

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting	Wednesday, 12th November, 2014
Time	7.00 pm
Venue	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG
Contact	Julia Cleary

Cabinet

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.

- 2 Financial and Performance Management Report to end of Quarter Two (July-September, 2014) (Pages 3 - 14)**
- 3 Draft Council Plan Summary 2015-20 (Pages 15 - 20)**
- 4 Planning Peer Review (Pages 21 - 44)**
- 5 Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief (Pages 45 - 50)**
- 6 Hardship Relief - Business Rates (Pages 51 - 56)**
- 7 Customer Service and Access Strategy and Customer Promise (Pages 57 - 68)**
- 8 Review of Allotments Service (Pages 69 - 76)**
- 9 Asset Disposals (Pages 77 - 104)**
- 10 Council Response to Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Plan- Call for Sites (Pages 105 - 154)**
- 11 URGENT BUSINESS**
- To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 12 EXCLUSION RESOLUTION**
- To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix A and Appendix B to the Irrecoverable Items report because it is likely that there will be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 13 HARDSHIP RELIEF - BUSINESS RATES (Pages 155 - 156)**

14 ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS

Councillor attendance at Cabinet meetings:

Any Newcastle under Lyme Borough Councillor is entitled to attend Cabinet meetings and any Members of the Council may also speak with the permission of the Chair of the Cabinet. There are no limits on the time Councillors will be allowed to speak for. In addition, the respective Chairs of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees will be permitted to attend and speak at Cabinet meetings, as will the mover(s) of motion(s) referred to the Cabinet

Public attendance at Cabinet meetings:

Any member of the public is entitled to attend meetings of the Cabinet (including press). If a member of the public wishes to speak, they may do so in the form of a question which should be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive of the Council at least two days prior to the meeting taking place. The Chief Executive will share questions with the Chair of Cabinet, who will assess whether the question(s) is/are permissible. The Chair's decision is final on this matter. A maximum of three such questions can be asked at any one Cabinet meeting and no right of reply from the questioner or any other member of the public is permitted, nor any follow up questions. Each questioner can ask one question at any one meeting. A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for the questioner to ask their question or make any other statement, and questions deemed to be repetitious or vexatious will not be admitted.

Members: Councillors Mrs Beech, Kearon, Turner, Stubbs (Chair), Williams, Mrs Shenton (Vice-Chair) and Hambleton

PLEASE NOTE: The Council Chamber and Committee Room 1 are fitted with a loop system. In addition, there is a volume button on the base of the microphones. A portable loop system is available for all other rooms. Should you require this service, please contact Member Services during the afternoon prior to the meeting.

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

1. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER TWO (July - September) 2014

Submitted by: Head of Finance and Head of Business Improvement, Central Services & Partnerships

Portfolio: Communications, Policy & Partnerships
Finance and Resources

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To provide Cabinet with the Financial and Performance Review report - second quarter 2014/15.

Recommendations

- (a) That Members note the contents of the attached report and agrees to the recommendation that the Council continues to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside the latest financial information for the same period.
- (b) That Members note the comments made through the Scrutiny process and the responses from officers and others to these comments.

Reasons

The Financial and Performance Management monitoring reports provide information on a quarterly basis regarding the performance of individual council services, alongside related financial information on the organisation. This report was originally presented to the Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny (FRAPS) Committee meeting on 5 November 2014.

1. Background

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the second quarter of 2014/15 by presenting performance data set within a financial context.
- 1.2 This report provides financial information (Appendix A) and also detailed analysis of performance (Appendix B) for the second quarter of 2014/15.
- 1.3 A summary of the overall performance picture is presented in section 3 of this report.
- 1.4 In summary, performance is generally progressing well, with the majority of targets currently being met.



2. 2014/15 Revenue and Capital Budget Position

- 2.1 The Council approved a general fund revenue budget of £14,893,770 on 26 February 2014. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.




3 Performance

- 3.1 The latest performance information is reported and attached as Appendix B.

- 3.2 Any indicators failing to meet the set targets are reported, by exception, in the table found in section 3.6.
- 3.3 The information found in Appendix B is presented in four sections against each corporate priority and detailed results and progress towards identified outcomes for the Council is presented here as well.
- 3.4 The number of indicators monitored in this report for quarter two 2014-15 is 26 in total, and the proportion of indicators which have met their target during this period stands at 65%.
- 3.5 The report contains five columns designed to show achievement:
- The “Good is” column denotes whether ‘low’ or ‘high’ figures are good and allows the reader to analyse the results in detail;
 - There are two columns included showing comparative quarterly performance for 2013-14 and 2014-15 – this allows the reader to gain some insight into annual trends;
 - The fourth column shows the target for 2014-15 (in some cases a quarterly target may be provided when relevant and necessary) and;
 - One set of symbols (icons) show whether performance is on target or not at this time.
- 3.6 Nine indicators from Appendix B are off target this quarter and are reported by exception in the table below, together with commentary.

Exception Report Quarter 2, 2014 (July-September)						
Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer	Portfolio holder
1.7	The amount of residual waste per household	108.39 kgs	415kgs (annual)		Trevor Nicoll	Councillor Beech
Comment	The indicator would appear off target in quarter 2 given the annual target of 415kgs which equates to a quarterly target of 104kgs, and that ‘good performance’ is low. This result reflects the quarterly returns for last year where the results were seasonally affected due to residents’ behavioural changes. The service continues to deliver and promote its programme to encourage residents to recycle more and reduce residual waste; however it appears there is a national trend of waste growth, and therefore we will have to look carefully at the next quarter’s performance to see if the target can still be met.					
1.8	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	53.17% (est)	55%		Trevor Nicoll	Councillor Beech
Comment	The indicator for quarter two is slightly off target given the annual target of 55%. The results are slightly less than last year’s quarter 2 performance, however due to changes in household waste classification we are no longer allowed to include all street sweepings for recycling, although they continue to be recycled, and nationally we are seeing a reduction in paper consumption, and more materials such as glass and plastics being produced in lighter weights in order to save on manufacturing cost and transport.					

Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer	Portfolio holder
1.10	Number of community volunteer groups/hours spent caring for their local green spaces and neighbourhoods	585.5 hrs	2000 hrs	No	Roger Tait	Councillor Beech
Comment	In 2013-14, the number of volunteer hours was nearly 9,000, and in quarter 1, 2014-15 the result was 2,105.5 hours. However the total number of hours for quarter 2 has reduced significantly to 585.5 hours. The reason is due to an external partner reducing the resource they were putting in to this initiative. Therefore the forecasted target now needs to be reviewed. A positive to this has been an increase in the number and frequency of other events with community volunteers.					
2.6	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within time	75.7%	85%	No	Guy Benson	Councillor Williams
Comment	The drop in performance with respect to this indicator is a direct consequence of the departure of one of the Senior planning officers at the beginning of May (in a situation where the Service had already lost some capacity in the previous October). There has been no significant increase in the number of applications. Performance dropped significantly in July and has worsened since, reflecting the nature of the indicator and the need to deal with applications on a first come first served basis. Following an internal promotion a planning officer has been recruited and is now in post, helping rebuild the capacity of the Service, which has also been affected by several long term absences due to ill-health.					
2.7	Percentage of Other Planning Applications determined within time	85%	92.5%	No	Guy Benson	Councillor Williams
Comment	See the comment for 2.6					
3.6	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	145,731	170,180	No	Rob Foster	Councillor Hambleton
Comment	<p>There were a few closures of the swimming pools this quarter:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The swimming pools at Jubilee2 for 2 days due to lack of heating 13th – 14th September 2014, The training pool at Jubilee2 since the 17th September 2014 due to a mechanical failure of the moveable floor. This has had an impact on the class programme, swimming lessons, school swimming service, public swimming, pool hire, and also The swimming pools at Kidsgrove Sports Centre due to essential tile repairs 1st- 2nd September 2014. <p>In relation to football development, public health withdrew funding for the programme as from the second quarter of the year, which in turn lead to some courses being cancelled due to lower attendance numbers.</p>					

Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer	Portfolio holder
4.1	Percentage attendance at planned meetings by members	77.28%	80.00%		Mark Bailey	Councillor Shenton
Comment	There has been a reduction in the percentage of meetings attended by members in the second quarter, down from 81% in quarter 1. Hopefully this will improve in the coming quarter.					
4.4	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	96%	97%		Jeanette Hilton	Councillor Turner
Comment	Although there has been a slight decrease this quarter against the high target set (last year's target was 90%), the new CRM system is enabling improved management of contacts. Resource was stretched during quarter 2 predominately due to the peak holiday season. Despite this, the call volume managed was in excess of 9,500 calls per month. The service has confidence in continuing to maintain results to meet the high target level set.					
4.8	Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	57.5%	58.3%		Kelvin Turner	Councillor Shenton
Comment	The slight drop in collection is due to a change in national regulations which has allowed all rate payers to pay over twelve months rather than ten. Most of the big firms with large assessments have taken this option up as it helps their cash flow. However this has had a negative effect on the forecasted collection profiles which were already set. The effect of the change was not apparent in quarter 1 as most payments for the first instalment were at the old rate, and did not impact on the results. It is anticipated that the shortfall will reduce by quarter 4 when profiled payments for the last months are received.					

These indicators are not causes for concern at present, and the management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to deal with the situation where possible and/or appropriate.

Further quarterly updates will be provided for Members in future reports.

- 3.7 Positive performance can be seen in a range of services although it must be borne in mind that the results later in the year may be liable to change and that some services have seasonal factors.
- 3.8 The 'Delivering our Outcomes' (Appendix C) section is not attached this quarter but a timetable of service areas proposed for future reports are for your information and would invite comments as to whether you agree or prefer to see other areas explored:

Quarterly Report	Subject
Qtr 3 October-December 2014	Partnerships
Qtr 4 January –March 2015	Planning
Qtr 1 April –Jun 2015	Operations

It should be noted that the timetable will be subject to variation dependent on subsequent performance results.

4. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

4.1 All of these indicators link to corporate priorities set out in the Council Plan and/or Service Plans.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

5.1 The Council has a duty to set targets for performance of a range of functions and needs to monitor these closely.

6. Equality Impact Implications

6.1 There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this monitoring report.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 Any positive variance for the full year on the General Fund Revenue Account will enable that amount to be transferred to the Budget Support Fund and will be available in future years for use as the Council considers appropriate. Conversely, if there is an adverse variance, the amount required to cover this will have to be met from the Budget Support Fund.

8. Major Risks

8.1 The ongoing difficult economic situation represents the greatest risk to the revenue budget, particularly with regard to the impact it may have upon income receivable in relation to services where customers may choose whether or not to use Council facilities, such as car parking and other areas directly affected by the economic downturn(e.g. land charges and planning applications). The situation will be monitored through the normal budget monitoring procedures.

8.2 The capital programme will require regular monitoring to identify any projects which are falling behind their planned completion dates. This will be carried out by the Capital Programme Review Group, which meets on a monthly basis together with quarterly reports to Cabinet.

8.3 The above represents a high level view of risk. There are detailed risk registers available if members wish to see them.

9. List of Appendices

Financial information (Appendix A), the Performance report (Appendix B)

10. Background Papers

Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.

11. Management sign off

Each of the designated boxes need to be signed off and dated before going to Executive Director/Corporate Service Manager for sign off.

	Signed	Dated
Financial Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Risk Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Legal Implications Discussed and Agreed		
H.R. Implications Discussed and Agreed		
ICT Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Report Agreed by: Executive Director/ Head of Service		

Financial Position Quarter Two 2014/15

1. General Fund Revenue Budget

1.1 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £14,893,770 on 26 February 2014. The actual position compared to this budget is continuously monitored by managers, EMT and Portfolio Holders in order to detect any significant variances of expenditure or income from the approved amounts contained in the budget. Regular reports are made available to members by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources informing them of the current position, highlighting any significant factors giving rise to variances.

2. Capital Programme

2.1 A Capital Programme totalling £7,242,300, covering the two years 2013/14 to 2014/15, was approved at the same Council meeting. Of this total, £2,238,000 was estimated to be spent in 2014/15.

3. Revenue Budget Position

3.1 At this point in the financial year, we would have expected to have spent approximately £5,241,300; we have actually spent £5,291,700. Therefore, as at the end of the second quarter, the general fund budget shows an adverse variance of £50,400.

3.2 The main reasons for the overall adverse variance to date are:

- a. The overtime budget is overspent as no changes have yet been implemented to deliver the 2014/15 savings target of £100,000. Negotiations with the Trade Unions have been ongoing and a collective agreement is due to be signed imminently.
- b. Jubilee 2 is operating at a net overspend primarily due to income shortfall. A four point action plan is being pursued to both improve income and reduce costs. This consists of:
 - improvements to the J2 website;
 - a push on marketing and promotion with particular emphasis on digital marketing;
 - improvements to the management process for direct debits which will allow staff to focus on membership retention; and
 - reductions to utilities costs through improvements to the building management system
- c. Kidsgrove Sports Centre is also operating at a net overspend due to income shortfall.

There are also a number of favourable variances, the main ones being:

- a. Additional planning fee income in respect of major planning applications.
- b. Saving on Elections due to the European Elections being held and costs shared with Central Government.
- c. Employee costs in respect of a number of vacant posts and flexible retirements that have taken place across the Council.

3.3 Any changes to inflationary rates have not had any effect on the Councils budget as at the end of quarter 2.

4. Capital Programme Position

4.1 The Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2014 has been updated to take account of slippage in 2013/14. Where planned expenditure did not occur last year, this has been added to the budget for 2014/15 (apart from any cases where costs have been reduced or expenditure will no longer be incurred). The revised budget for capital projects in 2014/15 totals £4,067,100.

4.2 £1,247,700 of the revised budget was expected to be spent by 30 September; the actual amount spent was £1,137,835 resulting in a variance as at the end of quarter 2 of £109,865.

5. Investment Counterparties

5.1 Investment counterparties with whom money is invested, as at 30 September 2014 are as follows (with the parent company shown in brackets, where applicable):









Debt Management Account – Deposit Facility
Nationwide Building Society
Barclays Bank
Halifax Bank of Scotland
Coventry Building Society
Heritable Bank (*Landsbanki*)

5.2 With regard to the Council's frozen investment in Heritable Bank, the total amount repaid now amounts to some £2,357,691, which is 94% of the total that was frozen. The Administrators current prediction is that no further repayments will be made.






Corporate Performance Scorecard

Quarter 2 2014-15



Priority 1: A clean, safe and sustainable Borough

Outcomes: Our borough will be safer, cleaner and sustainable						
Lead Members Cllrs. Ann Beech, Tony Kearon and Terry Turner						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 2	Result 2014/15 Qtr 2	Target 2014/15	Status
1.1	Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating.	Low	1.44% (10 out of 692 published premises)	1.02% (8 out of 780 published premises)	2.25%	
1.2	The percentage of food establishments which are broadly compliant with good hygiene law	High	92.7% (1042 out of 1124 premises)	95.03% (1072 out of 1128 premises)	85%	
1.3	The area of contaminated land that has been remediated or is determined suitable for use	High	71Ha	4.242Ha	-	-
1.4	Number of incidents of violence with injury	Low	242	248	-	-
1.5	Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour	Low	1176	1035	-	-
1.6	Number of incidents of serious acquisitive crime	Low	197	223	-	-
1.7	The amount of residual waste per household	Low	107.11kgs	108.39kgs (est)	415kgs (annual)	
1.8	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	High	55.01%	53.17% (est)	55%	
1.9	Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	High	96.67% 93.92% 99.33% 100%	92.33% 96.27% 99.17% 99.83%	91% 91% 97% 99%	
1.10	Number of community volunteer groups/hours spent caring for their local green spaces and neighbourhoods	High	1776.25	585.5	2000 hrs	
1.11	Town Centre Vacancy Rate	Low	16.2%	13.5%	15%	
1.12	Percentage of investment portfolio (NBC owned) vacant	Low	8.4%	8.6%	12%	

Priority 2 : Borough of Opportunity









Outcomes: Newcastle is a great place to live, work and do business - Lead Member Cllrs. Ann Beech, Terry Turner and John Williams						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 2	Result 2014/15 Qtr 2	Target 2014/15	Status
2.1	Number of hours worked by volunteers in council co-ordinated activities (museum)	High	550hrs	363hrs	375 hrs	
2.2	Percentage of minor adaptations delivered within four months (approval to payment for works under £5000)	High	78.6%	86%	75%	
2.3	Number of homelessness cases where positive action was successful preventing homelessness	High	130	141	150	
2.4	Average stall occupancy rate for markets	High	61%	78.5%	55%	
2.5	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within time	High	75%	85.7%	70%	
2.6	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within time	High	77.6%	75.7%	85%	No
2.7	Percentage of Other Planning Applications determined within time	High	90.1%	85%	92.5%	No




Priority 3 : A Healthy and Active Community

Outcomes: Everyone has the chance to live a healthy, independent life, access to high quality leisure and cultural facilities/activities and the opportunity to get involved in their community - Lead Member Cllrs. Ann Beech, Trevor Hambleton and John Williams						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 2	Result 2014/15 Qtr 2	Target 2014/15	Status
3.1	Number of parks which have Green Flag status	High	9	11	9	
3.2	Level of satisfaction with Council run parks and open spaces	High	78.2% Annual result	Reported at a later date	70%	n/a
3.3	Number of people visiting the museum	High	36413	31363	60,000	
3.4	Number of referrals from GPs to organised sporting activity	High	64	n/a	n/a	n/a
3.5	Percentage of people referred for exercise by GPs whose health improves	High	32.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
3.6	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	High	143,481	145,731	170,180	No

Priority 4 : A Co-operative Council, delivering high-quality, community driven services

Outcomes: Your council is efficient, open and innovative in its work, with services designed and delivered co-operatively and communities are strong and well supported - Lead Member Cllrs. Mike Stubbs and Elizabeth Shenton

Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 2	Result 2014/15 Qtr 2	Target 2014/15	Status
4.1	Percentage attendance at planned meetings by members	High	84.79%	77.28%	80%	
4.2	Percentage projected variance against full year council budget	Low	0.1%	0.3%	No variance	
4.3	Average number of days per employee lost to sickness	Low	4.05 days (long term 2.53 and Short term 1.52 days)	3.33 days (long term 1.88 and Short term 1.45 days)	3.75 days	
4.4	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	High	99.29%	96%	97%	
4.5	% Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)	Low	11.5%	5.9%	8%	
4.6	Time taken to process Housing/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	Low	16.08days	9.42 days	10	
4.7	Percentage of Council Tax collected	High	52.6%	52.8%	50.11%	
4.8	Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	High	61.1%	57.5%	58.3%	

Key	Performance information not available at this time or due to be provided at a later date.	n/a
	Performance is not on target but direction of travel is positive	
	Performance is not on target where targets have been set	
	Performance is on or above target.	

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM TO CABINET

12 November 2014

DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN SUMMARY 2015-20

Submitted by: Head of Business Improvement, Central Services and Partnerships

Portfolio: Communications, Policy & Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To present, for consideration by Cabinet, the proposed new draft Council Plan Summary, covering the period 2015-20.

Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the contents of the summary (found at Appendix A) and recommends that it is progressed.

Reasons

The attached Council Plan Summary 2015-20 provides information on the priorities and actions planned to be delivered by the Council. The document communicates the clear vision of the Council and the Council's strategic priorities around promoting economic development, growth and regeneration in the borough and is a response to the findings of the recent Planning Peer Review.

1. Background/Key Areas of Focus

- 1.1 A new Council Plan Summary for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough was developed for 2015-20 to reflect changes in the political and economic environment impacting on the borough.
- 1.2 This document communicates the clear vision and the Council's strategic priorities to promote economic development, growth and regeneration in the borough and is in response to the findings of the recent Planning Peer Review. The Planning Peer Review report contained a recommendation on the need for a clear political narrative for the long term future of the borough and also stressed the need and importance of homes, jobs, and infrastructure. The Planning Peer Review report also emphasised the need for the Council and its partners to develop a coherent strategy for investment and growth. The development of the Council Plan Summary document has sought to take into account these key messages.
- 1.3 The Council Plan itself forms the basis of everything we do as a council, and links to all Council strategies and service planning.
- 1.4 The vision/corporate priorities remain unchanged from the previous Plan and are:
 - To create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe (the vision)
 - a co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven services
 - A clean, safe and sustainable borough,

- A borough of opportunity and
- A healthy and active community (the corporate priorities)

The purpose of this Summary, therefore, is to do the following:

- Provide a strategic policy framework for service and financial planning for 2015 onwards
- Communicate the challenges facing the Council (financial and otherwise)
- Set out the key activities and outcomes of the Council under each priority heading
- Ensure local need is being addressed by the Council
- Ensure that the Council's various strategies (which feed into the Council Plan) are still relevant and are reflected in the Council Plan
- Reflect the key areas of focus for the Council as outlined earlier in this report and which came out of the recent Planning Peer Review process

2. Development of the Council Plan Summary

- 2.1 The Council Plan document has been developed by examining its content and layout, taking into consideration information from previous work undertaken and the need for the council to be in a strong position to establish and progress its plans.
- 2.2 The document consists of a tri-folded A3 plan.
- 2.3 The Plan retains the existing vision for the Council - "to create a Borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe" and, as already said, its four priorities.
- 2.4 The Plan also contains a set of twelve outcomes to monitor the impact of the Council's work (whether alone or in partnership with others) which continue to meet the needs of the communities of the Borough and remain unchanged:

Priority: A Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough

Our Borough will be safer

Our Borough will be cleaner

Our Borough will be sustainable

A Borough of Opportunity

Newcastle is a great place to work

Newcastle is a great place to do business

Newcastle is a great place to live

A healthy and active community

Everyone has the chance to live a healthy, independent life

Everyone has access to high quality leisure and cultural facilities/(activities)

Everyone has the opportunity to get involved in their community

Becoming a co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven services

The council is efficient, open and innovative in its work

Services are designed and delivered co-operatively

Communities is strong and well supported

3. Timetable for delivery

- 3.1 The Council Plan summary is to be developed along the following timetable, thereby presenting opportunities for comments and feedback as part of this process at the outset of the financial year:
- Draft version for adoption from Cabinet 12 November 2014

- Approved version to Finance, Resources and Partnership Scrutiny Committee 4 December 2014

4 Constraints

- 4.1 One of the main constraints to consider in the development of the Plan for Newcastle Borough Council is that, like other authorities, balancing reductions in funding with the provision of quality services and increases in demand is a major challenge and potentially limits the ability of the Council to deliver against its plans generally.
- 4.2 The financial picture and how the council plans to deliver identified savings are detailed in the Revenue & Capital Budgets and Medium Term Financial Strategy. These activities will be monitored regularly and considered in service planning and other planned activities to ensure the savings are realised.

