

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

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

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

CABINET

Wednesday, 16th October, 2013

Present:- Councillor Gareth Snell – in the Chair

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

1. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. SITE ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

A report was submitted requesting members to consider issues arising from the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan process. The report sought authority to prepare a new Local Plan for the borough as a whole or jointly with the City Council.

Resolved: a) That Cabinet suspend the preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.

b) That a further report be submitted to the earliest available meeting of the Cabinet in order to receive the views of the Planning Committee and to receive an update on Stoke-on-Trent City Council's formal stance in this matter.

c) That the financial implications of this report for 2014/15 to 2016/17 are addressed through a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy and the respective budget-setting processes.

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014 - 2015

A report was submitted providing the background on the financial strategy for the Council over the next five years in the light of the national and local financial situation and taking account of the Council's priorities.

Resolved: (a) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2014/15 to 2018/19 be approved.

(b) That the report be referred to the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment.

5. CORPORATE CLEANING SERVICES

Cabinet received a report informing it of a review of corporate cleaning services and suggesting proposals which would introduce new and revised value-for-money arrangements.

Resolved: a) That cabinet approve the proposals outlined in Option Three of the report for a review of the current mix of in-house and external cleaning arrangements at the council and to implement the changes identified in that option.

b) That cabinet support the actions outlined in the report which indicate savings to be generated from revised cleaning product procurement methods.

c) That a further report be brought forward on behalf of the Executive Management Team to consider the potential for the future development of corporate cleaning services at the borough council.

6. KIDSGROVE TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

A report was submitted to update Members on the progress of the establishment of a Kidsgrove Town Centre Community Interest Company and Council support for this.

Resolved: a) That Cabinet endorse the Borough Council becoming a corporate director of the Kidsgrove Town Centre Community Interest Company and that Councillor Mrs Elsie Bates is nominated to the Board.

b) That £10,000 be allocated to the Kidsgrove Town Centre Community Interest Company for the delivery of its emergent action plan, subject to the completion of a Service Level Agreement and an agreed arrangement for draw-down of defrayed or committed expenditure.

7. MULTI FUNCTIONAL DEVICE (MFD) CONTRACT

To inform Cabinet of efficiencies and savings from the multi-functional device contract and to seek permission to extend the contract in line with agreed procedures.

Resolved: a) That Cabinet notes the efficiencies and savings relating to the multi-functional device contract at the borough council.

b) That Cabinet agree in principle to extending the contract with the current multi-functional device supplier in line with agreed procedures.

c) That cabinet authorise the Head of Communications to negotiate the terms of the contract extension up to a maximum of two years.

d) That the Portfolio holder for Communications, Policy and Partnerships be consulted before any extension is agreed.

8. KEELE GOLF CENTRE

A report was submitted to obtain Cabinet's decision on the selection of a new operator and approval to the grant of a new lease of the golf centre at Keele on the terms outlined in this report.

Members noted that the matter had been the subject of detailed scrutiny and Cabinet thanked Members who had been involved in this scrutiny process for their hard work.

Resolved: a) That members accept the outcome of the bidding process and the offer from Company B for a new 25 year full repairing and insuring lease containing options to break with rent based upon a percentage of turnover.

b) That officers be authorised to complete a new lease with Company B on the terms summarised both within the report and at Appendix 3 (the appendix is not for publication as it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972).

c) That the decision to extend the interim management and maintenance arrangements be noted.

9. DUTY TO COOPERATE PROTOCOL WITH STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

A report was submitted to advise Members, that on behalf of the Council and with regard to the council's 'general instructions' relating to matters of urgency, the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development and the portfolio holder for Economic Regeneration and Town Centres, had a) agreed and; b) signed a Protocol between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stafford Borough Council, demonstrating the duty to cooperate, pursuant to section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, for submission to the Examination in Public of 'The Plan for Stafford Borough.' (Stafford Borough's Core Strategy).

Resolved: That Cabinet note that the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development had taken urgent action to agree and sign a Protocol, countersigned by the portfolio holder for Economic, Development, Regeneration and Town Centres, demonstrating the duty to cooperate between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stafford Borough Council and that this has been submitted to Stafford Borough for inclusion in their Duty to Cooperate Statement to form part of the evidence supporting the Submission version of 'The Plan for Stafford Borough' Examination in Public.

COUNCILLOR GARETH SNELL
Chair

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REPORT TITLE Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council Urban Forest Strategy

Submitted by: Head of Operations – Roger Tait

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Purpose of the Report

To seek the approval of the Cabinet for the adoption of the Urban Forest Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received
2. That the Urban Forest Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme is adopted
3. That officers are authorised to develop and progress the action plan within current budgetary and staff resource provision.
4. That officers are authorised to work with partners to develop and progress the action plan.

Reasons

To manage and improve the tree stock within the Borough and to provide a framework for it's future development and rationalisation.

1. **Background**

1.1 Our tree cover is crucial to the wellbeing of the borough in terms of landscape, local air quality and microclimates, nature conservation, biodiversity, economic development and human health.

We recognise that all trees are constituents of the forest and that the forest needs managing as a holistic entity. We aim to gain a wider recognition of the quality of our urban forest, and create an environment to encourage further investment in the borough.

By working to improve and increase the forest area of the borough, essentially our whole environment, we will reap the rewards in terms of a richer and more valuable living space. By managing the forest in a more commercial fashion we will create an environment for future generations of which we can all be proud.

The proposed Urban Forest Strategy recognises the long-term nature of tree management, with targets up to the year 2050, with a programme of short and long-term actions to achieve our goals. The strategy will be subject to constant review and renewal. Ultimately, following a long timescale,

reflecting the life-span of the tree population, we will achieve a larger, intensively-managed urban forest of which we can all be proud.

The strategy is a bold and progressive initiative that will lead the way in urban tree management in these times of increasing environmental pressures and predicted climate change. This is one of the borough's suite of strategies aimed at meeting these pressures for the benefit of the population as a whole.

1.2 Trees are living plants. They grow, they mature, they become sick and they die. When trees start to decline they can start to become a risk. The urban and suburban environments, and indeed the farmed landscape, are not natural environments. The countryside has been shaped by thousands of years of tree clearance for agriculture. The built environment has developed over a small number of years. Trees left within the built environment have many pressures to cope with including reduced rooting space, vandalism, changed local climates, greater susceptibility to disease, and generally shorter life expectancies.

Complacency is a big challenge to tree survival. Planting schemes from Victorian times have left us with leafy lanes and glorious parks and gardens. Trees have now matured and there is resistance to making significant changes to these environments as they are so pleasant at the moment. However, in many of these locations trees are all of a similar age and in order to ensure their continuance some will need to be removed to make way for younger trees and to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the rich environment of many parts of the borough.

Whilst trees are essential for human survival, they can also create their own problems. The pressures suffered by trees such as those described above can render them hazardous in several ways and management of the tree resource ensures that trees remain in a safe condition. Management is targeted to areas of greater risk, for example where trees are next to houses, roads, play areas etc. Management also helps to keep natural sunlight filtering into homes, minimising discomfort, minimising nuisance, improving sight lines at road junctions and even improving the chances of better TV reception! Structured and planned tree management ensures the survival of trees for maximum benefit, whilst at the same time minimising the less favourable effects of nuisance and annoyance to people.

1.3 The Newcastle under Lyme Urban Forest is a new concept. The Urban Forest has always existed but it has not been viewed as such before. The urban forest is defined as all of the woodlands, trees and open spaces within the borough, viewed as a single entity rather than as separate collections of trees and woodlands. To satisfy the needs for good environmental management Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is moving away from the concept that each individual tree is to be protected in its own right, and now recognises the importance of the holistic view of the forest as a whole. This strategy is concerned with the improvement and management of the urban forest as a whole.

We are fortunate in Newcastle in having a higher than average covering of trees. Woodland cover for Staffordshire in general is between 6 and 8% and within Newcastle the percentage appears a little higher than this. Formal surveys over the next few years will give us a more reliable figure. Our borough is essentially a collection of small urban areas with an extensive rural fringe. The agricultural landscape is well endowed with trees and there are numerous small woodlands across the borough. Previous clearance of wooded areas for industry is being reversed with the planting of many former mining sites and the creation of country parks such as Birchenwood and Apedale. Within the last thirty years Dutch Elm Disease has had a profound influence on the landscape of

Newcastle under Lyme. Few elm trees remain and where the English elm is regenerating in the hedgerows it is succumbing to disease again when it reaches around 8 cms stem diameter. As such these once prominent trees have become little more than a hedgerow component. Other diseases, including the newly-arrived Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) have had, and will continue to have an impact on tree cover within the borough and this confirms the need for a strong and robust woodland strategy.

Traditional response to disease and decline of tree populations has been largely ad hoc with the planting of standard trees with stakes in parks and open spaces. More recently woodland style planting with forestry “whips” and transplant trees has taken precedence, utilising native broadleaf species wherever possible. This style of planting is easier to establish, less prone to vandalism and is, on the whole, a more cost-effective form of planting. However, this places a greater need on thinning plantation areas following vigorous growth in order to maintain healthy woodland.

In general tree management has been reactive and whilst this deals with problems as a whole, a vision and sense of direction is currently lacking. Structured, planned, proactive management by all land owners in the urban forest will ensure an end to decline, an improvement to the urban forest, greater numbers of trees and a reduction in complaints.

2. Issues

2.1 Tree cover across the borough is divided into a complex matrix of ownerships and responsibilities. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council owns and directly manages a significant volume of tree stock in its 1800 acres of parks and open spaces and other land holdings. The council has a Tree Management System (TMS) which has plotted all of its tree stock and has set up a programme of survey, inspection and physical work based on a risk management system. The council employs a qualified Arboricultural Officer to manage its tree stock in recognition of the high risk which this function contains and has trained tree operatives within the multi-skilled Streetscene workforce who carry out programmed and reactive tree maintenance work identified via the TMS.

The council also has a number of powers, duties and management responsibilities for tree stock in other ownership through its planning, development control and enforcement functions and this is managed by officers in relevant departments as a part of their wider duties and responsibilities. The council has a number of existing policies and procedures in relation to tree management but the proposed Urban Forest Strategy is the first time that these have been reviewed and co-ordinated into one, over-arching policy document. A copy of the proposed Urban Forest Strategy is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

2.2 The proposed strategy recognises that in addition to the council's own tree stock, there are key partners who own significant volumes of tree stock in the borough and that the management practices of these partners have a high impact on how the urban forest is managed, and how it is perceived by the community. The key partners are Staffordshire County Council who own and manage the highway tree stock which gives many of our streets and roads their landscape character, and Aspire Housing who own and manage the tree stock on the amenity land surrounding much of the borough's social housing. These partners, as well as a number of other stakeholders, have been consulted on the proposed strategy and a summary of the comments received your officers' responses, is attached to this report at Appendix 2. Both Staffordshire County Council and Aspire Housing support the aims of the strategy and the intention is to work with both organisations to develop good arboricultural working practices and deliver the action plan to ensure that the aims of the strategy are achieved.

2.3 In terms of privately owned tree stock, the main controls available to the council are contained within planning policy. The council has the powers to make and administer Tree Preservation Orders to protect privately owned trees of amenity value from the threat of unnecessary removal or inappropriate management or development. There are currently over 150 Tree Preservation Orders in Newcastle Under Lyme, which provide protection for thousands of trees on an individual, group, area or woodland basis. Trees within Conservation Areas are also afforded protection and the local planning authority can impose conditions on planning permissions to retain trees of value and enter into management and maintenance agreements.

Other organisations also have control and enforcement powers in relation to privately owned tree stock, including the Forestry Commission from whom a felling licence must be obtained for permission to remove trees over a specified volume.

2.4 The Urban Forest Strategy pulls together all of the above factors into one over-arching policy document for the management of tree stock in the borough. It represents a shift away from considering each individual tree in its own right and seeking to secure replacement planting in sites where perhaps tree cover had become inappropriate, to a holistic approach where the overall aim is to increase tree cover, but to do so in appropriate locations and using appropriate species. The strategy proposes the following guiding principles:

- **Protect**

Objective 1: Retain and protect existing woodland

Objective 2: Retain and protect existing hedgerows

Objective 3: Protect and enhance existing trees and groups including street trees

- **Care**

Objective 4: Care for woodlands areas to promote structured, uneven-aged and sustainable environments for multiple uses, with an emphasis on recreation, amenity and nature conservation.

Objective 5: Care for trees, and hedgerows to promote healthy growth and development

- **Plant**

Objective 6: Plant more woodlands and hedgerows

Objective 7: Plant more trees, tree groups and street trees

- **People**

Objective 8: Consultation with public and interest groups over major schemes and initiatives.

Objective 9: Listen to public opinion and manage Newcastle Borough Council-owned trees in the interests of good neighbourliness and human comfort

2.5 The strategy then proposes an Action Plan, deliverable over the period up to 2050, to seek to carry out detailed projects and initiatives to achieve these aims.

The Action Plan has been designed to take into account current resource availability in terms of staffing levels and budgets and is considered to be achievable within these limitations.

The action plan also seeks to develop tree management as a potential income generating activity to offset the cost of the service by trading with other organisations who may be interested in procuring work of this type from the council.

Should current resource levels change, there will be a need to review the action plan and amend it accordingly.

It is therefore proposed to prepare an annual monitoring report to review progress with the strategy and to agree any amendments which may be necessary.

2.6 The strategy also proposes that we continue to develop our volunteering and partnership initiatives to assist in delivering the action plan and that we continue to seek external funding opportunities where appropriate.

3. **Options Considered**

Options have been considered as part of the strategy development process

4. **Proposal**

4.1 That the report is received.

4.2 That the Urban Forest Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme is adopted.

4.3 That officers are authorised to develop and progress the action plan within current budgetary and staff resource provision.

4.4 That officers are authorised to work with partners to develop and progress the action plan.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

To manage and improve the tree stock within the Borough and to provide a framework for its future development and rationalisation.

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

6.1 Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough.

6.2 Creating a healthy and active community.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

There are a number of legal and statutory implications relating to the management of tree stock in the borough. Current legislation and planning guidance covered within the strategy includes the following:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- Environment Act 1995
- Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999
- Highways Act 1980
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- “Tree Preservation Orders . A Guide to the Law and Good Practice.”
DETR 2000
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
(sections 23 & 24)
- Forestry Act 1967 (as amended). Felling Licences
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The council is also directly responsible for the safe management of the tree stock within it's ownership and operates the Tree Management System to manage and mitigate liabilities in this regard.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no negative impacts identified as part of this report

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The cost to the council of managing it's own tree stock is met from within existing budgets in the general fund revenue programme for the Streetscene service, which include salary costs for the Arboricultural Officer and Streetscene Operatives (tree operatives), equipment and training costs and annual licence costs for the Tree Management System (TMS).
- 9.2 There are also staff costs relating to other tree management and enforcement functions in a number of departments across the authority which are similarly included in the general fund revenue programme for those respective service areas.
- 9.3 There are no additional staff or financial resources required directly relating to the proposed adoption of the Urban Forestry Strategy at present.

10. **Major Risks**

There are major risks associated with the management of tree stock and the council has a Tree Management System (TMS) in place to ensure that it's responsibilities and liabilities are managed and mitigated wherever possible.

11. **Key Decision Information**

The strategy proposes a new policy, affects all wards in the borough and has been included on the Forward Plan. It does not result in significant expenditure or savings at this time.

13. **List of Appendices**

- 1 – Urban Forest Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme
- 2 – Summary of consultation responses

14. **Background Papers** None

URBAN FOREST STRATEGY
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL
OCTOBER 2013



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OUR VISION

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is pleased to present its strategy for management and improvement of the urban forest of Newcastle under Lyme.

Our tree cover is crucial to the wellbeing of the borough in terms of landscape, local air quality and microclimates, nature conservation, biodiversity, economic development and human health.

We recognise that all trees are constituents of the forest and that the forest needs managing as a holistic entity. We will gain a wider recognition of the quality of our urban forest, and will create an environment to encourage further investment in the borough.

By working to improve and increase the forest area of the borough, essentially our whole environment, we will reap the rewards in terms of a richer and more valuable living space. By managing the forest in a more commercial fashion we will create an environment for future generations of which we can all be proud.

This strategy recognises the long-term nature of tree management, with targets up to the year 2050, with a programme of short and long-term targets to achieve our goals. The strategy will be subject to constant review and renewal. Ultimately, following a long timescale, reflecting the life-span of the tree population, we will achieve a larger, intensively-managed urban forest of which we can all be proud.

We believe this to be a bold and progressive initiative that will lead the way in urban tree management in these times of increasing environmental pressures and predicted climate change. This is one of the borough's many strategies aimed at meeting these pressures head on for the benefit of the population as a whole.



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THE BOROUGH OF NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME URBAN FOREST STRATEGY FOR NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

WHY DO WE NEED TREES?

Trees are utterly essential for human life. There are many quoted reasons for having trees in towns including landscape benefit, nature conservation, provision of shelter, encouraging investment in business etc. But more importantly they convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. It is trees that keep us alive.

Global warming is at the top of the agenda throughout the globe and we are all now aware of the harmful effects of deforestation across the world. Whilst the primary forests in the third world continue to be harvested it is essential that the more privileged populations do their bit to prevent harmful climate change. Local Authorities throughout the world are actively planting trees and managing those they already have to ensure the safety and continued wellbeing of the human population.

Figures have been available for many years on measured quantities of oxygen released by trees and it has been determined that a single mature tree could produce enough oxygen itself to keep 10 people alive. If that tree were to be felled and replaced with new, smaller trees, 2,700 trees would need to be planted to maintain the effects the old tree had on the environment.

In the last two decades there has been very significant reinforcement of the need for action on a worldwide scale to protect and conserve trees. In 1994 “Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy” was published as Britain’s response to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development; the “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro. An important recommendation of the Earth Summit was that individual countries should prepare strategies and action plans to implement the agreements.



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The following UK initiatives relate to trees and woodlands.

- Agenda 21 - a comprehensive programme of action to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development for the 21st century
- The Climate Change Convention - a framework for action to reduce global warming
- The Biodiversity Convention - protecting the diversity of species and habitats
- A Statement of Principles - for managing, conserving and sustainable development of the world's forests
- Local Nature Partnerships – A key commitment in the Natural Environment White Paper to bring together local people and organisations to get the most out of the natural environment
- Biodiversity Duty – to raise the profile of biodiversity so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies and decisions made by public authorities.

Trees have a significant part to play in achieving the above programmes.

For its part, the UK Government is committed to improving the management and conservation of forests and encouraging the expansion of the UK's tree cover. It is also encouraging the planting, management and protection of trees important to amenity.

WHY DO WE NEED TO MANAGE OUR TREES

Trees are living plants. They grow, they mature, they become sick and they die. When trees start to decline they can start to become a risk. The urban and suburban environments, and indeed the farmed landscape, are not natural environments. The countryside has been shaped by thousands of years of tree clearance for agriculture. The built environment has developed over a small number of years. Trees left within the built environment have many pressures to cope with including reduced rooting space, vandalism, changed local climates, greater susceptibility to disease, and generally shorter life expectancies.

Complacency is a big challenge to tree survival. Planting schemes from Victorian times have left us with leafy lanes and glorious parks and gardens. Trees have now matured and there is resistance to making significant changes to these environments as they are so pleasant at the moment. However, in many of these locations trees are all of a similar age and in order to ensure their continuance some will need to be removed to make way for younger trees and to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the rich environment of many parts of the borough.

Whilst trees are essential for human survival, they can also create their own problems. The pressures suffered by trees such as those described above can render them hazardous in several

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ways and management of the tree resource ensures that trees remain in a safe condition. Management is targeted to areas of greater risk, for example where trees are next to houses, roads, play areas etc. Management also helps to keep natural sunlight filtering into homes, minimising discomfort, minimising nuisance, improving sight lines at road junctions and even improving the chances of better TV reception! Structured and planned tree management ensures the survival of trees for maximum benefit, whilst at the same time minimising the less favourable effects of nuisance and annoyance to people.

THE NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME URBAN FOREST

The Newcastle under Lyme Urban Forest is a new concept. The Urban Forest has always existed but it has not been viewed as such before. The urban forest is defined as all of the woodlands, trees and open spaces within the borough, viewed as a single entity rather than as separate collections of trees and woodlands. To satisfy the needs for good environmental management Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is moving away from the concept that each individual tree is to be protected in its own right, and now recognises the importance of the holistic view of the forest as a whole. This strategy is concerned with the improvement and management of the urban forest as a whole.

We are fortunate in Newcastle in having a higher than average covering of trees. Woodland cover for Staffordshire in general is between 6 and 8% and within Newcastle the percentage appears a little higher than this. Formal surveys over the next few years will give us a more reliable figure. Our borough is essentially a collection of small urban areas with an extensive rural fringe. The agricultural landscape is well endowed with trees and there are numerous small woodlands across the borough. Previous clearance of wooded areas for industry is being reversed with the planting of many former mining sites and the creation of country parks such as Birchenwood and Apedale.



An idea of the density of tree cover in the borough can be seen in the aerial photograph at Appendix IV

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Within the last thirty years Dutch Elm Disease has had a profound influence on the landscape of Newcastle under Lyme. Few elm trees remain and where the English elm is regenerating in the hedgerows it is succumbing to disease again when it reaches around 8 cms stem diameter. As such these once prominent trees have become little more than a hedgerow component. Other diseases, including the newly-arrived Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) have had, and will continue to have an impact on tree cover within the borough and this confirms the need for a strong and robust woodland strategy.

