COUNCIL

Wednesday, 8th July, 2026
Time of Commencement: 7.20 pm

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Present: Mayor.Councillor Christopher Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	Beeston	Renshaw	Ashworth
	Bettley-Smith	Barber	Rogerson
	Casey-Hulme	Clarke	SainReiners
	Fear	Downs	Saxton
	Heesom	Duffy	Sedgley
	Holland	Evans	Shaw
	Hutchison	Fisher	Sparks
	D Jones	Gullis	Stevenson
	Parker	Harrison	Swain
	J Tagg	Jellyman	Tift
	S Tagg	Kasperowicz	Walton
	Whieldon	Lefroy	Wood
	Whitmore	Machin	Westcott

Apologies: Councillor(s) Turnock, Chamberlain and Simpson

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Deputy Chief Executive
	Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Craig Turner	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Olwen Brown	Interim Service Director- Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Leader declared an interest in item 6, the Borough Local Plan - the landowners of proposed AB2 site were clients of a company that the Leader worked with in a private capacity as a senior advisor.

Councillor Downs declared an interest in item 6 – as a resident in close proximity to a site being discussed this evening.

Councillor Jones declared an interest in item 6 - as an employee of Harper & Keele Veterinary School but would take part in the debate. Also, a declaration of interest was made for item 10 – protecting green spaces as both of his children attended Madeley High School.

The following Members declared an interest in Item 10 – withdrawing from the Local Government Association – who had benefited from training and guidance from the LGA: Cllrs: Beeston; Bettley-Smith; Fear; Holland; Heesom; Hutchison; Lefroy; Sedgley; Swain; J Tagg; Whieldon; Whitmore and S Tagg who had also undertaken mentoring for the LGA.

2. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Whieldon referred to item 15 on the Minutes regarding her request for a timescale for the implementation of the recommendations and asked when that would be done.

The Mayor advised that a detailed report would be brought to the September meeting of Full Council.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May, 2026 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made one announcement:

His Civic Service would be held on Sunday, 26th July, 2026 at St Giles Church with the procession commencing at 10.15am approximately, from Castle House.

4. **AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

The Leader introduced a report and moved the Motion setting out proposed changes to the Council's Constitution stating that the changes were about clarity, efficiency and accountability.

The proposed changes were shown at paragraph 1.2 of the report and concerned decision making, Council and Cabinet Procedure Rules, Planning Committee provisions- which had been set nationally, Code of Conduct complaints and the removal of substitutes from meetings.

Councillor Rogerson seconded the Motion stated that the proposed amendments would keep the Council's arrangements clear, effective and fit for purpose. He welcomed the changes made to the Council procedure rules.

Councillor Holland introduced the proposed amendments put forward by the Conservative group. He stated that the Conservative group opposed on principle, measures within the report that impeded democratic accountability. They were open to the reform of the petition scheme and asked the Leader to justify his proposed changes. The Conservative group amendment called for a Working Group to discuss the changes.

Councillor Simon Tagg seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

The Leader and Councillor Rogerson did not consent to the Conservative groups' amendment.

A debate took place on the Conservative groups' amendment.

Comments were made by Councillors' Fear and Whieldon stating that the proposed changes would close down local debate and also that the changes were not clear.

Councillor Lefroy stated that the restrictions placed on petitions would affect smaller communities of less than 100 people and the Leader was asked to look into that point as part of the Working Group proposed by the Conservative group. In addition, there seemed to be no provision for petitions between 101 and 249 signatures.

Councillor Jones raised concerns regarding appeals being delegate to the Chief Executive, particularly in terms of impartiality and whether the change would be ACAS compliant. Concerns were also raised regarding the questions time frame as they would have to be submitted before the Council agenda was available.

Councillor Parker arrived at 7.45pm

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that the Conservative group had concerns about several of the proposals and the change in direction of the Council. He agreed that the changes to Planning with the National Scheme of Delegation was out of this Council's control. Reference was made to the Leader writing to the Government putting the case forward for change and Councillor Tagg asked that the Leader write a letter to the Secretary of State relating to the changes to Planning arrangements stating that local accountability was needed.

Councillor Tagg referred to the removal of substitute members from committees and the benefit that would be lost in areas such as sub-committees.

The Leader stated that the peoples democratic rights had not been nullified as they could attend committees, ask questions and submit petitions.

