

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting **Wednesday, 22nd July, 2015**
Time **7.00 pm**
Venue **Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG**
Contact **Geoff Durham**

Cabinet

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 MINUTES** **(Pages 3 - 6)**
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.
- 3 PETITION SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL OPPOSING THE** **(Pages 7 - 12)**
INCLUSION OF LAND KNOWN AS 'THE BUTTS,
GALLOWSTREE LANE, THISTLEBERRY, KEELE' IN
RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL PLAN CALL FOR SITES
- 4 PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN** **(Pages 13 - 40)**
AGREED BY THE COUNCIL IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
OF THE PLANNING PEER REVIEW TEAM
- 5 PILOT PROJECT FOR COLLABORATION ON PRINT AND** **(Pages 41 - 48)**
ASSOCIATED SERVICES
- 6 CABINET PANELS** **(Pages 49 - 52)**
- 7 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO** **(Pages 53 - 66)**
END OF QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY TO MARCH) 2015
- 8 HOUSING RENEWAL LOANS** **(Pages 67 - 72)**
- 9 OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER** **(Pages 73 - 76)**
STAFFORDSHIRE - SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS
- 10 URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the
Local Government Act 1972.
- 11 ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS**

Councillor attendance at Cabinet meetings:

- (1) The Chair or spokesperson of the Council's scrutiny committees and the mover of any motion referred to Cabinet shall be entitled to attend any formal public meeting of Cabinet to speak.
- (2) Other persons including non-executive members of the Council may speak at such meetings with the permission of the Chair of the Cabinet.

Public attendance at Cabinet meetings:

- (1) If a member of the public wishes to ask a question(s) at a meeting of Cabinet, they should serve two clear days' notice in writing of any such question(s) to the appropriate committee officer.
- (2) The Council Leader as Chair of Cabinet is given the discretion to waive the above deadline and assess the permissibility if the question(s). The Chair's decision will be final.
- (3) The maximum limit is three public questions at any one Cabinet meeting.
- (4) A maximum limit of three minutes is provided for each person to ask an initial question or make an initial statement to the Cabinet.
- (5) Any questions deemed to be repetitious or vexatious will be disallowed at the discretion of the Chair.

Members: Councillors Beech, Kearon, Turner (Vice-Chair), Williams, Shenton (Chair), Proctor and Rout

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.

CABINET

Wednesday, 10th June, 2015

Present:- Councillor Elizabeth Shenton – in the Chair

Councillors Beech, Turner, Proctor and Rout

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors' Kearon and Williams.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March, 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **QUESTION TO CABINET**

Councillor Naylor had submitted a question to the Cabinet regarding the renovation of the Nelson Place Roundabout and the possible erection of a permanent structure along with a more sustainable planting scheme.

The question was to enquire as to the possibility of a number of designs and materials being offered for people to vote upon.

The Council's Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling – Councillor Beech responded. The renovation of the roundabout would be a better scheme than the usual exhibits which are placed there.

The Realise Foundation were commissioning a fish sculpture, along with PM Training and feedback had been good.

A number of local companies had pledged funding and the Borough Council would be planting more perennial plants rather than annuals.

The Cabinet was informed that the sculptor was in the process of constructing the fish in readiness for July, therefore there would not be enough time for further consultation.

Councillor Beech added that it was a lovely project and thanked all who had been involved in the process. Councillor Beech confirmed that she would write a letter offering thanks.

Councillor Naylor had requested a full written response to her question and Councillor Beech agreed to forward her response to Councillor Naylor.

Resolved: (i) That the information be received.
(ii) That a letter of thanks be sent to PM Training

- (iii) That Councillor Naylor receive a full written response.

5. NEWCASTLE AND KIDSGROVE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIPS NOMINATIONS

A report was submitted seeking Cabinet approval for a nominee to represent the Council on the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership and also the Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership.

Councillor Bates was currently the nominee for the Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership and wished to continue. Therefore the recommendation, as set out in the agenda, was revised to reflect this.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for town centres, currently the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets be the nominated person to represent the Council on the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership.
 - (ii) That Councillor Bates be the nominated person to represent the Council on the Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership until such time as she may resign the role. At such a time, the nominated person will revert to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for town centres.

6. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE

A report was submitted for Cabinet to consider the business case for the establishment of a Newcastle Business Improvement District (BID) for the Town Centre.

A ballot for the establishment of a BID would be held between 17 June and 16 July, 2015.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets (nominated as the Council's representative), be authorised to vote in favour of the Business Improvement District.
 - (ii) That the Council becomes a member of the Newcastle Business Improvement District Company, with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets nominated as the Council's representative.

7. PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

A report was submitted to seek Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Localism thanked the members of the Steering Group and officers for the hard work which had gone into the preparation of the Strategy which was a key document for keeping residents fit and active.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Newcastle-under-Lyme Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2020 (PPS), which will be the basis for making strategic decisions on future playing pitch provision and associated facilities across the Borough, be approved.
 - (ii) That public consultation be carried out on any surplus sites arising from the Strategy, that are subsequently not required to meet Greenspace requirements, in accordance with the agreed consultation process set out in the Council's Asset Management Plan.
 - (iii) That a review of the PPS be carried out by the Steering Group on an annual basis with any significant changes being reported to Cabinet, to ensure that identified local priorities continue to be achieved.
 - (iv) That any future arrangements that the Council enters into with Partners will always protect the Council's interests.

8. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A report was submitted for Cabinet to consider the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for adoption.

The SCI had been considered by the Planning Committee on 3 June, 2015 and had been accepted.

A request was made for a possible condensed version of the document. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing agreed that this would be useful. It was also confirmed that a copy would be posted onto the Council's Website.

Resolved: That it be commended to Council to adopt the submitted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Statement of Community Involvement.

9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

10. ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS

COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH SHENTON
Chair

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

Date 22 July 2015

1. **Report Title: Petition submitted to Council opposing the inclusion of land known as 'The Butts', Gallowstree Lane, Thistleberry, Keele, Newcastle under Lyme in the response to the Local Plan Call for Sites.**

Submitted by: The Property Manager

Portfolio: Planning and Housing

Ward(s) affected: Thistleberry

Purpose of the Report

To provide members with information that will enable Cabinet to make a decision in this matter.

Recommendations

- (a) That Members receive and note the petitioners concerns and objections.
- (b) That members consider the issues raised by the petitioners in light of previous decisions and supporting documents.

Decision required

Do Members wish to reaffirm their decision of 12 November 2014 and authorise this area of land, to be subjected to the proposed joint local planning process and the associated masterplanning exercise of the wider area.

Reasons

Receipt of the petition was reported to Council on 25 February 2015 where because the actions being requested were outside the remit of the Council, it was resolved that the matters raised should be referred back to Cabinet for additional consideration.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 A report to cabinet on 12 November 2014 sets out the background and context which resulted in the decision to include this Borough Council owned land, along with some twenty other areas of land, in a Joint Local Planning (JLP) process designed to identify a future development land use supply.

- 1.2 Following Cabinet's decision to include The Butts in the JLP 'Call for Sites' a local residents' letter and petition of some 302 signatories was received 3rd February 2015 (see Appendix 1). The petition was presented to Council on 23 February 2015 which resolved because of the actions requested that matters be referred back to Cabinet for additional consideration.
- 1.3 The stated purpose of the petition was;
- to put on record objection to the Council's (i.e. Cabinet's) decision identifying The Butts as appropriate for alternative use or development once key strategy documents have been finalised.
 - to request the Council to revoke its decision to include The Butts in the JLP exercise or confirm its decision but identifying The Butts as suitable for continuing open space, not as appropriate for alternative use or development.
- 1.4 In summary the petitioners' letter contended;
- The inclusion of The Butts in the JLP exercise suggested that it had been identified as appropriate for alternative use, inferring that its sale for housing development could be anticipated. It was stated that local residents and others who use it had serious concerns about the possible loss of this important amenity and were strongly opposed to its development.
- 1.5 That despite the Council giving assurances that the inclusion of any site which it owned in the JLP process did not mean that a decision had been taken to change its planning policy status, or to sell or redevelop the land, residents inferred that the sale of The Butts and its development for housing purposes could be anticipated.
- 1.6 Reference was made in the letter to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) and several court decisions, the relevance of which were stated to be considered as material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.7 With regards to the report to Cabinet on 12 November 2014 and its decision to participate in the 'Call for Sites' initiative your officers consider that it is very important to distinguish between the Council as an owner of land and property and its statutory function of Local Planning Authority.
- 1.8 As a major landowner the Borough Council has an obligation to participate in the 'Call for Sites' initiative and the inclusion of greenfield sites has been accepted as necessary since it is unlikely sufficient brownfield land areas will become available for redevelopment.
- 1.9 Members are advised that the provision of information to the JLP exercise is not a commitment to release land for development, rather it is to assist in the identification of sites that have the potential to meet differing land use demand requirements over the next 15 – 20 years.
- 1.10 It is quite possible that land submitted and subjected to a thorough, rigorous, comprehensive iterative process will either not be found appropriate to be allocated for development or may even be allocated for open space. In this case members will recall that this parcel of land had been included, along with a number of other parcels of land to the south and west of urban Newcastle, with a view to undertaking a comprehensive master planning exercise in the expectation that a range of appropriate land uses would be identified within a coherent overall plan; such a plan would include appropriate and necessary open space. The forthcoming review of the Green Space Strategy will help to inform the future status of the land. In addition to the above Members will be aware that the subject land lies within the

currently designated Green Belt so any development would require the demonstration of exceptional circumstances.

- 1.11 The purpose of the Council's planning policy function is to monitor the supply and availability of land for future housing and employment development purposes. The outcome the JLP will identify and bring 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 process is evidence-led, key to which is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Employment Land Review, Green Belt Review, Sustainability Appraisal(s), Green Space Strategy and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

2. **Issues / options**

- 2.1 Taking account of the above members need to decide how to proceed and there are three broad options as follows:
- a) Continue to allow The Butts to go forward and be subject to the outcome of masterplanning and JLP process on the basis that such Plans will guide future decision-making as to the use of the subject land.
 - b) Revoke the decision to include The Butts in the JLP exercise and formally advise the local planning authority accordingly.
 - c) Confirm the decision but to identify The Butts as suitable for continuing open space only and not as appropriate for alternative use or development.

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

- 3.1 The identification of land which has 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 land be identified as suitable for alternative use, be approved for release, sale and development then the council would secure a 'best value' capital receipt upon disposal.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal or statutory implications arising directly from this report.

5. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 There are no such issues arising directly from this report.

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There are no such issues arising directly from this report.

7. **Major Risks**

7.1 There are a number of risks which will need to be balanced and weighed against one another in order depending upon the preferred course of action. Significant considerations include the following:

- The risk of under-provision of appropriate green spaces to meet community needs;
- The risk of the Council incurring unnecessary ongoing land maintenance costs;
- The under-utilisation of public assets;
- The risk of considering this site in isolation from other assets in the locality placing a greater burden upon other locations in meeting needs.

8. **Key Decision Information**

8.1 The full Council has delegated consideration of this matter to Cabinet.

9. **Appendices**

9.1 Letter and petition dated 03 February 2015 from Mr T. Cooper

10. **Background Papers**

10.1 Cabinet report dated 12 November 2014 – ‘Council response to the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Plan – ‘Call for Sites’.

10.2 Asset Management Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18

10.3 Cabinet report 10 December 2014 – to undertake a review of the Green Space Strategy.

Re: Agenda: 'Petition', Council's 25 February 2015 meeting

Short written skeleton submission of Tim Cooper (for 302 petitioners):

The petition is before you at paras 2(c) and 7.1 of my 03 February letter which you have.

The reason for this petition:

The Butts is included in the 'call for sites' (the Council's Cabinet 12 November 2014 decision). The decision says, and I quote, 'as appropriate for alternative use or development once key strategy documents have been finalised....'; and 'that officers be authorised to complete and submit pro-forma responses' in the Joint Local Plan 'call for sites'. The response form says: 'Only submit sites where you consider that there is a realistic prospect of development within the next 15 to 20 years'. By authorising a response for The Butts the Council impliedly believes that there is a realistic prospect of development; if there is no prospect a response would not have been authorised. Save that any response deemed necessary for transparency should indicate a proposed use for open space/Green Belt, not 'alternative use or development'.

This wording implies, and the petitioners infer, that 'alternative use or development' involves development, a material change of use, of the current open space/Green Belt use. This may not have been the intention of the Council, owing to this early stage in the new Local Plan, but the wording nevertheless implies possible development at The Butts. Hence the concerns and this petition.

My detailed submission is made in my 03 February letter that you have.

For these reasons I submit the Council should revoke its decision, which implies possible development, or confirm its decision but identify The Butts 'as suitable for continuing open space/Green Belt'.

I accept that The Butts should be included in the 'call for sites' so that the Council can be seen to be transparent and impartial. But it appears the Council has had no reasonable regard, or insufficient reasonable regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and its Practice Guidance.

[Particularly sections 9 (protecting Green Belt land) and 11 NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and PPG2 (Planning Policy Guidance 2) and the Practice Guidance referred to in the attached Appendix]

'Reasonable', meaning failing to take into account a relevant matter or taking into account an irrelevant matter.

