

CABINET

Tuesday, 2nd September, 2025
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Skelding
Fear Hutchison

Apologies: Councillor(s) Heesom

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Simon McEneny	Deputy Chief Executive
	Anthony Harold	Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer
	Sarah Wilkes	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Craig Jordan	Service Director - Planning
	Roger Tait	Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Paul Dutton	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 8 July, 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

3. WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR ISSUES

The Leader introduced a report updating Cabinet on the latest position regarding Walleys Quarry.

The Chief Executive advised that complaints had been low and steady over the past four months with a notable drop in August with just four complaints received. Officers continued to investigate complaints and the sources by mapping and tracking them.

As the autumn period was approaching, the site would be closely monitored and the agreed recovery mechanisms would now start to ramp up, moving from the response phase into recovery.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.6 of the report which set out the requests made at Full Council on 23 July, 2025 and the status of the correspondence.

The Leader stated that the position remained positive, with low complaints but it would be closely watched as autumn arrived. The site appeared to be well managed by the Environment Agency (EA) and their contractors.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning stated that the data was heartening. He asked if there had been a response from Adam Jogee MP regarding asking the Government for help in restoring the site and to call for a public inquiry.

The Leader confirmed that there had been no response from the MP on those two points.

Referring to the letter from the EA, The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth asked the Chief Executive if there was any update on the 'long term plans for the site, including funding arrangements'.

The Chief Executive advised that, as part of the recovery arrangements, the Council had highlighted that it needed to be focussed and government representation had been requested on the relevant working group to look at the practical steps for restoration and the associated funding which should not fall onto local shoulders. It was noted that this funding would be required for restoration post the bond which the EA had been using for the first works.

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

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4. ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Leader introduced the Council's Annual Report stating that this was the third one that had been brought during this term and was again showing a good picture of the Council's delivering of front line services whilst keeping finances under control and Council Tax low.

This year had seen full scale plans for the regeneration of the town. In the next couple of years, the former Midway, Astley Place and the remainder of the Ryecroft site would be developed.

Local Government Reorganisation had come to the fore in the last year which would abolish existing councils to create larger ones. This Annual Report was being looked at in the prism of the proposed reorganisation and told a good story of how Newcastle delivered services for its residents, both on its own and with partners.

The Annual Report would be taken to the next meeting of Full Council later in the month for debate.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment stated that street cleanliness had continued to be monitored around the Borough and had identified 'grotspot areas'. A highways grass cutting contract had also successfully been delivered on behalf of County Highways.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning stated that the Borough was seeing real change with the town centre redevelopment

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Heritage and Culture congratulated officers of the Council and members of the Business Improvement District (BID) who had been involved with Britain in Bloom. Newcastle had secured a double winner at national level in the Heart of England in Bloom Awards. The Brampton Museum continued to perform outstandingly and had secured a bronze award in the small visitor attraction of the year and in accessibility and inclusive tourism. The Active life programme at J2 continued to promote health and wellbeing of residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth state that a balanced budget had been agreed for 2025-26 with feasible and sustainable savings which had been identified by the Efficiency Board process. This had enabled a continued investment of £250,000 in the Council's priorities by the Civic Growth Fund.

The Leader stated that the Council could be proud of its activities this year, including the situation with Walleys Quarry. This year the Council had also made decisions that had awarded £1.5m to funding opportunity schemes throughout the Borough for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Council was working closely with the police to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in the town centre , with Civic Pride being a key part of that.

The Council had also invested in a new bus route linking the university communities and business parks, funded by the Town Deal monies.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Council's Annual Report for 2024-2025 be received
 - (ii) That the 2024-2025 Annual Report be referred to Full Council's meeting of 24th September 2025.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026-27 TO 2030-31

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report updating Cabinet on the financial pressures facing the Council for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.

The gap for this year was £1.777m. There were two main things that were causing the gap; the first being a fair funding review by the Government. As Newcastle was a well run council, the Government were taking funding away of around £1.5m. Secondly, the local government reorganisation would require £400,000 of funding.

The Leader endorsed the MTFs stating that the Council was well into the process of setting next year's budget with the Efficiency Board and efficiency reviews being carried out.

The MTFs would be taken to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee later this week.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the funding pressures of £1.777m in 2026/27 and £3.069m over the 5-year period covered by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be noted.

- (ii) That the approach regarding the development of savings and income generation proposals in the medium-term, be agreed.
- (iii) That the continued uncertainty regarding the medium-term impact of local government funding, be noted.
- (iv) That the letter sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Appendix B) from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth requesting further funding in respect of Temporary Accommodation, be noted.
- (v) That the first Medium Term Financial Strategy update be referred to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. KIDSGROVE TOWN DEAL UPDATE AND CONTRACT AWARDS

The Leader introduced a report for the Kidsgrove Town Deal update, seeking approval to award contracts and grant agreements for the new Enterprise Units.