A vote was taken on the Conservative groups' amendment.

In favour:	14
Against:	25
Abstentions:	02

The Conservative amendment fell and a debate took place on the original Motion.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that his group would be voting against the Motion but asked the Leader if he would take on board writing to the Government regarding the Planning changes.

Councillor Holland stated that he found it ironic that resolution number two empowered the Monitoring Officer in consultation with group leaders when previously a cross party working group had been opposed.

In summing up, the Leader stated that he would be happy to write to the Government regarding the changes to Planning legislation and would be happy to meet with Councillor Lefroy regarding his concerns around the petition scheme.

Resolved: (i) That the proposed changes to the Constitution be agreed.

(ii) That the responsibility for making such changes reflecting the will of Council, be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders; such changes to take effect as soon as the Monitoring Officer has consulted the Group Leader and made the changes required.

Watch the debate here

5. **BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN**

The Leader and Councillor Downs left the room during the debate on the following item.

The Deputy Leader presented a report seeking to adopt the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Local Plan (2020-2040). He stated that the Local Plan had been prepared, promoted and submitted by the previous administration. Four consultations had been carried out prior to its submission. Modifications were consulted on in late 2025 and changes were requested by the Planning Inspector before the Plan could be made sound, including the removal of six proposed housing allocations. The Planning Inspector's final report arrived on 19 May, 2026, the day before the current administration took control.

The new administration wrote to the Planning Inspector asking if changes could be made but were advised that no further changes could be made and that a new plan-making process would be required. Therefore, it was felt that the danger of not adopting the Plan could have serious consequences for the Borough as it would fall back onto old policies.

Councillor Ashworth seconded the Motion stated that the Local Plan was not what the Administration would have written and therefore had tried to change it through writing to the Planning Inspector. Challenges were made to targets around BREAM, energy statements, whole life carbon assessments and a fixed 10% on site renewable target. Stronger protection was sought for agricultural land, a more pro-business approach in Policy EMP1 and tougher controls on HMO's and a Borough wide Article 4 Direction was pushed for.

Councillor Fear presented the amendment submitted by the Conservative group. He referred to the standard calculation which was used to calculate the amount of housing required in the Borough and therefore, any sites removed from the Local Plan would require another site being put in. If the previous administration had not got a Plan in place, the additional 2000 houses that the Government had imposed in the new figures would have had to have been included in the Plan being discussed this evening.

The Conservative groups' amendment, at page 211 of the agenda set out a number of true facts which indicate that the previous administration had done whatever it could to protect green spaces in the Borough. Councillor Fear pointed out a typing error at point D where it should read AB2 instead of B2.

Councillor Simon Tagg seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

Councillors' Shaw and Ashworth consented to the amendment.

Councillor Fear stated that the Plan had been developed to try and ensure that impositions of national government were imposed upon the Borough as lightly as possible. Reference was made to paragraph 3.17 which stated that, although the Borough was under the national average for unemployment, the figures were slightly over the national average in Staffordshire. It was hoped that the Local Plan would help to provide the jobs required to bring the local unemployment figures down.

The Local Plan was good and sound and had gone through ample consultation and was offering the minimum amount of housing imposed upon the Borough and giving employment opportunities.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that difficult decisions had to be made in the previous Council and would have to be made in the new Council in the face of objections from local residents on sites being included/not included in the Plan. The housing and employment requirements had been set by national government and this Council settled on the lowest number that it could whilst still providing a sustainable Plan which met the Government's requirements.

Councillor Tagg stated that the Local Plan was very different to the Joint Local Plan that had been put together with Stoke on Trent City Council which would have meant 11,720 houses being built in the Borough between now and 2033. The Plan being discussed at this meeting had approximately 8000 proposed houses.

Councillor Holland stated that in his fifteen years as a Councillor, the Council had not had an up to date Local Development Plan which would come at an enormous cost to the Council's ability to control development in the Borough and had been especially harmful to rural communities.

Councillor Dave Jones stated that he sympathised with the new Administration who had inherited the Plan at its final stage and recognised that the Borough was in a difficult position with speculative applications. Councillor Jones had concluded that a flawed plan that locked in the wrong sites at Audley, damaged a site of real bio diversity at Keele and failed to secure social housing was not automatically a safer choice. He objected to site AB2 at Audley as it would remove 80 hectares of agricultural Green Belt land to become six large distribution warehouses and the Labour group had argued that it should have been met in the Chatterley Valley development site.