Traditional response to disease and decline of tree populations has been largely ad hoc with the planting of standard trees with stakes in parks and open spaces. More recently woodland style planting with forestry “whips” and transplant trees has taken precedence, utilising native broadleaf species wherever possible. This style of planting is easier to establish, less prone to vandalism and is, on the whole, a more cost-effective form of planting. However, this places a greater need on thinning plantation areas following vigorous growth in order to maintain healthy woodland.

In general tree management has been reactive and whilst this does deal with problems as a whole the sense of direction is lacking. Structured, planned, proactive management by all land owners in the urban forest will ensure an end to decline, an improvement to the urban forest, greater numbers of trees and a reduction in complaints.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE URBAN FOREST

Woodlands

There are a large number of woodlands throughout the borough both in public and private ownership. Several woodlands are thriving due to good management or good fortune and many demonstrate a good diversity of species and tree ages with healthy natural regeneration. However, where management is lacking there are signs of decline setting in, especially in woods dominated



by sycamore, willow and poplar, which out-compete other species. In such woods diversity is being lost and the structure and longevity of the wood as a whole is being compromised. Where relatively new plantations have been established there has been a lack of maintenance and necessary thinning works have been neglected. In these woodlands the wind is starting to have an effect with trees falling and being “hung-up” or leaning on other trees. Where responsive tree works have been undertaken arisings from the work are generally left on site. Whilst this can have benefits for nature conservation it can lead to unsightliness and further neglect, including the encouragement of further illegal dumping of rubbish. Woodlands have not received priority attention in the past as they are generally less frequented by people and carry a lower degree of perceived risk. There is, however, now a need to rescue woodlands from decline.

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Parks

There is a diversity of parkland types in Newcastle under Lyme, from the informal, such as Bathpool Park, to the highly ornamental gardens in Brampton Park.

The formal urban parks in particular demonstrate even-age structures with good populations of mature trees. Some have little evidence of recent plantings and now require active management to create more uneven age structures, enabling space for new trees to be planted for future generations. To avoid the prospect of trees all becoming old and starting to die off at the same time (and the cost implications that go with it) it is now time to commence a programme of selective thinning, felling and replanting. A survey in 2012 of Clough Hall Park in Kidsgrove has highlighted the problem of tree decline over a large scale, and this may be the first park to trial large-scale structured tree surgery works during the course of this strategy.



Highway Trees

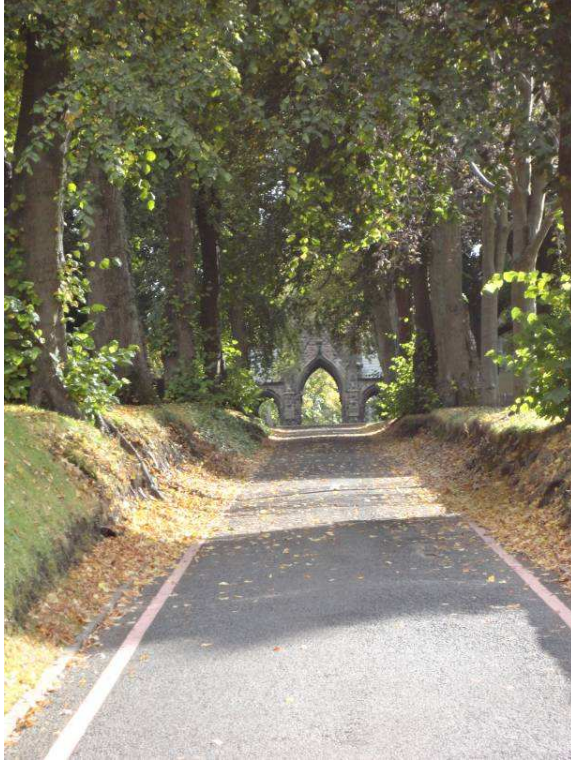
Highway trees are maintained by Staffordshire County Council. Whilst Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council carries out other grounds maintenance operations on the highways, such as grass cutting on a contract basis, the County Council maintain the trees themselves. There is close co-operation between the tree officers of the two authorities with a keen shared interest in developing the management of the tree population. Funds for maintenance are limited and tree work tends to concentrate at present on the areas most in need from the point of view of public safety. In the absence of major tree-planting over the last few decades there is a problem with an ageing tree population and annual reduction in numbers of trees. Leafy suburbs could, in future, become devoid of trees without an active programme of management.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Councils are exploring jointly some options to deal with this problem, involving shared resources, but there is much more planning to be done. Ultimately it is intended that both authorities will work in accordance with the aims, objectives and targets laid down in this strategy.

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Cemeteries and Church Yards

As well as municipal cemeteries, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is tasked with the maintenance of closed churchyards, where churches have requested this. Closed churchyards are those that are no longer used for new burials. Traditionally the cemeteries have been well tended and well planted with trees. However, there has been non-intervention in even-aged tree



populations, such as that in Newcastle Cemetery where the trees have been left to grow. Newcastle Cemetery will commence a three-year planned tree-maintenance programme in 2012, concentrating initially on hazardous trees and those overhanging other properties around the boundaries.

Cemetery trees carry their own problems, including the casting of dense shadow over graves and memorials, which can be distressing to those visiting the graves. The Newcastle Crematorium site has been subject to generous levels of tree-planting mainly as memorial trees, but over time there comes a problem of managing those trees and negotiating to remove selected specimens, which are currently memorial trees. A review of planting strategy within the crematorium site is intended, again to anticipate future problems arising from tree growth.

School Sites

Education land is the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council although Local Management of Schools means that most school sites now manage their own tree stocks with their own contractors. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council intends to take this strategy to the schools to encourage future initiatives and the better management and planting of more trees, in liaison with Staffordshire County Council.

Aspire Housing

Aspire Housing is a major land-owner in Newcastle under Lyme, and they have a large population of trees. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Aspire Housing have a close working relationship and are currently exploring possibilities in joint working with regards to increased efficiency in relation to strategic tree management in open spaces. Currently Aspire has a strategic approach via tree-planting programmes to support the neighbourhood planning process and have been successful in attracting external funding sources leading to significant numbers of trees being planted on Aspire and Newcastle Borough Council land. Aspire are currently undertaking a full inventory of all trees upon their land within the borough of Newcastle under Lyme.

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Trees in Private Ownership

The bulk of Newcastle under Lyme's urban forest lies within land ownership other than that of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council or Staffordshire County Council. Where sites are maintained by the Parish Councils we intend to work with them to promote the strategy. Much of the urban forest lies on domestic properties.

All trees, regardless of ownership, provide a local amenity, and a degree of protection is available to conserve tree cover. The Town and Country Planning Act assists with the management of the urban forest through Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and the protection of trees in the Conservation Areas. However, whilst TPOs can protect threatened trees they cannot be used to stimulate good management. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will seek to promote tree planting and management on private land, largely through the Development Control process and other partnership initiatives.

Public Attitudes

There is now a significant environmental awareness amongst the people of Newcastle and we have had active participation in community initiatives, both directly and in partnership with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and other organisations. Resident involvement in management is increasing throughout the borough, with input from residents via the Locality Action Partnerships (LAP), and various residents associations and Friends groups etc. There remains, however a mixed perception of and reaction to trees with some hostility and indifference as well as appreciation and support.

There is keen awareness of the disadvantages of trees, and the annoyance of falling leaves, lack of sunlight below tree canopies, honey-dew problems and the physical damage to property that can be attributed to trees, often incorrectly. Newcastle Borough Council receives around 15 to 20 requests for tree work every week. It is acknowledged that a level of distress and frustration can affect some residents as a result of living close to trees and this is being tackled with an increased efficiency in responsiveness to requests. It involves a considerable input of time and resources to respond to each public request and it is evident that the reactive management, dealing with small numbers of trees in each request is an inefficient way to manage such requests. Through this strategy it is intended that a more proactive style of management will anticipate future problems before they become an issue and that the level of complaints and requests for service will decrease



URBAN FORESTRY

Urban forestry is a simple concept. It aims to manage the urban forest in much the same way that a forester would manage a rural forest. The forester is less concerned with preserving every individual tree but more concerned with the health, vitality and productivity of the forest as a whole. The forester recognises the need to remove trees for the benefit of the forest, both to space trees out and to make way for new planting. The forester recognises that it is his or her job to ensure that future generations enjoy the same forest in the future. The rural forester may be concerned with timber production or other forest products and this commercial aspect can have a role in the urban forest as well. Investment in the forest can encourage the maximisation of income from timber or woodchip sales etc, which can be used to stimulate further initiatives and further tree planting.

THE URBAN FOREST STRATEGY IN LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This strategy is guided by the existing policies of the 2003 **Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan**. The Local Plan, which complements the **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan** is currently being revised and will be replaced by a **Local Development Framework** in the near future. Several of the policies contained within the Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan are still extant. Those relevant to this strategy document are:

- H7 – Protection of Areas of Special Character
- N10 – New Woodland – Considerations
- N12 – Development and Protection of Trees
- N13 – Felling and Pruning of Trees
- N14 – Protection of Landscape Features of Major Importance to Flora and Fauna
- B10 – The Requirement to Preserve or Enhance the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area
- B15 – Trees and Landscape in Conservation Areas
- N8 – Protection of Key Habitats
- N9 – Community Woodland Zones



As part of the **Local Development Framework**, Newcastle's **Core Strategy** contains specific aims and policies, specifically: Strategic Aim 15: Protect and improve the countryside and the diversity of wildlife and habitats throughout the plan area; and Policy CSP4 – Natural Assets. This strategy also complements the **Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy**, which is aimed at driving improvements to urban parks and biodiversity.

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Finally, all policies and strategies are informed by the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, which sets out to achieve sustainable development through the planning process.

WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY?

To drive positive change in the face of decreasing resources we need a plan. This will both drive the initiative and provide justification for actions in the face of challenge or opposition.

ACTION PLAN

'Protect', 'Care', 'Plant' and 'People' are the guiding principles that Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will apply to the trees, woodlands, and hedges for which we have responsibility.

The Newcastle under Lyme Urban Forest Strategy has the following broad set of objectives:

- **Protect**
 - Objective 1: Retain and protect existing woodland
 - Objective 2: Retain and protect existing hedgerows
 - Objective 3: Protect and enhance existing trees and groups including street trees

- **Care**
 - Objective 4: Care for woodlands areas to promote structured, uneven-aged and sustainable environments for multiple uses, with an emphasis on recreation, amenity and nature conservation.
 - Objective 5: Care for trees, and hedgerows to promote healthy growth and development

- **Plant**
 - Objective 6: Plant more woodlands and hedgerows
 - Objective 7: Plant more trees, tree groups and street trees

- **People**
 - Objective 8: Consultation with public and interest groups over major schemes and initiatives.
 - Objective 9: Listen to public opinion and manage Newcastle Borough Council-owned trees in the interests of good neighbourliness and human comfort

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The key elements of the Strategy, to achieve these objectives are:

- To involve members of the community in the selection, planting and protection of trees through programmes of education, promotion and consultations;
- Work towards minimising conflicts with the built environment and to provide protection to and from tree growth;
- To develop streetscape designs and strategies suited to the nature of the local community and built environment;
- To implement a priority based program for the continual rejuvenation of trees within the whole of the urban forest.
- The Strategy should provide clear guidelines for the management of tree populations from field/forest to street level.
- provide a summary and overview of the current condition of the tree population;
- compile prioritised plans on a site by site scale for the development and improvement of all areas of the urban forest in the short, medium and long term;
- examine traditional problem areas for tree planting and recommend innovative solutions to minimise problems with future plantings;
- develop a species selection database of generally available stock suited to local conditions and local characters within the area;
- prepare innovative recommendations for dealing with the ageing tree populations in specified areas, working closely with Staffordshire County Council to cover all Council-owned land, Aspire Housing and other land owners, as appropriate;
- ensure consultation with residents regarding capital works projects and other major proposals planned by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council;
- recommend methods and frequency of tree inspections to ensure public safety and health of the tree population.

Our objectives have given rise to a set of specific targets, which are to be achieved by 2050.

The targets are further guided by a series of Policy Statements which are set out in Appendix III.

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TARGETS

TARGET DATE

1. Management of Existing Trees and Woodlands

- Review the current IT arrangements and assess the suitability of the Council's Tree Management System to developing needs 2014
- Implement a programme of planned arboricultural maintenance across all Council-owned sites, to reduce the need for reactive working 2015
- Liaise with Staffordshire County Council and with Aspire for a commonality of approach with regard to strategic tree management on open space 2016
- Review Call-Centre operations with a view to setting up one contact centre for all tree matters relating to Newcastle, Staffordshire County Council and Aspire 2016
- Enter into discussions with Staffordshire County Council and Aspire with reference to shared workloads for more efficient and productive tree management in the borough 2016
- Obtain grant-aid and undertake a full inventory of Council woodlands leading to production of a Newcastle woodland management plan 2017
- Update and review the existing inventory of all Council-owned trees and set up a programme of reinspections 2018
- Achieve growth in sustainably-managed tree cover to 5% over the life of the strategy 2050

2. New Tree Planting

- Tree-planting to be incorporated into major arboricultural projects (e.g. major tree surgery schemes in parks), ensuring replanting takes place following major felling schemes 2014
- Preparation of a planting strategy on Council-owned land, to ensure Planned tree-planting, together with selective tree-removals to enable new trees to establish 2017
- Increase tree-cover in the borough in suitable areas, whilst conserving other natural habitats in the borough, as appropriate 2030

3. Publicity and Marketing

- Annual programmes of work to be taken to Locality Action Partnerships, formal residents associations, Parish Councils etc for information and consultation in advance of commencement 2014
- Review the disposal arrangements for arboricultural arisings and look at ways of maximising income or recycling opportunities for urban forestry produce 2016

4. Environmental Awareness

- Community Management Team at Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council promoting the plan and ensuring that volunteer groups are all aware of the background and importance of the strategy 2014
- Promote this strategy at every opportunity and incorporate into the statutory local plan 2018

5. Operational Management

- Review resourcing for in-house working arrangements, taking all due account of woodland surveys, management plans and available budgets 2016

Monitoring

This strategy and the implementation of targets will be subject to a set of Annual Reports, which will report on progress and will reassess final target dates, as required. The reports will also enable modification and changes to targets as circumstances may dictate.

A formal review will be undertaken in 2020 to enable an assessment of our success and to produce a second phase to enable any changes to policy and to continue the strategy into the future.



RESOURCES – NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the time of writing, the general economic climate is poor and available resources for tree work by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council are limited.

The Streetscene section is responsible for organising work to Borough Council-owned trees along with all other grounds maintenance and cleansing operations. Careful planning has ensured the optimisation of service delivery across the board on limited resources. With reference to trees, the qualified tree team operate during the winter months and move onto other duties, such as grass-cutting during the summer season. The team has at their disposal a full range of machinery, vehicles, tools and safety equipment necessary for efficient operation.

This strategy will set the foundation for a full assessment of tree and woodland condition and a review of working arrangements, largely from within existing revenue and capital budgets. In particular, however, it will look at the potential for income generation, for example with reference to timber and firewood sales and recycling to enable further funds to be put into the system, to enable further works, more tree-planting etc. It will also look at the potential for providing tree management and maintenance services to other customers and developing a business plan for the council's tree team.

We will also look into sources of external funding, as per the resource intentions laid out in the Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan. External funding is already being accessed and potential funding streams include:

- English Woodland Grant Scheme, administered by the Forestry Commission.
 - this is used to help fund tree-planting schemes and is increasingly used for woodland management and improvement. Grant aid is also available for drawing up woodland management plans.
- Natural England land management grants for nature conservation areas
- English Sports Council – for sporting initiatives in woodland areas etc
- UK National Lottery – for major initiatives and partnership ventures
- The Tree Council – Funds available for schools and community groups
- Possible sponsorship from local businesses
- Developer contributions through the planning process
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Groundwork
- Woodland Trust – Planting packs for communities

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- Charitable Organisations

In addition, for schemes on private land, Newcastle Borough Council can offer limited assistance by way of grant-aiding through the Community Chest.

From this strategy Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will seek to undertake long-term planning and management of the urban forest that will incorporate the addition of external funding wherever possible to optimise tree-cover, improve the natural environment and, hopefully, stimulate further economic growth. The Council will seek to engage with and consult stakeholders over the planning and management of the urban forest with the aim of working cooperatively with our residents and partners to achieve our goal of a clean, safe and sustainable borough.

VOLUNTEERING AND PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to attracting external funding, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to working with the voluntary sector to stimulate local interest and involvement in environmental and countryside issues.

We already work with various groups. Examples of current schemes are:

- Conservation Volunteers, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- Porthill Dingle Fishing Club
- St Georges Church
- Prince's Trust volunteers
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Forest of Mercia
- Status Grow
- Restart (ex offenders)
- ESG (long term unemployed)
- Newcastle Day Care services
- Elite
- Clough Hall Park Friends
- Bathpool Park Friends
- Kidsgrove Youth Parliament
- The Acre Allotment Association
- Basford Allotment Association
- Park Road Allotment Association
- Dimsdale Allotment Association
- Ickey Picky Friends Group
- Thistleberry Friends Group
- Lyme Valley Friends Group
- Chester Road Friends Group

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- Bateswood Country Park Group
- Wolstanton Residents Group
- Bradwell Residents Group
- Unpaid Workers (probation services)
- BAC O'Conner (Rehabilitation centre)
- Keele University Students
- Knights Solicitors Environmental volunteers
- Loggerheads Pickers and Planters

In addition to the above we also work with over 20 local schools and we are adding new groups as projects are set up.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council facilitates a whole range of work initiatives from one off projects to regular light maintenance works carried out in our parks and open spaces. Every event is logged, risk assessed and a record kept of what was done, how many volunteers were there etc. The total number of hours worked by individuals not paid by the council doing community enhancement projects during 2012/13 is 7765.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is also intending to work with the Tree Council to start a Tree Warden Scheme to involve local people in the care of trees in their area.

Assistance given by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council includes:

- Newcastle Borough Council (Green Grant Scheme/Planting Assistance Scheme)
- Green Grants
- Planting Assistance Schemes – provision of transplant trees and whips, bulbs etc.

Similarly, at Aspire Housing volunteers and community groups have been involved in several initiatives and this has contributed to low vandalism rates for newly-planted trees

REFERENCES

British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work'

The national standard for tree surgery work is defined in British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work'. This standard is often quoted by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and should be the basic standard followed by all tree work contractors.

British Standard 5837: 2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction' -

There is often a conflict between maximising the development potential of a site and retaining existing trees. Consequently, construction activities throughout the country account for the loss of many trees each year. The retention of suitable existing trees is highly desirable, often enhancing the quality of the development and facilitating its integration into the surrounding landscape. It is important, however, to ensure that retained trees and new dwellings exist compatibly, well beyond the completion of the development. If trees are to be retained effectively, measures to protect them need to be thorough and should be understood by all parties involved in the construction process (i.e. from architect to site operative).

The national standard for selecting, preserving and retaining trees within new development is B.S. 5837 : 2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations' This standard forms the basis of advice the Council provides to its own planning officers and other planning authorities. The Council is committed to promoting best practice when managing and integrating trees in association with new development.

Tree Planting

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council undertakes all tree-planting work in accordance with the relevant section of its own work specifications. These specifications accord with the following standards :-

- B.S. 3936 : 1992 Nursery Stock
- B.S. 4043: 1989 Transplanting Root-balled Trees
- National Plant Specification

When designing new native woodland planting, the Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will normally specify stock produced from seed collected from the appropriate Forestry Commission seed zones. Where the primary aim of a new tree planting scheme is to conserve or enhance nature conservation nursery stock should be produced from seed collected from local sources, if such seed is available.

However, this aim will be kept under review due to the pressures predicted in the urban environment, such as temperature increases due to climate change, which could affect choice of species.

