

Motion to Full Council from the Conservative Group – 8th July 2026

Protection of Council-Owned Green Spaces

This Council notes that:

1. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council previously committed to protecting parks, open spaces, playing fields as vital community assets supporting health, recreation and sports and play.
2. In May 2025, the Council resolved to pursue permanent legal protection for up to 88 council-owned green spaces through partnership with the Fields in Trust charity ([Council pursues legal protection for green spaces – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)).
3. These protections were intended to operate alongside enhanced Local Plan protections agreed in April 2022 (<https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/downloads/file/1440/report>), adding a further safeguard against future loss or development.
4. By October 2025, 20 applications had already been submitted for an initial tranche of sites, with further phases planned of the Borough's valued green spaces many of which had been under threat of development under the Joint Local Plan with Stoke-on Trent. (<https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/news/article/442/council-puts-green-spaces-on-the-map-with-fields-in-trust>)

This Council recognises that:

- Fields in Trust status provides a legally binding Deed of Dedication, ensuring land is preserved in perpetuity for public recreation and wellbeing, without transferring ownership.
- The process and timescales to gain Status is governed by the Fields in Trust charity.
- Such status offers stronger, long-term protection than Local Plan policies alone, which can be reviewed or revised over time.
- Accessible green space delivers significant public benefits, including improved physical and mental health and wildlife habitats.

This Council further notes:

- The Government is pressing local authorities to produce or update Local Plans at pace, including in the context of potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- The inherent risks arising from the position adopted by the Leader of the Council in respect of the preparation of a new Local Plan, as set out at the Cabinet meeting on 23 June 2026.

- These creates a real risk that, without the additional safeguards, locally designated Council owned green spaces could be vulnerable to future policy change imposed from above or development pressure that may be taken out of the hands of local people.

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

1. Formally endorse the previous Council's programme to protect council-owned green spaces through the Local Plan and through Fields in Trust Deeds of Dedication.
2. Affirm its commitment to seeking Fields in Trust status for those listed council-owned green spaces across the Borough*.
3. Therefore, ensure that, as part of any new or updated Local Plan whether prepared by this authority or a successor authority following LGR:
 - the strongest possible protections are in place for designated green spaces, and
 - Fields in Trust designations are actively supported and expanded where appropriate.
4. Request officers to provide regular update reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny on progress of Fields in Trust applications and a programme to complete remaining eligible green spaces.
5. Actively encourage and work with other public landowners, including Staffordshire County Council, to adopt the same approach by seeking Fields in Trust protection for green spaces within the Borough under their ownership.
6. Request that the Leader of the Council writes formally to the Leader of Staffordshire County Council urging them to pursue Fields in Trust status for their green spaces within Newcastle under Lyme Borough; and specifically requesting consideration of College Fields in Madeley and the playing fields and football pitches by Hoon Avenue, which are owned by Staffordshire County Council and have been the subject of public concern regarding their future.

Proposed: Cllr Andy Fear

Seconded: Cllr Simon Tagg

*List of council owned green spaces Protected in 2022:

<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/documents/s44691/Fields%20in%20Trust%20Appendix%201.pdf>