



**20 URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**21 Exclusion Resolution**

**Members:** Councillors S Sweeney (Chairman), Studd (Vice-Chair), J Bannister, A Howells, N Jones and M Reddish

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

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

**CABINET**

**7 September 2011**

**Present:-** Councillor Stephen Sweeney – in the Chair

Councillors Studd, J Bannister, A Howells and N Jones

**284. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss Reddish.

**285. MINUTES**

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 20 July 2011 be approved as a correct record pending the addition of the following wording in relation to the Newcastle under Lyme Equestrian Strategy:

That it be added to the background section of the report:

'it is also important to engage with other user groups including walkers and cyclists to promote co-operation and prevent conflict.'

**286. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**287. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER ONE (JUNE) 2011**

A report was submitted providing Members with the Financial and Performance Review for the 2011/12 First Quarter.

It was stated that the majority of targets were being met and that there was a positive trend throughout the report. There was also positive news with regards to Heritable Bank and it was stated that at least 90% of the Council's investment would be returned.

In February 2011 the Council had approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £15,258,700. The overall position at 30 June showed an adverse variance of £48,000. This was predominately due to sources of income such as land charges, planning fees and car park fees yielding less than what would have previously been expected. Due to anticipated economic problems however an allowance of £200,000 had been included in the budget to cover shortfalls.

The provisional outturn for 2010/11 showed an adverse variance of £87,000 mainly due to the current economic situation. This outturn figure had been minimised due to the addition of £200,000 in the 2010/11 budget.

The Capital Programme contained a number of large value schemes such as the former Sainsbury's site, the Health and Wellbeing centre and Silverdale Community Centre facilities where expenditure was not expected to be incurred until later in the year. Therefore only £1,565,200 was expected to be spent by 30 June.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services highlighted the fact that the Council's Customer Services Department had achieved a national excellence award and that improvements were continuing to be made. The % of requests solved at first point of contact was up on the quarter 1 target and was already higher than when the excellence award had been achieved.

It was stated that Sections RP3 to RP5 in the Dashboard Indicators report were very high targets to meet but that the only slippage had occurred due to the undertaking of necessary site visits.

ER2 in the Appendix showed that 52.6% of household waste was now sent for reuse, recycling and composting, this compared to just 16% seven years ago. It was also stated that the North Staffs warm Zone had recently won an award for its achievement.

The increase in the number of people visiting the museum was highlighted in CA2. This increase was largely attributable to the work of the staff at the museum and their encouragement of children to visit the museum. It was however thought that even more improvements could be made at the museum through the use of more scientific and interactive exhibitions and activities.

The overall trend in relation to crime was down in the Borough and throughout Staffordshire. It was hoped that this downturn would be helped further by greater partnership working with the police due to that fact that they would soon be moving into the Civic Offices. By sharing resources such as accommodation it was hoped that the police would be able to free up other resources to enable a greater police presence on the streets. It was stated that members of the public would benefit from being made more aware of the work of Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) as crime figures were regularly brought to LAP meetings.

**Resolved:** - That the report be noted and that the Council continue to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside financial information.

#### **288. LOCALITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (LAP) REVIEW**

A report was submitted containing information and proposals relating to the Newcastle Partnership and Borough Council review of Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs). The review was part of the wider Borough Council transformation project and aimed to further develop Locality Action Partnerships and to firmly establish them as a structure to the emerging localism agenda.

**Resolved:-** (a) That the contents of the report and the full Newcastle Partnership Locality Action Partnership Review Report be noted.

(b) That the recommendations of the full report and the proposals contained in the covering report be agreed subject to an ongoing review of partnerships with the aim of promoting locality working.

(c) That Cabinet Members identify opportunities within their portfolio areas for links to be made with Locality Action Partnerships.

(d) That Cabinet suggest proposals or recommendations relating to strengthening the role of the elected member.

(e) That the comments made by the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 August 2011 be noted and the actions followed up as required.

(f) That an action plan be produced to implement the proposals in the full report and covering report.

**289. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Members received a report updating them on the various elements of the Newcastle under Lyme Transformation Programme.

There were three change and transformation programmes ongoing within the Council:-

- Transformation Programme (TP)
- The Way We Work Programme (TWWW)
- The Business of the Council (TBC)

The TP included areas such as Customer Relationship Management in which the Council was working closely with the County Council and other partners to improve the it's picture of the people within the Borough and thus manage its facilities better to fit this picture.