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CONTACTS

If you have an enquiry relating to trees, please contact the appropriate section of the Council or Staffordshire County Council as detailed below : -

Management of trees on highways, schools and other County Council sites

contactus@staffordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 111 8000

Management of Trees in Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces

Streetscene (Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)

Email: Streetscene@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Tel: 01782 717717

The Streetscene Tree Maintenance Unit is responsible for providing contracting services for tree surgery, planting and woodland maintenance

Management of Tree Preservation Orders//Trees in Conservation Areas/Hedgerow Regulations and landscape design and management

Landscape Development Section (Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)

Email: landscape@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Tel: 01782 717717

Management of Trees in and around Aspire Housing Areas

Aspire Housing

Email: enquiries@aspirehousing.co.uk

Tel: 01782 615599

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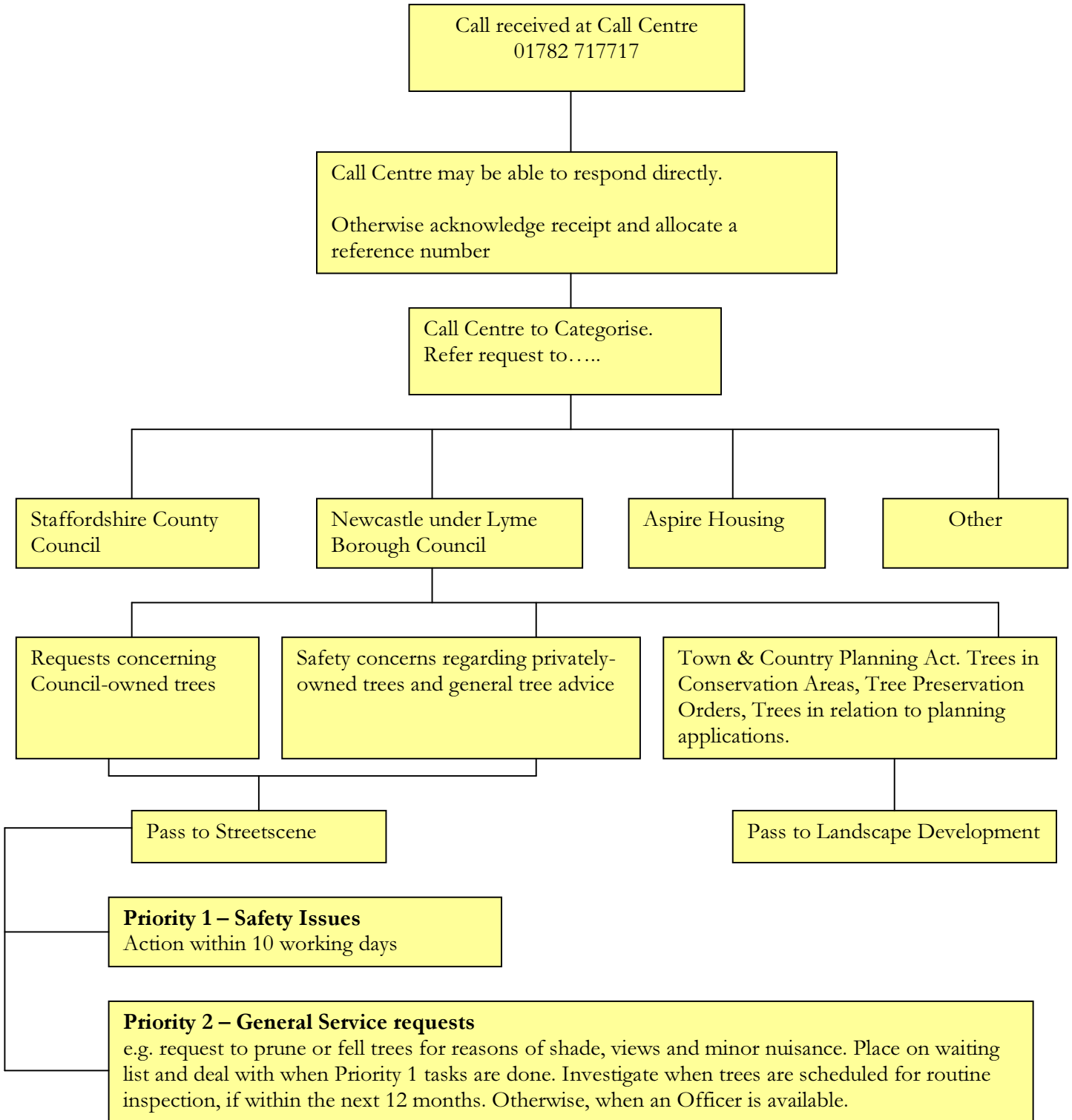
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**APPENDIX I
TREE ASSESSMENT
FORM**

General Details		Amenity Value: Input Required		Risk: Input Required						
Tree No :	<input type="text"/>	Alternative Tree Code :	<input type="text"/>							
Log Date :	<input type="text"/>	Logged By :	<input type="text"/>							
Location Details :										
Site Name :	<input type="text"/>									
Tree Tag No. :	<input type="text"/>	Label Type :	<input type="text"/>							
Description :	<input type="text"/>									
GIS Risk :	<input type="checkbox"/>	The UID is system generated - so do not enter a value for new records, the field will be automatically populated once the record is saved.								
Tree Map										
Tree Details and Tree Inspection Records										
Species :	<input type="text"/>									
Age Class :	<input type="text"/>	Planting Year Accuracy :	<input type="text"/>							
Year Planted :	<input type="text"/>	Crown Height (m) :	<input type="text"/>	Spread (m) :	<input type="text"/>					
Height (m) :	<input type="text"/>	Form - Stems :	<input type="text"/>	Physiological Condition (Vigour) :	<input type="text"/>					
DBH (cm) :	<input type="text"/>	Form - Symmetry :	<input type="text"/>							
Vitality :	<input type="text"/>	Condition Assessment								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Select</td> <td>Assessment Date</td> <td>Condition</td> <td>Issues</td> <td>Overall Condition</td> </tr> </table>						Select	Assessment Date	Condition	Issues	Overall Condition
Select	Assessment Date	Condition	Issues	Overall Condition						
Next Insp Date :	<input type="text"/>									
Tree Environment										
Slope :	<input type="text"/>	Aspect :	<input type="text"/>							
Exposure :	<input type="text"/>	Surface Type :	<input type="text"/>							
Adjacent Landuse :	<input type="text"/>									
Adjacent Services :	<input type="text"/>									
Context :	<input type="text"/>									
Amenity Type :	<input type="text"/>									
Routine Management :	<input type="text"/>									
Additional Features :	<input type="text"/>									
Designations & Constraints										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Select</td> <td>Type</td> <td>Reference</td> <td>Category</td> <td>Note</td> </tr> </table>						Select	Type	Reference	Category	Note
Select	Type	Reference	Category	Note						
Threats To The Tree :	<input type="text"/>									
Threats Posed By The Tree :	<input type="text"/>									
Enter TPO details in the Miscellaneous Details panel below										
Amenity Value Parameters										
Location Suitability :	<input type="text"/>	Form - Rating :	<input type="text"/>							
Visual Area Tree Coverage :	<input type="text"/>	Importance in Landscape :	<input type="text"/>							
Life Expectancy :	<input type="text"/>	Special Factors :	<input type="text"/>							
Data for all fields should be entered. The sail area of the tree is calculated from the mandatory crown and height data entered in the Tree Details panel. The Form Rating in the Tree Details panel must also be entered.										
Event Details										
Miscellaneous Details										

APPENDIX II

CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGEMENT (CRM)
PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO TREE REQUESTS



APPENDIX III

POLICIES RELATING TO TREE AND HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT IN NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

The following policy statements have all been produced specifically as part of this strategy to help deliver its aims. They do not relate to statements of policy laid down in other corporate documents, although they are intended to complement all existing corporate strategy.

1. Trees, hedges and woodlands – General Policies

T1 Healthy trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected, retained and enhanced. No tree will be felled or pruned without good reason.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will discourage any tree felling or pruning that is unnecessary. Essential work would include removing hazards, complying with legal requirements such as the highways legislation, routine management that is in the interests of the tree-stock/urban forest, and to allow approved development or redevelopment works to proceed. We will also take steps to ensure that where trees are being retained on development sites, they are protected from unnecessary removal or damage above or below ground through the planning process.

T2 Trees, hedges, and woodlands will be managed to ensure healthy growth and development.

Appropriate tree management is needed to ensure that trees, hedges and woodland are properly cared for through the various stages of their growth and development and to enable all trees to thrive. As part of that management, maintenance work will be needed to trees, hedges and woodland from time to time to retain them in a healthy condition and ensure optimum conditions for growth. Younger trees and plantations need careful and more intensive management, to help them develop into healthy mature trees in future years.

We also need to take care of our veteran trees to ensure that they are not removed prematurely and that they pose no danger to the public. Programmed work to trees in accordance with agreed management plans is intended.

T3 Tree stocks in the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme will be increased with particular attention given to locally native species, or exotic trees where appropriate and promoting a mix of tree species of different ages, including juvenile and veteran trees, to ensure a healthy, balanced, tree population.

Opportunities will be taken to plant more trees in Newcastle. There is a particular need to increase the area of woodland where there is space to accommodate woodland and where circumstances allow. However, we will ensure that other valued wildlife and habitats are not lost or damaged by woodland planting. Individual trees and tree groups are also of great value including trees of more exotic or ornamental species, tolerant of local environmental conditions.

Policies for Trees on Council Land

CT1 A Risk Management Strategy for Trees has been developed by the Borough Council enabling trees to be subject to regular health and safety inspections.

Owners of trees have a duty of care and are legally obliged to carry out regular inspections to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. As a responsible land owner Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council intends to introduce a system of regular inspection and monitoring of its trees.

CT2 No tree or woodland will be felled or pruned without adequate justification.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will not carry out felling or pruning that cannot be justified. Management and maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with policies T1, T2, & T3. Trees do require work from time to time for example to reduce risk and liability, or to ensure that people are not deprived of a reasonable right of enjoyment of public or private property. Groups or plantations of young trees need to be assessed regularly whilst they are growing and selected trees will need to be removed to make way for the remaining trees to develop.

CT3 All requests for works to trees or woodlands on council land must be assessed and authorised by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's Tree Management Team with reference to the current accepted procedure, practice and policy.

The Tree Management Team is based within Streetscene and works in partnership with landscape officers in the Landscape Development section.

CT4 Individuals or organisations requesting tree work will be informed of the outcome within 4 weeks (28 working days) of receipt. Agreed tree work will be programmed into work schedules and the individual/organisation will be informed of the likely implementation target. Applicants will be informed of any delays.

The Tree Management Team will be responsible for informing the public about the outcomes of requests for tree work, giving reasons for refusal if necessary. The Team will be responsible for ensuring compliance with any legislation or restrictions affecting trees in their ownership. There may be circumstances where work has to be done at a certain time of year. Many tree species are more vulnerable to pruning for example when sap is rising or when in leaf. It may be necessary to avoid tree work at certain times to prevent disturbance to other vegetation or to wildlife, for example roosting bats or nesting birds.

CT5 All work to council trees or woodlands will be carried out by the Tree Management Team, although at times statutory undertakers may prune trees back from power lines, although Newcastle Council will agree works and grant appropriate permissions.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to ensuring that our trees are properly cared for and that tree felling and pruning is carried out to a very high professional standard.

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CT6 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will plan and implement programmes for tree planting where resources allow to complement its annual programme of tree removals.

Except in the case of plantation thinning, replacement planting is desirable to ensure continuity of the tree stock. A single young tree will take many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature tree and in some locations it may be possible to plant several replacements. Replacement trees do not have to be in the exact same spot as the felled trees and other locations may be more practical and appropriate.

Street trees are currently maintained by Staffordshire County Council Highways Department and deserve a special mention as they are crucial to the landscape character of the town and very much affected by this strategy. The borough's streets offer a very unnatural environment for trees, which need special care and protection. This can be costly. Streets are where most of our services cables, pipes and overhead wires are found, together with junction boxes, letter and telephone boxes, street lights, signs and access chambers. The presence of this equipment above and below ground makes it difficult to find large enough spaces to plant trees. In residential areas verges have often been surfaced with tarmac and many people have driveways. When mature street trees are felled it is often impossible to remove the tree stump without damaging services and this means it can be very difficult to plant a replacement tree in the same place. Locations for new street trees need to be selected with great care and Newcastle Borough Council is keen to encourage new planting as a planned part of any new road schemes. Major development or redevelopment offers us our best opportunity for planting new street trees. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will work with Staffordshire County Council to ensure that street trees are replanted wherever possible.

CT7 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council will work towards preparing phased Tree Management Plans for its trees and woodlands.

The Tree Management Team will use the results of regular tree inspections to compile an inventory of our tree stock and to plan management work. Tree work that is programmed and budgeted for in advance is more cost effective than waiting for problems to be reported. However the need to respond to individual and emergency situations is acknowledged, for example when trees suffer storm damage.

CT8 New tree planting will ultimately be in accordance with Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's proposed design guidance.

We will be working on design guidance for use by everyone involved with tree planting operations, from design to specification, implementation and establishment care. Whilst this guidance may not cover every single individual circumstance it is intended to draw attention to basic principles for selecting suitable trees for particular locations and for proper planting and care from the outset.

CT9 Tree planting and establishment will be carried out in accordance with good horticultural and arboricultural practice as defined by BS 4428:1989, BS 3998:2012 and BS 7370:1991 and other good practice guidance promoted by government agencies and professional institutions.

3.11 We are committed to achieving a very high standard of workmanship and setting a good example to others.

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Additional Policies for Trees on Private Property Adjoining Council Land or Highways

CTA1 A Risk Management Strategy for Trees has been developed by the Borough Council. This may include inspection of trees on privately owned land that are adjacent to and/or overhang Council property or highways, where a concern has been reported to the Council.

Owners are responsible for trees on their property and have a duty of care to others. Best practice advice suggests regular inspections by owners to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has introduced a system of regular inspections and monitoring of its trees. We will encourage other landowners to do likewise. We will consider whether neighbouring trees are likely to pose any threat to members of the public using Council property, if we receive reports that a tree or trees are giving rise to concerns.

CTA2 Owners of any trees that are a potential nuisance or danger to the public or to public property will be asked to carry out remedial work. In the event of failure to carry out work we can use statutory powers to implement essential works and recharge the costs to the owner.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has powers under The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and in common law to ensure that members of the public are not put at risk when using Council land or facilities and to avoid risk to its own property. Similarly, Staffordshire County Council can use similar powers to ensure the safety of the highway under the Highways Act.

CTA3 Owners of trees that are a potential nuisance or danger will be offered advice in the event that the trees in question have protected status.

Where trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders or within a Conservation Area owners will be advised whether a formal application or notification for the tree work will need to be submitted. Certain works to trees are exempt from tree protection provisions.

Additional Policies for Trees on Private Property Maintained by the Borough Council.

Policies CT1 to CT9 will apply to trees on land where the Council has entered into an agreement with a private owner, except where the terms of the agreement specifically require otherwise. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council maintains land by agreement for example in churchyards, where the Council is not the owner of the land.

Where applicable we will take into account the presence of Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area status and will apply policies as appropriate. Legislation requires us to advertise proposed work to TPO trees on Council land. Scheduled Ancient Monument consents, Church Faculties or other restrictive covenants must also be adhered to.

Policies for Trees Protected under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Legislation.

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TPO 1 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will protect trees and woodlands that are of acknowledged amenity value, that are visible to the public, that are in reasonable health and condition and/or where there is a discernible threat, using the powers available under the Town and Country Planning Act and related legislation.

All Local Planning Authorities have a duty enshrined in the Town and Country Planning legislation and in National Government guidance to protect trees and woodlands of amenity value. Trees and woodlands can best be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) although there are certain circumstances where a TPO cannot apply. Trees within designated Conservation Areas also enjoy a degree of protection since any work to the trees must first be notified to the Local Planning Authority. In making Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas, Local Planning Authorities must follow the procedure prescribed in the legislation. There is opportunity for individuals and organisations to object to the proposals if they wish. We will make every effort to inform and advise owners whose trees are affected by Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas.

TPO 2 Trees and woodlands included within Tree Preservation Orders or within Conservation Areas will be protected where possible from harmful operations. We will encourage owners to maintain their trees in a healthy condition to enhance local amenity.

Trees and woodland will be retained wherever appropriate. Trees will also be protected from unnecessary removal or pruning and from damage to any part of the tree above or below ground. Management works that promote better and healthier tree growth and development will be encouraged and applications for appropriate and timely works will be supported.

TPO 3 No tree or woodland will be felled or pruned without adequate justification.

We will not support felling or pruning that is unnecessary. Trees do require work from time to time to reduce risk, liability and nuisance or to ensure that individuals are not deprived of a reasonable right of enjoyment of public or private property. Groups or plantations of young trees need to be assessed regularly whilst they are growing and selected trees will need to be removed to make way for the remaining trees to develop. The circumstances where we consider that pruning or felling would be acceptable are outlined in the Tree Management Guidance. This general guidance is expected to cover all but the most unusual or extreme cases.

TPO 4 The Borough Council will ensure that the tree protection legislation is properly enforced and will take steps to investigate reports of unauthorised tree work. Where an offence has been committed and there is clear and sufficient evidence to do so, the Council will consider prosecution.

Councils have powers under the Town and Country Planning legislation to prosecute offenders who damage or destroy protected trees in contravention of the law. This includes damage to the tree trunk, limbs and canopy above ground and also the tree roots below ground.

TPO 5 All applications or notifications for works to protected trees or woodlands will be processed and authorised by the Landscape Development section in accordance with statutory requirements and delegated powers.

The Tree Management team based within Streetscene works closely with landscape architects based in the Landscape Development Section. The Tree Management team are able to provide

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technical and specialist arboricultural and health and safety advice, to inform decisions about protected trees.

Policies for Hedges on Council owned land and Private Property.

H1 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council wishes to protect hedges that are of acknowledged amenity, archaeological or nature conservation value, that are visible to the public, that contribute to the character and value of the local landscape and that are in reasonable health and condition. It will use the powers available under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, and negotiation through the planning process.

H2 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's hedges will be protected where appropriate and managed in a healthy condition, in the interests of local amenity and wildlife.

Hedges will be retained on Council land wherever possible. We will encourage tenants and private home-owners to do likewise. Young hedgerows will be managed to ensure that they develop into healthy mature hedges in accordance with good practice. We will take steps to ensure that established and mature hedgerows are protected from unnecessary removal or damage to any parts above or below ground. As well as providing an attractive boundary, hedgerows are of very significant nature conservation value.

H3 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will increase stocks of traditional, locally native hedgerows where appropriate and will encourage the inclusion of hedgerow trees.

Opportunities will be taken to plant more hedgerows in Newcastle using predominantly locally native species, of local provenance particularly in countryside locations, to reinforce local countryside character or adjacent to sites of nature conservation value. In certain urban locations hedges of exotic or ornamental species may be more suitable and will still contribute significantly to amenity and wildlife.

H4 The planting of hedges of Leyland Cypress (*X Cupressocyparis "Leylandii"*) will be discouraged in accordance with national guidance on hedging.

Leyland Cypress hybrids will not normally be specified for use as hedging on council property. Regular maintenance of these types of hedges in accordance with the guidance will be encouraged.

H5 Hedgerows on Council land will be managed to promote healthy growth and development and to maintain the hedge as a stock proof and effective boundary, whilst preventing any obstacle or risk to the public or to property. We will encourage private owners to do likewise.

Hedge growth can sometimes pose problems for the public or for property for example by preventing maintenance of buildings or by obstruction of pavements, paths and vehicle accesses. Appropriate management will usually include regular clipping. Where privately owned hedges obstruct council property or highways we will ask owners to remove the obstruction. If necessary the Council will implement the work and recharge it to the owner. For some hedges there may be a need for other works, for example hedge laying, provided the work is appropriate to the particular type, function and species composition of the particular hedge.

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H6 The Council's Risk Management Strategy for Trees will include provision for our hedges to be subject to regular health and safety inspections.

H7 Established or mature hedges on Council land will not be grubbed out without adequate justification. We will resist unnecessary hedge removal.

H8 Requests for work to hedges on council property will be assessed and authorised by the Tree Management Team with reference to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and government (DCLG) best practice guidance.

H9 Individuals or organisations requesting work to hedges on council property will be informed of the outcome within 4 weeks of receipt. If it is appropriate to do so, agreed work will be programmed in to work plans. Applicants will be advised of any delays.

Hedge clipping is a seasonal operation. Hedges are attractive to wildlife and particularly to birds during the nesting season (March to August). In accordance with current wildlife legislation hedgerow maintenance may not always be possible at this time of year.

H10 All hedgerow removal notices will be processed and authorised by the Landscape Development Section in accordance with statutory requirements and delegated powers. Landscape officers will assess the hedgerow(s) in accordance with the legislation and associated guidance

H11 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council will ensure that the Hedgerow Regulations are properly enforced and will take steps to investigate reports of unauthorised work. Where an offence has been committed and there is clear and sufficient evidence to do so, the Council will consider prosecution.

The Council has powers under the Environment Act 1995 and Hedgerow Regulations 1997 to prosecute offenders who damage or destroy hedges in contravention of the law.

H12 Hedge planting and establishment will be carried out in accordance with good horticultural practice as defined by current British Standards (4428:1989; 3998:2012; 7370:1991) and other good practice guidance promoted by government agencies and professional institutions.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is committed to meeting its conservation and wildlife objectives, achieving a high standard of workmanship and setting a good example to others.

APPENDIX IV

AERIAL VIEW, SHOWING TREE COVER IN THE BOROUGH OF NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME



1. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER TWO (September) 2013

Submitted by: Head of Finance and Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships

Portfolio: Communications, Policy & Partnerships; Finance and Resources

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To provide Cabinet with the Financial and Performance Review for the 2013/14 First Two Quarters (April -September).

Recommendations

- (a) **That Members note the contents of the report and recommend that the Council continues to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside finances.**

Reasons

These monitoring reports provide information about the corporate performance of individual council services, alongside financial information. This report was presented to the Transformation & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2013.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the first quarter of 2013/14 by presenting performance data set in a financial context.
- 1.2 This report provides financial information (Appendix A) and also detailed analysis of performance (Appendix B) for the first two quarters of 2013/14.
- 1.3 A summary of the overall picture is presented in section 5 of this report. Performance is progressing well, with the majority of targets currently met.
- 1.4 Following presentation of the report to the Transformation & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2013, Appendix B has been amended as a result of comments received in this process. One addition is more detail as to how the information for reference 1.4.2 was collated.

2. 2013/14 Revenue and Capital Budget Position

- 2.1 The Council approved a general fund revenue budget of £14.119m on 27 February 2013. At this point in the current financial year, 2013/14, we would have expected to have spent £5.011m; we have actually spent £5.005m. Therefore, as at the end of the second quarter, the general fund budget shows a favourable variance of £6,000 (detailed in Appendix A).

- 2.2 A capital programme totalling £7.963m, covering the two years 2012/13 and 2013/14, was approved at the same Council meeting. The revised budget for capital projects in 2013/14 totals £5.352m. £1.565m of the revised budget was expected to be spent by 30 September. Actual spending was £1.356m.

3 Performance

- 3.1 The Council Plan Performance report is reported in a new format attached as Appendix B.

- 3.2 The information is presented in four sections against each priority and details results and progress towards identified outcomes for the council and the number of indicators monitored this time is 40. The proportion of indicators which have met their targets, based on data at the time of compiling this report, was 88%.