The Butts is patently Green Belt and should continue to be in the Green Space Strategy. The Council should have reflected this in its 12 November decision and not imply possible development. The response to the 'call for sites' requires identifying the proposed use; this could be done by stating 'as suitable for continuing open space/Green Belt'. Hence the wording of the petition. I do note that, as at last Monday, the Planning Authority has no response pro-forma from the Council about The Butts.

In taking into account relevant matters it should assist you to have regard to the relatively recent published Practice Guidance for the obligatory Framework.; I attach three extracts as an Appendix.

In conclusion: I trust the Council appreciates the Newcastle residents' concerns at the uncertainty that has been created by the wording of the 12 November 2014 decisions and will revoke or amend those decisions accordingly. I appreciate that you may wish to defer a decision on the petition for more detailed consideration, possibly by the Council's Scrutiny Committee, and, possibly, after you have visited The Butts to see its landscape, amenity, biodiversity, birds, habitat and, in May, carpeted acres of native bluebells.

Tim Cooper

Appendix

From Planning Practice Guidance (06 Oct 2014), linked to the National Planning Policy Framework:

In decision taking, can unmet need for housing outweigh Green Belt Protection?

Unmet housing need (including for traveller sites) is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the “very special circumstances” justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt.

Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt?

The National Planning Policy Framework should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan.

The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. Such policies include those relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives, and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park or the Broads; designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

The Framework makes clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. See para 14 & 83 NPPF

From Methodology – Stage 5: Final evidence base:

Do local planning authorities have to meet in full housing needs identified in needs assessments?

Local authorities should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs.

However, assessing need is just the first stage in developing a Local Plan. Once need has been assessed, the local planning authority should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period, and in so doing take account of any constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE CABINET

22nd July 2015

1. **PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN AGREED BY THE COUNCIL IN
RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE PLANNING PEER REVIEW TEAM**

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

Portfolio: Planning & Housing

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide a progress report on the progress made in implementing the agreed Action Plan.

Recommendations

- (a) That Cabinet note the progress made; and
- (b) That Cabinet agree to the proposals as set out in the report.

Reasons

To ensure that improvements agreed following the receipt of the report of the Planning Peer Review Team are both implemented and maintained, and appropriate staffing resources are provided to the Council's Planning Service to enable it to perform its required functions.

1. **Background**

1.1 The Council commissioned in 2014 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 2014 received a final report/letter from the Peer Review Team (PRT), a copy of which was subsequently circulated to all Members.

1.5 At its meeting on the 15th October 2014 Cabinet resolved

- a) To note the contents of the PRT's report and the recommendations therein;
- b) To 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; and

d) That officers write to the PRT thanking them for their report and confirming the Council's intended approach.

1.6 At its meeting on the 12th November 2014 Cabinet

- a) Agreed to the Action Plan which officers had drawn up in conjunction with Members and stakeholders;
- b) Agreed to receive in 6 months' time a report back on progress made in implementing the agreed Actions; and
- c) Agreed that the Planning Committee similarly receives the same report

2. **Issues**

2.1 The Action Plan agreed by the Council in November 2014 was based upon the 11 key recommendations of the PRT as summarised in their letter of 13 August 2014. These recommendations are set in Appendix 1.

2.2 Each key recommendation was the subject of a number of Actions. The Action Plan identified alternatives that had been considered and rejected, the expected timescale within which the Action was expected to be taken, the lead officer or Member, and the resources likely to be required to implement the Action. The Actions as agreed by Cabinet on the 12th November 2014 are provided in Appendix 2 to this report, together with an indication of whether or not they have been achieved.

2.3 There were 75 agreed Actions, with the majority indicating an expected implementation, or commencement within 6 months of the 12th November 2014 Cabinet meeting. Subsequent to that meeting the decisions of Cabinet were "called in" and were reviewed by the Economic Development & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 27th November 2014. The Scrutiny Committee chose to reject the call-in and to note the original decisions of Cabinet, with the decisions of Cabinet taking effect from the date of this meeting.

2.4 Officers have had a series of bi-monthly meetings with the previous Planning Portfolio holder and the then Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee to review progress made, the most recent such meeting being on 5th May 2015. At each of these meeting progress was reviewed and in particular expected completion dates were rescheduled to take account of circumstances. Out of the 75 agreed Actions, 56 at the time of writing have been achieved.

2.5 Completed actions include:-

- the preparation of a revised Council Plan that reflects the relationship between key strategies and sets out broad strategic policy objectives (Action 1(a))
- the strengthening of the narrative and strategic context of the following Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy (Action 1(a))
- the creation of a Senior Planning Policy Officer post as an alternative to the previously agreed but unfilled Planning Policy Officer post (Action 4(a))
- the review of the Service's pre-application charges as part of the fees and charges review (Action 4(f))
- the reassessment of the Service's targets after seeking members' views (Action 4(g))
- the resolution of the issue of the authority to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (Action 4(j))
- a review of the structure of officer reports on applications to consider whether appropriate focus is being given to local finance considerations (Action 5 (b))

- the Council's full engagement as a landowner in the Local Plan preparation process including the Call for Sites (Action 5 (e))
- the introduction of the proactive presentation of items by officers at the Planning Committee where appropriate (Action 6(b))
- changing the frequency of meetings of the Planning Committee and holding separate meetings to consider planning policy items (Action 6 (c))
- setting up and delivering 6 training events for members of the Planning Committee (Action 7(d))
- various actions with respect to Section 106 procedures (Actions 8 (a) – (k))
- reviewing the Scheme of delegation (Action 9 (a))
- reviewing various procedures of the Committee (Action 9 (b))
- reviewing committee and delegated report structure and content (Action 11(g))
- Improvements to the labelling and accessibility of documents on the Council's Planning website (Actions 11 (n) & (o), and
- central monitoring of responses to correspondence from Parish Councils (Action 11 (q)).

2.6 At the time of writing some 15 of the agreed Actions have however not been completed. In the case of 6 of these 15 there has been progress and the direction of travel is positive. These are identified in Appendix 2. In the case of a further 4 agreed Actions they either do not have a fixed required implementation date, or if they do, that date has not yet been reached. In Appendix 2 they are identified as 'ongoing'.

2.7 This report focuses upon the 15 Actions which have not been fully completed, including those where there has been progress and the direction of travel is positive. Proposals are put forward with respect to each of them.

2.8 Agreed Actions 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) refer to the bringing forward of a report to Cabinet on the development of an interim planning policy statement (IPPS) as part of the Local Plan preparation process, identifying the potential benefits and costs of such an approach including its implications for the existing Local Plan timetable and the weight such a statement could have in development management decisions; if such a proposal were agreed, the bringing forward of a timetable and the required consultation and resources implications; and then the implementation of the decision of Cabinet.

2.8 Your Officer's recommendation is that the IPPS report should now come before Cabinet at its meeting in September, with comments from an earlier Planning Policy Planning Committee on a date yet to be arranged.

2.9 The recommendation from the PRT, arose principally because officers were advising Members, in line with the NPPF, that as the Council was unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, policies on the supply of housing (within the saved Newcastle Local Plan and within the Core Spatial Strategy) had to be considered, at least for so long as this remained the case, as 'out of date'. Whilst the report on the idea of an IPPS has not yet been brought forward to Cabinet Members should note that steps (involving accelerated monitoring/ allocation of staff resources across the Service) have in the interim been taken to ensure that the "new" 5 Year Housing Land Supply position was established as soon as possible after the 1st April 2015 date. The priority given to this was at the expense of the Local Plan programme. A report on that position was submitted to 3rd June 2015 Planning Policy Planning Committee (to the effect that the Council could still not demonstrate a 5YHLS, because it could not identify its housing requirements). The item was deferred by the Committee for further information and advice, and a report back to the Planning Committee will be provided as soon as possible once that advice has been obtained.

Although the bringing forward of a report on the idea of an IPPS will divert staff resources at a critical point in the Joint Local Plan's development, it is accepted by officers that this is a priority, and the intention is to report to the 16th September Cabinet, with the views of the Planning Committee.

Recommendation with respect to these Actions – that these Actions continue to be pursued and that officers be asked to bring a report to the 16th September Cabinet

2.10. Agreed Action 4(b) was to review whether to either create a temporary post of a dedicated planning enforcement support officer or create, by other means, additional capacity for planning officers to progress their enforcement workload

2.11 The review has now taken place. As reported to the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 23rd June, the annual outturn performance for 14/15 with respect to the percentage of complainants being informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control has fallen for the third year running (down to 52%). There are some signs of improvement (performance with respect to the above indicator improved significantly in the last two quarters of 2014/15) and the overall poor performance in 14/15 can at least in part be attributable to the absence for a considerable amount of time of the sole planning enforcement officer due to illhealth. Indications are (Table 1 of Appendix 3)) that the number of new enforcement cases, whilst it fluctuates considerably from month to month has been increasing again over the last year.

2.12 The existing expectation is that planning officers are responsible for recommending whether or not it is expedient to take enforcement action in cases allocated to them once such cases are past the preliminary investigation stage, and for then progressing these cases. However in practice this is not working because of other competing demands upon the officers' time (i.e. pre-application enquiries, applications, appeals and applications for the approval of details required by conditions). The progression of enforcement cases is consistently being given less priority than it requires.

2.13 To deal with this an input of additional dedicated staff resource at an appropriate level (i.e. a professional planning officer rather than an additional investigation and advisory officer) is now considered to be required – the intention being that such an officer would be the case officer for all applications for retrospective planning applications and progress all enforcement cases once the investigation stage had been completed. Such an officer would it is envisaged report to the Development Management Team Manager and that the post would be at a Senior Planning Officer level, thus helping provide a more resilient service.

Recommendation with respect to Action 4(b)

That a new post of Senior Planning Officer (Enforcement) be created at Grade 9 plus any appropriate Market Supplement

2.14 Agreed Action 4(c) was to explore the idea of creating a 'premium' or 'fast track' service for development management, through a report to Cabinet.

2.15 No progress has been made to date on delivering this 'action'. Although it was part of the Action Plan and could potentially have brought in new resources, this is not considered a priority at present for the Service, is considered to be unachievable at present, and your Officer's recommendation is that this action be taken no further.

Recommendation with respect to Action 4(c) - That this 'action' be taken no further

2.16 Agreed Action 4(j) was to consider the potential use again of consultants to address short term Development Management staffing issues

2.17 Performance figures despite the coming into post of the replacement Planning Officer in September 2014 and return in February 2015 from long term sick leave of another planning officer, are still not moving in desired direction. A report on the position with respect to the suite of 6 performance targets for Development Management noted that the outturn figures for 2014/15 showed that the Councils' targets for 2014/15 had not been achieved in 5 out of the 6 cases. A report to Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny (FRAPS) Committee on 15th June confirmed that with respect to two out of the three dashboard indicators for the Planning Service (all of which are concerned with the speed of the determination of planning applications) performance for the last quarter of 2014/15 was below the Council's targets.

2.18 The number of valid applications being received is on a gradual increase – as indicated on Table 2 in Appendix 3. Tables 3-5 in that Appendix show inter alia a significant and sustained increase in the number of applications for Minor Development (one step down in difficulty from applications for Major development) and a partial recovery in the number of applications for Major Development. Tables 6-8 in that Appendix show the trends in the other principal workstreams that make up the workload of the Development Management Section.

2.19 Your Officer's view is that the only way to ensure that performance gets back onto track and to deal with the various backlogs, is to bring in additional short term additional staffing resources. In the past use has been made of self-employed consultants and this, if members are in agreement with the principle, would be the most likely option to be utilised. This enables the Service to bring in such assistance quickly, to effect an immediate improvement in the situation, and then to end such arrangements as soon as appropriate.

Recommendation with respect to Action 4 (j) – That Officers be authorised to spend up to £20,000 on the securing of short term assistance to the Development Management function

2.20 Agreed Action 6(a) was to review the remit, membership (widened to include all members of the Planning Committee) and business of the Strategic Planning Consultative Group, involving the Group in that review and bringing a report to Cabinet, with comments from the Planning Committee.

2.21 A report was brought to 10th February Strategic Planning Consultative Group concerning this matter and your officers have been discussing the available options with the new Planning Portfolio holder and the Chair of Planning. It is now proposed to bring a report on this matter to the 16th September Cabinet, with the comments of the Planning Committee being obtained beforehand.

Recommendation with respect to Action 6(a) - That officers take steps to ensure that this item comes before Cabinet at its meeting on 16th September

2.22 Agreed Action 7(i) was to put on wider training sessions for non-planning committee members on probity, member officer relations, etc.

2.23 Although Member Services have yet to make any arrangements for such wider training it should be noted the first training event for members of the Planning Committee will include a section on probity, and that if there are spare spaces, they will be available for non-planning committee members – numbers will however be limited. The Member Training and Development Officer is in the process of sourcing appropriate training

Recommendation with respect to Action 7(i) – That appropriate training be provided if it can be sourced

2.24 Agreed Action 8(a) was to review local validation requirements to determine whether more applications should require to be accompanied by ‘Heads of terms’ (of possible legal agreements that might be required) or whether actual draft agreements should be required, as a precondition of validation

2.25 The Council will have to complete a review of its local validation requirements by October 2015, so in the interests of efficiency it has been decided that this ‘action’ should be incorporated within that wider review.