Reference was made to the development of 900 homes on the former Municipal Golf Course at Keele, which, since its closure had become one of the most bio -diverse sites in the Borough. It would also put pressure on the infrastructure of Silverdale which was already straining.

Councillor Machin advised that the three Audley Ward Councillors would be voting against the Local Plan as the current Administration did not choose the sites contained within it. Residents had raised concerns about the affect of development on the infrastructure of Audley and the Ward Councillors felt that they needed to be honest with the people whom they represented.

Councillor Bettley-Smith stated that residents within the wards that he represented had become concerned as to what could happen when it was believed that the Local Plan may not be adopted.

Councillor Lefroy pointed out that the original plans for the former Keele Golf Course were for 1800 homes. Although the revised plan was still 900 homes, nearly 60% of the land would be devoted to a country park.

Councillor Hutchison stated that Silverdale Parish Council had backed the building of the 900 homes – which still left over half of the site to become Keele Park Countryside Park.

Councillor Stevenson opposed the amendment stating that 99% of Newchapel residents did not want housing on the allocated sites.

Councillor Shaw, in summing up, stated that the examination had concluded and no further changes could be made. If the Plan was rejected this evening no areas would be protected, leaving the Borough in a weakened position and the Council would be leaving itself open to the Government's higher housing numbers.

Councillor Duffy left the meeting at 8.40pm

A named vote was requested and taken on the Motion as amended:

ASHWORTH	Y	HARRISON P	N	SHAW	Y
BAILEY	Y	HEESOM	Y	SIMPSON	ABSENT
BARBER	Y	HOLLAND	Y	SPARKS	Y
BEESTON	Y	HUTCHISON	Y	STEVENSON	N
BETTLEY-SMITH	Y	JELLYMAN	Y	SWAIN	Y
CASEY-HULME	N	JONES	N	TAGG J	Y
CHAMBERLAIN	ABSENT	KASPEROWICZ	Y	TAGG S	Y
CLARKE	Y	LEFROY	Y	TIFT	Y
DOWNS – declaration of interest made	-	MACHIN	N	TURNOCK	ABSENT
DUFFY	ABSENT	PARKER	Y	WALTON	Y
EVANS	Y	RENSHAW	Y	WESTCOTT	Y
FEAR	Y	ROGERSON	Y	WHIELDON	Y
FISHER	Y	SAIN-REINERS	N	WHITMORE	Y
GULLIS– declaration of interest made	-	SAXTON	Y	WOOD	Y
HARRISON M	Y	SEDGLEY	Y		

In Favour (Y) – 32

Against (N) – 6

Abstain – 0

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) That the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Local Plan (2020-2040), be adopted subject to:

(a) incorporating the Main Modifications (Appendix 2) recommended by the Inspector necessary to make the Plan sound as well as the accompanying list of changes to the associated Policies Map (Appendix 3)

(b) the schedule of additional modifications (Appendix 4)

(iii) withdraws the policies in the adopted Newcastle-
under-Lyme
Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Core . Strategy and the adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme
Borough
Council Local Plan (2003) except for those policies
listed to
be saved in the Local Plan 2020 – 2040.

(iv) That the Interim Head of Service (Planning Policy) be
` authorised to publish a Sustainability Appraisal
Adoption
Statement and a Local Plan Adoption Statement in
line with
the regulations contained within the Town and
Country
Planning Regulations 2012.

(v) That the Interim Head of Service (Planning Policy), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any non-material updates and drafting changes to the Local Plan. This includes the additional (minor) modifications published alongside the Main Modifications (Appendix 4).

Watch the debate here

The meeting was adjourned for a short break at 8.50pm

The meeting resumed at 9.00pm

6. **STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader and Councillor Downs returned to the room

The Leader, Councillor Gullis presented the statement that had been circulated about the activities and decisions made by Cabinet to allow questions and comments. He stated that in a short period of time, the new Administration had saved the taxpayer £6.2m by cancelling net-zero plans for the electric bin lorries. He was proud of the introduction of the Community Funding and the Article Four Direction.

Questions were raised and responses were provided as follows.

