

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 23rd November, 2022

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Mayor - Councillor Gillian Burnett (Chair)

Councillors:	Adcock	Heesom	Sweeney
	Allport	Holland	J Tagg
	Barker MBE	Fox-Hewitt	S Tagg
	Beeston	Hutchison	Talbot
	Bettley-Smith	Johnson	J Waring
	Brockie	S Jones	P Waring
	Brown	D Jones	Whieldon
	Bryan	Lawley	G White
	Crisp	Moffat	Wilkes
	Dymond	Northcott	G Williams
	Edginton-Plunkett	Parker	J Williams
	Fear	Reece	Wright
	Gorton	Richards	
	Grocott	Skelding	

Apologies: Councillor(s) Panter, Stubbs and S White

Officers:	David Adams	Executive Director - Sustainable Environment
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer
	Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Executive Director - Growth and Development
	Daniel Dickinson	Head of Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer

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1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Northcott declared an interest in item 9 of the agenda – the Motion referring to the Aspire Board, as a Non-Executive Director of the Board.

2. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September, 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made three announcements:

- The Mayor's Christmas Carol Service at St Giles' Church on 18th December.
- The 1940's Dance held on Saturday 12th November had raised almost £1000 in aid of the Mayor's Charity Fund.
- The Mayor's Ball would be held on 31st March, 2023. It would be a Roaring Twenties Casino Night.

4. PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Leader introduced a report informing Council of the consultation from the Boundary Commission for England regarding parliamentary boundaries that impacted the Borough.

The Council was given the opportunity to comment upon the consultation and to make representations to the Boundary Commission. A report listing representations was tabled at the meeting.

Resolved: That the following representation be made to the Boundary Commission in its final consultation round:

- (i) Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council thanks the Boundary Commission for its diligent work in drawing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in our Borough. The proposals will increase electoral equality so that every elector's vote carries a more similar weight.
- (ii) We strongly believe that the Maer & Whitmore and Loggerheads wards are an integral part of Newcastle-under-Lyme and this area was previously included in the Newcastle seat, prior to 1983. We ask that further consideration is given to their inclusion in the Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency, which would then total an electorate of 75,768, which is within the acceptable variance of a constituency as set out in statute.
- (iii) We also support the representations made at the initial consultation stage that favour the renaming of the proposed Stoke-on-Trent North constituency "Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove". The town of Kidsgrove has a proud history independent of Stoke-on-Trent and it is right that its name should be included in the Parliamentary constituency that is proposed, which will contain every household within the Kidsgrove Town Council area including those in Newchapel Ward.

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5. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A report was submitted which provided an update to Members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet, together with the Forward Plan.

In respect of paragraph 2, Members stated that the odour from Walleys Quarry could still be smelt. It was stated that residents had been advised by the Liaison

Committee that they could not attend Committee meetings. The Leader stated that he too had smelt the odours recently. With regard to the Liaison Committee, at the next meeting the Council would be able to put across the point about local community representation.

A request was made for the Council to press the Environment Agency (EA) to ensure that their remit was discharged correctly in dealing with the odour issues. In addition, it was requested that this issue remain a top priority for the Council. The Leader confirmed that through officers and himself, it would be ensured that the EA kept a focus on this issue and it would continue to be a priority for this Council.

On paragraph 3, it was asked if interest from money currently invested from the Funds would be used to balance the books and if so, would there be full discussion as to where the interest would be distributed across departments. The Leader assured that the money received had been invested to create a return and would be spend on the schemes whether it be Future High Street or Town Deal Funds.

The Leader was asked if the Town Deals Funds and Future High Street Fund were secure, in view of media reports on funding cuts. This was confirmed as being the case.

On paragraph 4, it was stated that the final accounts did not acknowledge a £70,000 donation from Kidsgrove Town Council. The Leader was asked who would be managing the CIC's accounts going forward. The Leader stated that the Town Council's contribution was referred to at Cabinet. The money was given to the Community Group for equipment and was not therefore in the Council's final accounting for refurbishment and rebuilding. Regarding the accounts, the Group would be doing those themselves.

On paragraph 6, it was asked what this Council's attitude was towards parking income. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth stated that a decision had been made to make car parking rates as affordable as possible through different incentives. The Council did not use its car parks as a way of raising large amounts of money.