Recommendation with respect to Action 8(a) – that this action be incorporated in the statutorily required review of the whole Local validation list that must be completed before October 2015

2.26 Agreed Action 8(h) was to introduce a Service Level Agreement between Legal and Planning Services setting standards for response times to instructions/requests for clarification (with respect to Section 106 agreements)

2.27 Since the time of the Planning Peer Review there has been a substantial decrease in the number of Section 106 agreements waiting to be completed so the non-delivery of this action has had a very limited impact, although the action remains appropriate

Recommendation with respect to Action 8(h) – that when resources permit such a SLA be drawn up and introduced

2.28 Agreed Action 8(o) was to invite key consultees to enter into a Service Level Agreement as already in place between the Borough Council and the Highway Authority, with respect to development management functions

2.29 This is an action which principally impacts upon stakeholders involved in applications for Major development, so the non-delivery of this action has had a very limited impact

Recommendation with respect to Action 8(o) - that when resources permit such agreements be progressed, if the other party shows a willingness to enter into such an SLA

2.30 Agreed Action 8(q) was that draft conditions should be prepared within 2 weeks of Committee in all cases (where approval agreed) and also be the subject of consultation with the developer

2.31 Whilst the Government has drawn back from making consultation with applicants regarding the terms of draft conditions of planning permissions for Major development a statutory requirement it is undoubted good practice so it should remain an appropriate ambition for the Service. Whilst there are individual examples of good practice within the Service such early drafting and consultation is not universally occurring, at least in the case of those permissions whose release is subject to the prior completion of planning obligations. It is hoped that by the provision of additional staff resources intended to relieve at least in the short term the workload backlog this will enable an associated improvement in performance in the drafting of conditions.

Recommendation with respect to Action 8(q) – that a new date (December 2015) be set as the target by which this practice should be embedded within the Service

2.32 Agreed Action 9(c) was to review the Planning Committee members protocol seeking the required approvals for any changes

2.33 A preliminary presentation on the changes required has been made to the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) and it has been established this is a matter for Council which it will not get to until its 9th September meeting at the earliest (via CRWG, FRAP and Planning Committee).

Recommendation with respect to Action 9(c) – that officers take steps to ensure that this item comes before Council at its meeting on 9th September if possible

2.34 Agreed Action 10(a) was to seek external legal advice, and Action 10(b) to bring a report to Cabinet, on the issue of pooling post April 2015 (of Section 106 contributions) and to revisit the advice given to the December 2013 Cabinet that adoption of a CIL Charging Schedule could not proceed in light of the decision to abandon the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan & to instead proceed with the new Local Plan.

2.35 This matter is now being progressed.

Recommendation with respect to Actions 10(a) and 10(b) – that appropriate steps be taken to bring a report on this matter to Cabinet on 16th September

2.36 Conclusion

Whilst considerable progress has been made in implementing the Action Plan (with some 56 'actions' having been completed and a further 6 having a positive direction of travel) and almost all of these have involved officers of the Planning Service it is evident that the Planning Service has found it difficult to do this whilst at the same time maintaining performance levels in other areas, and several major actions were not completed when they should have been. The change in the frequency of planned meetings of the Planning Committee (from 3 to 4 weeks), designed to create some headroom for such developments has not proved as beneficial in this respect as had been hoped – in part because additional meetings (of the Committee) have had to be held.

2.40 Your Officer considers that the problems the Service has experienced in progressing the action plan reflects in part the difficulties which both the Head of Planning and the two Business Managers in progressing matters that develop the Service whilst at the same time dealing with "day to day" matters. It is considered that if resources permit there would be merit in actively pursuing the option of employing a 0.5 FTE practice manager or similar to provide assistance to these three officers.

Recommendation - That a new 0.5 FTE post of practice manager to the Planning Service (Grade 8) be created

3. Reasons for the recommendations

3.1 The recommendations provided above are considered those required to ensure that improvements agreed following the receipt of the report of the Planning Peer Review Team are both implemented and maintained, and appropriate staffing resources are provided to the Council's Planning Service to enable it to perform its required functions

4. Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report with respect to additional staffing resources, if accepted, have financial implications for the Council's 2015/16 budget and that for subsequent years, as there is no current budgetary provision for such budget expenditure

4.2 The financial implications are as follows

For 2015/16

Up to £20,000 for the employment of consultants

Up to £21,133 (6 months salary costs plus NI and pension costs for a Grade 9 appointment (at top of Grade) plus assumed 4 spinal column points Market Supplement)

Up to £8,450 (6 months salary costs plus NI and pension costs for a Grade 8 0.5 FTE appointment (at top of Grade))

Total for 2015/16 – up to £49,583

2016/17 and thereafter

Up to £42,266 (Annual salary costs plus NI and pension costs for a Grade 9 appointment (at top of Grade) plus assumed continued 4 spinal column points Market Supplement)

Up to £16,900 (Annual salary costs plus NI and pension costs for a Grade 8 0.5 FTE appointment (at top of Grade))

Total – up to £59,166 p.a. (+ any subsequent pay award)

4.3 In respect of the estimated £50k additional expenditure in the current financial year, in the first instance this will be financed from any additional planning fees over and above the budgeted amount, together with savings from minor staffing changes elsewhere within the service. The balance will then have to be met from the Council's Contingency Reserve.

4.4 In respect of the ongoing £60k this will need to be built in to the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy which is due to be considered by Cabinet in October.

5. Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities

5.1 The Action Plan has impacted 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. There are no legal or statutory implications associated with the recommendations of this report

7. Major Risks

7.1 The Government has established a system of designation of poorly performing planning authorities, the consequence of which is that applications for Major development can apply direct to the Planning Inspectorate rather than to the Local Planning Authority with the associated loss of local decision making and revenue (the application fee being payable to the Planning Inspectorate rather than the Local Planning Authority. At present designation is based upon a performance level that falls beyond two criteria – one relating to the speed of determination of applications for Major development and the other relating to the Council's performance on appeal – a quality measure. On neither basis is the Borough Council currently at risk of designation, although performance against the quality measure could vary considerably. The Government have however announced an intention to further lift the performance threshold below which authorities will be designated, and are proposing further criteria for designation – which the Council would be at risk of not meeting.

7.2 The Planning Peer Review 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.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 The following Appendices are attached to this report

- **Appendix 1** – The key recommendations of the Planning Peer Review Team's report
- **Appendix 2** – Actions agreed by Cabinet November 2014 with achievement as at 10th July 2015
- **Appendix 3** - Development Management workload elements

9. Key Decision Information

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

10. Previous Cabinet Decisions

10.1 15th October 2014, Cabinet, Agenda item 10 – Minutes published

10.1 12th November 2014, Cabinet, Agenda item 4 - Minutes published

11. Background Papers

11.1 Planning Peer Review report dated 13th August 2014


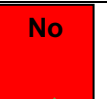

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Appendix 1 to 22nd July 2015 Cabinet Report - Summary of Recommendations of the Planning Peer Review Team






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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Planning Peer Review Action Plan – Progress on Actions as at July 2015







Key	Some progress but action not completed	
	Action not commenced/progressed yet.	
	Action completed/achieved.	








PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
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.	
(b) More active use of the Council's media and communications resources showcasing good work	Ongoing








PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
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	
3. Develop an interim planning policy statement (IPPS) 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	
(b) If proposal is agreed by Cabinet, report back (to next Cabinet) with a timetable for the preparation of such a Statement, identifying required consultation and resource implications	
(c) Implement the decision of Cabinet	
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).	
(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 Policy Officer post (bringing Planning Policy team up to 4 – Business Manager, 2 Seniors and 1 Non-Senior Officer)	







PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(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	
(c) Explore idea of creating a premium or fast track service for development management – report to Cabinet	
(d) Engage with Staffordshire One Place initiative (inter authority trading of services)	Ongoing
(e) Explore whether any scope to utilise SOTCC's planning enforcement services on a temporary basis	
(f) Consider whether to make an application for Neighbourhood Planning Grant, to provide additional resources to support potential Neighbourhood Development plans	Ongoing
(g) Review of pre-application charges as part of fees and charges review	
(h) Process review to identify tasks that should no longer be undertaken	
(i) Reassess current targets in the 2014 Service Plan, seeking member views	








PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(j) Consider potential use again of consultants to address short term DM staffing issues, requiring report to EMT	
(k) Resolve issue of authority to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and explore, in appropriate cases, whether use of PPA could bring in additional income	
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	
(b) Include within review of decision reports structure, specific section on finance considerations and weight to be given to them	
(c) Training for Planning Committee and officers on local finance considerations as a material consideration in the determination of applications	
(d) Publication of guidance on status and weight to be accorded to local finance considerations in planning decisions	
(e) Council as a landowner engages fully in the Local Plan preparation process including the Call for Sites	







PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
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	
(b) Introduce Proactive presentation of items by officers at Planning Committee when appropriate	
(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	
(d) Decide whether to reschedule at same time, onto a four weekly cycle CAWP, SPCG, & Development Team meetings	
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	
(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	
(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	








PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(c) Continue with feedback reports including on appeal and costs decisions and annual appeal performance reports to Planning Committee	
(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) and 4 bespoke sessions for Planning Committee members only delivered probably externally rather than in house	
(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	
(f) Encourage members even more than is already done to take up conference, training and similar opportunities	
(g) Chair and Vice Chair to be sent on courses specific to that role	
(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	
(i) Putting on wider training sessions for non- planning committee members on probity, member officer relations, etc	
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	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
<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	
(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	
(c) Renewed focus on clarity of instructions to Legal and completion of all sections of 'instructions to legal' memo	
(d) Confirmation of receipt of instructions to legal to be sent in all cases to Planning (client care memo)	
(e) Informing SCC where party to the agreement of the terms of the resolution of the Planning Committee immediately post Committee	
(f) Introduce officer check in Planning that prior instructions to Legal Services has been undertaken in all possible cases	
(g) Legal to Introduce early check procedure of instructions received	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(h) Introduce Service Level agreement between Legal and Planning setting standards for response times to instructions/ requests for clarification	
(i) Planning Service to provide instructions and comments on drafts to legal, including where other departments involved	
(j) Resume monthly S106 meetings	
(k) Consideration to be given to use of external solicitors where Legal services do not have capacity to act upon instructions	
<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)	
(m) DM Team leader and SPOs to start doing validation of Majors	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(n) Invite Education Authority to become part of the Council's Development Team	
(o) Inviting other key consultees to enter into a Service Level Agreement, as already in place between the BC and the Highway Authority	
(p) Project Management approach to Major developments	
(q) Draft conditions to be prepared within 2 weeks of Committee in all cases and to be subject to consultation with developer	
9. Re-examine the scheme of delegation to allow the Planning Committee to focus on major applications	
(a) Review Scheme of delegation with particular reference to telecom apparatus, consultations by other authorities, historic building grant applications	
(b) Review of public speaking arrangements, guillotine on late representations, site visit protocol and withdrawal of call in procedures	
(c) Review of Planning Committee Members Protocol, seeking approval of the Planning Committee	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
10. Review the decision to suspend work on community infrastructure levy	
(a) Seek external legal advice on the issue of pooling post April 2015 and revisit advice given to December 13 Cabinet that adoption of CIL charging Schedule could not proceed in light of decision to abandon Site Allocations & Policies Local Plan and proceed with new Local Plan	
(b) Bring report to Cabinet at earliest opportunity	
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)	
(b) Depending on above reintroduce Direct Dial perhaps with number available only to members (and agents?)	
(c) Ensure all staff working @home have access to phone	
(d) Review current appointment based system and consider alternatives	

PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(e) Review use of Customer Service agents as front end of the planning service	
(f) Customer Service training for all planning staff	
(g) Review Delegated and Committee reports, particularly for effectiveness and use of Plain English – remembering who reports are for	
(h) Include officer details on adverts/weekly lists/consultation letters/emails	
(i) Statement of Community Involvement, review	
(j) Continue support for Parish council training/ attendance at parish/town council forum as recently undertaken	
(k) Programme of annual visits by Head of Planning, Development Management Manager and Planning Policy Manager to Parish and Town Councils	
(l) Offer to established clerks opportunity to visit Planning service (as already done for new parish clerks)	Ongoing







PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 th November 2014	ACHIEVED
(m) Improve DM office layout and make it clearer who is who for visitors	
(n) Encouraging members to meet officers in reception in more suitable setting	
(o) Renewed focus on labelling of documents on website	
(p) Publication of guide to Planning website and in particular Public Access aspect	
(q) 6 month central monitoring of correspondence from Parish Councils	
(r) Review approach to customer satisfaction surveys	