5 Options, Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution

- 5.1 The Council Plan informs the Council's overall corporate planning and acts as the major impetus behind budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and also the service planning process.
- 5.2 The Council Plan Summary details the approach and work in order to effectively prepare the Council to meet the longer term demands and challenges to service delivery in the borough (as part of the 2020 Vision work).
- 5.3 Faced with the likely financial restraints leading up to 2020, decisions and planning for the next Council Plan (2016 onwards) will commence at the beginning of 2015-16 with a timetable of activities to ensure the council is in a good position to meet expected and unexpected challenges.
- 5.4 Members are asked to consider this draft Council Plan Summary and this covering report and recommend its approval and adoption.
- 5.5 In considering the Plan/report, Members can: -

Option A: Accept and approve the adoption of the new style Council Plan Summary 2015-20 and its contents as provided

This is the recommended option, albeit with further modifications and additions to be made as required by Cabinet

Option B: Request significant further changes to the document before it can be approved and adopted

This is also recommended, although Members should be aware that this will delay the process of publishing the summary and will also have an effect potentially on other related processes and activities in the future.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 Officers have drafted this Plan in line with current codes and legislation.

7. Equality impact

- 7.1 There are no differential impacts in this report.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 The Plan will form the basis of the implementation of the overall Budget Strategy of the Council for 2015/16.

9. Major risks

9.1 The Plan will be considered against the overall Risk Strategy of the Council. This is also done as part of the Service Planning process.

10. Key Decision information

10.1 This report is in the Forward Plan.

11. List of Appendices

11.1 Draft version presented to Cabinet (November 2014) and FRAPS (December 2014) (Appendix A)

12. Background Papers

12.1 Working papers held by officers in 'Council Plan 2020' files

13. Management sign off

Each of the designated boxes need to be signed off and dated before going to Executive Director/Corporate Service Manager for sign off.

	<u>Signed</u>	Dated
Financial Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Risk Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Legal Implications Discussed and Agreed		
H.R. Implications Discussed and Agreed		
ICT Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Report Agreed by: Executive Director/ Head of Service		

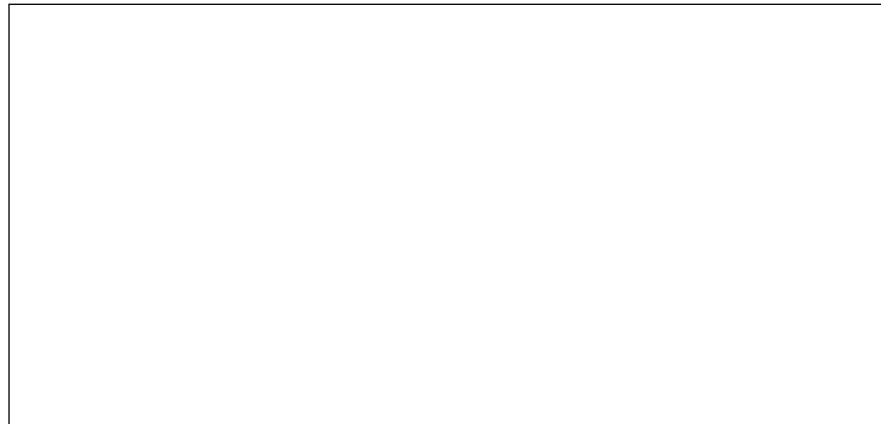
The borough council in partnership with Staffordshire County Council continues its work to create a new retail-led development scheme on the Ryecroft site in Newcastle. Through our commitment to securing new investment on this site we hope to step change the Newcastle town centre economy.

Our communities need to grow and develop and our commitment is to support them to do so. We currently have a housing shortage in the borough which if not addressed means that our children will not be able to live in their local community.

Through our developing **Local Plan** we will bring forward sites for new homes and new businesses, the establishment of which will work hand in hand with our strategy for investment. The plan will set out in detail our ambition for growth and how new development in the Borough will be delivered in a sustainable way.

By careful use of our planning powers we will steer new housing development to appropriate locations and we will continue to ensure that we maintain a balance between housing and good quality public open spaces giving people recreational opportunities close to where they live.

Within the Stoke and Staffordshire Strategic Economic Plan Keele Science Park is identified as the premier development site in North Staffordshire and land has already been allocated on the university campus to support further growth. We are working with the university and the county council to ensure that new development is sensitively integrated into our existing community.



A Healthy and Active Community

For our borough to be truly prosperous we not only need to ensure we have good homes and jobs but we need to ensure our communities remain safe, our people healthy and fulfilled in their daily lives.

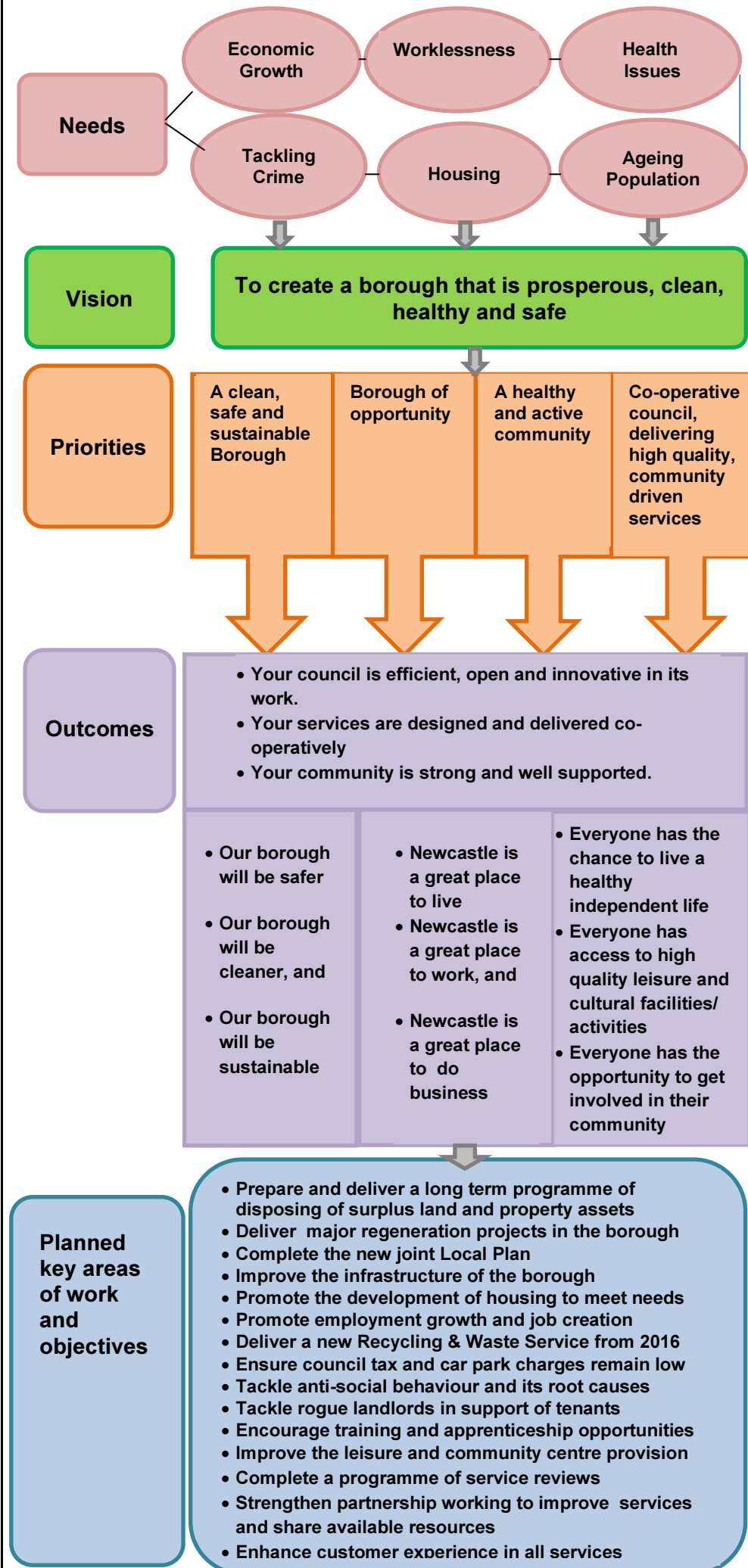
A strategy for wellbeing

In 2012 the council opened a new leisure centre in Newcastle – Jubilee 2. Jubilee 2 has not only provided a popular facility for our residents but is also helping them to live healthy and more fulfilled lives. We have an aspiration to repeat this success in Kidsgrove and to provide a replacement facility for the ageing Kidsgrove Leisure Centre. To do this we will need to release surplus land assets. This process supports our commitment to invest wisely in facilities which will benefit our borough long into the future.

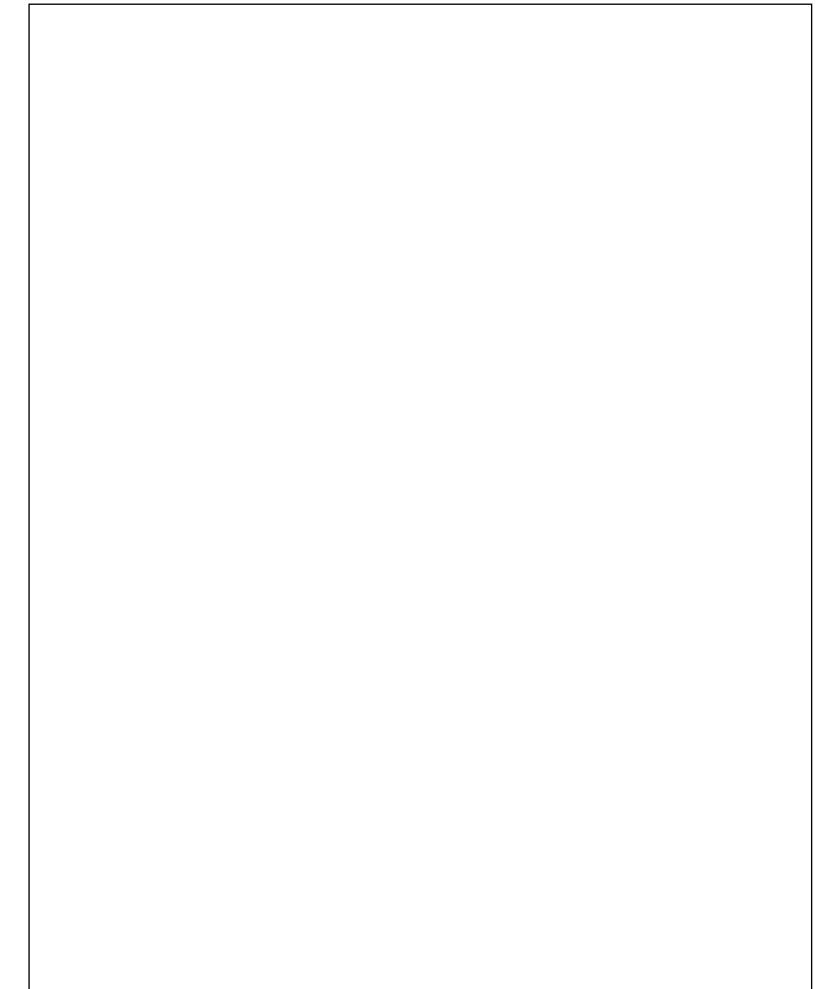
We are also placing a particular priority on:

- Enhanced levels of physical activity
- Encouraging people to cut down on smoking and drinking, as well as eating more healthily
- Playing a full role in their local communities to avoid the problems of loneliness and social isolation

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out in detail our ambition for promoting good health and fulfilled lives and the means through which we will achieve this.



Our Newcastle 2020: A strategy for investment, growth and community well being



This is a summary of the Borough's Council Plan for the next five years, 2015-2020.

Needs

Newcastle is home to around 125,200 residents and is characterised by significant variations in the level of employment, health, economic well-being, housing and overall living standards.

We know that:

- the population is ageing with its average age slightly higher than the national average,
- there is a large student population and,
- the borough is becoming more diverse.

Our vision

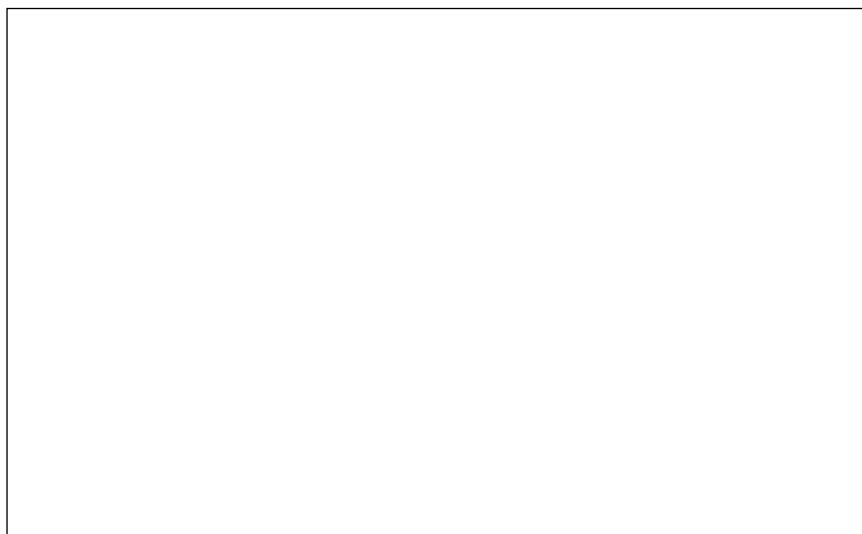
Our vision is to create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe.

We will deliver our **vision** by ensuring that:

- *there is growth in the number of jobs, homes and opportunities for the people of our borough*
- *people can enjoy healthy and fulfilled lives, and*
- *our communities remain safe*

The council has developed **four priorities** to deliver this:

- **A co-operative Council, delivering high quality, community-driven services**
- **A clean safe and sustainable Borough**
- **Borough of opportunity**
- **A healthy and active community**

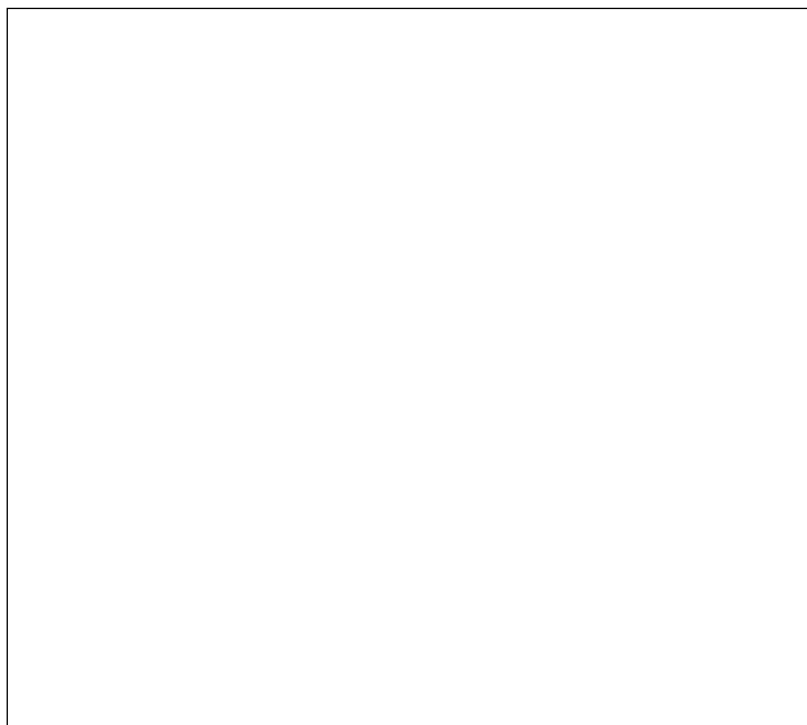


A co-operative Council, delivering high quality, community-driven services

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to becoming a co-operative council and our commitment is driven by:-

- a real desire to build on existing partnership arrangements and improve/enhance them
- the need to deal effectively with increased expectations from our residents and stakeholders
- interpreting and implementing the changing legislative agenda of government
- easing the financial pressures for ourselves and our partners

This priority is an overarching one which encompasses everything we want to achieve and as described links to future financial sustainability and communities.



Due to reductions in public spending, funding for the borough council from government grant will reduce between now and 2020 which means fewer available resources to deliver our services ourselves in the future.

We need to balance the books by:

- Focusing our spending, where possible, on those services directly delivered to the public
- Providing all services efficiently and in partnership with other organisations where appropriate
- Ensuring that the services we provide are value for money and continue to be lean and efficient
- Regularly reviewing our services to see if they are meeting the needs of the citizen/customer
- Being clear on our priorities for spending and investment
- Eliminating waste wherever we find it

One of our biggest challenges is capital funding. We need capital to spend on the buildings, equipment and modern technology to ensure provision of our fit for purpose services. Also to establish the necessary infrastructure for the Borough to grow economically with the new jobs and income such growth brings.

The council has two main options to fund its capital needs – we can borrow or we can sell assets or a mix of both to meet our needs. However we are fortunate in having land assets. By releasing surplus land we can not only provide funding for services but also assist the borough's growing housing shortage and help to sustain our communities and neighbourhoods.

Our current **Medium Term Financial Strategy** sets in detail our commitment to ensuring the council's financial sustainability and the means by which we will achieve this.

Our **Capital Strategy** details the capital investment required to provide a continuing sustainable funding flow in to the future.

A strategy for communities

The borough council works closely with partners to ensure our communities remain strong and are safe places to live and work. At the heart of our commitment to co-operation are four key values: -
We will ... put residents at the centre of everything we do
... work co-operatively with our partners and communities
... be open and transparent in our decision making
... be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things

We will continue to work with our residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can using the fewer resources we have. This will mean everyone looking at the way we work and adopting an innovative approach to ensure the best possible services are delivered to the people in the borough using the resources we have.

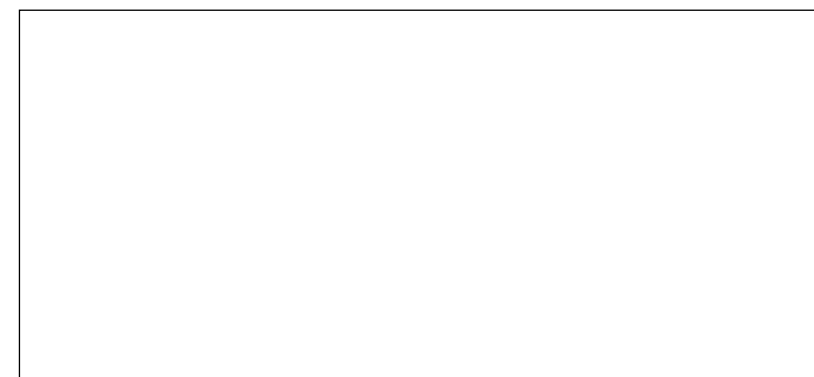
A clean, safe and sustainable Borough

We will improve the environment so that everyone can enjoy a safe, sustainable and healthy borough.

Our **Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy** sets in detail our ambition for keeping our borough safe and the means through which we will achieve this.

Working with the police over the next few years, we will deliver and develop initiatives funded by the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner to ensure that crime continues to remain low, our communities feel safe and work to ensure communities can deal with their own problems with or without our direct involvement.

Together we have adopted a no-nonsense yet co-operative approach to anti-social behaviour and have worked with communities to deal appropriately with those who seek to disrupt and damage the lives of others.



Borough of opportunity

As a council we want to see investment in the borough which will bring jobs and improve prosperity as well as improving the well-being of our citizens and their communities.

Strategy for investment and growth

We want to continue to encourage investment through new business start ups and the further growth of established businesses.

During the past two years we have placed a particular focus on our two main town centres, Newcastle and Kidsgrove and supported the creation of two business-led town centre partnerships.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET

Date 12th November 2014

1. PLANNING PEER REVIEW

Submitted by: Executive Director – Regeneration & Development, Neale Clifton

Portfolio: Planning and Assets

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To approve an Action Plan to address the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review Team

Recommendations

- (a) That Cabinet agree to the Action Plan attached as Appendix 2 to this report**
- (b) That Cabinet receive in 6 months' time a report back on progress made in implementing the agreed Actions**
- (c) That the Planning Committee similarly receive the same report**

Reasons

To agree the Action Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council commissioned the national Planning Advisory Service to review its Planning Service with the aim of addressing perceived concerns about facets of the service to ensure that this important service is both effective and efficient.
- 1.2 The review process was undertaken in accordance with a nationally-agreed approach. This involved an assessment around a number of key themes.
- 1.3 The review team spent three days on site during which they interviewed a wide range of Members, officers and other stakeholders.
- 1.4 The Council in mid-August received a final report/letter from the Peer Review Team (PRT), a copy of which has since been circulated to all Members. For ease of reference the recommendations have been extracted and shown at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 At its meeting on the 15th October Cabinet received a report inviting it to agree how to manage and respond to the report. Members were advised that it had been agreed with the portfolio holder that an Action Plan should be prepared, that in order to

optimise the robustness of the Action Plan all stakeholders (including all members of the Council) had been sent a copy of the letter and encouraged to comment upon the recommendations in a manner that will inform the action Plan. Additionally Cabinet was advised that arrangements had been made to engage Members of the Planning Committee, along with officers, in the drafting of the Action Plan.

1.6 Cabinet resolved

- a) That Members note the contents of the PRT's report and the recommendations therein.
- b) That Members agree with the proposal to prepare an Action Plan to address the said report's recommendations.
- c) That the Action Plan, referred to above, be reported to Cabinet for approval at the earliest opportunity.
- d) That officers write to the PRT thanking them for their report and confirming the Council's intended approach.

2. **Issues**

2.1 **Introduction** - Peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. They are improvement oriented and are tailored to meet individual councils' needs. Indeed they are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. They help planning services review what they are trying to achieve; how they are going about it; what they are achieving; and what they need to improve.

The five comprehensive themes of focus for a Planning Peer Challenge are:

- clarity and locally distinctive vision and leadership for the planning service;
- community leadership and engaging with the community;
- management arrangements and service delivery;
- partnership working both internally and externally; and
- achieving outcomes.

2.2 The Council asked the PRT to specifically examine and report on the following areas:

- joint local plan timetable;
- advice/ approach of officers in relation to interpretation of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in particular the consequences of being unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply;
- quality of effective joint working between officers and councillors;
- resources and demands;
- statement of community involvement;
- public perception; and
- enforcement.

2.3 In the summary of their feedback, which members have received the Review Team indicated that their overall messages were as follows

"The Council continues to support the delivery of some high quality development through strong joint working with the public and private sector. Notable examples include town centre redevelopment such as the Jubilee 2 health and well-being centre and the mixed use redevelopment of the former Silverdale Colliery providing

housing, employment and recreational land. The service has a good focus on supporting applications for major schemes through a development team approach involving specialist officers including economic development, housing, environmental health and highways. Speed of decision making is above the historically-set government targets.

However while the planning service does support growth and investment in the borough, the Council now more fully appreciates that it needs to bring the service 'front and centre' to deliver its corporate priority of 'delivering opportunity'. The borough needs more homes and more jobs to meet local demand. Critically, development is required to fund infrastructure needs such as roads, drainage and services. And without new development, locally generated income in the form of council tax, business rates or new homes bonus will not replace diminishing government grant.