<u>On paragraph 2 – Waste Vehicles – Procurement Saving</u>

Councillor Hutchison stated that the road map to net-zero had £7m for fleet replacement. Electric RCV's were put into the budget 4 years ago -in line with Government guidelines. As the previous Portfolio Holder, Councillor Hutchison had agreed that the Council would not be buying electric waste collection vehicles. The Council had been successfully using hydro treated vegetable oil in its vehicles, reducing carbon emissions so there was no need to purchase electric vehicles. Councillor Hutchison had considered it prudent to leave the budget unchanged and were acting with good judgement thinking about any possible penalties from the Government for not purchasing electric vehicles and any price increases in the purchase of future waste vehicles.

The Leader stated that it was a serious implication to infer that the Council's Section 151Officer had not made sure that the £2.1m saving from changing the Council's procurement rules was a genuine saving.

There was a plan in the Capital Programme for a future procurement for electric collection vehicles. There was a quote of £4.2m for the infrastructure that was not budgeted for. £6.2m had been saved for the people of Newcastle from future spending in the Capital Programme and ending net-zero.

Councillor Simon Tagg referred to Hansard where it stated that, previously as an MP, Councillor Gullis had welcomed a new electric bus fleet in Stoke on Trent through an investment and asked the Leader what had changed.

The Leader stated that he did argue for the electric buses in Stoke on Trent because a private company was willing to invest almost £40m into improving the bus network which had not been improved in over a decade.

Councillor Mark Harrison stated that he was not opposed to electric vehicles. In his professional background he had been involved in electric vehicle technology – specifically air taxis. For solar power, 3mw would be needed to charge a fleet of vehicles which equated to approximately 7000 solar panels.

Vehicle performance would dip in the winter so the national grid would have to be relied upon.

<u>Paragraph 3 - Article 4 Direction</u>
Councillor Casy-Hulme welcomed this particularly the recognition of uncontrolled growth of Houses of Multiple Occupation(HMO's) and their affect on local communities. The Article 4 Direction would ensure that they were subject to the Planning process allowing their impact to be properly assessed before any approval was given.

The Leader congratulated Councillor Casey-Hulme for her hard work in her Ward in respect of HMO's.

Councillor Fear stated that it was clear that people rightly had concerns regarding HMO's. Councillor Fear asked for assurance from the Leader, in respect of paragraph 3.4 of the agenda report, that when a report goes to Cabinet, it would be investigated thoroughly.

Councillor Simon Tagg welcomed this and referred to the Motion that had come to Council last September which had asked officers to look at HMO's and possible Article 4 Directions. It was Councillor Tagg's understanding that a report had been prepared and the Leader was asked why the report could not be brought to Council sooner than the Autumn.

The Leader stated that when the Article 4 Direction report came back to Cabinet and to Full Council, the detail would be done. There was already a heat map of where registered HMO's were going and detailed work was being carried out regarding where the other HMO's were.

Councillor Kasperowicz asked the Leader if he agreed that vulnerable people should be fully supported with the proper safeguarding procedures in place – including safe accommodation and the full support at the Council's disposal.

The Leader stated that his group were lucky to have Councillor Renshaw with them who had extensive experience, both working as a Housing Officer at the Council previously and leading a successful charity supporting homelessness and addictions within Stoke on Trent. Councillor Renshaw was currently looking at the Homelessness Strategy to ensure that a support package was in place and that the resources of the Council were working with those who wished to engage.

<u>Paragraph 4 – Walleys Quarry</u>

Councillor Casey Hulme asked why the costs order, awarded against Walleys Quarry was not enforced and asked for an update on the multi-agency working group regarding the capping and restoration of the site.

The Leader stated that he did not have the information to hand and would therefore email Councillor Casey-Hulme after the meeting.

Councillor Jones welcomed the announcement of a cross-party working group and asked the Leader for more information on the powers and remit of the group and whether meetings and recommendations would be reported publicly.

The Leader stated that once the group was formed and the first meeting was held, the powers and remit could be discussed there. It was hoped that the first meeting would be held soon – over the summer.

<u>Paragraph 5 – Community Fund</u>

Councillor Jones welcomed this and asked the Leader to advise him of any discussions around governance of the Fund to ensure transparency and management of conflicts of interest and political impartiality.

