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Cabinet - 06/05/25

CABINET

Tuesday, 6th May, 2025
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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|-----------------|---|--|-----------|
| Present: | Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair) | | |
| Councillors: | Sweeney Heesom | Fear Skelding | Hutchison |
| Officers: | Gordon Mole Simon McEneny Anthony Harold Sarah Wilkes Roger Tait Geoff Durham Paul Dutton | Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery Civic & Member Support Officer Senior Media Officer | |

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th March 2025 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. **WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES**

The Chief Executive presented the update report on Walleys Quarry.

As clay was being brought onto the site and excavation works were taking place as part of the capping process the Environment Agency (EA) had highlighted that a temporary increase in odour levels along with vehicle movement was to be expected. Odour complaints had regardless decreased in March and were down to levels as low as last recorded in March 2020.

The meeting was suspended for ten minutes due to a fire alarm.

The Chief Executive resumed the presentation, advising that the hydrogen sulphates had been at zero exceedance across the three monitoring stations for five consecutive weeks. A virtual public meeting had also been held on 20th March and uploaded to the EA website. The Council was finally working in partnership with the EA and the liquidators to keep the landfill under control.

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It was noted that as the abatement notice had ceased to be enforceable legal proceedings had been suspended.

The Leader welcomed the overall improvement of the situation and clarified that the company was no longer in existence and had gone into liquidation, expressing thanks to officers for a fruitful exercise of the legal action.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning commented being pleased with the progress made, adding that efforts should be sustained to hold responsible parties to account until the whole matter was put to bed.

The Deputy Leader supported the statement and shared his observation that odours had largely reduced on the allotment site on the other side of the road.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. FOOTBALL FOUNDATION HOME ADVANTAGE PROGRAMME

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage introduced the report on the Football Foundation's Home Advantage Programme. An email had just been received advising that Newcastle Town Football Club and Kidsgrove Lads and Dads had been successful in their request for funding towards further improvements at the Whammy, Birchenwood and Chesterton Football club.

The Leader welcomed the good news.

The Deputy Leader commented on the tremendous job done by Newcastle Town Football Club in the community, along with the league standards of their facilities, adding that anything to encourage them was worth supporting.

Resolved: (i) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, be authorised to develop detailed grant applications with the relevant football clubs for funding via The Football Foundation Home Advantage Programme and enter into any funding agreements as necessary.

(ii) That the procurement of suitable contractors be approved to carry out the improvements to those sites selected by the Football Foundation once detailed specifications had been developed within available grant funding limits.

(iii) That the above-mentioned officers be authorised to ensure any agreements were fulfilled, enter into suitable contracts to deliver the improvements and ensure any necessary leases were completed.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. FIELDS IN TRUST

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced the report on the Fields in Trust permanent status available to the Council for green spaces and carbon capture areas over and above allocations in the Local Plan and the Green Spaces Strategy.

The Leader commented that many of these sites had been put forward for housing in the past which was no longer the case in the Local Plan. The status would bring an additional level of protection in addition to enhancing the sites. Village greens' applications had also been submitted including an application for Sandy Lane, which the Leader was involved with.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning welcomed the recommendations, adding that the Fields in Trust status would contribute to protect sites from predatory planning applications.

The Leader noted that some of the smaller sites did not qualify and while they were protected under the Local Plan officers were investigating other external accredited protection.

Resolved: (i) That the Fields in Trust principle as it applies to the Council's green spaces and carbon capture areas, be noted.

(ii) That the Deputy Chief Executive and the Service Director Sustainable Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Sustainable Environment and Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to undertake the required legal documentation and lodging of the Fields in Trust applications to secure this status for the site identified within this report.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. **PROJECT APPROVAL FOR THE DECARBONISATION OF THE J2 LEISURE CENTRE**

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced the report on the Decarbonisation of the J2 Leisure Centre following a successful application and grant being awarded as part of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero PSDA phase 4 funding.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage commented that the funding was coming at a fantastic time to support Jubilee 2 and help them remain financially secure as a growing and popular facility with a healthy membership in a competitive market and age of rising energy costs, allowing them to be a leading player in the leisure industry.

The Leader welcomed the recommendation to bring money from outside, Jubilee 2 providing great facilities and going from strength to strength after recovering from lockdown.

Resolved: (i) That acceptance of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero granting of funding available to enable Salix Finance to provide the Council with a grant of up to £2,790,173.00 to assist in carrying out a low carbon heating project at its Jubilee 2 Leisure centre, be authorised.

(ii) That the Service Director, Sustainable Environment in consultation with the Service Director, Legal & Governance be approved to engage Veolia Energy to assist in the delivery of this project, through a direct award process through the NOECPC

Specialist Estates Engineering & Maintenance Services (Hard FM) (NOE.0609) Framework.

(iii) That the report herewith and that a further report is taken to Council for final acceptance of the Salix grant, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

The Leader introduced the report providing an update on the Local Government Reorganisation. An Interim Plan had been submitted in March as requested by the government and no feedback had been received yet.

The Council's position was that the current two-tier system and existing boundaries worked and the suggested reorganisation was not desirable. Ongoing discussions with other councils showed that this view was not shared and that a North Staffordshire and countywide proposal had been put forward, which the Leader did not sign up for.

Changes had also been suggested to the terms of reference for the Staffordshire Leaders Board meeting so that this became the body which would take forward Local Government Reorganisation for Staffordshire. The Leader did not think this would be appropriate and wished for the matter to be discussed with the new Leader of Staffordshire County Council.

The Deputy Leader expressed his support to the Leader's proposals.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning also endorsed the Leader's approach, commenting that a clear message had been received from residents of the borough that they did not wish to be merged into a greater Stoke-on-Trent. Hope was shared that the local MP would support the historic independence of the borough.

The Leader concluded on the positive proposals and interim plan put forward and agreed by Full Council.

Resolved: (i) That the confirmation of the Council's submission of its interim plan for Local Government Reorganisation, be noted.

(ii) That the next steps for workstreams as set out in section 3 of this report be endorsed and agreed that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, progresses the necessary activity to prepare for submissions to Government in November 2025.

(iii) That it be noted that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council did not endorse the joint progress update of Staffordshire Leaders.

(iv) That it be agreed that data be shared between authorities to assist in development of submissions.

(v) That it be noted that this Council does not agree to the amended terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

(vi) That Newcastle-Under-Lyme's Members of Parliament be called upon to support the Borough's resolutions as set out in the report to

full Council of 19th March 2025, and that they engage with Government Ministers in stating the case for the Borough.

(vii) That a meeting be sought with the new leader of Staffordshire County Council to discuss local government reorganisation in Staffordshire and ask for their support to Save our Borough.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS 2024/25

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on Irrevocable Items for 2024-25. Everything had been done to get the money back but companies having been dissolved and liquidated meant there was no-one left to chase.

Figures were detailed in a confidential appendix that had been shared for discussion in a private session.

Resolved: That the write off for items detailed within the confidential Appendix 1 which are considered irrecoverable, be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

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10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following matter because it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

12. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS 2024/25 - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.44 pm

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