Changes in a range of key national and local circumstances over the last two to three years have set a challenging context in the borough for delivering the planning function; these include the introduction of the NPPF; the changing local political landscape and the 5-year housing land supply issue. Recent decisions by the Council's planning committee to overturn officer recommendations on some large scale housing applications have brought to a head, issues concerning trust and confidence. This has impacted upon the ability of officers and councillors to work together, albeit respecting the key differences in their roles and responsibilities. An absolutely key improvement requirement is for councillors and officers to communicate and engage more effectively with each other. This is in both planning policy and development management.

We agree with both senior political leaders and senior managers that the status quo is not an option. The need for a clearer vision of what the Council can achieve through more effective use of its planning policy is obvious. We suggest that a new corporate 'narrative' is agreed that provides a 'golden thread' that will give more meaning to the objective of creating a 'borough of opportunity' through various plans and strategies that complement the local plan. The imperative of needing a strong planning service to support development and increase locally derived income cannot be underestimated given continuing cuts to local government funding. The Council also needs to build on its key competitive locational advantages and on the use of its land assets.

We know that the Council is progressing its joint local plan with Stoke as quickly as it considers it is able to do. We make a fundamental recommendation about delivering an interim planning policy statement as soon as is practically possible in 2015. To achieve this and work at the fastest possible pace we recommend the Council revisits its resources and capacity to make sure these reflect its priorities.

We suggest changes to the way members of the planning committee can engage as early as possible with applicants involving major applications. We see improved training and development of councillors and officers as a key need. To create some headroom for this and time for better engagement we suggest some things that the service should do less or do differently."

Cabinet have previously received as part of the papers for the 15th October meeting a full copy of the PRTs' letter.

- 2.4 **The recommendations** – The PRT summarised their recommendations and these are provided in Appendix 1.

2.5 This report discusses each of the recommendations in terms of what Actions might be appropriate, and what other actions have been considered but are not recommended. The proposed Action Plan is provided as Appendix 2. Agenda item (No.9) for the 28th October Planning Committee and the supplementary report to that item published on the 24th October provided details of the comments that have been received from the following stakeholders – Keele University, the clerk to Keele and Audley Rural Parish Councils, Keele Parish Council, Silverdale Parish Council, Audley Rural Parish Council, Whitmore Quality Parish Council, Loggerheads Parish Council, Maer & Aston Parish Council, Chapel & Hill Chorlton Parish Council, and Councillor Loades Chairman of the Newcastle Rural Locality Action Partnership. At this stage it is important to note that the approval of the Action Plan merely begins the process of improvement; it is not an end in itself. In some instances “quick wins” may be achieved whilst in other cases it will be necessary to explore approaches in more depth and in liaison with members or other parties before determining the most effective improvements.

2.6 The Draft Action Plan was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 28th October. The Committee resolved as follows

- a) (i) That it be recommended to Cabinet that it agree the proposed draft Action Plan
- (ii) That training for both members of the Committee and officers on local finance considerations be provided (an amended Action with respect to recommendation 5)
- (iii) That guidance be provided to both Parish Councils and the public on the status of local finance considerations in the determination of planning applications (a new Action with respect to recommendation 5)
- (iv) That Cabinet be informed that the Planning Committee resolved unanimously that it is of the view that the Action Plan should not include consideration of introducing making call ins subject to Chairs approval (a deletion of an Action with respect to recommendation 9)
- b) That Cabinet be informed that the Planning Committee resolved by the casting vote of the Chair that Cabinet should not be requested to refer the Action Plan to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.7 As indicated to the Planning Committee a number of amendments have now been made to the Draft Action Plan, so that it differs in certain limited ways from that which they considered. The changes made are in response to the discussion of the item by the Planning Committee, consideration of the comments recently received from various stakeholders and to take into account current workload priorities of those identified as responsible for the proposed Actions.

2.8 **Recommendation One (the political narrative).** The PRT refer to the benefit that the Council would derive from a stronger political narrative around the benefits of growth for existing and future generations, and that the leaders of all political parties have a clear responsibility to work together in the best long term interests of all the existing and future residents in the borough - both at a district and ward level and the narrative, they say, can be built around the benefits that economic and housing growth can deliver for places and people. The proposed actions with respect to this recommendation are that the Council prepare a revised Council Plan that reflects the

relationship between key strategies and setting out broad strategic policy objectives, and greater use is made of the Council's media and communication resources

- 2.9 **Recommendation Two (a coherent strategy for investment and growth which recognises the key role that planning performs, and examines opportunities for the release or reuse of land assets to stimulate growth and economic development).** That Planning has a key role in such a strategy is reflected in the importance given to the preparation of the Local Plan. Decisions about future resourcing of the Planning Service will need to reflect this. The proposed action with respect to this recommendation is that officers strengthen the narrative and strategic context in the next Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy
- 2.10 **Recommendation Three (the development of an interim planning policy statement).** The PRT in making this recommendation did so to provide greater certainty to the development industry and to local people. They made it clear that they saw such an action as being undertaken in parallel with the preparation of the Local Plan and that it would not be able to be undertaken immediately (although they do suggest that it would be achievable in 2015). They did however expressly acknowledge the limitations of an Interim Planning Policy Statement approach. The proposed actions with respect to this recommendation reflect your officers' view that any decision on whether to go down this route needs to identify both the benefits but also the costs of such a proposal – including any implications for the existing Local Plan timetable and doubts as to the weight that such a Statement could have in development management decisions, for so long as the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. Despite these doubts the option (of an interim policy statement) needs to be thoroughly investigated, so the option of rejecting such an idea at this stage has not been pursued.
- 2.11 **Recommendation Four (resource allocations).** The PRT's message is both about the need to maintain a strong planning service, including ensuring that it has the capacity to deliver the above interim planning policy statement, and also about detailed issues of financial monitoring and awareness within development management. In response a range of proposed actions are indicated. Particularly important ones include resolving the position of the fourth post in Planning Policy, creating a surge of enforcement activity to bring more under control the enforcement workload, and exploration of a range of initiatives as set out in the Action Plan.
- 2.12 **Recommendation Five (links between financial planning and planning).** The PRT remind the authority of the importance of increasing locally derived income given continuing cuts in local government funding. New Homes Bonus is one such source of income. The PRT also suggests that the Council as a large land and property owner maximises this position to its advantage. Insofar as the Planning Service is concerned the proposed actions are in part about the flows of information and understanding between the two activities – financial planning and planning – but also more than that. They include that more explicit reference is made in reports on applications to local finance considerations – a legitimate consideration in the determination of applications, that officers and members are properly informed and advised respectively about such local finance considerations, and that guidance on the status of local finance considerations be provided to parish councils and the public.
- 2.13 **Recommendation Six (member arrangements)** The recommendation that the Council establish an informal pre planning briefing for members of the Planning Committee has been extensively debated at the officer and member workshops. Concerns have been raised both as to the probity of such a proposal and the lack of

transparency on the one hand and a concern about meeting overload on the other. It appears to be generally agreed that without lengthening the committee cycle there would be considerable practical difficulties with such a proposal, and even if that occurred there is concern about the additional workload such an arrangement would impose upon the Planning Service. An alternative suggestion that the Council review the arrangements for its Strategic Planning Consultative Group, including widening its membership to at least include all members of the Planning Committee, and that applications for significant major development come before such a Group at such an early stage as to minimise any risk of any impression of predetermination being given. This alternative forms the basis of the proposed actions with respect to this recommendation.

- 2.14 **Recommendation Seven (training)** There has been, in the workshops, a universal acceptance of the need to improve the training provision for members of the Planning Committee beyond that currently provided, to continue make attendance at such training (or rather a high proportion of it) mandatory. A range of ideas that have been generated in the workshop sessions form the proposals with respect to this recommendation.
- 2.15 **Recommendation Eight (Section 106s and major applications).** Frontloading of the system is already a recognised objective and the Council has in place a list of local information requirements which enables it to make invalid an application that does not comply with these local requirements if it wishes to. There is considered to be limited scope, having regard to the importance of not making disproportionate requests for information, to front load applications even more. Identifying applications which would require viability assessments and invalidating them until they have been received would not, it is considered, be an appropriate way forward. The proposed actions are a range of measures designed to improve internal procedures and those involving consultees and Legal Services.
- 2.16 **Recommendation Nine (Scheme of Delegation).** Differing opinions have been expressed in the workshops about any changes to the Scheme of delegation but a commitment to re-examine it should it is considered form the key proposed action with respect to this recommendation. That review will involve the Planning Committee.
- 2.17 **Recommendation Ten (Community Infrastructure Levy).** That it would be appropriate to review the decision made by Cabinet to cease work on the Community Infrastructure Levy, and to work towards adoption of a levy after the adoption of the Joint Local Plan, is generally agreed, as is the need for any reconsideration of the issue to be informed by legal advice. The proposals in the Action Plan with respect to this recommendation reflect this.
- 2.18 **Recommendation Eleven (a systematic reviews of the service's methods of Communication).** A number of specific proposals are put forward with respect to this recommendation. In response to the comments received from Stakeholders a number of further actions have been added to those considered by the Planning Committee

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 As indicated in the above section a number of options for inclusion in the proposed Action Plan have been considered, and some have been rejected.

4. **Proposal**

4.1 That Cabinet agree to the Action Plan set out in Appendix 2 which identifies actions, the timescale for completion of each action, the key officer or member and the likely resource implications of these actions

5. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

5.1 The Action Plan will impact positively on the following of the Council's corporate priorities:

- creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough
- creating a Borough of opportunity
- creating a healthy and active community
- creating a co-operative Council, delivering high value, community –driven services

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The duties of the Council as a Local Planning Authority are set out in primary and secondary legislation

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The changes to the Planning Service would suggest that the undertaking of an Equality Impact Assessment would be appropriate

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The Council contributed £5,000 to engage in this process. In addition there has been a relatively significant amount of officer and Member time involved in the process to date which has been found from within existing capacity by prioritising the tasks.

8.2 Some of the actions could lead to direct resource implications for the Council if as a consequence a decision is later taken. Where the review or consideration of an issue is a recommended action, when that review is undertaken the resource implications will be a significant consideration and will need to be balanced against the wider context of the Authority having to make further financial efficiency savings over the next five years. At this stage it is intended to explore the potential for creating 'headroom' in order to introduce new working practices by cutting back in some existing processes (where such activities are not considered to add significant value to the overall process).

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The Planning Peer Review has identified a range of issues with the Planning Service. A failure to address these issues could well involve the Council in reputational damage and direct costs.

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 This is a key decision as defined in the Council's Constitution.

11. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

11.1 15th October 2014, Cabinet, Agenda item A10 – Minutes published

12. **List of Appendices**

12.1 The following Appendices are attached to this report

- Appendix 1 - Appendix 1 of the Planning Peer Review Team's report showing their recommendations
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Action Plan

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 Planning Peer Review report dated 13th August 2014

Appendix 1 to 121114 Cabinet Report - Summary of Recommendations of the Planning Peer Review Team

1. Set a clear political narrative for the long term future of the borough stressing the need and importance of homes, jobs, infrastructure and locally generated income/grant. Develop a 'golden thread' linking this to key corporate policy documents including the local plan.
2. Develop a coherent strategy for investment and growth which recognises the key role that planning performs. Examine opportunities for the release or reuse of land assets with partners to stimulate growth and economic development.
3. Develop an interim planning policy statement as part of local plan preparation process.
4. Re-examine resource allocations, especially in planning policy and enforcement to ensure that these match priorities and needs. Switch or increase resources to match priorities including pump priming, partnering and planning performance agreements (PPAs).
5. Develop systematic links between financial planning and local plan development / monitoring to help focus on costs and income in relation to non-national domestic rate, council tax and new homes bonus.
6. Establish an informal pre planning briefing for members of the planning committee including a review of strategic planning group.
7. Set up effective mandatory councillor training programme that is bespoke to meeting local needs. Develop wider training programme for councillors and officers to be delivered jointly where ever possible focusing on improving understanding of respective roles and the need for effective engagement.
8. Review the guidance and protocols in relation to section 106 to seek to front load the system and reach decisions more quickly on major applications.
9. Re – examine the scheme of delegation to allow the planning committee to focus on major applications.
10. Review the decision to suspend work on community infrastructure levy.
11. Undertake systematic review of the effectiveness of the service's methods of communication and access focussing on councillors, parish councils and service users.

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Appendix 2

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
1. Set a clear political narrative for the long term future of the borough stressing the need and importance of homes, jobs, infrastructure and locally generated income/grant. Develop a 'golden thread' linking this to key corporate policy documents including the local plan.				
(a) Prepare revised Council Plan that reflects the relationship between key strategies and setting out broad strategic policy objectives.		Dec 2014	MB / EMT	Time
(b) More active use of the Council's media and communications resources showcasing good work		Ongoing	PJ	Time
2. Develop a coherent strategy for investment and growth which recognises the key role that planning performs. Examine opportunities for the release or reuse of land assets with partners to stimulate growth and economic development				
(a) Strengthen the narrative and strategic context in the next Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy.		Jan 2015	Assets / Finance	Time
3. Develop an interim planning policy statement as part of local plan preparation process				
(a) Bring forward a report to Cabinet on this recommendation identifying the potential benefits and costs of such a proposal, including implications for the existing Local Plan timetable and the weight that such a statement could have in development management decisions	To Rule out at this stage this option either because no apparent benefit in pursuing it (because limited or no weight could be given to it in development management decisions), or because the diversion of resources that it would involve will set back further the timescale of the Local Plan	By 14 Jan 2015	HB and GRB	Time, & diversion of resources from Local Plan

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
(b) If proposal is agreed by Cabinet, report back with a timetable for the preparation of such a Statement, identifying required consultation and resource implications		By end March 2015	HB and GRB	Time
(c) Implement the decision of Cabinet		As per any agreed timetable	HB	Time and opportunity cost
<p>4. Re-examine resource allocations, especially in planning policy and enforcement to ensure that these match priorities and needs. Switch or increase resources to match priorities including pump priming, partnering and planning performance agreements (PPAs).</p>				
(a) Consider whether within Planning Policy a fixed 4 year term Senior Planning Officer post should be created and recruited to rather than the agreed but currently unfilled Planning Officer post (bringing Planning Policy team up to 4 – Business Manager, 2 Seniors and 1 officer) – perhaps on a shared basis with the City Council ?		By mid Nov 14 – report to EMT If agreed – go to market Dec 2014	GRB with HB	Additional salary and on-costs not covered in budget
(b) Review whether to either create a temporary post dedicated planning enforcement support officer or create, by other means additional capacity for planning officers to progress their enforcement workload	Carrying on with existing arrangements - a single planning enforcement officer, with planning officers providing input where required, and with Development Management Team Manager having oversight of work of planning enforcement officer	By end Nov 14 report to EMT If new post agreed go to market Dec 2014	GRB with EM	Additional salary and on-costs not covered in budget
(c) Explore idea of creating a premium or fast track service for development management – report to Cabinet		By end of March 2015	EM with GRB	Initial time and opportunity

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
				costs, setting up costs, but might bring in additional revenue
(d) Engage with Staffordshire One Place initiative (inter authority trading of services)		By end of Dec 2014	EM with GRB	Cost if purchasing services. Income if selling services
(e) Explore whether any scope to utilise SOTCC's planning enforcement services on a temporary basis		By Feb 2015	EM	Cost
(f) Consider whether to make an application for Neighbourhood Planning Grant, to provide additional resources to support potential Neighbourhood Development plans		Next opportunity to apply	HB	Time, but potential increased revenue to meet additional demands
(g) Investigate further cost recovery options including charging for return of invalid but processed applications, and review of pre- application charges as part of fees and charges review		By end Nov 2014	EM with GRB	Time, but potential increased revenue
(h) Process review to identify tasks that should no longer be undertaken		By end of Jan 2015	EM and SPOs in DM	Time but potential savings

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
(i) Reassess current targets in the 2014 Service Plan, seeking member views		By March 2015	GRB with portfolio holder	Time
(j) Consider potential use again of consultants to address short term DM staffing issues, requiring report to EMT		When required	GRB with EM	Time and £
(k) Resolve issue of authority to enter into Planning Performance Agreements and explore, in appropriate cases, whether use of PPA could bring in additional income		By end of Feb 2015	GRB with EM	Time and opportunity cost
5. Develop systematic links between financial planning and local plan development / monitoring to help focus on costs and income in relation to non-national domestic rate, council tax and new homes bonus				
(a) Review of information flow arrangements between Planning and Finance on projected completions, housing development trajectories		By end Jan 2015	Finance / Plng (SD)	Time, opportunity cost
(b) Include within review of decision reports structure specific section on finance considerations and weight to be given to them		By end Jan 2015	EM with GRB	Time
(c) Training for Planning Committee and officers on local finance considerations as a material consideration in the determination of applications		Within 14/15 training sessions	GRB	If delivered by external providers £. If delivered internally time and opportunity cost
(d) Publication of guidance on status and weight to be		By end of	EM with	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
accorded to local finance considerations in planning decisions		Jan 2015	GRB	
(e) Council as a landowner engages fully in the Local Plan preparation process including the Call for Sites		Nov 2014 Cabinet	NSC	
6. Establish an informal pre planning briefing for members of the planning committee including a review of strategic planning group.				
(a) Review remit, membership (widened to include all members of the Planning Committee) and business of Strategic Planning Consultative Group, involving the Group and bring report to Cabinet for decision	Introduction of Planning Briefing meeting, having considered the probity and practical implications of such a proposal	By end of Dec 2014	NSC with GRB	Time
(b) Introduce Proactive presentation of items by officers at Planning Committee		With immediate effect	Presenting officers	Time – longer Cttee meetings
(c) Change frequency of planned Planning Committee from every 3 weeks to every 4 weeks, holding separate meetings where possible and required to deal with planning policy items – it will adversely affect performance unless other measures are taken, and responsiveness of Service to requests for quick committee consideration will be affected regardless. However purpose of reduced frequency to create headroom for service improvement is overwhelming consideration	No change in the frequency of planning committee meetings	From January 2015 onwards	J Cleary	Potentially some savings in meeting attendance costs but may be balanced out by costs of additional Policy Planning meetings

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
(d) Decide whether to reschedule at same time, onto a four weekly cycle CAWP, SPCG, & Development Team meetings		Before Jan 15 changes	J Cleary GRB and EM	Some saving in CAWP attendance costs
<p>7. Set up effective mandatory councillor training programme that is bespoke to meeting local needs. Develop wider training programme for councillors and officers to be delivered jointly where ever possible focusing on improving understanding of respective roles and the need for effective engagement</p>				
(a) Maintaining current provision of induction training to any member of the Planning Committee prior to their first meeting, with attendance not permissible unless received	Ending this induction training	Ongoing – as at present	GRB with EM	Time
(b) Continue to bring subject specific reports to the Planning committee – e.g. on the 5 year housing land supply issue, and on the results of evidence base gathering for the Joint Local Plan, but to a Committee meeting with no development content wherever possible, even if an additional meeting is required	Ceasing bringing such reports	Ongoing	Planning Service	Time, and potential additional committee attendance costs if additional meetings required
(c) Continue with feedback reports including on appeal and costs decisions and annual appeal performance reports to Planning Committee	Ceasing bringing such reports to the Planning Committee	Ongoing – as at present	RK	Time
(d) Set up and deliver 6 training programme in 2014/15 involving delivery of two off the peg training sessions delivered by TRA or similar (to both Planning Committee and Non-Planning Committee members)	No training	Programme agreed by Mid Nov 2014	GD on instns from Plg	£ - say 15K

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
and 4 bespoke sessions for Planning Committee members only delivered probably externally rather than in house – Report to Planning Committee informing members of this. Training to include specific training on planning policy issues and		Sessions Dec 2014 to March 2015		
(e) Arrange above out of hours training sessions, at a time when officers can also attend (early evening) with time off in lieu recompense, in order to provide local examples to add to external training input	Holding training sessions during the day which would exclude those members who are in employment	By mid Nov 2014	GRB	Opportunity cost, Time off in lieu
(f) Encourage members even more than is already done to take up conference, training and similar opportunities		By end of Nov 2014	GRB	Yes - £ depending upon take up
(g) Chair and Vice Chair to be sent on courses specific to that role		By end of Nov 2014	GRB	Yes, depending upon take up
(h) Remind members of Planning Committees' agreed policy that failure to attend 2/3 rd of training sessions means that they cannot then take part in decisions at Planning Committee - relying upon compliance with decision of Chair to exclude members from voting if they don't not achieve two thirds attendance or upon Group leaders to impose sanction of removal of non-attendees	Bring report to either Planning Committee or Council if necessary changing the Council's constitution to require members of the Planning Committee to undertake an agreed amount of training every year	By end of Nov 2014	GRB/ JClery	No
(i) Putting on wider training sessions for non- planning committee members on probity, member officer relations, etc		By end of April 2015	Member Services	Yes

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
8. Review the guidance and protocols in relation to section 106(s) to seek to frontload the system and reach decisions more quickly on major applications				
<i>Reviewing Section 106 procedures</i>				
(a) Review local validation requirements to consider whether more applications should require to be accompanied by 'Heads of terms', or whether draft agreements should be required	Making draft agreements rather than Heads of Terms a mandatory validation requirement	By end of Nov 2014	EM	No
(b) Ensure that the validation requirements of submission of Heads of terms (of any likely Section 106 agreement) are applied in a consistent, but also not disproportionate manner		Ongoing	EM	No
(c) Renewed focus on clarity of instructions to Legal and completion of all sections of 'instructions to legal' memo		By end of Nov 2014	NB	No
(d) Confirmation of receipt of instructions to legal to be sent in all cases to Planning		By end of Nov 2014	SMT and JM	No
(e) Informing SCC where party to the agreement of the terms of the resolution of the Planning Committee immediately post Cttee		By end of Nov 2014	Case offcrs	time
(f) Introduce officer check in Planning that prior instructions to Legal Services has been undertaken in all possible cases		By end of Nov 2014	EM/ GRB	No
(g) Introduce early check procedure of instructions received		By end of Nov 2014	LH	No
(h) Introduce Service Level agreement between Legal and Planning setting standards for response times to instructions/ request s for clarification		By end of Dec 2014	GRB/ MB	No
(i) Planning Service to provide instructions and comments on drafts to legal, including where other departments involved		With immediate effect	NB and other planning	No

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
			officers	
(j) Resume monthly S106 meetings		Already underway	EM and LH	Time
(k) Consideration to be given to use of external solicitors where Legal services do not have capacity to act upon instructions		By end of Oct 2014	LH and MB	Yes – significant
<i>Reaching decisions more quickly on Major applications</i>				
(l) Support officers in DM to stop doing validation on Major applications (because of the degree of judgement required)		By mid Nov 14	EM, RK and NB	
(m) DM Team leader and SPOs to start doing validation of Majors		By Mid Nov 14	EM, RK and NB	
(n) Invite Education Authority to become part of the Council's Development Team		By end Dec 14	EM	
(o) Inviting other key consultees to enter into a Service Level Agreement, as already in place between the BC and the Highway Authority		By April 15	EM	time
(p) Project Management approach to Major developments		By April 15	EM and GRB	Already adopted in some cases
	Introducing site visits for ALL Majors in advance of application being considered by Committee			costs
(q) Draft conditions to be prepared within 2 weeks of Committee in all cases and to be subject to consultation with developer		By Jan 15	Case Offrs	time
9. Re-examine the scheme of delegation to allow the Planning Committee to focus on major applications				
(a) Review Scheme of delegation with particular	Removing probity safeguards	Report to	GRB/	No, and