- 3.3 There are two columns to show improvement and achievement :

- One set of symbols (arrows), show whether performance has improved or worsened since the last time each indicator was reported
- The “Good performance is” column denotes polarity: low or high and allows the reader to analyse the results in detail

- 3.4 An overall summary of performance against each priority is also stated, highlighting issues and improvement to be noted.

- 3.5 The intention is to further develop the format of performance reports ensuring suitability and clear communication of progress with outcomes for members and officers of the council.

- 3.6 Positive performance can be seen in a range of services although it must be borne in mind that the results later in the year can be different and that some services have seasonal factors.

- 3.7 There are a small number of areas listed in this report which are not on target, though none causes concern at present. In all cases, the management of the service is aware of the issues and are taking steps to deal with the situation. Further updates will be provided for Members in future reports.

4. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 All of these indicators link to corporate priorities.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

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

6. Equality Impact Implications

- 6.1 There are no differential equality issues.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

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

8. Major Risks

- 8.1 The current economic situation represents the greatest risk to the revenue budget, particularly with regard to the impact it may have upon income receivable in relation to services where customers may chose whether or not to use Council facilities, such as car parking and other areas directly affected by the economic downturn, such as land charges and planning applications. The situation will be monitored through the normal budget monitoring procedures.
- 8.2 The capital programme will require regular monitoring to identify any projects which are falling behind their planned completion dates. This will be carried out by the Capital Programme Review Group, which meets on a monthly basis together with quarterly reports to Cabinet.
- 8.3 The above represents a high level view of risk. There are detailed risk registers available if members wish to see them.

9. List of Appendices

Corporate Performance ('dashboard') report is attached as Appendix

10. Background Papers

Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.

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Financial Position Quarter Two 2013/14

General Fund Revenue Budget

The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £14,118,640 on 27 February 2013. The actual position compared to this budget is continuously monitored by managers, EMT and Portfolio Holders in order to detect any significant variances of expenditure or income from the approved amounts contained in the budget. Regular reports are made available to members by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources informing them of the current position, highlighting any significant factors giving rise to variances.

Capital Programme

A Capital Programme totalling £7,963,400, covering the two years 2012/13 to 2013/14, was approved at the same Council meeting. Of this total, £5,352,500 was estimated to be spent in 2013/14.

Revenue Budget Position

At this point in the financial year, we would have expected to have spent approximately £5.011m; we have actually spent £5.005m. Therefore, as at the end of the second quarter, the general fund budget shows a favourable variance of £6,000.

However there are a number of both favourable and adverse variances to bring to your attention:

- Commercial rents continue to yield less compared to what we would, in the past, have expected to receive up to 30 September.
- Kidsgrove Sports Centre is operating at a significant net overspend as at 30 September, primarily due to income received.
- There have also been a number of income sources whereby income has exceeded what we would have expected to receive up to 30 September; these include licensing, planning application fees and the recovery of housing benefit overpayments.
- Additionally a number of service under spends have occurred.

There are also a number of smaller variances, both positive and negative, that contribute to the overall outturn.

In relation to the Member interest in respect of outstanding monies from Gatedale regarding The Square. It is pleasing to report that a payment of £420k was received on 18 July.

Capital Programme Position

The Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2013 has been updated to take account of slippage in 2012/13. Where planned expenditure did not occur last year, this has been added to the budget for 2013/14 (apart from any cases where costs have been reduced or expenditure will no longer be

incurred). The revised budget for capital projects in 2013/14 totals £5,352,500.

£1,564,900 of the revised budget was expected to be spent by 30 September. Actual spending was £1,356,500. The variance of £208,400 is mainly attributable to Section 106 Works at Lowlands Road, Disabled Facility Grants, Replacement/Repair of Play Equipment and Town Centre Public Works.

Investment Counterparties

Investment counterparties with whom money is invested, as at 30 September 2013 are as follows (with the parent company shown in brackets, where applicable):

- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Halifax Bank of Scotland
- Heritable Bank (*Landsbanki*)

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

Appendix B

Quarter 2 2013-14

Priority 1: A clean Safe and sustainable Borough

Overall Progress Report

Overall our progress with our outcomes for this priority is positive. A combination of monitoring and target driven indicators are measured with three indicators (1.1.3, 1.3.5 & 1.4.2) introduced for 2013-14 for which it will be the baseline year. The performance for this quarter is shown where possible for the monitoring indicators where a comparison or previous results are known. There are no concerns with the performance of the service indicators.

Our economic indicators have remained constant this quarter despite some businesses closing. The Town Centre Vacancy Rate indicator is just off target with a result of 16.2% against a target of 15% and the indicator measuring the Percentage of investment portfolio (NBC owned) vacant continues to perform well with a result of 8.4%, both are unchanged from the last quarter.


Community and Streetscene have achieved excellent results for the Levels of Street and Environmental Cleanliness (1.4.1) and exceeded targets set. Also the team have worked well with volunteer groups who have provided an impressive total of 2,147 hours caring for their local green spaces and neighbourhoods in the last six months. Waste indicators also continue to perform well this quarter.

However when comparing performance results of the Crime and Disorder indicators from the Police with the results for this period in 2012-13, there is an increase in the number of incidents.

Environmental Health continue to work well progressing assessments on air quality in the borough and undertaking inspections to ensure high standards of safety and public health.

Outcome 1.1 Ensure high standards of safety and public health – Lead Member Cllr. Ann Beech, Lead Officer Nesta Henshaw

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Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.1.1	Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating.	Baseline year	-	Low	Quarterly	1.44% (10 '0/1' premises out of 692 published).	Monitoring indicator	1.87% (14 '0/1' premises out of 746 published).	-	Partial
<p>This indicator measures the percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating, where following each Food Hygiene Inspection, a food business is awarded a rating of between zero (Urgent improvement necessary) and Five (Very good). These ratings are published on the website at http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/environment_content.asp?id=SXC69E-A7811729&cat=1390 or http://ratings.food.gov.uk/ Those premises that are rated zero (urgent improvement necessary) or one (major improvement necessary) have been found to be not complying with Food Hygiene Regulations and will be subjected to enhanced business support visits/revisits (and in the most serious cases enforcement action) to help them raise their compliance and protect public health. These premises will then receive a further unannounced inspection approximately 6-9 months later where they will receive a new rating. Due to the number of businesses changing day by day the numerator and denominator are constantly changing throughout the year.</p>										
1.1.2	The percentage of food establishments which are broadly compliant with good hygiene law	91%	85%	High	Quarterly	92.7% (1042 out of 1124 premises deemed broadly compliant).	85%	92.1% (1,028 out of 1,116 premises deemed broadly compliant)		Partial
<p>Following each food hygiene inspection a premise will be risk rated and given a score of between 0 (Very Good) and 30 (Very bad) for its' compliance with 1. Food Hygiene Procedures, 2. Structure and 3. Confidence in Management. Where a premises scores 10 or better in each of these 3 categories they are defined as being 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene law. This indicator describes the percentage of businesses in the borough that are deemed 'Broadly Compliant'.</p>										
1.1.3	The area of contaminated land that has been remediated or is determined suitable for use	Baseline 2013-14	N/A	High	6 Monthly	71 Hectares	Monitoring Indicator	To be reported in Qtr 2	-	Partial
<p>The possibility of land being contaminated is a material planning consideration to ensure that land is 'suitable for use' and does not present any unacceptable risk to human health or the wider environment. Land is considered suitable for use following receipt of sufficient evidence from the developer showing that the site has been remediated to an appropriate and agreed standard, if required, or that no unexpected contamination was found during development. During this period, the Environmental Protection Team reviewed 14 separate sites to discharge the final validation condition imposed on the planning permission. This equated to a total of 71Ha of land determined to be suitable for its intended end use following appropriate remediation.</p>										

Ref	Indicator	2011 Baseline (year)	Target	Good is	How often reported	Result 2012	Target	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.1.5	Number of people killed or seriously injured on the borough's roads	27 (5 fatal, 22 serious)	-	Low	Annual	19 (3 fatal, 16 serious)	Monitoring indicator	-	None
Information available is from Qtr 1 in 2012 and is a monitoring indicator, showing a decrease from the same quarter in the previous year.									



Outcome 1.2 Newcastle will be safer with vulnerable victims of crime and disorder receiving high quality support. – Lead Member Cllr Tony Kearon, Lead Officer Mark Bailey

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result -Period 01.04.13 to 07.10.13	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.2.3	Reduction in the number of incidents of violence with injury	680	-	High	Quarterly	442	Monitoring Indicator	170	-	Partial
Comparing this result to the same period in 2012-13, the number of incidents has increased by 23.46% from 358.										
1.2.4	Reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour	3,831	-	High	Quarterly	To be provided	Monitoring Indicator	1,022	-	Partial
Statistics are currently being determined and will be provided shortly.										
1.2.5	Reduction in the number of incidents of serious acquisitive crime	773	-	High	Quarterly	388	Monitoring Indicator	182	-	Partial
Comparing this result to the same period in 2012-13, the number of incidents has increased by 10.22% from 352.										



Outcome 1.3 The negative impact that the Council, residents and local businesses have on the environment will have reduced – Lead Member: Cllr. Ann Beech, Lead Officers: Trevor Nicoll/Nesta Henshaw

Ref	Indicator	2012-3/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.3.1	The amount of residual waste per household	421.64 kgs	425 kgs	Low	Quarterly	208.68 kgs (year to date)	210kgs (year to date)	102.50 kgs	↑	Partial
The performance this quarter is 106.18 kgs (estimated) and has improved on the result for the comparative quarter for Qtr 2 in 2012-13 of 107.69 kgs. This indicator is on target for the annual target of 420kgs.										
1.3.2	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	51.69%	52%	High	Quarterly	54.9%	54%	53.4%	↑	Partial
On target this quarter with a total 7,127.56 tonnes recycled and composted.										
1.3.5	The level of air quality	Baseline year 2013-14	-	Low	Quarterly	N/A	Monitoring indicator	N/A	-	Partial
<p>The Council has a statutory duty to assess air quality for compliance against the standards set in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 for a range of pollutants which have an impact on health. This regime requires monitoring, assessment and interpretation of air quality. Further assessment (including computer modelling of pollution levels), the declaration of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) and action plans to reduce pollutant levels have to be undertaken if any exceedances of the legal 'objective level' are identified.</p> <p>In quarter one we commissioned a statutory detailed assessment and a further assessment of air quality due to exceedances of the statutory annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide for four geographic areas located in Kidsgrove, Madeley, Newcastle Town Centre and Porthill/Maybank area. This report will now be submitted to DEFRA in quarter 3 and will form the basis of consultation with stakeholders and residents on the boundaries of air quality management areas. Once the AQMA's have been declared, an air quality action plan will be developed for submission to DEFRA within 18 months. Work will also be commenced on the preparation of planning guidance and an air quality strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme.</p> <p>A statutory air quality progress report is also to be submitted to DEFRA in quarter 3 which will provide commentary on air quality across the Borough in the 2012 calendar year. The Borough Council monitors air quality through the use of nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes installed in 50 locations across the Borough and analysed on a monthly basis and an air quality monitoring station at Queen's Gardens which continuously measures concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter.</p>										

Outcome 1.4 Our streets and open spaces will be clean, clear and tidy– Lead Member Cllr Ann Beech, Lead Officer Roger Tait

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.4.1	Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	87.5% 88.33% 98.29% 99.84%	91% 91% 97% 99%	High	Quarterly	Litter 96.67% Detritus 93.92% Graffiti 99.33% Fly posting - 100%	91% 91% 97% 99%	Reported in Qtr 2		Partial
<p>It is encouraging to see that the results for the first tranche inspections are showing that performance is currently very good and has improved significantly from last year's outturn. There are a further two tranches of inspections to be completed in 2013/14 and the outturn for the year will be averaged across the three inspections, so it is good to make such an encouraging start, albeit that the areas covered in the first tranche of inspections were less challenging than some of the areas which will be covered in the forthcoming tranches. The process for identifying challenging areas and targeting resources into tackling these sites has been thoroughly scrutinised and reviewed since the results from 2012/13 so it is hoped that performance will continue to achieve the desired targets over the coming months.</p>										
1.4.2	Number of community volunteer groups/hours spent caring for their local green spaces and neighbourhoods	Baseline 2013-14	N/A	High	Quarterly	2,174 hrs	Monitoring Indicator	1,497hrs		Partial
<p>The number of hours worked by volunteers has increased over the second quarter with a running total of 3,671 hours for 2012-13. The number of volunteer hours and activity is recorded for each individual group of volunteers and a running total of community volunteer hours is available at any time. The volunteers or groups participating vary from individuals, schools, fishing groups and Saltbox volunteers to name but a few, and work on various projects such as litter picks, painting, general works and planting in our local green spaces and neighbourhoods.</p>										

Outcome 1.5 Town centres across the borough will be sustainable – Lead Member Cllr Terry Turner, Lead Officers Simon Smith/ Louise Beeby

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
1.5.1	Town Centre Vacancy Rate	13	15	Low	Quarterly	16.2%	15%	16.2%		Partial
<p>The vacancy rate is unchanged since July at 16.2% (53 vacant units out of a total of 327) although there has been some change in the units which are vacant. The last quarter has seen the opening of Café Nero in a prominent position (former Burton's), Isabella Boutique in the former Galerie Woman, 1st Cameras moving from Lancaster Building to Ironmarket, the occupation of offices in Ironmarket and the temporary re-opening of the Stoke City shop in the Roebuck. Conversely we have lost Today's Girl from the Roebuck, Money Matters from Fogg St, Harvey's in Ironmarket and the Post office. Hopefully there is the chance of more companies wishing to open temporary outlets in the run up to Christmas and, of course, the winners of the Enterprize competition should hopefully be operating before Christmas.</p>										
1.5.2	Percentage of investment portfolio (NBC owned) vacant	(Qtr 4) 7.8%	14	Low	Quarterly	8.4%	12%	8.4%		Partial
<p>The percentage for this quarter is within target and given the current economic climate is a positive result. Only 15 out of 179 properties are vacant.</p>										

Quarter 1 2013-14

Priority 2 : Borough of Opportunity



Overall Progress Report

Overall our progress with our outcomes for this priority is fairly positive. A combination of monitoring and target driven indicators are measured to give a clearer picture of certain issues such as worklessness, albeit some of the information available is not for the current quarter. The performance for this quarter is shown where possible for the monitoring indicators where a comparison or previous results are known.


The Percentage of Minor Adaptations delivered within four months indicator has progressed well this quarter and has exceeded the target with a result of 78.6% against a target of 75%. The supporting of the homeless indicator continues to perform well with a total of 259 clients given help to prevent homelessness in the first six months of 2013-14.

A positive result is the involvement of volunteers at the museum who spent a total of 565 hours supporting activities and events this quarter.

Outcome 2.1 Levels of worklessness will have reduced– Lead Member Cllr Terry Turner, Lead Officer Kim Graham

Ref	Indicator	2011-12 Baseline (Apr 11 – Mar 12)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result 2012-13	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.1.1	Level of employment in the borough*	69.9%	N/A	High	Annual	N/A	Monitoring indicator	72%		Partial
The level of employment at March 2013 was 72% which compared well to the West Midlands average of 68.4%.										
Ref	Indicator	2011-12 Baseline (Apr 11 – Mar 12)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result 2012-13	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.1.2	The percentage of working age people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)	2.9% (Jun 12)	N/A	Low	Quarterly	2.7% (Aug 13)	Monitoring indicator	2.7% (Jun 13)		Partial
This compares to the West Midlands result of 4.1% of working age people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in August 2013.										

*% of working age population (aged 16-64) who are economically active and in employment


Ref	Indicator	2011 Baseline (Nov 11)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.1.3	The percentage of working age people claiming key out-of-work benefits*	11.5%	N/A	Low	Quarterly	10.8% (Feb 13)	Monitoring indicator	10.6% (Nov 12)		Partial

There has been a very slight increase in the number of claimants of key out-of-work benefits since the Qtr 1 result of 10.6%. This mirrors the increases both regionally and nationally over the same period (West Midlands 12.6% to 12.7%, England 11.6% to 11.7%).



* % of working age population (16-64) who are claiming JSA, ESA or Incapacity Benefit, lone parent and other income related benefits


Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Dec 2012	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.1.4	The level of 16-19 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	N/A	N/A	Low	Quarterly	N/A	Monitoring Indicator	4.91%	-	Partial
	To be provided									

Outcome 2.2 Local people will be able to access opportunities for personal development and growth – Lead Member: Cllr. Ann Beech, Lead Officer: Trevor Nicoll/Rob Foster

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.2.6	Number of hours worked by volunteers in council co-ordinated activities (museum)	2234	N/A	High	Quarterly	565	516	481		Partial
	The museum and art gallery currently has 15 volunteers who support officers with the work of the service. Their duties include dealing with archive enquiries, research, cleaning collections, documentation, digitisation, hanging exhibitions, invigilating, and assistance at events. Two additional members of volunteer staff have resulted in exceeding the Qtr 1 result and the target for this indicator.									

Outcome 2.3 Housing will be available and accessible to meet a range of diverse needs– Lead Member: Cllr Terry Turner, Lead Officer: Jo Halliday


Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.3.4	Percentage of referrals for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) approved within six months	100%	N/A New target	High	Quarterly	100%	100%	100%		Partial
There have been 46 approvals between 01.04.13 to 30.09.13.										
2.3.5	Percentage of minor adaptations delivered within four months	71%	N/A New target	High	Quarterly	78.6%	75%	61%		Partial
Corrective measures are ongoing to seek to maintain this performance.										

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.3.6	Number of homelessness cases where positive action was successful preventing homelessness (from the P1E Quarterly return: Households dealt with under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act, and homelessness prevention and relief)	554	500	High	Quarterly	129	125	130		Partial
The service has successfully prevented homelessness in a total of 129 cases this quarter with the service projecting a target of 125. The total for the first six months of the year is 259.										

Outcome 2.4 Key parts of the borough will have been regenerated and there will have been overall economic growth– Lead Member: Cllr Terry Turner, Lead Officer: Jo Halliday/Louise Beeby

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Ref	Indicator	2010 Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Target 2013-14	Result 2011	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.4.3	Rate of Business Births and Deaths	8.3% -Births 10.6% - Deaths Stock total 3,485	N/A	Business birth rate ≥ Business death rate	Annual	Monitoring Indicator	10.1% – Births 10.2% - Deaths Stock total 3,415	-	Partial
<p>There is a time lag in the data supplied from the ONS Business Demography: Enterprise Births and Deaths and the data shows that there was an increase in business set ups between 2010 and 2011. In terms of business support to prevent business death, Business Boost is open to all businesses in the borough to encourage and support business planning. The scheme then rewards businesses which have the potential to grow. Information on business start up and business support is now available on the Council's website; this includes referring customers to the LEP helpline if their business is in difficulty.</p>									

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 1 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
2.4.4	Average stall occupancy rate for markets	54%	55%	High	Quarterly	61%	55%	61%		Partial
<p>The occupancy rate has improved since the end of 2012-13 and exceeded the target of 55% with a maintained result of 61% for the first two quarters; this reflects the seasonal variances that more occasional trading occurs in the dry summer months.</p>										

Quarter 1 2013-14


Priority 3 : A healthy and Active Community

Overall Progress Report

Overall our progress with our outcomes for this priority is positive. A combination of monitoring and target driven indicators are measured to give context to the work undertaken by services. The performance for this quarter is shown where possible for the monitoring indicators where a comparison or previous results are known.

Unfortunately the targets are not yet available for the indicators (3.3.2 and 3.3.3) measuring progress of people to the GP referral programme but current information on the programme is detailed. A positive result is the number of visitors to the museum which is over the target of 37,000 and shows good progress in 2013-14. The number of leisure facility users this quarter was 143,481 with a target of 167,500 and is off target but it should be noted that the target for this indicator has been increased by 100,000 for the year. Positive results for the measures relating to the Parks and Open Spaces, linked to this priority and outcome 3.1, were reported in the last quarter, and are to be noted with 9 Green Flag awards and an improved satisfaction result by users

Outcome 3.1 People who live, work, visit or study in the borough will have access to high quality facilities– Lead Member Cllr Ann Beech , Lead Officer(s) Roger Tait

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Target Qtr 2 2013- 14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
3.1.1	Number of parks which have Green Flag status	9	9	High	Annual	9	9		Partial
A total of nine green flags have been awarded for 2013-14. Newcastle is the top performer in Staffordshire for these awards.									
3.1.2	Level of satisfaction with Council run parks and open spaces	70.2	-	High	Annual	70.2%	78.2%		Partial
Satisfaction with Council run parks has improved over the last year.									

