

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting **Wednesday, 17 July 2013**
Time **7.00 pm**
Venue **Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG**
Contact **Nick Lamper
01782 742227**

Cabinet

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** **(Pages 1 - 8)**
Held on 22 May 2013, to be signed as a correct record.
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Urban North Staffs Green Space Strategy Annual Progress Report** **(Pages 9 - 20)**
- 5 An Arts Strategy for the Borough** **(Pages 21 - 48)**
- 6 Newcastle Economic Development Strategy Year Two Action Plan** **(Pages 49 - 66)**
- 7 Town Centre Car Parking** **(Pages 67 - 72)**
- 8 Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013/2015 - Update** **(Pages 73 - 94)**
- 9 Transforming Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services in Staffordshire** **(Pages 95 - 100)**
- 10 Revenue Investment and Budget Support Cabinet Panel** **(Pages 101 - 104)**
- 11 Staffordshire Local Authorities Commissioning and Procurement of a Home Improvement Service** **(Pages 105 - 110)**
- 12 NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM PROJECT** **(Pages 111 - 126)**

The appendix to the report contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 and is therefore not for publication.

If the Cabinet wishes to discuss the information in the appendix it will be necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting during that discussion.

- 13 HARDSHIP RELIEF FOR BUSINESS RATES** **(Pages 127 - 136)**
Appendix B to the report contains exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of

Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 and is therefore not for publication.

If the Cabinet wishes to discuss the information in Appendix B it will be necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting during that discussion.

14 Urgent Business

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

<p>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.</p>
--

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

CABINET

7.00 pm, Wednesday, 22 May 2013

Present:- Councillor Gareth Snell – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Bates, Mrs Beech, Kearon, Williams and Turner

In attendance: John Sellgren (Chief Executive), Kelvin Turner (Executive Director, Resources and Support Services), Neale Clifton (Executive Director, Regeneration and Development), Dave Adams (Executive Director, Operational Services), Paul Clisby (Head of Central Services), Nick Lamper (Senior Member Services Officer), Louise Stevenson (Scrutiny Officer) and Simone Bridgewater (Communications and Marketing Officer)

1. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

The Leader offered the Cabinet's gratitude to Councillor Eddie Boden (who had recently left the Cabinet) for his service and hard work, and welcomed Councillor Terry Turner as the new portfolio holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres.

2. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mike Stubbs.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. ADDITIONAL RECYCLING MATERIALS

Councillor Ann Beech, portfolio holder for Environment and Recycling, introduced a report updating the Cabinet on the extension of the range of material recycling opportunities for residents collected on the kerbside. The report aimed to highlight the importance to reuse and recycle waste via the new revised waste hierarchy and demonstrate that the current service provided residents with a system that met their needs, complied with legislation and ensured that waste was dealt with in an environmentally responsible, safe yet simple and flexible manner.

The change extended the number of bring sites where batteries and waste electrical and electronic equipment could be recycled from three to six, and the portfolio holder also proposed that the provision be added to the existing bring site at Loggheads.

Resolved:

- (1) That the extension of the range of materials (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries) that can be presented in the council blue box for recycling and reuse, be acknowledged;
- (2) That the increase in the number of bring sites that have capacity to recycle WEEE from three to six, be acknowledged; and
- (3) That the provision also be added to the existing bring site at Loggerheads.

6. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME SPORTS COUNCIL - GRANT AID 2013/14

Councillor Elsie Bates, portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure, introduced a report proposing a grant to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council and providing information on the grants awarded by the Sports Council to individuals and sports clubs in the borough in 2012/13.

Councillor Elizabeth Shenton, the chair of the Sports Council, attended the meeting to update the Cabinet on the work of the organisation.

The work of the Sports Council supported the sports voluntary sector in the borough and promoted the value of sport, recognising the need to support individuals in their personal quest for achievement and the wider community benefits this brought.

It was acknowledged that Councillor John Williams was a member of the Sports Council as a representative of the council and, as such, no interest arose.

Resolved:

- (1) That a grant of £22,550 be awarded to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council to support the contribution it makes to sport in the borough; and
- (2) That a review of the governance arrangements for the Sports Council be undertaken to ensure that these are aligned with the council's other grant allocation processes and best practice.

7. DELIVERY OF THE CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

Councillor Ann Beech, portfolio holder for Environment and Recycling, introduced a report seeking approval for the 2013/14 Carbon Management Plan.

The Carbon Management Plan outlined the approach to reducing carbon emissions from the council's own estate and operations and set out in a delivery plan the projects which would, where possible, be delivered. The Cabinet had approved the use of Low Carbon Funding to take forward a range of projects and officers had been authorised to update the Carbon Management Plan Delivery Plan to reflect these projects. The report outlined progress in delivering the Low Carbon funded projects in 2012/13 and sought the Cabinet's views on the proposed projects for the calendar years of 2013 and 2014.

Resolved:

- (1) That progress on the delivery of the projects in the Carbon Management Delivery Plan for 2012/13 be noted and the projects for the 2013/14 plan be approved in principle; and
- (2) That officers be authorised to seek external funding opportunities to support delivery of the remaining projects and to seek consideration of appropriate projects as part of the Invest to Save allocation process funded from the Budget Support Fund.

8. **DEVELOPING THE PRIVATE RENTED OPTION FOR HOMELESS RESIDENTS**

Councillor John Williams, portfolio holder for Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods, introduced a report outlining how the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 provided the council with the additional option of re-housing homeless households into suitable private rented accommodation in order to meet its statutory duties.

The report recommended the use of Homelessness Prevention funding, already allocated within the council's existing homelessness budgets, to fund innovative approaches to encourage private landlords to re-house homeless households when appropriate. This recognised that the demand for housing options services and the provision of housing was increasing and more could be done in the private rented housing sector to alleviate these needs.

As well as the recommended option, the report considered the alternative of continuing to offer assistance with the current homelessness prevention tools; however, the opportunities to meet a household's housing need through the private rented sector would continue to be of limited success in the borough, thereby reducing the overall prospects of meeting customer needs.

Resolved: That Homelessness Prevention funding, already allocated within the council's existing homelessness budgets, be used to fund innovative approaches to encourage private landlords to re-house homeless households when appropriate.

9. **CUSTOMER CASE MANAGEMENT POLICY - UNACCEPTABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR**

Councillor John Williams, portfolio holder for Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods, introduced a report along with a proposed Customer Case Management Policy for Unacceptable Customer Behaviours and Actions.

The report outlined how the council had adopted procedures for dealing with unreasonable complainant behaviour within its Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy (3Cs Policy), but this policy did not address the small number of customers who made unreasonable demands on the council either in the way that they behaved towards staff and/or council property, or the resource that was required to deal with their demands.

The proposed new policy would enable the council to deal in a fair and consistent way with customers who displayed unacceptable customer behaviour and actions, through adhering to industry guidelines and best practice.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Customer Case Management Policy be approved; and
- (2) That the Customer Service Team be congratulated on their recent Customer Service Excellence Award.

10. DRAFT NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

Councillor John Williams, portfolio holder for Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods, introduced a report along with the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Consultation Draft) sought to identify and prioritise the key determinants of health in Newcastle-under-Lyme, develop a shared approach to addressing health inequalities and ensure that the borough's residents were well placed to benefit from current health reforms.

Resolved:

- (1) That the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy be approved and the partnership responses required to implement it be supported; and
- (2) That a consultation exercise be undertaken with Public Health, North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Newcastle NHS Partnership, Healthwatch, local residents and a much wider range of partner organisations.

11. NEWCASTLE GREENWAY - LINKS TO COMMUNITIES BID

Councillor Ann Beech, portfolio holder for Environment and Recycling, introduced a report on a proposed project, led by Staffordshire County Council, to improve the cycle route along the Newcastle Greenway (former mineral line). The report sought approval for the scheme where it would be located on land owned by the borough council. The scheme would improve infrastructure which facilitated and encouraged walking and cycling in Newcastle.

Resolved:

- (1) That the details of the scheme be noted;
- (2) That the scheme be approved and landowner consent be granted to Staffordshire County Council (and its agents) to undertake the work and thereby adopt the Greenway as Highway upon completion of the works; and
- (3) That a further information be provided to Cabinet at the appropriate time showing the approach to be taken in respect of the provision of gates and other barriers/access provision within the scheme.

12. POLICY FOR UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

Councillor Elsie Bates, portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure, introduced a report providing an update on the current position in relation to the Policy for Unsupervised Children's Playgrounds and seeking approval for a programme of repairs and replacement of play equipment and associated items identified in the annual independent inspection report for 2013.

The report also sought to make financial provision in the General Fund Capital Programme for the cost of repair and replacement of play equipment and associated items identified in the annual independent inspection report for 2013/14 and to consider provision for future works in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

This would ensure that children's playgrounds provided by the council were maintained in a fit-for-purpose condition, and in accordance with independent safety

inspections and the council's adopted European Safety Standards, while minimising the authority's exposure to risk in respect of reducing accidents and improving its ability to defend claims that may arise.

An alternative option would be to reduce the current level of play provision by ceasing to repair or replace items which failed to meet the safety standards and opting to remove such items, focusing on providing a fewer number of larger multi-functional sites at major parks and open spaces. This would require a significant policy shift away from local provision to more centralised provision and would necessitate a full policy review preceded by public consultation. The financial and human resource implications of this option would be significant.

Resolved:

- (1) That the programme of works for 2013/14 be approved; and
- (2) That the Executive Director – Operational Services be authorised to seek and accept the lowest suitable tender or quotation for the works.

13. PROPOSALS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER JUBILEE BATHS SITE

Councillor Terry Turner, portfolio holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres, introduced a report seeking approval of the disposal of the above site on terms outlined within the report.

The Cabinet was advised that the appendix to the report (which contained details of the proposed terms) was not for publication as it contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972. As such, if the Cabinet wished to discuss the content of the appendix it would be necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting during its consideration. In the event, such discussion and exclusion did not take place.

The offer was considered to represent market value, generating a significant capital receipt and would result in the redevelopment of the redundant swimming baths.

The disposal was in accordance with both the council's Asset Management Strategy (in respect of surplus land/property) and its Capital Strategy, and would optimise the prospects of regenerating this part of the town centre and secure the satisfactory redevelopment of a key town centre site.

An alternative option would be to decline the offer and continue to market the site for disposal in the hope that a higher one was received. The council had a duty both to achieve 'best consideration' in the disposal of the site and to use its best endeavours to secure a form of redevelopment that would not only enhance the Town Centre Conservation Area but also benefit the local economy.

Resolved:

- (1) That the offer to purchase from Westlands Estates Limited be accepted; and
- (2) That officers be authorised to complete the disposal on the terms summarised both within the report and at Appendix A; and
- (3) That steps be taken to ascertain the ownership of the properties opposite the site with a view to entering into discussions with the owners to achieve a tidying up of their condition.

14. KEELE GOLF COURSE - INTERIM MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND LONG TERM OPTIONS

Councillor Elsie Bates, portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure, introduced a report informing the Cabinet of interim management arrangements that had been established to facilitate ongoing provision of the municipal golf service at Keele Golf Course following actions taken by the liquidator to disclaim the lease of the property, and to seek the Cabinet's endorsement of related decisions.

The report also outlined the long-term options for ongoing provision of municipal pay-as-you-play golf at this location and sought approval for a preferred course of action in relation to the medium to long term option for the site.

Immediate options considered had included:-

- mothballing the course whilst the council considered long term options (this could be regarded as a low cost option that would enable a strategic review to be undertaken from both a service and asset management perspective, but would be likely to be seriously harmful to the long term prospects of municipal golf provision in this location because of the damage caused to the course through lack of proper maintenance and loss of loyalty/good will from the existing customer base); or
- establishing ongoing interim maintenance and management arrangements whilst the council considered long term options (this option presented the short term benefit of keeping the course in operation although this had been balanced with the aim of minimising financial risk to the council).

These demanded consideration of whether the council wished to take the opportunity of:-

(a) undertaking a strategic review of the activity (ie municipal pay-as-you-play golf) in advance of a strategic asset management review (the latter in the context of current and emerging policies). This approach would tend to direct the council towards letting short term maintenance and management contracts awaiting the outcome of a strategic review; or

(b) testing the market interest in operating a municipal golf activity in the long term prior to making any decision to proceed. Such an approach would tend towards a commercial lease as the vehicle to achieve the council's objectives. This would involve a two-stage process that would provide the council with an early indication of market interest through an "Expression of Interest" stage. It would be appropriate to set the terms of any lease on a relatively short term basis, say up to five years. However there was a risk that such a time period may have a significant adverse effect upon the market interest and value of such a lease. For that reason it would be advisable to invite interested parties to submit an alternative bid for longer time periods to be agreed by officers in consultation with Cabinet members before the marketing process began.

In view of the considerations set out in the report, the second bulleted option with the course of action set out at (b) appeared to be the most appropriate at this stage.

Resolved:

- (1) That the actions taken by officers to facilitate ongoing provision of the municipal golf service at Keele – in particular the award of interim contracts for up to six months for both maintenance of the golf course (18-hole and 9-hole) and management of the operation to Glendale Managed Services Limited – be noted;
- (2) That the associated fees and charges as set out in the appendix to the report be set, subject to the junior rates being applied to under-18s rather than under-16s;
- (3) That officers be instructed to proceed with a formal, competitive, two-stage marketing process with the aim of securing a tenant who can deliver a commercially viable municipal golf offer at Keele Golf Course by way of a commercial lease on the basis set out in the report;
- (4) That officers be authorised to prepare the necessary draft lease document in accordance with a specification that shall have been agreed in consultation with the portfolio holders for Culture and Leisure; Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres; and Finance and Resources;
- (5) That the outcome of the overall marketing process be reported to Cabinet to enable a final decision to be made about the award of any long term lease; and
- (6) That officers be thanked for the work undertaken on the issue.

15. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER FOUR (MARCH 2013)

The Leader introduced the Financial and Performance Management Report for the fourth quarter of 2012/13, and reported the comments of the Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 20 May 2013.

The other Cabinet members provided information in relation to the performance within their respective portfolios, with particular reference to areas of particularly strong performance or concern.

Resolved:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and the monitoring and scrutiny of performance alongside finances be continued;
- (2) That the new style of the performance report be developed further for 2013/14 as detailed, in line with the Performance Management Framework Review and the Council Plan 2013/14 to 2015/16;
- (3) That the Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee be thanked for its comments and those comment be noted; and
- (4) That the Customer and ICT Services Teams be commended for keeping the “unmet demand” indicator (4.5) in relation to telephone calls on target despite the increase of 1,700 additional calls on the day following the recent changes to the Council Tax Benefit system.

16. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR GARETH SNELL
Chair

Cabinet - 22/05/13

The meeting concluded at 8.54 pm.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE CABINET

MAY 2013

1. **REPORT TITLE:** URBAN NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2013
- Submitted by:** Head of Operations – Roger Tait
- Portfolio:** All
- Ward(s) affected:** All Urban Wards of the Borough

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of progress made with the implementation of the Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy and the associated Action Plan.

Recommendations:

- (a) That the report be received and progress noted.

Reasons

- (a) To ensure that the green space asset base in urban North Staffordshire and in particular Newcastle, fulfils its potential to deliver a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits through a strategic approach to planning and management.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Cabinet of 7 September 2011 a report was considered in relation to the Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy. It was resolved:-
- “That Officers be instructed to undertake an annual review of the progress made with implementation of the North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy and the associated Action Plan to ensure that objectives are being met”.
- 1.2 The Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy was formally adopted by the Cabinet of the Council at the meeting of 2 December 2009. Since this time, work has been progressing with delivering the actions identified in the Action Plan programme and in developing processes and mechanisms to deliver the aims and objectives of the Strategy.

2.0 **Issues**

- 2.1 The Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy promotes the environmental, economic and social benefits which green space brings to parallel strategic regeneration initiatives and to the Council's corporate priorities and core values. The Strategy demonstrates how good quality green space supports economic regeneration and provides opportunities for people to live a healthy and active lifestyle in a clean and safe environment. It also demonstrates the positive impact green space has on carbon reduction.
- 2.2 The Strategy aims to ensure that the residents of the Borough have the right amount of green space to cater for their needs in terms of parks, play, sport, nature and green routes. The Strategy seeks to provide these sites in places which are accessible and easy to reach for as many people as possible and by grouping facilities together into larger, multi-functional high quality green spaces.
- 2.3 To achieve these aims, the Strategy includes a phased and prioritised Action Plan programme to strategically manage the Council's green space assets to ensure that they deliver a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits and that the financial and community value of green space is recognised and reflected in the way the Council sets priorities and allocates resources.
- 2.4 Significant progress has been made in delivering the Action Plan for the Strategy and a progress report is attached to this report at Appendix 1. In addition to this, annual consultation is carried out with residents of the borough to gauge their views on a number of green space and cleanliness indicators including meeting expectations, safety, cleanliness of streets and open spaces and appropriate provision of facilities. Residents are asked if activities and/or facilities have improved, stayed the same or worsened over the last year. For 2012/13, the majority of residents consulted (range of 60% to 91.5% with most in 77- 86% band) felt that activities and facilities had improved or stayed the same. The majority (17 out of 23) of the categories consulted upon showed an improvement on the score from 2011/12, with the remaining 6 categories still in the 70%and above band.

Key Achievements To Date Include:-

- (a) In the last five years a total of over £4.1 million in external funding has been secured towards delivering the projects in the Action Plan and a number of key capital development projects have been completed or are in progress to provide and improve community green space provision.
- (b) Implementation of the Streetscene Service to deliver the cleaner, safer and sustainable agenda and neighbourhood working.
- (c) Review of potential surplus green space assets incorporated into the asset management and site allocation development plan document consultation process.
- (d) Green Space Strategy embedded into Local Development Framework process and validated as evidence base of the Core Strategy.

- (e) Consistent high performance and achievement of highest quality standard in Britain in Bloom campaign and Green Flag Awards.
 - (f) Projects have been completed or are currently in progress to create or improve facilities at Brampton Park, Wolstanton Marsh, Bathpool Park, Lyme Valley, Birchenwood Playing Fields, former Silverdale Colliery, Westlands Sports Ground, Keele Cemetery, Silverdale Cemetery, Chesterton Memorial Park, The Wammy, Silverdale Park, Cotswold Avenue, Thistleberry Parkway and the Castle Motte in Queen Elizabeth Park.
 - (g) Programme of work ongoing to maintain the Council's playground stock and green space footpaths/roads in a safe condition.
 - (h) Launched and developed the Community Engagement and Participation Framework to enable and support residents to take an active role in looking after their neighbourhood, with over 8000 hours of volunteer time (estimated value of £100,000) contributed in 2012/13. This work is key to the success of the strategy as it creates the opportunity for communities to be fully involved in shaping and delivering green space services in their neighbourhoods. A highly successful inaugural "Communities Day" was held on 7th June 2013 where 37 different community events took place in the Borough's parks, open spaces and neighbourhoods involving large numbers of volunteers.
- 2.5 The Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy and its Action Plan programme is designed to be delivered over a fifteen-year timescale, ending in 2022, following which the Strategy should be reviewed and developed for the future. The Strategy and Action Plan are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate changes in residents' needs and priorities over the fifteen year life of the document and in recognition of the financial and staff resource constraints which may influence its delivery. However, the Strategy sets out a framework and core principles for green space management which, if followed, will assist in ensuring that it's main objectives continue to be met throughout periods of change.
- 2.6 Your officers have reviewed the current policy, legislative, financial and demographic influences which affect North Staffordshire, and in particular Newcastle, in relation to green space provision, management and maintenance. Whilst there are some minor changes to these factors which would normally be expected and are allowed for in the strategy, there is no material change which would necessitate a review of the strategy in it's current form and it is therefore considered to continue to be fit for purpose.
- 2.7 Further work is underway to identify and bid for funding to deliver other projects prioritised in the Action Plan programme. These projects, and their proposed funding mechanisms, will be the subject of future reports to Cabinet at appropriate times.
- 2.8 Work is also underway with partner agencies to investigate the potential to jointly deliver initiatives identified in the Action Plan programme. The outcome of this work and any associated resource implications will be reported at appropriate times.
- 2.9 It is proposed that progress with delivery of the Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy will continue to be formally reported to Cabinet on an

annual basis and that reports on individual actions and projects are brought forward for approval at the appropriate time.

3.0 **Options Considered**

3.1 Options for delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan are detailed in the Strategy document.

4.0 **Proposal**

4.1 It is proposed that the report be received and progress with the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan be noted.

5.0 **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 To ensure that the green space asset base in urban North Staffordshire and in particular Newcastle, fulfils its potential to deliver a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits through a strategic approach to planning and management.

6.0 **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities and the Sustainable Community Strategy**

6.1 A clean, safe, and sustainable Borough.

6.2 A Borough of opportunity.

6.3 A healthy and active community.

6.4 Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high value, community driven services.

7.0 **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 The Council has various powers and duties relating to green space provision and management, set out in statutes relating to open space, public health, miscellaneous provision and well being.

8.0 **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 It is considered that the Strategy has a positive impact on equality issues.

9.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Financial and resource implications have previously been considered.

10.0 **Major Risks**

10.1 Major risks have previously been considered.

11.0 **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

11.1 Cabinet: 09 February 2005 – Resolution No. 761
Cabinet: 03 August 2005 – Resolution No. 285
Cabinet: 21 May 2008 – Resolution No. 39
Cabinet: 02 December 2009 – Resolution No.

Cabinet: 07 September 2011 – Resolution No. 13
Cabinet: 23 May 2012 - Resolution No. 5

12.0 **List of Appendices**

12.1 Appendix 1: Action Plan Progress Report

13.0 **Background Papers**

13.1 Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy.