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
reference to telecom apparatus, consultations by other authorities, historic building grant applications		Jan 15 Planning Ctte and then to the 25 th Feb 15 Council meeting	MB/Chair and Vice Chair of Plg	could be savings
(b) Review of public speaking arrangements, guillotine on late representations, site visit protocol and withdrawal of call in procedures		Report to Planning by end of Jan15	GRB with Chair and Vice Chair	Time to undertake, - likely long term cost implications unknown but not significant
(c) Review of Planning Committee Members Protocol, seeking approval of the Planning Committee		Report to Planning by end of Jan15	GRB with MB	Time to undertake – no long term resource implications expected
10. Review the decision to suspend work on community infrastructure levy				
(a) Seek external legal advice on the issue of pooling post April 2015		By end of Nov	GRB and HB	Cost of external legal advice
(b) Bring report to Cabinet at earliest opportunity		By Jan 15	GRB and HB	Opportunity cost of not being able

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
				to resource infrastructure. Opportunity cost of diversion of staff resources away from Local Plan preparation
11. Undertake systematic review of the effectiveness of the service's methods of communication and access focussing on councillors, parish councils and service users				
(a) Review decision to remove direct dial facility for DM staff (introduced as part of move towards support based triage system)		By end Feb 15	GRB	Yes
(b) Depending on above reintroduce Direct Dial perhaps with number available only to members (and agents ?)		By end Feb 15	GRB	Probably not
(c) Ensure all staff working @home have access to phone	Prevent home working, and end privilege of extended flexitime for DM staff	By end Dec 14	Mark B	Yes
(d) Review current appointment based system and consider alternatives		By end Feb 15	GRB with EM	Probably not
(e) Review use of Customer Service agents as front end of the planning service		By end Feb 15	EMT	Yes, if pursued
(f) Customer Service training for all planning staff		By end Mar 15	EM	Yes, but could be done inhouse ?
(g) Review Delegated and Committee reports, particularly		By end Dec	GRB	Additional

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
for effectiveness and use of Plain English – remembering who reports are for		14	with EM	preparation time
(h) Include officer details on adverts/weekly lists/consultation letters/emails		Immediate	JP and JC	No cost
(i) Statement of Community Involvement, review		Oct 2014 went Cabinet	GRB, HB and EM	Already underway-potential staff resources released if proposals agreed
	Stop drive towards Self service			
(j) Continue support for Parish council training/ attendance at parish/town council forum as recently undertaken		Ongoing	GRB	Time
(k) Programme of annual visits by Head of Planning, Development Management Manager and Planning Policy Manager to Parish and Town Councils		Start Jan 15	EM, HB and GRB	Time
(l) Offer to established clerks opportunity to visit Planning service (as already done for new clerks)		Start May 15	GRB	Time
(m) Improve DM office layout and make it clearer who is who for visitors		Part Done	EM	Nil
(n) Encouraging members to meet officers in reception in more suitable setting		With immediate effect	All	Nil
(o) Renewed focus on labelling of documents on website		With immediate effect	Support	Time
(p) Publication of guide to Planning website		By end of	JP	Time

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS				
PROPOSED ACTION	ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT BEING PURSUED	Timescale	Lead Officer	Resource allocation
		Nov 15		
(q) 6 month central monitoring of correspondence from Parish Councils		Starting Jan 15	JP	Time
(r) Review approach to customer satisfaction surveys		By end May 15	GRB	Time

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MEETING BEING SUBMITTED TO: CABINET

1. **HEADING** **Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief**

Submitted by: **Revenues Manager**

Portfolio: **Finance and Resources**

Ward(s) affected: **All**

Purpose of the Report

To consider the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief in accordance with powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Recommendations

That, in accordance with Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, Discretionary Rate Relief is either granted or refused in respect of the organisations and premises detailed in Appendix A of this report.

Reasons

To enable the Borough Council to provide financial assistance to charitable and not for profit organisations occupying business premises within the council area where it is deemed appropriate in accordance with regulations detailed in The Local Government Finance Act 1988.

1. **Background**

Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives Councils the discretion to grant relief from the payment of business rates for charitable or not for profit organisations or in the case of charities already receiving mandatory charity relief, to grant additional discretion relief.

2. **Issues**

Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables charitable or not for profit organisations to make application to the Council for consideration of assistance or additional assistance, with the statutory rates liability in respect of the premises they occupy for the furtherance of their activities. The cost of granting the relief is shared in accordance with the Business Rates Retention Scheme local and central share arrangements, which are currently 50% by central government, 40% by the billing authority (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council), 9% by the County Council and 1% by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Borough Council grants relief in accordance with the type and nature of an organisation's activity.

3. **Options Considered**

Not applicable

4. **Proposal**

That the discretionary relief set out in the attached appendix A be granted or refused as indicated.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

Legislation enables the Council to provide financial assistance towards the payment of business rates in respect of charitable and not for profit organisations. The roles these organisations carry out contribute to the health, wellbeing and activity of the area, often helping with the creation of opportunities for individuals and groups who would otherwise be unable to access such services. However, there is a cost to granting such relief and the Council needs to be mindful of this when deciding to grant any relief and assess the overall benefit provide in doing so.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

Granting discretionary relief where appropriate fits well with the Council's corporate priorities of Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough, Creating a Borough of Opportunity and Creating a Healthy and Active Community.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables the Council to grant discretionary relief for the payment of rates in respect of business premises where it see fit.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

The cost of any discretionary relief is split between the national and local rating pools 50% each. The 50% cost to the local pool is then split 40%, 9% and 1% between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Fire and Rescue Authority respectively. Although the costs of any discretionary relief are shared, the decision to grant the relief or not lies solely with the billing authority.

10. **Major Risks**

Failure to provide assistance to these charitable or not for profit organisations may lead to undue financial pressures being placed upon them, risking their ability to continue with their activities. This could lead to the loss of important work being carried out on behalf of the wider community.

11. **Key Decision Information**

Not applicable

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Not applicable

13. **Recommendations**

That, in accordance with Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, Discretionary Rate Relief is either granted or refused in respect of the organisations and premises detailed in Appendix A of this report.

14. **List of Appendices**

Local Government Finance Act 1988 – Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief

15. **Background Papers**

Not applicable

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Local Government Finance Act 1988 – Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief

1. The Newcastle Co-Operative Learning Trust , Ostend Place, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 2QY

The Newcastle Co-operative Learning Trust is the former Westlands County Primary School and as part of a registered Academic Trust it already receives 80% mandatory relief.

The majority of educational establishments are unable to claim any rate relief but for various reasons, a number are able to register as charities or academies and receive 80% mandatory relief. It is your usual practice to grant no further discretionary relief in these cases.

The gross rates payable for the current financial year will be £9760.50 reduced to £1952.10 by academy status.

Recommendation: That no additional discretionary rate relief be granted.

2. Staffordshire Adults Autistic Society, 15 Andrew Place, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1DL

Staffordshire Adults Autistic Society is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief. It occupies 15 Andrew Place to help to facilitate its work in promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of adults on the ASD spectrum by providing support, practical advice and recreational facilities and raising awareness of the condition.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 5% additional discretionary rate relief, to the mandatory charity relief it already receives.

SAAS have been in occupation of 15 Andrew Place since 2 June 2014. The gross rates payable for the current financial year will be £1720.54, reduced to £344.11 by mandatory charity relief. Granting 5% discretionary rate relief would further reduce this amount by £86.03 to £258.08 at a cost to the Borough Council of £24.09.

Recommendation: That additional discretionary rate relief at 5% is granted.

3 Cinders's Hub CIC 9-10 Lancaster Buildings, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1PG

Cinders's Hub CIC is a newly established Community Interest Company limited by guarantee which was created on 30 July 2014.

They have negotiated a short term lease on 9-10 Lancaster Buildings, Newcastle, from 29 September 2014 to 24 December 2014 and intend to use the premises as an 'Artisans Market' until the Christmas period with the possibility of extending the enterprise if successful.

In trying to establish the value of this particular business to the area over and above other service providers Cinder's Hub were asked to state if there were any special service delivery items that make their business unique or meriting special consideration. They state that: *"the Hub is a centre, a meeting place, a venue and an affordable outlet for artists and artisans to show and sell their creations to the enjoyment of the public. These creations could range from a poetic or musical composition, a painting, a piece of furniture, a cupcake or a sausage. The variety, diversity and uniqueness of the stock should generate steady turnover and footfall from the locality and further afield. The Hub aims to complement the general shopping experience of Newcastle by employing co-operative, ethical and fair trading principles"*.

The gross rates for the period 29 September 2014 to 24 December 2014 is £3331.74. However as the property has been empty for nearly 2 years the new occupier will qualify for Reoccupation Relief of 50% of the charge reducing the amount to £1665.87. They will also qualify for retail relief of £238.37 leaving £1427.50 to be paid.

Recommendation: That no additional discretionary rate relief be granted.

CABINET November 2014

1. HARDSHIP RELIEF - BUSINESS RATES

Submitted by: Revenues Manager

Portfolio: Finance and Resources

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To consider an application for hardship relief in relation to business rates liabilities.

Recommendations

That the application for hardship relief detailed at appendix (b) be dealt with in accordance of the reasons stated.

Reasons

Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives the local authority power to reduce or remit business rates on the grounds of hardship. Each application needs to be assessed with regard to its own individual merits.

1. **Background**

Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives the local authority power to reduce or remit the amount of business rates a charge payer is liable to pay under the provisions of either Section 43 (occupied rate) or Section 45 (unoccupied rate) of the same act, where it is satisfied that:

- (a) the ratepayer would sustain hardship if the authority did not do so; and
- (b) it is reasonable for the authority to do so, having regard to the interests of persons subject to its Council Tax.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 There is no statutory definition of hardship for the purposes of this relief. Each application needs to be assessed with regard to its own individual merits.
- 2.2 In December 2002, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued guidance on granting rate reliefs and this is reproduced at appendix (a) to this report.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Business rates are long established statutory charges levied in respect of premises or other units occupied for non domestic purposes. The rateable value of a property is set by the Valuation Office Agency, an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and is refreshed on a regular basis to keep pace with prevailing market conditions, normally every five years, although the values used on the current valuation list have been extended to seven years (up to 31 March 2017) by central government.

- 3.2 The principles used in making decisions on valuations are complex and may vary for a variety of reasons. However, different premises used for similar purposes will be valued on the same basis. For example, all petrol filling stations will be valued using the same principle, whilst all car parks will be valued using the same principle but a different principle to that used for petrol filling stations, etc.. This means that business that may be in direct competition from a commercial aspect are being charged businesses rates in an equitable manner, differences in value only dependant upon the size or other significant aspect of their premises.
- 3.3 In view of 3.1 and 3.2 above, it should be noted that the payment of rates in itself should not be considered a hardship. It is a legitimate business expense that all businesses need to be aware of and meet. Central government have recognised that there may be additional pressures on some businesses caused potentially by their size or location and have put in place and in some cases enhanced schemes such as small business rates relief and rural rate relief. However, Section 49 hardship relief also enables local authorities to recognise on an individual basis that some businesses may from time to time experience temporary set backs or difficulties or that a particular business may be important to the overall viability or wellbeing of its location. The payment of hardship relief should not be a mechanism to mitigate poor business decisions but it should provide a safety net to provide assistance in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4 It is undoubtedly true to say that the general economic conditions of recent years have put financial pressure on many business enterprises. Although hardship relief provides a mechanism to give some financial assistance, it should not be used to give a competitive advantage to one business compared to another. It is reasonable to assume that businesses of the same general type will experience overall similar costs. Hardship relief should therefore be used for some unexpected or exceptional circumstances and not necessarily to mitigate changing economic conditions, although these are likely to have a negative impact on business viability.
- 3.5 Actual applications for hardship relief included potentially sensitive information in respect of the business operations affected. There is the potential that this information could be used by other similar enterprises to the applicants further detriment if it were general disclosed. For this reason, the detail of each application should be considered confidentially.

4. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The cost of granting the relief is shared in accordance with the Business Rates Retention Scheme local and central share arrangements, which are (as we are currently in excess of the baseline set by Central Government) 50% by central government, 28% by the billing authority (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council), 12% to the Stoke and Staffordshire Rating pool, 9% by the County Council and 1% by the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 4.2 The Council does not currently have a budget to cover the cost of any hardship relief, having never considered any applications in the past, although this in itself would not be a justifiable reason for refusal. Any cost directly to the Council will need to be met from elsewhere within existing budgets. The pooling arrangements of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Rates Pool do not cover the treatment of this type of cost and are something that will need to be resolved at some point. However, again this would not be a reason to refuse an application and any costs are likely to be relatively insignificant in terms of the pool size in general.

5. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

None

6. **Recommendations**

That the applications for hardship relief detailed at appendix (b) be dealt with in accordance of the reasons stated.

7. **List of Appendices**

7.1 Appendix A – Guidance on Rate Reliefs

7.2 Appendix B – Application for Hardship Relief (confidential item)

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Appendix A

Guidance on Granting Rate Relief – issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – December 2002

- (i) Authorities must consider each application on its merits and can not have a blanket policy to either give or not give hardship relief.
- (ii) Reduction or remission on the grounds of hardship should be the exception rather than the rule.
- (iii) All relevant factors affecting the ability of the business/ratepayer to meet their liability for rates should be considered.
- (iv) 25% of the cost must be borne by the authority
- (v) The interests of the Council Tax payer may go further than direct financial interest, where for example the ratepayer is the only provider of a service in the area.
- (vi) Where the financial interests of the Council Tax payer would suffer an adverse affect by granting hardship relief, the case for a reduction or remission may still on balance outweigh the cost to taxpayers.
- (vii) Hardship relief may in some cases constitute state aid and may need to be notified to the European Commission.
- (viii) Authorities may wish to consider how the business can demonstrate a loss of trade or business. For example, by examining accounts, order books, till receipts or VAT returns showing a marked decline compared to previous periods.
- (ix) Any relief would only be granted for a period for which there is clear evidence of hardship for the ratepayer
- (x) To guard against fraudulent claims, authorities should satisfy themselves that the claim is from a ratepayer suffering genuine hardship.

Finally, the guidance states “Hardship relief should be reviewed regularly and should be given for short fixed periods, which could be renewed following a review, rather than for extended periods without review, but can straddle financial years.”

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET

Date:12th November 2014

REPORT TITLE Customer Service and Access Strategy and Customer Promise

Submitted by: Executive Director (Resources & Support Services)

Portfolio: Economic Development, Town Centres, Business and Customer Service

Ward(s) affected: Non specific

Purpose of the Report

To seek Cabinet approval for the replacement of the Customer Access Strategy and Customer Charter with the Customer Service and Access Strategy and Customer Promise.

Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the Customer Service and Access Strategy and Customer Promise.

Reasons

The Customer Access Strategy and accompanying Customer Charter have been in place since 2007. A review has been undertaken and an organisation wide Customer Service and Access Strategy ('the Strategy') and Customer Promise will better reflect and incorporate the national 'Customer Service Excellence Standard' best practice along with the latest industry guidelines.

1. Background

1.1 The Customer Access Strategy and accompanying Customer Charter were approved by Cabinet in 2007 and centred around 4 customer focused themes:

- greater access to services;
- joined up services, both internally and with the community;
- more coordination of services from the public's view;
- greater efficiency in customer facing service channels.

1.2 Over the last few years the Council has transformed the ways in which customers can access services; for example, through the creation of Customer Service Centres with joined up services, improvements in telephony, the development of customer relationship management (CRM) software, and by extending the range of services that are available to customers at the front line.

1.3 The Council recognises that there is work still to do to ensure that service delivery matches current and future customer expectations and The Strategy aims to ensure that the Council's resources will be focused on achieving common objectives across the whole organisation to benefit both the organisation and the community it serves.

2. Issues

Classification: NULBC **PROTECT** Organisational

- 2.1 The themes noted above are still relevant today; however the ways in which customers' expect to access information and services has changed considerably. Major advances in technology mean that there is an increasing expectation from customers to do business with the Council in the same ways that they do with other organisations and agencies, and at times that suit them. This ultimately means that electronic 'end to end' solutions¹, such as current provided by the Planning 'Public Access' system whereby the public can submit and comment on planning applications directly via the web, must be increased and coordinated to match demand. The aim of the Strategy is to respond to these current and future needs moving forward and provide details of how these changes will affect and improve access to service delivery.
- 2.2 The existing Customer Access Strategy has proved to be successful, but is now limited in its scope in that it has focused on customer services as a department and has therefore not been adopted by all areas of the Council. There is now an organisational requirement to extend the standards of service achieved by Customer Services as a department, evidenced by the awarding of the government's national Customer Service Excellence standard for the last four years, to the rest of the Authority to ensure that the customer experience is of consistent, high quality and meets customer needs regardless of contact method or service chosen.
- 2.3 Although it is likely that face-to-face, telephone and paper options for access to Council services will continue for some time, justification should be increasingly needed to continue delivering services at the current level of provision via these channels if a digital alternative is available that provides simple, end to end solutions and satisfies a customer's request for service at their first point of contact.
- 2.4 The latest Customer Service Excellence Standard advocates the introduction of two items:
- 'Customer Standards and Access Strategy - a document that details a corporate approach to achieving the five customer focused themes of the Standard;
 - 'Customer Promise' - a visual interpretation of the standards of service that customers can expect as "bullet points" which should be displayed in all front line customer areas/sites.

3. Outcomes linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

The outcome supports becoming a cooperative Council, delivering high quality community driven services, by providing a clear commitment to the customer, enhancing transparency and providing consistency in the way in which we serve our customers.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

Although there are no legal or statutory requirements for the Council to adopt such a Strategy, it is considered good practice to provide a framework which outlines the Council's commitment to customers in terms of service and improved access, whilst enabling us to put into practise the guidelines and priorities set out by Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment review is undertaken regularly in order to ensure that all customers are able to access services easily and equally.

6. Financial and Resource Implications

There are no significant financial or resource implications specifically associated with the approval of this Policy above those expected in updating and training staff to the required level to achieve the Customer Service Excellence standard. A review of the financial and resource implications resulting

¹ End to end solutions are defined as those that enable a request to be submitted electronically and the request to be progressed through systems without additional manual intervention, to satisfactory completion.

Classification: NULBC **PROTECT** Organisational

from any increased requirement for mobile and agile working together with further electronic scanning of documents may be needed if these solutions are further implemented.

7. Major Risks

No major risks have been highlighted.

8. Earlier Cabinet Resolutions

Customer Access Strategy 2007

9. Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the Customer Service & Access Strategy and Customer Promise, for the reasons given in the report.

10. List of Appendices

Appendix A: Customer Service & Access Strategy

Appendix B: Customer Promise

11. Background Papers

The Customer Access Strategy 2007 can be found using the following link http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/documents/Policies%20and%20Strategies/C/Customer%20Access%20Strategy_SX9690-A7808950.pdf

Details of the Customer Charter can be found on the Council's website using the following link http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online_content.asp?id=SXA175-A780DF44&cat=1535

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Appendix A



Customer Service and Access Strategy

1. Introduction

The Council aims to put the customer at the heart of everything it does by providing consistent, high quality services that meet customers' needs, and by offering choice in how those services can be accessed.

The Council Plan details the priorities, outcomes and activities of the Council over the next few years. These priorities are:

- A clean, safe and sustainable borough
- A borough of opportunity
- A healthy and active community
- A co-operative council, delivering high-value, community-driven services

The Customer Service & Access Strategy ("The Strategy") has been developed to support these priorities by responding to our customers current and future needs; driving change in customer service delivery; tailoring services to meet local needs and improving access to services through the use of customer knowledge gained from sources such as customer consultation. The Strategy also addresses the need to deliver high quality services at a time of reduced resources.

In order to meet the needs of customers, the Council must provide services that are:

- easy to access
- simple to use
- streamlined – providing end to end transactions
- convenient – available at times and in ways that reflect customer preferences
- efficient and cost effective
- consistent across all services

2. Aims of the Strategy

The aims of the Strategy are:

- to deliver consistent , nationally recognised standards of customer service across the whole of the organisation
- to reflect and respond to the changing needs of current and future customers by increasing current access methods or introducing more innovative means of access, which makes contacting the council easier, in line with customer expectations
- to maximise the usage of access channels by further exploiting the Council's investment in technology
- to inform future Service Plans for those customer driven services
- to help ensure that the Council's resources and those of the various services will be focused on achieving common objectives, to benefit both the organisation and the customers we serve
- to inform the medium to long-term investment that the Council requires in meeting customer demand

3. How will we deliver the Strategy?

The Strategy will be delivered through five themes, based on the nationally recognised Customer Service Excellence standards:

- Customer Knowledge
- Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

Theme 1: Customer Knowledge

Understanding our customers is essential for the future delivery of services tailored to fit their needs. The Council understands there is no “one size fits all” approach to knowing its customers. Developing insight and a deeper understanding of our current customers’ needs and preferences is critical in enabling the Council to tailor and develop future service delivery to meet those needs and preferences.

Therefore, we will:

- Extend the usage and increase the functionality of the new Customer Relationship Management system to other areas of the Council and use collated information to build a ‘single view of the customer’.
- Evaluate barriers to digital inclusion and develop an approach to improve accessibility. This means encouraging people to use and realise the benefit from the use of the Council’s web facilities and ensuring those facilities are easy to access.
- Share the ‘single view of the customer’ with partner organisations to determine opportunities for joint working whilst ensuring compliance with data protection principles.
- Develop reporting to improve understanding of customer groups and their locations and use of services.
- Build proactive services through consultation with customers to improve our understanding of their immediate and future needs.

Theme 2: Culture of the Organisation

The Council is committed to putting customers at the heart of everything we do. All employees and elected members in our organisation will be encouraged to actively support this.

Therefore we will:

- Challenge the way we work; creating a truly customer focused culture throughout the Council by adhering to recognised standards of customer service delivery.
- Ensure feedback obtained from our customers is used to inform and tailor service delivery and to ensure that all customer groups are treated fairly.
- Use customer knowledge to inform policy and strategy development and service improvement that helps ensure excellent levels of service.
- Deliver consistent high levels of customer services irrespective of the service our customers choose to deal with. Staff should be polite, friendly and professional and understand customer needs. Staff delivering front line services across the whole organisation will be fully trained in customer services to ensure these high standards are maintained.
- Protect customer privacy both in face to face and telephony discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.

Theme 3: Information and Access

Over the last five years, the Council has focused on updating and improving much of its front line provision through greater utilisation of its Customer Service Centres, increasing access to partner services and upgrading and improving its IT support services. The significant challenges on resources to local government over the next five years will also challenge the Council's ability to meet the varying demands of its diverse customer base, and the emphasis will be on minimising the cost to serve whilst striving to meet that demand.