Table 1

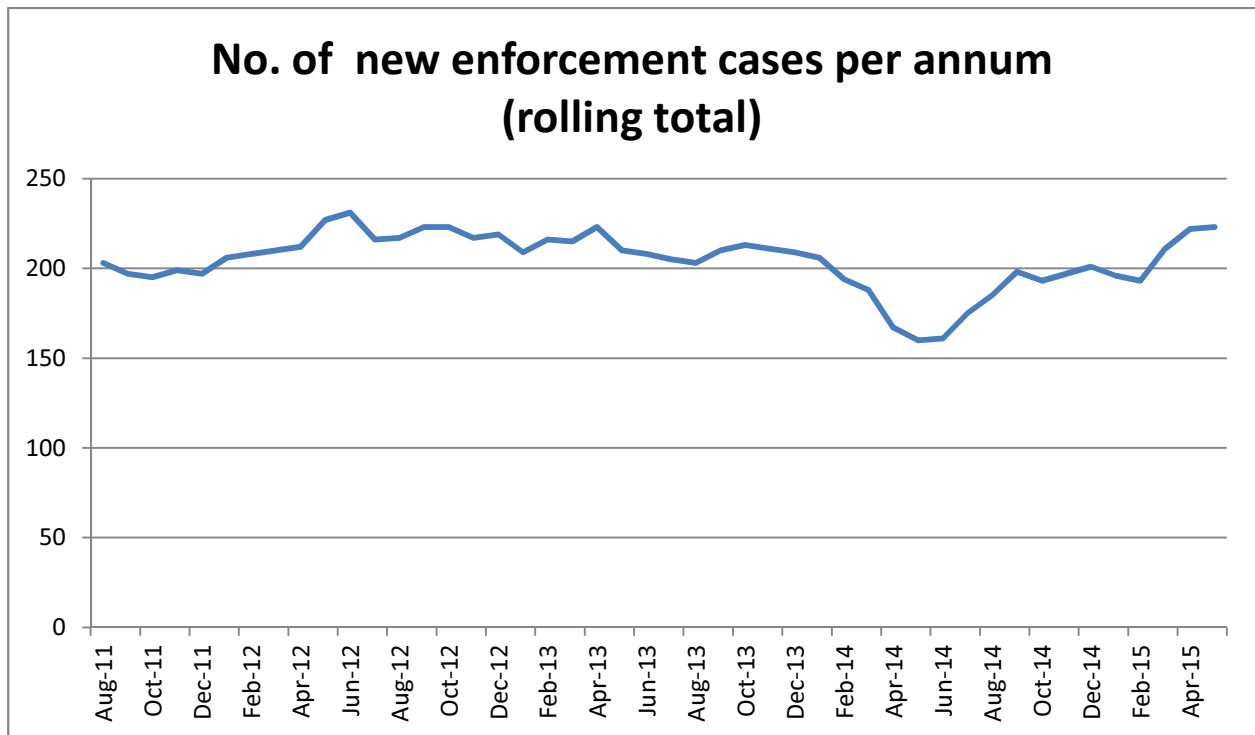


Table 2

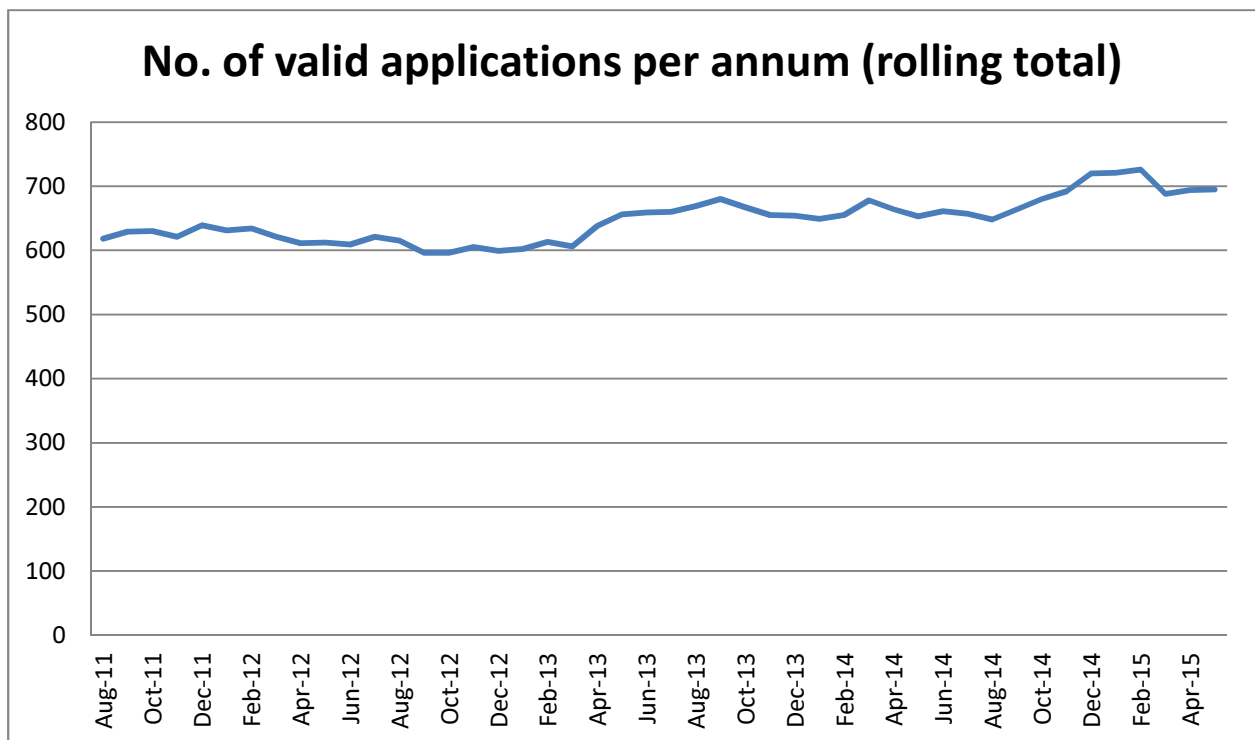


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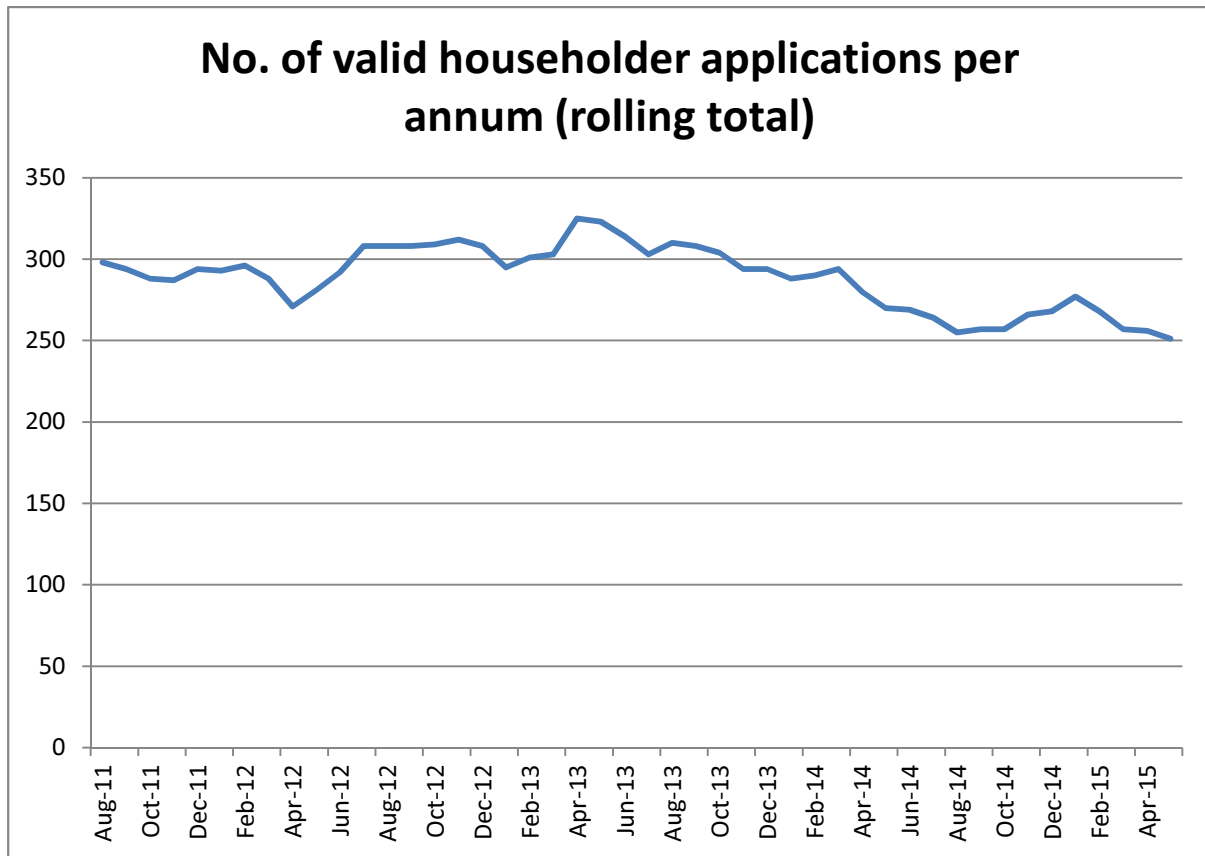


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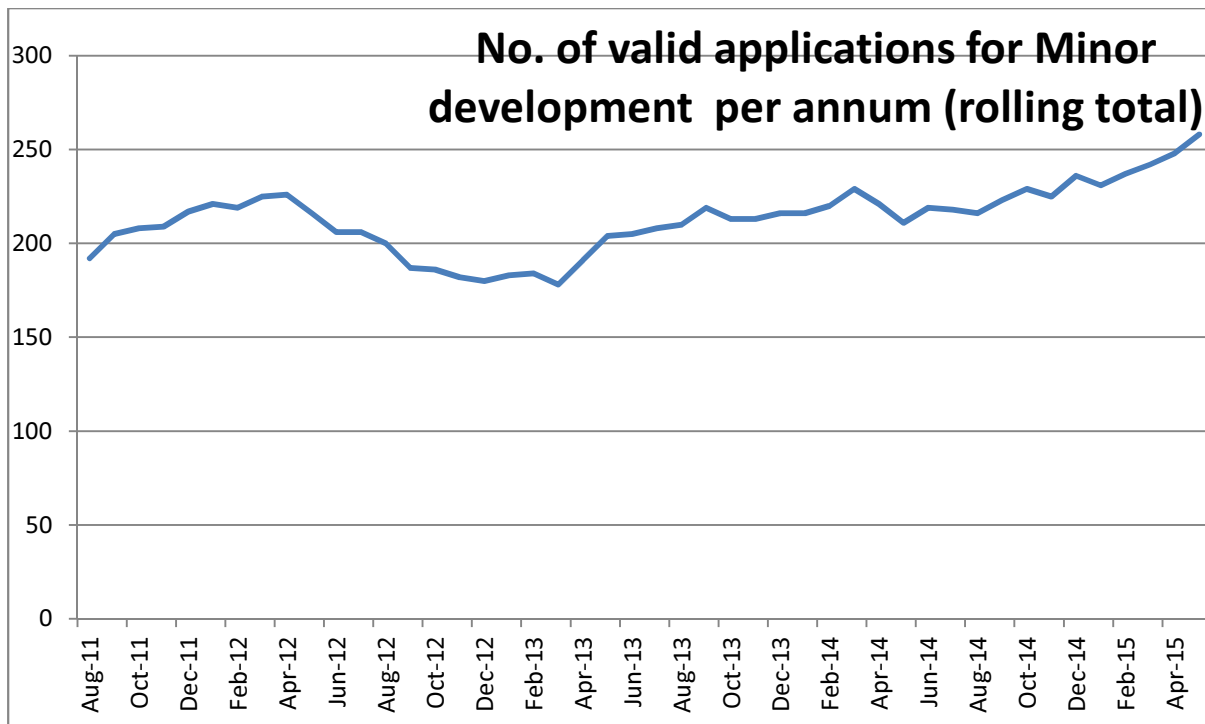


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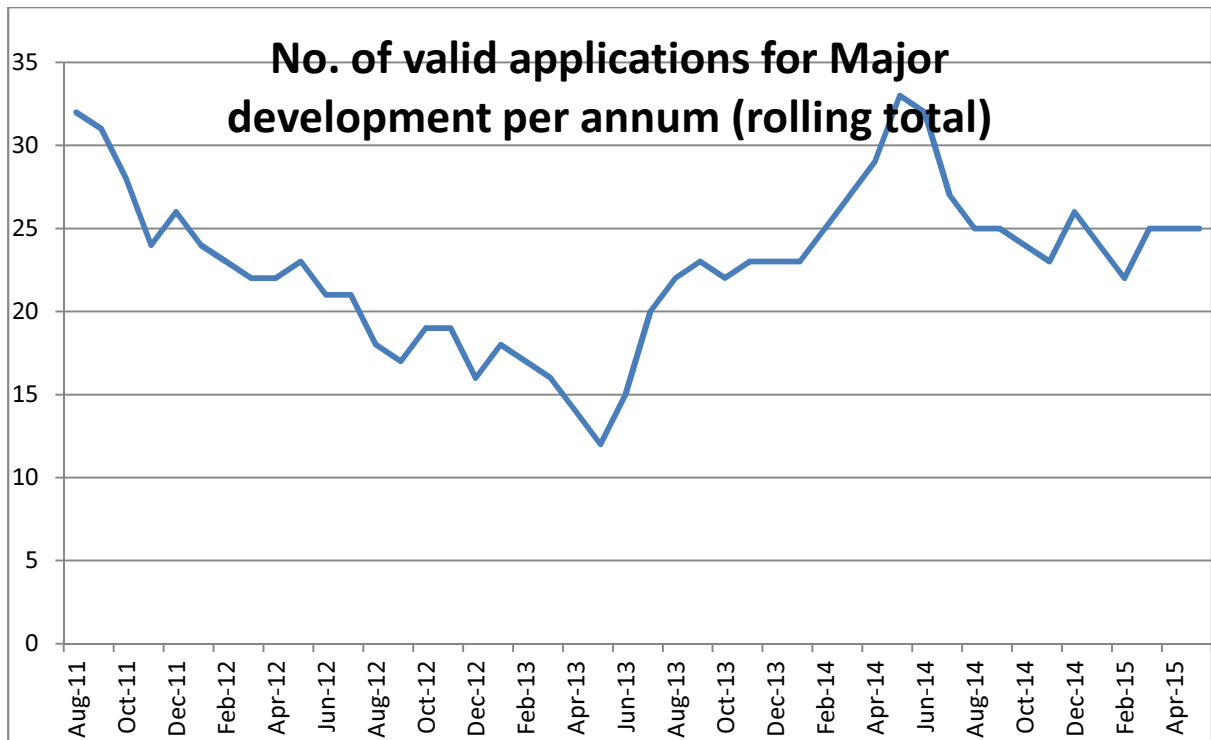