The Leader stated that the Section 151 Officer had written in the Cabinet report the terms on which the money could be used and not used. Information would be published on every Councillors page where money had been spent and when. Councillors would email either the Section 151 Officer or the Deputy Chief Executive with suggestions and ask for feedback.

Councillor Simon Tagg also welcomed the scheme which had grown out of the Council's Civic Pride Fund. He shared the concerns around the management and audit of the scheme.

Councillor Mark Harrison asked Councillor Simon Tagg if his group could draw on Councillor Tagg's experience of managing such funds in the past.

The Leader, referring to Councillor Harrison's comment stated that Councillor Tagg's experience would be most welcome.

Councillor Kasperowicz asked the Leader how the funds would support grass roots organisations, local events and voluntary organisations.

The Leader stated that it could be used, for example, at Kidsgrove Scouts who needed a new boiler or to contribute towards a new kitchen there. It could be used for community litter picks, skip days, jet washing local bus stops and much more.

Councillor Downs was pleased that local schools looking for help with funding would be another good cause.

Paragraph 6 – Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Councillor Whieldon, referring to digital platforms in regard to LGR stated that the digital platforms had shown that the Leader had shifted his position on LGR since being elected – now being opposed to it, whereas the former Leader had been consistent with his opposition to the process.

The Leader stated that Councillor Whieldon was correct. His Facebook history stated that rather than sitting back, the elected representatives must actively shape a system that truly served the community. The Leader believed that, rather than being reactive- it was sometimes good to be proactive. He accepted that the people of Newcastle, Reform UK Councillors and the wider community had made it clear that LGR should not go ahead and it was sometimes good to admit that you were on the wrong side of an argument and, ad Leader would fight for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's right to exist.

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

Watch the debate here

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

Reports for the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee, the Health Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee were attached to the agenda.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

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

Reports for the Audit and Standards Committee, Planning Committee and the Licensing and Public Protection Committee were attached to the agenda.

Members were advised that the Audit and Standards Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Full Council.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

9. **MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

Four Motions were received:

The first Motion concerned the rescinding of the Climate Emergency Declaration, and was proposed by Councillor Gullis and Seconded by Councillor Ashworth.

The Leader stated that the Council would continue with practical, local environmental action but without the costly net-zero approach. The UK accounted for less than 1% of global territorial greenhouse gas emissions and therefore the taxpayers money should be directed towards statutory duties and residents priorities.

A resolution was passed to continue the meeting as it approached the three hour deadline.

Councillor Ashworth, in seconded the rescinding of the Climate Emergency Declaration stating that it did not mean that the Council had stopped caring about the environment but meant refusing to foot the bill for problems that this Council did not create.

Councillor Parker left the meeting at 10pm

An amendment to the Motion - shown at page 231 of the agenda, had been proposed by Councillor Simon Tagg and seconded by Councillor Hutchison.

Councillor Simon Tagg presented the Conservative group's amendment which, although the new Administration's fresh approach was acknowledged, noted that a lot of valuable work had gone into the policy and it was important to commit to the impact of changing climate. The amendment also requested that a new Sustainable Environment Strategy be brought forward.

Councillor Hutchison seconded the amendment, stressing the need for a new Sustainable Environment Strategy.

The amendment was not accepted by the Leader and Councillor Ashworth, as the proposer and seconder of the original Motion.

The amendment was debated.

Councillor Lefroy stated that he was in favour of the pragmatic approach in tackling climate change. He had visited a factory, covering 40,000m2, in his line of work and the entire roof had been covered with solar panels. The factory used no electricity from the grid but did supply it. This Council should be insisting that every new building had solar panels fixed on the roof which would then give no reason for agricultural land to be used to site them.

In summing up, the Leader stated that Councillor Lefroy's suggestion regarding putting solar panels on all new buildings was common sense. However, the country's grid network could not handle the power that was generated. Reference was made to air source heat pumps that had been proposed by the previous Administration for Jubilee2. The Leader stated that no checks had been made as to whether they needed changing and he was now awaiting a report on that matter. If the report stated that they would not need changing, they would not be changed.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that he stood by his group's amendment. In his time as Leader, he, along with two portfolio holders had taken a measured approach with the Sustainable Environment Strategy to make improvements. Referring to J2, the funding for the new boiler, the funding was being focussed into energy efficiency to save taxpayers money.