This page is intentionally left blank

URBAN NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY
PROGRESS REPORT: JUNE 2013

Completed Actions (Actions completed between Sept 2007 and June 2012)

Ref:	Action	Status
GA1	Establish strategic business unit responsible for green spaces	Operational Services/Streetscene Division set up and delivering a cleaner, safer, sustainable agenda
GA2	Develop a funding strategy to deliver the Action Plan programme	Framework for funding strategy devised
GA3	Develop strategy for supporting and involving community groups in green space provision at non-strategic level	Community Engagement and Participation Framework launched and Community Development Officer recruited. Support mechanisms for community groups in place.
GA4	Create database of community volunteers and skills and develop recruitment and training plan	Database set up and recruitment in progress through Community Engagement and Participation Framework.
GA5	Identify appropriate partners to deliver projects within the Action Plan programme	Work in progress to allocate projects to appropriate partners as opportunities and funding programmes arise.
GA6	Identify a Green Space Champion	Portfolio Holder for Culture and Active Communities appointed as Champion
GA7	Establish consultation and review mechanism to gauge level of use, visitor opinion and satisfaction level	Annual Parks and Green Spaces Consultation ongoing.
GA12	NSRP to establish schedule, nature and extent of strategic green space projects	NSRP no longer in existence
GA14	Implement visible patrol of parks in partnership with the Police	Targeted patrols implemented at hotspot sites
GA15	Set up rapid response teams to deal with fly tipping, broken glass, graffiti and vandalised equipment	Integrated into Streetscene (Operations and Performance) set up
GA16	Undertake safety audits of green spaces	Pilot audit undertaken at Chesterton Park – programme to be rolled out to other green spaces where necessary
GA17	Facilitate youth and play work in green spaces to help combat anti-social behaviour	Big Lottery Children's Play Programme portfolio of projects completed. Ongoing work with Staffordshire Youth Service to provide targeted interventions.
GA18	Establish a commitment to ring fencing a proportion of capital receipts and income from green spaces for reinvestment in green space	Approved by Cabinet May 2008
GA19	Consider creation of semi natural areas within green spaces of other functions	Trees not Turf and wildflower meadow creation programme completed. Further projects ongoing as resources allow.
GA20	Produce a Management Plan for each strategic open space	Management Plans completed for strategic (District level) parks and

	and generic Management Plans for non-strategic green spaces	other strategic green spaces.
GA21	Review maintenance procedures and set up multi skilled area teams	Integrated into Streetscene (Operations and Performance) set up
GA22	Review surplus green space sites to determine appropriate alternative use	Initial review undertaken and integrated into asset management plan and site allocations DPD.
GA25	Establish neighbourhood management arrangements for management of non-strategic green space	Integrated into Streetscene (Operations and Performance) set up
GA26	Establish forums for partners to identify and deliver strategic and non-strategic green space projects	Community Forum launched in May 2012. Friends of Parks groups established
RA3	Ensure remaining amenity space designated as LAP is fit for purpose	Sites identified and improvements ongoing as resources allow.
OS2	Create Sports Village at The Wammy	Project re-profiled to Health and Well Being Centre (completed December 2011) and The Wammy Neighbourhood Park (Phases 1 & 2 completed)
OS3	Improve tennis courts/pavilion at Westlands Sports Ground	Pavilion Project completed 2009
OS4	Improve drainage/pavilion at Birchenwood	Drainage Project completed August 2008
PP6	Improve Wolstanton Park/Marsh	Footpaths improved via Section 106 Agreement.
PP7	Improve Bathpool Park (District)	Phase 1 completed March 2008
PP8	Improve Lyme Valley Parkway (District)	Phase 1 completed March 2006
PP9	Improve Brampton Park (District)	Phase 1 completed March 2009
PP19	Improve Cotswold Avenue/The Wammy (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed March 2008
PP20	Improve Thistleberry Parkway (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed 2009
PP22	Improve Brampton Recreation Ground (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed December 2007
PP23	Improve Chesterton Memorial Park (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed March 2009 Phase 2 (new pavilion) completed 2010
PP24	Improve Silverdale Park (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed March 2009
PP27	Improve Loomer Road (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 completed March 2006
PP53	Create fourteen LEAPs in accordance with Policy for Play	One LEAP secured (Keele Road)
SN1	Declare local nature reserve at Bradwell Woods	Declaration completed December 2007
SN4	Improve local nature reserve at Pool Dam Marshes	Section 106 Agreement secured
SN6	Improve semi-natural at Audley Road Open Space, Chesterton	Management Plan implemented
SN7	Improve semi-natural at Waterhays open space, Chesterton	Management Plan implemented
SN11	Improve Newcastle Greenway	Section 106 Agreement secured. Completed December 2009
SN22	Develop Biodiversity Management Plan for each local nature reserve and large semi-natural green space	4 LNR Management Plans prepared
GC1	Create greenway extension at Pool Dam Marshes	Completed in SCC NTADS Programme 2011/12

GC2	Create greenway extension at Lyme Brook	Completed in SCC NTADS Programme 2011/12
-----	---	--

Current Actions (Actions started since June 2012)

Ref:	Action	Status
GA3	Develop strategy for supporting and involving community groups in green space provision at non-strategic level	8000 hours of volunteer work supported in 2012/2013
GA6	Identify a Green Space Champion	Portfolio Holder for Culture and Active Communities appointed as Champion – Current Portfolio Holder to be updated / briefed on role
GA8	Create design briefs for all green space improvement projects	Briefs prepared as part of individual project inception and feasibility – standard format to be developed
GA23	Prepare an Allotment Strategy	Work in progress to review strategy.
GA24	Investigate mechanisms for joint authority co-ordination of green space maintenance	Partnership working, shared service scoping on going with various partners
GA27	Set up joint authority green space information hub	Work on NBC website in progress.
RA2	Review sites where function is unclear to determine future use and maintenance regime	Review in progress and ongoing
OS2	Create Sports Village at The Wammy	The Wammy Neighbourhood Park – Phase 3 (teen facilities) in progress
OS5	Improve sports pitch provision at Wolstanton Marsh	Drainage works complete June 2013. Play Area Improvements in progress
OS6	Improve strategic sites identified in the Newcastle under Lyme Leisure Needs Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy as requiring qualitative improvements	1½ pitches and community facility in progress at former the Silverdale Colliery. Review of Playing Pitch Strategy is underway.
PP6	Improve Wolstanton Park/Marsh	Funding secured for further improvements via Section 106 Agreements. Programmed for Autumn 2013.
PP20	Improve Thistleberry Parkway (Neighbourhood)	Phase 2 funding secured via S106 agreement
PP25	Improve Queen Elizabeth Park (Neighbourhood)	Phase 1 (Castle Motte) Complete
PP53	Create fourteen LEAPs in accordance with Policy for Play	Section 106 Agreement for one LEAP secured (Butt Lane)
SN2	Declare local nature reserve at Bathpool Park	Management Plan completed and Natural England approval granted. Declaration scheduled for Summer 2013.
SN4	Improve local nature reserve at Pool Dam Marshes	Section 106 Agreements secured. Awaiting payment
SN11	Improve Newcastle Greenway	Sustrans funding secured Completion December 2013
SN22	Develop Biodiversity Management Plans for each local nature reserve and semi-natural green space	Bathpool LNR declaration in progress
S106	S106 Agreements secured	Kidsgrove Ski Club (Bathpool Park), Charter Road (The Wammy), Former Silverdale Goods Shed & Thistleberry House (Thistleberry Parkway)

S106	S106 Agreements paid	Lower Milehouse Phase II (The Wammy), Charter Road (The Wammy), Thistleberry House (Thistleberry Parkway)
------	----------------------	---

Future Actions (Actions to be undertaken over the lifetime of the Action Plan)

Ref:	Action	Status
GA6	Identify a Green Space Champion	Portfolio Holder for Culture and Active Communities appointed as Champion – Portfolio Holder to be updated / briefed on role
GA9	Adopt Green Space Urban Taskforce principles for planning, design, management and maintenance	Initial work underway to embed principles – further research on implications required
GA10	Prepare Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy	Initial work in progress via Britain in Bloom campaign and Green Flag Award Management Plans – further work required to develop strategy
GA11	Investigate potential for Public Art and Cultural Activity Strategy	Public art and cultural activities incorporated into green spaces – further work required to develop strategy
GA13	Establish lines of communication with North Staffordshire tourism functions	Incorporate into Communications Plan (action GA10)
GA19	Consider creation of semi natural areas within green spaces of other functions	Trees not Turf and wildflower meadow creation programme completed. Further projects ongoing as resources allow.
PP5	Create District Park at Wye Road	
PP18	Create Neighbourhood Park with NEAP at Kingsbridge Avenue	
PP21	New NEAP at Salop Place	
PP53	Create fourteen LEAPs in accordance with Policy for Play	
OS2	Create Sports Village at The Wammy	The Wammy Neighbourhood Park Phase 4 - Pavilion
SN3	Create local nature reserve at Westomley Wood	Work to commence on Management Plan
SN5	Improve semi-natural at Birchenwood	
SN8	Create semi-natural at Parkhouse Industrial Estate	
SN9	Create semi-natural at Rowley Wood	
SN10	Create semi-natural at Leys Drive	
SN12	Create semi-natural at Moffat Way	
SN13	Create semi-natural at Castle Street	
SN14	Create semi-natural at Pepper Street	
SN21	A Biodiversity Management Plan should be developed (referring to SBAP) for non-strategic semi-natural green spaces	Initial scoping in progress and resources being sought.
GC13	Improve existing Greenway in west and south Newcastle	
GC14	Create potential green route extensions between Crackley & Kidsgrove	

GC15	Create potential green route extensions between Apedale & A34	
GC16	Create potential green route extensions between Brampton & Wolstanton	
GC17	Create potential green route extensions between Newcastle Town Centre & Staffordshire University	

This page is intentionally left blank

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE CABINET

1. **REPORT TITLE** **An Arts Strategy for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme**
- Submitted by:** **Executive Director Operational Services, Dave Adams**
- Portfolio:** **Culture and Leisure**
- Ward(s) affected:** **All**

Purpose of the Report

This report concerns the multi agency Arts Strategy for Newcastle under Lyme that is to be the subject of a public consultation exercise. The views of the Cabinet on the Strategy are warmly welcomed.

Recommendations

1. **To approve the Arts Strategy for public consultation.**
2. **Note the work of the arts and culture group formed in 2012**
3. **Support the aspirations of partners for the arts**

Reasons

The Council's support for the arts and culture sector needs to sustain those organisations that deliver activity locally and the Council, and other stakeholders must ensure that key cultural assets are viable in the short and long term.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The aim of the arts strategy is to set into context what 'the Arts' means for the Borough and explore its relevance and role to our communities both in the present day and the future.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The role of the multi agency arts and culture group has been to make sure the strategy is developed appropriately, by agreeing the structure of the strategy, agreeing strategic priorities following consultation, and ensuring the strategy complements other existing and emerging local, countywide, regional and national strategies
- 2.2 The arts and culture group will be responsible for managing delivery of the strategy in the future following formal approval for the final Strategy. As well as overseeing delivery the Strategy priorities the group will also developing proposals for monitoring, reporting, reviewing and refreshing the strategy as well as publishing and promoting the Strategy.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 The strategy acknowledges the importance of partnership working, addressing itself to the agencies, voluntary and professional organisations within the area who will work in partnership to achieve agreed community outcomes. This commitment will grow support for culture and the arts and by building on existing strengths and developing them to meet community priorities, partner organisations will meet the following challenges:

- Increase participation in the arts
- Support the growth and spread of cultural and creative activity
- Strengthen leadership and resources dedicated to these tasks.
- Measure the improved effectiveness of the arts and culture in tackling community issues

3.2 For the purpose of the strategy culture and arts are defined as the following:

1. Performing arts, visual arts, craft, design and fashion
2. Media, film, television, digital media and language
3. Museums artefacts and archives
4. Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
5. Heritage (encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences).
6. Festivals and attractions
7. Creative business sector

4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

4.1 The new strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with key partners, interested bodies and individuals. The wide range of partners involved in its development reflects the fact that the strategy is not owned by the Council but has shared ownership with external partners.

5. **Links to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

5.1 It is vital that there is a clear strategy for partnership working to raise arts engagement in the Borough, there is growing understanding and recognition in the borough for the arts, and there is robust evidence that the arts have a part to play in addressing wider social and economic issues and concerns.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The Council has the power to provide directly arts and culture services and also the power of community leadership, introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, to lead, influence and support partner organisations to work to common goals to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The final strategy will be subject to a full equalities impact assessment. The strategy has been developed with full regard to the Council's commitment to equality.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The Art Strategy has been developed at a time of limited financial resources. It forms part of our response to achieve visible service excellence, at the same time as being driven by the need for austerity.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The strategy seeks to manage the risks for the public, stakeholders and funders, in relation to the culture and arts sector's ability to respond to current and future changes in customer and stakeholder needs.

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 This proposal has the potential to bring investment into the Borough and to support the regeneration of the town centres.

11. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

11.1 Cabinet resolved at its meeting on 14th November 2012 to approve the development of an Arts Strategy to harness the support of the culture and arts sector to support the desired outcomes of the Council Plan, particularly in relation to town centre regeneration.

12. **List of Appendices**

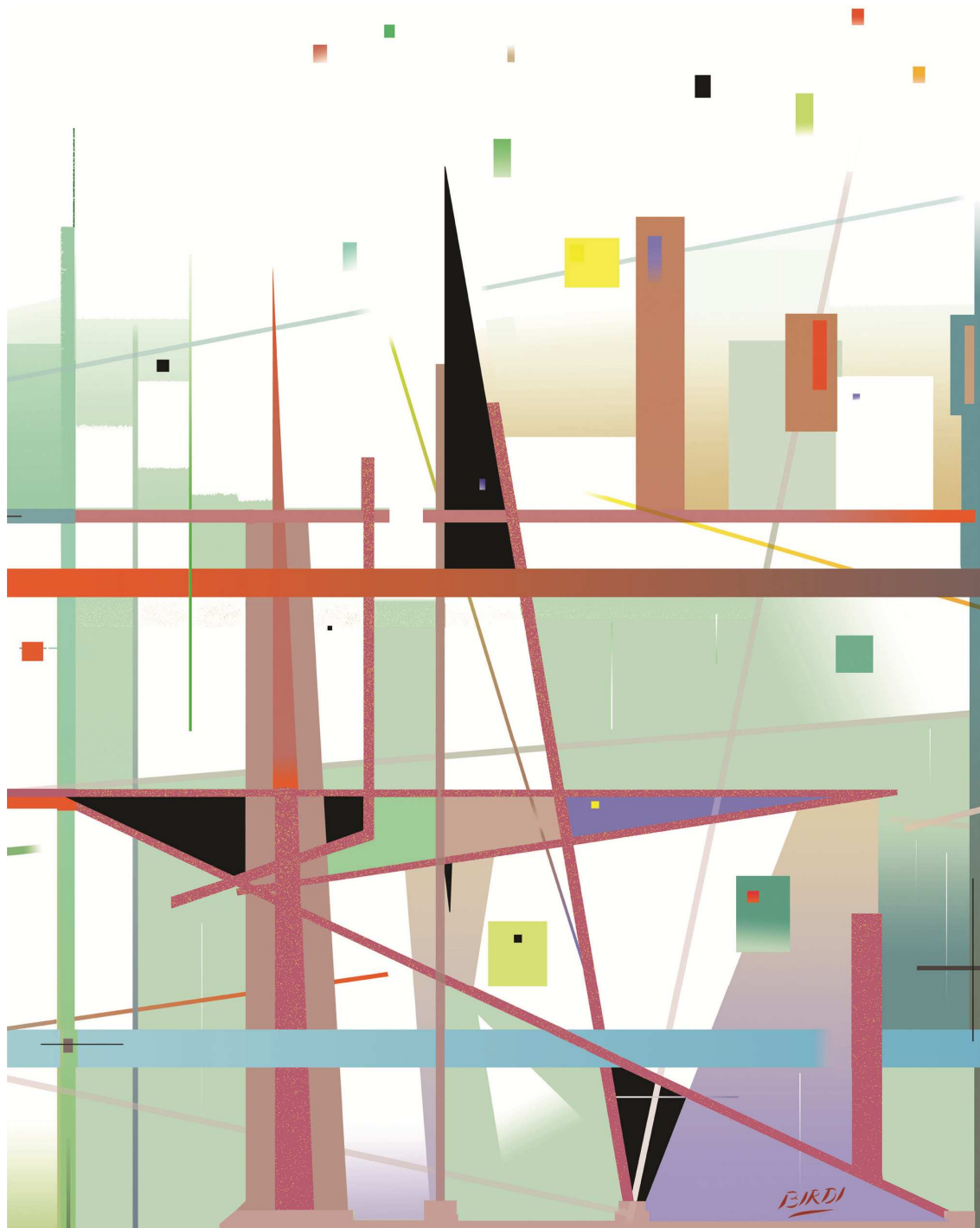
12.1 Appendix 1 An Arts Strategy for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme.

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 None.

This page is intentionally left blank

An Arts Strategy For the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme



Detail of Flight of the RAVEN BY Saranjit Birdi

Contents Page

Section 1	Overview
Section 2	Introduction & Background
Section 3	<p>National, regional and local policy context for culture and the arts</p> <p>Overview of cultural and artistic capacity</p> <p>Building on existing cultural and artistic strengths</p> <p>Encouraging the growth of the cultural and creative enterprise sector</p> <p>Strengthening leadership</p> <p>Putting policies and mechanisms into action</p>

Introduction and Background

The aim of this strategy is to set into context what 'the Arts' means for the Borough and explore its relevance and role to our communities both in the present day and the future.

The Borough is a unique place with two principal towns as part of the North Staffordshire conurbation and a large rural area. These areas contain a rich heritage, history and cultural make-up, that means we are not starting with a blank sheet as art and culture already influence our 'sense of place'. The Arts also have a significant economic impact on the borough. For example, the New Vic Theatre generates £11.6m to the local economy and the Museum a further £1.6m. These buildings along with many others, such as Keele University, and more recently Newcastle-under-Lyme, College and Jubilee2, are all part of an existing infrastructure that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area, enhance the architectural heritage of our historic towns and villages and have raised standards of design. The Arts has also helped shape our communities, particularly through work of BArts and Borderlines, and as a sector the Arts has been very effective in developing audiences locally.

An Arts and Culture Group was formed in 2012 as a consortium of local arts and cultural providers who have joined together to provide to promote the power of art in contributing to every facet of life in the Borough. The aims of the Culture and Arts Group are:

- For organisations with an interest in arts and culture to seek to maximise opportunities for partnership working in order to ensure that the community benefits to the fullest extent from these activities
- To ensure that arts and cultural activities support economic development, notably through the development of skills, employment generation and tourism opportunities
- To ensure that arts and cultural activities promote personal aspiration and achievement and support the social development and enrichment of communities
- To ensure that the benefits from the range of arts and cultural assets is maximised, particularly to ensure that all assets are utilised to the maximum degree possible
- To develop a comprehensive programme of arts and cultural events and to provide opportunities for commissioning new works, particularly from local artists
- To provide opportunities for local arts to show their work and to raise awareness in local communities of the talents of artists living and working in their locality
- To ensure that through outreach activity the benefits of arts and cultural programmes are spread across the widest possible geographical area

The primary responsibility for arts and cultural activity itself lies with the agencies that make up the Arts and Culture for the Borough. Their initial priorities are to help to regenerate the town centres and work with museum partners to commemorate the Centenary of the First World War.

It is this group that have driven the development of the strategy.

This strategy acknowledges the importance of partnership working, addressing itself to the agencies, voluntary and professional organisations within the area who will work in partnership to achieve agreed community outcomes. This commitment will grow support for culture and the arts and by building on existing strengths and developing them to meet community priorities, partner organisations will meet the following challenges:

- Increase participation in the arts
- Support the growth and spread of cultural and creative activity
- Strengthen leadership and resources dedicated to these tasks.
- Measure the improved effectiveness of the arts and culture in tackling community issues

National, regional and local policy context for culture and the arts

It is our intention to ensure that this strategy takes into account current key national, regional and local influences and our work links to these issues and priorities.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) provides funding for the arts in England, sets arts policy and supports arts based initiatives, often in partnership with other government departments.

DCMS funding is distributed through Arts Council England, the development agency for the arts in England.

The Arts Council Strategy mission is, 'To get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives'.

They have a number of goals, linked to funding, which are:

Goal 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

England is regarded as a pre-eminent centre for artistic excellence.

- developing arts opportunities for people and places with the least engagement
- strengthening the distribution of excellent art through touring and digital platforms
- encouraging funded organisations to be even more focused on attracting new audiences

Funding Source – Strategic Touring Fund

Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts

The arts are at the centre of people's lives – more people are involved in arts in their communities and are enriched and inspired by arts experiences.

- using our investment to ensure excellent art happens
- establishing a coherent, nationwide approach to the development of artistic talent, particularly for emerging and mid-career artists
- supporting an artistically-led approach to diversity in the arts
- to showcase talent and build audiences for excellent art

Funding Source – Grants for the Arts

Goal 3: The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative

Collaborative and networked, the arts are known for resilience, innovation and their contribution to the nation's reputation and prosperity.

- promoting greater collaboration between organisations to increase efficiency and innovation
- strengthening business models in the arts, helping arts organisations to diversify their income streams including private giving

Funding Source – Cultural Leadership Programme

Goal 4: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

The diversity of the arts workforce reflects the diversity of society and artistic practice in England. Outstanding arts leaders play a wider role in their communities and nationally.

- building a network of arts leaders who value sharing their knowledge and skills, for the benefit of the arts and civil society
- creating equal opportunities to enter the arts workforce
- improving the delivery of arts opportunities for children and young people
- raising the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

Children and young people have the best current and future artistic lives they can have. They are able to develop their artistic capabilities and engage with, and shape, the arts.

We will encourage the Bridge organisations in the area to work together and work across regional and area boundaries where the geography makes sense. We will continue to promote Artsmark and Arts Award.

Funding Source/Initiatives - Artsmark & Arts Award, Music hubs, National Music Plan

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund can support arts projects when they increase access to, understanding of, or participation in heritage. Heritage Lottery West Midlands visited the Borough in the autumn and are to designate Newcastle (along with two other locations) as Priority Development Areas. As a result we will be allocated a member of HLF staff to work with us to help identify and develop bids which is intended to improve our success rate.

Staffordshire County Council Community Arts Fund

Staffordshire County Council's Community Arts Fund helps to support Staffordshire's communities in their access to a wide range of cultural activities and funds projects which help achieve the outcomes of the Council's Strategic Plan. There are two funding pots:

1. Community Arts Fund – for applications of up to £800 to run an arts activity or event which benefits the community, widens participation and promotes accessibility.
2. Community Arts Development Programme – for applications of up to £2500 to run an arts project which address social issues, develop new audiences, target marginalised groups and support community development.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Cultural Grants

The Borough Council's Cultural Grants panel has an annual budget of £14,500 and makes awards of up to £1,500. The fund is open to any arts or community group planning an arts project or event in Newcastle Borough or can demonstrate that at least 25% of participants / spectators are Newcastle Borough residents if taking place outside of Newcastle.

Existing artistic and cultural strengths

This section highlights some of the strengths and examples of the many notable achievements in culture and the arts in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Culture and Arts are defined, for this purpose as the following:

1. Performing arts, visual arts, craft, design and fashion
2. Media, film, television, digital media and language
3. Museums artefacts and archives
4. Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
5. The built heritage, architecture
6. Festivals and attractions
7. Creative business sector

Performing arts, visual arts, craft, design and fashion

B'Arts

B Arts develops creative programmes and projects that sustain, develop and enrich communities; while employing artists in work that is intelligent, thoughtful and contributes to a process of cultural democracy. They are based at the Barracks where they have workshop space and offices,

Creative Art North Staffs

CANS area a community arts company delivering a wide range of arts projects to young people and the wider public. They work with hard to reach communities and encourage the use of artistic activities to support community development and improve quality of life.

