at paragraph 2.1 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection stated that the report had been updated to reflect the introduction of the Renter's Rights Act and asked if there was any data on whether the Act had led to any increase in landlord enquiries, notices served, homelessness presentations or homelessness prevention cases. If so, what trends were officers seeing and did they anticipate any further pressures on Council services over the coming months.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that when people faced with homelessness contacted the Council, both prevention and homelessness duties were considered. Each case would be looked at individually to determine what action can be taken to support them.

Regarding the Renter's Rights Act, the Newcastle Housing Advice Team were beginning to see customers coming forward, with a few Section 21 Notice, issued prior to the Act implementation. There had been an increase in presentation for quarter one customers who had been issued with a Section 81A Notice and some cases were now starting to come through as landlords had to give four months' notice so the impact would become apparent in the near future.

Direct landlord enquiries had been limited. However, information was available for both landlords and tenants on the Renter's Rights Act implementation on the Council's website.

Other area of change that the Renter's Rights Act brought in was for the duty of the Council to enforce breaches of the Act with a few cases having been referred to the Council and which were currently being investigated. Should tenants need support or wish to make a complaint, that could be done through the Council's website on the Renter's Rights Act pages.

The implementation of the Renter's Rights Act was phased, with the third phase expected to be implemented this coming Autumn.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection stated that the Strategy rightly identified homelessness and rough sleeping as one of the three key priorities and asked for the current position of the number of recorded rough sleepers in Newcastle and how it compared with previous years and what targets or measures would be used over the lifetime of the Strategy.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that in June, 2025 there was a single night count of 6 and in June, 2026 there were 6. Over the month there were 22 in June, 2025 and 14 in June, 2026. In July, 2025 a single night was 10 and in July, 2026 was 8. Over the month in July, 2025 was 23 and for July, 2026 a report was awaited.

Figures were reported monthly to DELTA and those were recorded on the .gov website. Performance data was recorded in the Council's quarterly report to Cabinet. Case studies were also provided on a six-monthly rolling period.

There was also an added pressure of out of area rough sleepers which came from the court, hospital and supported housing provider that did not have a local connection criteria and had 86 units in the area – mainly in the town centre. This was tackled through partnership working and joint commissioning of services.

Referring to the current reviewing of the Parks and Open Spaces Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), the Leader asked if tents and encampments had been added to it.

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery confirmed that the renewed PSPO was currently out for consultation, having been considered by the Licensing and Public Protection Committee in June, 2026. After the twelve week consultation period, tented structures and other encampment related matters would be included and reconsidered by the Licensing and Public Protection Committee, along with any other amendments that had been proposed.

The Leader asked how Navigation House was working, so far. The Leader was advised that there was no information available on that at present. However, it was up and running and seemed to be working well. It appeared to be engaging with rough sleepers who had a local connection to Newcastle.

The Chief Executive stated that there had been a managed roll-out of Navigation House for the first residents and it had been received well.

The Leader made reference to the Article 4 Direction being brought to Cabinet in the Autumn where the Council would be able to outline registered and unregistered HMO's and give a clear distinction where to draw the boundaries in order to take action.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Recycling and Green Spaces asked if engagement was representative of residents views, given that only three responses were received.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the consultation process was by direct communication to partner organisations and the public consultation was advertised through the Council's website. It was agreed that responses were low, however the responses received had been noted in the report sand amendments had been made to the Policy to take into account the representations that had been received.

Resolved: That the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2026-2030 be received and noted

Watch the debate here

5. **TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER AMENDMENT CONSULTATION**

The Service Director for Commercial Delivery introduced a report Seeking Cabinet approval for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) amendment which would include three new car parks: Lyme Park Countryside Park, Keele; Meadows Road, Kidsgrove and Heathcote Street, Kidsgrove.

Each of the car parks had a particular time limit on them so that they each serve particular users, enabling customers to come and go and there be an availability of parking for the next users.

Parking charges did apply to long-stay parking in terms of the Meadows Road car park and this was due to the train station parking where train passengers were using the town centre car parks.

It was proposed to run all three consultations at the same time to make the process efficient in terms of costs.