Outcome 3.2 Levels of cultural activity and participation in the arts will have increased– Lead Member Cllr Elsie Bates , Lead Officer - Rob Foster

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
3.2.2	Number of people visiting the museum	51,364	63,000	High	Quarterly	37,196	37,000	15225	↑	Partial
<p>Quarterly targets have been profiled this year to allow for the seasonal nature of the service. Marketing and raising awareness of the service to maintain and increase visitor numbers is a key objective for the museum during 2013/14</p> <p>During the Summer holidays a series of family friendly events and exhibitions both within the museum and on the park resulted in 15,000 people over 6 weeks.</p> <p>We are aware of the need to attract audiences throughout the winter – this is being addressed by looking at additional events/initiatives that attract new audiences. Training courses related to this are planned.</p>										
3.2.3	Number of people attending the local theatre	106,398	N/A	High	Quarterly	30,954	Monitoring Indicator	21,717	↑	Partial
<p>The New Vic Theatre is the main theatre serving the residents of Newcastle and the surrounding area. Council support for the theatre is through an annual funding stream and partnership working on a number of projects. The total attendances for the year to date are around 20% ahead of last year results.</p> <p>These figures are for theatre visits only and do not include visits to the Café, shop, meeting rooms or exhibitions.</p>										
3.2.6	Impact of community-run cultural events and people attending	£14,327.50	£14,360	High	Quarterly	£5,400	Monitoring Indicator	£2,000	↑	Partial
<p>In 2012-13, a total of 20 Community groups and organisations applied for Cultural Grants for funding totalling £29,277 and 14 groups were awarded grants totalling £14,327.50 out of an annual budget of £14,360.</p> <p>For 2013-14, 4 applications for Cultural Grants were received in the second quarter with all 4 being awarded a total of £5,400.</p>										

Outcome 3.3 There will be a range of healthy lifestyle choices, resulting in an increase in participation – Lead Member Cllr John Williams, Lead Officer - Rob Foster

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
3.3.2	Number of referrals from GPs to organised sporting activity	Baseline – New indicator	N/A	High	Quarterly	64	To be agreed	101	-	Partial
The GP referral programme is led by the County and the targets will be set by December. Last year Newcastle had a total of 391 referrals with 61 people improving their health at the end of the 12 week programme. In the first quarter 16% of referrals completed the course and improved their health.										
3.3.3	Percentage of people referred for exercise by GPs whose health improves	Baseline – new indicator	N/A	High	Quarterly	32.8%	To be agreed	16%	-	Partial
See comment for 3.3.2.										
3.3.4	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	579,575	570,000	High	Quarterly	143,481	167,500	148,206	↓	Partial
The breakdown of users is as follows in Qtr 2: Jubilee 2 – 115,324, Kidsgrove Sports Centre – 15,475, Knutton Recreation Centre – 1,070, Sports & Events Team -11,612. There has continued to be short term closures at Kidsgrove Swimming Pool due to electrical faults and mechanical failure which has impacted on meeting the target set. , however Jubilee 2 continues to perform well. The data is currently being challenged and verified and an update will be provided when completed.										

Priority 4 : A co-operative Council, delivering high –value, community-driven services**Overall Progress Report**

Overall our progress with our outcomes for this priority is positive. A combination of monitoring and target driven indicators are measured with two indicators (4.2.3 and 4.2.4) introduced for 2013-14 for which it will be the baseline year. The performance for this quarter is shown where possible for the monitoring indicators where a comparison or previous results are known.

The result for the Customer Service indicator - Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact (4.4.8) continues to do extremely well with a high result of 99.29% , increased from 96.41% in the last quarter. Added to this the Skills and Competencies of Staff indicator result collated in Qtr 1 is excellent with a 96.4% achieved against a high target of 95%. However the result for staff sickness -Average number of days per employee lost to sickness has started 2013-14 off target but is being pro-actively managed as detailed in the report.

Outcome 4.1 The council will have increased the capacity and skills of its workforce– Lead Member Cllr Gareth Snell , Lead Officer - Richard Durrant

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 4	Target Qtr 4 2014-15	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.1.5	Percentage of staff who feel they have the necessary skills/ competencies to do their job effectively	96.4%	95%	High	Biennial	-	95%	↑	Full
The result for this indicator, which is collected biennially, has now been collated for 2012-13 and available to be reported in Qtr 1. It is a very good result and is over the high target set of 95%.									

Outcome 4.2 Councillors will be community champions and powerful community advocates– Lead Member Cllr. Gareth Snell, Lead Officer - Mark Bailey


Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed ?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.2.3	Percentage attendance at planned meetings by members	Baseline – new indicator	-	High	Quarterly	84.79%	Monitoring Indicator	87.78%	↔	Partial
This indicator is calculated using the information from Modern.gov and is available for public viewing on the website after each meeting. From a total of 401 possible attendances for the second quarter the result was 340.										

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr 2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.2.4	Items raised by members on the Scrutiny Work programme.	Baseline – new indicator	-	High	Quarterly	4	Monitoring Indicator	To be updated in Qtr 2	-	Partial
<p>Due to the nature of how topics are identified for scrutiny, there may be a decrease in the number of items identified by Members during quarters 2-4. This is because the committee’s work programme for the forthcoming year is considered at the first meeting of the municipal year in quarter 1, where the majority of scrutiny topics for the forthcoming year will be identified.</p>										

Outcome 4.3 The Council will have delivered further efficiencies – Lead Member Cllr Mike Stubbs, Lead Officers - Dave Roberts/Richard Durrant

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.3.2	Percentage projected variance against full year council budget	0%	No variance	Low	Quarterly	0.1%	No variance	0%	↑	Full-Partial
<p>Council Revenue Budget shows a small favourable variance at Quarter 2.</p>										
4.3.3	Average number of days per employee lost to sickness	8.06 days (long term 5.08 and short term 2.98 days)	6.9	Low	Quarterly	4.05 days (long term 2.53 and short term 1.52 days)	3.75 days	2.16 days (long term 1.48 and short term 0.68 days)	↔	Partial
<p>The cumulative Quarter 2 result is above target and as the intervention point (3.95 days for Quarter 2) remains active, both short term and long term sickness statistics are continuing to be monitored monthly at Executive Management Team and Departmental meetings. This is to ensure that managers are consistent and proactive in their approach and that early Occupational Health referrals are made in all cases of long term absence.</p>										

Outcome 4.3 cont'd The Council will have delivered further efficiencies – Lead Member Cllr Mike Stubbs, Lead Officers - Dave Roberts/Richard Durrant

Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.3.7	Net income collected from Council assets	85.6%	No variance	High	Quarterly	97.1%	No variance	95.6%		Partial
Income still affected by economic downturn.										

Outcome 4.4 Local communities are engaged and able to shape and deliver services which impact on their lives – Lead Member Cllr John Williams , Lead Officer Jeanette Hilton


Ref	Indicator	2012-13/ Baseline (year)	2012/13 Target	Good is	How often reported	Result Qtr 2	Target Qtr2 2013-14	Result Qtr 1	How have we performed?	Control Full/ Partial/ None
4.4.8	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	95.20	75.00	High	Quarterly	99.29	80	96.41		Partial
Our performance continues to be above target.										

Table of indicators to be collected and reported at later dates

Ref	Indicator	Frequency
1.1.4	Percentage of Category 1 housing disrepair hazards concerns brought to the attention of the Council that are investigated and addressed	Annual
1.2.1	Level of satisfaction with the support provided to vulnerable citizens	Annual
1.2.2	Support given to vulnerable citizens and victims of crime (narrative)	Annual
1.3.3	The amount of carbon emissions by the Council	Annual
1.3.4	Number of non-residential collections covered by the trade waste recycling scheme – includes Council properties and schools	Annual
1.4.3	Satisfaction with cleanliness of streets and green spaces	Annual
2.2.1-3	Number of people/ volunteers gaining NVQ/additional educational qualifications/employment (narrative) .	Annual
2.2.4	Narrative on the impact of the Council's role as employer of volunteers	Annual
2.2.5	Number of organisations working with the council to take on volunteers	Annual
2.3.1	The number of affordable homes provided as a result of partnership working with Registered Providers and the Homes and Communities Agency	Annual
2.3.2	The net number of additional homes provided	Annual
2.3.3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	Annual
2.4.1	Economic health across the borough (Narrative)	Annual
2.4.2	Buildings within the built heritage asset register improved and no longer at risk (narrative)	Annual
3.1.3-5	Level of satisfaction with Council-run leisure, cultural and bereavement services	Annual
3.1.6	Level of service equality of the two main Council information centres	Annual
3.1.7	Percentage of town centres public toilets that meet the Council's minimum standard for quality and cleanliness	Annual
3.2.1	Visitor satisfaction	Annual
3.2.4	Economic impact of visitors to museums (narrative)	Annual
3.2.5	Impact of volunteer development programme (narrative)	Annual
3.3.1	Percentage of primary school children who are categorised as obese	Annual
3.3.5	Number of teenage pregnancies	Annual

3.3.6	Number of premature deaths	Annual
4.1.1	Number of apprenticeships/shared apprenticeship placements offered	Annual
4.1.2	Percentage of workforce with completed learning and development plans	Annual
4.1.3	Percentage of staff who have completed accredited training courses	Annual
4.1.4	Number of e-learning modules completed-	Annual
4.2.1	Percentage of elected members who have a personal development plan	Annual
4.2.2	Impact of actions from the workplans (narrative)	Annual
4.2.5	Percentage of candidates and agents satisfied/very satisfied with the electoral service	Annual
4.3.1	Percentage of planned procurement efficiencies achieved	Annual
4.3.4	Percentage of residents who feel that the Council is providing VFM	Annual
4.3.5	Percentage return on council investments	Annual
4.3.6	Ratio of planned versus responsive maintenance expenditure on all Council owned buildings	Annual
4.4.1-2	Level of satisfaction with the role of the council in supporting communities	Annual
4.4.3	Impact of the Council's support in empowering communities to solve specific local problems (narrative)	Annual
4.4.4	Overall level of satisfaction with the Council as a provider of services	Annual
4.4.5	Percentage of people who feel that they can influence Council decisions	Annual
4.4.6	Level of satisfaction with the support provided to LAPs and other community group	Annual
4.4.7	Increase the number of residents, community and voluntary groups engaged with LAPs (narrative)	Annual

Proposed Joint Local Plan

Submitted by: Executive Director of Regeneration and Development

Portfolio: Economic Development, Regeneration, and Town Centres

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

- a) To report the views of the Planning Committee on the Cabinet's resolution to cease work on the Site Allocation and Policies Local Plan and options for proceeding with an alternative Local Plan.
- b) To seek authority to formally withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to proceed with the preparation of a joint Local Plan with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council covering the borough and City of Stoke-on-Trent
- c) To advise on the implications for the Council's CIL process of preparing a new land use plan.

Recommendations

- 1) That Cabinet agree to the formal withdrawal of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.**
- 2) That Cabinet agree to proceed with the preparation of a new joint Full Local Plan in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council (Option C) and that your officers work with officers at Stoke-on-Trent City Council to reach agreement on a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan.**
- 3) That if Stoke-on-Trent City Council do not approve the preparation of a joint Local Plan or agreement can not be reached on the timescale for the completion of the Plan that Cabinet agree to proceed with the preparation of a borough-wide Local Plan.**
- 4) That a further report is submitted to the Cabinet to receive an update on Stoke-on-Trent City Council's formal stance in this matter and if necessary to consider the need to establish a joint advisory group to support the governance arrangements of each Council.**
- 5) That Cabinet note the implications arising from the need to re-appraise the adopted Core Spatial Strategy for the Council's CIL process and seek a further report in this regard at the earliest opportunity.**

Reasons

To reduce the council's exposure to the risk of being found 'unsound' at examination. To ensure that the Borough Council takes the necessary steps to create a development plan that reflects the vision and aspiration of its communities and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

1.0 Background

1.1 Members will recall that on the 16 October, 2013, the Cabinet agreed to suspend preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to seek the views of the Planning Committee on this, as well as, a proposal to prepare a new Local Plan either for the borough as a whole or jointly with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council. It was further resolved to receive an update on Stoke-on-Trent City Council's formal stance on this matter and that the financial implications of the report be addressed through the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the respective budget-setting processes.

1.2 Planning Committee

1.3 At its meeting on the 29 October, 2013, the Planning Committee considered a report which outlined a number of serious issues arising from the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan process and which meant there was a strong risk of the Plan ultimately being found unsound on a number of counts when subject to an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Members' views were also sought on a number of alternative plan making options. It was resolved that the Cabinet be informed that the Planning Committee agrees with the principle of ceasing to prepare and withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to instead proceed with the preparation of a new Local Plan either on a borough- wide only basis, or jointly with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

1.4 The Planning Committee will be made aware of the contents of this Cabinet Report at its meeting on the 10 December 2013 and will be given an opportunity to give its views so that these may be taken into consideration by Cabinet.

1.5 Summary of key issues of 'soundness'

1.6 The previous Cabinet Report on this matter set out in some detail the justification for withdrawing the Site Allocations Local Plan and to instead take forward a new type of land use plan. It is not considered necessary in this report to restate the case, but a summary of the main issues which were raised is provided below to act as a helpful reminder. Essentially a re-appraisal of the borough's overall development strategy is warranted due to:

- The evidence assembled during the preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan clearly indicates that it would not be possible to implement or deliver the adopted Core Strategy. Furthermore attempting to change the strategy (of housing delivery) through the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan would be an 'unsound' approach;
- A shortage of commercially attractive and viable employment sites.
- Today's new economic landscape for the provision of housing, which is very different from the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Programme, in which the adopted Core Spatial Strategy is firmly rooted; and
- The need to put in place a development strategy, which protects the areas economic prosperity, particularly in the light of the growth

strategies being pursued by the neighbouring authorities of Cheshire East Council and Stafford Borough Council over the next twenty years.

1.7 Stoke-on-Trent City Council

1.8 Members will be aware that the previous Cabinet Report stated that it was the intention of Stoke-on-Trent City Council to take a report to their Cabinet, on the 24 October, 2013, which would review their plan making programme, including giving further consideration of their position that the City could not support a review of the Core Strategy before 2016/17. In fact this report will now be considered at the City Council's 19th December Cabinet meeting. The publication of the City Council's Cabinet Agenda will be on the 12 December and so the formal recommendations of officers are currently not known at the time of writing this report.

1.9 However, in due regard to the legal duty to co-operate, your officers have been in discussions with planning officers at the City Council regarding the need for a new development strategy and at the same time the potential issues which might arise if a decision was taken to prepare a joint Local Plan have been explored.

1.10 A joint meeting involving Members from both Councils has also recently taken place in an attempt to reach a consensus on the way forward. There was unanimous agreement that a re-appraisal of the current development strategy was necessary and that it was vitally important to speak with a single coherent voice in order to protect and enhance the economic prosperity of both the Borough and the City of Stoke-on-Trent. This led both parties to agree in principle to take forward a joint Local Plan.

2.0 Options Considered

2.1 The previous Cabinet report set out three potential plan options of which all three involved strategic review and could take between 3- 5 years to reach adoption. It is considered helpful to remind Members what these were and to describe the potential pros and cons of each option before Cabinet makes a formal decision on the way forward

- Option A – **Joint Core Strategy Review** with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council, followed by a **separate Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan** for the borough.
- Option B - **separate full Local Plan** covering the borough only.
- Option C - **Joint full Local Plan** covering the administrative areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

2.2 Option A retains the notion of producing a site allocations document but would defer this until a formal review of the Core Spatial Strategy had first been carried out. The original Local Development Framework (LDF) model is thus followed albeit that the allocations document will be produced under a revised version of the current Core Spatial Strategy. Both the Planning and

Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Local Planning Regulations allow for such an approach but the Government's preferred approach is to have a single Local Plan. Given that a consensus appears to have now been reached with Stoke-on-Trent City Council that the Core Spatial Strategy needs to be reviewed it would not appear to be sensible to adhere to an LDF model (which is also not preferred by the Government) rather than take the opportunity to prepare a new style Local Plan. While this approach could help to achieve a coherent spatial plan it would also retain the risk of divergence between strategy and delivery, which would be very costly both in financial terms and in terms of the extra delay that this would cause to getting a plan in place. It would prolong the uncertainty in the borough about site allocations for both housing and employment because the plans would have to be prepared sequentially. Finally this option is also likely to incur the greatest costs because it will involve two consecutive processes and at least two examinations.

- 2.3 Option B – separate borough-wide Local Plan is a more cost effective option than Option A and is also likely to be a more streamlined process than preparing one larger joint Local Plan (Option C), which would potentially involve a lengthier and more costly examination. The key advantage of preparing a single Local Plan for the Borough is that it would make it possible for the Council to consider the most appropriate strategy for the borough independently of Stoke-on-Trent City Council. However, to have any prospect of passing the 'duty to cooperate' test this would require close public and signed off joint working particularly by, but not solely, with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council on issues including delivery and require joint evidence bases including a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. In other words the level of cooperation required would not differ greatly from the production of a joint plan. The need to have a joint evidence base also means that the Council would not have full control over the timetable for the Local Plan.
- 2.4 The main issue to consider in deciding to prepare a borough-wide Local Plan is not one of timing, or even the future soundness of such a Plan, but in fact arises from the related issue of the duty to cooperate and the exemplar partnership created as a result of adopting the joint Core Spatial Strategy. Section 33A(6)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism act) requires a local planning authority to consider "whether to agree under section 28 to prepare joint local development documents." Consequently, both Councils need to give specific consideration to why the past joint plan approach should not be followed in the future. If the decision was made to pursue independent Plans, this would raise questions at the examination of any borough-wide Local Plan in relation to the duty to cooperate obligation. Given the previously well established partnership and context of shared housing and employment markets, this will impose a new requirement to justify the decision to pursue a separate strategy. In addition it would send negative signals which could potentially impact on the borough's ability to attract external funding and further undermine the validity of the Core Spatial Strategy to guide development management decisions in the interim.
- 2.5 Option C – Joint full Local Plan would be the most effective way of discharging the duty to cooperate. It would also enable the close interdependencies between the two areas to be reflected in a new comprehensive and coherent spatial plan for the area (acknowledging both the functional economic geography of North Staffordshire as well as the nature of the housing market). Undoubtedly this option would not be without

its difficulties. The wider the scope of the Plan, the more there is to get right and gaining agreement on the key strategic priorities and growth strategy options is likely to present challenges. One way of managing the process of cooperation could be through the establishment of a joint advisory group. It is proposed to explore this option with officers at the City Council and if it appears necessary to establish new governance arrangements then a report will be brought to Cabinet and if necessary Council to deal with this matter.

- 2.6 This option could ultimately achieve greater cost savings as it would make it possible to share the examination costs for example and although the borough would not be in control of its own timetable it would not be in the interests of the City Council to unduly delay the process because the joint evidence base would have a limited life.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed to withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to prepare a joint Local Plan covering the borough and City of Stoke-on-Trent, subject to clarification of the City Council's position. The joint Local Plan would contain: a spatial vision; a set of strategic objectives for both councils; core policies, that will set the basis for directing change, preferably over a 15 year time period in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (effectively these combine to create the spatial strategy to guide investment decisions), site allocation proposals and finally a set of generic development management policies.

4.0 Major Risks

- 4.1 Due to the multiple issues that have been identified it would be a high risk strategy to proceed to examination of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan; the Plan would be unlikely to conform to all four tests of soundness, set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Failure at examination would incur significant costs both financially (for the Council and other stakeholders) and in terms of reputation. More importantly it would fail to deliver necessary allocations of land for housing and employment thereby undermining future economic growth of the borough. Therefore, officers consider that the Council has no option but to withdraw with the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.
- 4.2 The adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy will remain part of the approved development plan for the area, as will the saved policies of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 and planning applications will continue to be assessed against these policies, although the weight given to them is dependent upon their closeness to policies within the National Planning Policy Framework. Nevertheless it can be expected that there will be an increased risk of challenges to the adopted Core Strategy. Members are, of course, aware that relevant policies for the supply of housing would only be considered up to date once the council is able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (the approach to mitigating this risk has been agreed at a meeting of the Planning Committee on 4 June 2013).

4.3 Partnership Working

- 4.4 Working in partnership with another local authority will be challenging and the potential for a divergence of views exists. Section 2.6 considers some practical arrangements which can facilitate the process of cooperation but it is important to note that the statutory Town Planning Process, which is firmly rooted in evidence based policy, works to ensure that any new development strategy for the borough is both “sustainable” and “realistic” and has been through substantial local consultation.
- 4.5 Your officers are aware that Members have some concerns about the setting of development targets in partnership with another local authority. In driving economic growth the National Planning Policy Framework states that Plans must pay attention to market signals and be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing economic circumstances. If then there is pressure to plan for employment growth above any objectively assessed needs it wouldn't be possible to put this in a Plan unless the market indicated that this was feasible. However, it would be perfectly appropriate to develop a strategy which laid the foundations for that growth in the early part of the plan period and to only allow more growth to take place should the economic landscape signal that this can be accommodated later.
- 4.6 To facilitate employment growth we will need to ensure that there are sufficient homes. Now that the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy has been revoked the overall scale of housing will be informed by an objective assessment of need through a joint strategic housing market assessment (with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council), which will consider demographic and housing market evidence including population growth, changes in household size and composition plus patterns of migration. These key factors will need to be set against matters that work to constrain supply; these include Green Belt, infrastructure limitations, highway capacity and environmental designations. The prospects for job creation will be critical too. Having factored together these issues it will then be possible to judge how realistic any aspirations for housing growth beyond the identified objectively assessed needs are.
- 4.7 If the Borough Council were to prepare its own Local Plan independently of the City of Stoke-on-Trent it may ultimately be necessary to justify why it could not accommodate their growth aspirations (providing they were sustainable and supported by valid evidence) and if we could not do this satisfactorily then our own Local Plan could be found unsound.
- 4.8 In such circumstances it makes sense to go forward on the basis of preparing a joint strategy to work out the detail of at least three growth scenarios - high, medium and natural growth and if no agreement can be reached regarding the correct approach to setting development targets then it would be quite feasible for the Borough Council to opt to prepare a separate borough-wide Local Plan.

5.0 Legal and Statutory Implications

5.1 Formal withdrawal of a development plan document

- 5.2 In accordance with section 22(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 a local planning authority may at any time withdraw a local development document before it is adopted. Section 27 of the Local Planning

Regulations, 2012, identifies the steps that need to be taken as soon as reasonably practicable after withdrawing a local plan including:

- i) make available a statement of the fact and;
- ii) send, to each of the consultation bodies notified under regulation 22(3) (b), notification that the local plan has been withdrawn and;
- iii) cease to make any documents relating to the withdrawn local plan available on the local planning authority's website.