The schemes included the shared service hub and progress on Kidsgrove Station refurbishment. The Government was not providing the bigger funding for remediation work on land around the Station so there would be no rebuilding on that land.

Kidsgrove Town Deal had already delivered Kidsgrove Sports Centre, improvements to the pump track and Clough Hall Park.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Heritage and Culture stated that this was great news for Kidsgrove with the refurbished Railway Station being a great addition to the town. The progression of proposals for the one-way system would also be seen under the funding which would lead to development of the public toilets.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth stated that the Labour Government had never invested in Kidsgrove but the Conservative Government's investment had made a real difference showing that Kidsgrove was an integral part of the Borough.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress made with the schemes in Kidsgrove as part of the Kidsgrove Town Deal, be noted.
 - (ii) That the alternative schemes following the Shared Services Hub project revisions, be approved.
 - (iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships, progress legal agreements to enable continued delivery of projects.

- (iv) That the progress made with the delivery of the Kidsgrove Station works and agrees that a further report will be presented as soon as practicable outlining the scheme and the budget, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME LOCAL PLAN 2020-40 UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning introduced a report updating Cabinet of the progress being made and seeking approval for the next steps prior to it being considered for adoption by Full Council.

The examination had taken place and the report listed what was needed to take it to the next stage. Currently there was a lot of engagement with external bodies both in the private sector and Staffordshire County Council.

The Leader stated that there was a commitment to getting a viable, workable local plan in place was one of this Administration's election pledges and it was now on the final stretch.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress made with the Borough Local Plan to date, be noted.
 - (ii) That the updates on the issues raised in response to the Inspectors Post Examination Hearing Feedback, be noted.
 - (iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning be authorised to progress the next steps necessary on the Local Plan ahead of the Plan being considered for adoption at a future Full Council.
 - (iv) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning, be authorised to approve a list of Main and Additional Modifications to the Local Plan and Policies Map, that arise from the Local Plan Examination process, alongside the necessary Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment for public consultation for a period of six weeks.
 - (v) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning, be authorised to forward responses from the Main Modifications consultation directly to the Inspector to allow the preparation of a final report on the Local Plan and undertake the necessary steps to take a report to Full Council to consider the adoption of the Local Plan.

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8. RENEWAL OF CIVICA FINANCIALS CONTRACT

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report seeking to award a contract to Civica UK Ltd to provide the Council's Financial Management system.

Civica had been providing this service for a number of years, therefore the report was seeking renewal of that contract. This had been brought to Cabinet early as there was uncertainty as to what would happen under the local government reorganisation. The proposal was to put the five year contract on 2+1+1 years, which also generated a cost saving.

Resolved: That the contract award to Civica UK Limited for the provision of the Council's Financial Management System on a 2+1+1+1 contract at a total cost of £258,685 (should the contract be utilised for the full 5 years), be approved.

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9. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2025-26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced the Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Report for 2025-26 on the performance of individual council services and progress with delivery against priorities and financial information.

Cabinet was advised that the revenue budget was £34,000 underspent at the end of Quarter One.

The Leader then went through the Performance Indicators, 78% of which had met their targets. Portfolio holders were invited to comment.

Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People

Many of the indicators were on or above target. Staff sickness was staying on the right side.

Website interactions had been seen as a positive as residents were dealing with their queries quickly without having to refer to various parts of the website.

Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

Indicators for the Planning service were on or above target with some large planning applications now being received.

Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

The percentage of materials for recycling and composting was 0.01 below target. This had been due to a wet Spring in 2024 which had made the garden waste heavy, whereas Spring 2025 had been very dry.

Targets for J2 and the Museum had been met. There was a new monitoring system at the Museum for the number of people accessing it.

The Community Safety indicators were all good showing that partnership working was going well

Priority 4: Town Centres for All

The number of parking tickets purchased was down and national comparison data was being sought to look at trends which were affecting car parking. A lot of permits were being sold which were not taken into account in these performance indicators.

Town centre footfall figures were showing an increase reflecting increased visitor activity.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the contents of the attached report and appendices and continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period, be noted.
 - (ii) That the movement in reserves under section 7 of the Finance Appendix A (£100k to the Planning Appeals Reserve, £150k to the Local Plan Support Fund and £150k to the Budget and Borrowing Support Fund, all of which to be transferred from the Business Rates Reserve), be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Leader presented the Forward Plan.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

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11. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

12. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

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

13. **CIVICA FINANCIALS PROPOSAL - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**

Consideration was given to the confidential appendix relating to item 9 on the agenda.

Resolved: That the confidential appendix be received and noted.

Cabinet - 02/09/25

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.50 pm