The Leader referred to some misinformation regarding the Heathcote Street car park – short stay and long stay. There was never any intention of introducing parking charges on those. It was the Council's view that they would just have a two hour limit on the lower car park and then long stay free access on the top one in order to have a better flow for both nipper shoppers and those wishing to stay longer. The Service Director confirmed that was the case. There would be a 30 minute time limit on parking bays closest to King Street shops and the lower bays would have a maximum of two hours and upper bays were unlimited and people could park there all day.

The Leader asked what the ratio was of residents using Lyme Park Countryside Park to access the park and those currently using it to use the University. The Service Director advised that the car park was currently closed off so nobody was using it. Some anglers with permits did have access to the park but were minimal in terms of numbers. If there were no restrictions it would be predicted that all of the spaces would be occupied by persons going to the University before 9am.

Resolved: (i) That the Traffic Regulation Order Amendment be approved for consultation.

(ii) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Commercial Services be authorised to review the consultation response and make minor alterations as appropriate before adopting the Traffic Regulation Order.

Watch the debate here

6. **LYME VALLEY PUMP TRACK**

The service Director for Commercial Delivery introduced a report seeking approval to transform an existing BMX track in Lyme Valley into a modern pump track facility and to allocate existing Section 106 Agreement funding to the project. Public consultation would be undertaken online to gauge community views on the options for the facility. The two options were appended to the report.

The estimated cost of installing a pump track was £150,000 with approximately £135,000 identified in Section 106 Agreement funds. There would be an estimated build time of 10-12 weeks.

The Portfolio Holder for Residents Services and Neighbourhoods stated that the Lyme Valley was a fantastic asset for the Borough and the pump track would show the Council's commitment to families and residents over the coming years.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Recycling and Green Spaces asked what the life span and maintenance costs would be for the facility. The Service Director advised that they were now covered in tarmac and it would only be bikes etc using the facility, the life span would be around 15 years before the tarmac needed patching up. As the Lyme Valley was already maintained by the Council there would be no new maintenance burden.

The Leader stated that it was a great asset for the community, encouraging young and old to get out and about. There had been a couple of youngsters who had become involved in the Team GB BMX. People had come from as far as Glasgow to try out the Newchapel pump track.

The Leader thanked Councillor Paul Wood who pushed for this project, wishing to see this happen for his community and the people of Clayton.

Resolved: (i) That the initial draft proposals received from specialist design and build contractors for consultation be approved;

(ii) That the Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Residents Services and Neighbourhoods, to approve the final design having considered the consultation responses, and to award the contract for construction of the facility to the lowest suitable tender subject to the full costs falling within the available budget;

(iii) That the identified Section 106 Agreement funding totalling £135,000 be allocated to the project, and that officers be authorised to continue to seek additional funding to bridge the gap to the estimated total cost of £150,000.

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7. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION WITHDRAWAL**

The Chief Executive introduced a report advising Cabinet of the next steps in withdrawing from the Local Government Association (LGA) following the resolution passed at Full Council on 8 July, 2026.

The management of withdrawal across key areas was outlined in the report at paragraph 3.1.

Officers had engaged with stakeholders to understand what the LGA did/did not do and had also engaged with the LGA directly, West Midlands Employers (WME) and other councils operating outside of LGA membership.

The report concluded that many essential functions and sources of support did remain available through other routes.

The Leader referred to a document that the Service Director for Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer had obtained following engagement with the LGA regarding the terms of any deals that were struck and asked the Service Director for an update. The Service Director advised that a letter had been received today from the legal advisor to the LGA. The Articles of Association stated that local authorities must give one year's notice to expire on 31 March the following year and therefore any notice given by this Council would not expire until 31 March, 2028.

The Leader stated that this Council had given almost 12 months notice since his intention had been made public and reaffirmed at Full Council on 8 July – which was 9-10 months notice. The Leader stated that no payment would be made to the LGA on 1 April, 2027 onwards.

Since 2012/13 the LGA had received £627.63m from council subscriptions or government grants which could have been put to better use.

A recent LGA survey had shown that 51% of members believed that the LGA demonstrated value for money.

The Service Director for Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer advised that she could advise further on the terms when required.

The Chief Executive, referring to the first recommendation, stated that it could be amended to 'seeking to withdraw immediate participation' whilst the points raised by the Monitoring Officer were worked through. It could be put on record that the Council was not participating and discussions would continue around the withdrawal as noted.

The Leader stated that he was content for the recommendation to remain as written in the report.

