

Regulatory Committee's Chairs' reports

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee has met on two occasions since the 12th of February.

25th of February

There were two substantive items on the agenda.

- Former Jubilee baths Nelson Place Newcastle 25/00008/FUL. Temporary variation of condition 3 to allow up to 40 units as serviced apartments until the 30th of September.

Following a lengthy debate by members this application was refused due to the lack of parking provision impacting on highway safety on the streets nearby.

- Ashfield Grange, Hall Street, Newcastle by Aspire Housing 25/00012/FUL to vary a previous condition to enable the relocation of the cycle shelter on the site.

Members resolved to permit the application subject to conditions.

- 5 Boggs cottage Keele 14/00036/207C3. Update report.

The next meeting convened on the 25th March 2025.

Again, there were only 2 substantive items on the agenda

- Land at Slacken Lane. 24/00089/FUL.
This application sought full planning permission for the erection of 170 new dwellings lying on 5.94 hectares.

There followed presentations from the public and agents on this application and after a lengthy debate it was resolved by members that the application be refused on the basis that access would have an adverse effect on highway safety, suitable drainage impact on residential immunity and loss of significant trees.

- Clive Beech Motors Ltd Pitt Green Lane, Wolstanton. 24/00207/OUT. This application was for a new build 2.5 storey student accommodation for 16 students.

Members resolved that this application be permitted subject to conditions such as a time limit of conditions, approved plans and restriction on building height to no more than 2.5 stories. Members also requested that a note be

made that were an application for variation of condition in respect of Parking, it would be flagged up to ward councillors and final designs made known to the committee.

- Land at Doddlespool, Betley 17/00186/207C2.
Members resolved that the information be received and again an update report be brought back to the committee in two months' time.

Cllr Paul Northcott

Chair

Licensing and Public Protection Committee

The Licensing and Public Protection Committee met on 30 January and 18 March:

30 January:

At the meeting Members, received the following Public Protection reports:

- PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2025-26
- TAXI LICENSING POLICY – SUITABILITY GUIDELINES
- TAX CONDITIONALITY CONSULTATION

The Committee discussed a number of aspects of the reports and agreed to the proposed recommendations that were set out in those reports.

18 March:

At the meeting Members, received the following Licensing reports:

- ALCOHOL OFF SALES REGULATORY EASEMENT – CONSULTATION RESULT
- RELAXATION OF LICENSING HOURS FOR THE 2025 WOMENS UEFA EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Committee discussed a number of aspects of the reports and agreed to the proposed recommendations that were set out in those reports.

At the meeting Members, also received the following Public Protection reports:

- CONSULTATION RESPONSES IN RELATION TO THE REVOCATION OF, AND CHANGES TO, EXISTING SMOKE CONTROL AREAS

The Committee discussed a number of aspects of the reports and agreed to the proposed recommendations that were set out in those reports.

Since the Full Council meeting held on 22 January the Licensing Sub Committee has not met. The Public Protection Sub Committee has met three times.

The minutes for the Sub Committees were received and noted as correct records

Cllr Joan Whieldon

Chair

Audit and Standards Committee

The Committee has met on two occasions.

3 March

The first substantive item on the agenda was presented by the Chief Internal Auditor, an update on the progress of the Internal Audit, as at 31st December 2024. Members were asked to note the progress, to date, which was felt to be satisfactory and in line with the plan.

Following this the RFO, Sarah Wilkes, lead members through the Q3 Corporate Risk Management Report. There were a number of things for members to note, including 6 risks that are currently more than 6 months overdue. However, it was also noted that two of these had now been completed and the remaining four were in the process of being completed. Members noted the remaining points.

Richard Lee (Director) and Robert Fenton (Manager), KPMG, updated members on the progress of the 2023/4 Audit and advised members that the audit was now essentially complete. Members asked how Newcastle had fared in comparison to other councils and were informed that the standards set by the Newcastle team had been very high and significantly better than most councils. Whilst there had inevitably been a few issues, these, in many cases had been beyond the control of the council, and the Newcastle team had prepared excellent working papers and had been very co-operative and helpful.

Members also considered the Value for Money report by the Auditors, which showed a high level of confidence in the procurement arrangements and long term financial viability of the council.

The RFO and accounting team were congratulated on the quality of the work produced to facilitate such a successful audit.

7 April

Richard Lee, of KPMG, presented the proposed Audit Plan for 2024/25 Audit. It is expected that as this will be the second audit by KPMG, completion will be earlier than for the 2023/24 Audit. It was noted that potential areas of difficulty can be expected in relation to property valuations and classification, but that this would most likely be down to differences of opinion of various experts etc, rather than any deficiency on either part.

Alex Cannon, Staffs CC Audit Manager, detailed the Proposed Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2025/26. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to approve the plan. He then advised members of the Internal Audit Charter 2025/26 and its relevance. The revised document now takes account of the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector, which came into effect on 1st April 2025. These replace the now obsolete Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, and require the Chair of the Committee to formally sign the Charter, which was agreed to by members.

Due to the absence of the Monitoring Officer, the RFO introduced the Corporate Risk Management Report. Members accepted and approved the Risk Management Policy and Strategy 2025/26.

The National Fraud Initiative was discussed and the way in which this works both on a National basis, and also within the council itself. Members agreed that this is a highly beneficial scheme for the council to be involved with from both internal and external points of view.

The S151 Officer, Sarah Wilkes, described the counter-fraud arrangement for the forthcoming year, including various plans and policies that support the arrangements, which are broadly similar to those of previous years, updated as required.

Paul Waring

Chair