Letting in the Light

Letting in the Light are a not for profit, socially engaged arts group based in Newcastle-under-Lyme. They have engaged with a multitude of different communities in many different forms and has a particular interest in working with groups and communities that don't often have a voice. From creative consultation to hands on workshops, Letting in the Light specialises in creative thinking and are ambitious in their multimedia installations. They have vast experience of project development & management, community development, adult learning, creative consultation and working with communities at a grass-roots level, all of which strengthens our ability to work in the heart of communities

Newcastle College

Newcastle-under-Lyme College is a highly successful college in North Staffordshire, with pass rates and student success levels amongst the best in the country. The college provides a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications from entry to degree level, along with the support services to help students achieve their goals. With purpose-built facilities for art, design and creative industries the college is fully equipped to prepare the next generation of creatives.

New Vic Theatre

The New Vic is Staffordshire's award-winning theatre-in-the-round. With nine major productions a year, they present a varied and adventurous programme that includes contemporary drama, new commissions, acclaimed operas, innovative adaptations and accessible classics. Alongside this work the company has developed extensive and award-winning community involvement with an Education Department and ground-breaking New Vic Borderlines undertaking work of international significance.

The theatre also has a programme of art exhibitions.

Keele University

The University's mission is to be recognised as the UK's leading example of an open, integrated intellectual community. With a broad selection of full time and part time courses including humanities and music. They have an art gallery with a vibrant exhibition programme. It hosts an annual calendar of public events, ranging from lectures to live poetry readings, concerts and official ceremonies. The Keele Arts Panel has been set up to bring together people who have a particular interest in shaping the future arts programme. An Arts Officer has recently been appointed to develop a co-ordinated programme of events across disciplines, drawing and building upon the current arts offer. Arts and cultural activity is an integral part of what they offer as a University, providing events that enhance and enrich the student and staff experience and developing activities that appeal to and engage with the wider community.

Newcastle Borough Council Culture & Arts Service

Based at the Borough Museum on Brampton Park, in addition to offering development advice for young and emerging artists the service manages 3 temporary art exhibition spaces as well as a regular programme of arts and crafts events. This complements a retail offer that showcases the work of local and regional artists and designer makers in its handmade craft space at the museum and at The Perspective Gallery a unique temporary exhibition space housed on the first floor of Jubilee2 Health & Wellbeing Centre. It also administers the Cultural Grants Scheme which is able to support a wide range of cultural events and projects ran by community groups and organisations.

PicL

Partners in Creative Learning provide creative spaces for hire, arts training and development and research. PiCL's mission is to create more positive outcomes for children and young people in Stoke and Staffordshire, to enable them to find their strengths and fulfil their potential. It focuses on three main areas: project management, consultancy and advisory services research, professional development and training, fundraising and contract tendering.

Public Art

There are a number of excellent examples of public art within the Borough that reflects its vibrant history and culture. Most notably are the town', subway art projects. Six projects that brought artists and students together to design artworks to re-invigorate the subways have been completed to date with more planned in the future. A more recent example is 'Return of the Raven', a 50 x 4m digital collage work that adorns the glazing of Jubilee 2, designed by Saranjit Birdi.

Media, film, television, digital media and language

Vue Cinema

Vue Newcastle-under-Lyme is a state-of-the-art multiplex, located in the centre of the historic market town. This modern cinema has 8 screens and can seat up to 1,976 people. It shows main stream film releases and also screenings of plays, ballets and opera at London theatres. It also offers state of the art conference facilities.

Creative Production Companies

There are a wide range of film and broadcast production companies based in Newcastle including Inspired Film & Video, Junction15 Productions, McGovern Productions Eclipse Broadcast Ltd and Koko Digital

Museums, artefacts and archives

Museum & Art Gallery

Hidden in Brampton Park, less than half a mile from the town centre, the Museum and Art Gallery presents over 2000 years of Borough history and culture. Also housing a local history archive, this nationally Accredited museum takes care of unique archaeological, social history and fine art collections and makes them accessible to the public through displays, exhibitions, educational programmes and events and web based research facilities.

Apedale Heritage Centre

The volunteer run heritage centre tells the story of the heavy industries in the Apedale valley. It hosts a drift mine and a light railway which is operated by their colleagues from the Moseley Railway Trust.

Libraries, literature, writing and publishing

Libraries

Staffordshire County Council has 9 libraries in the borough. In addition to the regular book loan service these libraries have a regular programme of arts, music and craft events and exhibitions for use by local artists and arts groups.

Heritage (encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences).

Listed buildings, Monuments, Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas and other locally important buildings and structures

The Borough has a wealth of Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest, scheduled archaeological sites (Scheduled Ancient Monuments) and registered historic parks and gardens. These are of recognised national importance and are designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and English Heritage respectively.

Conservation areas are also designated by the local authority and therefore

enjoy additional planning protection and consideration. Newcastle has 20 Conservation Areas and much of the town centre is designated as such.

However there are a number of buildings and structures, which are not of national importance, and which lie outside of Conservation Areas. These also contribute to the rich cultural heritage of the Borough, and are included on the 'Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures', so that their significance to the Borough's heritage can be given proper consideration in planning matters.

Festivals and attractions

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership (NULTCP) is a new Community Interest Company whose aim is to offer a vibrant and thriving town centre to residents and visitors based on traditional market town values of quality and speciality, within an historic, beautiful, well maintained and safe environment. The partnership's board is made up of key stakeholders from the town, as well as strategic partners in the Borough and support from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. One of their aims is to develop and promote a year-round programme of professional and community-led events. Events such as the Lymelight Festival, Love Your Local Market and the Jazz and Blues Festival help to highlight local creative talent and create an atmosphere in which arts and culture can thrive.

Creative business sector

Newcastle town centre is home to a number of creative independents – the town boasts a fabric shop with its own sewing café, an art shop with facilities for regular classes plus workshop space, vintage clothes and crafts stores, one of which also run courses and a sheet music shop. Most of these are located in the northern end of town, home to many independents, in particular Bridge Street, which has the capacity to become an artisan quarter.

Pop-up Emporium, run by a local entrepreneur, has seen dozens of designer makers given the opportunity to sell their products in pop-up shops in a variety of locations round the town. Talented students from Newcastle-under-Lyme College have also used the pop-up shop concept to have a taste of running their own creative business.

The market, too, has been a focus for creative businesses with specialist markets run by Pop-up Emporium and a scheme to encourage craftspeople to consider market trading as a way of selling their products.

Both Staffordshire University and Keele University have focused on digital and creative studies to a high standard, from undergraduate degrees to PhDs. The result is an outstanding source of new local talent, and a dynamic attitude that's driven the creation of several graduate-run businesses in the area.

Building cultural and artistic capacity

Taking part in cultural activities can bring communities together and empower individuals to articulate their own aspirations and expectations. It is on this premise that this arts strategy identifies the need and demand for a programme of activity that also offers health benefits, community safety benefits, values diversity and tackles social exclusion. The case studies below document some outstanding achievements in these areas. Yet at the same time, much of our focus for capacity building is influenced by concerns and issues relating to town centre regeneration. We recognise the need to support economic regeneration but are keen also to capitalise on the wider benefits the arts can bring. This said we believe that to attract business and investment into our town centre we need to exploit its character and distinctiveness. High quality urban design and architecture are accepted as central to achieving sustainable development and a commitment to this will also support economic, environmental and social benefits. Architecture and design features, such as the predominantly Georgian architecture of Newcastle, are a reflection of our local history, the contextualising and understanding of which should inform our future plans and direction. Capitalising on and developing a strong local culture will help make Newcastle a distinctive place, contribute to its success and make it sustainable.

Newcastle has so far avoided much of the homogeneity of many town centres and continued to enjoy a good number of independent retailers and a strong evening economy. We have feature markets, an annual jazz and blues festival and do exceptionally well each year in Britain in Bloom (best small city category). Yet we are far from escaping the effects of the recession and like most towns there are empty shop units and growing concerns by businesses and landlords over the cost of parking and NNDR to the retail sector.

Part of the solution is clearly to do more – more farmers markets, more festivals, more pop up shops – but the wider benefits also need to be appreciated. We cannot just seek commercial benefits now that public money is in short supply. There has never been a better time for more collaborative work so that art and culture can continue to deliver improvements to people's quality of life in a variety of ways from improving physical and mental well-being to creating tighter knit sustainable communities and providing education. This approach can already be seen in the case studies highlighted below and the aspiration of the partner organisations involved in the production of this strategy.

Borderlines production of 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' 2012

This summer, we finally had the opportunity to perform in Brampton Park. The weather was good and the YPTC wanted to spend two days in Brampton to rehearse. It was a fantastic atmosphere people who were walking past would stop and watch the performance. We managed to get a younger audience and they even joined in the Indian dancing. This also allowed the Young Peoples to have an understanding of not needing a theatre space to put on a good performance. Furthermore the company performed in Koh-I-Noor restaurant which was a challenge for them because in Brampton Park they had a huge space but in Koh-I-Noor they had it was small. However at the end of the two

days they really enjoyed performing and interacting with the audience. The audience enjoyed watching the performance so much that they wanted to find out when and where the next play would be. In the past two years what we have discovered that this arts grant has allowed us to push and stretch the young people to perform in different theatrical styles. Majority of these young people come from very difficult and vulnerable backgrounds and this grant has them the opportunity to perform in a professional settings. This really boosted their confidence and one of the participants who performed in last year's summer project is now in full time employment. This project really celebrated the diversity in Newcastle under Lyme. The young people really had to embrace Indian music and dance to create the rich culture. Initially there were barriers but as the workshops development in scenes they we much more open and started to enjoy themselves. This kind of funding allows us to deliver projects which help young people to think positively therefore making positive contributions to the Newcastle-under-Lyme community.

B Arts and Chesterton Vision

For twelve months from February 2012 B Arts were in residency in the new youth centre for Chesterton in Staffordshire, Chesterton Vision. The youth service wanted to engage the young people by using creativity in four key areas affecting young people's safety and wellbeing. B arts suggested doing this through 4 artist residencies, each using a different art form to explore one of the topics identified by the youth service.

The projects across the year were; creating a series of short animated films on alcohol abuse (artists Matt Ollerhead and Steve Cooling); composing a digital soundtrack about careers and jobs (Steve Edwards and Steve Cooling); devising a performance piece about sexual health (Susan Clarke and Steve Cooling); and designing an art installation raising the issues of domestic abuse (Hilary Hughes and Steve Cooling).

All the projects were hands on for the participants, the youth members learning new skills and exploring new techniques, making decisions and using the arts to explore issues that are relevant to their lives.

On the 9 March 2013 the new building was officially opened with due speeches, ceremony and plaques. The building is a MyPlace project and is a resource for all the community in Chesterton. B Arts and the young people involved showcased work created in the year-long residency of four arts projects funded by Staffordshire County Council.

Maer, Chorlton and Blackbrook Social History Project

Maer and Chorlton have a rich historical heritage with links to Charles Darwin, the Davenport family and the Harrison Shipping Line. Both villages have ancient churches. The group, a subcommittee of Maer Village Hall following a feature in the Yesterdays supplement of the Sentinel which triggered a barrage of excited telephone calls from people with local memoires, decided to act. They wanted to spread the knowledge about their heritage, to appreciate their older residents

and learn what they experienced. Changing the perception of newcomers to the villages was also a motivation.

The residents honed their skills, including interviewing, typing articles, collecting memorabilia and researching in record offices and libraries. Participation was encouraged in the villages.

All the work was voluntary and funding was secured from a variety of sources including the HLF, Newcastle Borough council's Cultural grants, and the local parish councils. 'The Life and Times of the Villages: Maer, Blackbrook and Chorlton was published in 2012 and has sold out.

Local Festivals May Music Festival

Community Education Programme – Letting in the Light

'Animate!' facilitated by Anne Kinnaird (visual/digital artist) in collaboration with Ben McManus (sound/digital artist) was staged at the PICL venue in Newcastle. The participants explored a range of digital and related hands on activities e.g. story boarding, photography, light painting, model making, sound recording, music production, image manipulation, as well as more recognised animation and editing techniques, such as time lapse, stop motion and so on. The participants had access to a range of state of the art equipment and software to create exciting visuals, soundscapes and animated scenes.

As each child/young person had very diverse needs we tailored their involvement to suit their interests, abilities and needs. Each child/young person or small group created at least one animation and in each session we had a range of activities available. The activities ranged from creating plasticene figures and animating them against appropriate imagery downloaded from the internet, recording the sound effects and editing the final animation with sound and credits in iMovie to physically animating bodies.

The result of this project is a series of short animations that were shown at the end of the last session on a big screen where everyone received a trophy and certificate for their achievements. Each child/young person also received a DVD with their work on it and a CD of any other imagery or photos they created. All of the children/young people and their families have given consent to have their films uploaded to youtube for their friends, wider families and schools to watch.

Partner Organisations 3-5 year aspirations

Newcastle Borough Council

The priorities for the area are being taken forward in three principal strategies for economic development, safer and stronger communities and health and wellbeing. Culture and Arts development has an intrinsic role in all three strategies as arts and cultural activities supports economic development, improves the health and wellbeing of all participants and helps to create community cohesion.

Therefore the Council's specific involvement in **Culture & Arts** is to:-

- To provide the opportunity for everyone to enjoy the Borough's material culture and the arts, to explore their history and culture and to use them along with our knowledge as an inspirational resource for learning and creativity.
- Ensuring that the performance of the service continually improves within existing and future budgetary controls. This will mean looking at the best use of resources in terms of management, staffing and services.
- Creating a more self sustaining service by identifying new income streams.
- Advocating the importance and value that the arts and cultural activities can have in delivering on the objectives set by the performance framework. Developing partnership arrangements with other Councils and the Third Sector will be a priority.

B'Arts

- Continue to make progress on our three key programme strands – work with older people, community baking and large outdoor arts projects
- Establish a temporary cultural space within the town centre and co-ordinate a year's worth of programme from the professional, voluntary and amateur arts sectors

- Continue to strengthen the company organisationally, financially and artistically

New Vic Theatre

- Take ideas from the theatrical cutting edge and make them accessible to an audience eager for new adventure.
- Exploit the intimacy of our in-the-round auditorium.
- Capitalise on the unique voice and skills of our Artistic Director, Theresa Heskins,
- Ensure a diverse offer to as wide an audience as possible, including season programming exploiting the subscription model.
- Grow the audience of young people in the 16-25 age range with a dedicated audience development scheme and relevant programming.
- Present a strand of programming aimed at the C2DE socio-economic groups.
- Allocate resources to enhance the scale and artistic concept of at least one production each year.
- Maintain a dedicated team of in-house creative, craft and production staff
- Keep larger casts on stage through inventive programming
- Continue to invest a significant proportion of our resources into maintaining the quality and distinctiveness of our Christmas productions.
- Prioritise the ethos of the ensemble; of actors and audience inhabiting a shared space,
- Invest in the kind of artist development that's seen emerging theatre makers find a supportive home and interested audience at the New Vic.
- We'll continue to invest in our Borderlines department, which will work in partnership to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour and enhance neighbourhood relationships.
- We'll continue to invest in our Education programme, with a programme of lifelong learning aimed at developing aspiration and achievement.
- We'll continue to raise our national profile.
- We will continue our work to support the Borough's priorities and the ambition to make the borough prosperous, clean, healthy and safe.

Keele University

- Development of the Keele Arts Vision
- Development of a diverse and coordinated programme of arts activity
- A strong focus on engagement and participation both through the provision of events that enhance and enrich the student and staff experience, developing activities that appeal to and engage with the Keele community and local area and profiling our offer to wider regional and national stakeholders
- Developing clear marketing and communications
- Exploring fundraising, sponsorship and grant opportunities
- Developing key partnerships and exploring prospects for collaboration

Newcastle College

- The College's arts and culture priorities for the next 3 to 5 years mostly revolve around our new performing arts centre to be built on the old fire

station site and due to open in September 2014. We are hoping that the venue will not only provide accommodation for our growing performing arts offer, but will also act as a public performance space. Current plans are still sketchy, but should include both dance and theatre studio and performance spaces with a 200 seat capacity.

- We will continue to grow our music offer and looking to offer more performance opportunities linked to this.
- We will be expanding our fashion offer from September 2013.
- We are hoping to set up an in-house drama group and dance group from September 2013.

Civic Society

- To stimulate public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of the town and its surroundings.
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.
- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Encouraging the growth of the cultural and creative enterprise sector

Newcastle-under-Lyme is associated with a small number of national brands: The Potteries; the New Vic; and Keele Medical School. However it is also associated with failing industry: Coal mining; heavy industry; and engineering, which have resulted in a move to the service sector (logistics) and a loss of the dexterous skills with which people previously earned their living.

The cultural industries have begun to respond to this situation locally particularly through the provision of exhibition space. Recent times have seen the opening of the Perspectives Gallery at the Jubilee2 Health and Wellbeing Centre, the use of vacant shops in the town centre and additional gallery space created at the New Vic, the Barracks, and Museum.

Educational facilities have also improved greatly with the provision of Newcastle-under-Lyme College, but the schools in the Borough have not yet benefited from any of the national schools building programmes. Art and design is to continue as part of the national curriculum and will therefore remain a popular choice within our schools.

The retail environment has remained distinctive in nature maintaining a number of independent retailers, the town centre streets are pedestrianised and of a good width due to our history as a successful market town. Indeed, Newcastle still supports a daily market. Relocation of a major supermarket to the other side of the ring road has left a major town centre regeneration opportunity and it is still anticipated that this will be retail led, if the right anchor tenant can be found, but until then at least attracting people into the town centre will require a variety of means and in particular a more flexible use of shop space, some of which can be shared or occupied by arts and cultural groups and agencies

Case Study Shops for Art

Action

Shared priorities

- Audience development/increased participation
- Town Centre regeneration
- Exploring Venues
- Contributing to a vibrant arts community

Action

Themed Activity Planning 2014 -2018

[First World War – 100th anniversary](#)

[Town Centre regeneration](#)

[Guildhall 300th anniversary](#)

[Philip Astley – 200th anniversary of his death](#)

Strengthening Leadership

Newcastle has a good cultural offer, and leadership for the arts and cultural communities comes from the organisations involved in developing this strategy.

Both local authorities recognise the value of the arts and have gone some way in integrating them into policies and strategies. Coordination is effective with a number of county groups and locally the production of 'Creative Catch-up' e-news letter along with the marketing activity of individual venues or events means that communication is beneficial. Strong partnership working takes place at a local level to demonstrate the value of culture and arts to cross cutting issues and at a regional and national level with cultural bodies.

Action

Build on existing coordination, communication and partnership activities.

Putting policies and mechanisms in place

Summary of actions from earlier sections

REGENERATION

- That culture, arts and heritage in all its varied interpretations including our historic buildings, monuments, archaeology, rural and build environments are central in development of both the public realm and in the redevelopment of Newcastle town centre.
- Create new ways to access the historic environment, and maintain accessible archives.

PARTNERSHIP

- Some strong and productive partnership working is already in place and potentially provides a strong foundation for establishing Newcastle as a cultural town and area of historical interest.
- Newcastle has a number of groups and societies who actively promote and support heritage and history. They provide many opportunities for local people and include for example the Civic Society, Friends of the Museum and local history society.

To develop

- Engage key partners to deliver specific agendas and shared outcomes and to lever external income through joint funding opportunities.
- Enable partnership approaches to audience development, access, funding and sponsorship
- Investigate the possibility of a historic festival for the town possibly based on the Circus
- Work together to attract national and international exhibitions
- Re-develop the Town Centre Library and Borough Museum with strong branding

ACCESS

- Alternatives should be available to those who do not or cannot visit venues, including the access provided through emerging technologies; including a virtual heritage experience online, a virtual museum and art gallery.
- Maximise access and participation in culture and art
- Develop the online offer and web pages, to include a 'Virtual-online Museum' and links to other Heritage venues and use of technology to maximise engagement in and access to art, culture, heritage and history.
- Ensure venues are easy to locate by improving signage and orientation.
- Increase volunteering opportunities
- Develop trails and storyboards around the town

LEADERSHIP

Ensure that culture and arts organisations and services:

- Have quality leadership and management in place to set the strategic direction for the culture and arts sector.
- employ and retain quality skilled and creative staff
- Are skilled in attracting outside investment, sponsorship and funding.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Support workforce development of both traditional and transferable business skills in order to develop the sector.
- Raise the quality of service provision through quality assurance frameworks and use of benchmarking.
- Maximise opportunities for attracting investment, funding and sponsorship, both within individual services and across services.
- Ensure excellence through making staff training and development a priority.
- Support workforce development of both traditional and transferable business skills in order to develop the sector.
- Improve the use of data and statistics to evidence delivery against key agendas and priorities

OUTCOME

- A joined up, recognised and quality visitor offer across Newcastle. Marketed to target groups with tailored packages and offers.

Priorities	Outcome	Project/Initiative	Milestones/Actions	Completion date	Lead organisation/officer
To develop audiences/ increased participation		WWI Astley Guildhall		2019	
To contribute to town centre regeneration	A more vibrant town centre which attracts visitors				
To investigate new venues/spaces for the arts		Shops for art Shop front exhibitions Creative industries			
To create a vibrant, cohesive arts community	Greater cooperation between partners including joint funding bids/marketing/planning				

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET****17th July 2013****NEWCASTLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: YEAR TWO ACTION PLAN AND YEAR ONE REVIEW****Submitted by: Neale Clifton, Executive Director, Regeneration and Development****Principal author: Simon Smith, Regeneration Manager****Portfolio: Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres****Ward(s) affected: All****Purpose of the Report**

To review progress made in taking forward the Borough's Economic Development Strategy, in particular by reviewing the Year One Action Plan and considering the Year Two Action Plan.

Recommendations

- (a) That receipt of comments from the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.**
- (b) That the review of the Economic Development Strategy Year One Action Plan be noted and that the Year Two Action Plan be approved.**
- (c) That officers continue to seek Members' approval for the annual Action Plans and to keep Members informed of progress made with the same.**

Reasons

To ensure that the broad objectives contained in the agreed strategy are converted into realisable actions.