Increasingly, customers expect to do business with the Council via electronic means at times that suit them, 24/7, whether this is by web or email and it is anticipated that face to face and telephony services will reduce as a result. The Council's website has a crucial role in providing up to date, accurate, robust information to customers and the public generally across a wide range of Council services.

Whatever the access method chosen, it is essential that customers are provided with accurate, consistent, reliable and detailed information across all service areas.

Therefore we will:

- Continue to provide face to face contact through our Customer Service Centres, whilst ensuring that these mirror customer demand and preference.
- Encourage customers who visit the Centres to use 'self service' facilities on site, and to look to extend these facilities.
- Build on the existing working arrangements and facilities we currently have with the Police and extend these to other community partners to improve and increase joint working.
- Increase automated advice via the telephony service by offering up to date information on relevant topics and services thereby reducing the potential for any unnecessary repeat contact or delay in resolution.
- Consolidate all existing Council telephone numbers into one unified number for all public contact with the Council to support easier access to services.
- Increase the take up of digital services, such as web and email, to reduce cost and focus more expensive access channels, such as face to face, to resolving complex service needs.
- Revise and continue a programme to update the content and technical functionality of the Council's website to ensure it reflects customer needs and priorities; is easy to navigate and is expanded to further incorporate end to end transaction delivery.
- Develop options and deliver solutions for mobile and agile working within services to improve staff efficiency; to improve the time taken between officer action and system update; to improve customer response times and avoid duplicate or unnecessary calls.
- Introduce solutions that improve the customer experience such as enabling customers to directly interact with front line Council employees via the web, introducing smartphone apps, providing enhanced telephony and social media facilities.
- Adopt a consistent approach to web delivery that will ensure its efficiency and usage as the primary means of access to Council and partner services.

Theme 4: Delivery

The provision of high-value customer services is about more than delivering effective information and access channels. The Council must ensure that customers are satisfied

with both the outcome of their contact and how the requested service is actually delivered. The Council must ensure that services learn quickly from any mistakes and continue to maintain the trust of customers.

Therefore we will:

- Work with elected members as a valuable source of feedback from customers and residents, and ensure they have the opportunity to develop the same customer service skills as front line Council employees in working with their constituents.
- Consult with customers and ensure that we meet the standards expected by them, together with any national standards and internal targets.
- Monitor and challenge how standards and key departmental performance targets are met and ensure that the Council informs its customers about its performance.
- Clearly detail the service standards that can be expected by customers and reporting on those standards. The standards will be available as our 'Customer Promise' to view at all Council sites.
- Benchmark against other similar organisations and learn from best practice to continually incorporate change and improve our services.
- Regularly reviewing our complaints, comments and compliments process with a clear commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible.
- Undertake "mystery shopping" to ensure that there is a consistent customer experience regardless of access channel chosen.
- Work with focus groups such as Locality Action Partnerships to help inform service delivery.

Theme 5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

The development of a customer focused culture requires our customer service standards to be visible and embedded. This means ensuring services are delivered within specific timeframes and are of consistently high quality.

Therefore we will:

- Utilise customer service delivery standards that are measurable including timeliness of response and ensuring these are advertised.
- Monitor our performance against our own and other organisations standards for timeliness and quality and take action to improve when required.
- Respond to enquiries and requests within the timescales detailed in the 'Customer Promise'.
- Evaluate service offering through self-assessment using the Customer Service Excellence standard.

4. Review of the Strategy

We will review the Strategy, and the underpinning plans to change the services, regularly in consultation with our customers and partners.

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Appendix B

Customer Promise

You have the right to expect good quality, easily accessible Council services and information.

Our Customer Service Standards apply to everyone working for us.

We aim to:

- make it easy for you to access our building and find what you need
- welcome and greet you within 5 minutes of arriving at a customer service centre
- ensure that you do not have to wait for more than 20 minutes in normal circumstances to be seen by an officer before your enquiry can be handled
- answer all calls received within 30 seconds
- respond to voicemails and messages within 1 working day
- acknowledge written enquires (by post) within 5 working days
- acknowledge emails within 2 working days
- respond to enquiries within 10 working days

You can expect:

- all of our staff to be fully trained, customer service professionals
- our help with any council enquiry, complaint or suggestion
- to be given a warm welcome in a clean environment
- to be provided with up to date information about your enquiry or complaint whenever you ask us
- us to be sensitive to your needs and do our best to ensure that you can make best use of our services

You can help us by:

- giving us all the information we need to help you
- letting us know if you have any special needs
- telling us how we can improve our services
- asking us to explain anything you're not sure of

The Council strives for continual improvement. Our Customer Relations Officer welcomes any feedback or comments on the service you received today.

By email: crelations@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

By web: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/customerservices

By telephone: **01782 742480**

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DRAFT VERSION 3 – 14th OCTOBER 2014

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET 12TH NOVEMBER 2014

TITLE: Review of Allotments Service

Submitted by: Head of Operations – Roger Tait

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the Report

- To report the outcome of the consultation on the draft Allotments Strategy and to request that Cabinet formally adopts the Strategy.

Recommendations

- That the responses received during the consultation are noted
- That the minor changes to the Allotments Strategy, arising from the consultation, as detailed in this report, are approved.
- That the Allotments Strategy 2014-2020 is formally adopted and Officers are authorised to implement the actions set out in the Action Plan.

Reasons

- To update the Allotments Strategy and improve the management of the allotment service provided by the Council.

1. Background

- 1.1** At the meeting of the Cabinet of the 2nd April 2014, a report was considered on the work of the Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee, with regard to the Allotments Strategy.

It was resolved:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the findings of the Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee be endorsed by the Cabinet and that the draft Allotments Strategy be approved for consultation.
- (iii) That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet, detailing the outcome of the consultation on the draft Allotments Strategy and recommending that the Strategy is formally adopted, subject to any changes arising from the consultation responses.

- 1.2** Subsequently, your Officers prepared a consultation plan for approval by the Allotments Review Task and Finish Group.

- 1.3** The consultation period ran from 16th June 2014 to 31st August 2014 and copies of the responses are available to view in the Community Team files.

2. Issues

- 2.1 20 responses were received in relation to the draft Allotments Strategy. The following summary outlines the issues which were raised by consultees:-

Concerns seemed to mainly relate to rental charge increases, water charges for tenants and the intention to encourage self-management of sites by tenants.

- 2.2 Your Officers response to the issues raised is as follows:-

Rental charge increases – it is considered that even with the proposed increase, the overall charge for an allotment will still represent good value for money when compared to many other leisure activities. The intention of proposed rent increases is to close the gap between the cost to council taxpayers of providing the service and the income which is collected from tenants.

Water charges – it is accepted that it will be difficult to create a fair method of charging for mains water to individual tenants, as water use will vary between tenants at each site. It would not be practically possible to account for an individual's exact water usage. Therefore it is proposed to continue to provide mains water for the time being, but to review this element of site facilities and charging if sites move into community management models. Tenants are to be encouraged to collect and use rainwater wherever possible.

Self-management of sites – it is accepted that some tenants and associations have concerns regarding their capacity to be able to form committees and self-manage sites. However, there are successful examples in operation in the borough and the benefits to tenants include control over rent setting and collection, access to funding to improve sites and control over lettings and site management issues. Therefore, it is proposed to continue to encourage individual tenants to work in partnership with their fellow plot holders, supported by the Council where necessary, to achieve an appropriate level of self-management as a long term goal.

- 2.3 Having fully considered the issues raised during the consultation process, it is considered appropriate to make the following amendment to the draft Allotments Strategy:-

It is proposed to continue to provide mains water for the time being, but to review this element of site facilities and charging if sites move into community management models. Tenants are to be encouraged to collect and use rainwater wherever possible.

- 2.4 With the above amendments made, your Officers consider it appropriate to recommend that the Allotments Strategy 2014-2020 is formally adopted and that the actions in the Action Plan are progressed in accordance with the specified timescales.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1 Do not adopt the Allotments Strategy – not recommended as the future management of the service will not improve.
- 3.2 Adopt the Allotments Strategy without amendment – not recommended as this would not take into account the views submitted during the consultation process.
- 3.3 Adopt the Allotments Strategy, with the amendments detailed in Section 2 of this report – recommended.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 That the responses received during the consultation are noted.
- 4.2 That the minor changes to the Allotments Strategy, arising from the consultation, as detailed in this report, are approved.
- 4.3 That the Allotments Strategy 2014-2020 is formally adopted and Officers are authorised to implement the actions set out in the Action Plan.

5. Reasons for Proposed Solutions

- 5.1 To update the Allotments Strategy and improve the management of the allotments service provided by the Council.

6. Outcomes Linked to Council Plan and Corporate Priorities

- 6.1 Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough.
- 6.2 Creating a healthy and active community.
- 6.3 Becoming a Co-operative Council.

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 7.1 There are a number of legal and statutory implications relating to the provision, maintenance and charging of allotments which were considered during the scrutiny process and policy review.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 It is considered that a positive equality impact will result from adoption of the reviewed Strategy.

9. Financial and resource implications

- 9.1 The current net annual cost of the allotment service, provided by the Council, is £28,290.00. Financial implications have been considered as part of the review process and efficiencies have already been achieved in relation to processes and expenditure. The following recommendations are incorporated into the Allotments Strategy to seek to reduce costs further and increase income with a view to closing the gap between service cost and income incrementally each year over the life of the policy.

- (i) Review support service recharges and request that recharges are reduced/minimised wherever possible.
- (ii) Reduce annual spend on repairs and waste removal.
- (iii) Rationalise and improve systems for administration work, billing etc., for allotments.
- (iv) Reduce concession rates from 50% to 20%.
- (v) Increase rents by £11.80 for a full plot (equating to an additional 23 pence per week) in 2015/16 and by an agreed percentage each year thereafter for an initial five year period. It is proposed that the second annual increase should be a further £7.08 for a full plot.

- 9.2 If the above recommendations are approved and adopted, as part of the Allotments Strategy, it is estimated that the net annual cost of the allotments service will reduce by approximately £5000 in 2015/2016 subject to current occupancy levels being maintained

when the higher rents/reduced concessions are implemented. Any subsequent reductions in cost would be subject to future rent increases and minimising internal recharges.

10. Major Risk

10.1 The risks associated with each option have been considered as part of the review process. The main risks are considered to be as follows:-

- (i) Public dissatisfaction.
- (ii) Reputational damage.
- (iii) Failure to close the gap between cost and income.
- (iv) Failure to implement rent review.
- (v) Inability to meet demand.
- (vi) Failure to transfer remaining site in Silverdale to the Parish Council.

11. Key Decision Information

11.1 This initiative impacts on more than two Wards and has been included on the Forward Plan.

12. Earlier Cabinet Reports

12.1 Cabinet 30th November 2011.
 Cabinet 14th November 2012.
 Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee 25th February 2014
 Cabinet 2nd April 2014.

13. Background Information

13.1 Allotments Strategy 2014-2020 (final amended version) Hard Copies will be available at the meeting and electronic version can be viewed on ModernGov.

13.2 Action Plan

The following action plan sets out the specific tasks and timescales which will be undertaken over the 5 year life of the Strategy to deliver the aims:

Year 0 (2014/15)	ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
	A001	Report to Cabinet	April 2014	RT	Draft strategy approved for consultation
	A002	Consultation with stakeholders	July/August 2014	SM	Consider responses and amend draft strategy
	A003	Report to Cabinet	November 2014	RT	Approve and adopt strategy
	A004	Complete transfer of Park Road Allotments to Silverdale Parish Council	April 2014	SM	Transfer agreement completed
	A005	Complete transfer of Acre	December 2014	SM	Rationalise plots and sign transfer agreement

	Allotments to Silverdale Parish Council			
A006	Give notice to plotholders of new tenancy agreements and rents	April 2014	SL	Issue letters and update web pages
A007	Set up new billing arrangements	September 2014	SL	Create database and plot measurements to determine rent
A008	Measure all plots	September 2014	SL	Determine charge based on m2
Year 1 (2015/16)				
ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
A009	Set up Allotment Associations for all sites	April 2015	SL/BS	Complete constitutions
A010	Affiliate Allotment Associations to NAO	September 2015	SL/BS	Complete registration/membership
A011	Issue rent bills and review rent for following year	April 2015	SL/BS	Single annual bill in advance, including supplement for water charges. Determine rent increase for following year
A012	Review waiting list	April 2015	SL/BS	Rationalise list
A013	Set local standard	April 2015	SM	Needs assessment and plans showing demand and provision
A014	Identify sites for future provision	September 2015	SM	Plans showing potential sites and capacity
A015	Promote allotment gardening	April 2015	SL	Organise local competitions, open days, projects

Year 2 (2016/17)				
ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
A016	Issue rent bills and review rent for following year	April 2016	SL/BS	Determine rent increase for following year
A017	Review waiting list	April 2016	SL/BS	Rationalise list
A018	Update webpage	April 2016	SL/BS	Provide up to date information
A019	Hold stakeholder meeting	September 2016	SL/BS	Annual meeting to discuss issues and opportunities
A020	Promote allotment gardening	April 2015	SL	Organise local competitions, open days, projects
Year 3 (2017/18)				
ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
A021	Issue rent bills and review rent for following year	April 2017	SL/BS	Determine rent increase for following year
A022	Review waiting list	April 2017	SL/BS	Rationalise list
A023	Hold stakeholder meeting	September 2017	SL/BS	Annual meeting to discuss issues and opportunities
A024	Promote allotment gardening	April 2015	SL	Organise local competitions, open days, projects
Year 4 (2018/19)				
ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
A025	Issue rent bills and review rent for following year	April 2018	SL/BS	Determine rent increase for following year
A026	Review waiting list	April 2018	SL/BS	Rationalise list
A027	Hold stakeholder meeting	September 2018	SL/BS	Annual meeting to discuss issues and opportunities
A028	Promote allotment gardening	April 2015	SL	Organise local competitions, open days, projects

Year 5 (2019/20)				
ID Number	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer	Commentary
A029	Issue rent bills and review rent for following year	April 2019	SL/BS	Determine rent increase for following year
A030	Review waiting list	April 2019	SL/BS	Rationalise list
A031	Hold stakeholder meeting	September 2019	SL/BS	Annual meeting to discuss issues and opportunities
A032	Review Strategy	September 2019	SM	Report to Cabinet
A033	Promote allotment gardening	April 2015	SL	Organise local competitions, open days, projects

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET**

12 November 2014

1. ASSET DISPOSALS

Submitted by: Property Manager

Portfolio: Planning and Assets

Ward(s) affected: Numerous wards within the Borough

Purpose of the Report

- i) For Cabinet to consider the comments received from the public following the consultation in respect of the tranche 2 sites (excluding land at Church Lane Knutton and Gallowstree Lane, Westlands), along with desktop technical information.
- ii) To seek approval, subject to planning permissions, to dispose of the identified tranche 2 sites.
- iii) To seek approval to secure specialist consultants to prepare and submit planning applications in respect of the sites at Sandy Lane/Brampton Road, May Bank, Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads and Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads.

Recommendations)

- (a) That Members approve (with the exception of the sites at Church Lane, Knutton and Gallowstree Lane, Westlands) the disposal of the tranche 2 sites, subject to having first secured an appropriate outline planning permission for each parcel of land.**
- (b) That Members approve the procurement of specialist consultants to prepare and submit planning applications in respect of the sites at Sandy Lane/Brampton Road, May Bank, Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads and Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads and the associated costs.**
- (c) That members agree to add the cost of procuring the specialist consultants referred to in recommendation (b) to the current capital programme in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.**

Reasons

The assets within this report have been identified in the Asset Management Strategy 2014/15 as sites in respect of which alternative uses should be explored as they no longer serve any strategic or operational purpose to the Council and in addition by potentially disposing of these assets the Council removes ongoing maintenance liabilities.

Equally importantly, the receipts derived from the disposal of Council-owned land or property are required to support the funding of the Council's future capital programme.

1. Background

The Asset Management Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2014. This document contained a list of sites listed as Tranche 1 and 2 where options for alternative uses were to be considered. The Tranche 1 sites were considered at your Cabinet meeting in June 2014 and Tranche 2 sites are to be considered within this report. Also members have acknowledged the importance and necessity of the Council disposing of land and property assets in order to fund future capital programme requirements in approving reports at both the last Cabinet meeting and in February of this year.

1.1 Tranche 2 sites

The sites are listed below and the anticipated disposal date is during the period 2015-17.

St. Edmunds Ave, Porthill
Wedgwood Ave, Westlands
Stafford Ave, Clayton
Sandy Lane/Brampton Road, May Bank
Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads
Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads
* Church Lane, Knutton
* Gallowstree Lane, Westlands

The public have been consulted in respect of the first six sites, over a six week period which ended on 10th October 2014. This took the form of letters being sent to the relevant local councillors, all owners/occupiers whose properties were adjacent to the site (when footpaths and roads were excluded), Residents Groups (if applicable), Town/Parish Councils (if applicable) and the LAPs. A notice was also placed on the site.

The two asterisked sites did not proceed to public consultation for reasons explained below.

Desk top assessments (including a mining report) have been produced in respect of all sites which have brought to light any significant technical constraints (which may inhibit alternative use or development).

1.2 Future sites

Preparation of the Asset Management Strategy 2015/16 has commenced and will be reported to Cabinet in January 2015. This strategy will seek to identify future site disposal opportunities to meet the known and anticipated capital programme demands over the coming year. In addition members' attention is drawn to a report elsewhere on your agenda relating to the Council's response as land owner to the local planning authority's "Call for Sites".

2. Issues

2.1. Set out below is a summary of the comments

Site	Summary of comments	Outcome of desktop assessment and response to consultation comments
St Edmunds Ave, Porthill	Children play on the land.	Noted although there are other play areas nearby. There was a proposal to put a children's play area on this site but the local residents opposed

	<p>More cars in road as result of development</p> <p>Loss of privacy for residents.</p> <p>Large housing estate already built nearby</p> <p>Area only small not expensive to maintain.</p> <p>Local Councillor has carried out “door knocking” exercise and approximately 45% of residents surveyed are happy with some form of development on this site</p>	<p>this and the S.106 monies were used to improve the facilities on Wolstanton Marsh</p> <p>These three issues will be considered at the planning stage. It is considered unlikely that there would be any significant highway safety issues arising from the development of this small plot.</p> <p>Comment noted but land ownership responsibilities / risks remain.</p> <p>Comment noted</p> <p>Potential technical constraints: The site is on a significant incline</p> <p>There may be some migration of coal mine and ground gas from adjacent sites</p> <p>There are no known coal entries on or within 20m of the site.</p> <p>The geological mapping has identified a fault in the north eastern corner of the site.</p> <p>Response: Any of the above site constraints will be investigated more fully at the planning application stage</p>
<p>Stafford Ave, Clayton</p>	<p>Loss of green open space which is used by the local community for children’s play, rambling and dog walking</p> <p>Residents views will be affected Reduce value of adjacent properties – expects compensation the land for recreation</p> <p>Trees on land would potentially require removal. If very few trees are removed, that’s fine.</p> <p>Stafford Ave already a busy road more properties will increase traffic Stafford Ave mainly bungalows, houses would spoil Avenue. Development needs to be sympathetic</p> <p>species of wildlife on land Stream would have to be culverted. Land sweeps away downwards.</p>	<p>The site forms a very small part of a much larger piece of open space which can serve such needs.</p> <p>The Planning process would address amenity considerations. And wider public interest consideration.</p> <p>Tree survey would be commissioned for submission with planning application</p> <p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage</p>

	<p>Already lost land in Clayton for housing e.g. Westbury Park</p> <p>If land is built on will generate employment</p>	<p>There may be a minor fault running through the site – this will be investigated more fully at the planning stage</p>
<p>Wedgwood Ave, Westlands</p>	<p>Site used daily for car parking Limited spaces in front of the Community Centre. Loss of parking will result in parking in nearby narrow roads and congestion around the road junction (plus safety of children issues). Cause friction between centre users and nearby residents. Access by emergency vehicles could be delayed. Potential vehicle access problems to the sports ground. Already parking problems in nearby streets e.g. driveways blocked by parked vehicles. Street parking as a result of the care home. Limited access to/from the development site. Members of various groups are elderly and disabled and would have problem walking if had to park on nearby roads Also an overflow car park for the bowling green and tennis courts Busy community centre used by various groups 25 users or more Centre not as attractive to hire with less car parking spaces (affecting sustainability of the Community Centre).</p> <p>Small size of land, not suitable for housing (which would be unattractive.) Wedgwood Ave has flooding problem/ street lighting not good in the area.</p> <p>Used for cycle safety training (almost every week)</p> <p>Used for recreational use, children's parties and siting of bouncy castles</p> <p>Housing on a site put over to community recreation.</p> <p>Community centre used by an Arts Group, building on land would affect light to community centre. May need to look for an alternative venue. New houses would have an impact on</p>	<p>There would appear to be scope to address such perceived problems if the original community centre grounds were reconfigured - see 2.5 below.</p> <p>These issues will be considered at the planning application stage</p> <p>There are other car parks in the area which could be used for this activity</p> <p>Comment noted and availability of other publicly accessible land in the vicinity should be taken into account.</p> <p>Land not currently used for community recreation purposes</p> <p>Noted; issues highlighted will be considered at the planning application stage</p>

	<p>already stretched drainage system, Wedgwood Ave has flooding problem/ street lighting not good in the area.</p> <p>Community Centre has active Management Committee which Council should encourage.</p> <p>Many brownfield sites could be allocated for housing</p> <p>7 petitions (number of signatures ranging from 20 to 131) from the various user groups objecting to the proposed disposal</p>	<p>Comment noted; this proposal is not intended to undermine the operation of the centre.</p> <p>This would be a consideration for the lpa but limited available brownfield land.</p> <p>Potential technical constraints: Potential noise nuisance issues arising from adjacent Community Centre and Tennis Courts as well as traffic on the public highway will need to be addressed as part of the supporting documents in any planning application. In view of the suburban residential location of the site such issues are not considered to be insurmountable.</p>
<p>Sandy Lane, May Bank</p>	<p>The area is part of Brampton Conservation Area. Land well used by the community for 200+ years – children, dog walkers, people keeping fit Development will spoil the lovely neighbourhood Pleasant amenity in leafy suburb of Newcastle Last greenfield outside Brampton Park</p> <p>Ruining a lovely area with over development. Detrimentially affect the street scene</p> <p>Resident purchased property for its quiet location.</p> <p>Loss of woodland, abundant wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Area is not previously developed. Use areas already built on and not used.</p> <p>Development not in keeping with the</p>	<p>The Conservation Area designation does not prevent development per se. The lpa would have to consider whether development of all or part of the site would be acceptable.</p> <p>area is adjacent to the much larger Brampton Park</p> <p>Comments noted. This will be considered at the planning stage</p> <p>Wider public interest would be the primary consideration.</p> <p>This will be considered at the planning stage</p>