5.3 These steps will be taken subject to members resolving to withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.

5.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

5.5 In response to questions raised by your officers and Stoke-on-Trent City Council officers, Stoke-on-Trent City Council has obtained Counsel opinion on the possible impact on CIL which would be created by a decision to re-appraise the Core Strategy and have shared this legal advice with your officers. Sections 5.6 to 5.8 summarise the legal advice received. It should be noted that because the Borough Council was not the client the advice cannot be relied upon in a legal sense. However your officer agrees with the advice.

5.6 Any decision to re-appraise the Core Spatial Strategy will impact on the Council's decision to implement a charging schedule under the CIL regulations. Paragraph 4 of the CIL Guidance provides that "charging schedules should be consistent with and support the implementation of **up-to-date** Local Plans in England."

5.7 The Core Spatial Strategy is a Local Plan for the purposes of paragraph 4 of the CIL Guidance. Your officers consider that the Core Spatial Strategy is broadly in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore remains valid for development management purposes. However, a question arises as to whether the Plan can be considered 'up to date' for the purposes, of CIL. Members are reminded that the preliminary draft charging schedule, which the Council consulted on earlier this year, makes clear that the Council is promoting a charging schedule which levies funds on residential and retail development only. The evidence in respect of housing land supply is now pointing to the need to re-appraise the Core Spatial Strategy. In addition the Council's policies relating to housing land supply are not considered up-to-date because the Council does not currently have a five year land supply. The implications of this are that there is a significant risk that the Core Spatial Strategy would no longer be considered up-to-date at the examination of the Council's Charging Schedule under the CIL Regulations 2011 (as amended).

5.8 In such circumstances it is recommended that at this point in time no further action is taken to progress the current work on implementing a CIL charging Schedule.

5.9 The correct way forward, in order to ensure appropriate coordination of processes, would be to develop the CIL charges and test them alongside the emerging Local Plan as envisaged in paragraph 11 of the CIL Guidance and paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.10 The financial implications of ceasing work on the implementation of a CIL Charging Schedule are dealt with in section 6 below.

6.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.1 Members will recall that the October Cabinet report considered in some detail the financial and resource implications of going forward with a new type of Local Plan and it was resolved that the financial implications of the report be addressed through the next Medium Term Financial Strategy and the respective budget-setting processes. However, it is worth reiterating the fact that this stream of work will be based on the amount of commissioned work and on the assumption of existing staff resources.

6.2 Consequences of postponing the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.3 If the Council is unable to carry on with the current work on the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (because we are considered to not have an up-to-date Local Plan for the purposes of the CIL guidance and regulations) it ultimately means that it will not be possible to fund infrastructure from the levy in advance of a new Local Plan. However it should be noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy represents an alternative method of funding infrastructure to the existing method of Section 106 obligations alone and essentially draws on a similar pool of funds as through the use of Section 106 obligations. However there are some important differences and issues to consider.

- 6.4 The Council, as Local Planning Authority, will only be able to fund very limited site specific infrastructure through Section 106 contributions until a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule is adopted at a later stage. From 6th April 2015, the Council will be restricted in its use of planning obligations for pooled contributions (back dated to 2010). Pooled contributions may be sought from up to five separate planning obligations for an item of infrastructure. Critically the Government's latest CIL consultation makes it clear that the limit of five applies to types of general infrastructure contributions, such as education, transport and open space. This is to incentivise places to adopt the levy (as the Government's preferred vehicle for developer contributions). As a consequence there could be significant financial implications although the Council has no alternative due to the Regulations. The extent of these implications will require further consideration and reporting back to members at the earliest opportunity.

7.0 Earlier Cabinet Committee Resolutions

- 7.1 Cabinet approval of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan Issues and Options Paper for consultation purposes, 18 July, 2012.
- 7.2 Cabinet approval to cease preparation on the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, 16 October, 2013.

8.0 Background Papers

- Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy, 2009
- Site Allocations and Policies Issues and Options consultation Paper

- National Planning Policy Framework, March, 2012
- Draft schedule of work packages (including cost estimates) to be commissioned to provide the evidence base for the new Plan
- Stoke-on-Trent Plan Making Advice – Alan Evans, Kings Chambers, 8 November 2013

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BUDGET CONSULTATION

Submitted by: Head of Communications

Portfolio: Communications, Policy and Partnerships / Finance and Resources

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide Cabinet with information relating to the outcomes of the 2013 budget consultation process.

Recommendations

- a) **Cabinet notes the outcomes of the budget consultation process.**
- b) **Cabinet authorises the Portfolio holders for Communications, Transformation and Partnerships and Finance and Resources to further review the consultation process and consider how budget consultations could be developed for the future.**

Reasons

The six-week process held during October and November 2013 was the second year running that the council had carried out a major budget consultation. The responses and comments from the public will help the borough council as it considers its spending pressures and priorities. Other feedback from community groups will also be fed into the process over the coming weeks and months to further shape the council's budget and spending proposals.

1. Background

- 1.1 Between Monday 30 September and Friday 8 November the borough council carried out a major budget consultation process. This was the second consecutive year the council had run such a process with an eight year gap between the previous consultation in December 2004.
- 1.2 Last year's process involved the production of a mini budget Reporter which set out how the council spends money and gave the consultation contextual background information. A sister document was produced which posed 10 questions to residents and for each they had to tick a box showing the level of importance they placed on that factor ranging from "Extremely Important" to "Of No Importance."
- 1.3 Analysis of the feedback showed three groupings of responses in terms of levels of importance. In the upper group were economy and environmental issues with keeping streets and open spaces clean and clear; vibrant, active and safe town centres and promoting economic growth regarded as the three most important areas for residents.
- 1.4 In the next grouping were reducing worklessness, supporting victims of crime and vulnerable citizens as well as improving public health.

- 1.5 In the next grouping, which could be assessed as being of lower importance were promoting healthy lifestyles; improving the way the council communicates; improving housing standards and choices; cultural activity and promotion of the arts.
- 1.6 Cabinet agreed to run another budget consultation process in 2013 and following a series of discussions it was agreed that it would be beneficial if this second process built on the data gathered during the 2012 budget consultation. This would enable the council to compile a more comprehensive picture of local views and opinions with regard to budget issues and priorities. It was agreed that a mini budget Reporter would again be produced to set the context for the consultation (this is attached as Appendix A). In addition, it was agreed that to develop the consultation process a more probing questionnaire involving qualitative responses would be put together for residents to complete (this is attached as Appendix B).
- 1.7 In 2012, the council received 635 responses to its consultation. This year the figure was 270. This means the council has received information from more than 900 residents as this cumulative information is helping it to gauge the thoughts and priorities of the public over local public spending. The detailed findings have been drawn together in Appendix C which is attached to this report.
- 1.8 During the consultation process contact was made with a range of community groups including parish councils, Locality Action Partnerships and residents' associations. Cabinet members offered to visit meetings and discuss the budget issues with community groups. Although some organisations took up the offer immediately others have been slower to respond and some invitations are still outstanding. These will be met by Cabinet members and data collected will be added to the responses already gathered during the formal six week process with the public.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Cabinet members once again agreed to lead the consultation process with officers from the Communications Service – which has corporate responsibilities for consultation and engagement at the borough council - working alongside.
- 2.2 The questionnaires asked residents six questions:-
 - a) What do you think the council could do to make the town centre more vibrant, active and safe?
 - b) What do you think the council should do to promote economic growth?
 - c) What do you think the council should do to reduce worklessness?
 - d) How do you think the council can improve support for victims of crime and vulnerable citizens?
 - e) How do you think the council can better promote healthy lifestyles?
 - f) Would you pay a few extra pence if it meant protecting public services?
- 2.3 Some of the headline information from the responses can be summarised as:-
 - (i) A significant majority of respondents would be prepared to pay more to protect public services.
 - (ii) Business rates are perceived as a problem locally and a barrier to economic growth and vibrant town centres. The rating lists are created and maintained by the Valuation Office Agency, a Government executive agency, billing and collection is the responsibility of local authorities such as the borough council.
 - (iii) Concerted action is required to develop and regenerate our town centres.
 - (iv) Residents support taking positive action to increase skills and employment opportunities locally.

- 2.4 When the consultation process ran during 2012 it was the first of its kind for a number of years. A “lessons learned” process did take place involving Cabinet members and officers and as a result a number of changes were made to this year’s process.
- 2.5 Fewer public meetings were organised; a greater emphasis was placed on distribution of information rather than standing with residents to collect questionnaires from them (this was because of the time required to fill in a form); greater emphasis was placed on advertising and promotion.
- 2.6 The detailed proposals for this year’s consultation were brought to the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration, comments and suggestions prior to the process itself starting.

3. **Proposal and reasons for preferred option**

- 3.1 As a result of the consultation process, the borough council has received a significant amount of up-to-date information from residents concerning their priorities for service areas.
- 3.2 This will undoubtedly play an important part in the council’s budget setting and will be aligned to information which is fed into process from other quarters such as community groups – dialogue is still going on with some in the borough over briefings from Cabinet members – the Scrutiny Café in January and so on.

4. **Outcomes linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 One of the borough council’s corporate priorities is to “become a Co-operative Council delivering high quality, community driven services.”
- 4.2 One of the key outcomes which will undoubtedly enable the borough council to fulfil its obligations within that corporate priority is that it will be an “open, honest and transparent organisation which undertakes regular consultation with its residents and listens to their views.”

5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 5.1 The council has a statutory duty to consult with the business sector only with Government guidelines stating as a body the council has to consult with “persons or bodies appearing to it to be representative of persons subject to non-domestic rates.”
- 5.2 However, it is the council’s ambition to go further than this as indicated above in 4.1 and 4.2. As a result, it has carried out this six week long consultation to allow all sections of the community to get involved.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 Although an Equality Impact Assessment was not carried out on the budget consultation exercise, the diversity of the channels used ensured there was no negative impact on any section of the borough’s community.

- 6.2 All of the work carried out was in line with the council's Communications Strategy – which includes a section on consultation. This strategy and an associated Equality Impact Assessment was approved by Cabinet in March 2012.

7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 At its meeting on 2 September 2013, the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the issue of the budget consultation and the programme of work which was being organised as part of the process.
- 7.2 That programme of work was delivered and the human and material resources outlined below were considered at the scrutiny committee again on 2 December:-

Meetings

- Three public meetings were held with Cabinet members in attendance to talk to residents about the budget pressures and issues. These were at the Civic Offices in Newcastle, Kidsgrove Town Hall and the Madeley Centre.
- Seven “stop and chat” events were held at locations across the borough.
- Presentations were given to two residents associations who accepted an offer from Cabinet members to go and discuss the budget at their meetings.

Material resources

- 5,000 mini budget edition Reporters were printed and distributed together with the same number of questionnaires. Forty of each of these documents were sent to all councillors.
- Most of the mini Reporters were distributed at public meetings, stop and chat events and also through ad-hoc site visits at different locations in the borough by the Communications Team.
- Pop-up banners in place for three weeks prior to the public events at the host venues.
- 10 A3 posters promoting the consultation and events were also displayed at the events which were to host the public meetings.
- An article outlining the process to be undertaken and the locations of public meetings and the “stop and chat” events featured in The Reporter which was distributed between 26-31 August.
- Two press releases were produced and circulated to the local media promoting the public meetings and the “stop and chat” events. These did receive local coverage.
- Following a suggestion from Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all community centres received a letter on the budget consultation together with a poster advertising the process and a quantity of mini Reporters and questionnaires.
- A similar process involved the Locality Action Partnerships.

Human resources

- Approximately 12 hours were spent by staff in the production and printing of material associated with the consultation – mini Reporter, questionnaire, pop-ups, flyers and posters, website content. This is significantly fewer than the 44 hours spent on this area of work last year. This is because production templates are now in place and no flyers were written, designed or printed.
- Twenty hours were spent by staff distributing materials – some posters were taken out to promote events but the main human resource here involved distributing mini-Reporters and questionnaires in short and sharp guerrilla

marketing/promotion trips to a variety of locations. This is slightly less than the assessment of 28 hours last year.

- Approximately 56 hours were spent by staff supporting Cabinet members at sessions with the public. Two staff were at each of the four-and-a-half hour “stop and chat” events during the week with four at the Saturday event in anticipation of greater public demand. Staff also supported Cabinet at the three public meetings in the evenings. Some of these hours were paid at overtime as they took place at weekends and in the evenings.
- Approximately 40 hours have been spent inputting, collating and evaluating data received during the process. Although there were fewer responses this year, because they are comment based it has taken much longer to assess and evaluate. More than 200 of the responses were in electronic format which has significantly reduced inputting demands.

Financial resources

- £796 was spent on advertising space in The Sentinel; Kidsgrove News; Junction 15 magazine and on pop-up banners for the three venues which hosted the public meetings. These banners were in place for three weeks before the events.
- £404 was spent on printed materials – all of which were done in-house.
- £86 was spent offering Freepost returns on the questionnaires.
- £30 on room hire.
- £691.31 in staff overtime.
- £70 on transport.
- The total for financial resources is just over £2,000.

- 7.3 All of the costs identified above – including the overtime payments to staff – can be met from within existing budgets for consultation services at the borough council.
- 7.4 As far as the human resources are concerned, the focus on the budget consultation has been very resource intensive both for Cabinet members and for the Communications Service at the borough council.
- 7.5 Cabinet members have been on hand at public engagements to ensure any political questions could be answered and dealt with. Presentations outlining the budget issues facing the council have also been delivered by the Cabinet Portfolio holder responsible for finance and budget management. Members have also been in attendance at the face-to-face sessions.
- 7.6 Devoting officer time to supporting the initiative has had an impact on the Communications Service as staff from all sections of the department have been involved in the events schedule. This has meant some lower priority work being re-scheduled, other elements being postponed and in some instances work has been cancelled such as pro-active media releases.
- 7.7 This has been another significant piece of work for the borough council and if Cabinet is mindful to repeat budget consultation exercises on an annual basis then continued evaluation and development must take place to try and ensure as many residents as possible are given an opportunity to come forward and take part in the process.
- 7.8 Significant changes this year included greater publicity devoted to the consultation; a reduced number of public meetings to make better use of resources; wider distribution of printed materials and information; an offer from Cabinet members to personally visit and talk to community groups; more informal “stop and chat” events.

8. **Major Risks**

8.1 There are no major risks associated with this report.

9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

9.1 There are no earlier Cabinet/Committee resolutions relevant to this report.

10. **Background papers**

10.1 Appendix A is a PDF of the four-page “mini” budget Reporter produced for the consultation.

10.2 Appendix B is a PDF of the questionnaire distributed as part of the process.

10.3 Appendix C is a breakdown of the results of the budget consultation process which ran from Monday, 30 September to Friday, 8 November 2013.

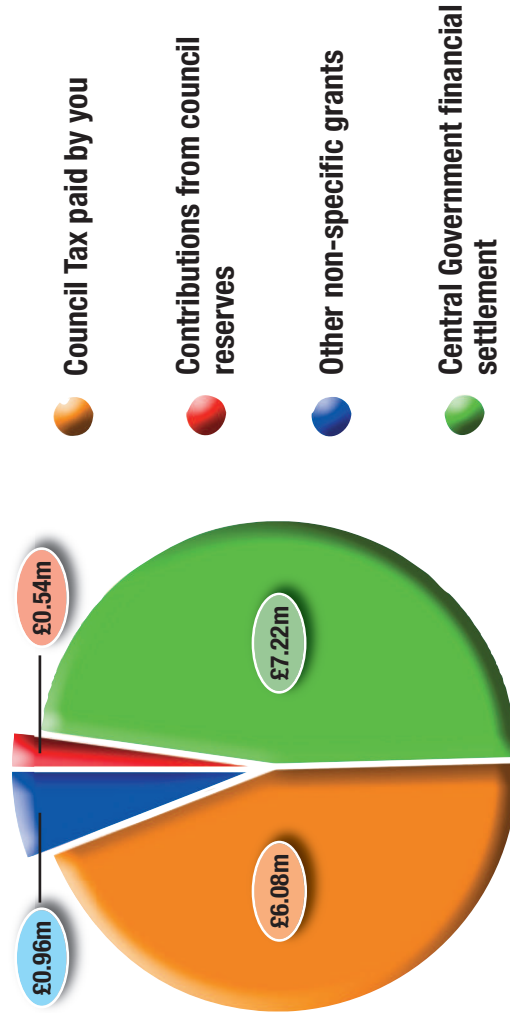
Council Tax - the facts...

An average household in Newcastle-under-Lyme pays **£1,449.43** in Council Tax each year.

The borough council collects all of this money from residents - but we only keep 12 per cent (**£176.93**) to pay for the services we run. The rest goes to:-

- Staffordshire County Council **£1,027.25**
- Staffordshire Police **£177.61**
- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service **£67.64**
- Plus parish and town council precepts if you live in areas where they are in place.

Where the money comes from...



How you can get involved

"STOP & CHAT" EVENTS All 10am - 2.30pm	
Tues 1 October	Freeport, Talke
Thurs 3 October	King Street, Kidsgrove
Tues 8 October	Outside Guildhall, Newcastle
Tue 15 October	Keele University, Students' Union
Thurs 17 October	Madeley Centre
Fri 19 October	Farmers' Market, Newcastle

PUBLIC MEETINGS All 7pm - 9pm	
Tues 22 October	Madeley Centre
Wed 23 October	Kidsgrove Town Hall
Thurs 24 October	Civic Offices, Newcastle

OR have your say on our website www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/budget
OR fill in the attached questionnaire and send it back to us FREE



Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is giving residents another chance to influence how public money is spent in this area.

For the second year running, the council is consulting local people so they can help to shape spending proposals in our communities.

Last year, you told us the most important things to you were:-

- Keeping streets and open spaces clean and clear.
- Vibrant, active and safe town centres.
- Promoting economic growth.

You said

The borough council has taken on board what was said during the six week consultation in October and November 2012. And as a result, a number of things have happened.

We listened

Since your comments were analysed, the council has:

- Invested £468,000 on new street sweepers.
- Worked with partners to bring JCB jobs into the borough.
- Allocated £30,000 for a Town Centre Manager post.
- Achieved Green Flag status at nine sites – more than anywhere else in Staffordshire.
- Overseen the final stages of a £500,000 investment in Newcastle town centre on new market stalls, better access for buses, improved taxi facilities.
- Frozen Council Tax.
- Won a Gold in the Regional In Bloom awards 12 years in a row.

We did

You already know from the television, radio and newspapers that the Government has been reducing the money it gives councils for local services.

This pattern won't change in the years ahead and this means resources to spend on services will continue to be stretched. With less to go round, your borough councillors need to prioritise where money is spent.

Reduced cash for councils inevitably means we can't go on doing everything that has been done before. But before the borough council makes any decisions, we want to hear what you have say first.

This consultation exercise enables you to do that and to make your voices heard **BEFORE** any decisions are made.

And once your borough councillors have heard what you have to say in this consultation exercise, they will then sit down and make some tough decisions on where to prioritise what your cash is spent on locally.

Reduced Government funding and inflationary rises means savings of £2.2m are needed in the council's 2014/15 budget. This equates to a 13 per cent reduction.

THIS IS HOW WE SPEND THE MONEY

Highways, Roads and Transport

- Highways/Roads (Structural)
- Highways/Roads (Routine)
- Street Lighting
- Parking Services
- Public Transport
- Traffic Management and Road Safety
- Transport Planning, Policy and Strategy



Corporate Expenditure

- Interest and Investment Income
- Investment Properties
- Pension Liabilities Account



Housing Services

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Advice
- Housing Advances
- Homelessness
- Private Sector Housing Renewal
- Housing Benefit Payments
- Housing Benefit Administration
- Enabling
- Licensing of Private Sector Landlords



Planning Services

- Building Control
- Development Control Enforcement
- Development Control Applications and Appeals
- Planning Policy
- Environmental Initiatives
- Economic Development
- Commercial Portfolio
- Economic Development - Other
- Economic Development - Government Initiatives
- Community Development



Central Services

- Council Tax Collection
- NINDR (Business Rates) Collection
- Non Distributed Costs
- Members Services and Committee Administration
- Mayorality
- Registration of Electors
- Conducting Elections
- Corporate Management
- Local Land Charges
- General Grants, Bequests and Donations
- Emergency Planning



Cultural Services

- Museum and Art Gallery
- Theatres and Public Entertainment
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Golf Course
- Community Recreation Service
- Community Centres
- Sports and Leisure Centres
- Tourism
- Cultural Management and Support Services



Environmental Services

- Cemetry and Cremation Services
- Environmental Protection
- Pollution Control
- Environmental Crime
- Food Safety
- Public Conveniences
- Licensing
- Dog Warden Services
- Infectious Diseases
- Pest Control
- Public Health
- Water Safety
- Community Safety - Crime Reduction
- Community Safety - CCTV
- Community Safety - Safety Devices
- Footpath Lighting
- Flood Defence and Land Drainage
- Street Cleansing



- Waste Collection
- Recycling
- Waste Disposal
- Waste Strategy
- Trade Waste
- Waste Minimization
- Climate Change Costs
- Environmental Management and Support Services
- Streetscene

Shown as a negative amount due to income exceeding the costs associated with these activities

Budget Consultation 2013

Please make your comments below and return the form to the borough council free of charge by putting it in the post.



What do you think the council could do to make the town centre more vibrant, active and safe?

What do you think the council should do to promote economic growth?

What do you think the council should do to reduce worklessness?

How do you think the council can improve support for victims of crime and vulnerable citizens?

How do you think the council can better promote healthy lifestyles?