Areas under TWWW programme included the introduction of the Modern.gov Committee Management System. This system was now live and being used to publish all agendas and minutes for Committee business.

**Resolved:-** (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That Cabinet receive further updates in its role as a key element of the Council's Strategic Programme Board, alongside the Executive Management Team.

(c) That Cabinet suggest items for further inclusion in the change programmes as set out in the report in terms of project areas for further examination.

(d) That Cabinet instruct the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships, as the Programmes Manager to continue to provide these updates as the officer responsible corporately for programme and project management for the Council and also instruct the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships to make any necessary updates as outlined in the previous recommendation.

**290. JUBILEE 2 UPDATE**

A report was received containing information regarding progress of the development of the Jubilee 2 Centre since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

The capital build phase of Jubilee 2 was now 75% complete and the programme of completion remained in line with the Council's aspirations of opening the new centre to the general public in January 2012.

It was also confirmed that a decision had now been made regarding the operator for the cafeteria and vending machines for the centre, the selection criteria had been

based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (M.E.A.T) and the winning tender had scored highest in both the quality and price elements.

- Resolved:-**
- (a) That the progress in delivery of the Jubilee 2 be noted.
  - (b) That the Council enter into a contract with the preferred Cafeteria operator for the Jubilee 2.
  - (c) That the Council enter into a contract with Staffordshire County Council to procure the Section 278 Highways Works in relation to the Jubilee 2 development in accordance with the project plan.

**291. JUBILEE 2 HEALTH AND WELLBEING CENTRE FEES AND CHARGES**

A report was submitted detailing the proposed fees and charges and car parking arrangements for the new Jubilee 2 Health and Wellbeing Centre. The figures had been devised to try and provide the best value for money for those people visiting the centre.

**Resolved:-** That the fees and charges and car parking arrangements for Jubilee 2 be approved

**292. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR LEISURE SERVICES**

Members received a report updating them on the work of the Leisure Trust Steering Group. Members agreed that it would be a good idea to use a leisure trust to run the Council's leisure facilities but that for the time being it might be wise to take note of how this was being done in other Councils and learn from this first.

- Resolved:-**
- (a) That the work of the Leisure Trust Working Groups be noted and that in view of the uncertain business case and financial implications not to progress at this point in time.
  - (b) To receive a further report once the financial implications of the business case are clearer.

**293. BATESWOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The report was submitted highlighting a petition presented to a ward member on behalf of local residents requesting that the Council allow angling on the pool at Bateswood Local Nature Reserve, Halmer End. The report asked Members to consider undertaking a consultation exercise on the principle of including additional site based recreational activities with the review and update of the Management Plan for Bateswood. Members were further asked to consider adopting ethical fishing guidelines for use on Borough Council controlled fishing areas.

If a consultation exercise was to go ahead it was highlighted by members that it would need to take into account all users of the land and investigate all possible conflicts that could arise.

- Resolved:-**
- (a) That the petition be received.
  - (b) That the principle of allowing angling and additional bridal route provision in Bateswood Local Nature Reserve be subject to consultation with local residents and appropriate stakeholders and appropriate agreements to manage angling on the pool and equestrian access to the site be prepared.

(c) That a further report on the outcome of the consultation be brought back to an appropriate Cabinet meeting for consideration and that the consultation take into account all users of the land and all the possible conflicts that could arise.

(d) That the draft "Ethical Fishing Guidelines" which have been proposed in relation to the pool at Bateswood and other angling facilities in the Council's control be approved for consultation with appropriate stakeholders.

**294. GRANTS REVIEW AND THIRD SECTOR COMMISSIONING**

A report was submitted to update Members on progress with the grants review and the revised third sector commissioning framework.

The Council provided funding from its own budgets, for the voluntary and community sector, both through commissioning and grants; a review of processes to try and improve efficiency for the Council, whilst providing support to voluntary and community groups had now been undertaken.

**Resolved:-** (a) That the initial recommendations of the grants review be noted.

(b) That comments be provided on the initial recommendations of the grants review.

(c) That the revised third sector commissioning framework be noted.

(d) That the revised third sector commissioning framework be agreed

(e) That the recommendation of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee not to accept the offer from The Staffordshire Community Foundation to manage the Council's grants be supported.

(f) That a detailed report be requested regarding the work of the New Vic Theatre.