	<p>area.(affect aesthetics)</p> <p>Access to any new development will be difficult because of roundabout and bend - safety compromised Already parking problem in area, causing inconvenience to residents, which would be made worse Adjacent roads and roundabout already very busy more properties will increase the traffic Difficulties for emergency vehicles going to properties.</p> <p>Infrastructure will not take development.</p> <p>flooding issues in area which will be made worse – land used as a soakaway. Pollution levels high in this area.</p> <p>Brownfield/vacant sites should be developed first The area has many trees and shrubs and is an ancient boundary (with medieval structure)</p> <p>Area increasingly built up. The Homestead May Place is to be redeveloped-more traffic (plus increased traffic from the new Marks and Spencer). Funds from proposed sale would be small in comparison to the borough's budget. High end development, which most borough residents will not be able to afford (glut of properties on the market). Development of this site would break Policy H7, of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Possible devaluation of adjacent properties.</p> <p>1 petition received (60 signatures) objecting to the proposal</p> <p>Development proposal great news not enough good housing on nice land. Land suitable for development, not much of an amenity space.</p>	<p>Comment noted; again a matter for the lpa to consider.</p> <p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage</p> <p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage</p> <p>Comments noted; again an lpa consideration.</p> <p>Tree survey would be commissioned for submission with planning application</p> <p>Comments noted</p> <p>Wider public interest is the primary consideration.</p>
<p>Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads</p>	<p>A53 is already busy and dangerous made worse by new Community Fire Station – several fatal accidents Speeds of between 60/80 mph are recorded in</p>	<p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage and there should be scope to address these issues in that process.</p>

	<p>the 30mph area fronting the site. Adverse effect of school/local facilities such as doctors surgery currently inadequate Inadequate infrastructure particularly drainage and electricity</p> <p>Loss of green space</p> <p>Public footpath running through the site.</p> <p>Large Oak trees on site</p> <p>Want to preserve rural nature of Loggerheads (development will make Loggerheads a urban sprawl) Site located outside village envelope Should look at brownfield sites first. More suitable sites for development should be used for leisure uses</p> <p>1,800 empty homes in the borough already served by inadequate infrastructure</p> <p>Loggerheads is designated as a "Key Rural Service Centre"</p>	<p>This area is used for quasi-agricultural purposes and lies adjacent to open countryside</p> <p>Footpath would be accommodated within the development</p> <p>Tree survey would be commissioned for submission with planning application</p> <p>Comments noted. The matters of principle are lpa considerations. In the absence of a 5-year housing land supply the village envelope argument would carry less weight. It is considered that this site lies in a sustainable location and that other material considerations can be satisfactorily addressed through the Planning process. The issue of empty homes is not directly relevant to the lpa's need to provide a 5-year housing land supply.</p> <p>Other technical issues: Site is located on an aquifer as is most of Loggerheads. This will present a technical constraint that would need to be addressed through the Planning process.</p>
<p>Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads</p>	<p>Site entrance close to school and on brow of hill – access would be dangerous Cause traffic congestion.</p> <p>Concern of removal of trees Area surrounded by woodland</p> <p>Disruption to all types of wildlife</p> <p>Area within site of active landscape conservation and, special scientific interest. Current amenities already stretched e.g. medical centre, education and public transport</p> <p>Outside village envelope (not suitable for development)</p>	<p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage</p> <p>Tree survey would be commissioned for submission with planning application</p> <p>These issues will be considered at the planning stage</p> <p>Comments noted. The matters of principle are lpa considerations. In</p>

	<p>Availability of other suitable sites. Residents want to preserve rural nature of Loggerheads Development will destroy the historical aesthetics of the area Development not in keeping with the surroundings</p> <p>).</p> <p>Paths used by dog walkers and ramblers Drainage problems on site (aquifer)</p>	<p>the absence of a 5-year housing land supply the village envelope argument would carry less weight. It is considered that this site lies in a sustainable location and that other material considerations can be satisfactorily addressed through the Planning process.</p> <p>This area is adjacent to open countryside</p> <p>Other technical issues: Site is located on an aquifer as is most of Loggerheads. This will present a technical constraint that would need to be addressed through the Planning process.</p> <p>There may be a minor fault running through the site – this will be investigated more fully at the planning stage</p>
Church Lane, Knutton		<p>There is a significant mining fault known as the Apedale fault running across the site and there are two coal shafts with 20 metres of the western boundary. Taken together with the shape of the site, these constraints would seriously undermine the developability of the land in whole or in part.</p>
Gallowstree Lane, Westlands		<p>There is a significant mining fault known as the Apedale fault the conjectured line of which runs in close proximity to the site. In addition in view of the linear shape of the plot and the existence of public footpaths the site would be difficult to develop in isolation.</p>

2.2 The primary aim of the consultation was to identify any issues that are likely to impact upon the developability of the sites. As the table above shows the issues raised are ones which can and should most appropriately be considered more fully as part of the planning process.

2.3 The results of the desktop assessment in respect of Church Lane Knutton and Gallowstree Lane, Westlands indicate that these sites should not be taken forward for disposal at the present time. There may be scope in the very long term for either or both of the plots to be assimilated into wider redevelopment plans.

2.4 In respect of the sites at St Edmunds Ave, Stafford Ave and Wedgwood Ave it is proposed that your Officers submit planning applications for residential development and if approval is granted the sites be disposed of. These sites lie in locations that are broadly compliant, in principle, with current planning policies relating to housing development.

2.5 As Members may be aware the site at Wedgwood Ave, Westlands was former tennis courts but has been used for car parking purposes in conjunction with the adjacent community centre. A car parking survey has been carried out, over a period of 3 weeks when the centre has been in use and the average number of cars at any one time parked within the grounds has been 17. The original car park currently accommodates 12 cars (including 3 disabled spaces). There is however the option of reconfiguring this space and treating the grassed area so it can be used for car parking (subject to planning permission) which would accommodate up to 33 cars. The cost of this would be in the region of £5,000 and would significantly enhance off-street parking provision to support the centre.

2.7 As indicated in the Cabinet report in June 2014 the sites at Sandy Lane/Brampton Road, May Bank, Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads and Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads are likely to raise more complex issues so if approval is granted to dispose of these sites it is proposed that specialist consultants are procured to prepare and submit planning applications will be required. The two sites at Loggerheads both lie adjacent to the Village Envelope – i.e. locations where relevant, current, local planning policies would presume against development as a matter of principle. However as the local planning authority does not have a current 5-year housing land supply there is the potential for these sites to be promoted now subject to other material considerations being satisfactorily addressed. Whilst the Sandy Lane site, in view of the Conservation Area designation, would require a sensitive and more detailed assessment to be made as part of a comprehensive planning application.

3. **Options Considered**

3.1 Option 1 – retain the sites within the Council's portfolio.

If the Council retain these assets then there will be an ongoing maintenance cost associated with these sites. In addition neither capital receipts nor best consideration will be achieved thereby undermining the Council's ability to fund its Capital Investment Programme and jeopardising essential services.

3.2 Option 2 – Dispose of the sites (with the exception of the land at Church Lane and Gallowstree Lane) and procure specialist consultants to prepare and submit planning applications in respect of the larger sites. Planning permission would be sought for the smaller sites by the in-house Assets team.

If the sites are disposed of with the benefit of planning permission then the highest possible capital receipt will be realised which can contribute towards the work/schemes identified in the Newcastle Capital Investment Programme to assist the Council in achieving its corporate and service objectives.

In addition the release of the sites for housing development would contribute to the supply of housing land and meet broader housing provision objectives.

3.3 Option 3 – dispose of the sites without the benefit of planning permission.

It is considered likely that the value of the capital receipts would be substantially reduced, particularly in respect of the larger sites therefore not achieving best consideration

4. **Proposal**

4.1. Option 2 is proposed as outlined above.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

The assets identified are considered to have better alternative uses and no longer serve any purpose to the Council therefore if any of these assets are retained then there will be an ongoing maintenance liability to the Council. In addition the Council needs to proactively generate its own capital to fund the Newcastle Capital Investment Programme.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

The disposal of these surplus assets enables the achievement of priority outcomes in all four of the Council's corporate priorities.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

The Council has a duty, both fiduciary and operationally to utilise its Assets for the benefit of the community

Local Government Act 1972 – Section 123 - the Council has a duty to achieve best consideration for its assets

Local Government Act 2000 - powers to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no issues arising from this report.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Tranche 2 Sites

It is anticipated that that the disposal of these sites (including the former Jubilee Baths) would generate estimated capital receipts in the region of £7.7m, subject to detailed site assessments and any unknown technical or other site constraints. It is anticipated that the fees in respect of the two sites at Loggerheads and the Sandy Lane land would be in the region of £400,000.

It is estimated that the fees for architects, the relevant reports required to be submitted with the planning applications, the planning fees and the auction fees (where applicable) will be in the region of £32,000.

9.2 Funding of fees

It is intended that the cost of the various fees associated with the seeking of planning permissions will be derived from the capital receipts reserve which would be replenished by the receipt arising from these land/property sales. There are provisions within the Financial

Regulations that would enable such costs to be added to the Council's current Capital Programme.

10. **Major Risks**

- Loss of income to the council (capital receipts)
- Increased revenue expenditure for the council
- Reputational damage to the council
- Inability to implement the council's Asset Management Strategy
- Community and/or political resistance to the programme
- Inability to fund essential Council services
- The estimated capital values are based on the assumption that there are no significant abnormal costs associated with the making the land (sites) developable.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

Any issues will be considered through the planning process.

12. **Key Decision Information**

The report is referred to in the Forward Plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Cabinet 15th January 2014 – Asset Management Strategy
Cabinet 5th February 2014 – Newcastle Capital Investment Programme
Cabinet 18th June 2014 – Asset Disposals
Cabinet 15th October 2014 – Newcastle Capital Programme funding

14. **List of Appendices**

1. Plans of sites.

15. **Background Papers**

Asset Management Strategy 2014/17 – available on the Council's website
Consultation letters and background information – available on request from property section
Previous Cabinet reports (see 13)

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Land opp 73-79 St Edmunds Avenue
Porthill
0.24 Ha (0.59 Acres)

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Asset Section
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Merrial Street
Newcastle Under Lyme
ST5 2AG
01782 742371

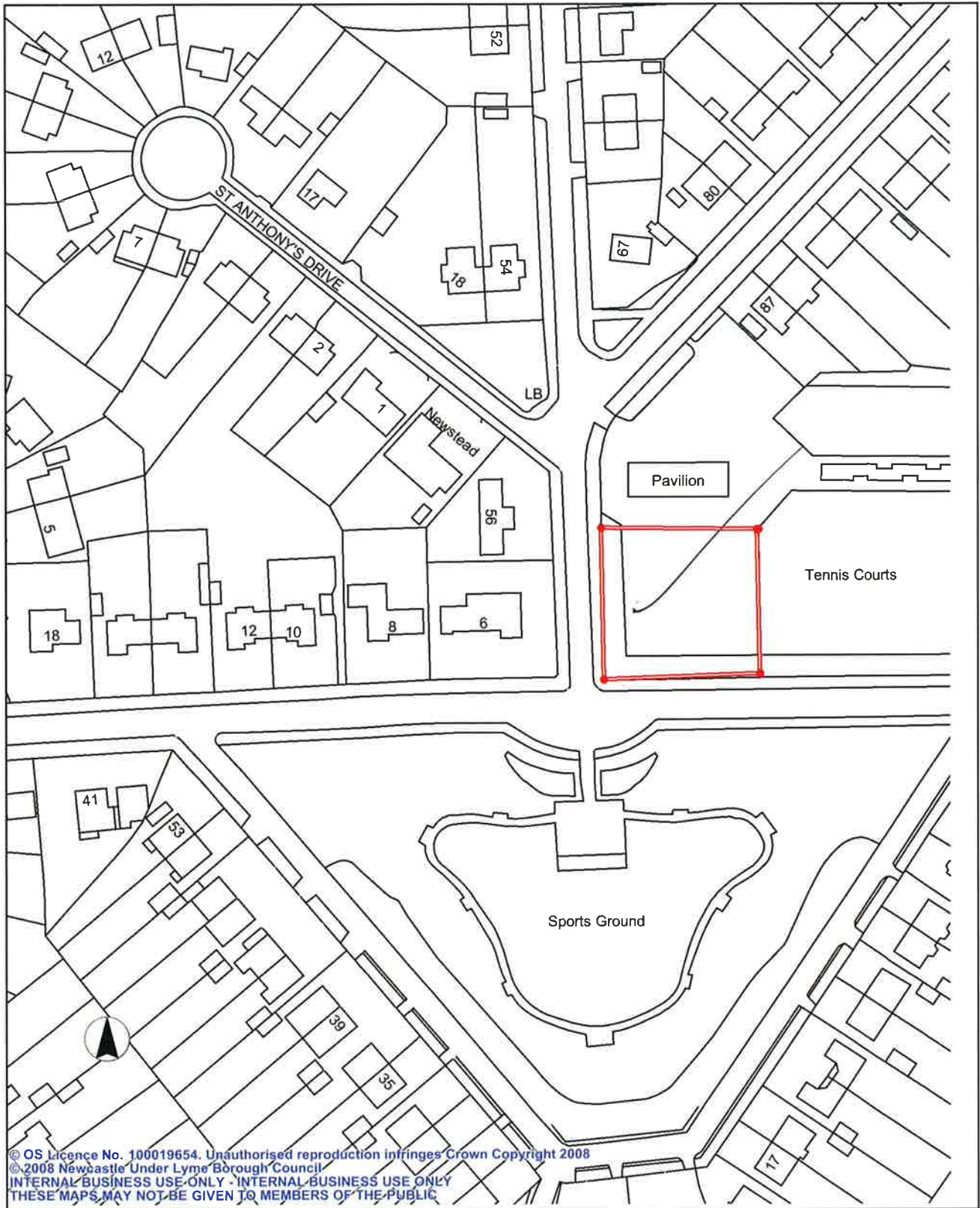
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wedgwood Avenue Westlands
0.11 Ha (0.275 Ac) - SHLAA Ref:

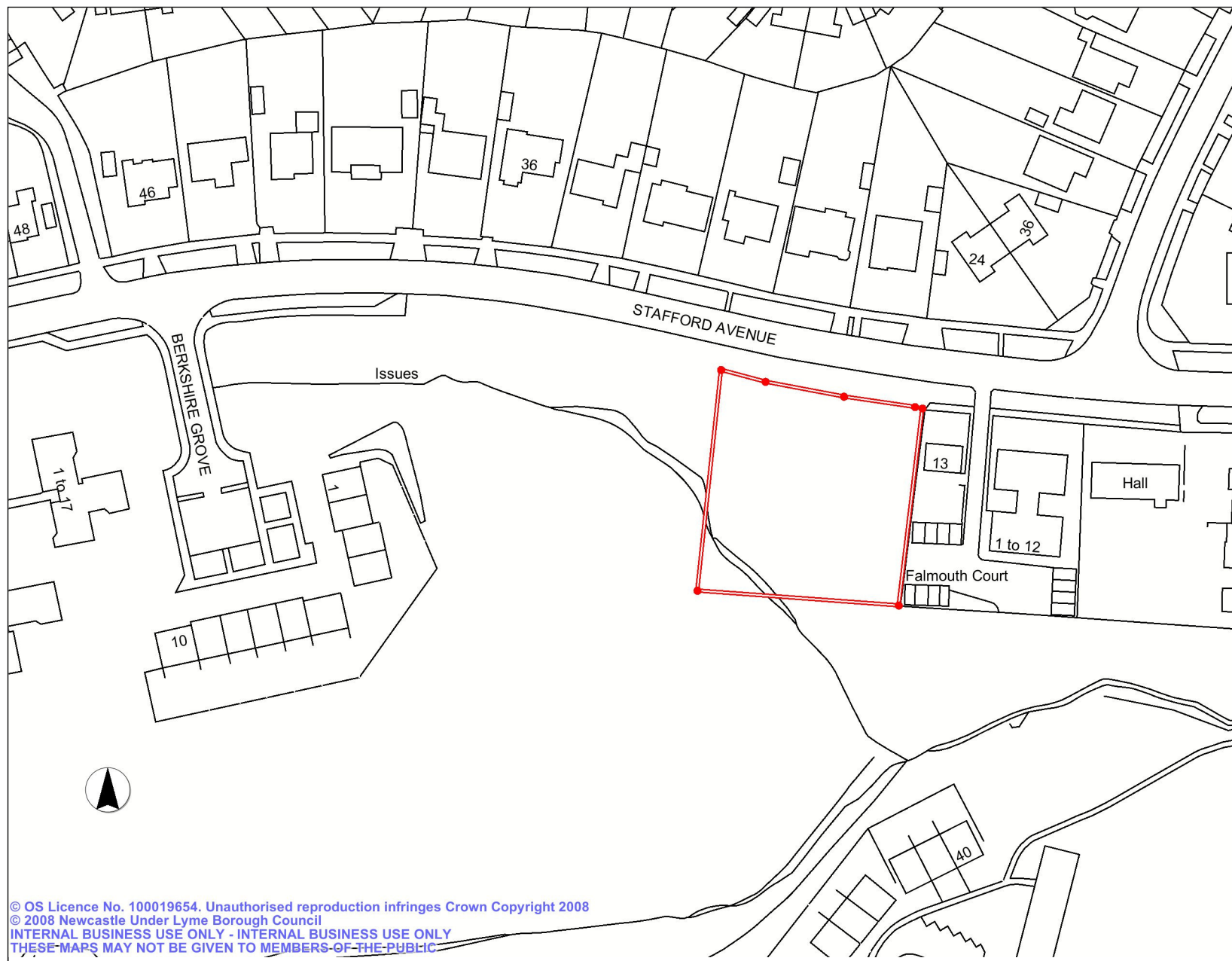
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Stafford Avenue Clayton
0.20 Ha (0.5 Ac)

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Sandy Lane /Brampton Road
0.90 Ha (2.22 Ac) SHLAA Ref: 282 **Customer Services**

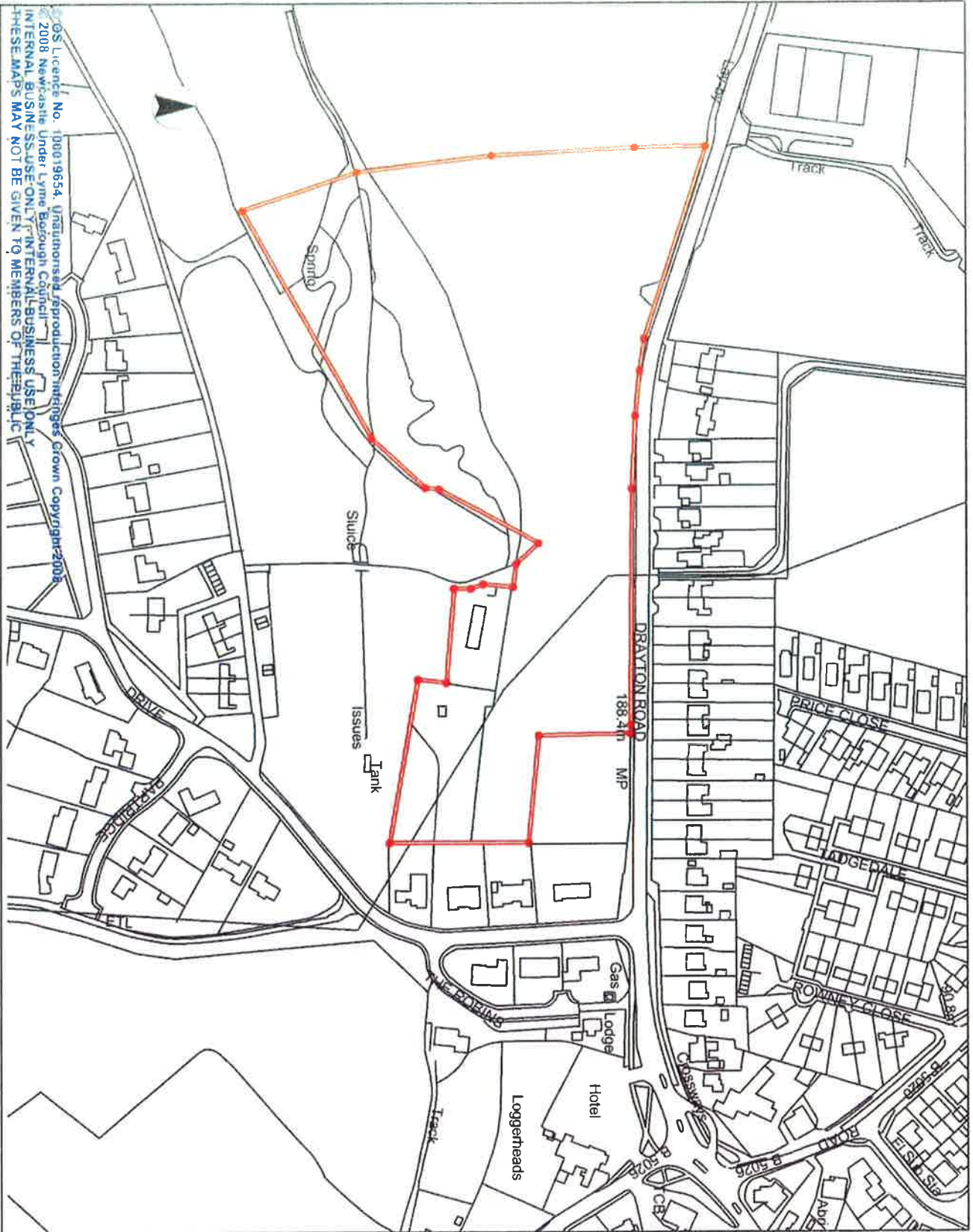


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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME

Market Drayton Road
Loggerheads
11.50 Acres

Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

Asset Section
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Newcastle Under Lyme
STS 2AG
01782 742371

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24.7.2013
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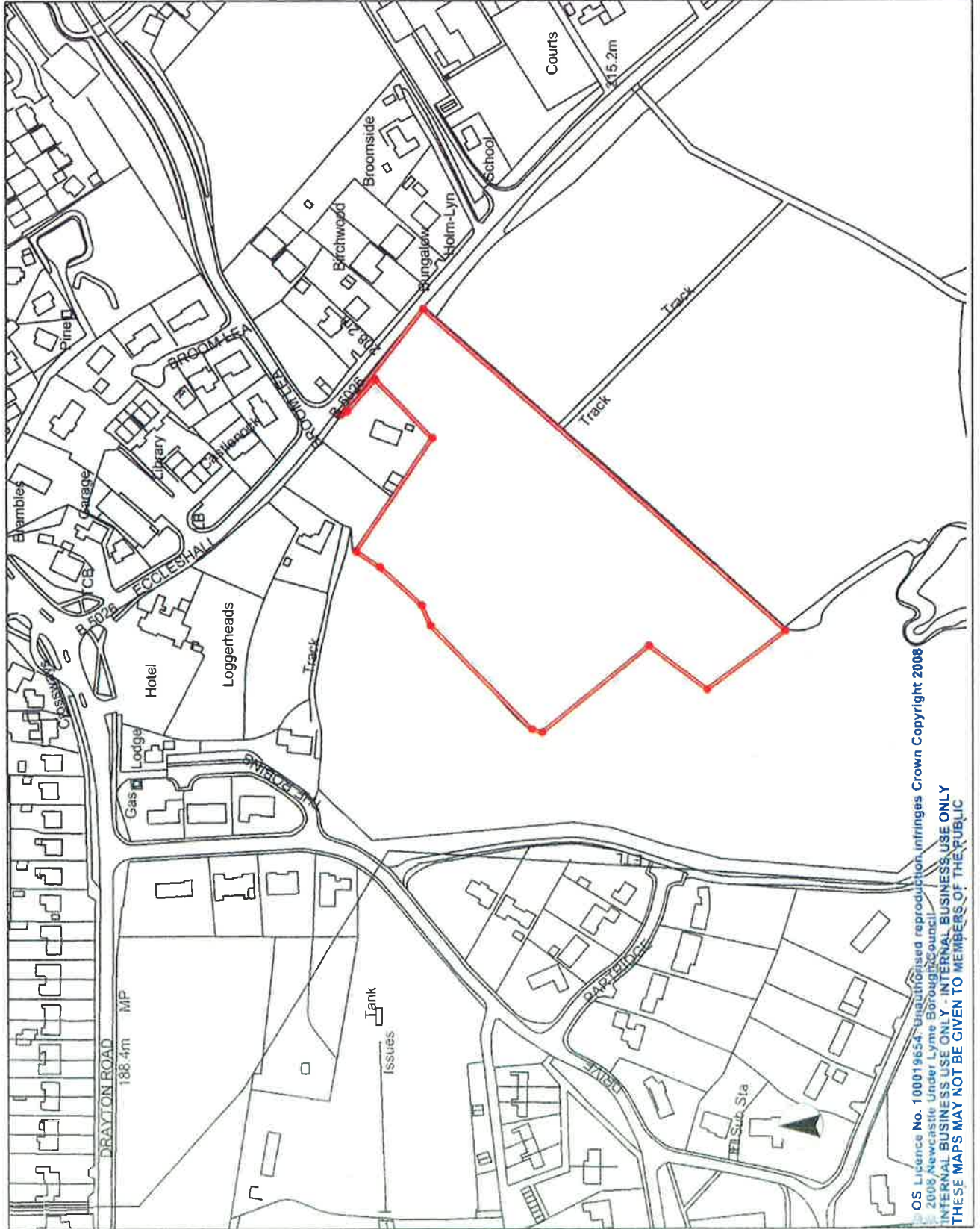
Customer Services

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*Eccleshall Road
Loggerheads
5.56 Acres*



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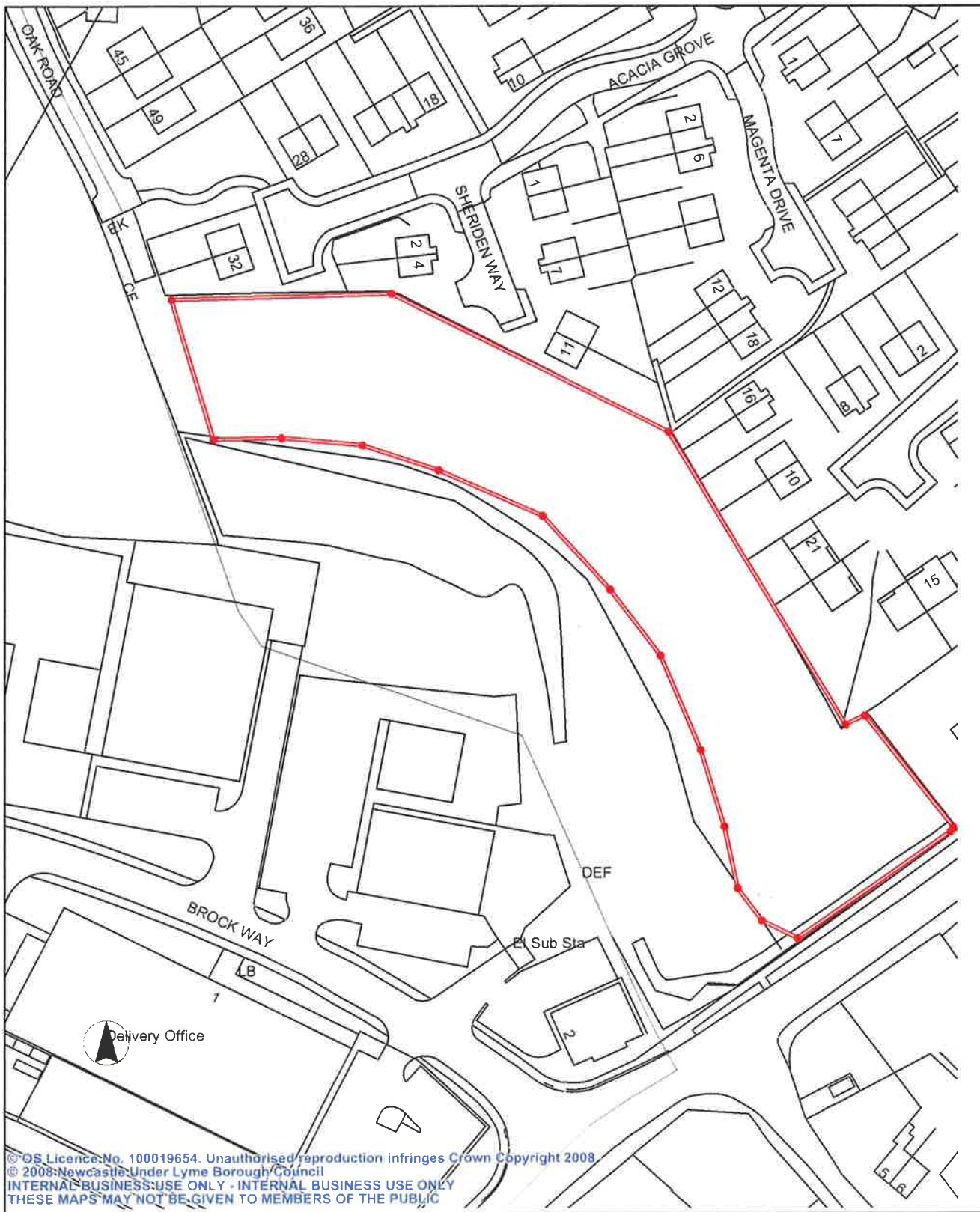
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Church Lane Knutton
0.66 HA (1.62 AC) - SHLAA Ref:
307

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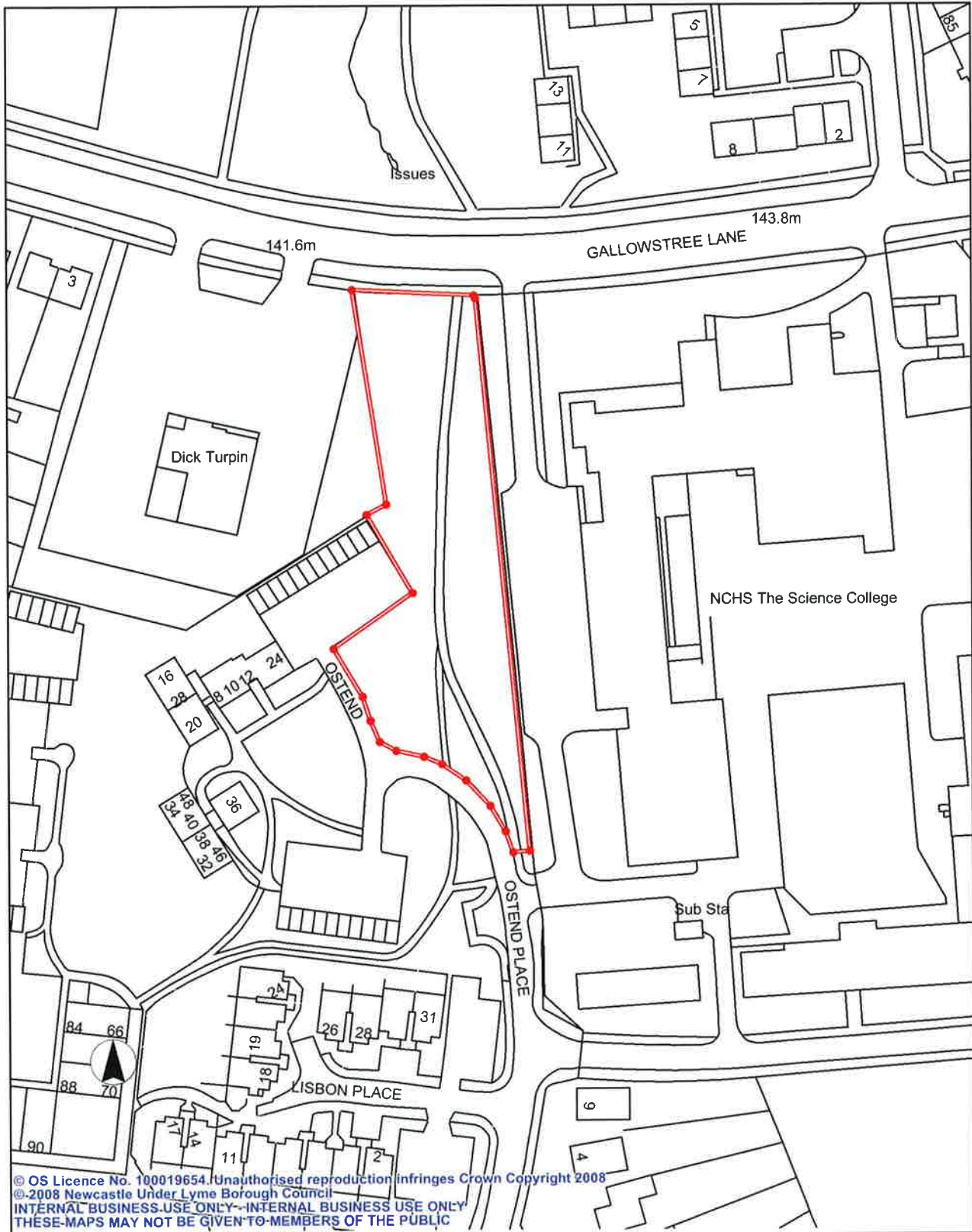
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Gallowstree Lane Westlands
0.71 Acres - SHLAA Ref: 247

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET

Date 12 November 2014

1. **Council response to Newcastle-under-Lyme & Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Plan – Call for Sites**

Submitted by: The Property Manager

Portfolio: Planning and Assets

Ward(s) affected: Numerous Wards

Purpose of the Report

To advise members that the Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, in their capacity of joint local planning authorities are undertaking an information gathering exercise to help identify sites having the potential to satisfy demand for housing, employment and other needs, and;

To seek approval for the nomination and inclusion in this process of a number of Borough Council owned sites, as listed in this report.

Recommendations

- (a) That officers be authorised to complete and submit pro-forma responses to the local planning authority for all Borough Council owned sites listed in the appendix to this report.
- (b) That officers be authorised to incorporate the identified sites listed in the appendix in the scope of the proposed masterplan (around the former Keele Golf Course and western / southern fringes of urban Newcastle) and to proceed, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to agree the principles of a brief with appropriate land owners.
- (c) That the financial implications arising from recommendation (b) be addressed through the 2015/16 budget setting process.
- (d) That the sites listed in the appendix to this report be used to inform the next and future Asset Management Strategies / Plans.
- (e) That officers bring forward at the earliest opportunity a further report identifying any additional sites which may be identified as appropriate for alternative use or development once key strategy documents have been finalised as described in the report.

Reasons

- The exercise will secure information about sites, help inform planning policy and

provide for supply of development land within the Borough to meet alternative land use needs and generate capital receipts to fund the Council's future capital programme requirements (in those cases where land disposals are progressed).

1. **Background**

- 1.1 A key role of the authority's planning policy function is to monitor the supply and availability of land for future housing and employment development purposes. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Employment Land Review (ELR) contains information that has previously been captured but there is now a need to refresh and update this information as part of the preparatory work for the forthcoming Local Plan (being prepared jointly with the City Council).

As one of the early stages in the process the two authorities have launched a 'call for sites', seeking information from landowners, developers, agents and members of the public, for sites for all types of land uses, not just housing and employment sites. In the case of potential housing sites, the criteria for consideration is that the site must be of an area sufficient for a minimum of five dwellings and potential employment sites must be a minimum of 0.25 ha (0.62 acres).

- 1.2 It is intended that the new Local Plan identifies and brings forward sites in both public and private ownership that are capable of meeting land use needs, be this for housing, industrial or commercial development purposes. The call for sites went out in early September and asked land owners to complete a pro-forma questionnaire (see Appendix 1) in respect of any site which they own and which they potentially would like to be considered as suitable for future development. Land owners are also being requested to provide updated information about those sites which they own and that are already included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Employment Land Review (ELR). The information will provide a comprehensive picture about future land options and enable plans to be made for development in the right locations that meets the needs identified in the next version of the SHLAA and the next ELR, both of which will inform the process of site allocation in the forthcoming Local Plan. In addition a new Play Pitch Strategy and a refreshed Green Space Strategy may identify other land which is capable of beneficial alternative use or development.

A list of Borough Council owned sites in respect of which pro-forma are proposed to be completed can be found at Appendix 2.

- 1.3 The other relevant background is reflected in reports considered by Cabinet in February and October of this year. Those reports acknowledged the importance and necessity of securing funding for the Council's capital programme from the disposal of land that is not required to meet either a strategic or operational service need.

2. **Issues**

When allocating land for development in the Local Plan there is need to demonstrate that all options have been considered which include sites in the Green Belt, that the development proposals are realistic and deliverable within the timescale of the plan, which is 15 to 20 years.

It is possible that the current use of a site may not be one for an alternative planning use could easily be secured, however this does not necessarily preclude it being considered and possibly re-designated. At this early stage it is not considered important what the prospects are of a site gaining permission because policy may change. This exercise is one of information gathering and it is caveated that an owner's submission of information in respect of a site does not imply that the council agrees with the information and arguments put forward to support its possible development for any particular use. Additionally the process does not bind the Council, as a land owner, to any disposal in due course.

The other key point to highlight at this stage is that the Council is about to commission a review of its Green Spaces Strategy (and is close to completing a Playing Pitch Strategy) as other key documents in the Local Plan evidence gathering stage. The outcome of these documents will assist the Council in determining the future use of some Council land and consideration of such land should not be pre-judged at this time. Nevertheless officers should report, at the earliest possible future date, the outcome of these Strategies where they identify potentially surplus land because such land may be capable of beneficial alternative use or development.

Finally this process would provide for a more comprehensive approach to be adopted to the previously-agreed masterplanning around the former Keele Golf Course. Members' previous decision in this regard acknowledged the potential benefits of reviewing the Council's land in the context of other local land owners' needs and aspirations. It is now intended to incorporate other Council-owned land in the wider area on the western and southern sides of urban Newcastle in order that the area could be reviewed and planned much more comprehensively, including the assessment of any necessary infrastructure requirements. The relevant sites are grouped together at Appendix 2 for ease of reference.

It is important to explain that this Town Planning process is designed to inform a strategic approach to planning the medium to long term development of the Borough and to enable some broad spatial planning principles to be considered. At this stage there is no commitment by the Council as a land owner to dispose of any of the subject land. Nevertheless any sites which are considered to be broadly compliant with prevailing Planning policies should be regarded as appropriate for inclusion in future Asset Management Strategies. At this stage a small number of sites have been identified as potentially appropriate for taking forward in the next such Strategy (referred to as "Tranche 3" sites at Appendix 2).

3. **Options Considered**

3.1 **Option 1 – Do not respond to the 'call for sites'.**

A landowners failure to respond to the 'call for sites' would lead to difficulties in identifying sites having the potential for alternative planning uses and being available for development to meet future demands.

3.2 **Option 2 – Respond to the 'call for sites'.**

In responding to the call for sites landowners will provide vital information that will shape the Local Joint Plan, enable policy to be formulated and should lead to the identification of sites having the development potential to meet future use demands. In addition the option could be taken to assemble a cluster of sites on the western and southern fringes of urban Newcastle as part of a master-planning approach linked to the former Keele Golf Course.

4. **Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution**

4.1 As a major landowner the Borough Council has an obligation to participate in this initiative so option 2 is proposed. The provision of information is not a commitment to release land for development, rather it is to identify sites that have the potential to meet differing use demand requirements over the next 15-20 years. In addition the scope to undertake comprehensive master-planning should optimise both the community outcome and the assessment of financial benefits.

5. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

5.1 The identification of sites having the potential to meet future land use needs will enable the achievement of priority outcomes in all four of the Council's corporate priorities. Should Borough Council owned sites be identified as suitable, appropriate and approved for release and development then the council would secure a 'best consideration' capital receipt upon disposal.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 There are no legal or statutory implications arising from the provision of the requested information. Nevertheless the Council has a duty to achieve best consideration in the disposal of any land.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 There are no such issues arising directly from this report.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no such issues arising directly from this report. But clearly the Council's engagement in this process has the potential to assist not only the spatial planning of our borough but also to establish the principle of developing Council land in the future. Of course this would enable the Council to take a long term and comprehensive view about its disposal programme with the aim of aligning it with capital programme needs.

8.2 The cost of the Council's contribution towards the procurement of a significant masterplan of the Council-owned land including the former Keele Golf Course and other land around the west and south of urban Newcastle (estimated to be at least £100,000) will be addressed through the 2015/16 budget setting process. A contribution to these costs will be sought from the other stakeholders.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 It is necessary to identify sites which satisfy planning policy and that are capable of different alternative uses in order to satisfy future potential demand.

9.2 Failure to engage effectively in this process would undermine the Council's ability to optimise the value of its property portfolio thereby threatening future service delivery.

9.3 Failure to undertake a comprehensive master-planning exercise may undermine the potential to develop a coherent development-led outcome to meeting community needs.

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 The content of this report is not considered as such. A list of Borough Council owned sites in respect of which these forms will be completed can be found at Appendix 2

12. **Appendices**

12.1 Blank 'call for sites' pro-forma

12.2 List of sites for potential inclusion in the Council's response to the Call for sites.

12.3 Plans of the sites

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 Cabinet reports considered at meetings in February and October 2014 in respect of the Council's funding strategy for its capital programme.

13.2 The local planning authority's call for sites process.

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Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED** Organisational
Appendix 2

SHLAA No	Asset No	Street	Area	Site Area		In Green Belt Y, N or P (part)	In Green Space Strategy Y, N or P (part)
				(Ha)	(Ac)		

TRANCHE 3

118	0238/001/001	Deans Lane	Red Street	1.39	3.44	N	N
Part 413	0408/920/001	St Edmunds Avenue (Single Plot)	Wolstanton	0.02	0.06	N	N
	0410/920/001 part	Shrewsbury Drive (3-5 single plots)	Chesterton	3-5 sites 0.02-0.04 Ha	3-5 sites 0.05-0.10 Ac	N	N
Employment Sites							
	0320/920/002	Brick Kiln Lane	Chesterton	4.76	11.76	N	N
	0243/921/002	Rowhurst Area E	Chesterton	1.79	4.42	N	N

CALL FOR SITES LIST

Sites included in Keele Master Plan

	0271/902/001	Park Road	Silverdale	3.10	7.66	Y	Y
	0271/002/001	Jobs Wood	Keele	3.10	7.66	Y	Y
	0271/001/001	Home Farm Keele Road	Keele	9.05	22.36	Y	Y
	0270/001/001	Keele Golf Course	Keele	60.06	148.40	Y	Y
	0275/920/001	The Butts Gallowstree Lane	Thistleberry	10.49	25.92	Y	Y
	0292/005/001	Guernsey Drive	Seabridge	18.48	45.67	Y	N
	0292/920/001	Seabridge Lane	Seabridge	6.17	15.25	Y	Y
	0292/003/001	Whitmore Road	Seabridge	1.86	4.60	Y	Y
	0292/003/002	Whitmore Road	Seabridge	1.87	4.62	Y	P
	0292/920/002	Westcliffe Avenue (inc Rowley Wood)	Westbury Park	25.33	62.59	Y	Y

SHLAA No	Asset No	Street	Area	Site Area	In Green Belt Y, N or P (part)	In Green Space Strategy Y, N or P (part)	Y
Sites included in Birchenwood Master Plan							
	0222/001/001	Birchenwood Way West	Kidsgrove	2.42	5.98	N	Y
33	0217/920/001 & 0217/002/001	Land at Kidsgrove Bank and Chatterley Drive	Kidsgrove	6.54	16.16	Y	P
Other Potential Housing Sites							
	0232/001/001	High Street	Rookery	2.99	7.39	Y	N
	0232/920/001	High Street	Rookery	1.56	3.85	Y	Y
	0230/001/001	Gloucester Road	Whitehill	2.38	5.88	Y	N
Potential Employment Sites							
	0239/920/001	High Carr	Chesterton	15.28	37.76	Y	Y
	0241/920/001	Land adj A34, Parkhouse	Chesterton	14.27	35.26	P	Y
	0320/920/001	Parkhouse Road West - behind Bank	Chesterton	14.88	36.77	N	Y
	0214/900/001	Land off Lowlands Road	Kidsgrove	3.25	8.03	Y	Y

OFFICIAL USE ONLYReference No: Date Received:

 <p>NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p>Newcastle-under-Lyme & Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Plan CALL FOR SITES Response Form</p>	 <p>city of stoke on trent</p>
--	---	--

Instructions for completing this form:

- Please only complete if you are nominating a site to be considered within the forthcoming Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke on Trent Joint Local Plan.
- If your site is already listed within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013/14), the Joint Employment Land Review (2011) or the 'Call for Sites' undertaken by Stoke-on-Trent City Council (2012) then please use this form to provide further additional detail to update or amend information previously submitted. Please complete a **separate form for each site** submitted.
- Please complete this form electronically. If this is not possible then hand written copies should be completed in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.
- Please provide as much detail as possible about the scale and nature of the development proposed on the site.

Please supply the following information:

- **A site plan** (preferably at 1:1,250 scale) on an Ordnance Survey base map, showing a precise red line boundary around the extent of the area proposed for development. **We regret that submissions received without a clear boundary shown on a site plan will not be considered.**
- Provide as much detail as possible on any constraints to development describe, including the extent of the constraint(s) and how they can be overcome. Where known, please show the location of any physical constraints on the site plan.
- Please **do not send additional documentation** to support your submission, unless requested. All relevant information should be provided on the form. The council will contact you if further information is required.

Important points to note:

- Nominating a site does not imply that the council agrees with the information and arguments put forward to support its development.
- Please note sites of less than 0.25 hectares or capable of accommodating fewer than 5 dwellings will not be considered.
- Only submit sites where you consider that there is a realistic prospect of development within the next 15 to 20 years.
- Upon completing and submitting this form, you are providing consent for a representative of the council to access the site, with or without prior notification, for the purposes of assessing its suitability for development.