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough at its meeting last May following consultation with partners and the local business community on an earlier draft. Printed copies of the strategy, illustrated with plans and photographs, have since been widely disseminated, including to Cabinet Members. The approved strategy has a five year timescale (2012-17) and included the preparation of an Action Plan for Year One (2012-13) which identified a number of concrete actions which could be taken in a shorter time scale.
- 1.2 This report provides a review of that Year One Action Plan and (in part informed by this) sets out a Year Two Action Plan (2013-14) for your consideration and approval. By its nature this Action Plan is fairly detailed and for this reason is contained in appendix form. The draft action plan was considered by the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny

Committee and a number of minor changes have been made to improve the quality and specificity of the action plan. The action plan covers a wide range of objectives many of which are delivered through a range of partnerships and are reliant on external partners. The improved action plan includes all the objectives and partnerships but also highlights where the Council is focussing our internal resources to high priority projects where the Council is playing a significant role in delivery.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Strategy is inherently about making choices – making the case for why certain actions should be prioritised over others and to what intended effect. The annual action plans on the other hand are more about adding the flesh to those priorities, setting out what actions are to be taken, so that the actions proposed can be seen in the context of the broader objectives. While it is intended that the broad thrust of the strategy will have a long enough life to see demonstrable progress made (in this case a five year time horizon), the annual action plans are drawn up anew each time and are able to reflect changing circumstances and (sometimes unforeseen) opportunities as they arise. This should have the benefit of keeping them relevant and fresh. This annual review may also take the opportunity to consider new initiatives from Government or a key partner or changes in the economic or financial landscape and capitalise on them. It may also suggest changes in emphasis or priority (and perhaps what might no longer be pursued so that new things might be tried).
- 2.2 At the end of the five year period covered by this strategy (2017), the Council will publish an evaluation report of the effectiveness of the strategy and assess the successes achieved and what might have been done better (or differently). This more detailed review will be undertaken after the period of the Strategy by which time changes in the economic and financial circumstances of the country (and the area) will be clearer and it may then be more appropriate to consider more fundamental changes in direction, including new initiatives.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 When the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy was first discussed, it was initially proposed to provide a 'mid-term report' half way through the five year horizon of the strategy to review progress made and consider whether any changes in emphasis (or even direction) were required. Cabinet instead requested an annual review in the form of an annual Action Plan in which progress made in the previous year's Action Plan was reviewed and a detailed Action Plan for the following year drafted and agreed. This report follows that approach.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The appendix to this report contains a review of the Year One Action Plan (2012-13) and sets out a proposed Year Two Action Plan (2013-14) for your consideration and approval. The annual Action Plans set out in more detail how the aims and 18 broad objectives agreed will be carried out. Like the strategy itself, these will also be based around the four themes of:
- Economy
 - Place and Infrastructure
 - People, and
 - Image & Marketing

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To ensure a commitment to agreed objectives (the Strategy) while also ensuring that actions are flexible and reflect changing opportunities and circumstances (the annual action plans).
- 5.2 To continue to act as a basis for dialogue with other partners to encourage complementary action.

6 **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 An Economic Development Strategy falls within the Borough Council's corporate priority of 'Creating a Borough of Opportunity'.

7 **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 It is not a statutory requirement on the Council to prepare an Economic Development Strategy though it is good practise to do so and to take decisions against the background of agreed priorities, up to date data and following consultation with partners. In view of the relevant powers and duties placed upon Local Authorities in relation to economic well-being it is appropriate for the Council to lead upon the preparation of such a strategy.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 No differential impact had been identified. Specific actions which are designed to improve the prospects of particular sections of the community (for instance, those without work), will be subject to subsequent reports, which may themselves require an EIA.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 Where actions are proposed which require proposals for expenditure these will be the subject of specific reports to Cabinet. The Economic Development Strategy and the annual Action plans will provide context for that expenditure but there is no presumption that funding will be met by the inclusion of an action within the Action Plan and any action requiring Borough Council expenditure will be subject to its own report and justification.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 These will be dealt with project by project.

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 This report has been included in the forward plan. The strategy will affect more than two wards of the Borough. Approval for specific expenditure will be subject to more detailed later reports.

12. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

- 12.1 At its meeting on 14th March 2012, Cabinet resolved

- (a) That the draft strategy be amended in the light of comments received.

- (b) That Cabinet given further consideration to any other improvements / modifications Members wish to see made to the draft

- (c) That the modified (final) version of the strategy be reported to next meeting for approval.
- (d) That the final version of the strategy be accompanied by a first year action plan demonstrating in more detail timescales, lead bodies and resource implications.
- (e) That the approved version of the strategy be re-formatted with plans and photographs added and printed for wider distribution.

12.2 At its meeting on 23rd May 2012, Cabinet resolved

That the Economic Development Strategy and the first year Action Plan be approved.

That arrangements be made to publicise the strategy.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Year One Action Plan Review 2012-13 and Draft 2013-14 Action Plan.

14. **Background Documents**

14.1 Newcastle Economic Development Strategy 2012-17

Economic Development Strategy 2012-17 Year One Action Plan Review 2012-13

Actions listed in **bold** are those which are priorities for the Council

No.	Objective	Action	2012-13 review	2013-14 Actions
Business – Objective: Strengthening the Business Base				
1	We will develop a long-term economic strategy built on 'diverse specialisation', aiming to increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution	1.1 This objective cuts through the strategy as a whole and actions which flow from it are covered in the other sections		
2	We will develop a co-ordinated enterprise strategy	2.1 Produce 'route map' to setting up a business, concentrating on council services	Simple route map for food businesses being set up as a trial, others to follow, including generic business start-up.	Revamp of council website planned for 2013/14 which should improve customer journey. Continue to add more business options to the route map, encompassing all NBC services by Mar 2014.
		2.2 Seek funding to ensure continuation of North Staffordshire District Enterprise & Education Partnership group (DEEP)	Unable to establish appropriate funding to support continued employment of the education/business co-ordinator after Staffordshire partnership funding ran out in July 2012. However, the successful Job Carousels, developed by the DEEP group are being reintroduced from Feb 2013.	Ongoing in 2013-14. Interest from the LEP-led Education Trust in exploring Job Carousels as a way to enable young people to have more informed career choices
		2.3 Pilot single telephone contact point for local business support and link from Stoke & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; (The LEP) website	The Helpline was launched in Feb 2012 as a six month pilot scheme which has now been extended to a full time, 6 day a week service contactable by telephone and e-mail. The contract for delivery for the first 6 months was held by NSCCI but is now with Winning Moves.	Continue to promote the Helpline as a first point of contact for businesses seeking help and advice. Winning Moves seeking to further develop the helpline in conjunction with partners.
		2.4 Develop innovative ways of engaging young people in enterprise activities	Job Carousels re-introduced from Feb 2013 to give primary school children a taste of the many career paths open to them in the future, 8 schools have already expressed an interest in running carousels and a bank of around 30 employees from a wide range of local businesses has been set up to service them. LYLM 'schools market' trialled in Jun/Jul 2012 with 6 schools taking part and more expressing an interest in future events. This will be repeated in 2013.	Continue to engage with schools and volunteers to develop Job Carousel format. Hold another schools market to encourage young entrepreneurs. Assist in the set-up of a youth wing of the Town Centre Partnership.

2.5 Continue to grow and develop the Newcastle Business Boost competition	Highly successful year again, including bringing in a new sponsor, the County Council. 24 Newcastle-based businesses entered, most of which went on to submit a business plan for the second round. Three overall winners were presented with cash prizes at an awards ceremony attended by over 80 people.	Seek additional sponsors to ensure that cash prizes can still be part of the competition.
2.6 To provide business events in line with The LEP with the aim of unlocking the potential of the private sector	The LEP has held a number of dissemination events for Staffordshire businesses throughout the region. The Make It team has also held commercial property events. The Stoke and Staffordshire LEP website also publicises partner events on its website.	Ongoing in 2013-14
2.7 Actively manage business pages of NBC's website	This is ongoing. The council website is being revamped in 2013/14 which improve the customer journey.	Improve business pages of website once new site is operational, taking account of customer feedback.
2.8 Introduce Planning Charter Mark	Cabinet 12/12/12 approved proposals on the steps likely to be required to achieve Planning Charter Mark status in 2013	Seek to embed the principles of the Charter in service delivery. Engage with LEP and Local Authority partners in ongoing review of regulatory services with the aim of making them more business-friendly.
2.9 Delivery of faster and more reliable broadband across Staffordshire	The BDUK Superfast Broadband project in Staffordshire is underway, the BDUK allocation of £7.44m has been match-funded by the County Council. A project manager has been appointed to keep stakeholders informed and ensure they are ready to assist with the delivery phase.	Ongoing in 2013-14. Delivery phase to commence in this financial year. Officers to engage in prioritisation process.
2.10 Establish business enterprise coach in Newcastle. Initially focusing on unemployed people.	Newcastle Business Enterprise coach established working with unemployed people based centrally at the Civic offices, Guild Hall and Library. 27 people assisted to start a business and 12 business starts	Continue to support the Newcastle Business Enterprise Coach by providing rooms at the Civic Offices and Guildhall. Also, attend activities to provide business advice and support as required
2.11 Set up Newcastle Partnership Social Enterprise	Newcastle Partnership have completed work to identify public services across the Borough with potential for SE delivery and gaps in provision that could be commissioned by SE	Continue to work with Newcastle Partnership to implement the recommendations from the Social Enterprise sub group.

		2.12 Work with local business community to develop proposals for funding from the Regional Growth Fund	GE Power Conversion successfully applied for a grant from the RGF in 2012 to enable the expansion of its Butt Lane factory	Support for the company in meeting BIS requirements of the grant offer. Support for the company in addressing any planning requirements in advance of submitting plans for the proposed development. Support for the company in organising a workforce development conference of firms within the sector to address common skills and workforce issues. The availability of RGF will be further promoted to other businesses via the Make It team and the Chamber of Commerce.
3	We will support development of emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher and further education expertise	3.1 Develop the Business and Innovation Group (BIG) to support high growth companies	BIG set up as informal partnership comprising Keele and Staffordshire Universities, KSBP and NSCCI. Has held a number of events including the Technology Strategy Board and one on exporting. Over 100 businesses supported this year	Continue to develop the BIG offer, particularly staging events that other organisations cannot offer on their own, including access to European funding based around networks and collaborations. Target is to assist an additional 100 businesses.
		3.2 Mentoring & work placements for students wishing to pursue a science based career	NuLC running the 'Britten Academy' for V1th formers studying Maths/Economic/Accountancy which will include a mentor and work experience.	Ongoing in 2013-14
		3.3 Use 'Career Academies' to raise aspiration and attainment for young people	NuLC no longer affiliated to the organisation 'Career Academies' but using a similar model (mentors, guru lectures, placements, etc). NBC mentored one student and offered two paid placements during 2012-13. The Enterprise & Business Academy is working closely with Argos and includes a 'Dragon's Lair' competition for students.	On-going in 2013-14. Looking at developing more flexible ways for employers to engage with courses.
		3.4 Attract more young people into education, training and employment through the STEM sectors	NuLC actively promoting STEM to 6th formers. Student mentors include representatives from Siemens and Alstom. STEM profile raising events held by LEP and STEM prioritised as a key curriculum area.	NuLC looking for more employers to offer work experience relevant to STEM students.

		3.5 Promote Keele University as an exemplar of environmentally aware and sustainable campus to demonstrate the expertise offered and grow the low carbon & environmental sustainability expertise in the Borough	Approximately 12000 people have visited the hub including borough schools and a wide cross-section of demographics have visited, particularly on the Community Day. A vertical axis wind turbine developed by a Keele based business has been erected on site and Nissan have donated a zero emissions car for use on campus. Environmental Masters' students are based in the hub who are required to undertake an industrial project as part of their qualification.	Ongoing in 2013-14 (more details can be obtained the Sustainability hub strategy)
4	We will support development of the professional and business services sector	4.1 Continue the development of finest as the region's leading professional services network	finest has continued to offer its members a comprehensive programme of lectures, talks and seminars, to encourage B2B activities and collaborations and to promote training at all levels including senior management. Future finest continues to provide mentoring, networking, social and CPD opportunities for young professionals. NBC held its annual 'meet the chief executive' event at J2.	As finest enters its 10th year of operation it plans to refocus its activities on business basics concentrating on member to member business generation, standards and training, economic development business opportunities and investment. Restructuring of the Steering Group and working groups will also take place. NBC will hold another 'meet the Chief Exec event' in 2013-14.
		4.2 Bring forward suitable business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre. See also 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6	1. Work on new 'Civic Hub' project which aims to co-locate public sector employees and bring outlying staff into the town centre. 2. Work on 'seeing is believing' brochure which aims to convince agents and developers of the potential (and suitability) of town centre office sites for office development and deter recourse to out of town development. 3. Discussions with agent acting for Blackfriars site to share market intelligence and enquires. 4. Support for Morston Assets in seeking funds for the refurbishment of Blackburn House.	Continue to progress actions listed in 2012-13 (Civic Hub, Blackburn House, Blackfriars, 'Seeing is Believing'). In respect of Civic Hub complete outline business case by the end of Q1 and, subject to the outcome, commission detailed feasibility study.
		4.3 Encouraging local procurement of professional services	finest continues to promote member and public sector procurement opportunities on its website.	Plans to develop good practice examples with NBC Procurement Officer and to disseminate these to the local authorities.
5	We will make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector	5.1 Marketing the Borough for inward investment	1. Worked with the 'Make It Stoke and Staffordshire' Inward Investment team to prepare promotional copy about the area. 2. Prepared North Staffs investment brochure. 3. Responded to development enquires with appropriate property options in the Borough. 4. Worked with the Make It team and Mickeldore to identify prospective growth sectors which North Staffordshire has a realistic	Continue to progress actions listed in 2012-13 (Make It, Mickeldore, North Staffs brochure, responding to development enquiries) and ongoing provision of support to the Inward Investment Service.

			prospect of success and developed marketing strategies to target these. 5. Provision of direct support to the Inward Investment service.	
		5.2 Exploit the PR value to the Borough of the outstanding environmental standards attained by the Blue Planet building	This is used in much of our promotional material.	As 2012-13/ Work with the Inward Investment Service and owner of the building to secure a tenant with the aim of achieving ongoing positive PR.
6	We will seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.	6.1 Make more use of the Think Local for Business (TL4B) website to promote business opportunities	TL4B has now been incorporated with Lichfield, Tamworth and Stafford districts as founding members. A business manager has been employed to increase membership. Membership of Newcastle businesses has grown over the last 12 months, albeit only slightly.	Continue to promote TL4B as a B2B option for local businesses. Explore possibility of Newcastle becoming a founder member of the TL4B company
		6.2 Set up procurement hub on council website for lower value contracts	Procurement hub ready to go live, but delayed whilst the Procurement Gateway Process and expected outcomes were rolled out to each of the departmental management teams. This has now been completed.	Roll out of the procurement hub.
		6.3 Set up internal 'gate keeping process' to provide assistance to officers preparing larger contracts	The 'gate keeping process' is the procurement gateway process mentioned in 6.2. A briefing paper was submitted to Executive Management Team and ratified and presented to departmental management teams.	Inform NBC business managers of next steps
		6.4 Development of 'Platform' as a North Staffordshire contracts portal covering all sectors	As part of the Staffordshire Procurement Group three District Councils have agreed to contract with Bravo Solutions as a provider for their E-Tendering platform. Stoke City Council already has the Bravo platform in place and has rolled training out to local providers in utilising this solution.	Further development work around a Staffordshire platform.

We will draw up a Masterplan to guide the future development of Newcastle Town Centre

<p>7.1 Further development of the Newcastle Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) - see further Objective 18</p>	<p>Cross refer to the projects in objective 18</p>	<p>Cross refer to the projects in objective 18</p>
<p>7.2 Bringing forward the development of a major new retail scheme for the Ryecroft site (further detail see 8.1)</p>	<p>1. Engaged expert commercial advisor (Cushman & Wakefield) to help secure a development partner for the site; 2. agreed marketing plan for the scheme; 3. commissioned planning consultants to advise on appropriate planning policy document to make the case for comprehensive treatment. 4. See 4.2 relating to the Civic Hub project which is a paving action to facilitate the redevelopment of the overall Ryecroft site.</p>	<p>Subject to the outcome of the Civic Hub project at 4.2, seek to secure preferred development partner by end of 2013, complete Development Agreement, apply for planning permission and sign up key anchor tenants by Autumn 2014.</p>
<p>7.3 Bringing forward the development of a new Civic Quarter potentially on council owned land at Nelson Place or the Ironmarket</p>	<p>This project should be subsumed within the 'Civic Hub' proposal intended to co-locate all Newcastle-based County Council and Borough Council staff (and, potentially, those of other public sector partners). Business case under preparation as well as options appraisal of potential sites within the town centre.</p>	<p>See comments in 2012-13; make business case for scheme, secure commitment of two councils and potential partners to the investment required, complete options appraisal for sites under consideration by Summer 2013.</p>
<p>7.4 Securing the satisfactory redevelopment of the former Blackfriars Bakery site, Pool Dam</p>	<p>Ongoing support for the land owner in directing appropriate inward investment enquiries.</p>	<p>Discussions will continue with agent and land owner and potential enquiries shared. Suitable proposals will be supported (i.e. those which comply with key prevailing planning policies).</p>
<p>7.5 Adoption of design briefs for each of the town centre's three key development sites (see 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4 above) as agreed planning policy</p>	<p>Design briefs completed and will be subsumed within any future Planning Policy document.</p>	<p>Emerging Planning Policy document(s) to reflect stated ambitions for each of these sites.</p>

8

We will bring forward proposals for retail and business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre with priority placed on growing its professional services and a distinctive retail offer

8.1 See also 7.2: Procure development partner for the Ryecroft scheme (ensuring that the partners' Development Agreement makes provision for elements which play to the town's qualities (a department store, a quality food store, family friendly eateries/ restaurants); ensure scheme design encourages the circulation of retail footfall around the town).

Formal marketing not yet underway; aim is to secure development partner by end of 2013 selected on the basis of those stated objectives (and others).

As comments 2012-13 and in relation to 7.2.

8.2 Town centre promotion (including that of its independent shops offer) see further Objective 18

See section 18

See section 18

8.3 Develop a new Civic Centre with co-located services between NBC, SCC and other public sector partners.

see 7.3 and 4.2

see 7.3 and 4.2.

8.4 Market key town centre development sites for office development

see 4.2

as 2012-13; explore potential for addition resource from Make It to ensure that this is given greater priority (especially while the Hanley CBD is not available); detailed discussions with agent acting on behalf of two known large scale office enquiries.

8.5 Bring Blackburn House back into use

Successful bid for funding from the Growing Places Fund. Not yet taken up as land owner now seeking a pre-let prior to committing to refurbishment. Sharing market intelligence and enquiry information with land owner in respect of two current large scale office enquiries.

To continue supporting and working with the land owner with the aim of securing a commercially viable use for the building.

8.6 Market Lancaster Buildings for office occupation

Advertising of the availability of the 2nd floor offices has continued both on the Borough Council's website and via the appointed estate agent. Unfortunately, whilst the first floor is in occupation, the second floor offices remain vacant.

Continue to market the remaining office space for occupation including exploring innovative models for new business occupation in conjunction with key partners.

		8.7 Undertake complementary investment in the town centre to attract further developer interest, in line with the Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework (see further objective 18)	See detailed commentary Objective 18	As comments 2012-13
9	We will promote the further development of Keele Science and Business Park	9.1 The development of further Innovation Centres and the Conference Hotel	University has decided not to develop the conference hotel itself but to seek interest from hotel operators to build and run the hotel. Currently in discussions. Likely to be 150 beds. Would support the university's conference business. Staffs County Council are in talks with an anchor tenant to take a third of the planned IC5. If agreed, this will trigger its construction, later in 2013. The three storey building provides for labs on the ground floors and two storeys of offices over.	Secure sufficient interest in IC5 to encourage SCC to begin construction. Support, where possible, university actions to find a hotel developer.
		9.2 Marketing of the Science Park for inward investment of further high tech businesses	The university has prepared a marketing brochure to promote interest in IC5 (see 9.1) and is actively working with the Make It team to promote the area and the science park for inward investment, including a presence at the UK Renewables Conference at Glasgow last year and sponsorship of Make It's trip to the Mippim Conference in March.	Insider Magazine investor event planned. Ongoing in 2013-14. It will also host the Midlands Insider Property event Spring 2013.
		9.3 Successful occupation of the Nova Centre by graduate enterprises and other businesses	The Nova Centre is now full with 16 small companies based here (some hot desking). Currently looking at how to sustain the model and ensure that (a) businesses currently based here are able to stay in the area after their two year business occupancy expires, and (b) space is freed up for new enterprises	Develop strategy to help tenants move on after 2 years - may include potential accommodation on campus

10	We will enable the development of higher quality housing for current and future residents, with an explicit aim to increase the attractiveness of North Staffordshire as a home to affluent residents	10.1 Identify housing development sites specifically for 'high earners' in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document	Local Plan is still at the 'Issues and Options' stage.	as column 2
11	We will bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough.	11.1 Identify an appropriate and attractive range of new employment sites in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to replenish the supply of development land in the Borough	Local Plan is still at the 'Issues and Options' stage.	as column 2
People – Objective: Transforming Ambition				
12	We will raise skills, reduce worklessness and raise aspirations as a core element of all transformational strategies	12.1 Equip young people and adults with basic employability skills required by local businesses based on research into local employers needs	NULC further development of Employment and Skills agenda. Specific work to encourage more apprenticeships through the 100 in 100 campaign launched during national apprenticeship week March 2013	Promote the Council's shared apprenticeship scheme with partners to recruit 12 apprentices. Support the Talent Match project to encourage young people aged 18-24 yrs unemployed for 12mths, into training and employment.
		12.2 Provide a programme of support and training back into work to reduce worklessness	Family Employment Initiative continues to work with people across the Borough and has engaged with 288 people, supported 117 into training and 82 people into employment. Continue to coordinate Newcastle Employment and Skills Group to enable further joint working especially in relation to welfare benefit cuts.	Work to identify European funding opportunities to support this area of work.
13	We will work towards getting the right skills mix to increase productivity	13.1 Identify business growth sectors over the next 5-10 years and identify the specific skills required within these sectors.	Work with Make It inward investment team to develop a sector-specific marketing campaign based on the recommendations of last year's Mickledore study.	LEP Education Trust established to improve links between business, schools and education and training providers. Also to match supply to demand and identify communication and networking opportunities. Develop annual calendar of events.