**295. ROUGH SLEEPER'S OUTREACH SERVICE**

A report was received requesting Cabinet's support for the re-provision of the Rough Sleeper's Outreach Services from April 2012 and to reserve future years third sector commissioning funding for a three year period.

For the past few years Stoke on Trent City Council and the Borough Council and separately commissioned a Rough Sleeper's Outreach programme. Both authorities' contracts were due to end in March 2012 thus creating an opportunity to jointly commission a single service.

**Resolved:-** That a future service be jointly commissioned with Stoke on Trent City Council to combine both Councils' resources and to develop a service which meeting the need of both authority areas whilst maximising efficiencies.

**296. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

A report was submitted to enable Cabinet members to consider and respond to the report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that was set up to review plans for the disposal and development of surplus Council-owned land (seven particular sites).

In the majority of areas the report was completely accepted by the Cabinet and where this was not the case it was principally due to the fact that that Cabinet had no authority to permit its capacity as established by the 2000 Act to be trammelled.

**Resolved:** - (a) That the Newcastle Development Programme (NDP) Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, and all those involved in supporting the review process, be thanked for their report and recommendations in respect of this matter.

(b) That it be confirmed that no further decision be taken at this stage regarding disposal of the seven NDP sites.

(c) That the appropriateness of development, in land-use planning terms, of the seven NDP sites along with all other surplus non-operational land belonging to the Council, be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Site Allocations Development Plan Document process.

(d) That future versions of the Council's Asset Management Strategy incorporate an annual planned disposals programme, as appropriate, supported by the three important qualifications set out in the Report:-

- (i) That this programme is accompanied by appropriate site specific technical information ;
- (ii) That a clear process be established for effective community and stakeholder consultation along with a summary report of the outcome of public consultation and any related public consultation activities regarding individual sites and;
- (iii) That clear evidence be provided of the proposal's alignment with the Council's financial capital planning process.

(e) That officers be instructed to undertake an annual review of the progress made with implementation of the North Staffs Green Spaces Strategy and the associated action plan to ensure that objective are being met.

(f) That members note the information regarding the Council's transformation programme which, through its associated sub-programme plan, 'The Way We Work' and the associated emerging programme 'The Business of the Council' is concerned with the organisational structure of the Council to promote greater efficiency in the way the Council operates as well as ensuring greater accessibility for all to decision making processes.

(g) That further member training be provided, as appropriate, so that members have a fuller understanding both of Asset Management and strategic policy making.

#### **297. ASSET DISPOSAL OF LAND AT DRAYTON ROAD**

Members received a report seeking authority for the freehold sale of 0.297 hectare (0.73 acres) of Borough Council owned land situated off Market Drayton Road,



Loggerheads to facilitate the development of a community fire station as part of the Staffordshire-wide improvement programme of such facilities.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services needed to provide a new fire station and this land had been identified as the most suitable development site in the area to meet operational requirements. Borough Council officers are satisfied that the disposal of this land is in the public interest and that market value will be obtained.

**Resolved:-** (a) That approval be given for the release of the property which is required by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority for the construction of a new community fire station subject to the granting of planning permission.

(b) That the provisionally agreed sale terms be agreed.

298. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**S SWEENEY**  
**Chair**

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## WORK OF THE NEW VIC THEATRE

**Submitted by:** Robin Wiles, Community Regeneration Officer

**Portfolio:** Culture & Active Communities

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Members with a preliminary report on the funding of the New Vic Theatre.

### **Recommendation**

**Members note the initial steps to developing a Partnership Agreement with the North Staffs Theatre Trust in respect of funding for the New Vic Theatre from the Borough Council.**

### **Reasons**

In response to the preliminary report on the Grants Review, a further report in relation to the funding of the New Vic Theatre has been requested.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Grants Review looked at the processes of managing grants to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) that the Council provides from its own budgets.
- 1.2 The Council currently grant funds the North Staffs Theatre Trust for the running of the New Vic Theatre. The level of grant is determined by Full Council on a year by year basis, and for 2011/12 was £97,620.00.
- 1.3 An Elected Member representative attends the North Staffs Theatre Trust's Board Meetings, and Board Papers are received by the Council.
- 1.4 The Grant Review (Cabinet Report, "Grants Review and Third Sector Commissioning, 7 September 2011) outlined various options as to how this grant could be managed, and in response this further Report has been requested.