A vote was taken on the amendment but was defeated.

A vote was then taken on the original Motion and was carried.

For:	24
Against:	15
Abstain:	--

Watch the debate on the rescinding of the Climate emergency Declaration here

The second Motion, concerning 'Save our Borough' was submitted by the Conservative Group, proposed by Councillor Simon Tagg and seconded by Councillor Holland.

Councillor Simon Tagg presented the Conservative Group's Motion seeking the scrapping of forced council mergers in Staffordshire.

Councillor Holland, in seconding the Motion, thanked the Leader and all who had signed the petition.

An amendment to the Motion - shown at page 235 of the agenda, had been proposed by The Leader and seconded by Councillor Shaw.

The Leader stated that he would make sure that the letter was sent out to the Prime Minister and any councillor who wished to, was invited to sign it.

Councillor Shaw seconded the amendment.

Councillors' Simon Tagg and Holland accepted the amendment.

A vote was taken and the Motion, as amended was carried.

For:	37
Against:	--
Abstain:	2

Watch the debate on 'Save our Borough'

The third Motion concerned the Protection of Council Owned Green Spaces and was proposed by Councillor Fear and seconded by Councillor Simon Tagg.

Councillor Fear presented the Conservative group's Motion which aimed to 'fire-proof' some of the Council's green spaces for the future. The Fields in Trust status would provide a legally binding Deed of Dedication to protect it from future development. In addition, the Motion called for other landowners to pursue Fields in Trust status.

Councillor Simon Tagg in seconding the Motion, stated that it was about finishing a job that had already been started by the previous Administration, protecting 88 sites across the Borough.

An amendment to the Motion, shown at page 239, was submitted by the Reform UK group, proposed by Councillor Gullis and seconded by Councillor Ashworth.

The Leader presented the Reform Uk group's amendment, stating that the original Motion did not guarantee that the sites could not be developed in the future. Having only been in power for seven weeks, the Administration wished to take time to look at the information and understand the implications and costs. Once that had been done, the Administration would report on their findings as they did agree with the desire to protect green spaces.

Councillor Ashworth seconded the amendment, stating that it kept the principle that the Conservative group's Motion, protecting parks, open spaces and playing fields but it did not tie the Council to a legal mechanism as the right safeguard depended upon the site. The amendment also stated that the Reform UK group opposed being forced by Government to produce a new local plan which would have to include 2000 new homes across the Borough.

Councillors' Fear and Simon Tagg did not consent to the amendment, which was then debated.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that the 88 sites previously referred to were already protected in the Local Plan which gave permanent protection and a number of the sites had Village Green Status.

Councillors' Jones and Casey-Hulme left the meeting at 10.35pm

Councillor Holland stated that the amendment did not mention 'Fields in Trust' which had royal patronage and helped local authorities to place legally binding restrictions on the Council's parks and playing fields so that they were protected in perpetuity.

Councillor Fear stated that the Motion was a neat straight forward solution to protect green spaces in the Borough.

Councillor Downs stated that the new Administration deserved time to look at what was being proposed who were committed to protecting the Council's green spaces and other green spaces in the Borough.

The Leader stated that the Motion could not be clearer about how important green spaces were.

A vote was taken on the amended motion. The amendment was passed and therefore became the substantive Motion.

Councillor Simon Tagg stated that his group would be voting against the amended Motion as Fields in Trust was not included and expanded protection would be gone.

The Leader, in summing up stated that he was proud of the Borough's green spaces and would do all that he could to protect them.

A vote was taken and the Motion, as amended was carried.

For:	24
Against:	13
Abstain:	--

Watch the debate on Protection of Council-Owned Green Spaces here

The final Motion concerned the withdrawal of the Borough Council from the Local Government Association and was proposed by Councillor Gullis and seconded by Councillor Shaw.

The Leader presented the Motion stating that tens of thousands of pounds of taxpayers money should not be spent on the subscription when nothing was seen by the public in return. To date, the LGA had received £627.63m, through council subscriptions or government grants.

The 2025/26 accounts of the LGA showed that only 51% of its members agreed that it demonstrated value for money.

The Leader stated that Newcastle Borough Council already had elected members, officers, legal advice, financial advice, external auditors, statutory inspection regimes, public scrutiny and scrutiny committees, Cabinet, Council and direct routes to government. Leaving the LGA was not about avoiding scrutiny.

Councillor Shaw seconded the Motion.

An amendment to the Motion had been submitted, proposed by Councillor Simon Tagg and seconded by Councillor Whieldon.

Councillor Simon Tagg presented his amendment stating that the reason for it was to ensure that any decision taken by the Council was based on evidence, a transparency approach and an assessment of the facts. The Council would remain a member of the LGA until at least 2028 and therefore no urgency that required Full Council to make a decision until all relevant information was available. The Motion also requested that the report to Cabinet included information as set out at number 1, under the heading 'Council Further Resolves'.

Members from all political groups had benefited from training and development from the LGA over the years.

Councillor Whieldon seconded the amendment stating that, for £12,145 membership the Council got ad hoc and bespoke support throughout 2024/25, tailored to local challenges, complex issues and new roles and responsibilities. At the same time training was given to Councillors on governance, chairing skills and election scenario, planning and more.

The Leader and Councillor Shaw did not accept the amendment.

A debate took place on whether to accept the amendment.

Councillor Fear stated that the Council did need to know what it got for the money as, some things were expensive when needed and consultants cost a lot of money too. If the Council had a legal problem that the LGA could provide back-up for, it was worth having a cost-benefit analysis. Councillor Fear asked when the Council could leave the LGA as it was his understanding that it could not be left just like that.

The Chief Executive stated that, as Councillor Tagg and the Leader had noted, a report would be going to Cabinet which would include Terms and Conditions for the LGA and officers had been asked to engage with the LGA to challenge that.

The Leader stated that even having paid the subscription, training course fees had to be paid on top of that. He stated that, even with training courses he still could not see any benefit going to the residents of Newcastle.

Councillor Tagg stated that the LGA was about collaboration and the LGA ensured that Councils achieved what was best for their residents.

A vote was taken on the amendment and was defeated.

A debate then took place on the original Motion.

The Leader stated that collaboration had happened at Newcastle without the LGA being involved. He reiterated that the LGA gave no benefit to the residents of the Borough.

Councillor Tagg stated that his group would be voting against the Motion as they did not have the information that had been requested and required the Chief Executive's assessment and pros and cons of leaving the LGA.

Councillor Gullis stated that Reform UK was acting in the interests of the people it served.

A vote was taken on the Motion which was carried.

For:	23
Against:	13
Abstain:	--

Watch the debate on the withdrawal from the LGA here

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

Question from Councillor Sue Beeston to the Leader of the Council:

"Can the Leader explain why the Conservation Advisory Working Party (CAWP) meetings scheduled for June, July, August and September following the local elections have been cancelled?

The CAWP has long provided an important forum for members to review and comment on planning applications affecting listed buildings, conservation areas and the wider historic environment across the Borough. It also plays a key role in advising the Planning Committee, Cabinet and Council on conservation policy, enhancement schemes, design guidance for conservation areas, and applications for historic building grants.

Given the significance of this work, what were the reasons for cancelling these meetings, what arrangements have been put in place to ensure appropriate member input on heritage and conservation matters during this period, and when does the Leader intend the Working Party to resume its regular programme of meetings?"

The Leader stated that it was his intention to end CAWP. Heritage protection in the Borough was not delivered by a monthly meeting but by rigorous experts, statutory scrutiny of every application affected depending upon listed building or conservation area. CAWP was an advisory only, commenting on applications with no decision making powers. Those powers sat and would continue to sit with the Planning Committee and officers under delegated authority, informed by the Conservation Officer and, where required, by Historic England. He did not believe that a parallel advisory forum on top of the statutory process justified the officer and Member time that it took up.

Councillor Beeston asked a supplementary question:

"Who would carry out the work that CAWP had done in the past"

The Leader stated that it would be the Planning Committee, officers under delegated authority – informed by the Conservation Officer and where required, by Historic England.

Watch the debate here

11. **RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

12. **URGENT BUSINESS**

Olwen Brown left the room during the debating of the next item

Appointment of Interim Service Director- Legal and Governance/Monitoring Officer – Olwen Brown

The Leader moved the motion and it was seconded by Councillor Simon Tagg

The appointment was agreed

Watch the debate here

13. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There were no confidential items

Mayor.Councillor Christopher Bailey
Chair

Meeting concluded at 11.50 pm