14	We will stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire skills for current and future industrial structure	14.1 Increase the number of people in Stoke and Staffordshire qualified to graduate level and above	LEP Education Trust Established. Council representation on the Communications and Networking group.	LEP Education Trust will promote a calendar of activities that seek to raise the achievements of pupils and students and to raise educational and training aspirations. Work will focus on schools and business links, supply and demand and communications.
'Image and Marketing' – Objective - Transforming Perceptions				
15	We will develop an external marketing strategy for the Borough	15.1 Support the work of the 'Make It' team	Fortnightly team meetings to share market information, current enquiries and prospective leads. Follow up leads and offer sites and premises which meet clients' requirements.	Continue to pursue, as column three
15.2 Produce North Staffordshire Employment Land Compendium		Work under preparation, completion planned March 2013.	Design and production of the North Staffs site Brochure widely disseminated amongst local and regional agents.	
15.3 Actively develop links at strategic and operational levels with The LEP		Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group wound up in 2012 to focus on the establishment of the Stoke and Staffordshire Education Trust.	Continue to play an active role in the Education Trust Communications and Networking Group	
16	We will improve the quality of life offer for current and future residents	16.1 Confirm existing customer profile of town centre users to see if any changes since previous surveys carried out	After discussion with the TCP shadow board it was agreed that this work would be deferred until the town centre manager was in post.	Carry action over to 2013-14
16.2 Identify gaps from the research and define target market for marketing campaigns		See 16.1	Carry action over to 2013-14	
16.3 Develop appropriate marketing material for town centre assets		Town centre website, commissioned by NULTCP under construction (launch planned for Apr 2013).	Carry action over to 2013-14	
16.4 Develop marketing strategy for Newcastle Town Centre and the market		Marketing strategy for Newcastle town centre currently under development by the NULTCP. The aims of the strategy are to raise Newcastle Under Lyme's profile as a destination for retail, leisure and business, develop and promote a consistent brand image based on the overall Town Centre Partnership vision, bring cohesion to town centre marketing messages, develop and promote a year-round programme of professional and community-led events. The first event NULTCP event of 2013,	Ongoing in 2013-14	

			Keele RAG parade, took place in Mar.	
		16.5 Complete public realm works	<p>Works in the Ironmarket and Barracks Road / the Bus Station complete by September 2012.</p> <p>Works to introduce a new taxi rank at lower High Street commenced in February 2013.</p> <p>A test market stall was installed in December 2012 for evaluation although the process of evaluation was somewhat disrupted by the weather.</p>	<p>Complete re-paving of Hassell Street September 2013.</p> <p>Install new market stalls October 2013.</p>
		16.6 Refurbish three Town Centre Subways	Preparatory work with the County Council to investigate paint systems	Start refurbishment works on three town centre subways summer 2013 and commission artists to work on the community arts element.
		16.7 Provide new community facility in Silverdale	Secure additional funding from HCA to provide adequate services for the facility, transfer the community facility land from HCA to the Council.	Sign agreement with Severn Trent Ltd to realign the sewer April 2013, complete Heads of Terms between the Council and SAFC June 2013, commence community facility build programme April 2013 with a view to complete December 2013.
17	We will support the development of North Staffordshire's 'experience economy'	17.1 Continue to work with the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) to make the Borough a more attractive prospect for visitors, including business tourism	NBC continues to support the work of the DMP. A successful ERDF bid by the DMP has secured £500k additional resource for tourism activities in Staffordshire. Two 'Out & About' guides have been published along with the annual 'Enjoy Staffordshire' tourism guide. In addition, user information collected from the website has been used to send out targeted e-mails promoting events (e.g. the Food festival in May 2012)	Ensure all town centre special events are promoted through the DMP media resources.

17.2 Work with Keele university and Keele University Students' Union to bring more students into town	The TCP is building up links with Keele at a variety of levels. The TCP board includes a member of the senior management team. The TCM is also engaging with the Students' Union. Plans are in hand to re-introduce student nights on a Thursday in the town centre and a RAG parade is due to be held on 9th March. Student volunteers also participated in the Christmas Lights switch on and Dickensian Market	Develop more permanent links between the Students' Union and the TCP, including inviting student societies to participate in town centre events. Engage students in enterprise activities, including volunteering opportunities.
17.3 Work with DMP to encourage more take up of membership by Newcastle businesses	No specific work undertaken on this action due to focus on town centres although NBC supports DMP initiatives to grow membership	Ongoing in 2013-14
17.4 Bring St Giles & St Georges back into use	Unsuccessful attempt to lease to local RSL (refurbishment too expensive). Currently in discussions with local charitable organisation.	Continue to market the premises whilst other options for development are explored.
17.5 Encourage greater use of Jubilee 2 (J2) conference facilities	A Business Panel and a Finest event have been held at J2. Have worked with the J2 project manager to develop a business offer.	Ongoing in 2013-14 including working with town centre businesses to provide a package of discounts and special offers for the mutual benefit of members and retail outlets in the town centre.
17.6 Promote the Borough's qualities to existing and potential visitors and residents	This is ongoing but a significant revamp of the tourism pages on the website took place in July to coincide with the 'Newcastles of the World' summit. The Facebook sites are used on a daily basis to keep people apprised of events, activities and offers (over 1600 'friends' and over 600 'likes' for the related community pages).	Use town centre website to further promote Newcastle town centre. Improve tourism information on NBC's new web pages when complete.
17.7 Develop better links between the town centre and the New Vic Theatre	New Vic MD sits on TCP board and champions the Marketing & Events group. New Vic Youth Theatre seniors performed in town as part of the Christmas lights switch on and are working on other collaborations in the town centre.	This action is completed
17.8 Improve/diversify the cultural offer within the town centre	A number of different cultural events were held in the town centre including a Food festival in May, the Jubilee Music Festival in May, specially produced open air drama pieces by GCSE students from Newcastle School and a five week pop-up emporium featuring a wide variety of art and craft classes.	Plans for 2013-14 include the 'Lymelight' music festival in May for local talent and a dance festival in July as well as the popular Jazz & Blues Festival in May.

18	We will use the Strategic Investment Framework as the basis for investment in the cultural and retail experience of Newcastle Town Centre	18.1 Set up a Town Centre Partnership	The TCP was incorporated in January 2013. A town centre manager, employed by the TCP, took up post in Jan 2013.	This action is completed
		18.2 Set up Town Centre website	The TCP commissioned a website in Dec 2012, which will be launched in Apr 2013.	Continue to support and promote the website as a source of information about the town centre and offers from local businesses
		18.3 Develop a viable scheme for using vacant shop units to enhance the visitor experience in the town centre	NBC, in conjunction with a local entrepreneur trialled a monthly pop-up shop, featuring a variety of designer-makers. This was extended to a 5-week occupation in the run-up to Christmas. NuLC also set up a pop-up for existing and past students to display and sell their goods.	Work with TCP Business and Enterprise theme group to develop a start-up programme to utilise empty shops. Continue to explore ways of using vacant premises, particularly those in prime locations. B Arts and NMAG working in partnership to develop a creative hub/workspace in the town centre
		18.4 Develop a Food Festival for the town centre	Food festival held in May 2012.	Plans to incorporate a food festival in the 2013 programme of events
		18.5 Explore possibility of setting up local tourism group	No action on this point - defer to 2013-14	Defer to 2013-14
		18.6 Continue to develop events to increase footfall and raise awareness	Wide variety of events held in the town centre during 2012 and publicised through a variety of sources - photographs available on Facebook pages. TCP Marketing & Events group has held an Ideas generation session for 2013 events, which will be implemented by the TCM.	Continue to develop events and focus on delivery of those which were most successful in 2012
		18.7 Undertake a review of parking in the town centre	NBC Economic Development Scrutiny Panel has set up a sub-group to review parking in the town centre, which included representation from the TCP. Free parking after 2pm was offered on all town centre car parks in the run up to Christmas on Tues/Wed/Thur/Sat.	Ongoing in 2013-14
		18.8 Look at the impact of rents and rates on businesses	High rates are an issue, particularly in primary retail locations. NBC has worked with local entrepreneurs to facilitate pop-up shops in Lancaster Building and other landlords, e.g Roebuck Shopping Centre are also looking at ways of supporting new tenants.	Ongoing in 2013-14

<p>18.9 Encourage more retail start ups through 'Independents Month' and 'Love Your Local Market' campaigns</p>	<p>Newcastle participated in LYLM in Jun/Jul 2012. An Indie Easter Egg Hunt will be held in Mar/Apr 2013 to promote independent retailers.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2013-14</p>
<p>18.10 Market the town centre through a variety of electronic and written media</p>	<p>Media press release have been sent out for all town centre events, Facebook has been used extensively, including the setting up of specific event pages (e.g. Portas pilot and Paint the Town Pink) - currently running at over 1550 friends. Twitter and LinkedIn have also been used.</p>	<p>Continue to grow social media presence; develop town centre newsletter in conjunction with TCM; town centre website online.</p>

Agenda Item 7

<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	Town Centre Car Parking
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Graham Williams, Engineering Manager
<u>Portfolio:</u>	Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres and; Environment & Recycling
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	Town

Purpose of the Report

To inform Cabinet of the outcome of a scrutiny review process and subsequent member discussions that considered a range of options to introduce changes to the car parking fees and charges regime in an attempt to generate greater footfall in the town centre with the express aim of improving its economic fortunes.

Recommendations:

- a) That Members approve the proposals set out in the report and authorise officers to take the necessary steps to implement:
 - i) initiatives 2, 3 and 4 on a six-month trial basis commencing 1 October 2013, including liaison with the Town Centre Partnership, and;
 - ii) initiative 1 in consultation with the County Council, as soon as practically possible.
- b) That Members note the decision taken to accept the proposals from Bemrose Booth Mobile to implement on a 12-month trial basis the three initiatives described in the report and to accept the related Grant offer.
- c) That the financial implications of the trial upon the Council's revenue and capital budgets be met from the Bemrose Booth Mobile grant offer, as set out in the report.
- d) That the balance of the Bemrose Booth Mobile grant offer be retained to support any ongoing urgent repair/maintenance works of the former St. Giles and St. Georges School Building.
- e) That in respect of initiative 2 the trial be established with the understanding that the Town Centre Partnership would work with local businesses to develop the refund element of the double ticketing scheme.
- f) That Members urge the Town Centre Partnership to establish a retail index scheme to monitor trade in order to evaluate any improvements in, and/or displacement of, trade.
- g) That officers report back to Cabinet with an evaluation of the trial as soon as practically possible after the end of the 6-month trial period.
- h) That officers seek to agree with Cabinet Members the most appropriate approach to consulting stakeholders on the matters referred to in this report.

Reasons

To enable members to make a balanced response to the Town Centre Partnership which is seeking changes to the car park management regime with the aim of increasing footfall in the town centre for reasons of economic well-being.

1. Background

1.1 Over the past year the Council has received a number of approaches from the business community (via the Town Centre Partnership) to review its town centre parking charges in the hope that concessions may help to generate greater footfall with the consequent benefit to businesses and the overall town centre economy. Cabinet asked that the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (EDEOSC) undertake a review balancing the wishes of the Town Centre Partnership with the likely impact of any concessions upon the Council's revenue budget. Prior to Christmas the Committee resolved to set up a task and finish group to address the task set by Cabinet. The task and finish group members consisted of Cllrs Baker, Studd and Peers, the Town Centre Manager and the Roebuck Centre Manager. The recommendations of the EDEOSC were as follows:

1. That cashless parking be introduced.
2. Whilst Members support the introduction of a Pay on Foot system, they acknowledged the significant capital cost required and therefore recommend the scheme be implemented should capital funding become available.
3. That free parking should be introduced after 2.00pm on Thursdays in the Midway Car Park

2. Issues

2.1 As a result of both general economic conditions and changes in shopping habits the town centre has suffered a reduction in footfall which, in turn, has worsened trading conditions. The business community has requested that the management of parking be reviewed in the hope that concessions would encourage additional visitors to the town centre and/or to increase the length of time that customers stay in the town.

2.2 There have been a few studies which investigated the relationship between parking and its effect on the footfall in town centres. The studies have generally shown that there is no clear relationship between parking charges and footfall in a town centre. Nevertheless the Council is seeking to respond to the Town Centre Partnership's request for reasons of the economic well-being of the town centre. It is considered appropriate to review options that strike a balance between the potentially adverse impact upon the Council's revenue budget and the expectation of direct benefit being achieved by town centre businesses.

3. Options Considered

3.1 As indicated above EDEOSC recommended three initiatives for Cabinet to consider and these are reviewed first:

a) Cashless Parking

A growing number of local authorities have opted to introduce an additional method of payment which uses mobile phone technology to pay for parking; this allows for the customer to extend their payment period whilst away from the car park. The customer would incur an additional charge, over and above the normal parking tariff, of 20p per visit. The Borough Council would lose income due to the debit and credit card charges.

The cost for introducing such a system comprises £950.00 for the alterations to the hand-held devices used by the civil enforcement officers and approximately £1000 for the signage.

The loss of income would be in the order of £1100 per 1% of the tickets issued (based on an average debit/credit card charge of 15p). Where similar systems have been introduced at other Staffordshire authorities, approx. 1% of customers have chosen to use this method of payment. Of course if there was an increase in patronage as a result of introducing cashless parking then there would be a subsequent increase in income.

In view of the relatively low cost impact upon the Council and the fact that this payment method has the advantage of allowing users to extend their stay without returning to their vehicle, officers consider this to be a viable option.

b) Pay-on-foot system

A number of interested parties believe that such systems encourage longer dwell time for users (because they are not having to worry about the expiration of their pay-and-display ticket). The obvious preferred location to introduce such a scheme would be on the Midway Multi-Storey car park (because it is the centre's main car park) and officers have estimated that there would be a likely capital cost to the Council of about £125,000. Whilst the Council may be prepared to support such a scheme as a matter of principle, in view of other competing demands upon the Council's capital programme over the next few years, this option is not recommended at this time. Additionally, from a value-for-money perspective, it could be argued that the introduction of the Cashless Parking scheme would achieve a similar outcome at a fraction of the cost.

c) Free parking after 2.00pm on Thursdays

Following consultation with the Town Centre Partnership's representative EDEOSC was persuaded that this initiative may help to stimulate new footfall on one of the quieter days of the week. The estimated lost revenue income to the Council would be about £25,000 p.a.

In considering this option officers felt that Members should take into account the fact that another local authority in Staffordshire introduced such a scheme on a 6-month trial basis and found that it simply displaced local shoppers from another time during the week (resulting in no net increase in footfall).

In view of the above and the significant adverse financial consequence to the Council (including other pressures upon the wider revenue budget) officers feel unable to recommend this initiative at this time.

3.2 Since receiving the EDEOSC report officers have discussed the potential scope for introducing other car parking-related initiatives and these are set out below:-

a) Nipper Parking

Nipper parking is normally 30 minutes free parking, generally near to the centre of the town centre which allows customers to "nip" in and out of town to make a short targeted visit.

The area road in front of the old police station has 3 parking bays, sufficient for at least 8 cars, specifically for marked police vehicles. Due to the relocation of the police into the civic offices these bays could be used for an alternative use. Subject to the County Council agreeing, these spaces may be used for nipper parking (max stay 30 mins).

An estimated cost to carry out this change in the traffic regulation order is £3,750.

Officers would recommend that the County Council be asked to priorities this low-cost option to add this dimension to customer choice.

b) Double Ticketing Scheme

This is a scheme where the customer purchases a parking ticket as normal; the ticket machine would issue an additional ticket that can be redeemed either full or in part by a retail member of the scheme. This option would require the Town Centre Partnership working with local businesses to establish and manage the process of the refund scheme.

To alter the tickets machines on the Midway and Goose Street car parks to enable double ticketing would cost approximately £1,200 and the additional cost for the tickets is estimated to be up to £2,000 per year.

In view of the relatively modest up front and ongoing cost to the Council this option would allow the town centre business community to work with the Authority on a joint initiative for the direct benefit of the customer

c) Enhanced Free parking Days

It has become customary in recent years that the council offers free parking on the five weeks leading up to Christmas from 2pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

To encourage visitors to the town centre on special event days it is considered that the Council could increase the number of days by 5, (in addition to the days currently given leading up to Christmas). The allocation of these days would be determined in liaison with the Town Centre Partnership.

The additional loss of income due to the extra days is estimated to be £15,000.

Evidence from other towns (and our own) indicates the growing value and importance of promoting events in town centres to draw people in with the consequent benefit for food and drink establishments and increasing the likelihood of expenditure on other foods/services. Consequently officers consider that the potential revenue consequences to the Council can be offset by the likely significant benefit to the town centre economy.

3.3 The other notable initiative that has come to light in recent weeks is an offer from a national supplier of car park management systems along the lines described below.

3.4 In short the offer made to the Council is for the supplier to install, as a 12-month trial, cashless parking, virtual permits and an ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) systems at no cost to the Council.

- The cashless parking system is described in the previous section, whereby the potential cost to the Council would be met by the company.
- A virtual permits system where our customers can purchase a parking permit on line; no paper ticket is produced as the details are communicated to the civil enforcement officers using mobile phone technology.
- ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) is used to record when a vehicle arrives and

departs from a car park. This could be linked to a payment system where a customer pays for the length they have stayed at a payment station, on the return to their vehicle. Currently, the legislation under which we operate our car parks does not allow this system for payment. However the data collected would be invaluable in the future management of a car park. It is worth noting that, subject to legislative changes, this technology has the potential to provide a cost-effective alternative to Pay on Foot in the longer term.

3.5 The offer described in sections 3.3/3.4 was linked to the offer of two grants to the Council:

- £10,000 in relation to the Permits system and;
- £50,000 in relation to ANPR

These grant offers were time-limited, requiring a decision by 28 June 2013. Officers reviewed the offers in consultation with key Members and considered that the trial would provide an opportunity to both review the effectiveness of such systems and provide the Council with a great deal of fine-grain management information (the latter would be of benefit to the Council in considering the risks and/or opportunities of implementing other car park-related initiatives in the future). So the company's proposals for a 12-month trial of the above three systems, along with the grant offer, has been accepted. This report seeks to bring this information to the attention of elected members given the direct implications for the delivery of Cashless Parking initiative and in view of the fact that the grant offer could be used to offset the likely adverse financial implications of the wider package of initiatives.

3.6 Evaluation

The effect of the loss of income from our car parks is information which could be secured from our ticket machines, however without additional utilisation counts we would not know whether this is due to new customers or our existing customers visiting at different times.

The Town Centre Partnership in conjunction with its members have committed to set up a 'retail index scheme' this would give a good indication of the effect initiative would have on the retailers in the town centre. This would involve the Town Centre Partnership working with local businesses to monitor trade to evaluate any improvements in trade and displacement of trade between days. Your officers would recommend that this initiative is encouraged.

3.7 In taking forward any of the initiatives listed above it is considered appropriate to consult interested parties. At this stage the details of any such consultation have not been determined but Members may wish to agree to the principle of this, subject to further consultation with officers.

4. Proposal

4.1 The proposal is to implement the range of initiatives set out in the recommendations section of this report.

5. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough
- creating a Borough of opportunity

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 Any changes to the parking regime require a modification to the Off Street Parking Order.
- 6.2 With regard to procurement issues the Council is entitled to proceed with the proposed trial described at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 without the Council entering into a competitive procurement process. Clearly any longer term initiative of the nature referred to would require the latter.

7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There is no capital (£6,850) or revenue (£18,100) provision made for any of these initiatives in either of the approved capital or revenue budgets.
- 7.2 The supplier of the system trials as described in section 3.5 has offered the Council a grant of £60,000 to enable the trials of their systems to take place and this has been accepted.
- 7.3 In view of the point made at paragraph 7.1, it would be appropriate to earmark £30K of the latter grant offer to cover the anticipated cost to the Council of implementing the initiatives set out in Section 3 of this report (including a contingency of £5K to cover the cost of any enabling works).
- 7.4 On a related note it would be prudent to earmark the £30K balance of the grant offer (referred to above) to support the Town Centre Works project; in particular the funds should be made available to support the carrying out of any urgent repair or maintenance works to the former St. Giles and St. Georges School building.

8. **Major Risks**

Failure to implement some parking concessions could contribute to the demise of the town centre economy. Equally the implementation of some initiatives may result in a higher than anticipated loss of income to the Council thereby jeopardising delivery of a balanced revenue budget.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

Date 17th July 2013

<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015: Update on progress
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey
<u>Portfolio:</u>	Transformation, Policy and Partnerships
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To provide the Cabinet with an update on the development of the Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015 (see Appendix A). The Strategy was previously approved in draft by Cabinet in February 2013.

The Strategy provides the framework for the Borough Council to develop, in conjunction with others, a Co-operative Council in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The development of a co-operative council is one of the key priorities as set out in the current Council Plan.

This report updates Members on developments and also sets out a series of proposals and actions for further work around the co-operative concept.

Recommendations

- a) **That Cabinet notes the contents of the report including the action plan to be found at Appendix B.**
- b) **That Cabinet makes any further amendments or suggestions to the content of the Strategy, noting that this update was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on 24th June 2013**
- c) **That the Cabinet requests further circulation of the Strategy to partners and communities as part of an engagement process on the meaning of the 'co-operative' concept for Newcastle and also requests further updates on the Strategy's development at future meetings of the Cabinet.**

Reasons

The Co-operative Council Strategy 2013-2015 provides the main framework for work being done by Newcastle Borough Council in conjunction with its partners, communities and other key stakeholders in develop a Co-operative Council for Newcastle under Lyme B.C.

The Strategy brings together existing areas of work and provides a common basis for future work programmes as well as providing a framework for future development of the co-operative concept.

This report sets out for Cabinet details of a number of areas of work being progressed which are linked to the Co-operative Council concept, and also sets out an action plan at Appendix xx setting out a number of actions related to the development of a Co-operative Council as identified by the LGA Peer Challenge in October 2012 and also via a number of other initiatives since the original draft Strategy was approved in February 2013.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The background to the co-operative approach is set out in the draft strategy itself, found at Appendix A of this report.
- 1.2 The initiative has been developed nationally due to a number of related issues currently faced by the public sector in general, and local authorities in particular. These include reductions in resources and rising expectations from service users and citizens generally.
- 1.3 The co-operative approach has at its foundation the assertion that traditional approaches to local government and local governance, together with the existing approaches to service delivery are no longer fit for purpose and, instead, new models of co-production and decision making need to be explored which mean a new role for the organisations involved, including local authorities.
- 1.4 The co-operative approach puts the local authority at the centre of a process of change in the local area, using its position as a civic leader to develop communities, staff, partners and other sectors to work together in order to continue to deliver high quality services against a challenging financial background.

2. **Further Developments**

- 2.1 The initial draft of the Newcastle under Lyme Co-operative Council Strategy 2013-2015 was presented to Cabinet in February 2013.
- 2.2 The Strategy sought to develop the ideas outlined above and translate them into a set of core concepts for Newcastle-under-Lyme. These concepts emphasise the desire of the Borough Council to use its role as a leading body within the community to ensure that citizens, partner agencies and staff work together to improve the borough.
- 2.3 These concepts and how they will be taken forward were set out in the Strategy as the '5Es':
 - Encouraging collaborative working – developing partnership working further and deeper, making it a critical part of how the Council operates;
 - Enhancing citizen/customer experiences – co-operating with citizens/customers by making their experiences in doing business with the Council as simple and straightforward as possible;
 - Engagement with others – developing consultation and communication further to ensure that as many people as possible know what we are doing and why;
 - Establishing change – to be clear about what change we want and why and how we will deliver it – ensuring that any change is fair; and
 - Empowering stakeholders - people taking charge of their own lives and being part of decisions about their own area
- 2.4 Building on the '5Es', the Borough Council has changed its own organisational values to reflect the desire to work co-operatively. These values replace the previous values which were Putting People First; Delivering Excellent and Sustainable Services; and Making the Best Use of Resources. The 'new' set of values, as included in the current Council Plan are:
 -
 - We will put residents at the centre of everything we do

- We will work co-operatively with our partners and communities
- We will be open and transparent in all our decision making
- We will be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things

2.5 In addition to these strategic changes, a number of areas of work have commenced which have focused on developing a co-operative approach as their primary focus. The list of these work areas includes the following: -

- Building on changes to our partnership working by developing new links with areas such as health and using co-location to further partnership work in key areas such as anti-social behaviour
- Further developing LAPs and working with town/parish councils with a view to encouraging devolution where possible
- Enhancing consultation work where possible and where relevant
- Setting up a partner workshop on investigating the impact of welfare reform
- Developing the concept of the 'customer journey' – analysing where people do business with the council with a view to ensuring that the process is as simple and straightforward as possible
- Inclusion of the new values in the Council Plan for 2013-2016
- Developing an Employer Supported Volunteering scheme for the Council's staff to volunteer locally
- Work with staff, including a conference on the issue in May 2013

2.6 As well as this work, the Council's developing performance framework has sought to include the co-operative council priority as part of the areas being measured in key areas of council activity such as workforce development, Member development; community engagement and partnership working.