On paragraph 7, the Leader was asked to commit to working with ward Councillors and residents groups in Bradwell, when designing and enhancing the open spaces. The Leader confirmed that public consultation did take place when deciding where to plant trees and other enhancements.

On paragraph 8, it was asked whether contaminated land had been considered for development once it had been decontaminated. It was also asked what the housing figure had been under the Joint Local Plan. The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning stated that some of the land had been used before and therefore could have been contaminated. With regard to the housing figures under the Joint Local Plan, these were, in 2015 - 679 dwellings per year and 586 dwellings per year in 2017.

The Leader was asked if any work had gone into looking at land banking. It was also asked that if the target figure of 7000 homes was reduced by the Government, would the Council press ahead with the 7000 homes as set out in the report. The Leader stated that one of the biggest land bankers in Newcastle was the Borough Council with its green space and carbon capture areas that are protected from development. The figure of 7000 homes would be kept as people wanted to move into or remain in the Borough so there had to be houses available.

On paragraph 9, it was stated that the Council had been shortlisted for an award in the most improved performer category for the waste and recycling service. The Leader stated that the awards ceremony would take place on 1st December and wished the Council good luck at the event.

On paragraph 10, it was stated that the date of the next Cabinet meeting was the 5th anniversary of the current administration and 10th anniversary of Councillor Simon Tagg being Leader of the Council at different periods and he deserved a vote of thanks for his work.

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

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6. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Reports were submitted for the Committees that had met since the last Council meeting.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

7. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Reports were submitted for the Committees that had met since the last Council meeting.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

8. MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

A Motion was received concerning Realise and Achieve Training from the Aspire Group proposed by Councillor Dave Jones and seconded by Councillor Moffat.

Following a debate on the substantive motion, a vote was taken.

In Favour (Y)- 18

Against (N)- 22

Abstain – 0

The Motion fell.

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9. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Councillor Andrew Parker asked:

Could the Leader update the Council on the effects that the cost of living and inflation rises are having on people across the Borough and what actions the Council is able to take to help residents at this difficult time?

The Leader stated that the Council was working with its partners to measure the impact and to ensure that support was available for those who needed it. As well as passporting funding across the Borough, the Council had worked with the County Council and other partners to provide slow cookers to households and funding had been secured to provide warm packs, warm clothing and blankets to be given out to those who needed them. The Council was also, working with the County Council to deliver the Warmer Homes Scheme. In addition a network of warm spaces was being set up.

Councillor Parker then asked:

Did the Leader agree that it was encouraging that the Council was making such a proactive response. The Leader agreed.

Councillor Joan Whieldon asked:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing Holder update the Council on the work being carried out to reduce rough sleepers in the town centre and how many rough sleeper were there at the last count?

The Portfolio Holder stated that earlier this year the Council had set up a Coordinated Rough Sleepers Initiative through which funding was provided to create a supported pathway for rough sleepers and a number of key posts to deliver this work had been established. There was a multi-agency homelessness hub based at the Salvation Army offices in the town centre and the rough sleeper accommodation programme with Aspire which had had an immediate positive impact with the number of rough sleepers currently being four.

Councillor Whieldon then asked:

Could the Portfolio Holder advise what, if any arrangements were being made for the winter.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the Council's Severe Winter Emergency Protocol was again in place, running from 1st November to 31st March next year, when temperatures hit zero or below. Overnight accommodation was provided at St George's on an ad hoc basis. A local third sector organisation had shown an interest in running St George's as a night shelter where it would be open every night over the winter months.

Councillor Richard Gorton asked:

Could the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth advise how many people, currently on the Borough Council's waiting list for an allotment have been waiting for two or more years to be offered a plot?

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council provided 240 plots split across six sites with other allotments provided by parish Councils and Kidsgrove Town Council. There were currently 215 residents who had been waiting for two or more years for a plot.

Councillor Richard Gorton then asked:

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In view of the number of people on the waiting list, would the Portfolio Holder agree that more should be done to reallocate allotments that were neglected or abandoned by plot holders.

The Portfolio Holder stated that at the 'Acres' plots, if people did not turn up for a while, the plot would be taken off them. This could be an incentive for the Council, although most people would not have an allotment if they did not intend to use it.

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10. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

12. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There were no confidential items

**Mayor - Councillor Gillian Burnett
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 9.16 pm