Would you pay a few extra pence if it meant protecting public services?

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Age Under 18 18-35 35-55 55-70 70+

Reduction in financial settlement . . . there has been a 51 per cent reduction in the amount that the borough council receives from the Government from 2010/11 to 2014/15 (when taking account of inflation).

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Appendix A – evaluation of budget consultation responses

As the main report to Cabinet indicates, the budget consultation process ran for six weeks from Friday, 30 September to Friday, 8 November 2013.

The questionnaire was structured so that the public were able to give greater thought and consideration to the issues presented before them. This has resulted in a significant amount of quality data being harvested by the borough council.

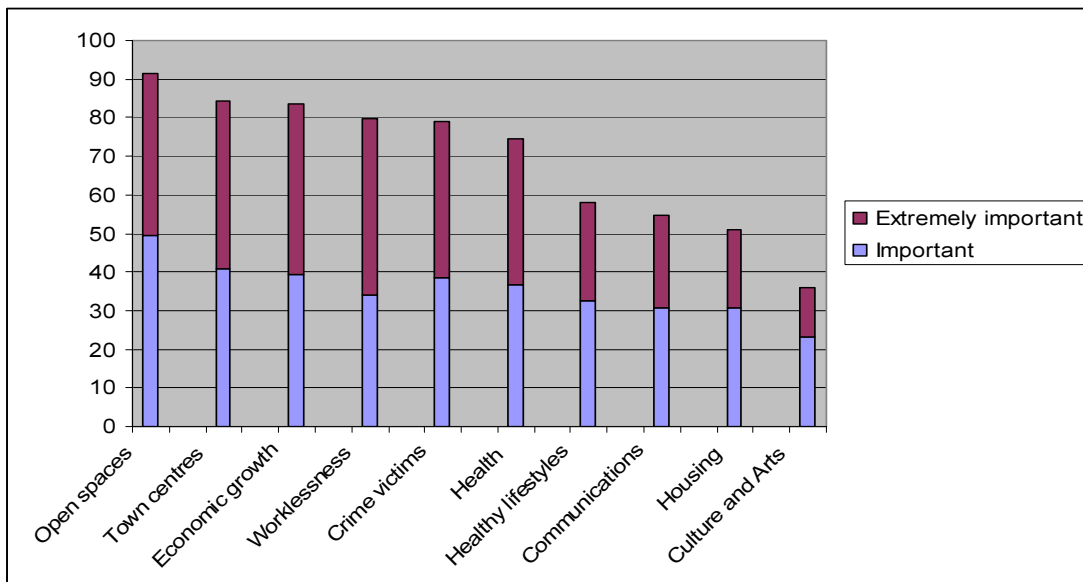
It was also intended to build on the responses from 2012 rather than just run a repeat process.

The first graph illustrates the relative levels of importance which residents who returned the questionnaire in 2012 placed on the 10 core themes.

The five categories used in the questionnaire were:-

- Extremely Important
- Important
- Neither nor
- Not important
- Of no importance at all

By adding the “extremely important” and “important” responses together, we can weight the 10 themes against each other in terms of their overall importance to the 635 residents who responded.



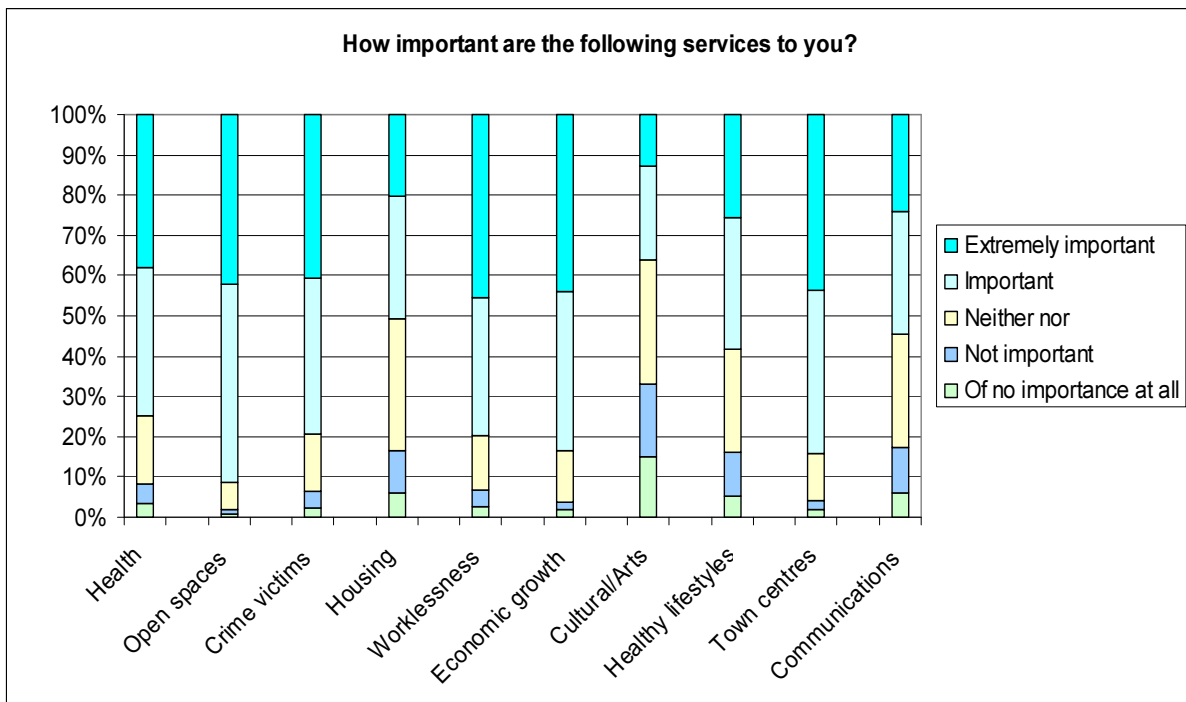
Analysis of this feedback shows three groupings of responses in terms of levels of importance.

In the upper group are economy and environmental issues with keeping streets and open spaces clean and clear; vibrant, active and safe town centres and promoting economic growth regarded as the three most important areas for residents.

In the next grouping are reducing worklessness; supporting victims of crime and vulnerable citizens and improving public health.

And in the final grouping, which could be assessed as being of lower importance, are promoting healthy lifestyles; improving the way the council communicates; improving housing standards and choices; cultural activity and promotion of the arts.

This second graph below shows how all 10 themes scored overall against each other in the five weighted areas.



This year's questionnaires asked residents six questions to build on this initial data set. They were:-

- 1) What do you think the council could do to make the town centre more vibrant, active and safe?
- 2) What do you think the council should do to promote economic growth?
- 3) What do you think the council should do to reduce worklessness?
- 4) How do you think the council can improve support for victims of crime and vulnerable citizens?
- 5) How do you think the council can better promote healthy lifestyles?
- 6) Would you pay a few extra pence if it meant protecting public services?

A total of 270 responses were submitted utilising both electronic and hard copy formats.

Responses have been analysed and grouped together in general themes and the most significant statistically have been grouped together beneath each question.

Because of the qualitative data which has been submitted, it is felt that a narrative rather than pictorial assessment of the responses is required.

What do you think the council could do to make the town centre more vibrant, active and safe?

- a) Reducing the rates which businesses pay was the single most common response (26) and although the council can lobby for this, the public should of course understand that business rates are set by the Government and the council merely acts as the collection authority.
- b) The range and type of businesses available in the town centre was by far the most consistently raised theme in response to this question.
- c) Too many charity shops (21); too many of the same kind of businesses (18); a need to enhance/expand the market (17); fill empty shops (14); attract national chains (12) and more activities/events (10) are all essentially making the same point which is that the fundamental retail offer needs to change if Newcastle town centre is to become more vibrant.
- d) Closely linked to this them of the range and type of businesses in Newcastle involved what some respondents felt was an over-reliance on alcohol-related premises in the town centre (21) with licensing issues also blamed for a perceived decline in the town centre (5) and an additional number of people (6) indicating they wished to see “more shops and less pubs.”
- e) Parking charges and a request for free parking (22) together with more short-stay parking (5) is also raised as an issue by residents.
- f) In terms of safety, there was a call for more visible policing (10), a suggestion that more CCTV is needed in Newcastle town centre (6) and the closure of the court buildings in Ryecroft (5) was also seen as a way of improving safety.
- g) Those who responded also seemed concerned by what some described as an over-reliance the Alcohol in the town was by response which drew the largest single number of responses (26) involved a reduction in rates for shops.

What do you think the council should do to promote economic growth?

- a) This question drew two responses which stood well above all others submitted and they relate to issues already raised in the first question. Respondents also followed through some of the themes that had also been raised through the first question.

- b) Respondents believe that a reduction in rates for shops (34) will make a significant contribution to the promotion of economic growth. As elected members know, business rates is the commonly used name for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) which is a tax on the occupation of non-domestic property. All properties are assessed in a rating list with a rateable value, a valuation of their annual rental value on a fixed valuation date using assumptions fixed by statute. Rating lists are created and maintained by the Valuation Office Agency, a UK Government Executive Agency. However, billing and collection is the responsibility of local authorities such as the borough council.
- c) As the level of NDR is seen as an issue by the public then it may be something the council wishes to take forward and action through lobbying.
- d) Residents also repeated their focus on lower parking charges/free parking (32) as well as better shops (11) and tackling vacant shops (8).
- e) Some felt that the council could try to offer incentives to get businesses to locate in the borough (24) with others calling for efforts to attract “big” employers/national chains (13) to the area.
- f) Interestingly, a number suggested a bigger emphasis on encouraging local businesses/services (17) with the same number saying encouragement should be given to small/independent business.
- g) A smaller number talked about development of greater links with Keele University and considering ways in which graduates could be retained in the area.

What do you think the council should do to reduce worklessness?

- a) This question produced the biggest concentration of responses in terms of overall groupings with five themes in particular drawing heavy responses and a significantly reduced spread of responses.
- b) The most significant factor according to respondents was a demand for the council to focus on support for the unemployed and enhancing skills (42). There was a call for efforts to be made in improving access to education opportunities, skills training and development. Another set of respondents (5) made calls for skills training workshops to be developed in the borough.
- c) The next highest theme involved young people in particular and a desire to see more apprenticeship schemes locally (36).
- d) Greater council support for job creation schemes (27) was also highlighted.
- e) It should also be pointed out that a high proportion of respondents who answered this question wanted to see council support for welfare reform and less of what they described as “welfare handouts” (34).
- f) The issue of reducing business rates (18) was highlighted once more in this question as it was in the previous two questions.

How do you think the council can improve support for victims of crime and vulnerable citizens?

- a) Two distinct themes were generated by this question and the responses from residents can then be broken down into two broad sub-themes – where the council may be in a position to take direct action on its own and secondly where the council may try to work with its partners to move forward on issues raised during the budget consultation process.
- b) As far as the first sub-theme is concerned, the single most common response (19) involved people calling for the council to do what it can to increase funding for, and also awareness of, the various victim support mechanisms which operate across the borough.
- c) The availability of funding for enhanced home security for the vulnerable (10) and the provision of more diversionary activities for young people (8) were also areas where the council could take direct action – although it has to be recognised that there have been good examples of joint working in this latter area in the borough.
- d) Through its involvement in Newcastle Safer Communities Partnership, the borough council could decide to raise some of the other issues which have been raised but where the council cannot directly decide on an outcome.
- e) For instance, respondents would like to see an increase in police numbers locally (18) what they describe as a “crackdown on perpetrators” of crime (14); more visible policing (14); proactive policing (11) and the availability of more community officers (7).
- f) There was also a call for “partners to pool resources” (12).

How do you think the council can better promote healthy lifestyles?

- a) Affordability, accessibility and awareness were the three main themes from this question which drew a hugely diverse range of responses.
- b) The individual theme which resulted in the greatest number of responses revolved around making facilities more affordable (37).
- c) Accessibility/service provision was also a common theme for respondents. Thoughts put forward included encouraging cycling through the provision of more routes and events (20); a greater emphasis on outreach work and locally based events and activities (20); providing healthy eating advice and meal ideas (19); health promotion and screening events with partners (16) and providing routes and maps to boost walking as an activity both for individuals and local groups (13).
- d) Awareness raising and incentivisation – membership incentives for target groups such as the chronically ill and those on low incomes (19); more active

engagement with young people (18) and better promotion of sports and leisure facilities (17) and health promotion

- e) Respondents also felt the council could take a more proactive stance when it came to planning issues and restricting access/availability of what were described as “junk food” outlets (31) and licensed premises (7).
- f) It should also be noted by members that there was also a school of thought which felt no additional action was required from the council although admittedly this was for a variety of reasons – not the council’s job (10); already doing it (8); individual’s choice (6) and do nothing (3).

Would you pay a few extra pence if it meant protecting public services?

- a) Of those respondents who answered this question, an overwhelming majority said they would be prepared to pay more to protect services. The ratio was broadly just under three out of every four in support of this suggestion – 156 to 69.
- b) Of those who said neither yes or no (16) they said their eventual decision would depend on things such as which services would be protected and evidence produced of value for money.

Phil Jones
Head of Communications

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

REPORT TITLE: Allotment Provision in the Parish of Silverdale

Submitted by: Head of Operations – Roger Tait

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling/Planning, Regeneration and Town Centres Development

Ward(s) affected: Directly – Knutton/Silverdale and Silverdale/Park Site

Purpose of the Briefing Paper

- (a) To inform the Cabinet of the legal position in respect of the provision of allotments in the Parish of Silverdale.
- (b) To seek authority to progress action to regularise the position.

Recommendations

- (a) That the report be received.
- (b) That the legal position in respect of the provision of allotments in the Parish of Silverdale be acknowledged.
- (c) That Officers are authorised to progress actions to regularise the position as follows:-
 - (i) That the Park Road site is leased to Silverdale Parish Council for the purpose of meeting it's statutory duty to provide allotment land within the parish.
 - (ii) That tenancy agreements with current plot holders on the Park Road site are transferred to Silverdale Parish Council and any outstanding rent due to the borough council is collected. Following this, new tenancy agreements are offered by Silverdale Parish Council at the appropriate time.
 - (iii) That actions (i) and (ii) are completed by early in the new year 2014.
 - (iv) That Silverdale Parish Council is asked to confirm whether or not it wishes to lease the The Acre site (either in whole or in part) for the purpose of meeting it's statutory duty to provide allotment land within the parish.
 - (v) Subject to a positive response to (iv) that the The Acre is leased (either in whole or in part) to Silverdale Parish Council (the precise area to be agreed by negotiation in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder).
 - (vi) That tenancy agreements with current plot holders on the agreed section of the site are transferred to Silverdale Parish Council and any outstanding rent due to the borough council is collected. Following this, new tenancy agreements are offered by Silverdale Parish Council and ploholders are relocated within the agreed section as part of a consolidation plan for the site.
 - (vii) That alternative plots in the agreed section of the site are offered to plot holders affected by (v) for allotment gardening purposes only.

- (viii) That any remaining section of the site is retained by the Borough Council.
 - (ix) That if a negative response to (iv) is received, the Borough Council concludes all tenancy agreements with existing plot holders on The Acre with 12 months notice and any outstanding rent is collected.
 - (x) That the Borough Council offers alternative plots to plot holders who are not residents of Silverdale Parish, at other allotment sites in the Borough where capacity exists to do so.
 - (xi) That if insufficient capacity exists to accommodate plot holders from The Acre, a further report on the implications be brought to Members for consideration.
 - (xii) That the decision to temporarily suspend the letting of vacant plots at both Park Road and The Acre, pending transfer of the responsibility of allotment provision in Silverdale to the Parish Council, is noted.
 - (xiii) That the tenancy agreements with any ploholders on the Acre who are currently not using the plots for allotment gardening purposes and may therefore be in breach of the tenancy agreements are concluded with immediate effect, if it is found that a breach has occurred.
- (d) That regular reports on progress with these actions are submitted at appropriate times to keep Members informed.

Reasons

- (a) To regularise the legal position in respect of the provision of allotments in the Parish of Silverdale.

1. Background

1.1 The Cabinet resolved to carry out a review of the allotments service at the meeting of the 30 November 2011. Subsequently, at the meeting of the 14 November 2012, the Cabinet resolved that further consultation and scrutiny be undertaken on the preferred options for the review.

This scrutiny work is being undertaken by a Task and Finish Group of members of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, supported by Officers and is due for completion in January 2014.

1.2 Officers are progressing a number of work streams to inform and support the review and information is being reported regularly to the Allotments Review Task and Finish Group.

2. Issues

2.1 The Council operates seven allotment sites across the Borough, including two sites within the Parish of Silverdale. There are a number of other allotment sites in the Borough, operated by Parish Councils and charitable or voluntary organisations.

- 2.2 As part of a work stream reviewing the legal framework of allotment services, information was found in the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 29, Part II, paragraph 9(i) which stipulated that:-

“As respects a parish in England those functions under the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950 which, apart from this paragraph, would be exercisable both by the District Council and the Parish Council or parish meeting shall not be exercisable by the District Council.”

Legal advice has been provided on this matter which states that it appears that where there is a parish, only a Parish Council can provide allotments in the Parish and must let these only to residents of the Parish. Therefore, in Silverdale, only Silverdale Parish Council can provide allotments. The Borough Council cannot provide allotments in Silverdale or in any other area where there is a Parish Council.

This appears to be consistent with other parished areas in the Borough (Kingsgrove, Madeley, Audley, Loggerheads etc) where the Parish or Town Council provides allotments for the use of its respective parishioners.

- 2.3 In effect, this means that the Borough Council has no powers to provide allotments in the Parish of Silverdale and must, therefore, cease to do so as soon as is practical.

However, it is recognised that it would be unfair on plot holders and the Parish Council to simply cease providing this service with immediate effect.

Therefore, actions have been implemented to seek to commence a phased withdrawal of the service by the Borough Council and to support the Parish Council in assuming the role of service provider for allotments in Silverdale.

A summary of actions undertaken by Officers to date is as follows:-

- Clarification and confirmation of the legal position.
- Briefing of Portfolio Holders for Culture and Leisure and Environment and Recycling.
- Briefing of Ward Councillors.
- Briefing of Chair of Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Meetings with the Chair of Silverdale Parish Council to agree the legal position and begin to plan transition.
- Analysis of the two Borough Council operated allotment sites in Silverdale (The Acre and Park Road).
- Provision of information in relation to both sites to Silverdale Parish Council (copy attached at Appendix 1).
- Briefing of plot holder associations at The Acre and Park Road.

- 2.4 Discussions with Silverdale Parish Council have been progressing on how to implement the transition of the allotment service in the Parish.

Silverdale Parish Council accepts that it has a duty to provide the service in the Parish and has appointed a member to be the lead representative in taking this work forward.

The Parish Council has informally indicated that it is willing to take on responsibility for the Park Road site in its entirety and has informally indicated that it is willing to consider the principle of taking on responsibility for The Acre, either in whole or in part, dependent on a consolidation plan being implemented by the borough council.

2.5 It is, therefore, considered necessary at this stage to seek formal authority from the Borough Council to continue with this work and to negotiate an appropriate agreement with Silverdale Parish Council.

2.6 In relation to the Park Road site, it appears relatively straight forward to achieve the handover to Silverdale Parish Council.

The Borough Council holds freehold title to the land and can, therefore, choose to dispose of it by way of sale or lease to Silverdale Parish Council. The Borough Council is under no obligation to dispose of the land to the Parish Council to enable the continuation of an allotment service at this site. The duty to provide land for allotments rests with the Parish Council. However, it is considered appropriate to assist the Parish Council and avoid potential inconveniences to allotment plot holders by offering a lease of this site.

Advice has been received from colleagues in the Council's Property Section as to the most appropriate method of disposal to achieve "best consideration", and it is considered appropriate to offer a lease for the purposes of allotment provision only. The lease would be conditional on the land reverting to the borough council should the use of the land for allotment purposes cease. It is therefore proposed to agree a date with the Parish Council at which point it will become the operator of the allotment service at Park Road and to then give plot holders formal notice of the change in landlord. A target date of early in the new year 2014 has been informally agreed.

Existing tenancy agreements with the Borough Council would transfer to the parish council with an appropriate period of notice and plot holders would subsequently be issued with new tenancy agreements from the Parish Council.

Any outstanding rent due to the Borough Council would be requested from plot holders and then the Parish Council would set its rent for the period of the new tenancies. Other details, such as transfer of the water bill for the site to the Parish Council would also be dealt with at this stage.

2.7 Dealing with matters at The Acre is considered to be more complex.

The Borough Council must withdraw from providing an allotment service at this site as soon as possible. It holds freehold title to the land. At present, Silverdale Parish Council has indicated that it would consider the principle of taking on responsibility for this site, either in whole or in part by way of a

lease, subject to agreement of detailed terms including a consolidation plan for the site to be implemented by the borough council.

Therefore, the options for the Borough Council appear to be as follows:-

Option 1

Cease to provide an allotment service at The Acre and withdraw from the site.

This would involve terminating all tenancy agreements with current plot holders by giving 12 months notice.

Current plot holders who reside within the Parish of Silverdale would have to approach the Parish Council to seek alternative provision, whilst those who reside outside the Parish would be entitled to seek alternative provision from the Borough Council.

The Borough Council may therefore be required to provide a new site elsewhere in the Borough (preferably in a location near to the site to be vacated) if there is insufficient capacity on other Borough Council-owned allotment sites to accommodate all non-parishioner plot holders from The Acre.

The Borough Council has a duty, in non-parished areas, to provide land for allotments if the demand can be demonstrated.

Option 2

Phase 1 - Rationalise the current use of the site by condensing it into an agreed portion and lease this area to Silverdale Parish Council for the purpose of continuing to provide allotments.