2.7 Finally, the Council has become a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network. The Network is made up of councils who subscribe to the principles of co-operative working and delivery, namely: -

- Working with local people to create solutions
- Using concepts like collective action and co-operation as the foundation for developing solutions
- Re-balancing power between public services and citizens to deliver better outcomes and manage demand on public services

2.8 The Network was formally launched at the LGA Conference on 3rd July 2013.

3. **Issues to consider**

3.1 In addition to the work already being done by the Council, a number of other areas relating to the co-operative council concept need to be considered by Cabinet.

3.2 These issues are set out at Appendix B – the action plan linked to the Co-operative Strategy. A number of these issues were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on 24th June 2013.

3.3 The first of these issues relates to communicating the co-operative council concept to other partners and to communities. This covers making sure that partners and others know what the Borough Council means by its priority to become a co-operative council and also

engages with partners and other stakeholders on how it is going to bring the concept to life. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee asked for a list of key stakeholders to be included in this process. Such a list could include the following: -

- Staffordshire County Council – including all parts of the organisation
- Parish/Town Councils – also linked to LAPs (the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee felt that relations between LAPs and Parish/Town Councils needed to be improved)
- Locality Action Partnerships (LAPS) (although the Co-ordinating Committee expressed concerns about using LAPs to progress the co-operative concept)
- Staffordshire Police
- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue
- Voluntary sector
- Health service – including Public Health (now part of Staffordshire County Council) and Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Registered Social Landlords, including Aspire Housing

It should be emphasised that this list is not exhaustive, and can be changed or developed. It is further proposed that the communication process could include the development of a Co-operative Charter, which will allow others to know what to expect from the Borough Council in terms of co-operative working in the future.

- 3.4 A further key issue for the development of the co-operative council is around training and development – specifically the development of elected Members, Borough Council staff; and communities in order to recognise the primacy of co-operation in terms of progressing key areas of work.
- 3.5 As previously, the focus of NBC activity and service provision is on the citizen/customer and a review of how to make the citizen contact with the Council as simple as possible so that services are delivered effectively and efficiently is an ongoing piece of work for NBC.
- 3.6 As part of the training and development process, it is proposed that co-operation is embedded as part of the Council's decision making and consultation processes – to build on work which has already taken place in key areas such as around budget setting in order that decisions are as open and transparent as possible and that communities and others are involved in decision making as far as possible. Connected with this will be the issues of ensuring data transparency and also developing models of co-production (where services are delivered not just by one organisation but by partnerships between organisations and communities).
- 3.7 Finally, the co-operative approach is to be developed in order that the opportunities presented by the Localism Act are taken up by communities where possible – this might be around the Right to Challenge process or the Right to Bid/Build. Every effort will be made to ensure that communities are a part of how assets are used in the future.
- 3.8 Overall, the desire of NBC is to introduce change with the community and other partners rather than doing things to the community. It is on this basis that a consultation exercise with the community will be undertaken and the key areas of action are, as said, included in the action plan at Appendix B.
- 3.9 It is recognised by the Borough Council that, with the increasingly challenging financial picture over the coming years, not everything can continue to be done indefinitely. The key part of the co-operative approach, however, is that any changes are introduced in a way that involves all interested parties and where decisions are made collaboratively.

3. **Options**

There are no options to be considered at this stage. Cabinet is asked to consider the Strategy and action plan, and to make any comments as required. Further consultation and engagement is due to take place with partners and other key stakeholders after this Cabinet meeting and a further updates will be presented to Cabinet at a later date.

4. **Proposal**

4.1 It is proposed Cabinet consider the report. Strategy and action plan and make comments and changes as required.

4.2 It is proposed that the Strategy becomes the overarching document for work in these key areas of activity.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The Strategy has been developed in order to organise the work being done under the co-operative heading. The Strategy has taken note of key issues as set out in this report and has also taken into account the restrictions placed on organisations and individuals due to the prevailing economic situation. The Strategy forms the basis for ongoing work in these areas over the next few years and provides a structure and coherence which will assist in moving forward in the areas covered by the Strategy.

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

6.1 The Strategy has potential to help deliver key outcomes across all the priorities of the Borough Council.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 None at present – there is no statutory requirement to provide this Strategy.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being developed for the Strategy.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 There are a range of resource implications in terms of delivering the Strategy and these have been referred to in this report and elsewhere.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 The GRACE risk assessment for the Strategy is being developed. The key risks include not committing enough resources to these areas of work and the community and Borough continuing to deal with the ongoing issues as a result.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 No direct implications, although these issues will be part of the projects set out in the Strategy.

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This item is included in the forward plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

February 6th 2013 – Cabinet

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix A – Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015

14.2 Appendix B – Draft Action Plan

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None.

16.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015

What is does a co-operative approach mean for Newcastle-under-Lyme?

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is committed to becoming a co-operative council and wishes to work towards making the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme a co-operative Borough.

In developing its ambition for a co-operative approach, the Borough Council is seeking to improve the Borough through a renewed relationship between the key stakeholders in the area – including the Council itself, its public sector partners, the community, staff and elected Members – via partnerships and other collaborative arrangements which help delivers the overall Borough Council vision of “a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe”.

The background and drivers for this commitment are manifold. They include: -

- The financial pressures currently affecting the Borough Council and its partners – budgets are being reduced significantly
- Despite these pressures, the increasing expectations of residents and other key stakeholders for services of the highest quality
- The constantly changing legislative agenda of government
- The desire to work, where possible, in partnership with others in order to deliver high quality, cost effective and seamless services

In terms of these drivers and pressures, there is an inherent risk that a gap will appear between what service users and others expect and need and what local authorities and partner agencies can actually provide.

The net result of these factors is that the nature of local government – as it has developed over the past 15-20 years – will have to change. This is reflected in other ways, such as the ending of the performance regime introduced by central government in the early 1990s and continued on until 2010 and the developing agenda of localism, as expressed in the Localism Act 2011 and in other government-sponsored initiatives.

Not all those involved in local governance agree on the nature of this change, although all agree that change is necessary.

At its heart, the changes required need to address the related issues set out above of financial pressure, coupled with increasing levels of demand against a backdrop of legislative change and a desire to deliver services differently. In developing these changes, the need for local authorities is to reduce levels of demand from service users and also to enhance the ability of other stakeholders to deliver services

where possible. In other words, by providing key stakeholders with the necessary tools to deliver services themselves or in partnership with each other they are able to better satisfy demand and reduce it through the re-design – where necessary – of services.

In Newcastle, we are keen to seek out opportunities to meet the challenges we currently face across the areas already outlined above.

Our over-arching mechanism to do this is to develop a co-operative approach, in order to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take greater responsibility for their own areas and their own lives and to rely on public services, as well as being able to commission the services they feel they need. We see this process as delivering some financial savings, but – more importantly – facilitating the continued delivery of high quality services.

Increasingly, we shall need to adopt new approaches as the ‘conventional’ approaches to finding efficiencies will not be available indefinitely and we need new, sustainable solutions.

In pursuing a co-operative approach, we wish to change the nature of local governance by remodelling the way we do business and the way in which we relate to the key stakeholders in the Borough. We believe strongly that keeping our commitment to act as a civic leader helps us to co-ordinate the pooling of resources to continue to deliver for the people of the Borough.

We are not advocating, therefore, that we as a Council should abdicate our leadership role in the community – as a local authority we are unique amongst our partners in that we are directly elected and we take our place in society seriously. In addition, we do not wish to remove ourselves from the everyday life of our community as we alone – in many cases – have the ability to bring different stakeholders together. Unlike the ‘Big Society’, our co-operative approach envisages a role for the local authority and the public sector agencies in delivering change and delivering quality services in a different way – one that recognises and reflects the times we are living in.

What we are seeking, therefore, to do is use our position and our role as a community leader to lead by example and encourage other stakeholders to become self-reliant – for example, by bringing different stakeholders such as residents and the wider community more into our decision making processes and also involving other stakeholders in how we structure and deliver our services in the future. By doing this, we want to open up our decision making processes and allow others to ‘own’ what is done in a positive way and a way where they feel that things are being done ‘with’ them and not ‘to’ them. In this way, we also feel that change will be sustainable and will not be the victim of changes in political party control or changes at the national level.

As a Council, we want to both set the best possible example to the rest of the Borough in everything we do, and offer the rest of the Borough the opportunity to get involved in a real sense in our activities and responsibilities.

Delivering change in this way – by working with communities, partners, staff and residents - is not easy and we do not pretend it will be easy. To achieve our ambitions will require considerable changes in the way we do things both internally and externally as an organisation. We will be seeking to look at the internal culture of our organisation – to examine what we can improve to allow our staff to co-operate fully in the ways set out above. In addition, we will be seeking to bring partners together to improve the co-ordination of service delivery to our citizens (at the times they are our customers) so that their ‘journey’ as customers is straightforward and effective in them getting what they want when they want it. Our work on managing demand and redrawing the boundaries of our relationship with citizens will also play a key part in our future development.

Having set out what we are seeking to do in developing our co-operative approach, we have also given some thought to how we are going to deliver against our ambitions.

As we have said, our ambition is to deliver the necessary changes required by a number of key drivers – including the financial position we find ourselves in, but also the legislative changes we need to implement.

The changes we want to see have the collective aim of reducing some of our expenditure, but we also want to be able to continue to deliver high performing services. Our preferred approach to dealing with these challenges is a co-operative one – working with other key stakeholders to empower them (in the case of communities, for example) to deliver services themselves or co-produce services with us or other public sector agencies. This does not mean, as already stated, that we will stop doing things ourselves altogether, but it will mean that we need to take decisions on how we want to do certain things in the future.

In pursuing our co-operative vision, we have already made it a key priority in our Council Plan 2013-2016, and we will be making a number of key announcements following the publication of this strategy including the development of a Co-operative Charter setting out a number of minimum standards we hope to achieve from our co-operative work.

In delivering our vision of a Co-operative Council, we will seek to develop a number of key elements: -

- **Encouraging collaborative working** – we already work successfully in partnership with others but we want to develop this further and make it a central part of the way we operate as a business so that every decision will be looked at from a partnership perspective

- **Enhancing citizen and customer experiences** – we want to co-operate with our citizens at the times they are our customers by simplifying the way in which we deal with their enquiries and ensuring that they do not have to go from organisation to organisation to get what they want
- **Engaging with others** - we will seek to develop further our consultation and communication techniques and approaches, building on our consultation on the 2013/14 budget for the Borough Council and work with our Locality Action Partnerships in delivering the key parts of this strategy – our aim is to make sure that everyone, so far as possible, knows what we are doing and what we are planning to do
- **Establishing change** - as this strategy has set out, we need to change and we want to deliver that change via a co-operative approach and we want to ensure that this change lasts

We call these the 4Es of co-operative working in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

In delivering this vision, via these key areas, we want to establish a Borough where people feel they have a say in what happens in their locality and where they also feel they 'own' decisions and actions taken in their name. We also want to foster a feeling of concern and care amongst people as to the direction the Borough is taking. Too often we see situations where one group of people feel that things cannot be changed or have nothing to do with them – we feel that changing attitudes towards a more responsible and engaged populace is key to delivering successful change in the way we have outlined here.

Finally, we want people to be able to decide as to what they want for their own lives. We want communities to make it clear about the level of service they require, for example, as it may be that they either want an enhanced service or perhaps a reduced service. We as a council can also take decisions for our own future, given the relative freedom given to us to determine our own destiny. Overall, we want to be able to deliver services with the highest possible quality for the best possible price, but with an ethical and social value as well.

Overall, therefore, we do not see a co-operative approach as narrow, instead we see it as delivering the 4Es set out above with the aim of creating a fifth E – that of **empowerment**. In other words, we want people to be able to control their own lives and decide what resources they and others need from the Borough Council and from other partners. In this way, co-operation can mean a great many things in practice.

What does working co-operatively mean for Newcastle-under-Lyme?

Achieving our ambition of becoming a co-operative council does not mean that all our existing or future problems and challenges will be solved, but it does mean that we can seek to deliver some of our needed savings not by traditional 'salami slicing' activity but through a method which allows us to be innovative and also allows decisions to be made in a new way through involvement and dialogue with our key stakeholders – especially our communities.

A co-operative vision for this Council and for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme as a whole offers a range of opportunities for us. It builds on our acknowledged strengths – planning and priority setting; partnership working; sound financial management; high performing services; excellent staff; good engagement with communities and others; sound governance – and potentially tackles some of our acknowledged areas for development such as developing elected Members; involving LAPs and the wider community in a more constructive way to build capacity amongst the community; identifying what are not priorities for us; and delivering necessary savings in the future.

Further to these points, it allows us to set a benchmark for the future for this area, to provide the opportunity for our employees to develop a co-operative future and for us to develop our own model for achieving this future, along the lines set out in this strategy so far.

The involvement of our staff is a key part of our co-operative approach as we see them as the best asset we have. In developing our staff to act more co-operatively, we feel we need to facilitate an atmosphere for the changes that we wish to see. In order to achieve this – at least in part - we are seeking to address elements of our organisational culture, such as: -

- Supporting risk taking and discouraging blame amongst staff and all stakeholders
- Continuing our focus on action centred work
- Focusing on the use of plain English and eliminating jargon and acronyms where possible
- Opening up the work of the organisation in a real and physical way including the use of open days and innovative approaches to publicity
- Generating ideas and removing blockages from the system which prevent these ideas getting through

We believe that by examining our own culture in this way, we will set an example for others to look at the way they do business and seek to develop their own approaches to co-operation, including the community.

In delivering these ambitions, we will devote resources from the Borough Council, including a number of elements of the co-operative approaches set out here in a change programme led by the Executive Management Team and including other key employees.

We have acknowledged that our approach to co-operation can encompass many different ways of working. We can express our approaches in the form of a ladder of co-operation. The ladder can stretch from simply working in way which is based on the key elements of co-operative working set out above ('the 4Es') to more complex methods of working together, such as the use of mutuals or single purpose vehicles. Each of these 'rungs' on the 'ladder' can involve different stakeholders or groups of stakeholders - see below (together with existing examples of our work for illustration): -

Services delivered by formally constituted company – delivering a service via a mutual or unincorporated company – e.g. the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership
Co-production of services with communities other others – such as the purchase of facilities from Council for community to run themselves – e.g. Bradwell Lodge
Active input into decision making from stakeholders – giving service users the power to shape services – e.g. the review of community centres in the Borough
Working based on the 4Es – community development, culture change, elected Member development to develop new ways of working – e.g. LAPs development
Partnership working – working with partners on key projects – e.g. Let's Work Together
Consulting with residents and other stakeholders – on key areas of policy – e.g. the Budget setting process
Informing stakeholders of key decisions – providing timely information – e.g. about elections

Figure 1: Ladder of Co-operative Working

Work has already been undertaken by the Borough Council on the various types of service arrangement which could be developed under a Co-operative Council heading – as can be seen by the examples above. It should be pointed out that none of the ‘rungs’ on the ladder are mutually exclusive, and a combination of different approaches can be adopted. What we want to show, however, is that there is a range of choices open in developing a co-operative approach and we see the notion of developing key stakeholders to work co-operatively is a key part of seeking out new ways of dealing with the challenges that face us. It should be stated that we do not see the above as a list of importance; rather we see it as an assessment of some of the options available as we seek to deliver our co-operative vision.

What have we done so far?

As said in the previous section, work has already got underway in developing a co-operative approach for Newcastle under Lyme B.C.

As an organisation which is used to dealing with change, the Borough Council has been busy in developing a range of approaches to face up to the challenges facing it over the next few years. The major documents setting out the Council's plans and ambitions are: -

- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Plan 2013-2016 – referred to at various points in this strategy
- Newcastle under Lyme Economic Development Strategy 2012 -2017 – covers the key elements of economic development and growth
- Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012 – 2017 – focuses on crime-related and partnerships issues, including driving forward prevention
- Health and Well-Being Strategy

Each of these key documents set out the overall vision for the Council, together with its key priorities. These are: -

Vision – To create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe

Key priorities

- A clean, safe and sustainable borough
- A borough of opportunity
- A healthy and active community
- Becoming a co-operative council which delivers high quality, community-driven services

In addition, the three strategies set out the key actions which will seek to deliver against the key priorities set out above. In so doing, the Borough Council has sought to bring together partners, communities, and other key stakeholders to deliver key actions.

This Co-operative Strategy is both a part of this strategic framework and yet is also something else. We acknowledge that the notion of being co-operative is nothing new – indeed, it has its roots in the nineteenth century. It is a new concept, however, in the way we are seeking to achieve it. As said, we seek to develop a new role for the Council, as well as for other stakeholders in that we want to encourage these stakeholders to play a much greater role in decisions; and even to potentially deliver services for themselves. In addition, we are keen to develop our own organisation, to change our culture and become a co-operative council in a real sense.

In a sense, therefore, this strategy both complements the above documents but also adds a delivery approach which covers all of the above. In other words, our Council Plan sets out what we are planning to do, and the three strategies above set out what we are going to do to deliver against this plan. The Co-operative Strategy, however, sets out *how* we are going to do this. We see co-operation as the over-arching delivery mechanism – developing our stakeholders such as our local community to deliver for themselves and offering our leadership role to co-ordinate and lead on that.

This Strategy covers the period 2013-2015, as we believe that it will take a period of time to lay the foundations for our co-operative approach. Having said that, we have already done a number of things to move us in this direction. These include the following: -

- Committed to the introduction of a Living Wage, ensuring that the lowest paid staff earn at least the local cost of living
- Restructured our partnership working, to move away from meetings and to focus on action and delivery
- Developing an approach to employee volunteering and encouraging volunteering generally in the borough
- Focusing on our town centres as locations for economic growth by working with local businesses
- Developed a wholesale consultation process around the budget setting for 2013/14

These are at the early stage of our work on becoming a co-operative council. As we have said, we recognise that there is still much to do.

The Next Steps

We very much want to build on the work we have already done towards developing a co-operative council, as we have outlined in this strategy.

As said, we have as one of our key corporate priorities to become a co-operative council delivering high quality, community driven services. In order to deliver against this priority, we want to fundamentally change the way we operate as a council and also redefine the relationships we have with our key stakeholders, including our communities and residents.

We understand that to realise our ambition, we need to develop communities in order for them to take their own decisions and we need to develop ourselves in order to act as a community leader, and we can also build on our acknowledged role as the leading agency for the Newcastle Partnership. As part of the Council's development, we will be seeking to develop a range of different actions, but – as the key point in our development – we will seek to develop our workforce and work with others to change the culture of the organisation and also to work on changing assumptions about the public sector amongst the public. We know that the public sector is not seen positively at present and we want to seek to challenge that.

As we have said, we are aware that this will take time and we have set aside a period of time in this strategy to achieve its key aims, in order to bring about the reality of, first, a co-operative council and – in time – a co-operative borough for Newcastle under Lyme.

In so doing, we will seek to achieve our vision – as articulated in the key corporate priority set out above – in a number of key areas. These include: -

- Improving the customer journey, including focusing on the levels of demand from service users
- Examining the ways in which we currently deliver services and changing methods of delivery if needed, including developing community led services
- Working and engaging with others where possible – including developing co-location opportunities and our work on welfare reform
- Changing key areas of our organisation – including developing our employees and elected Members

These key areas, combined with the 4Es as outlined previously in this strategy, we believe are key to developing a co-operative council and we have studied other co-operative councils, such as Oldham and Telford, to learn valuable lessons from them in terms of how they delivered their own ambition to be co-operative.

These areas of work, focusing on key stakeholders, are designed to bring together the different strands of the co-operative approach in order to deliver change in the way set out in this strategy. These key areas of work are designed to complement the basis for the co-operative approach, as set out in the 4Es and will form the basis of an extensive change programme for the Council, led by the Cabinet and/or with the Executive Management Team (EMT).

Our ambition to become a co-operative council must be balanced, we believe, with a desire to deliver positive outcomes. With this in mind, we have developed and will implement in 2013/14 a new performance management framework which is outcome-focused and we will be seeking to performance manage our work on pursuing a co-operative approach.

Our ultimate ambition is to bring about long-term sustainable change both internally for the Council and also externally with communities and partners throughout the borough, and also with other bodies nationally where possible. We will seek to deliver this change in a coherent and clear way, so that we remain transparent and accountable at all times during this process.

What will we do between 2013 and 2015?

In order to deliver a co-operative council by April 2015, we will develop an implementation/action plan and we will record our progress against it as part of the performance management framework of the Council.

As we have seen, some work is already ongoing to achieve this, but we will seek to build on these foundations in conjunction with other key stakeholders.

Our work here is designed to complement other key areas of work, to provide the framework for all the work we are hoping to do as set out in our Council Plan and the three main strategies of the organisation. We do not intend to duplicate existing areas of work, nor do we intend to supplant existing workstreams – instead this strategy focuses on additional areas of work which are designed to assist with our ambition of co-operation and which will seek to assist in delivering other key ambitions for Newcastle under Lyme B.C.

As we have seen, we are looking at a number of areas of work at present, including developing existing areas of engagement (e.g. the LAPs) and also developing new areas where possible, including the potential to devolve decision making and even service delivery where possible and where practical. We will continue to work on these areas, in order to develop our communities and our residents in order that they may get more involved in the workings of the local authority and to deliver true co-operation across the council and the borough.

In order to bring this to fruition, we as a Council recognise the need to change both our culture and our ways of working. We are not saying that we need to change everything, but a whole range of external and internal drivers – as outlined in this strategy – mean that we shall have to do things differently in future.

Key elements of this work will involve developing both our employees and our elected Members. We see elected Members playing a central role in the development of the co-operative council and we want to build on good areas of practice and develop Members into civic leaders, ready to lead by example, bring people together, and help to deliver co-operative solutions for the council and the borough. In the same way, our staff need to be encouraged to look wider than the traditional solutions to issues and problems and bring both innovation and different ways of thinking into what they do.

