

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON WEDNESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2026, COMMENCING
AT 6.30PM**

PRESENT: His Worship the Mayor, Councillor D Watton (in the Chair) and Councillors Dixon, Dunne, Harrington, Hill, Jurd, King, Lea, Madden (Via AV Link), Mason, Palmowski, Pascoe and Hawkins.

IN ATTENDANCE: Interim General Manager (Director Planning and Environment)
Acting Director Planning and Environment (Compliance Manager)
Director Corporate and Community Services
Director Works and Infrastructure
Chief Finance Officer
People and Culture Manager
Senior Environment Planner - Strategic Planning
Communications & Engagement Manager
Principal Community Engagement Officer
Community Engagement Officer
Help Desk Support Officer
Senior Business Support Officer – Council Services

The Prayer was presented by Councillor Mason

ATTENDANCE BY AV LINK:	MOTION	Moved: Councillor Hill
		Seconded: Councillor Harrington
	333	
		RESOLVED that Council permit Councillor Madden to attend the 14 January 2026 Ordinary Council meeting by audio-visual link.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Dunne	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES:

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea
Seconded: Councillor Pascoe

334

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 December 2025, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Dunne	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST NO. DI1/2026

SUBJECT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Nil

MAYORAL MINUTES

Nil

MOTIONS OF URGENCY

MOTIONS OF URGENCY NO. MOU1/2026

SUBJECT: MOTIONS OF URGENCY

Nil

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Councillor Hawkins
Seconded: Councillor Mason

335

RESOLVED

That the order of business be amended so that item CC3/2026 Application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Permanent one-year special variation of 39.9%, be brought forward to be dealt with as the first item of the agenda.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Dunne	Councillor King
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (11)	Total (2)

CARRIED

SUBJECT: APPLICATION TO THE INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL FOR A PERMANENT ONE-YEAR SPECIAL VARIATION OF 39.9%

MOTION

Moved: Councillor Mason

Seconded: Councillor Hill

1. That Council approves the submission of an application to IPART for a permanent one-year Special Variation of 39.9%, inclusive of the applicable rate peg, to general income, commencing in the 2026/27 financial year.
2. That Council notes that the determination of whether the Special Variation is approved rests solely with IPART under delegation from the Minister for Local Government.
3. That Council notes that the application is supported by independent expert reports addressing financial sustainability, efficiency, capacity to pay, debt capacity, and community engagement, together with updated Long Term Financial Plan modelling.
4. That Council authorises the General Manager to finalise and lodge the Special Variation application and supporting documentation with IPART in accordance with the 2026–27 IPART Special Variation Guidelines.

An amendment proposed by Councillor Jurd was ruled out of order by the Mayor as it was deemed a direct negative of the original motion.

The Motion was then *PUT* and *CARRIED*

MOTION

336

Moved: Councillor Mason

Seconded: Councillor Hill

RESOLVED

1. That Council approves the submission of an application to IPART for a permanent one-year Special Variation of 39.9%, inclusive of the applicable rate peg, to general income, commencing in the 2026/27 financial year.
2. That Council notes that the determination of whether the Special Variation is approved rests solely with IPART under delegation from the Minister for Local Government.
3. That Council notes that the application is supported by independent expert reports addressing financial sustainability, efficiency, capacity to pay, debt capacity, and community engagement, together with updated Long Term Financial Plan modelling.
4. That Council authorises the General Manager to finalise and lodge the Special Variation application and supporting documentation with IPART in accordance with the 2026–27 IPART Special Variation Guidelines.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Harrington	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Hill	Councillor King
Councillor Lea	Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (9)	Total (4)

CARRIED

RESCISSON MOTIONS

RESCISSON MOTIONS NO. RM1/2026

SUBJECT: *BN19/2025 - SUSPENSION OF ALL NON-LEGISLATED NET ZERO EXPENDITURE TO SUPPORT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY*

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Palmowski
337
RESOLVED

That the recommendation to BN18/2025 - Suspension of all Non-Legislated Net Zero Expenditure to support Financial Sustainability be rescinded.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Hill	Councillor Harrington
Councillor Lea	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Madden	Councillor King
Councillor Palmowski	Councillor Mason
Councillor Pascoe	Councillor Watton
Councillor Hawkins	
Total (7)	Total (6)

CARRIED

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Palmowski
338
RESOLVED

1. **That Council note the ongoing review into Financial Sustainability and efforts within the draft Long Term Financial Plan and reviewed Delivery Program which prioritises spending on asset maintenance and net positive organizational initiatives.**
2. **That the General Manager provide a Councillor workshop to inform on the currently adopted Climate Change Resilience Plan (2023).**

Councillor Jurd left the meeting, the time being 7.28pm

Councillor Jurd returned to the meeting, the time being 7.30pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Hill	Councillor Harrington
Councillor Lea	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Madden	Councillor King
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (9)	Total (4)

CARRIED

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC1/2026

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2036

MOTION

Moved: Councillor Hill

Seconded: Councillor Lea

That Council adopts the Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036 and that the adopted Long Term Financial Plan is published on Council's website in accordance with Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Councillor Jurd

Seconded: Councillor King

That the matter be deferred until a decision is made from IPART in regards to CC3/2026 Application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Permanent one-year special variation of 39.9%.

FOR

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King

Total (3)

AGAINST

Councillor Dunne
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Hawkins
Councillor Watton

Total (10)

The Procedural Motion was **PUT** and **LOST**

The Motion was then **PUT** and **CARRIED**

MOTION

339

Moved: Councillor Hill

Seconded: Councillor Lea

RESOLVED

That Council adopts the Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036 and that the adopted Long Term Financial Plan is published on Council's website in accordance with Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Harrington	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Hill	Councillor King
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (10)	Total (3)

CARRIED

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC2/2026

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DISTRIBUTIVE EQUITY IN COUNCIL'S RATING STRUCTURE

MOTION

340

RESOLVED

Moved: Councillor Hill

Seconded: Councillor Lea

1. That the General Manager undertake a review of the distributive equity of Council's current rating structure; and
2. That Council notes that the distributive equity review will assess equity impacts, legislative compliance, revenue stability, administrative feasibility, with findings and any proposed options to be reported to Council for consideration, with an intention for inclusion in the 2027/28 Revenue Policy.

Councillor King left the meeting, the time being 7.55pm

Councillor King returned to the meeting, the time being 7.56pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Dunne	Councillor King
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Hawkins	
Councillor Watton	
Total (11)	Total (2)

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Nil

The Meeting Was Declared Closed at 8.09pm

CONFIRMED AND SIGNED at the meeting held on 18 February 2026

.....**CHAIRPERSON**

.....**GENERAL MANAGER**