#### **2. Issues**

- 2.1 The funding for the New Vic, at the 2011/12 level, constitutes 22% of the total that the Council made available for grant funding, and through commissioning, to the voluntary and community sector in that year, and was the highest single payment issued.
- 2.2 The level of funding for the New Vic is considerably higher than the maximum level of £5,000.00, which can be approved by the Grants Assessment Panel. This is a lot higher than the level at which the Third Sector Commissioning process would operate. It is, therefore, an anomaly to refer to this funding as a "grant".
- 2.3 Given the nature and scale of the New Vic's provision, a commissioning process would be inappropriate since there are no other voluntary or community organisations in the arts sector that could reasonably compete for this as a package. It is also worth noting that the Council has no wider experience of commissioning performing arts.

- 2.4 The current level of funding for the New Vic helps to maintain a high quality of production by the theatre that is nationally and internationally acclaimed. The positive reputation this gives for Newcastle-under-Lyme and for the Council is difficult to quantify. The Council's funding also helps the New Vic to attract other funding, most significantly from the Arts Council.
- 2.5 The work of Borderlines with communities and schools in the Borough – with an emphasis on areas that experience economic and social disadvantage – is of great importance for supporting the work of the Council and of partners in tackling issues such as antisocial behaviour, domestic violence and alcohol misuse.
- 2.6 A report produced initially in 2009 demonstrates the range of activities & projects carried out by the New Vic, including:-
- Work with schools.
  - Young Persons' Theatre Company.
  - Borderlines, the theatre's community programme, with a particular focus on working in and with disadvantaged communities in the Borough.
  - Theatre productions, with subsidised tickets for people on benefits, and free tickets for people with disabilities and, if appropriate, their carers.
  - Specific projects in partnership with a range of agencies, including the Borough Council – "All Our Daughters?" a touring play in 2010 on the subject of forced marriages, produced in partnership with the Council's Partnership Team, was nationally acclaimed by the Home Office.
- 2.7 The analysis in this report also shows the extent to which the New Vic's activities support the Council's Corporate Priorities and the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The report can act as a template for a Partnership Agreement.

### 3. **Options Considered**

3.1 The options set out in the Grants Review Preliminary Report were:-

- (i) No change - it may be appropriate that it is Full Council determine the level of financial support provided to the New Vic given the nature and sensitivities of the issues listed above.
- (ii) The funding goes through the Third Sector Commissioning Framework. Given the fairly unique nature of the New Vic, it is questionable as to whether there is any other Third Sector theatre organisation that could compete, at least for the bulk of the commission.
- (iii) The level of financial support provided to the New Vic continues to be determined by Full Council, but with the funding subject to a Service Level Agreement to be monitored by the Third Sector Commissioning Board.
- (iv) Financial support to the New Vic is taken out of the grants/commissioning equation and is considered as core funding within the main Council budget.

### 4. **Proposal**

4.1 A Partnership Agreement be drawn up, with the New Vic, with the aim of establishing formal funding arrangements that recognises the need to monitor, in line with 3.1 (iii) above.

4.2 The Partnership Agreement be set out to show the activities which the New Vic Theatre will undertake in support of the Council's objectives in line with the statements in **Appendix B**.

4.3 Through this mechanism the funding for the New Vic would continue to be determined as part of the Council's main budget setting process.

4.4 A progress Report is brought to Cabinet in 3 months detailing the Partnership Agreement.

#### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The preferred solution would provide a balance between the need to maintain the Council's support for the work of the New Vic whilst doing so in a manner that better monitors the effect of the funding, is better aligned with the other processes by which funding is provided to the voluntary and community sector in Newcastle.

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

6.1 The proposal recognises the close link between the work of the New Vic and outcomes linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities, and will better enable the Council to monitor the impact of the funding thereof.

#### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 The Council is required to take into account all relevant matters, and not take into account irrelevant matters, and to otherwise behave reasonably. Failure to do so may lead to legal challenge.

7.2 The Best Value Statutory Guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government issued in June 2011 advised that Local Authorities do not, in response to public spending cuts, disproportionately cut funding to voluntary and community groups.

#### 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 Equality Impact Assessment completed.

#### 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 The proposal does not look at the budgets for funding of the New Vic. There are, therefore, no direct cost implications.

9.2 The proposal would enable better monitoring of how the funding is used, and therefore help to ensure Value for Money.

#### 10. **Major Risks**

10.1 Risk Assessment to follow

#### 11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 None identified

#### 12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 The report is not on a Key Decision as defined in the Council's Constitution.

12.2 The report is included in the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 Cabinet - 7 September 2011 Res No 294/12

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Grants Review Report to Cabinet, 7 September 2011.