As we have seen, this strategy seeks to make sense of the co-operative approach for Newcastle under Lyme B.C. In it, we have highlighted our overall ambition, as contained within our key corporate priorities, of creating a co-operative council. In bringing this ambition to life, we have focused upon a number of key areas – we have called them the 4Es – of encouraging collaborative working;

enhancing the experience of our citizens, especially when they are our customers; engaging with our communities and other key stakeholders; and establishing change. Building on the 4Es – which we see coming together to empower – we will seek to follow a number of work areas, such as simplifying the customer journey; improving our consultation processes; working with our partners on key projects (e.g. welfare reform); working with our communities in areas like funding bids; promoting community based service approaches such as the freeing up of assets; developing our organisation and our workforce and developing our elected Members.

This is our strategic framework, designed to create the conditions for the Council to continue to deliver in the short, medium and long terms as we work towards our vision of a prosperous, clean and healthy Newcastle against a background of financial challenge.

This page is intentionally left blank

Co-operative Council Strategy 2013-2015 DRAFT Action Plan

ACTION	LEAD MEMBER	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALES	COMMENTS
Engagement with stakeholders on what a 'Co-operative Council' means	Cllr Gareth Snell	Mark Bailey	July – Oct 2013	This is an area of work which can be carried out via the Newcastle Partnership
Developing a charter of minimum standards for the co-operative council	Cllr John Williams	Mark Bailey	July – Oct 2013	Based around the five Es of the Strategy, with parameters put against each of the Es
Improving the Customer Journey	Cllr John Williams	Jeanette Hilton	Ongoing	Work being done by the EMT Programme Board
Embedding the concept of the co-operative council in consultation, performance management and decision-making	Cllr Gareth Snell	Phil Jones (consultation) Mark Bailey (decision making/performance management)	July – Oct 2013	Includes development of a code of conduct and an ethical framework.
Further development of support for Members, staff and communities	Cllr Gareth Snell	Richard Durrant/Sarah Taylor (staff development) Mark Bailey (community/Member development)	July – December 2013	
LAPs to champion the co-operative council concept	Cllr John Williams	Mark Bailey	July – December 2013	Work with LAP Chairs
Making land and property assets work for the community	Cllr Terry Turner	Head of Assets	July – December 2013	Linked to Localism Act – Right to Challenge and Right to Bid/Build
Develop a model of co-production	Cllr Gareth Snell	Mark Bailey	July – October 2013	
Develop minimum standards for data transparency	Cllr Mike Stubbs	Richard Durrant	July – December 2013	

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET 17 JULY 2013

1. TRANSFORMING WELFARE BENEFITS AND FAIRER CHARGING SERVICES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

Submitted by: Head of Revenues & Benefits

Portfolio: Finance and Resources and Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To approve in principle, the transfer of work currently undertaken by Staffordshire County Council around Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services, to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, as part of a package of work involving all district and borough councils in Staffordshire. Additionally, to confirm delegated powers to the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in consultation with the portfolio holders for Finance and Resources and Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods to finally approve the transfer, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of detailed contract negotiations.

Recommendations

- a. **That in principle, the transfer of work currently undertaken by Staffordshire County Council around Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area is transferred to this authority.**
- b. **That subject to the satisfactory conclusion of detailed contract negotiations, the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in consultation with the portfolio holders for Finance and Resources and Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods is delegated to finally approve the transfer of the service.**

Reasons

The assessment by district and borough councils of Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit and the work undertaken separately by Staffordshire County Council to deliver Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services currently involves a certain amount of duplication, with a proportion of common clients. To access all the help available to them, these clients are required to undergo two broadly similar processes and are needed to evidence their claims to two separate organisations. Transferring the Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services to district and borough councils will lead to a more efficient single point of service delivery. This will improve the client experience, delivering entitlements in a timelier manner and from a locally accessible centre. There will also be cost savings with the revised delivery model which will be shared between the County and district and borough councils.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 As part of a project sponsored by Leaders and Chief Executives entitled 'Staffordshire One Place', which looked at potential ways of collaborative working across the county between district and borough councils and the County Council, one area that was identified as possibly suitable for consideration was the delivery of Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services currently delivered by the County Council.
- 1.2 Differing elements of the Staffordshire One Place project were allocated across all Leaders and Chief Executives and this particular element was under the lead of the Chief Executive of South Staffordshire District Council. For this reason, South Staffordshire District Council have assumed the role of project leads to prove the feasibility of the proposal but as the report will make clear, all district and borough councils have been involved to some extent

but in the case of Lichfield District Council and this authority, very actively by agreeing to undertake the role of pilot sites together with South Staffordshire District Council as a proof of concept.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 District and borough councils are responsible for the administration and payment of means tested benefits in respect of Council Tax Reduction, which replaced Council Tax Benefit from the 1 April 2013 and Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit is planned to be incorporated into Universal Credit which will be administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions by Job Centre Plus. New claimants who would have claimed Housing Benefit will start to claim Universal Credit from October 2013 although existing claimants will not migrate to Universal Credit until sometime between April 2015 and the end of 2017. The exact timetable for this change is as yet, unknown and will impact upon on the service delivery requirements of the existing Revenues and Benefits Service. However, it is likely that this will lead to a changed emphasis in the role of the Revenues and Benefits Service rather than a reduction in capacity, with greater involvement on advisory services, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- 2.2 The Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Service works with adults to maximise personal benefits, children with disabilities and specialist children's work around fostering, adoption and guardianship orders. It provides welfare benefits advice, advocacy and appeals services, fairer charging assessments for non-residential services, domiciliary care, direct payments, day services and day centres and Extra Care. Financial assessments are carried out for access to residential services, including respite care, disability facilities grants, supported housing and adult placements.
- 2.3 At the core of both services is the need to offer advice and process claims, making assessments to entitlement based on the claimant's means. District and borough councils have the larger volumes of claimants and therefore more sophisticated processing techniques but there is sizeable overlap in clients needing to access both district and borough services and the County Council, offering the potential for efficiency savings if these can be dealt with at a single point of delivery.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Having identified the potential for the project, on behalf of all the district and borough councils, South Staffordshire District Council undertook a scoping exercise with the County Council on exactly which elements of the county work could be considered for transfer. It was recognised at a very early stage that there were some elements particularly around children's services that would not be included in any proposal. This is in recognition of their specialism and with particular reference for their continued close interaction with other elements of County Council functions. However, by and large, this work did identify many positive ways to take the project forward and was confident in the abilities of the districts and boroughs to fulfil enhanced service delivery as a result.
- 3.2 Following from the success of the project scoping, the County Council and also the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust who commission some of this work from the County Council required some form of proof of concept. Discussions between all the parties involved resulted in a pilot exercise being proposed.
- 3.3 As lead authority from the onset of this project and having worked closely with officers at the County Council on the scoping exercise, South Staffordshire District Council were the obvious choice to lead on this pilot work. They had already established the trust and respect of key officers at the County Council in developing a proposed district and borough solution.

However, it was felt that more than one district or borough needed to be involved. By mutual agreement of all the parties involved, Lichfield District Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council were requested to also take part in the pilot work. In this case of Newcastle, this was influenced by confidence in our IT capacity and connectivity demonstrated in previous joint working arrangements.

- 3.4 There was an unrelated issue surrounding any proposals to transfer this work around the information technology used by the County Council. Their existing systems were outdated and scheduled for replacement. It was felt that the pilot work could not wait for the replacement system to be installed and operational but that would be the preferred options before full roll out to all districts and boroughs if the project was to be adopted. This meant the pilot authorities would have the less than ideal situation of learning to use the soon to be obsolete old systems to deliver the pilot work and then the new systems quickly afterwards.
- 3.5 Work commenced on the pilots in two stages. The non-residential elements started from the 1 November 2012 and the residential element started on the 7 January 2013. Two full-time equivalent posts transferred from the County for the non-residential and one part-time (0.5 full-time equivalent) for the residential element.
- 3.6 As is to be expected, the first few weeks of the pilot exercise identified a few teething troubles around working practises and file records but these have been quickly resolved. There have been very regular meetings between all parties involved to ensure service delivery has been maintained and it is pleasing to note that the pilot authorities are now out performing the remaining experienced in house County Council team on timescales for processing cases. It is confidently predicted that should the work be transferred permanently to the districts and boroughs that there are still further efficiencies to be made.
- 3.7 Efficiency gains have not only been made with regard to the work being undertaken on behalf of the County Council, there have been gains for our own service delivery. To a certain extent, these have been lost in the general additional pressures experienced around the nation welfare reform agenda but nevertheless they have an important part to play, particularly around the timeliness of processing changes.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 Originally, the pilot scheme was set to run until the end of April 2013, with a view to a transfer of the service on the 1 July 2013. However, delays with the introduction of the new IT system at the County Council have seen these proposals put back. The aim now is to get approval in principle from all parties by the 31 August 2013, with a view to the transferred service becoming operational from the 1 November 2013. It is anticipated that immediately prior and shortly after this date that those involved with the pilot will provide assistance to non-pilot colleagues.
- 4.2 Transferring the service will involve transferring some County Council staff under TUPE arrangements to this authority's employ. Although the costs involved in transferring the service have been ascertained on an indicative basis, it is not possible to finalise the position currently until the County Council engages with the staff involved. It is proposed to commence this engagement after agreement in principle is received from all parties by the 31 August 2013.

5. **Reasons for the Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 The most obvious reason for this solution is the improved service delivery it will provide to a significant numbers of potentially vulnerable clients. Many of these clients will be seeking assistance because they have experienced some form of trauma either through ill health or

the normal ageing processes. With an increasingly elderly population those in need of these services is likely to increase over time. By merging the existing points of service delivery into a locally provided district or borough function, clients will only need to interact with one organisation to resolve their claims for assistance.

- 5.2 By having a single point of delivery, there are cost savings to be made by way of efficiency gains. These would be shared between the County and the districts and boroughs.

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

- 6.1 Incorporating the Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Service into the existing Revenues and Benefits Service will contribute towards creating a healthy and happy community and fits well with the principles of the co-operative council.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 Although benefits delivery of all types is covered by numerous items of legislation, there are no new legislative requirements directly related to transferring the service.
- 7.2 The proposed transfer would involve the County Council entering into an individual contract with each district or borough council to provide the service on their behalf. Similar contracts have been in place for the provision of the pilot work currently taking place and drafts of the final version are available for scrutiny. These contracts will be subject to amendment until nearer the proposed start date for the transfer and would be agreed with the two responsible portfolio holders prior to final agreement.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 Equality Impact Needs Assessments already exists for the Revenues and Benefits Service. Transferring the Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Service into the existing service will require these to be updated in order to reflect this additional function.

9 **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 Delivering this additional service provision will require an additional staffing resource. The pilot work currently being undertaken indicates this will be 2.5 full-time equivalent posts. It is envisaged this resource will be provided by staff currently employed by Staffordshire County Council who would be transferred under TUPE arrangements. The Head of Human Resources and the Head of Revenues and Benefits have held meetings with local trade union representatives to appraise them of the situation. Obviously, our own staff in the Revenues and Benefits Service have been made aware of the proposals also and several have been actively involved in the proof of concept through the pilot work. It is believed that this additional function will strengthen the service in what is a changing national environment for welfare benefits delivery.
- 9.2 TUPE arrangements may create a slight difficulty with regard to the part-time post, which concentrates on the residential and respite aspect of transferred work. Traditionally, these staff have been full-time employees working across two local authority areas. The member of staff carrying out these duties for Newcastle also works within the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area. The preferred transfer option for this position would be to a single authority, with a service level agreement in place to provide the service to the other authority. Officers from the two authorities would be happy with this arrangement, which would see Newcastle employing the member of staff full-time.

9.3 Final details around the cost of providing this service can not be concluded until the TUPE situation is resolved. However, indicative calculations show that Newcastle would derive an income from this service.

10 **Major Risks**

10.1 The major risk in transferring this service to district and borough councils is that assessments are not carried out to the required standard and in an adequate time scale. This would impact upon income that would be derived from the assessments. The pilot work undertaken has been to prove the concept of transferring the service and improving existing standards. An evaluation report produced in conjunction with the County Council, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust and the three pilot authorities is available in the Members Room.

11 **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Not applicable.

12 **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 None

13 **Recommendations**

13.1 That in principle, the transfer of work currently undertaken by Staffordshire County Council around Welfare Benefits and Fairer Charging Services for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council area is transferred to this authority.

13.2 That subject to the satisfactory conclusion of detailed contract negotiations, the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in consultation with the portfolio holders for Finance and Resources and Stronger and Healthier Neighbourhoods is delegated to finally approve the transfer of the service.

This page is intentionally left blank

REVENUE INVESTMENT AND BUDGET SUPPORT CABINET PANEL

Submitted by: Nick Lamper, Senior Member Services Officer

Portfolio: Finance and Resources

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform the Cabinet of the intention to put in place arrangements for the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources to discharge the function of making decisions on expenditure from the Revenue Investment Fund, and from the Budget Support Fund in respect of funding “Invest to Save” schemes, in response to recommendations of the cross-party Revenue Investment and Budget Support Cabinet Panel.

Recommendation

- (1) That the intention to put in place arrangements for the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources to make decisions on expenditure from the Revenue Investment Fund, and from the Budget Support Fund in respect of funding “Invest to Save” schemes, in response to recommendations of the cross-party Revenue Investment and Budget Support Cabinet Panel, be noted; and**
- (2) That it be noted that Part 3 of the council’s constitution (Scheme of Delegation) will be amended to show the inclusion of this responsibility in the list of responsibilities for the exercise of Cabinet functions.**

Reasons

The proposals seek to expedite the making of decisions on expenditure from the Revenue Investment Fund, and from the Budget Support Fund in respect of funding “Invest to Save” schemes, in response to the recommendations of the Cabinet Panel.

1. Background

- 1.1 In setting its budget for 2013/14, the Council approved the establishment of a Revenue Investment Fund as a resource to fund activities which supported the Council's key policy priorities. Further, it approved the use of funds drawn from the Council's Budget Support Fund to deliver “invest to save” projects which would incur short term revenue expenditure in order to deliver longer term financial efficiency savings. The fund would be replenished as the first call on cashed savings and sustained to fund an ongoing programme of “invest to save” efficiencies.
- 1.2 In the interests of establishing a responsive, efficient and accountable mechanism for considering proposals for funding from the Revenue Investment Fund and Budget Support Fund, a cross-party Cabinet panel was established by the Cabinet at its meeting on 6 March 2013 (minute number 11 refers). The terms of reference of the panel provided for it to make recommendations to the Cabinet.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The panel met on 27 June, when it considered ten initial bids for funding from the Revenue Investment Fund. It recommended one bid for approval, sought detailed presentations in respect of three others and requested further information on a further three.

- 2.2 Of 13 initial bids for Invest to Save Schemes to be funded from the Budget Support Fund, the panel noted decisions which had been taken in respect of two (one by the Cabinet and one by officers in consultation with the portfolio holder) and supported one other in principle. Consideration of the other ten was deferred.
- 2.3 The meeting was adjourned to a date and time to be confirmed, to enable the presentations and additional information requested to be brought back before it and for the deferred business to be considered.
- 2.4 Under the current arrangements, the panel would make its recommendations to Cabinet, which would make the taking and actioning of decisions dependent upon the scheduling of Cabinet meetings.
- 2.5 It is clear from the initial consideration of bids by the panel that the process has the potential to involve a number of ad hoc meetings and possible adjournments, and the requirement for its recommendations to be presented only to scheduled Cabinet meetings is not wholly conducive to the timely and effective implementation of successful schemes.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 In order to expedite the making of decisions in respect of the panel's recommendations, it is proposed to put in place arrangements for the portfolio holder to make those decisions.
- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to make Executive Arrangements in their constitutions for the discharge of executive functions. Those arrangements may make provision for the discharge of functions by the executive, members of the executive, committees of the executive or officers of the authority. (Committees of the executive may contain only executive members.)
- 3.3 Where functions are not allocated under the Executive Arrangements, the Executive Leader may discharge them or arrange for their discharge by the executive, another member of the executive, a committee of the executive or an officer of the authority.
- 3.4 Where functions are allocated to the executive, the executive may arrange for those functions to be discharged by a committee of the executive or an officer, but it does not have the power to arrange for them to be discharged by a member of the executive.
- 3.5 This council's Executive Arrangements state (in Part 2, Section 7, paragraph 7.6 of the constitution) that all Cabinet decisions will be taken by the Cabinet acting collectively, with a number of exceptions relating to (a) finalising detail of in-principal decisions, (b) urgent matters and (c) "when the Leader has arranged for a Cabinet function to be discharged by a Cabinet committee consisting of Members of the Cabinet or a single Member or an officer or by way of joint or local arrangements."
- 3.6 The constitution goes on to state, "The Leader will maintain a list in Part 3 of this Constitution (Scheme of Delegation) setting out which Cabinet committees, Cabinet members, officers or joint or local arrangements are responsible for the exercise of particular Cabinet functions."
- 3.7 It is the Leader's intention to make provision in the immediate future within the Scheme of Delegation, for the responsibility for making decisions in respect of the Revenue Investment and Budget Support Cabinet Panel's recommendations to be exercised by the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources.

- 3.8 The decisions taken by the portfolio holder will be published on the council's website and open to public inspection, as is required by legislation.

4. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The funding of key policy priorities and invest to save projects will contribute to all the council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan:-

- A clean, safe and sustainable Borough.
- A Borough of opportunity.
- A healthy and active community.
- Becoming a co-operative council which delivers high quality, community-driven services.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 5.1 The Local Government Act 2000 and the council's constitution make provision for executive functions to be delegated to individual executive members in the manner proposed.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no differential impacts in this report.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Full council on 27 February 2013 established a Revenue Investment Fund of £100k as part of the overall budget proposals. Depending upon the Council's future budget position, further contributions to the fund may be made in the following years.

- 7.2 Council also approved the use of the Budget Support Fund to initially finance "Invest to save" projects. It was agreed that viable proposals could be financed from the Budget Support Fund with the fund being "repaid" out of the revenue budget as resulting savings arise. Once the fund has been repaid the full amount it originally financed in respect of a particular proposal, the savings will be retained within the revenue budget, thereby providing an ongoing benefit.

8. Major Risks

- 8.1 A full risk assessment in respect of the council's budget for 2013/14 was included as part of the budget report to full council on 27 February 2013.

9. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

Council 27 February 2013 – Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax 2013/14.
Cabinet 6 March 2013 – Establishment of Cabinet Panel.

This page is intentionally left blank

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE CABINET

Date 17th July 2013

<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	Staffordshire Local Authorities Commissioning and Procurement of a Home Improvement Service
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Mike O'Connor, Housing Manager
<u>Portfolio:</u>	Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To seek Cabinet approval to the participation of the Council in the procurement of a county wide Home Improvement Agency through a Partnership Agreement, to deliver Supporting People Services and Enhanced Support, including assistance to residents to enable them to repair, adapt or improve their homes.

Recommendations

To sign a Participation Agreement with the County Council to enable them to procure the services of a Home Improvement Agency for Newcastle.

That the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development is authorised in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to agree any minor alterations to the specification and to approve the preferred tender.

That the existing contract with Revival Home Improvement Agency is extended beyond March 2014 until the new service provision commences.

Reasons

The Council has utilised the local Home Improvement Agency, Revival for many years to support vulnerable residents to repair their homes and specifically with adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants programme. It is appropriate that the Council seeks to secure the services through competitive tender to ensure good quality services are offered efficiently. This report outlines the options for procuring the services and the views of the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee to procure with the potential benefits of the working in partnership with the County Council.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure dwellings in the Borough are safe to occupy and are not a nuisance to the neighbourhood. This is achieved through; the provision of advice, enforcement of statutory housing standards, or financial assistance in the form of grants and loans. The latter is targeted to vulnerable groups unable to afford repairs and improvements and where necessary disabled adaptations.
- 1.2 Vulnerable households find it difficult to access assistance and to fill this gap Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's) have developed initially with government help. The Council has worked in partnership with Staffordshire Housing Association for the delivery of the Home Improvement Agency branded as Revival since 2009. The agency operates in Stoke and Staffordshire Moorlands and is locally based in Stoke-on-Trent. Revival assists the Council to deliver its Renewal Assistance Policy including disabled facilities grants, home

safety grants and a home loans scheme. It helps vulnerable people to fully consider their housing options and where appropriate enables them to negotiate the processes necessary for them to make applications for grant assistance and find reputable contractors, thus enabling them to remain living at home in safety.

- 1.3 Revival Home Improvement Agency receives funding from the County Council and Borough Council. The County Council provides a Supporting People annual grant of £38,000 and the Borough Council a grant of £26,000 towards the running costs and in support of all services provided. In addition the Borough Council pays fees of 7% of the cost of works eligible for disabled facilities or health and safety grants.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1.1 The County Council has given Supporting People Grant to three HIA's in the county, including Revival, since 1993. It now considers it necessary to re-tender the Service and wishes to use their Supporting People Grant funding to procure a new contract for a single county wide HIA provider. It is suggested that this will achieve an improved and consistent service across the county. This will require the participation of all the district councils in the county who will need to agree to promote the new HIA service to residents requiring financial advice and assistance.

- 2.1.2 The proposal is that the County Council will act as the lead authority to procure the service with a contract commencing on 1st July 2014 for an initial term of three years and nine months with an option to extend by one further year.

2.2 **Service Specification**

- 2.2.1 This includes three levels of support

1. 'General Advice' providing people considering their housing options with a light touch service such as internet and telephone-based information and advice;
2. 'Support for Choice' offering more intensive support for those most at risk, including those who do not have alternative personal and social resources, to allow them to consider their options and make decisions; and
3. 'Enhanced Support' for those who need help to implement their chosen options. This will involve arranging for changes to the physical fabric of the home to meet the need. It will usually result in an application for a disabled facilities grant from the district Council and arranging for the works to be completed.

- 2.2.2 The Provider will be required to enter into a contract with Staffordshire County Council for funding the delivery of 'General Advice' and 'Support for Choice'. The Enhanced Support will need to be funded by the resident. Whilst some residents will be able to fund the works themselves the majority will not and will become eligible for grant funding from the Council in accordance with the Housing Assistance Policy. It is expected that the HIA will charge a fee for assisting the resident and this will be included within the grant paid.

- 2.2.3 Tenderers are required to submit bids for the three levels of service. All management and overhead costs will be apportioned pro-rata across the three levels. The funding for Enhanced Support has been capped in the specification at 10% of the cost of the works completed, with a maximum total fee of £2,000 and it is possible that a Provider will offer a lower cost.

2.3 **Participation Agreement**

- 2.3.1 The Council is being requested to sign up to a Participation Agreement. This formalises the County Council as the Accountable Body and sets out the governance arrangements which

comprise a Project Board, Steering Group and Local Advisory Group. The Board will have overall decision making authority including budgets, timescales and risks and approval of all major variations. The chair of the Steering Group will represent all the councils on the Board. A lead officer from each council will be a member of the Steering Group.