The Monitoring Officer noted that previous reports of a rooftop bar within the LGA headquarters had been challenged. The Leader noted that he had been clear in reference to a rooftop terrace during debate at both full Council and Cabinet meetings.

Resolved: (i) That the Council's intention to seek immediate withdrawal from the Local Government Association, including all committees, events, activities and information-sharing arrangements, be noted.

(ii) That the terms and conditions of LGA membership be noted, and that the Service Director for Finance and the Service Director, Legal & Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Legal, Governance & Operational Performance, be authorised to engage with the LGA to secure immediate withdrawal.

(iii) That engagement with other authorities to understand the Council's position outside the LGA be noted.

(iv) That the Council's withdrawal from LGA-associated bodies, including the Local Councils Network and LG Inform, be noted.

(v) That should the LGA's purpose and structure change significantly to address the concerns raised by members in the motion to full Council, Cabinet will give due consideration to membership in future years.

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8. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE**

The Chief Executive introduced a report updating Cabinet on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) following the announcement made on 16 July, 2026.

The Government had indicated its intention to replace the current two-tier local government system in Staffordshire with two new unitary authorities from 1 April, 2028 – subject to parliamentary approval.

Newcastle-under-Lyme would become part of a North Staffordshire Unitary Authority alongside Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands Councils and bringing in parts of Staffordshire County Council's functions.

The report set out the opposition to the proposal and the Leader of the Council's ongoing representations to Government.

The Leader stated that it had been a ‘dark day’ for the Loyal and Ancient Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme when the decision was announced. The previous Administration were thanked for their work in gathering over 11,000 signatures on the ‘Save our Borough’ Petition.

The Leader had written to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State and responses were awaited.

The Leadr asked the Service Director for Legal and Governance/Monitoring officer if there was a timeline for the receiving of legal advice ahead of the Special Council Meeting scheduled for 2 September, 2026. The Service Director stated that a Brief was sent to leading counsel on or around 23 July with a response being requested by 20 August, 2026.

The Leader, stating that the Service Director had already looked at some of the decisions taken by Essex & Harlow and asked what the framing was for those judicial reviews at this moment in time. The Service Director stated that the first issue would be ‘did we have grounds’; the second issue would be that if we did have grounds, what would be the best way to take them forward – whether it was to join in another judicial review. There were some doubts about the Essex authorities in that they were claiming different grounds to what this Authority would claim.

The Portfolio Holder for Residents Services and Neighbourhoods stated that this had been a shocking announcement.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance referred to the monumental debt that Stoke City Council had at the moment and stated that, from a monetary point of view, it was an abysmal decision for Newcastle.

The Leader agreed and asked the Service Director for Finance/ Section 151 Officer what money had been set aside for this and what, if any financial support the Council was being given. The service Director advised that Central Government had announced that there would be £900,000 allocated to each new authority, so £1.8m across Staffordshire. This Council had set aside £400,000 in a reserve fund for LGR which would be topped up by a further £200,000 in the new financial year.

The Leader asked what portion of the £900,000 Newcastle would receive or was that solely at the discretion of the new authority when it was set up in May, 2027. The Chief Executive advised that the allocation was yet to reach Staffordshire County Council whose Chief Executive was the senior responsible owner. However, from the £900,000 would have to come the core costs, for example staff for the programme and associated legal costs so on that basis Newcastle might see a very small proportion, if anything.

The Leader stated that that was of grave concern as there was approximately £783m of outstanding debt associated with Stoke City Council alongside £69.5m of exceptional financial support. The Leader stated that he intended to write to all council leaders with in the North Staffordshire proposed area to see if they would join with him, alongside all of the local MP’s, to send a clear letter to Government stating that if LGR was going ahead, the debt must be cleared.

Elections would take place in May, 2027 for 84 councillors for the new authority. The Council’s Administration would remain in post until 1 April, 2028.

Resolved: That the update report be received and noted.

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9. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Leader went through the items contained within the Forward Plan.

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

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10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Leader placed on record his thanks to Councillors' Shaw and Renshaw who attended the Flag Raising Ceremony. It was fantastic to see the brass band performing, young musicians and over 100 local residents in attendance.

Staffordshire County Council were thanked for having engaged with this Council both proactively and constructively to get the roundabouts repaired.

11. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There was no confidential business.

Councillor Jonathan Gullis
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.56 pm