Phase 2 - Consider either retaining the remaining vacated section of the site or leasing it to the parish council if further demand exists for allotment use within the parish.

This would require relocation of some current plot holders within the site by effectively transferring current tenancy agreements with the Borough Council to Silverdale Parish Council and offering alternative plots on the site.

Any outstanding rent due to the Borough Council would be requested from plot holders and then the Parish Council would set its rent for the period of the new tenancies.

Other details, such as transfer of the water bill for the site to the Parish Council would also be dealt with at this stage.

- 2.8 In view of the above options, it has been considered to be prudent to temporarily suspend any future lettings of vacant plots (at both The Acre and Park Road sites) until the transfer of the responsibility for providing allotments to Silverdale Parish Council has been completed. This course of

action has been taken in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling.

- 2.9 There are currently some plots on the Acre where tenants are not using the plots for allotment gardening purposes and may therefore be in breach of the tenancy agreement with the Borough Council. It is therefore proposed to conclude these tenancy agreements as soon as possible, if it is found that a breach has occurred.

3. Options Considered

3.1 The options are as described in Section 2 of this report.

4. Proposal

4.1 It is proposed that the Borough Council ceases to provide an allotment service in the Parish of Silverdale for the reasons described in Section 2 of this report and that the following actions are progressed to regularise the position:-

- (i) That the Park Road site is leased to Silverdale Parish Council for the purpose of meeting it's statutory duty to provide allotment land within the parish.
- (ii) That tenancy agreements with current plot holders on the Park Road site are transferred to Silverdale Parish Council and any outstanding rent due to the borough council is collected. Following this, new tenancy agreements are offered by Silverdale Parish Council at the appropriate time.
- (iii) That actions (i) and (ii) are completed by early in the new year 2014.
- (iv) That Silverdale Parish Council is asked to confirm whether or not it wishes to lease the The Acre site (either in whole or in part) for the purpose of meeting it's statutory duty to provide allotment land within the parish.
- (v) Subject to a positive response to (iv) that the agreed section of The Acre is leased to Silverdale Parish Council (the precise area to be agreed by negotiation in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder).
- (vi) That tenancy agreements with current plot holders on the agreed section of the site are transferred to Silverdale Parish Council and any outstanding rent due to the borough council is collected. Following this, new tenancy agreements are offered by Silverdale Parish Council and ploholders are relocated within the agreed section as part of a consolidation plan for the site.
- (vii) That alternative plots in the agreed section of the site are offered to plot holders affected by (v) for allotment gardening purposes only.
- (viii) That any remaining section of the site is retained by the Borough Council.

- (ix) That if a negative response to (iv) is received, the Borough Council concludes all tenancy agreements with existing plot holders on The Acre with 12 months notice and any outstanding rent is collected.
- (x) That the Borough Council offers alternative plots to plot holders who are not residents of Silverdale Parish, at other allotment sites in the Borough where capacity exists to do so.
- (xi) That if insufficient capacity exists to accommodate plot holders from The Acre, a further report on the implications is brought to Members.
- (xii) That the decision to temporarily suspend the letting of vacant plots at both Park Road and The Acre, pending transfer of the responsibility of allotment provision in Silverdale to the Parish Council, is noted.
- (xiii) That the tenancy agreements with any plotholders on the Acre who are currently not using the plots for allotment gardening purposes and may therefore be in breach of the tenancy agreements are concluded with immediate effect, if it is found that a breach has occurred.

5. Reasons for Preferred Solution

- 5.1 To regularise the legal position in respect of the provision of allotments in the Parish of Silverdale.

6. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

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

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 7.1 The legal and statutory implications are detailed in Section 2 of this report. It should also be noted that if plot holders do not vacate plots on expiry of a notice to quit, the borough council would have to apply to the court for an order for possession of the plots and ultimately a warrant.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 No issues.

9. Financial and Resource Implications

- 9.1 When the Borough Council ceases to provide an allotment service at Park Road and The Acre, there will be a modest saving to the General Fund Revenue Programme in relation to utility costs, waste removal and other maintenance and repair costs. At current budget provision levels, it is estimated that this will equate to approximately £6000 per annum.

There will be a corresponding loss of income of approximately £4100 per annum.

There will also be a cost for the consolidation of the Acre site, including relocating current tenants, preparation of alternative plots, site clearance and securing of the remaining land. An estimate of the costs will be prepared for consideration by Members.

- 9.2 There will be a significant requirement of staff resources to manage the transition of the service from the Borough Council to the Parish Council. This will predominantly affect the Community Team in the Operations Service, where responsibility for managing allotments sits, but there will also be a requirement for support from colleagues in the Property and Legal teams. Legal costs may also be incurred in the process for taking possession of plots where tenants do not vacate on expiry of a notice to quit.
- 9.3 If the Borough Council is required to provide a new allotment site to accommodate plot holders who are vacated from The Acre, there will be a requirement for a capital sum (as yet unknown) to lay out a new site and a modest annual revenue provision for its management.
- 9.4 A fully costed plan will be prepared subject to the outcome of consideration of this report by Members.

10. Major Risks

- 10.1 A full risk assessment will be prepared subject to the outcome of consideration of this report by Members.
- 10.2 However, initial risks are as follows:-
- Failure to reach an appropriate agreement with Silverdale Parish Council.
 - Negative reaction from current plot holders.
 - Adverse publicity.
 - Legal challenge and costs.
 - Failure to secure a new site for alternative provision.

11. Key Decision Information

- 11.1 The decision may result in significant initial expenditure for the Council. The decision impacts directly on one Ward (Knutton/Silverdale) and indirectly on other Wards.
- 11.2 It will be included in the Forward Plan.

12. List of Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Provision of information relating to both sites to Silverdale Parish Council.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Site Plans

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Briefing Paper to Chair of Silverdale Parish Council

Allotment Provision in the Parish of Silverdale

**Draft Initial Response to Questions Raised by Silverdale Parish Council
17th September 2013**

NB – this is a working document which will be updated as work progresses on completing responses to the questions raised. The information provided is for guidance only at this stage and may be subject to change and clarification as work progresses.

Question	The Acre	Park Road	Comment
Do you have the historical records relating to the land?	NuLBC holds freehold title to the land and a copy of the agreement between the Trustees of the Silverdale Trust Lands and the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme	NuLBC holds freehold title to the land	No further relevant documents revealed as part of this process
Are the sites statutory or temporary as defined under the Allotments Act?	Legal advice suggests site will be defined as statutory due to length of time it has been used for provision of allotments	Legal advice suggests site will be defined as statutory due to length of time it has been used for provision of allotments	
Are there any maps or quality survey or similar assessment of the state/value/liabilities of these land assets including any utility services running nearby, watercourses or any environmental/habitat assessment?	Draft plans prepared. Public rights of way exist on the west and south tracks. Water supply with 9 recorded	Draft plans prepared. No public rights of way. Water supply with 5 recorded standpipes	No further relevant information to be added

	standpipes.		
What are the conditions of tenancy for ploholders – in particular, the tenancy at the Acre that include livestock?	Copy of current tenancy agreement provided	Copy of current tenancy agreement provided	
What is the current annual expenditure on these sites – including staff and other resources?	2012/13 Water = £2400 Repairs = £1950 Removal of waste (skip hire – discretionary) = £750 Total = £5100 Other work carried out by Streetscene (tree/hedge pruning, weedkilling etc) – approx. 110 hours	2012/13 Water = £150 Repairs = £750 Total = £900 Other work carried out by Streetscene (tree/hedge pruning, weedkilling etc) – approx. 40 hours	Staff costs not included as this will not be incurred by parish council However an estimate of hours spent provided. It is assumed that the parish council could source a local provider for grounds maintenance work at a lower cost than NuLBC – see schedule below table
What is the current annual income generated from the individual allotment sites?	£2761 in 2012/13	£1410 in 2012/13	
What commitments have been made to tenants/site associations in terms of expenditure, rent levels, investment and administration/management?	New gate ordered for south east of site. Potential community garden to be funded by group on plot beside car park. No other commitments	Remedial work in progress to tidy up tip area. Number system for plots being considered. No other commitments	
Is there a current listing of rules and regulations (terms and conditions of tenancy)?	Copy of current tenancy agreement provided	Copy of current tenancy agreement provided	
*At the Acre – has there been any inspection of the livestock and associated issues? (animal welfare/bio-	See response from Environmental Health team	N/A	

security/disposal of fallen livestock/animal passport or movement licences)	below table		
Are there any encumbrances, wayleaves, restrictive covenants or other restrictions/obligations associated with the sites or allotment obligations?	No restrictions other than those in title documents and tenancy agreements	No restrictions other than those in title documents and tenancy agreements	No further information revealed during process
Number of plots on each site?	69	41	
Number of plots let?	58	35	11 plots not let on the Acre, 6 not let on Park Road
Number of plots where non-cultivation/notice to quit served?	10	10	
Number of people on waiting list?	41	30	
Number of parishioners who hold a plot?	18	21	
Number of non-parishioners who hold a plot?	40	19	
Number of parishioners on waiting list?	6	7	
Number of allotments required to serve parish?			Dependent on good practice guidance
Existing demand (number of parishioners who hold a plot or are on the waiting list)?	24	28	54 plots required to service current demand in parish (2 parishioners hold plots on other NuLBC sites, no parishioners on the waiting lists)
What would Newcastle Borough Council charge to maintain the allotments?	Quotation can be supplied if required but likely to be more expensive than local	Quotation can be supplied if required but likely to be more expensive	

	provider	than local provider	
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*At the Acre – has there been any inspection of the livestock and associated issues? (animal welfare/bio-security/disposal of fallen livestock/animal passport or movement licences)

Whilst Environmental Health may periodically need to become involved with nuisance issues (flies, odour, noise etc) from animals, the welfare of 'stock' is generally a matter for **Staffs County Council Animal Health Team**, who administer registration & licensing requirements.

NuLBC has undertaken pest control treatments (rats) which may be indirectly linked to livestock on site, but are not aware of welfare complaints, or suggestions that the animals posed a statutory nuisance.

Through joint projects with Staffs County NuLBC offer general advice for those considering or operating smallholdings on our website at: http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/environment_content.asp?id=SX7896-A7813282&cat=1512 . You may want to offer the relevant information sheets to the plot holders

To follow this up with Animal Health contact: 01785 277875 or email animal.health@staffordshire.gov.uk

Schedule of Works undertaken by Streetscene

Grass cutting

Hedge trimming

Tree pruning

Plot strimming/cultivation

Weed killing

Waste/fly tipping removal

Path repairs

The Acre – approx. 110 man hours per annum

Park Road – approx. 40 man hours per annum

(Approx 4 weeks work in total per annum)

<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	Staffordshire Community Foundation – Formal Launch of a Community Fund for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey
<u>Portfolio:</u>	Communications, Policy and Partnerships
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To report to Cabinet the proposal to formally launch a Community Fund for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme – in partnership with the Staffordshire Community Foundation (SCF) (who are responsible for the Fund).

Each area in Staffordshire has its own Community Fund, run by the community and held by the SCF on an endowment basis. A number of Staffordshire districts have formally launched their own Community Funds and it is proposed that this is now done for Newcastle under Lyme Borough.

The SCF is seeking the support of Newcastle under Lyme BC for this launch. This report sets out how the Fund works and also outlines the process of launching and administering the fund. The report also covers other possible areas of collaboration between SCF and NuLBC.

Recommendations

- a) **That the Cabinet notes the contents of the report**
- b) **That the Cabinet supports the proposal to launch the ‘Newcastle under Lyme Community Fund’ in January 2014 with the support of all sectors and partners in the Borough**
- c) **That the Cabinet requests further consideration be given to other areas of potential collaboration between the Staffordshire Community Foundation and Newcastle-under-Lyme BC and also agrees that NuLBC offers support to the SCF in arranging fund raising events, raising the profile of the Fund and also in making best use of the Fund to assist local people in the area**

Reasons

Each district/borough area in Staffordshire has its own Community Fund, with the Staffordshire Community Foundation (SCF) legally responsible for each of these funds. A number of areas in Staffordshire have already formally launched their own Funds and the report asks Cabinet to support a formal launch in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

In formally launching the Community Fund for Newcastle under Lyme, the opportunity is provided for organisations across the public/private/third sectors to take decisions on use of the Fund for the local area and also to allow for applications to be made to the Fund, as well as raising the profile of the Fund so as to encourage fund raising to be organised.

The SCF has requested that the Borough Council offer ‘in kind’ support to the Fund in terms of communications/organisation and the Cabinet is asked to support such an involvement.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Staffordshire Community Foundation (SCF) is an independent charity “dedicated to strengthening local communities and tackling issues of disadvantage and exclusion”.
- 1.2 The SCF carries out work in a number of core areas, including: -

- Delivering grants on behalf of Government, local authorities and others
 - Building permanent endowments, designed to ensure long-term sources of funding for charities and community groups
 - Develops partnerships to aid people in Staffordshire
 - Provides help to businesses and others to encourage Corporate Social Responsibility
- 1.3 The SCF has undertaken various pieces of work in the past, including the “Boost Initiative” to revitalise dormant and ineffective trusts – thereby bringing them back into use for Staffordshire people.
- 1.4 The SCF also offers a range of other services including support for the administration of existing grants for different organisations.
- 1.5 The SCF, therefore, can offer help with all aspects of grant management, including promoting grants, supporting applications and decision making.
- 1.6 In many cases, as already outlined, existing or dormant funds can be transferred to the SCF who can either continue to administer the funds as they already exist, or include them as part of a wider ‘Community Fund’ for an area. A number of funds previously administered by NuLBC were transferred to the SCF in March 2010 (see details below) based on an agreement signed by both NuLBC and the SCF (see Appendix A).
- 1.7 In doing so, the SCF pledges to contribute match funding – a 50% contribution to the fund.
- 1.8 These funds are managed by the SCF – in cases where the SCF takes over the running of a particular fund (or funds), the Foundation takes a one off set up fee of 5% of fund value, prior to match funding and also takes a fee of up to 2% per annum to cover management costs.
- 1.9 In terms of Community Funds – each area in Staffordshire has its own Community Fund. These are “true community initiatives, run by the community for the benefit of the community” (quote from the SCF).
- 1.10 The governance of the Community Fund for each area is made up of the SCF (who is legally responsible for the Fund); the relevant local authority; representatives of the private sector; and representatives of the local voluntary/third sector.
- 1.11 The Community Fund itself is a permanent endowment fund that will distribute grants to the local area covered. All donations to the Fund are pooled together and invested according to Charity Commission guidelines.
- 1.12 Each year, the interest from the Fund is given away as grants to individuals, community groups and local charities. Only the interest is given away, so the fund remains intact.
- 1.13 The aim of the SCF is to raise around £500,000 over the next five years for each Community Fund in Staffordshire. As each fund grows, then more can be given away as grants.
- 1.14 Donations are sought via fund raising events and other initiatives from local people and local businesses and dormant funds can also be added to the Funds. Dormant funds are often those set up many years before for specific causes which no longer apply.
2. **Issues and Areas for Consideration**
- 2.1 In relation to Newcastle under Lyme Borough, a Community Fund already exists, although it has not been launched formally. The Fund was agreed by NuLBC and SCF in March 2010 (see Appendix A).

2.2 The Fund stands at around £90-100,000. It is made up of a variety of funds from charitable organisations including: -

- John Bentley Charity;
- William Meadon Charity;
- the Mayor's Air Raid Distress Fund; and
- Services Entertainments (1940/45) Fund

These funds were transferred to SCF in March 2010, as confirmed by a decision taken at the Full Council meeting of 31st March 2010.

2.3 The Cabinet is requested to agree that the 'Newcastle under Lyme Borough Community Fund' is launched formally – probably in January/February 2014. A formal launch would raise the profile of the Fund so that groups/individuals can make applications for financial support from it and also that fund raising can be intensified via events and other activities.

2.4 In terms of the launch, the SCF has requested NuLBC support for publicity; use of the NuLBC logo; and an invitation to the launch for interested partner organisations. Beyond the launch, SCF has asked for NuLBC support around events aimed at fund raising; work to raise the profile of the Fund and also to arrange 'award ceremonies' where grants can be publicised thus helping in funding raising and profile raising for the Fund. This assistance would be required on an 'as and when' basis and would probably involve members of staff from Communications and Business Improvement & Partnerships.

2.5 Once officially launched, the SCF would operate the Fund on an 'advised' basis – in other words, a panel would be created that would lead on the fund, made up of equal numbers of representatives from the public, private and third sectors. Each member of the panel would have a link to the Borough and panel members would be appointed by NuLBC.

2.6 Applications for grants from the Fund would be open all year round and applications would be considered by the above panel on a quarterly basis (depending on demand). It is also suggested that the panel act as a strategic body, working with the SCF to plan fund raising and other events aimed at publicising the Fund.

2.7 No financial input is requested from the SCF at this stage – rather the 'in kind' support outlined above is requested.

2.8 As said, the Fund itself is already operating and has funds attached to it. Cabinet may wish to consider, however, whether to add any other existing funds to the Community Fund or request the SCF to administer any existing grant or other kinds of funding on behalf of NuLBC (or any other organisation). If any additional areas are identified by Cabinet as being candidates for transfer to the SCF, then a number of stages need to be gone through, including: -

- Agreement between SCF and any donors
- A formal signed agreement giving details of funds and setting out the SCF commitments and responsibilities
- Establishment of a fund by the SCF (or inclusion in an existing Fund)
- Notice will be provided by SCF to claim match funding to the Community Development Foundation (who hold the balance)
- Applicable funds transferred to the SCF from donor(s)
- Amounts are then registered and match funding claimed by SCF
- Existing fund or charity is then closed as reporting is handled by the SCF
- Meetings on the fund are arranged to assess grant applications

- SCF begins immediate promotion of the fund

2.9 At present, NuLBC manages a limited number of charitable type funds. These include: -

- Newcastle Almshouses Trust – NuLBC currently maintain the almshouses, administer the charity's affairs and maintain its accounts;
- United Charities (an independent charity) – NuLBC administers the charity's affairs and maintain their accounts. Similar comments to Almshouses, although I don't think as much time will be spent on them.

2.10 In both cases listed above, transfer would allow the Council to save on officer time, although other factors (including any charges that the SCF would make and also the fact that both charities are independent bodies free to make their own arrangements) would have to be taken into account.

2.11 Cabinet is reminded that, as set out in the previous section of this report, there is a cost to such a transfer.

3. **Options**

- Option A – that Cabinet support the proposals set out in this report, to formally launch the 'Newcastle under Lyme Community Fund' and to work with the SCF in raising funds for the Fund in the future, together with examining other areas either for inclusion in the Community Fund and/or for the SCF to manage on behalf of NuLBC (Recommended)
- Option B – that Cabinet does not support the proposals in the report, thereby potentially losing the opportunity to make use of an existing Community Fund and also lose the opportunity of increasing the size of the Fund (Not Recommended)

4. **Proposal**

4.1 It is proposed Cabinet consider the report and agree to the proposals set out for a formal launch of the 'Newcastle under Lyme Community Fund'.

4.2 Cabinet are also asked to support the proposal that NuLBC works with the SCF to raise further funds for the Community Fund and raise its profile.

4.3 Finally, Cabinet are asked to support the proposal to examine other funds to see whether they can be managed by SCF and/or included in the Community Fund.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The formal launch of the 'Newcastle under Lyme Community Fund' will raise the profile of the Fund and encourage donations to it. This will then allow more financial support to be provided to groups, organisations and individuals in the area. Ongoing work with the SCF will allow for further development of the Community Fund and also potentially uncover other areas which can be included in the Community Fund and/or be managed by SCF in the future.

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 in terms of the launch of the Community Fund – Legal input will be required if any further funds are transferred to the SCF.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being developed.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 There are resource implications in terms of assisting the SCF in the launch of the Community Fund for the Borough such as staff time. There are no financial implications at this stage, although this would change if the SCF was asked to manage other funds currently administered by NuLBC.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 The major risk with the immediate proposal is that a launch does not fulfil the stated objectives of encouraging greater fund raising and an increased Community Fund. This risk is mitigated to some extent by the involvement and experience of the SCF.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 No direct implications.

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This item is included in the Forward Plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Report to Full Council (31st March 2010) – ‘Transfer of Charity Funds to Staffordshire Community Foundation’

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – The Newcastle under Lyme Community Fund (Agreement document) August 2010

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

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Report on a Delegated Decision in Relation to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Submitted by: (Democratic Services Manager)

Portfolio: (Environment and Recycling)

Ward(s) affected: (all)

Purpose of the Report

The matters of urgency clause in the Council's constitution states that in a matter which is not delegated by the Officer Scheme of Delegation requiring action where there is no scheduled meeting where the matter would be considered by the appropriate Cabinet or committee (and where the matter does not make or change policy), the Chief Executive or an Executive Director or the Monitoring Officer having consulted with the Leader or a Cabinet Portfolio Holder of the Chair of the appropriate Committee (or in their absence the vice chair) shall have delegated authority to take such action.

Any actions taken must then be reported to the next available meeting of the Committee as appropriate.

The following decision was approved by the Leader and Monitoring Officer on 24th October 2013:

Delegations for Approval:

1. That authority to grant applications received under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, where there are no questions relating to the suitability of the applicant be delegated to Licensing Officers.
2. That where questions do arise regarding the suitability of the applicant, the application be referred to the Democratic Services Manager, the Head of Environmental Health and a Principal Solicitor of the Council.

That the following fees be set:

1. That a fee of £150 be set for a collectors Licence
2. That a fee of £200 be set for a Site Licence

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