Table 6 – preapplication enquiries

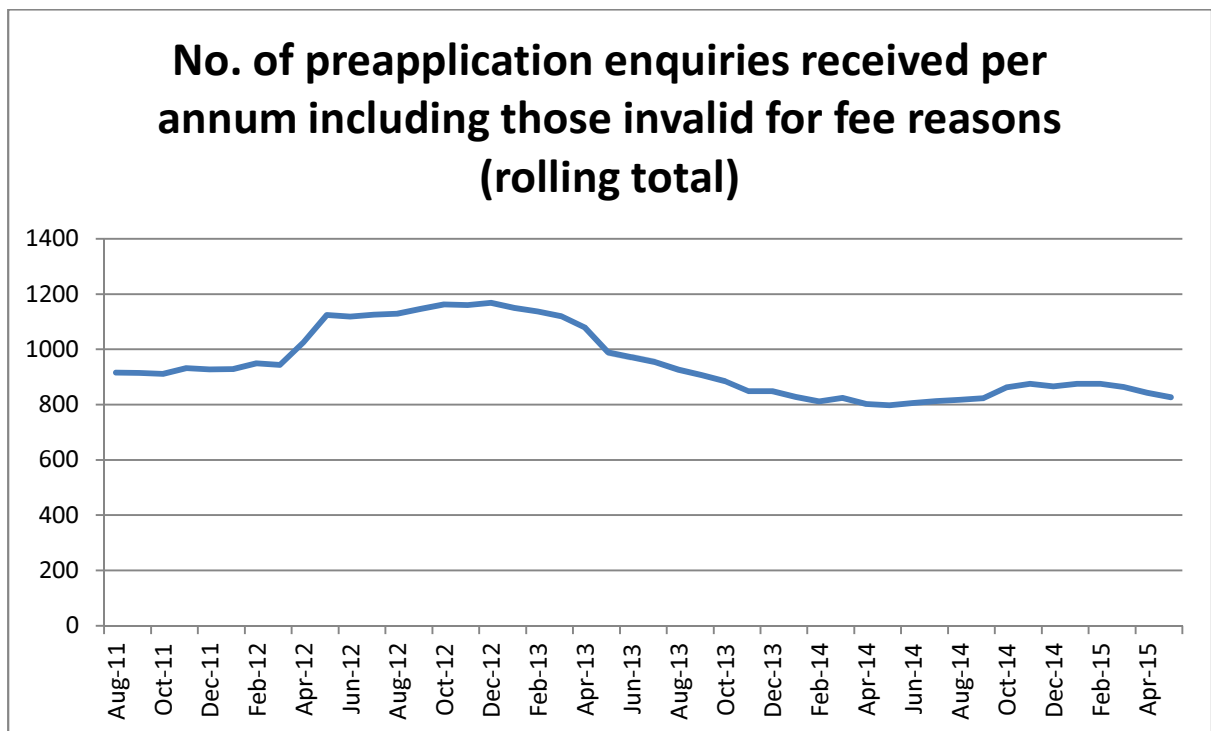


Table 7 number of appeals

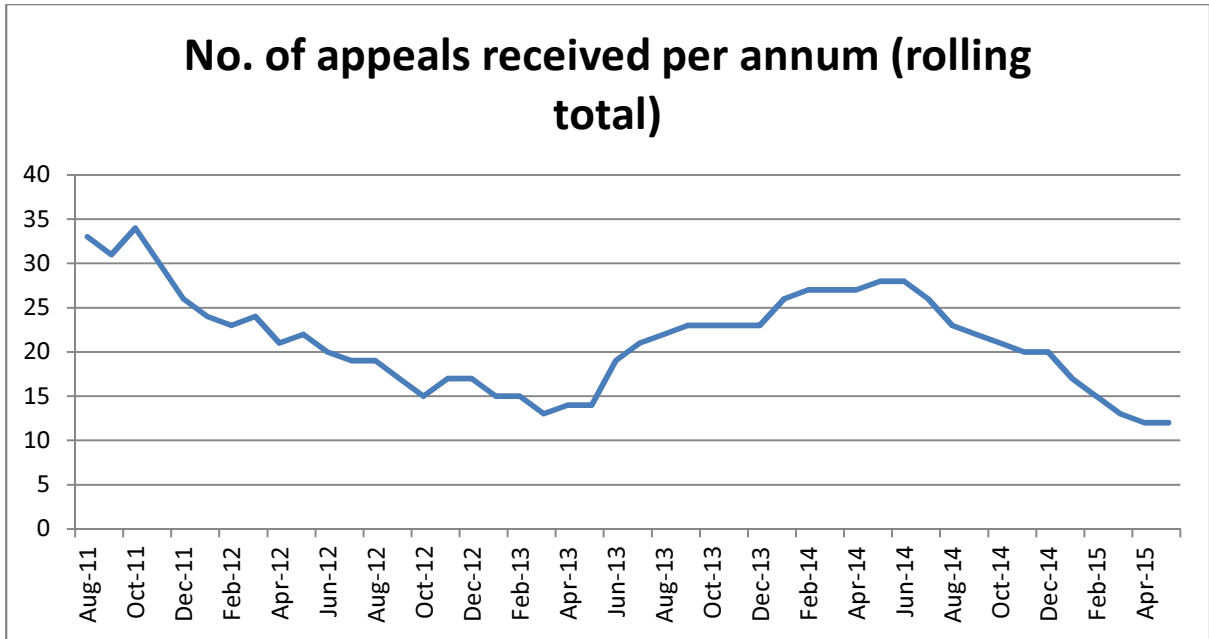
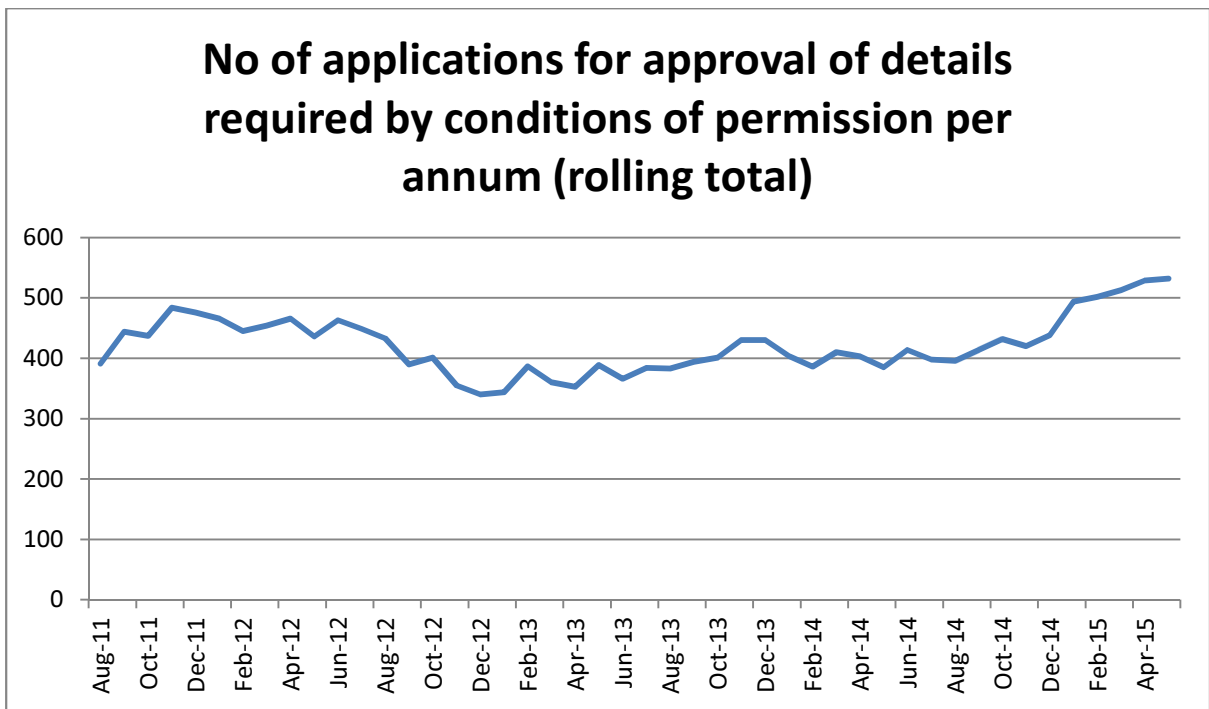


Table 8 number of condition applications



PILOT PROJECT FOR COLLABORATIVE WORKING ON PRINT AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

Submitted by: Head of Communications

Portfolio: Communications, Policy and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To outline proposals for closer working relationships with partners on print and associated services in a way which continues to meet the needs of the Borough Council in an efficient and effective manner.

Recommendations

a) Cabinet approves proposals for a pilot project for collaborative working involving print and associated services.

b) Cabinet requests a further report be brought back which gives an overview and evaluation of the first six months' of the pilot project with recommendations for any further action.

Reasons

As pressures continue to grow on local government finances it is vital that councils look at alternative methods of delivering services and securing jobs in the public sector. Working closely with neighbouring councils to share costs and resources while ensuring continued access to required services is something Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council already does in some service areas. This proposal is a further example of how working closely with partners in some service area can continue to meet both customer and the Council's needs and expectations with diminishing resources.

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2014, trade unions were informed that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council were to begin discussions on the potential for collaborative working on print and associated services. This would include print, graphic design, photography and video production.
- 1.2 The unions were informed that staff likely to be involved would be given briefings to outline thoughts behind the project. They were also advised that scoping discussions would take place to evaluate the potential for working more closely in these specialist service areas.
- 1.3 Detailed assessments have taken place involving officers from both councils with these joint discussions involving reviews and assessments of all available equipment, staff and their skills base, annual workloads/print volumes, budgets, procurement issues and importantly requirements and aspirations moving forward.

- 1.4 Officers are now in a position to recommend that Cabinet agrees to implement a pilot project for collaborative working between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council on print and associated services.
- 1.5 Cabinet is asked to note that a report on this matter is also being drafted by Stoke-on-Trent City Council for its Cabinet to consider and if agreement to continue is secured at both authorities then officers will begin the process for preparing to establish the pilot project.
2. **Issues**
- 2.1 A report by the Local Government Association – **Under Pressure (How Councils Are Planning For Future Cuts)** – said: *“Councils are currently half way through a scheduled 40 per cent cut in funding from central Government. Having delivered £10 billion of savings in the three years from 2011/12, local authorities have to find the same savings again in the next two years. As a result of these cuts councils in many areas will not have enough money to meet all their statutory responsibilities.”*
- 2.2 It goes on to state that councils are facing pressures on three sides which have imposed, and will continue to impose, huge pressures on budgets. These are:-
- Funding pressures: A 40 per cent real terms cut to core Government funding over the life of the Parliament; consistently reducing Council Tax referendum thresholds; £1bn cut to local Council Tax support funding to April 2016.
 - Cost pressures: Care service reforms (deferred payment schemes, social care cost cap); additional public health duties; an ageing population; increasing costs of concessionary fares schemes; pressures on social housing services; inflation.
 - Other pressures: Business rate appeals; welfare reform, including the benefit cap, social sector size criteria and Universal Credit; potential changes to interest rates
- 2.3 It is against this testing financial backdrop that councils up and down the country are looking at new models of service delivery which can fulfil a variety of criteria – meeting statutory responsibilities; satisfying user/customer needs and expectations; the requirements of councils themselves; efficient and effective use of public finance.
- 2.4 Shared services, joint ventures and collaborative working are all means of delivering the required outcomes outlined above and certainly, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council have a record of working closely together for the benefit of the people of North Staffordshire.
- 2.5 Both councils have defined and well-established print, graphic design and photography requirements which will continue for the foreseeable future.
- 2.6 Collaborative working can help to meet these requirements and also has the potential to deliver savings and efficiencies through a more joined-up approach to the procurement and delivery of the services outlined.

3. **Options considered**

- 3.1 ***Option one*** – both councils continue to run separate print and associated services.
- 3.2.1 Both councils currently have their own print and graphic design capabilities with teams responsible for producing in-house work and project managing purchased work.
- 3.2.2 Print - some work, such as high volume print runs or specific finishing requirements – are occasionally put out to the private sector by the Borough Council. During the 2014/15 financial year this work was valued at around £21,000 and was for two distinct service areas - specialist materials for the elections (such as canvas forms and ballot papers) as well as volume printing for the recycling and waste service.
- 3.2.3 Graphic design – the vast majority of the Borough Council’s requirements are met via the in-house design and print team with only occasional work of relatively low value – such as pop-up banners or economic development signage bought in.
- 3.2.4 Photography and video production – all of the Borough Council’s requirements are currently met via the in-house design and print team and external work has not been procured for at least three years.
- 3.2.5 The future of the Civic Offices in Newcastle is currently being considered following the Borough Council’s decision to offer to move out of the Civic Offices to enable the wider regeneration of the Ryecroft area of Newcastle town centre.
- 3.2.6 The high volume print machines in the print room are leased from Xerox and these leases are due to expire in July 2016. One is a colour machine and the other mono and together during the course of the year they produce on average well in excess of two million prints. In the short-term these would be transferred to the pilot project to ensure continued usage and the Borough Council’s requirements continue to be met.
- 3.3 ***Option two*** - develop a pilot project around collaborative working.
- 3.3.1 A joint vision statement was produced by officers at the beginning of the scoping discussions and this outlined the goal for a potential project. The goal would be to save money, create opportunities and promote partnership working.
- 3.3.2 There is obvious potential for efficiencies through a collaborative project with savings likely to be generated as a result of economies of scale in procurement, revised procurement arrangements at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, reduced overheads, remove duplication in machinery and cost etc.
- 3.3.3 The aim is to have work relating to all print and associated service requirements from both teams being procured through the pilot project. This system is already in place at the Borough Council through the use of a specific cost centre which has a limited number of staff who can authorise print, design and photography work.
- 3.3.4 Stoke-on-Trent City Council has embarked on a similar centralised control process to ensure maximum use of the in-house collaborative project. Changes will also be made to current procurement rules at the city council to ensure maximum efficient and effective working in the joint venture.

- 3.3.5 An evaluation has been made of all staff skills, machinery, print and graphic design requirements and other associated services such as photography and video production.
- 3.3.6 Over a period of time the goal will be to upskill all staff involved in the project to ensure the needs of both councils continue to be met.
- 3.3.7 In the longer-term this is likely to put the venture on a solid and sustainable footing which should enable it to explore the potential for more partnership working with other public or third sector organisations.
- 3.4 **Option three** – procure print and associated services externally.
- 3.4.1 In these very difficult financial times, it is important that the public sector considers all possible options when reviewing the future direction and provision of all services. As a result, the potential for sourcing print, graphic design, photography and video production work externally has to be considered.
- 3.4.2 Although there have been some reductions in local print capacity through the closure of some providers which have previously worked with the councils, there is still a well-developed local market place for the services the pilot project would provide.
- 3.4.3 Spot pricing – the process by which individual, one-off print jobs are put to the market - can result in some initial savings as print providers look to secure work to ensure maximum usage of their resources. But in the longer-term, and taking into consideration the volumes of work which both councils require, this would not be an option as procurement thresholds are likely to be breached and contractual arrangements would have to be put in place which negates the spot pricing effect.
- 3.4.4 Both councils currently have in-house teams who work very closely with internal customers to ensure deadlines are met and jobs delivered. They also know the needs and requirements of their public sector clients. Without the in-house provision there would be a need for greater rigour around the deadlines for placement of work, amendments and copy changes. Currently these do not incur a cost but if all work were outsourced there could be significant additional sums paid on large volumes of work resulting from either missed deadlines or required amendments.
- 3.4.5 Outsourcing print and associated services would result in the loss of public sector jobs.

4. Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution

- 4.1 The preferred option is option two which requests Cabinet support for the development of a pilot project around collaborative working for print and associated services.
- 4.2 The project should illustrate the potential for efficiencies for both councils as it will reduce overheads – such as equipment, utility bills – and improve procurement opportunities through economies of scale.

- 4.3 The pilot project would be based at a location in Stoke-on-Trent and this would deal with the issue of the future location of print and associated services if the establishment of a Civic Hub proceeds.
- 4.4 In the longer-term, a team providing a range of skills to both councils – with the potential to liaise with other public and third sector partners – will provide a more sustainable solution for the respective workforces.
- 4.5 This would result in public sector jobs being protected while allowing the authority to explore a new and more sustainable – as well as more efficient and effective - way of working using existing staff resources.
- 4.6 A pilot project which eventually resulted in a joint venture would present opportunities to further develop the skills of those involved.
- 4.7 Outsourcing all of the print and associated service requirements of both councils would not result in all staff leaving the teams. Specialist buyers – who effectively project manage the commissioning, purchase and delivery of all requirements - would be required to oversee the delivery of services. If they were not in place then the responsibility would pass to individual services that would not have the specialist knowledge and perhaps even the resources to ensure timely delivery of work.
- 4.8 At the moment the two council teams deliver a combined total of 5.6 million mono page prints each year, 1.3 million colour and 2.5 million litho.
- 4.9 There would be increased opportunity for staff development as there would be a greater requirement for all of the skills currently in the Borough Council team.
- 4.10 If Cabinet agrees to the pilot project then it is likely this will be based initially at premises that Stoke-on-Trent City Council's current unit occupies in Stoke close to the A500 and Stoke railway station.

5. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 A pilot project for print and associated services would contribute to the Borough Council's corporate priority of delivering high quality, community driven services.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 gives the Council, as a local authority, the power to supply, goods and services to any "public body". This gives authority for staff from the two councils taking part in this pilot project to carry out work for both councils and not just the one directly employing them.
- 6.2 The General Power of Competence (GPC) was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and took effect in February 2012. In simple terms, it gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. It applies to all principal councils (district, county and unitary councils etc). It replaces the well-being powers in England that were provided under the Local Government Act 2000.

6.3 As a result of moving Borough Council staff to a proposed new place of work there is a requirement to carry out a formal consultation with staff and trade unions over the proposals. It is proposed that this should be a 30-day consultation.

6.4 If this process was completed in a way which presented no obstacles to the proposals, then it is recommended the pilot project begins at the earliest opportunity.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no equality issues to highlight at this moment in time.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 The Borough Council would incur some initial costs if the pilot project were to go ahead. In the first year these would relate to staff travel as well as moving the two high volume devices currently leased from Xerox.

8.2 Costs for the temporary transfer of the devices are currently being finalised but the initial quote is for £650 for each of the devices plus £200 per hour for an analyst to oversee the transfer and installation.

8.3 The Borough Council is likely to incur some small additional ongoing costs resulting from delivery arrangements for printed materials to be brought back from the joint venture's base in Stoke to the Civic Offices. Discussions are currently going on with colleagues at Stoke-on-Trent City Council to gauge the potential for its existing delivery arrangements to be extended and the likely costs. Whatever the outcome it is not thought this part of the project will add significant cost.

8.4 During the course of the pilot project, existing lines of management and budget responsibility will remain as they are although the pilot should identify how this may be resolved further down the line if it is successful. As the pilot progresses it is anticipated other issues may also arise as the joint working takes shape and these will be highlighted to Cabinet when the evaluation report is produced later in the year.

8.5 If a successful joint venture does grow from the pilot project then the Borough Council would no longer require its Print Replacement Fund which currently holds £50,000. Future purchases and capital requirements of the venture would be dealt with jointly by both councils on a pro-rata basis relating to volumes and requirements.

8.6 Built within the Borough Council's budget assumptions for 2015/16 is a proposal that the current annual £8,000 contribution to the Print Replacement Fund ceases.

8.7 Stoke-on-Trent City Council is amending its print procurement arrangements to ensure the responsibility for delivery of all print work will be through the joint venture. Currently, a three quote procurement system – one of which is the internal quote – is in operation for print related expenditure. Ensuring the joint venture is the only source for all print and associated service requirements for both councils – resource and technical considerations aside - should enable significant efficiencies to be achieved.

- 8.8 A similar way of working was introduced at the Borough Council several years ago and this has resulted in a 66 per cent reduction in the corporate budget line without any detriment to residents or service delivery.
- 8.9 The Borough Council is actively considering proposals related to the regeneration project at Ryecroft which could impact on its accommodation requirements. This may result at some point in the future in a move to a new Civic Hub with partners.
- 8.10 This high quality office environment will not include provision for a print unit and therefore further options in addition to this proposed pilot project will be considered to ensure the Council continues to be in a position to meet its requirements for print and associated services.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 A risk assessment profile has been completed with the Communications Service Risk Champion and is available on GRACE, the corporate risk software system.

10. **Key Decision Information**

- 10.1 Whether to approve proposals for a pilot project for collaborative working for print and associated services is not a key decision as defined in the Council's Constitution. However, it has been included in the Forward Plan for information purposes.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

Date: 22 July 2015

Report Title: Cabinet Panels

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling; Finance, IT and Customer; Leisure, Culture and Localism; Town Centres, Business and Assets; Policy, People and Partnerships

Wards affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To review the composition of the current Cabinet Panels with the aim of achieving consistency (and thereby enhance effectiveness).

Recommendations

- (i) That the number of Members serving on each of the following Cabinet Panels be confirmed to be seven:
 - Recycling and Waste
 - Concurrent funding
 - Locality Action Partnerships
 - Revenue Investment Fund
 - Capital Investment Programme
 - Community Centres
- (ii) That the Community Centres Cabinet Panel be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Policy, People and Partnerships.

Reasons

Currently some Cabinet Panels have five members and others seven. It is considered that the effectiveness of the Cabinet Panels would be enhanced by increasing the number of Members able to participate; it is recommended that the number on each be set at seven.

1. Background

1.1 This section of the report confirms the current arrangement for Cabinet Panels.

Existing Cabinet Panels

Cabinet Panels may be established by the Cabinet under the provisions contained in Section 4 of Appendix 8 of the Constitution. Members are reminded that Cabinet Panels are politically proportionate and are chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder. Cabinet Panels report to the Cabinet and may refer matters to the relevant scrutiny committee for comment. Panels are time-limited concluding when they report to Cabinet unless their brief is extended by the Cabinet.

The following Cabinet Panels have been formed:

Recycling and Waste

This Panel was established in October 2012 and has met regularly since that time. The role of the Panel is to advise on the policy framework for the council's new recycling and waste service. The Panel is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling.

Concurrent funding

This Panel was established in March 2015 and has met once. This Panel has a "task and complete" remit to review the concurrent funding for Town and Parish Councils. The Panel is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer.

Locality Action Partnerships

This Panel was established in March 2015 but has not met as yet. The remit of this Panel is to promote the further development of the Locality Action Partnerships and to ensure that these are meeting their objectives and potential. The Panel is chaired by Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Localism.

Revenue Investment Fund

This Panel was established in July 2013 and it makes recommendations on expenditure from the Revenue Investment Fund. The Panel is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer

Capital Investment Programme

This Panel was established in March 2015 but has not met as yet. The Panel has a remit to review the council's capital investment programme and to make recommendations for the future programme of capital expenditure taking account of the need for prioritising expenditure and clarification / monitoring of the resources to meet these requirements (most notably from asset disposals). The Panel will consider capital programme bids as set out in the Newcastle Investment Programme. The Panel is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets.

Community Centre Review Cabinet Panel

The Panel was established with delegated powers to implement the outcome of the Community Centres Review in December 2014 and has met on numerous occasions since. The remit of the Panel is to continue discussions with community centres to achieve in the first instance an internal repairing lease and ultimately towards full repairing leases as appropriate, to support community activities moving to alternative venues where management committees are not in place and where there are business activities in community centres that these are formalised on a commercial basis. The Panel is currently chaired by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources but it is recommended that this be changed to the Portfolio Holder for Policy, People and Partnerships.

2. **Outcomes linked to sustainable community strategy and corporate priorities**
 - 2.1 The work of the Panels will support the delivery of all of the council's priorities and is consistent with the objectives of the sustainable communities strategy.
3. **Legal and Statutory Implications**
 - 3.1 The Council's Constitution contains provision regarding the arrangements for the establishment of Cabinet Panels.
4. **Financial and Resource Implications**
 - 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report; the officer time involved in supporting the work of the Cabinet Panels will be prioritised within individual work programmes.
5. **Major risks**
 - 5.1 There are no risks in progressing the recommendation which would need to be recorded in the Council's risk management system. Indeed it could be argued that the operation of these Panels should assist delivery of key activities by providing additional focus and capacity (i.e. help to mitigate project delivery risks).

Earlier Cabinet resolutions

- 17 October 2012 – Review of Integrated Recycling and Waste Strategy (minute 28b)
- 13 July 2013 – Revenue investment and Budget Support Cabinet Panel (minute 10)
- 25 March 2015 – Establishment of a Cabinet Panel – Capital (minute 5)
- 25 March 2015 – Establishment of a Cabinet Panel – Concurrent Funding (minute 6)
- 25 March 2015 – Locality Action Partnerships (LAPS) – Further Development (minute 13d)

Background papers

None

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1. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER FOUR (January-March) 2015

Submitted by: Executive Management Team

Portfolio: Policy, People & Partnerships
Finance, IT & Customer

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To provide Cabinet with the Financial and Performance Review report - fourth 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 15 June 2015.

1. Background

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the fourth 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 fourth quarter of 2014/15.
- 1.3 There is additional information (Appendix C) detailing questions raised at the Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 June 2015, and subsequent responses forwarded to the attendees.
- 1.4 A summary of the overall performance picture is presented in section 3 of this report and members will note that performance is generally progressing well.



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 four 2014-15 is 26 in total, and the proportion of indicators which have met their target during this period stands at 81%.
- 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;
 - In the last column one set of symbols (icons) show whether performance is on target or not at this time.
- 3.6 Five indicators from Appendix B are off target this quarter and are reported by exception in the table below, together with commentary.

Exception Report Quarter 4, 2015 (January –March)					
Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer
1.7	The amount of residual waste per household	106.25 kgs (est)	415kgs (annual)		Trevor Nicoll
Comment	<p>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 despite monitoring monthly performance the forecasted annual target has not been met with a result of 426.8kgs for 2014-15 which is an improvement of 430.23kg for 2013-14. The indicator is off target in quarter four given the stretched target for 2014-15 of 415kgs which equates to a quarterly target of 103.75kgs, and that ‘good performance’ is low. Targets are being revised due to a reclassification of the definition of household waste.</p>				
1.8	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	44.12% (est)	55%		Trevor Nicoll
Comment	<p>The result for quarter four is off target given the annual target of 55% and is slightly less than last year’s quarter four performance of 45% This is partly due to changes in household waste classification as 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. The impact from these changes has resulted in the end of year result – 51.52% not meeting the forecasted target for 2014-15 although it is an improvement from the 2013-14 outturn of 50.94%.</p>				
<p>Comment from Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Ann Beech</p> <p>At a time when some Councils are downgrading their recycling targets in response to national trends of reduced paper use, lighter packaging materials and removal of street sweepings from what can be counted, it is a credit to our residents and their support for the service that last year’s recycling rate beat that from the year before</p>					

and maintained an above 50% level. This ensured that we are we are 5 years ahead of the national required target of 50% by 2020.

It is further hoped that as we move to implement the new service in 2016, which incorporates the kind of improvements that residents have called for such as better containers and more regular collections of recycling, our service will be in a strong position to build on the good current performance and push for a mid to late 50's level over the life of the next strategy period.

Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer
2.6	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within time	70.6%	85%	No	Guy Benson
2.7	Percentage of Other Planning Applications determined within time	82%	92.5%	No	Guy Benson

Comment
Performance during this quarter has been affected by the long term absence of an officer within a small team. Due to the issue of undetermined applications from the previous period it has proven difficult to improve on the numbers determined within time. Steps are being taken to manage the situation where possible by reallocation of workloads where appropriate and the setting of revised timescales. The targets will be revised to take account of national benchmarking and resources.

Comment from Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Bert Proctor

Overall the Council's performance is satisfactory given that our targets exceed those which had been set by Government historically.

Also we know that it is the quality of decision making which is equally, if not more, important than the simple measure of processing speed.

Nevertheless, members will note an item elsewhere on this agenda which provides an update on implementing the Action Plan arising from the Planning Peer Review undertaken last year. In particular members attention is drawn to the proposals to address staff resourcing/capacity which should help to improve the Service's performance in the latter part of 2015/16.

Ref	Indicator	Result	Target	Status	Officer
3.6	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	170,524	184,920	No	Rob Foster

Comment
The annual attendance figures and comments for each part of the service are as follows:

Jubilee2: There was an annual attendance target set of 500,000 with an outturn of 463,844 achieved. The shortfall of attendances can be attributed to the 50% closure of the gym and full closure of the activity in the 1st quarter due to the replacement of the gym floor and the closure of the training pool due to the failure of the movable floor in the third quarter.

Kidsgrove Sports Centre: There was an annual attendance target set of 130,000 with an outturn of 116,582 achieved. The shortfall of attendances can be attributed to a number of pool closures due to the failure of pool pumps and heating systems and the closure of the steam room, in addition to limited investment on the all-weather pitch.

Football Development: There was an annual attendance target set of 20,000 with an outturn of 17,379 achieved. The shortfall of attendances can be attributed to the unforeseen withdrawal of £20,000 of external funding in 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters.

	<p>Community Recreation Service: There was an annual attendance target set of 20,000 with an outturn of 16,510 achieved. The shortfall of attendances can be attributed to the reductions made to the service programme arising from budgetary constraints in summer programmes and the phased withdrawal of the minibus.</p> <p>It should be noted the annual target for the service of 670,000 attendances was a stretched target and assumed that there would be no interruptions in the delivery of services. However despite the unforeseen circumstances services areas have encountered during 2014/15 the cumulative attendances for 2014/15 of 614,315 is comparable to the 2013/14 outturn of 619,899 attendances across the service.</p>
<p><u>Comment from Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Amelia Rout</u></p> <p>Whilst nationally there is a small upwards trend in participation in sport, still just over half of adults play no sport at all. Locally, overall participation is slightly higher in Newcastle than the England and West Midland averages. (37.1% Newcastle, 33.3% West Midland, 35.7% England).</p> <p>The number of people accessing the Councils leisure and recreational facilities remained fairly constant in 2014/15 when compared with the previous year. This has been achieved despite a number of unforeseen and unavoidable service interruptions and withdrawal of external funding during the year at both Kidsgrove Sports Centre and J2. The Councils target of 670,000 attendances is an aspirational target and a wide range of new initiatives are under way with more being planned to stimulate further take up and encourage residents of all ages to adopt healthy and active lifestyles.</p>	

Officers consider that the performance against these indicators does not give rise to serious cause for concern at present, and the management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to deal with under achievement of targets 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 and members will note that some services are affected by both seasonal and external factors.

4. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

4.1 All 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 changing market conditions 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 or in the case of the waste/recycling service where the volume of recycled materials is liable to fluctuate. 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) and the Scrutiny Question and Answer update (Appendix C) are attached.

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		

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Financial Position Quarter Four 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.

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 The outturn position is a surplus of £7,327 which is in line with the approved budget and budget monitoring predictions during the year. The Audit and Risk Committee agenda for its meeting of 6 July 2015 contains a commentary on the outturn in the report in relation to the statement of accounts for 2014-15, which can be referred to for further details such as areas where variances occurred.

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 The actual capital outturn for 2014/15 is £2,061,454. The shortfall in spending occurred because some projects were unable to be commenced or completed in 2014/15, for example; vehicles scheduled for replacement have been kept in use for as long as they are capable of being operated economically; the results of consultation regarding the replacement/repair of play equipment are awaited; external funding has yet to be confirmed or received (Madeley Extracare contribution, Pooldam Marshes nature reserve); further work that is dependent upon the completion of works by other parties (Lowlands Road); and, the finalisation of scheme design and costs/contributions (Clayton Sports Centre, Brampton Park).









5. Investment Counterparties

- 5.1 Investment counterparties with whom money is invested, as at 31 March 2015 are as follows (with the parent company shown in brackets, where applicable):






Halifax Bank of Scotland (Lloyds Bank)
Nationwide Building Society
Coventry Building Society
Debt Management Account –Deposit facility
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 have informed creditors that a further dividend may be paid but this is subject to the successful outcome of their claim against their parent bank, Landsbanki.




Corporate Performance Scorecard
Quarter 4 2014-15
Priority 1: A clean, safe and sustainable Borough

Outcomes: Our borough will be safer, cleaner and sustainable						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 4	Result 2014/15 Qtr 4	Target 2014/15	Status
1.1	Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating.	Low	1.28% (9 out of 700 published premises)	0.88% (7 out of 793 published premises)	2.25%	
1.2	The percentage of food establishments which are broadly compliant with good hygiene law	High	95% (out of 1107 premises)	98% (1104 out of 1124 premises)	85%	
1.3	The area of contaminated land that has been remediated or is determined suitable for use	High	8Ha	4.34 Ha	-	-
1.4	Number of incidents of violence with injury	Low	197	262	-	-
1.5	Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour	Low	785	808	-	-
1.6	Number of incidents of serious acquisitive crime	Low	183	168	-	-
1.7	The amount of residual waste per household	Low	108kgs	106.25kgs (est)	415kgs (annual)	
1.8	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	High	45%	44.12% (est)	55%	
1.9	Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	High	96% 93% 99% 100%	94% 97% 99% 99%	91% 91% 97% 99%	
1.10	Number of community volunteer groups/hours spent caring for their local green spaces and neighbourhoods	High	1383 hrs	2691hrs (5929 hrs total 2014-15)	5250 hrs	
1.11	Town Centre Vacancy Rate	Low	14.68%	12.3%	15%	
1.12	Percentage of investment portfolio (NBC owned) vacant	Low	8%	7.8%	12%	








Priority 2 : Borough of Opportunity




Outcomes: Newcastle is a great place to live, work and do business						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 4	Result 2014/15 Qtr 4	Target 2014/15	Status
2.1	Number of hours worked by volunteers in council co-ordinated activities (museum)	High	396 hrs	385hrs	375 hrs	
2.2	Percentage of minor adaptations delivered within four months (approval to payment for works under £5000)	High	89%	84%	75%	
2.3	Number of homelessness cases where positive action was successful preventing homelessness	High	98	95 (643 total 2014-15)	600	
2.4	Average stall occupancy rate for markets	High	64%	75%	55%	
2.5	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within time	High	33.3%	86.4% (Cumulative)	70%	
2.6	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within time	High	74%	70.6% (Cumulative)	85%	No
2.7	Percentage of Other Planning Applications determined within time	High	96.5%	82% (Cumulative)	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						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 4	Result 2014/15 Qtr 4	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	70%	70%	
3.3	Number of people visiting the museum	High	10,693	10873 (59517 total 2014-15)	60,000	
3.4	Number of referrals from GPs to organised sporting activity	High	58	66	n/a	n/a
3.5	Percentage of people referred for exercise by GPs whose health improves	High	17.24%	18.36%	n/a	n/a
3.6	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	High	173,303	170,524	670,000	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						
Ref	Indicator	Good is	Result 2013/14 Qtr 4	Result 2014/15 Qtr 4	Target 2014/15	Status
4.1	Percentage attendance at planned meetings by members	High	n/a	n/a	80%	n/a
4.2	Percentage projected variance against full year council budget	Low	n/a	0.05%	No variance	
4.3	Average number of days per employee lost to sickness	Low	7.63 days	7.17 days	7.5 days	
4.4	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	High	96.5%	97%	97%	
4.5	% Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)	Low	5.6%	5.9%	8%	
4.6	Time taken to process Housing/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	Low	11.71 days	6.72 days	10 days	
4.7	Percentage of Council Tax collected	High	96.6%	97.7%	97.5%	
4.8	Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	Hlgh	96.9%	96.9%	96%	

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	 No
	Performance is not on target where targets have been set	 No
	Performance is on or above target.	

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Update to members of Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny meeting held 15th June 2015

To update Members on the questions raised on items 1.8 and 2.7 in Section 3.6 of the Financial and Performance Report Quarter 4 2015.

Q. With reference to 1.8, what is the percentage impact on the target of the changes to reclassification of the definition of waste?

The result of this indicator to meet the forecasted target has suffered as a consequence of the reclassification. The impact of not including road sweepings in the calculation is approximately 3%. Taking in to account this figure, the annual result of 51.52% becomes close to the 55% annual target set for 2014-15.

Q. With reference to 2.6 and 2.7, does the “determined within time” period include the time taken for verification or does it commence after the verification takes place?

The 8 week periods, referred to in the two indicators -2.6 and 2.7 which were considered in the report, start at the point when the Council **receives** a valid application, not when the Council establishes that it has a valid application. So for example if an application is received on the 1st June and the check on its validity is not made until the 5th June, and the check on the 5th finds that the application as submitted on the 1st was valid, then the period against which the Council is being measured has started on the 1st.

Where an electronic communication is received by the Council outside the Council's business hours, it is taken to have been received on the next working day, and for this purpose “working day” means a day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, Bank holiday or other public holiday.

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REPORT TO EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

1. **REPORT TITLE:** Housing Renewal Loans
- Submitted by:** Mike O'Connor
- Portfolio:** Planning and Housing
- Ward(s) affected:** All

Purpose of the Report

To appraise the options and seek approval to recommence a loan programme to enable the improvement and repair of homes funded from the Capital Programme.

Recommendations

A) That officers be authorised to take all necessary steps to develop and deliver an in-house home loans renewal programme.

B) That the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing be authorised to update the current Housing Renewal Assistance Policy to include the offer of loans.

Reasons

Loan-based housing renewal assistance enables householders to access funds for housing repair, improvement and adaptation as well as allowing the Council to recover sums advanced; capital funding provision has been made in this regard as part of the 2015/16 Capital Programme.

The Council previously successfully offered loans as a member of a regionally funded partnership but external funds were withdrawn and this was dissolved. Efforts to find alternative sources of funding or alternative delivery models have not been successful and it is considered appropriate for the Council to offer a loan programme in-house.

1. Background

- 1.1 Poor housing conditions can adversely affect the health and welfare of the occupants. It is the Government's view that the primary responsibility for maintaining privately owned property rests with the owner but it is nationally recognised that some owners, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, lack the means to carry out essential repairs, improvements and adaptations. The Council has wide ranging powers to provide assistance through the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 including grants, loans and other forms of assistance to ameliorate poor living conditions.
- 1.2 For many years, as part of a suite of private sector housing renewal initiatives, the Council has offered grants to assist homeowners. Between 2007-2011, however, it used its own capital funds and Regional Housing Board grant to develop a home loans programme working with a regional partnership called Kick Start and Revival Home Improvement Agency. Such loans were only available to low income owners. This partnership delivered 45 home loans lending £446,000 in total. Following the abolition of the Regional Housing Board, funding for a loans programme was withdrawn. The administration of the outstanding loan book and the fund was transferred to the partner local authorities.

2. **Issues**

2.1 The dissolution of the Kick Start Partnership and associated funding made it necessary for the Council to withdraw new loans. Your officers investigated ways of encouraging alternative funders to provide suitable loans to help vulnerable home owners afford home repairs, improvements, maintenance and adaptations. Initially there was some progress and Revival was able to obtain agreement from a local building society and a national equity loan provider to offer loans. However, the scheme was unsuccessful and then abandoned.

2.2 The following types of loan were available to homeowners during the Kick Start programme:

2.3 **Equity Share Loan**

This enabled home owners to borrow from the equity in their property providing that they retained an equity buffer and were on low income. There were no monthly repayments and no interest for the term of the loan. Instead a charge was placed on the property equivalent to a percentage of the value of the loan compared to the market value of the property. The expectation was that the property value would increase allowing the loan to be recovered which would cover lost interest. Repayment is made when the property ownership changes.

2.4 **Capital and Interest Repayment Loan**

This is a more traditional repayment loan at an affordable interest rate assisting homeowners who are unable to access mainstream loans. Loans were taken out over 1-7 years and repaid on a monthly basis. There is a guarantee of no repossession whilst the borrower continues to make payments on the loan, owns the property and uses it as their principal residence, and no-one else has moved in without consent.

2.5 **'Interest Only' Loan**

The same no-repossession guarantee applied as for a capital and interest repayment loan and an affordable interest rate applied.

2.6 **Interest-free Discounted Loan**

This was a smaller loan of up to £2,000 that could be borrowed on terms between 12 and 48 months. The borrower must have been on a means-tested benefit and able to demonstrate that they could afford the repayments. A discount of 50% could be given if payments were made on time for half of the loan term. (This effectively allowed someone to borrow £2000 and only repay £1000.)

2.7 During the period within which these loans were available 45 loans were given totalling £446,000 of which 36 were equity share loans amounting to approximately £439,000. The majority of these loans have still to be repaid.

2.8 Faced with difficulties in arranging alternative funding your officers considered it appropriate for the Council to pilot in-house loans for housing renewal. Accordingly £75,000 has been allocated in the 2015/16 capital programme.

3. **Options Considered**

3.1 **Option 1**

Not to offer loans as a form of housing renewal assistance.

This option would retain the current arrangements where the main assistance is mandatory disabled facilities grants, mainly funded from the government, and discretionary renewal grants from the Council. Grants are easy to promote, explain, target and deliver particularly to low income groups. However, they are costly as the expenditure cannot be recovered unless there has been a breach of grant conditions.

3.2 **Option 2**

To offer the full range of loans previously available in the Kick Start Programme

This option would provide homeowners with a choice of the full range of loan products described earlier in this report. The key weakness is that in the light of the current funding and staff resources it would be extremely difficult for the Council to implement and manage this option. The Kick Start programme provided substantial upfront capital to form a sustainable loan fund from which loans could be sourced and also funded staff resources, through a local home improvement agency, to promote and deliver the scheme on the ground.

3.3 **Option 3**

To continue to make available grants but offer a reduced range of Loans

This option would have lower resource implications whilst still retaining elements of a loan programme but would still require additional resources to implement, albeit this could be on a phased basis complementary with a piloted approach.

4. **Proposal**

4.1 The preferred option is to offer grants and a reduced range of loans. This will enable the Council to target its capacity and develop in-house expertise with the aim of growing a sustainable loan programme, when more resources become available in subsequent years.

4.2 As indicated earlier in this report the Kick Start Programme paid 45 loans of which 36 were equity share loans and 8 interest-only or interest-free loans; the remaining loan was a capital and interest repayment. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to develop a programme to deliver equity share and interest free loans, at least in the early years, with the latter being developed and offered first.

4.3 It is proposed that equity share loans to a maximum of £20,000 and interest free loans to a maximum of £10,000 be offered to homeowners secured on the property by a land charge.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 Equity share loans have the advantage of lower administration once they have been set up. There are no regular repayments to process as the loan is placed as a charge and is repayable upon sale of the property. There is an expectation that the property will increase in value and hence the amount repaid will exceed the loan, which would help defray lost interest. However, it will take several months to reach the stage when these loans can be offered because robust and lengthy procedures need to be developed prior to approval. There is a requirement to fully explain the implications to vulnerable households, together with signposting to independent financial advice. In addition a valuation must be obtained and a legal agreement finalised in relation to the charge to ensure where possible the loan is registered as a first charge debt.

5.2 In relation to capital and interest loans time consuming procedures would need to be formulated particularly with regard to financial advice and payment. The loans will need to be secured as a charge; therefore they could be regarded as mortgages. Arrangements will need to be agreed internally to establish a loan book and if necessary, recover any arrears.

Based on experience with the previous loan programme take up of these loans would be expected to be low. Balancing this with the administration necessary and the capacity available, it is not considered appropriate to proceed towards offering capital and interest repayable loans at this time.

- 5.3 In contrast interest-free loans are less complex and can be delivered more easily and quickly. Arrangements will still be needed to provide advice and to recover instalments, but the latter could be avoided if the loan was secured as a charge payable on resale. Promotion and marketing of these loans could begin in the autumn.

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

- 6.1 The continued provision of loan based housing renewal assistance will contribute to the corporate priorities of creating an active and healthier community and a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has wide ranging powers to provide assistance through the Regulatory Reform Housing Assistance (England and Wales) Order 2002 including issue grants and loans and other forms of assistance to home owners to ameliorate the poor living conditions.
- 7.2 The Order requires the local authority to have a policy setting out the exercise of its power to offer housing assistance. The Council has a policy in place that provides for loan-based assistance and the current policy was adopted by Cabinet in 2012. Should the Council decide to recommence a loan programme the Home Assistance Policy will be updated to reflect the scheme details.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 The Equality Impact Assessment for the Housing Assistance Policy has been completed and approved. This highlights that investment in line with the policy positively impacts upon the most vulnerable residents' of the Borough but that restrictions on finance also mean that assistance is limited.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The loan fund transferred to the council from the Kick Start Programme is approximately £446,000 and as loans are repaid these return to the Council, but are not ring-fenced to fund further loans. However, £75,000 has been allocated in the 2015/2016 capital programme for loans and for future years it is proposed that funding to continue the programme will be considered as part of the capital programme preparation process.
- 9.2 The inclusion of equity share loans will, it is expected, enable the council to receive more in repayment than the loan and therefore this will help defray interest costs. Conversely offering interest free loans is more costly but loss of interest is balanced by reduced administration costs.
- 9.3 The development of in-house loans will require staff resources to develop procedures, then to promote and deliver them. Housing, Legal and Financial Services will be required to input officer time to achieve this. It is envisaged that in the first year, given the modest financial allocation, only a small number of loans will be delivered which will help to minimise workload pressure.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 Not offering loan-based housing assistance would mean that some residents on low incomes are unable to afford to repair, improve or adapt their homes.

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 The provision of Loan assistance would be available to eligible homeowners in all wards subject to the funding allocated within the Council's capital programme. Amendment to the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy would be delegated to the Portfolio Holder.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 Cabinet at its meeting on 18th January 2012 adopted the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2012-2016.
- 12.2 Council at its meeting on 25 February 2015 approved the allocation of funding towards a Loan programme as part of the Capital Programme approval process for 2015/16.

13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 None

14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 None

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

22 JULY 2015

Title: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire - Safer Neighbourhood Panels

Submitted by: Sarah Moore – Partnerships Manager

Portfolios: Policy, People and Partnerships
Safer Communities

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNPs) have been established in each District by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in Staffordshire, following the success of the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel, which tests the accuracy of crime recording, examines the response of police to incidents and analyses the way they handle complaints about policing. The Panels will ensure policing in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is open and transparent, giving local people the chance to influence how their area is policed. The role of the panel is to:-

- Ensure residents are better informed and involved.
- Scrutinise all elements of local policing to ensure both the OPCC and Police priorities are delivered.
- Provide regular feedback to local policing teams and other community safety forums.
- Collaborate with other functions to ensure that engagement and scrutiny work with Staffordshire Police is joined up.
- Utilise and provide information that will aid greater transparency and openness.
- Assist in the building of further community engagement opportunities.
- Contribute to the wellbeing of the local area.

This report seeks Cabinet nominations for two Elected Members to represent the Borough Council on the SNP for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Recommendations

The report recommends that Cabinet supports the SNP process and makes nominations to OPCC for two Elected Members to represent the Borough Council on the SNPs.

Reasons

The recommendations are made to ensure that the Borough Council is fully represented in the SNPs process and continues to support the work of OPCC.

1. Background

- 1.1 OPCC envisages that SNPs will build on the work of the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel, whose role is to scrutinise elements of what Staffordshire Police does and help them to resolve issues and move forward in a positive way.
- 1.2 OPCC has recognised the value of this work and so would like to see engagement and involvement at a more local level; seeing further scrutiny, openness and transparency in policing. There will be eleven SNPs (eight in the county and three within the city), delivered in three phases and they aim to enable people to influence, improve the way their local area is policed.
- 1.3 Phase one of the process began earlier this year and is now well established in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire Moorlands and South Staffordshire. The Local Authorities selected for the second phase are Newcastle, Stafford, Lichfield and one locality/LPT area in Stoke (north, central or south – to be confirmed).
- 1.4 The Borough Council has been approached by OPCC to lead the co-ordination of SNPs and has been awarded £10,000 per annum in order to support the delivery of the function. OPCC has initiated a delivery timetable for the second phase and the recruitment stage for SNP members will begin week commencing the 29th June and close on the 19th July 2015. Interviews will take place week commencing 27th July 2015. First meetings will be held during September 2015.

2. Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNPs)

- 2.1 The overarching aim of the SNPs is to hold the local policing commander to account to ensure that local policing is being delivered effectively. The SNPs also seek to identify improvement opportunities or areas of challenge that may require research. Task and finish groups may be established to do this. This will be achieved by providing local scrutiny of issues considered by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel and also examination of crime figures, use of restorative justice and complaint resolution. The SNP will not discuss specific incidents and/or crimes (although specific ones may be selected as part of the scrutiny process). They will continue to be dealt with through the proper channels e.g. 101, 999 etc.
- 2.2 The SNP will be made up of between 12 and 15 members from a mix of backgrounds. Membership will be reviewed annually. This should comprise of:
 - No more than a third will be Councillors (ideally, one county and two district/borough)
 - One Neighbourhood Watch
 - One Magistrate
 - Local residents (ideally, around two thirds)
 - Business community representatives
- 2.3 The Magistrate will be selected by the Bench Chairman for the area, the County, District or Borough Councillor will be selected by the Leader of the Council or through the Council's decision making process. Business representatives will either be approached direct or via the Chambers of Commerce (it is proposed that Newcastle will approach the Town Centre Partnership for a nomination). All Panel members will be residents of the area. Other members will be invited to apply during the panel recruitment stage. Prospective members will be asked to complete an application form and should be residents of the area. Those local residents who are shortlisted will be asked to attend an interview demonstrating that they have the necessary skills, experience and interest in what matters in their community. Once selected they will be subject to a vetting process by Staffordshire Police.

- 2.4 Membership of the Panel will be for an initial 6 months, which will be followed by a review by the OPCC and the panel chair. If all parties agree, membership will be extended for a further 6 months and will subsequently be reviewed annually. Membership will be limited to a maximum of 3 years from the date of original appointment. This is to ensure a degree of continuity of skills and experience, whilst also having in place a process to refresh the membership.
- 2.5 SNP meetings will be held quarterly at a time and venue to be determined by the Panel. Initially, meetings will not be open to the public however, it is expected that once the SNP is well established members of the public will be able to attend.
- 2.6 The SNP are not restricted to a discrete list of areas to scrutinise as there is an expectation that as members develop their experience, this will lead to identifying new areas to discuss. Suggested agenda items include (but are not limited to):
- Overview presentation by LPT Commander of key issues
 - Discussion of presentation
 - Scrutiny of restorative justice
 - Issues/concerns of locality wide issues
 - Issues raised by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel
- 2.7 The SNP will remain under the control of the OPCC and will not form part of the Council's governance. The Council will support its delivery, with the Panel operating independently.

3. Proposal and Reason for Preferred Solution

- 3.1 This report seeks Cabinet nominations for two Elected Members to represent the Borough Council on the SNP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, in order to continue to support the work of OPCC.

4. Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The recommendations above contribute to the following Council's Corporate Priorities namely; a Cleaner, Safer and Sustainable Borough and Delivering a Co-operative Council.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal or statutory implications for consideration within this report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no adverse equality issues identified as arising from this report.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are resource implications for Borough Council Officers and Members as part of their substantive duties who will continue to provide support to delivering SNPs in the Borough in relation to these recommendations. These implications include officer time predominantly from the Partnerships Team.
- 7.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner will provide each District with £10,000 per annum, for three years to support the SNP delivery. This will enable the local authority to pay for the administration and facilitation of the SNPs. This will include the development of the work plan, taking and publishing minutes and reports, venue hire and organising training for members.

7.3 It is proposed that this funding should be used to facilitate a full time Partnerships Apprentice (in line with the Council's Apprentice scheme) so that capacity can be moved around in the existing Partnerships Team to co-ordinate and deliver this additional activity, under the supervision of the Partnerships Manager.

7.4 There are no additional specific financial implications or commitments required for the implementation of these recommendations to the Borough Council.

8. Major Risks

8.1 In the event of an adverse decision the Council may be unable to support delivery of the SNPs and this may be detrimental to the current partnership and working arrangements with OPCC.

9. Key Decision Information

9.1 This report can be considered key in the following ways: -

- It results in the Borough Council committing existing resources for the function to which the decision relates and;
- It is significant because it affects more than two or more electoral wards in the Borough.

10. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

10.1 None

11. List of Appendices

11.1 None

12. Background Papers

12.1 None