The Call for Sites submission deadline is 31 October 2014

SECTION 1: CONTACT AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS				
Personal data will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.				
Contact Name:				
Organisation: (where relevant)	l			
Correspondence Address:				
Telephone Number		Email Address:	y	
Are you (please tick as appropriate):				
An agent:	A Landowner:	A Developer:	A Registered Provider:	Other (please specify):
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If you are an agent, please provide your client's name and address:	n/a			
Are you (or your client) the current owner of the site?	Yes:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, are you the sole owner or a part owner of the site?	Sole Owner:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part Owner:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the site is in multiple ownership, please show the extent of the different ownerships on the site plan				
If you are not the owner of the land, or if you partly own it, please provide the contact details of all other landowners.				
Please provide the contact details of the person who can arrange access to the site:				

SECTION 2: SITE DETAILS	
Site Name:	
Site Address: (if possible, please provide postcode)	

SECTION 2: SITE DETAILS						
Grid Reference (if known):	Easting:		Northing:			
Current SHLAA/ELR Site Reference Number (if applicable):	Total Site Area: (hectares)					
	Developable Site Area: (hectares)					
Has the site been previously submitted to Newcastle-under-Lyme or Stoke-on-Trent as part of a similar process in the past 10 years? If so please provide details.						
Type of Site:	Urban:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban/Rural Mix:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Brownfield:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfield:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brownfield/Greenfield Mix:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the site:	Vacant:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partly Occupied:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If occupied or partly occupied, when is the present use of the site anticipated to cease?						
What is the current or most recent use of the site?						
What is the historic use of the site? (prior to the current/most recent use)						
What are the adjoining land uses?						

SECTION 3: PROPOSED USES			
<p align="center">Please indicate the uses proposed to be developed on the site. Tick one box for a single use proposal or multiple boxes for a mixture of uses. Provide additional relevant information, including type and quantity of development proposed</p>			
Type of Development	Tick Box	Specific Type	Quantity
Market Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. family housing, apartments, town houses etc.</u>	<u>Number of dwellings:</u>

SECTION 3: PROPOSED USES			
Please indicate the uses proposed to be developed on the site. Tick one box for a single use proposal or multiple boxes for a mixture of uses. Provide additional relevant information, including type and quantity of development proposed			
Type of Development	Tick Box	Specific Type	Quantity
High Value Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. executive housing</u>	<u>Number of dwellings:</u>
Affordable Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. social rented, intermediate housing etc</u>	<u>Number of dwellings:</u>
Offices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. office park, town centre offices etc.</u>	<u>Number of units and floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Research and Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. laboratories, science park etc.</u>	<u>Number of units and floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. factories, assembly plants etc.</u>	<u>Number of units and floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Warehousing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. storage buildings, distribution centres etc.</u>	<u>Number of units and floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Retail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. supermarket, department store, clothing store etc.</u>	<u>Floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Food and Drink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. public house, café, restaurant etc.</u>	<u>Floorspace in square metres (net and gross):</u>
Tourist Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. hotel, hostel, bed and breakfast, holiday let etc.</u>	<u>Number of bedrooms:</u>
Sports Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. sports centre, gymnasium, golf course etc.</u>	<u>Number of courts, pitches etc:</u>

SECTION 3: PROPOSED USES			
Please indicate the uses proposed to be developed on the site. Tick one box for a single use proposal or multiple boxes for a mixture of uses. Provide additional relevant information, including type and quantity of development proposed			
Type of Development	Tick Box	Specific Type	Quantity
Entertainment Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. theatre, cinema, bowling alley, bingo hall etc.</u>	<u>Number screens, halls etc:</u>
Open Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. park and garden, allotments, playing field etc.</u>	<u>Size in hectares, number of plots, pitches etc:</u>
Specialist Residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. Extra Care, warden controlled etc.</u>	<u>Number of dwelling units:</u>
Student Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. halls of residence, student village, shared housing etc.</u>	<u>Number of student spaces:</u>
Houses in Multiple Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. individual houses, apartment block etc.</u>	<u>Number of occupants per unit and number of units:</u>
Gypsies and Travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. permanent site, transit site etc.</u>	<u>Number of plots:</u>
Travelling Showpeople	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. seasonal site etc.</u>	<u>Number of plots:</u>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. school, college, university, training centre, library, museum etc.</u>	<u>Floorspace in square metres, number of students:</u>
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. health centres, surgeries etc.</u>	<u>Number of consulting rooms, patients served per day:</u>
Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Community centres, village halls, places of worship</u>	<u>Floorspace in square metres:</u>

SECTION 3: PROPOSED USES			
<p>Please indicate the uses proposed to be developed on the site. Tick one box for a single use proposal or multiple boxes for a mixture of uses. Provide additional relevant information, including type and quantity of development proposed</p>			
Type of Development	Tick Box	Specific Type	Quantity
Renewable Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Specify, e.g. windfarm, solar farm</u>	<u>Number of generating units:</u>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>e.g. highway, rail transport etc</u>	<u>Corridor length and width, movements per day</u>
Any Other Type Not Listed Above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Specify type:</u>	<u>State quantity:</u>

SECTION 4: SITE FEATURES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT				
Please mark features and constraints on the site plan where their location can be identified				
Does any of the following vegetation exist on the site?	Individual Trees:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Woodland:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Hedgerows:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrub/Grassland:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other vegetation (please specify):			
Is the site:	Flat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undulating?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Steep?	<input type="checkbox"/>	On High Ground?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Please describe any other landscape features:			
If the site is currently in agricultural use, what is the grading of the land?	Grade 1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade 2:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grade 3:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade 4:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grade 5:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Agricultural:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any existing buildings or structures on the site?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 4: SITE FEATURES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT				
Please mark features and constraints on the site plan where their location can be identified				
If yes, please specify what buildings or structures exist on the site:				
What is proposed to happen to the existing buildings or structures on the site? (tick all that apply and indicate locations on site plan)	Demolished:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relocated:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Converted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconfigured:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify):			
Do any of the following designations apply to the site?	Green Belt:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site of Special Scientific Interest:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local Nature Reserve:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation Area:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Listed Building:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduled Ancient Monument:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other designation (please specify):			
Are you aware of any of the following ground conditions affecting the site:	Mineshafts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Landfill:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Contamination:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flood Risk:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify):			
Are there any overground or underground cables or pipes within the site? Please specify and mark the locations on the site plan.				
Please show the route of any cables and pipes on the site plan				
Are there any other constraints affecting the site? (e.g. restrictive covenants, protected species/habitats etc.)				
For all of the constraints identified in the questions above, what measures do you think would be needed in order to overcome these to ensure that the site is deliverable within the next 15-20 years?				

SECTION 5: ACCESSIBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE				
Please identify the proposed access point on the site plan				
What type of road would provide access to the site:	Motorway/Major Trunk Road: (M6/A50/A500)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Major Road (e.g. 'A' road):	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local Distributor Road: (e.g. 'B' road)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor Road: (e.g. unclassified/ residential road)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unadopted/Private Road:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Direct Road Access:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please name the road(s) that would provide access to the site: (e.g. A34 Newcastle Road)				
Does the site have access, or potential access to the rail network?	Already has access via a halt or station:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential for direct access, subject to Network Rail approval:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Potential for a new rail link:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No potential for rail access:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any further details about the potential for rail access:				
Are there any access points, or potential access points for the following?	Footpaths/Rights of Way	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cycle Routes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bus Stop/Bus Route:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any further information about these other potential access routes:				
Would any access points to the site need to cross land in other ownership?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide the contact details of the landowner affected:				
Are there any known disputes over the access and use of the site? If so, please provide details:				
Please indicate if the site is already serviced by any of the following:				
Mains Water Supply:	Mains Sewerage:	Electricity:	Gas:	Broadband:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5: ACCESSIBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE			
Have any discussions already taken place with utility companies in relation to this site?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide copies of any relevant correspondence			
Are there specific infrastructure requirements for the proposed use? If so, please provide details:			

SECTION 6: DELIVERABILITY			
Within what timescale do you estimate that the site could be brought forward for development? If the site is to be phased, please tick more than one time period.			
0 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16-20 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the site been marketed for development?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any details of expressions of interest received or development options arranged with potential developers			
Would any adjoining land uses positively or negatively affect the marketability of the site? If so, please provide details			
Are there any other development opportunities nearby that could help to bring forward a larger and more comprehensive development scheme?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Please state the site name, address and reference number (if applicable) of other development opportunities:			
Has a viability assessment been made of the development potential of the site for the proposed use?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide a summary of the calculation and findings of the viability assessment: (or attach a separate supporting statement)			
Are there any financial matters that would affect the delivery of the proposed development? If so, please provide details:			

APPENDIX 1

SECTION 6: DELIVERABILITY				
Does the site currently have planning approval for development?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide the planning application reference number and a brief description of the approved development:				
Please show the extent of any part of the site approved for development on the site plan				
Is there a realistic prospect that the development will be fully implemented before the planning approval expires?	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the site does not have planning approval, when do you anticipate that a planning application can be submitted for the proposed development?				
Once construction has commenced, how many years do you anticipate that it will take for the development to be completed?				
How much development do you anticipate will be completed on an annual basis (i.e. number of dwellings, amount of floorspace etc.)?				

SECTION 7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
<p>Please provide any additional comments that you have in regard to the site: (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.)</p>	

Declaration:

I understand that the personal and other data I provide will be used to inform the council's emerging planning policy framework for its duration and may also be used to help ensure the accuracy and completeness of information held for other council purposes.

I understand that the details submitted may be made available to the public in line with The Local Government Access to Information Act and Freedom of Information Act.

I want to be consulted on the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Local Plan in the future (*please tick if yes*)

Signature

Date

For sites in Newcastle-under-Lyme please return your completed form and site plan by 31st October 2014 to:

Planning Policy

Civic Offices

Merrial Street

Newcastle-under-Lyme

Staffordshire

ST5 2AG

Email: planningpolicy@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Telephone: 01782 742467

www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planningpolicy

For sites in Stoke-on-Trent please return your completed form and site plan by 31st October 2014 to:

Planning and Transportation

Policy

Civic Centre

Glebe Street

Stoke-on-Trent

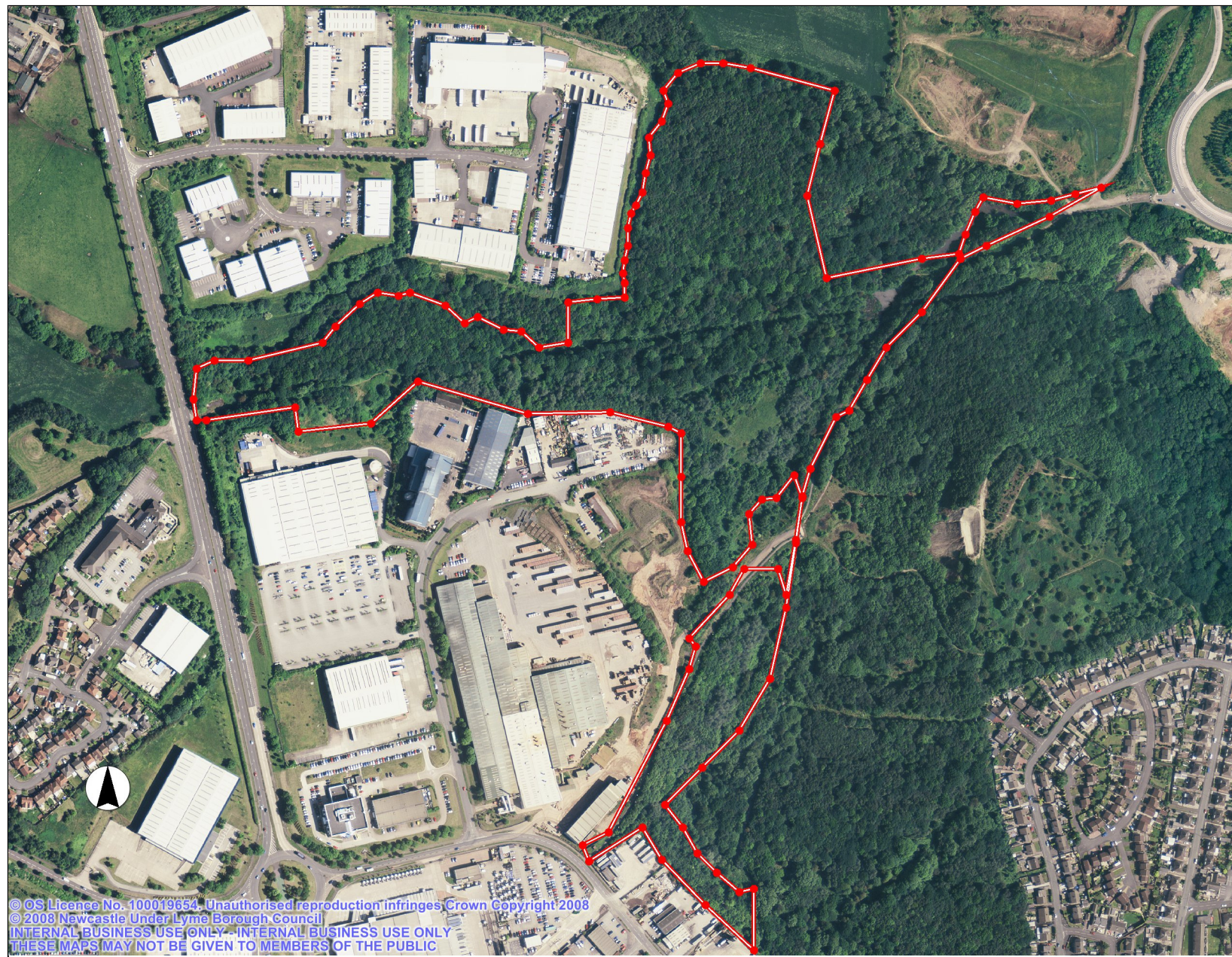
ST4 1HH

Email: planning.policy@stoke.gov.uk

Telephone: 01782 232353

www.stoke.gov.uk/ldf

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*Land adj A34,
Parkhouse, Chesterton
14.27 Ha (35.26 Ac)*

Newcastle Under Lyme Borough
Council
Asset Section
Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle Under Lyme
ST5 2AG
01782 742371

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*Birchenwood &
Kidsgrove Bank Master
Planning
Site Areas to be agreed*

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Civic Offices
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Brick Kiln Lane, Parkhouse West,
Chesterton
4.76 Ha (11.76 Ac)

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*Deans Lane, Red Street
1.39 ha (3.44 acres)*

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Gloucester Road Kidsgrove
2.38 Ha (5.88 Ac)

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High Carr Chesterton
 15.28 Ha (37.76 Ac)

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*High Street Rookery
(Playing Field and
Mowing Site)
4.55 Ha Total (11.24 Ac)*

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*Keele Master Plan - Plan
1
70.04 Ha (173.07 Ac)*

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*Keele Master Plan - Plan
2
53.25 Ha (131.58 Ac)*

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*Keele Master Plan - Plan
3
10.49 Ha (25.92 Ac)*

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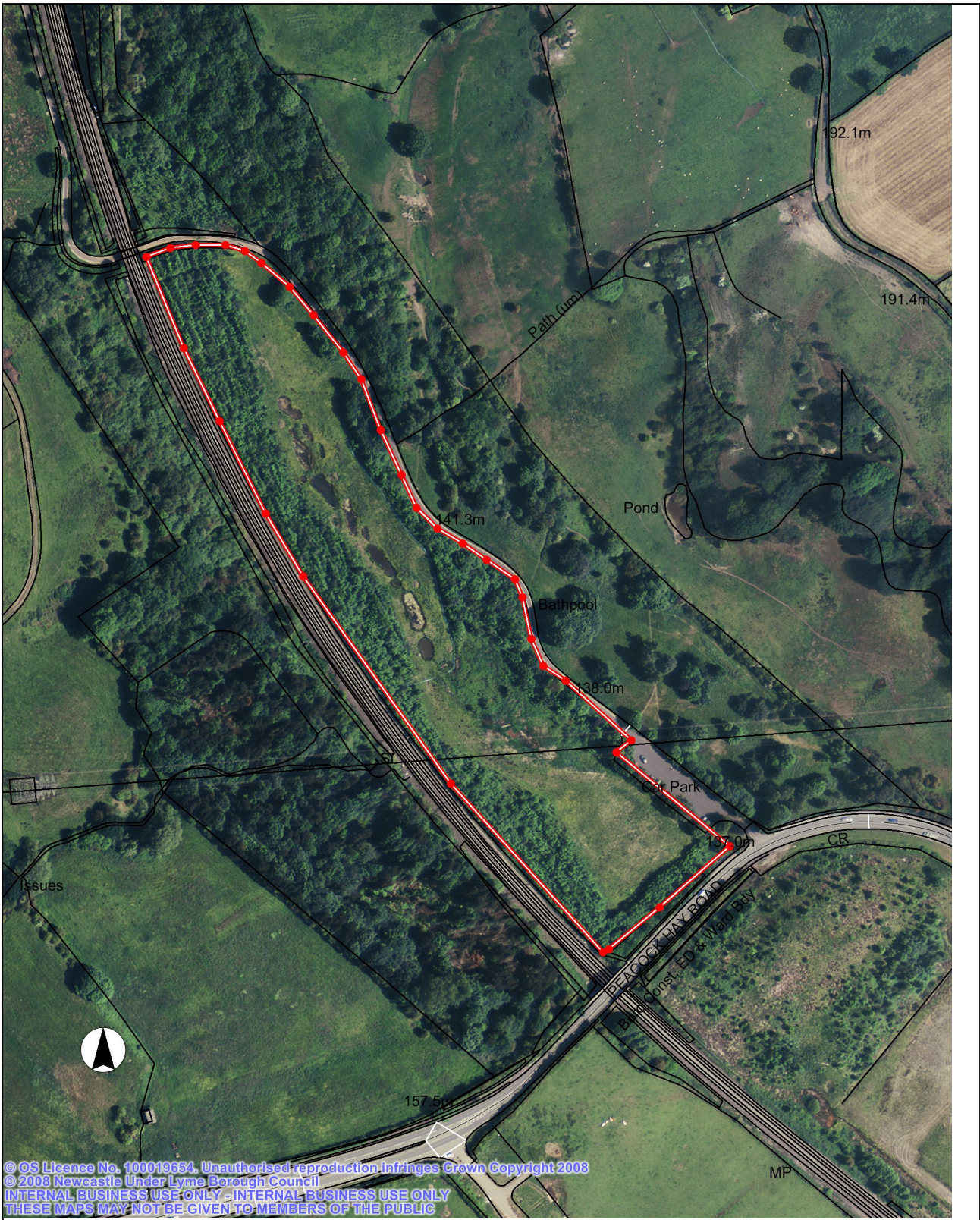
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Land off Lowlands Road,
Ravensdale
3.25 Ha (8.03 Ac)

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*Parkhouse Road West,
Chesterton
14.88 Ha (36.77 Ac)*

Newcastle Under Lyme Borough
Council
Asset Section
Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle Under Lyme
ST5 2AG
01782 742371

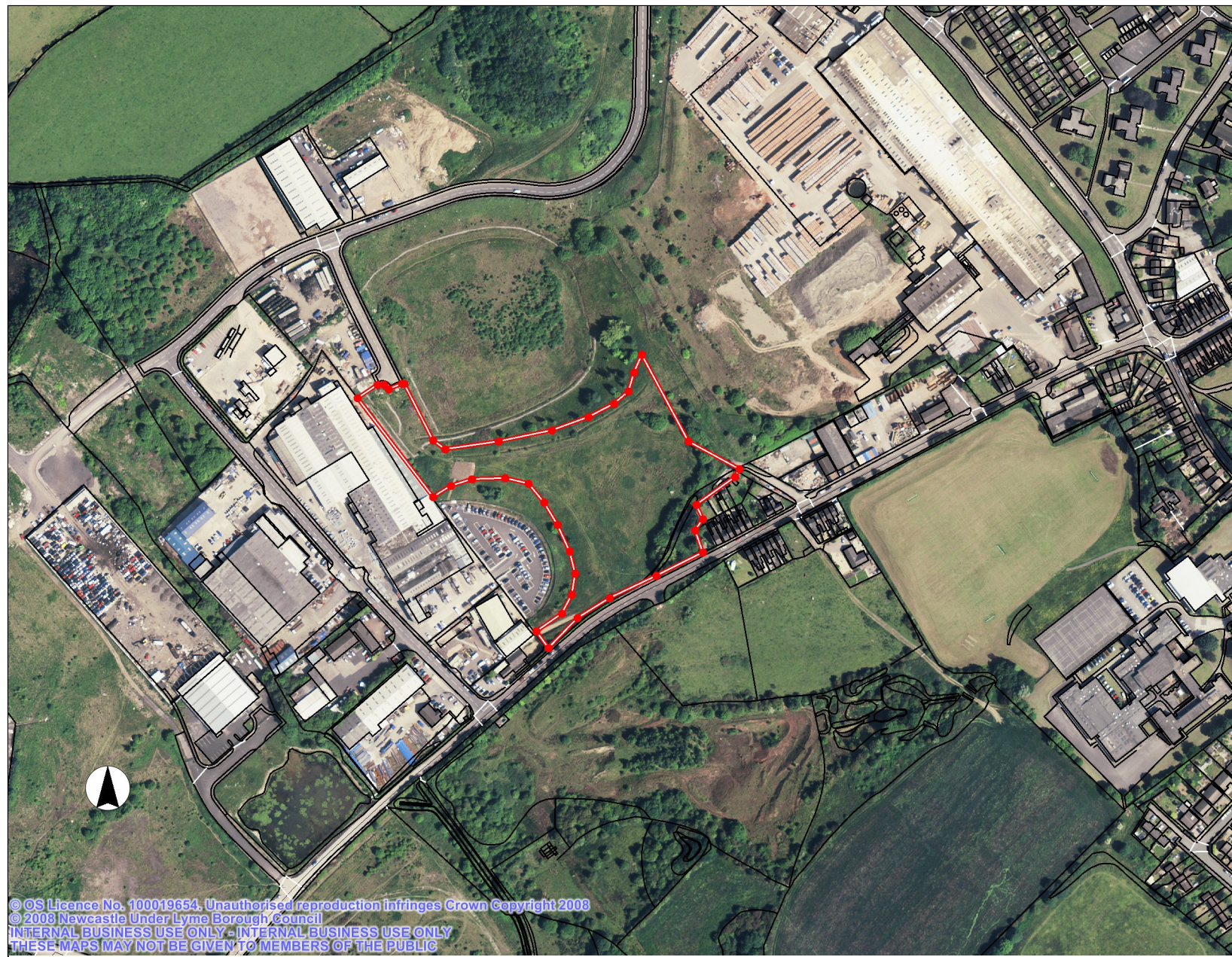
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*Rowhurst Area E,
Chesterton
1.79 Ha (4.42 Ac)*

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Shrewsbury Drive Chesterton
 3-5 Single Plots

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St Edmunds Avenue Porthill
0.025 Ha (0.06 Acres)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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