



# LOGGERHEADS PARISH COUNCIL

Loggerheads Community Fire Station,  
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Mr J Sellgren  
Chief Executive  
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council,  
Civic Offices,  
Merrial Street,  
Newcastle under Lyme,  
Staffordshire  
ST5 2AG

4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Mr Sellgren,

## **Resource to support Neighbourhood Development Plans**

On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Loggerheads Parish Council applied to the Borough Council for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area with the intention being to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish of Loggerheads. This was approved by Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

At the Cabinet meeting an application from Chorlton, Maer & Aston and Whitmore Neighbourhood Plan Group was also considered and agreed. I understand that at the meeting the need for additional resource to support neighbourhood plans was raised and it was agreed that a paper would be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting identifying the resource implications for the Borough Council.

In October both Loggerheads and Whitmore Parishes wrote to Helen to ask what support we would be able to access from the Borough Council. Both Parishes being made up entirely of volunteers with limited expertise in neighbourhood planning. Helen forwarded a draft Cabinet paper that sets out the statutory requirements on the Borough Council and the Lead body (neighbourhood plan group) but this is heavily caveated "subject to resource".

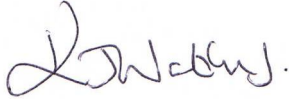
On 17<sup>th</sup> December representatives from Loggerheads and Chorlton, Maer & Aston and Whitmore Neighbourhood Plan Groups met with Helen and Stewart to consider roles and responsibilities. Helen informed us that the paper outlining the resource required by NuLBC to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities would not be presented to Cabinet until February. This Council is concerned that your Planning Department does not have sufficient resource to support us to deliver a Neighbourhood Plan and is supportive of the need for additional resource to provide the relevant expertise to help us to deliver what an inspector would call a "good" plan. Good practice guidance from Locality and several recent Inspectors reports states that the best plans are those where lead bodies work closely with the local authority.

Your officers have now had the best part of a year to respond to the initial request from Loggerheads to start work on a Neighbourhood Plan and are still not in a position to offer more than the most basic support. This has the potential to put the preparation of this

Neighbourhood Plan in jeopardy and will clearly have an impact on the length of time it is likely to take to get to a Plan that is adopted.

The Parish Council would implore you to take every step to support the Neighbourhood Plan process in Loggerheads and Whitmore and to resolve your resource shortfall as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Watkins'.

Karen Watkins, MBE  
Clerk, Loggerheads Parish Council

Cc Sir William Cash, Mr G. Benson, Cllr D. Loades, Cllr P Northcott, Mr D Davies, Chair of Chorlton, Maer & Aston and Whitmore Neighbourhood Plan Group.