- 2.3.2 The Participation Agreement signifies the Council's intention to work with the preferred provider but does not commit the Council to a particular level of funding or spend or to remove the rights of any grant applicant to use an alternative service provider. It will, however, require that all the participants promote the winning bidder as the preferred service provider. Signing up to the Participation Agreement will ensure participants are able to utilise the county wide contract and engage in the governance arrangements for procuring and monitoring the delivery of the contract.
- 2.3.3 If the Council does not sign up to the Participation Agreement it will need to make alternative arrangements if it wishes to provide a HIA service from June 2014.

2.4 **Value for money**

- 2.4.1 The current costs of the HIA to the Council are approximately 10% of the grant budget. The tender specification sets a maximum fee of 10% capped at £2,000 per application. Furthermore it is hoped that through the competitive tendering process that these costs will be reduced significantly.
- 2.4.2 Currently Officers of the Council approve grant applications and carry out site visits to ensure that the works for which Council grant have been paid have been completed to a satisfactory standard and this will be unchanged as part of the proposals. The tender specification requires that the Enhanced Service is divided into three elements with each to be separately costed. It is intended that the Council should not pay for the site supervision element which will further reduce the fees payable by the Council to the new provider.
- 2.4.3 The separate costing of the elements provides an opportunity for the service to be promoted to self funders who would be able and willing to pay for assistance, therefore providing help particularly, to an increasing numbers of elderly residents who experience mobility problems.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 The Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee considered the information outlined above and the three main options listed below on 26th June:

3.2 **Option A - Provide a HIA service in-house**

Officers already complete site supervision visits to check the quality of the work for which grant is claimed. This could be extended to include a client advocacy role helping applicants to complete applications, obtain necessary permissions as well as engaging suitably reliable local contractors. This local authority HIA model exists in other LA areas. The Council would retain full control and decisions would not be subject a joint arrangement involving a Project Board comprising other districts and the County. However, there is insufficient capacity at present. This proposal would require the employment of caseworkers and there will be a substantial extra workload for the officers to set up a new service and ensure that it was as comprehensive as that envisaged in the county wide scheme. There is a significant risk that the in-house option would be more expensive than the current service.

- 3.2.2 Assuming the other districts in the county sign up the Council would be isolated in respect of this activity. It is possible that the funding from the Supporting People Grant may be lost, It is more likely, however, that the county would still keep the advice and support elements and would signpost customers to our service, although it would be necessary to set up a

working arrangement with the new provider to ensure clients are swiftly referred for assistance.

3.3 Option B - Retender HIA as a Borough only service

- 3.3.1 This option will require the Council to tender for the services of an HIA outside the county wide arrangement. This would be resource intensive to set up but would enable the Council to determine and monitor its own service without the need to attend meetings in a county wide arrangement such as the project board and steering group. However, the prospective fee income may be too small to attract a bidder or if bids were made the required % fee would be higher to cover overheads.
- 3.3.2 If the Council were to procure the services of a different HIA than that of the County's preferred provider it is likely that there would be duplication of services and residents would need to be referred between the various agencies unnecessarily.

3.4 Option C - Retender in partnership with Staffordshire County Council

- 3.4.1 Joining the county wide HIA would give a single agency across the county which would be better resourced and co-ordinated to produce a consistent service. Partnership governance may lead to improved standards, monitoring and a more co-ordinated forward thinking service. Furthermore a 4 year contract ensures stability for planning within the partnership.
- 3.4.2 The costs to the Council would be lower than the present arrangements and procurement with the county will enable risks being spread to a number of partners. The specification makes it clear that although the contract will be for 4 years future funding beyond this financial year is indicative only and could reduce given uncertain future funding from central government and the council over this period, therefore any risks will fall to the provider. A county wide steering group would enable good practice and funding opportunities to be shared.
- 3.4.3 The disadvantages are that efficiencies envisaged may not be achieved and a central larger agency could increase bureaucracy and reduce speed of decision making leading to the loss of local service identity and the control of a statutory important service for residents in the Borough.
- 3.4.4 This model may also enable greater discussions with health commissioners around future commissioning and funding of support services related to hospital discharge and independent living in the home.

4. Reasons for Preferred Solution

- 4.1 The Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Council should join the county partnership. This recommendation is proposed as the approach would be value for money and give a better resourced and co-ordinated service. The comments noted from the Scrutiny are also proposed to be taken forward, namely that the contract includes requirements for residents in all boroughs to be treated fairly and that the contractor agrees to process applications against target times for all districts. Then should there be any issues arising with the contractor operating within our Borough, that a Council officer can attend the necessary Board to address the issues.

5. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The delivery of the HIA service clearly contributes to the corporate priority of creating a clean safe and sustainable Borough

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to approve a valid application for a Disabled Facilities Grant and receives central government grant allocation for this. There are no adverse legal implications to joining the Partnership. The County Council will be the Accountable Body and will be legally responsible for the procurement and operation of the contract.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The Service is aimed at assisting vulnerable residents and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the DFG service.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a DFG to an eligible applicant. The 2013/14 allocation is £864,000 made up of a government grant of £514,000 and capital funds from the Council of £350,000. The HIA is funded by an additional council grant of £26,000 and 7% fees based on the costs of works which form part of the grant payable to the applicant. Delivery of this level of adaptations gives a total charge of £86,480 paid to the HIA.

Clearly the level of costs payable to the HIA is dependent on the level of service offered and the total funding allocated to DFG's. If the new service was capped at 10% fees then the total payment on a DFG allocation of £864,000 would be £86,400 so this approach would be similar to current costs. If however the allocation was reduced to say £500,000 then the fees would drop to £50,000 (this would be more cost effective than the current approach of the grant and 7% fees which on this allocation would total £61,000). Similarly if the DFG allocation increased then the fees would also increase.

- 8.2 The tender is for the HIA service and not for the actual construction costs which form the majority of the costs. Membership of the Participation Agreement does not commit the Council to a minimum or maximum level of expenditure in the future years of the commission, only to the promotion of the service provider as a preferred supplier.
- 8.3 Membership of the Participation Agreement does not commit any resident to the preferred provider they remain free to use alternative providers. It will however set the level of fees payable so any service user opting to use a more expensive supplier will have to meet the additional costs themselves.
- 8.4 Failure by the Council to formally sign up as a participant would mean that it would not be able to use the service provision agreement once completed.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 Risk assessment completed by the County Council with the involvement of the District Councils.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 Whilst the aims of the Home Improvement Agency services are based around ensuring that vulnerable residents are able to repair and adapt their homes to meet their needs there are occasions whereby the agency are able to highlight opportunities for funding based around energy efficiency. Within the current financial climate funding opportunities can arise at short notice and may in the future be able to support customers of the HIA service.

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 The service affects vulnerable residents in all wards.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 The Housing Capital Programme allocated financial resources for DFGs and the HIA (Cabinet January 2013).

12.2 Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee considered the options on 26th June 2013 and recommended procuring the services with the County Partnership.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None.

MEETING BEING SUBMITTED TO CABINET 17th JULY 2013

1. HEADING Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm Project

Submitted by: Markets & Regeneration Officer

Portfolio: Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres

Ward(s) affected: Town

Purpose of the Report

To seek Member approval to formalise the allocation of the existing Capital Programme for Town Centre Works to the Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm project.

Recommendations

- a) That the existing Capital Programme allocation for Town Centre Works is allocated to the public realm project.
- b) That the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development is authorised in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres to procure the required contracts to deliver the project within the agreed budget.

Reasons

This report outlines the current position with regard to the Town Centre Public Realm Project and outlines the requirements in order that the project can commission appropriate works to be completed to a standard that is fit for purpose and minimises the requirement for future maintenance works in the project area. It is important that officers are given sufficient direction to enable the relevant aspects to be commissioned within a timely manner and this requires the Cabinet to allocate sufficient financial resources. The report outlines the revised timescales and explains the reasons for the budgetary requirement. Additionally, the current approved plans include extending the market trading area into Hassell Street and this requires the Council to amend the designated formal trading area.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm (public realm) project is a joint project with Staffordshire County Council that is intended to bring economic benefit to Newcastle town centre by closing Hassell Street to through traffic during the day and refurbishing Newcastle market. The business case for the project has been previously set out in a number of Cabinet reports.
- 1.2 To date the focus of work has been on preliminary actions to remove various forms of traffic from Hassell Street in the daytime. This has included changes to the bus station, new traffic signals and a bus lane on Barracks Road; plus changes to the entrance of the Ironmarket to enable a taxi rank to operate in this area. These works have been 100% funded by Staffordshire County Council.
- 1.3 More recently, works have taken place at the lower end of High Street to remove market stalls and introduce parking for disabled drivers, loading bays and a taxi rank in that area. These works have been 100% funded by Newcastle Borough Council.

- 1.4 Planning permission has been obtained for the new market stalls and a prototype stall which was on site by the Guildhall until earlier this year has been used to make design refinements in co-operation with market traders.
- 1.5 The project focus is now on the core area of High Street, Hassell Street and Friars Street. Work is being completed to produce final detailed designs for the landscaping works that are required in the core area. This, combined with County Council approved designs for the sub-base construction and new drainage connections will be used by the County Council's contractor to price the contract for this element of the project. Alongside this, the Borough Council will manage the procurement and placement on site of new market stalls.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 A recent review of the Council's Capital Programme allocation for the NTCPR project has highlighted the requirement to formalise a proposed virement of funding between items in the Town Centre Works Capital Programme Allocation.
- 2.2 Over the course of the past four or five years greater clarity over the likely financial implications of the Town Centre Works Programme has emerged. In 2010 a reduced allocation was made in the Capital Programme in relation to the Town Centre Works reflecting other competing pressures upon the Council at that time. That decision was made in the knowledge that further detailed design work would clarify more precise budgetary requirements at a later date. Officers have reached the stage where the latter detailed design information has emerged and there is a need to confirm the budgetary allocation so that the works can be commissioned.
- 2.3 At Part II of your agenda there is a Confidential item which contains full details about the financial implications of the project; that information has not been revealed in this report because of the likely adverse implications arising through the procurement process in relation to the works. Nevertheless summary level information of the key issues has been set out below in the interests of openness and transparency.
- 2.4 It is worth noting that the budget estimate that was completed in 2010 focussed on the core area of re-paving works in Hassell Street. Items that have now changed significantly in the more detailed design are:
 - i) Drainage proposals were based on a cost assumption that minimum interference with existing services would be required. Severn Trent has recently confirmed that the existing main sewer to which new drainage connections need to be made is 4.2 metres below ground level. This is considerably deeper than anticipated and is clearly outside of the scope of the original assumption. The revised budget reflects this.
 - ii) Re-paving of Hassell Street and construction of the foundations on which to place the new paving; revised arrangements for tactile paving have now been introduced following consultation with representatives from Guide Dogs for the Blind and in the light of the County Council's recent experience with other schemes in Staffordshire. Installation of this amount of tactile paving requires additional work to ensure that the tactile surface does not lift or shift when matched with adjacent paving. The fact that the paving sections are a different size to the surrounding paving also requires extra work to fit paving around the edges. The budget for the road and paving works has therefore been increased to reflect the additional requirements and anticipated problems.

- iii) The original cost estimate for the new taxi rank in lower High Street was based on a very basic scheme of changing road markings on the surface of the highway. However following consultation with Newcastle Hackney Association, surrounding businesses, Staffordshire Police and a County Council safety audit, a more extensive scheme of street works was required to deliver this element of the project. This included re-location of a CCTV camera, installation of bollards to control traffic movement and re-surfacing of an area of carriageway. Also the opportunity was taken to replace the automatic rising bollards at the lower end of High Street with manual bollards as the cost of maintaining and repairing the automatic bollards had become disproportionately high. The construction phase of the scheme was also extended by the presence of very solid reinforced concrete which was under the road surface and proved exceptionally difficult to break up.

2.5 Additional works were added to the public realm scheme following the results of a public consultation on the proposals. This was reported to Cabinet in July 2011. Based on the results of the consultation, Cabinet agreed to support a proposal to revise traffic access arrangements to Friars Street. The reasons for this were set out in the report and the accompanying consultation document. As this was additional work to that which had been previously proposed, a further capital programme allocation was requested to cover the Borough Council's contribution to this additional work.

2.6 At the time of the Cabinet resolution referred to in 2.4 and 2.5 above the market stall replacement and the public realm project were being managed as two separate projects. As stated above, the budget estimate produced for the public realm scheme therefore purely focused on the core area of Hassell Street. For practical project management reasons, as the public realm and market stalls projects moved towards the end of the detailed design stage the two projects were later combined and this has allowed a more strategic overview to be taken. Consequentially, this revealed additional areas of work that had not been considered at the time when the two projects were being managed separately, specifically:

- i) Removal of trees around the market area and allowance for their re-provision either on site or elsewhere.
- ii) Removal and making safe of existing electrical supplies to the market area and re-provision of new electric supplies in revised locations.
- iii) Working consultatively with market traders on the design of the new market stall. To evolve the stall design in line with trader requests first a wooden mock-up and then a full scale metal market stall prototype have been used to test the design. This approach was taken to minimise the risk of market traders being dissatisfied with new market stalls that are provided. This approach has been effective but has incurred additional unbudgeted costs.
- iv) Costs associated with the management of taxi rank changes, for example temporary signage, publicity about the taxi rank changes and management of taxi rank provision for the night time economy during the construction works in Hassell Street.
- v) Provision for the removal of excess street furniture around the market area in High Street and making good the pavement afterwards.

2.7 Officers are working closely with the County Council's Highways team to ensure that the improvements are delivered in the most cost effective manner and that where possible proposed designs are value engineered to reduce cost. The scheme is being delivered as a minimum cost scheme, where possible street furniture such as bollards and benches are

being re-used. A substantial amount of the cost of the scheme is on items to ensure that the scheme is fit for purpose – in particular, that the sub-base is sufficient to accommodate traffic without sinking or ridging and that once kerb lines are removed the drainage system is capable of accommodating rain water run-off.

2.8 For cost efficiency, it has been agreed with Staffordshire County Council that Highway works for the project will be delivered using their powers as the local Highway Authority through their Term Contract for maintenance and construction. This will cover works in the Friars Street, Hassell Street and High Street areas. Clearly until the County Council's contractor has confirmed its price for the landscaping works the project team is unable to provide a budget estimate for the scheme, other than to confirm the likely capital budget requirement. At each stage it would be expected that the competitive tendering process would deliver tenders below the budget. However, in view of a recent review of Capital Programme approvals for the scheme, it is prudent to confirm the use of the Town Centre Works allocation for this project.

2.9 With regard to the former St. Giles and St. Georges building your officers are of the view that it should be maintained in a wind and water-tight condition whilst its long term future is considered. This may require minor/urgent works from time to time the funding for which can be met from a windfall grant provided by a company working with the Council on another town centre initiative (see separate report).

2.10 Of particular note in the cost risk for the public realm scheme are:

- i) Whilst every effort has been made to trace underground services, works in both the Barracks Road and Ironmarket areas encountered services that had not been traced or notified by the utility companies. This caused delay and therefore increased cost to both of these elements of work. It would be prudent therefore to anticipate that similar issues will be encountered in the next phase of work, the contingency has also been increased to 10% to reflect a more suitable budget for a scheme of this size and nature. Whilst it is prudent to build in an appropriate contingency it is expected that through careful contract management this should not be required other than for unforeseen circumstances.
- ii) Of the current cost estimate for the scheme, three significant items are still to have a price confirmed by contractors. The manufacture of market stalls and also the groundworks to fix the market stalls on site is to be tendered by the Borough Council. The major highway works, which is to be managed by Staffordshire County Council, will be priced by the contractor. It is likely that within the County Council's term contract for maintenance and construction. There will have been cost inflation since the original cost estimate in 2010.
- iii) The complex requirements of managing traffic flow within a constrained area whilst works are undertaken. This is to enable necessary access for deliveries to surrounding properties and access and egress for market trader vans. This is likely to extend the period of the works.
- iv) The Council clearly needs to direct resources from the Assets Service and the Landscape Team to support the delivery of the project. These costs are incurred within the services as a revenue cost and should have been budgeted for as a recharge to the capital costs of the scheme; the revised budget therefore includes for this. Additionally, the departure of key staff due to retirement has also increased the need to rely on technical support from external sources.

2.11 Clearly this is a complex scheme that requires significant involvement from officers, the County Council, other partners such as the Town Centre Partnership, local traders, service providers and contractors. At each stage there is a risk of delay as practical issues arise. The timetable therefore needs to reflect these issues to ensure that works are completed satisfactorily and that the risk of remediation works are minimised so that the area does not suffer on-going works (as experienced on projects of a similar nature).

2.12 The following actions highlight key stages of the project timetable:

- i) At the time of writing officers are in the final stages of consultation on the Traffic Regulation Orders to control the flow of traffic and access times in Hassell Street, the completion of this is dependent on the comments made by local users.
- ii) Expressions of interest are being sought from suitable contractors for the provision of the market stalls based upon the revised specification. There is a risk that the revised drainage design and installation of electrical supplies may require trenches to be dug across the market area therefore this may need to be delayed until the paving and drainage works are complete. This would mean that the new market stalls won't be in place until 2014.
- iii) At the time of writing this report the County Council is tendering the major road and paving works to their contractor. Due to the potential risks outlined above particularly the depth of the drains and the requirement of traffic control during the construction phase it is expected that these works will take in excess of 20 weeks.
- iv) The adopted new market plans are based on extending the market trading area into Hassell Street, this will need to be formalised and legal processes completed to revise both the market area town centre street trading terms and conditions.

2.13 Due to the importance of the project it is necessary that the Cabinet formally allocate the necessary project funding to the public realm project.

3. Options Considered

3.1 The project objectives and design proposals have previously been considered and approved by Cabinet as set out in section 12 of this report.

3.2 If sufficient funding wasn't to be allocated then the Council could decide to cease the project and replace the market stalls in the current location and style, however this would not deliver any of the planned improvements to the town centre. An alternative option would also be to commence the works with the existing budget, however officers would not recommend commencing works without the confidence that funding is available to undertake the latter stages required. The other option would be to re-engineer the scheme to fall within a smaller budget sum. Given the minimal nature of the revised scheme it may prove difficult to achieve this without harming the overall integrity of the scheme.

4. Proposal

4.1 That the existing Capital Programme allocation for Town Centre Works is allocated to the public realm project to allow its completion.

4.2 That the Portfolio Holder receives regular updates on the delivery of the programme and that the necessary contracts are procured within this revised budget and all necessary legal processes are completed in terms of the market trading area.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the town centre projects funding is allocated to the Public Realm Scheme to enable construction of the remaining elements of the project to a standard that is fit for purpose and that will minimise the need for future maintenance works in the project area. Importantly it is necessary to allocate sufficient resources in order that officers in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder can authorise the commissioning of relevant works with the County Council. Without this there is a risk that the project can not take place and it would be subject to significant delays.
- 5.2 Delivery of the new market will assist in the revitalisation of Newcastle town centre and is both a priority for the Council and the Town Centre Partnership.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The project is within the Borough of Opportunity corporate priority featuring in outcome 1.5 of the Borough Council's Council Plan 2013 – 2014.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Borough Council is not under a statutory duty to act. However the Local Government Act 2000 provides the Council with the powers to take actions to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community.
- 7.2 The public realm proposals do require changes to Traffic Regulation Orders in the town centre and associated changes to highway signs. Our scheme partner, Staffordshire County Council will, as Highways Authority, ensure that all necessary requirements are complied with.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 No differential impact has been identified.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 As highlighted above the costs for the various elements of the scheme are still being finalised and are subject to the tendering process and to some extent the conditions found when the road surfaces are excavated. However it is recognised that the estimates are fairly accurate and that there needs to be some contingency to cover issues as they arise. Officers therefore recommend that the Council budgets for the cost for this programme of work on the basis set out in the attached confidential report. For the sake of clarity, there is no requirement for the provision of additional capital funding; the report seeks to formalise the virement of funding that has been allocated to different elements of the Town Centre Works programme.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 A full risk assessment is maintained for this project. The most significant risks have been highlighted in Section 2 of this report.

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 The project is located within the Town Ward although all users of the town centre will benefit.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 December 2012; Cabinet approved the removal and re-provision of trees to facilitate delivery of the Town Centre Market Improvements and the submission of a planning application for the proposed new market stalls.
- 12.2 July 2011; Members considered the results of a public consultation that had taken place in November and December 2010 and approved the scheme for implementation including introduction of a taxi rank at lower High Street and in the Ironmarket, changes to the layout of the market stalls and the introduction of new market pitches in Hassell Street and revised access arrangements for Friars Street to allow 24 hour access for deliveries, with a Capital Programme Contingency Reserve for this latter item.
- 12.3 September 2010; Cabinet authorised the scheme for public consultation and also the dedication of land at the bus station for Highway purposes to enable the works on Barracks Road to be completed.
- 12.4 January 2010; Members considered in detail the rationale for the public realm and market refurbishment scheme and authorised Officers to pursue the daytime closure of Hassell Street to through traffic and its repaving to emphasise its pedestrian focus; the replacement of market stalls and the removal of market stalls from lower High Street up to its junction with Hick Street.
- 12.5 January 2010; Members approved the Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework and a Capital Programme allocation for the projects set out in that report.
- 12.6 June 2006; This report reviewed progress with works around the town centre such as the subway improvement scheme and welcomed progress with the development of the Traffic Regulation Order for Hassell Street.
- 12.7 March 2005; That Officers be authorised to approach the County Council with a view to a Traffic Regulation Order being made seeking the closure of Hassell Street from its junction with Market Lane to the Midway. And; That officers be authorised to further discuss the project with representatives of the County Council with a view to securing an appropriate financial contribution.
- 12.8 August 2004; That the Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm project be approved.

13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 None

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET 17th JULY 2013

1. HARDSHIP RELIEF - BUSINESS RATES

Submitted by: Head of Revenues & Benefits

Portfolio: Finance and Resources

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

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

Recommendations

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

Reasons

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

1. **Background**

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

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

2. **Issues**

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

3. **Options Considered**

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

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

4. Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 The cost of any hardship relief granted is shared 75% by the rating pool and 25% by the billing authority. Changes in the pooling arrangements from 1 April 2013 mean that 37½% of the pooling cost will fall to central government and 37½% to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Rates Pool.
- 4.2 The Council does not currently have a budget to cover the cost of any hardship relief, having never considered any applications in the past, although this in itself would not be a justifiable reason for refusal. Any cost directly to the Council will need to be met from elsewhere within existing budgets. The pooling arrangements of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Rates Pool do not cover the treatment of this type of cost and are something that will need to be resolved at some point. However, again this would not be a reason to refuse an application and any costs are likely to be relatively insignificant in terms of the pool size in general.

5. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

None

6. **Recommendations**

That the items detailed at appendix (b) be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

7. **List of Appendices**

7.1 Appendix A – Guidance on Rate Reliefs

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A

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

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank