

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Plan

2014 -16



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Message

from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Mike Stubbs



**Councillor
Mike Stubbs**
Leader of the Council

This Plan sets out what we will do to tackle the issues that residents have told us matter most to them and which form the basis of our four corporate priorities - a clean, safe and sustainable Borough, a Borough of opportunity, a healthy and active community and a co-operative Council, delivering high-value, community-driven services.

We now have the foundations in place to continue the good work started by this Labour Administration two years ago in 2012 and our desire to continue to focus on our delivering our co-operative promise to residents and businesses alike.

We remain focused, therefore, on five aims, to:

- Enhance customer experiences and to put our citizens at the heart of everything we do
- Encourage collaborative working with our communities and in partnership with other agencies and organisations
- Engage with others to ensure that that the decisions we take are fair, inclusive, open and transparent
- Establish a sustainable approach to co-operative ways of working, including being open to new ways of working, and
- Empower citizens, communities and our staff in order to give people the confidence to take control of their own lives.

This administration is mindful, however, that these austere times continue to affect us all so we will continue to keep Council Tax as low as possible and we remain committed to supporting the local economy through investment in apprenticeships, developing our town centres and delivering regeneration projects within the Borough.

Ongoing cuts and legislative changes nationally continue to challenge us and we have to make tough decisions, but through our open and transparent processes and our inclusive use of consultation, we will seek to move the Council forward together in to 2014/15 and beyond.

This Plan is 'your' plan - every single member of the community of Newcastle-under-Lyme has a stake in delivering this Plan and it seeks to improve the Borough we live or work in.

I look forward to working with you all making the Borough a cleaner, healthier and prosperous place to live.

***. . . using
resources well
to provide good
public services***

***. . . targeting
support for
those who need
it most***

***. . . local people
involved and
having a say***

Welcome

from the Chief Executive



John Sellgren
Chief Executive

We want to make the borough a better place to live, work and invest by creating a place that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe.

For Newcastle Borough Council, 2014-15 is seen as a year of preparation to plan our approach of how it intends to face the financial issues of the local authority in the years ahead to 2020.

It sets out how the council will seek to achieve this by laying down firm foundations and looks to maintain high quality services with less resources.

In these challenging economic times it is important that resources are used prudently and effectively. Whilst we still face budget reductions, the council is ensuring we take every opportunity to reduce our costs by challenging what we spend and how we do things.

At the same time we aim to deliver value for money services, focused on the local needs of our communities, aiming to create a council which is responsive and in touch with the people it serves.

In producing this plan we have reviewed the way we do things and considered what is important for the borough.

Our plan focuses on doing those things which will deliver our priorities and on ensuring that we continue to deliver high quality services for our customers and as a council we are fit for the future.

By working smarter we will continue to deliver a programme that will bring real improvements and efficiencies in services for all in the borough.

- **Preparing for 2020**
- **Fit for the future**

- **Looking at the way we work**
- **Smarter business models**
- **Efficient and effective delivery**

Working towards 2020



Newcastle Borough is, like other Authorities, facing difficult times ahead - balancing the reduction in funding with the provision of good quality services and managing possible increases in demand.

Over the next six years the council faces further huge cuts in funding, with at least 20 per cent fewer resources in the years 2015-20. Added to this is the economic impact of reduced public spending on residents, communities, local businesses and organisations.

services going forward as identified in the Asset Management Strategy 2014-17

- creative ways to facilitate economic growth through collaborative approaches with key landowners
- continue to progress the major Ryecroft Development Project in order to regenerate the town proposal along with an initiative for a new Civic Hub
- establish more efficient practices and systems
- strengthen existing links with partners and communities whilst forging new links for efficiency
- identify and adopt smarter and innovative ways of working to face the challenges of 2015-20

“ ...the council faces **huge cuts in funding** with at least **20 per cent fewer resources** in the years 2015-20 ”

In order to get the right balance, the council needs to ensure it is “fit for the future” and prepared with strong foundations to face the expected and unexpected challenges of 2015-20. The period that this plan covers is 2014-16 and is seen as a time for further preparation to:

- ensure that spending matches available resources in the future years.
- manage the disposal of surplus land and assets to provide the necessary funds to support





What does this mean?

Reviews of current services and practices are necessary to identify options for improvement which will release savings and still provide a good quality service for all communities.

The council and its services will need to be:-

- efficient and effective
- ensure plans consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- pro-active in how they plan and progress their work
- looking at how shared services may work
- considering the possible options of collaborative approaches to providing and delivering services
- able to make informed decisions for the future of their services that are difficult
- managing the resulting outcomes of change and addressing the impact

- communicating regularly to residents, communities, businesses and partners the effects of proposed plans or changes and encouraging feedback
- providing support to communities, especially those who are vulnerable
- seeking funding wherever possible to provide sustainability of service delivery

All of these actions will provide the environment and foundations for the council to be fit for the future and produce the necessary economies and savings.



Preparation in 2013-14

The council has already taken steps to prepare for 2014-15 to improve delivery of services and ensure efficiencies:-

- Implemented a shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system
- Replaced the financial system
- Improved ICT infrastructure
- Implemented strong procurement and commissioning approaches to identify further savings
- Reviewed services and practices to realise efficiencies and improvement to service delivery
- Established new strategic partnerships across all sectors
- Supported Locality Action Partnerships to develop
- Reviewed strategies and policies
- Involve staff and members in future modelling

Our Vision

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

We want Newcastle-under-Lyme to be a borough in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business. Moreover, we want the borough council to be an open, honest and transparent organisation which is accountable to local people and which, through co-operation with partners, will work together to improve where we all live.



“ safer place to live, work and visit with support for people ”

A healthy and active community

We will work with partners to make sure residents and visitors are able to access a range of facilities and support activities that will enable them to improve their health and quality of life.

Priorities

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

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



A borough of opportunity

We will work with our partners to maximise investment and encourage enterprise and employment - generating activities that will create opportunities for improving the wealth, prosperity and housing choices of our residents.

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

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is working towards being a co-operative council which means we are working together with our residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can using the resources we have.



“ Newcastle is a co-operative council ”

What is a co-operative council?

The Co-operative Council Strategy was developed in 2013 and the council became a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network in July 2013. The Network is made up of councils who subscribe to the principles of co-operative working and delivery.

With the values of the council at the heart of our co-operative approach we have started work in five key areas, the 5E's of our co-operative promise for Newcastle-under-Lyme:

- **Enhancing** customer experiences - we will put our citizens at the heart of everything we do.
- **Encouraging** collaborative working between our communities and our partners - we will make our decisions co-operatively with the people that matter.
- **Engaging** with others - we will ensure that our decision making is fair, inclusive, open and transparent.

- **Establishing** a sustainable change to co-operative ways of working - we will be open to new ways of doing things.
- **Empowering** citizens, communities and our staff - we will give people the confidence to take control of their own lives and the area they live in rather than having decisions made for them by the Council.

Whilst we still face budget cuts, we are making sure that local people are much more involved when it comes to reducing our costs and challenging what we spend.

We are involving the community and business leaders in developing our future plans, drawing on the skills and expertise that exists in the borough.

Working with our communities

The Newcastle Partnership engages with the Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) across the Borough to offer potential opportunities for residents and communities to get involved in activities, engagement and decision-making in their area.

LAPs represent the established infrastructure of the partnerships for the delivery of locality working and offer communities enhanced and focused access to a range of partners in order to address and deliver against local priorities.

Our values

We will . . .

**. . . put residents
at the centre
of everything
we do**

**. . . work
co-operatively
with our
partners and
communities**

**. . . be open
and transparent
in all our
decision making**

**. . . be open
to new ideas
and new ways of
doing things**

The changing landscape

We have many things to consider when delivering a service to residents.



- ◆ **Population estimate of 124,200 residents in the borough**

- ◆ **14% more residents aged over 60 than in 2001**
(Census 2011)

- ◆ **Newcastle Borough is becoming a safer place to live, work and visit**

- ◆ **Long-term crime rates have fallen over the last few years.**

- ◆ **Residents are happy with Newcastle as a place to live**

- ◆ **Employment levels of 72% and key out-of-work benefits at 10.8% in early 2013**

- ◆ **Long-term worklessness and benefit dependency due to ill-health are major issues in some areas**

- ◆ **20.2% of year 6 children classified as obese in 2011-12**

- ◆ **Adult obesity rates recently estimated at 25.8%**

- ◆ **An estimated 20 per cent of adults smoke**

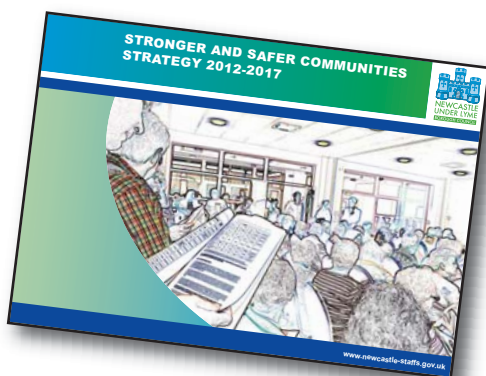
Priorities in Newcastle include tackling health inequalities, alcohol-related hospital admissions, the ageing population and long-term conditions.

Strategies, plans and partnerships driving our activities in 2014-16

Local Strategies

In response to the new landscape and future demands, four key strategies are used to help the Council focus its activities. These strategies are linked to the priorities of the Council:-

- Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy –
A clean, safe and sustainable borough
- Economic Development Strategy –
A borough of opportunity
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy –
A healthy and active community
- Co-operative Council Strategy –
A co-operative council delivering high quality, community driven services



These strategies show how the council is planning to work with partners and other organisations to improve and develop local communities and so deliver our vision for the borough.

Local Growth Strategy

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has prepared a Strategic Economic Plan against which the LEP can plan its investment to help drive economic growth to 2030. This plan reflects the priorities in the council's own Economic Development Strategy and sets out an ambitious countywide vision for the area and a number of priorities based on:

- the rapid growth of Stoke-on-Trent
- "super-connectivity"
- energy expertise
- applied materials technology
- competitive urban centres
- sector growth
- a skilled workforce

resourced in part from the Government's Local Growth Fund, EU Funds, City Deal and other, including private sector, sources.

Newcastle Partnership

The Newcastle Partnership is the strategic partnership for the borough and has the vision:

Newcastle communities together, securing a prosperous future

In delivering this vision the Newcastle Partnership is focused on two priorities:

- Improving economic growth
- Tackling vulnerability

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Police and Crime Plan 2014-17

The Local Police and Crime Plan for the borough has been produced by the council in collaboration with the Newcastle Local Policing Team and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

It recognises that the local communities deserve a voice on how they are policed, protected and supported and is tailored to their local needs. Also it reflects the commitments of the borough council, the police and other partner agencies in the borough to work co-operatively with residents, to deliver high quality support and services.

Making good use of public money
Having to do more with less will mean we will be looking more creatively at how we provide and deliver our services over the next years – on our own by involving officers in developing new business models and together with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will be taking a radical look at our assets - working hard to keep council tax low, maximising our resources and seeking out efficiencies in all that we do.



Priority 1:

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

Key activities for delivery in 2014-16:-

Recycling & Waste Strategy 2016

Since the introduction of the Recycling and Waste Service in 2010, the service has developed both in terms of efficiency and performance. Over this period we have reduced the cost of service by over £500,000 per year, increased our recycling to over 52% from a 27% rate in 2009, and reduced the amount of residual waste disposed of from 640.92 kg per household in 2009 to 430kg per household in 2014.

In 2016 the contract for the collection and treatment of the borough recycling and waste comes to an end. A Cabinet Panel reviewed a number of services and 13 different options and in July 2014 the panel will put a recommendation forward to Cabinet which includes a three 55 litre box system for dry recycling to be collected weekly and a change to all core collection services to be operated via an in-house service from the Councils Knutton Lane Depot.



Partnership Development

The shared vision for the Newcastle Partnership is Newcastle Communities together, securing a prosperous future. Having established a strategic framework, governance structure and work programme, the Partnership has been working since mid-2012 on delivering different projects, as well as continuing to work operationally with key partners in areas such as anti-social behaviour and the Building Resilient Communities and Families (BRFC) programme.

The Partnership in 2014 onwards will:-

- Work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to maximise future funding opportunities and the development of services for the borough including the delivery of objectives within the Local Police and Crime Plan;
- Progress and improve the opportunities with co-location of services;
- Work with the County Council to actively assist in the further development of the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) project;
- Work with the Public Health team to co-ordinate a gap analysis of Health and Wellbeing services/activities available in the borough;
- Work with partners to co-ordinate Safer Nights activities in the Town Centres;
- Streamline and strengthen the Locality Action Partnerships and provide additional support in order to allow them to govern their own work programmes and commission work effectively;

Outcomes:-

- *Our borough will be safer*
- *Our borough will be cleaner*
- *Our borough will be sustainable*



- Co-ordinate the Purple Flag submission to the ACTM and associated activity;
- Work towards achieving the Co-operative Council vision of the Borough Council in conjunction with partners and communities.

Local Environmental Quality in the Borough

Streetscene activities are key to ensuring the borough is clean, safe and sustainable. The teams work 364 days per year to keep streets clean, bins emptied and parks, open spaces and verges maintained. Surveys are undertaken throughout the year to monitor the Local Environmental Quality and the service aim is to ensure the high performance levels achieved are sustained in 2014-16. In addition, the community in 2013-14 gave over 8000 hours of voluntary effort to make the borough clean and attractive and the intention is to continue to develop and expand the scheme for 2014-16.

Priority 2:

A borough of opportunity

Key activities for delivery in 2014-16:-

Ryecroft development

The Ryecroft site, jointly purchased by the borough council and Staffordshire County Council from Sainsburys, is earmarked for a retail led redevelopment. The objective for development of the site is to bring new shops, up to 700 jobs and investment of around £60 million into the town centre.

The considerable interest, which has been shown by a range of interested parties wishing to take forward the major regeneration project is seen as a significant milestone for Newcastle. The evolution of the scheme will strengthen the economic fortunes of Newcastle town centre by improving the breadth of the retail offer. It reflects a growing confidence in the market place but is also seen as an encouraging sign of confidence in Newcastle itself.

Disposal of surplus land and assets

The first phase of a five year plan to sell some of the council's surplus land and property has come forward for public consultation. The council is proposing to sell some assets in its property portfolio to bring funds to support the capital programmes. Cuts in Government funding means the capital programme will depend on generating capital receipts for the foreseeable future.

The disposal of a range of assets which are surplus to requirements will allow the council to preserve services and invest in projects to meet community needs whilst avoiding costly borrowing to shore up its finances.

All land and property owned by the council is regularly assessed and the sites for disposal fall into one of the following categories:-

- Brownfield sites
- Green sites that do not form part of the council's Green Spaces Strategy
- Sites identified in the Green Spaces Strategy that could have a better alternative use
- Sites identified in the strategy which form a small part of a larger site and the removal of which would not impact significantly on the green space.

Further tranches of land and property will be brought forward for public consultation and potential disposal in the next few years and is expected to raise £7 million to support services and project.

Keele Golf Centre Development

The borough council is currently involved in talks with significant land owners near to Keele Golf Centre about the potential future of the site. The council is working with the landowners on a master planning exercise which will explore options for the medium to long term future of the facility along with their land. The centre is being advertised 'To Let' and is currently closed. Offers have been invited to lease the land for a term of up to three years. Interest about potential re-use have been wide ranging and include continuing as a golf course. Alternative or complimentary leisure use or other purposes would be considered – subject to planning, landlord and other approvals.

Outcomes:-

- **Newcastle is a great place to live**
- **Newcastle is a great place to work**
- **Newcastle is a great place to do business**

Local Plan

The Local Plan is a key, long term spatial plan which will help shape future development in Newcastle for the next 15-20 years. It sets out the opportunities and policies on what will or will not be permitted and indicates where it should go, including new homes and businesses.

The preparation of a new joint Local Plan working in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council is planned. A timetable for completion of the Local Plan has been approved and a Joint Advisory Group comprising elected members from the two councils has been established to facilitate delivery of the Plan. The Joint Local Plan will perform three key roles, which can be summarised as follows:

- Firstly, it will set policies guiding the strategic direction of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, which will include identifying new targets for housing and jobs for the future.
- Secondly it will contain site-specific allocations with the aim of directing new housing, employment and shopping facilities to where they are needed to meet local community needs and benefit local people.
- Finally it will set site-specific and generic development management policies to be used in the determination of planning applications across the borough. It is expected that not all of the generic policies will apply equally across the area but will each help to ensure that the environmental impact of development is minimised.

Priority 3:

A healthy and active community

Key activities for delivery in 2014-16:-

Allotment Policy Consultation

This is an ongoing project following on from the work over the past 12 months by the allotment review committee, who looked into the whole issue of how the Council administers its allotments. The committee produced a report which details suggested changes to the way we charge for allotments, manage the eviction of bad tenants and even considered such issues as water conservation and environmental responsibilities along with a host of other things. We will be consulting with as many people as possible who have an interest in these issues and ask them to look at the report via our website or at our public receptions and then give us their views accordingly. The process will be announced via a press release as well as through social media with the results summarised into a report for Cabinet in Autumn 2014.

Community Centre Review

The community centre review undertaken in the past year has protected the long term future of community centres. It has done this by transferring the responsibility to local management committees and providing the tools to raise the finances to operate their particular community centre successfully. The result being that several of the committees are now in the position to negotiate to lease their community centre buildings from the council.

Sports and Physical Activity Strategy

This strategy, developed from the Action Plan of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, identifies a number of stakeholders and activities that will increase the overall participation rates in sports & physical activity throughout the borough. The link between exercise and health is well documented, advising that increased levels of activity will improve an individual's health and reduce the impact on health related services in the future. Benefits include better mental health as well as combating the onset of several major diseases.

Kidsgrove Sports centre

The council has a long term association with the County Council and Clough Hall Technology School to

Outcomes:-

- *Everyone has the chance to live a healthy, independent life*
- *Everyone has access to high quality leisure and cultural facilities/ activities*
- *Everyone has the opportunity to get involved in their community*

jointly provide the Kidsgrove Sports Centre. This provision is nearing the end of its life span and the council is working hard to develop options to secure sports and leisure facilities for Kidsgrove that are fit for the 21st century. We are determined to provide the opportunity for Kidsgrove community to access high quality facilities that are designed, built, operated and financed in a sustainable way.



Priority 4:

A co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven, services.

Key activities for delivery in 2014-16:-

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The council plans its finances over a 5-year rolling programme. This longer-term view is designed to highlight at an early stage where the council may have financial challenges and the level of resources it is likely to have available beyond the current financial year. This is crucial now when councils are faced with budget cuts in government funding and helps to identify future issues in order that a timely and planned approach can be taken to address a shortfall in resources, a reprioritisation of spending or indeed where additional resources are available, where they should be invested. The implications of the MTFS forecast is taken into consideration in the preparation of detailed budgets for 2014/15 and gives guideline figures for the budgets for the following four financial years.

Delivery of the procurement (strategic) work plan

The programme of cuts in funding detailed in the MTFS means we have to look more creatively at how we provide, and deliver, our services over the next four years. It is essential that the council spends less, year on year, and rethinks how it procures goods and services. We need to spend only what is necessary and ensure what we buy delivers real and sustainable value. A commitment to sustainability, fairness and the development of Social Value will be built in to our

purchasing decisions. Added to this we will seek to work in collaboration with various partners, local authorities and other public sector organisations in order to make efficiencies. Also where possible, encouraging micros, small to medium enterprises and social enterprises to engage and explore potential opportunities to contract with the authority – and so impact on the local economy.

Asset Management Strategy 2014-17

The Asset Management Strategy is a key document to manage the disposal of surplus land and assets to provide the necessary funds to support services going forward. It provides a clear framework for understanding the value and condition of property owned by the Council and our approach to the management and use of Council's land and property assets. It also summarises the potential ways in which investment can be funded and highlights the necessity to generate its own capital through the identification and disposal of surplus assets.

Shared Apprenticeship Scheme

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is committed to help support the worklessness agenda by increasing the number of employment opportunities for young local people to enable them to gain valuable work experience and a qualification as well as earning a wage within North Staffordshire.

The council believe a shared scheme working with our partners will help to

Outcomes:-

- **Your council is efficient, open and innovative in its work**
- **Your services are designed and delivered co-operatively.**
- **Your community is strong and well supported.**

pool together our resources and share the responsibilities of training apprentices who may not have the time or resources to take an apprentice on for the duration of the programme. In this approach no single organisation bears the total costs of financing the apprenticeship and allows more varied opportunities for the apprentice. Some of the potential career paths for apprentices are Customer Service, Business Administration, Finance, Sports and Leisure, Parks, Grounds Maintenance, Streetscene, ICT, Garage Workshop and Warehousing/ Fork Lift.

Delivery of the Localism Bill

The Localism Bill was introduced in 2010 and shifts power from central government in to the hands of individuals, communities and councils. Localism isn't simply about giving power back to local government but to individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions – close to the people who are affected by the decisions. The Bill includes five key measures that underpin the Government's approach to decentralisation:-

- Community Rights
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Housing
- General power of competence
- Empowering cities and other local areas

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Plan

2014-16



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