Appendix B – New Vic Report on activities and projects.

**GRANTS REVIEW AND THIRD SECTOR COMMISSIONING**

**Submitted by:** Robin Wiles, Community Regeneration Officer and Simon Sowerby, Procurement Officer

**Portfolio:** Culture and Active Communities

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

To update Members on progress with the Grants Review and the revised Third Sector Commissioning framework.

**Recommendations**

- (a) That Members note the initial recommendations of the Grants Review.
- (b) That Members provide comments on the initial recommendations of the Grants Review.
- (c) That Members note the revised Third Sector Commissioning Framework.
- (d) That Members approve the revised Third Sector Commissioning Framework.

**Reasons**

The Council provides funding, from its own budgets, for the voluntary & community sector, both through Commissioning and grants; a review of processes to try and improve efficiency for the Council, whilst providing support to voluntary & community groups is necessary.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 A review of grants was requested by the Council's Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) and by the previous Portfolio Holder for Resources.
- 1.2 The Review will only look at grants that are funded from the Council's own budgets for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs), and the relationship between grants and Third Sector Commissioning.
- 1.3 The Review will make recommendations in respect of the processes of administering grants to achieve greater efficiency, better use of limited resources, and clear lines of accountability, with a view to any changes being implemented for 2012/13. The Review will not look at the budgets for grants.
- 1.4 The Third Sector Commissioning Framework commenced in 2009/10, with the first contracts being awarded as from 1 April 2009. Any new contracts would commence from 1 April 2012.
- 1.5 In the previous municipal year, the Active & Cohesive Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Third Sector Commissioning Framework and made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet, which had been agreed (minute 624/10 refers). The following resolution was agreed at the meeting held on 1 November 2010:-

- That the Committee undertake a review of the processes for awarding small grants in the context of the Third Sector Commissioning Framework and the financial challenges faced by the Council.

### 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The expenditure on grant funding for VCOs for 2010/11 was £225,803.16
- 2.2 The expenditure for Third Sector Commissioning from 2009 to 2012 was £635,860.00, averaging out as £211,953.33 per annum.
- 2.3 With these levels of expenditure, it is essential that the Council ensures that it gets value for money, whilst also providing a sufficient level of financial support to VCOs operating in the Borough.
- 2.4 The Government's recent consultation document "Best value: new draft statutory guidance" (DCLG, April 2011) states clearly that there is an expectation that:-
- "authorities should consider overall value, including environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision." and
  - "Authorities should be sensitive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community sector organisations (honouring the commitments set out in local Compacts<sup>1</sup>) and small businesses. Authorities should seek to avoid passing on disproportionate cuts."
- 2.5 The current system of grants, with 8 different schemes each with its own processes and people involved, can be confusing – a need for better information, co-ordination and accountability is apparent.
- 2.6 The current system of grants does mean that those responsible for managing the different schemes have specialist knowledge, experience and understanding of the specific type of grant concerned, for example:-
- 16 Locally Based Bodies<sup>2</sup> involved in managing Community Chest.
  - Cultural Grants being managed by the Council's Culture and Arts Managers, and Homelessness Grants by the Council's Housing Strategy service.
- 2.7 There is therefore a need for better co-ordination of, and clearer accountability for, grants whilst retaining specialist knowledge.
- 2.8 Voluntary and community sector partners are aware that the Grants Review is taking place, with the Newcastle Voluntary Sector Forum expressing support for the general objective of the review.

1 The Council is signed up to the Staffordshire Compact.

2 Ashley & Loggerheads Parish Council; Audley Rural Parish Council; Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Council; Chapel & Hill Chorlton Parish Council; Chesterton Community Forum; Clayton Community Centre; Harriet Higgins Community Centre; Keele Parish Council; Kidsgrove Town Council; Madeley Parish Council; Maer & Aston Parish Council; Marsh Hall Community Centre; Ramsey Road Community Centre; Silverdale Parish Council; Whitmore Parish Council; Wye Road Community Centre.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Please see the recommendations contained in the Grants Review Preliminary Report.



- 3.2 The Grants Review Preliminary Report was presented to the Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 22 August 2011. A summary of the decisions of that Committee is included in the Grants Review Preliminary Report.

#### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The recommendations contained in the Grants Review Preliminary Report, and the decisions thereof of the Active and Cohesive Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting of 22 August 2011 are considered.
- 4.2 Dialogue with voluntary and community sector partners is continued with the aim of gaining their support for changes that are approved.
- 4.3 Discussions with the Sports Council, as an external body (albeit administered and largely funded by the Borough Council) to take place since to establish their views on the observations/findings of the Grants Review, and seek their support for the changes that are approved, and any changes to their constitution that may be required thereof.

#### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 The voluntary and community sector play an indispensable role in helping the Borough Council and Newcastle Partnership deliver positive changes for residents and communities of Newcastle – it is therefore important that funding the Council provides for the sector is managed with the right combination of efficiency and use of specialist knowledge and experience to target funding appropriately.

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

- 6.1 The voluntary and community sector in, and working in Newcastle covers a diverse range of organisations, both in terms of types and size of organisations – everything from the small informal community group working to improve their neighbourhood to voluntary organisations with paid staff that provide professional services – and in terms of the nature of their activities. Grants to these organisations will, therefore, have a positive impact on all priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy and on the first 3 of the Council's corporate priorities.
- 6.2 Efficiently managed grants schemes that help to fund activities and projects that make a difference will help towards the fourth of the Council's corporate priorities.
- 6.3 Proposals in the Grants Review Preliminary Report will provide a more consistent evaluation and monitoring of grants issued.

#### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Council is required to take into account all relevant matters, and not take into account irrelevant matters, and to otherwise behave reasonably. Failure to do so may lead to legal challenge.
- 7.2 The Best Value Statutory Guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government issued in June 2011 advised that Local Authorities do not, in response to public spending cuts, disproportionately cut funding to voluntary and community groups.

#### 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 Equality Impact Assessment completed.

### 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The Grants Review does not look at the budgets for grants or Third Sector Commissioning. There are, therefore, no direct cost implications
- 9.2 The role of grants co-ordinator identified in the Grants Review's recommendations will be absorbed by an existing post. There are, therefore, no employment costs involved.
- 9.3 A more efficiently managed and co-ordinated grants system will provide better value for money by increasing the likelihood that grants go to the right organisations, and through improved monitoring.
- 9.4 A more efficiently managed and co-ordinated grants system will improve the information and advice that the Council provides to voluntary and community organisation on other sources of funding.
- 9.5 A more efficiently managed and co-ordinated grants system will enhance the capability of voluntary and community organisations to deliver better quality services.
- 9.6 The diverse range of voluntary & community organisations that work in the Borough who can, potentially, access Grant funding from the Council, provide services and activities that help to meet priorities of both the Council and of Newcastle Partnership across the board.

### 10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 Risk Assessment completed.

### 11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 Grant funding is accessible to voluntary and community organisations that carry out activities that have a positive impact on climate change. Examples of grants that have been given where that applies are available.

### 12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 The report is not on a Key Decision as defined in the Council's Constitution.
- 12.2 The report is included in the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

### 13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Cabinet, 624/10.  
Cabinet, 195b/11.  
Active & Cohesive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 379/11.  
Active & Cohesive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 653/11.

### 14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix 'A' - Grants Review Report 1 (including appendices – see 15.1).

### 15. **Background Papers**

- 15.1 Background papers to accompany the Grants Review Report 1 (see 14.1) are available from the Community Regeneration Officer on ext. 2493 or [robin.wiles@newcastlestaffpartnership.org.uk](mailto:robin.wiles@newcastlestaffpartnership.org.uk)

The New Vic and NBC's 2009 Sustainable Community Strategy Reviewed March 2011

All projects rely on the resources and capacity of the company that result from ongoing core funding

- Activity supported through core funding (NBC, Stoke CC, Staffordshire CC and Arts Council England)
- Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
- Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis

Priority	Sustainable Community Strategy Reference	Action	Desired outcome	Timescale	Core / Regular / One off
<b>PEOPLE</b>					
<b>1. To raise the aspirations of all young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups</b>	PE01	<p>Year-round programme of Borderlines projects delivered through partners who in the past have included the Domestic Violence Unit, the Police, the Fire Service, Youth Offending Teams, Young People and Children's services.</p> <p>Provide a Young People's Theatre Company free of charge for young people who have benefited from a Borderlines project and who face significant barriers to accessing other opportunities</p>	<p>Young People participating in activities that challenge destructive and anti-social behaviour and build self confidence, self esteem and aspiration.</p> <p>Young people who face significant barriers are supported to develop transferable skills self awareness and the self-confidence to succeed</p>	Ongoing	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support

1.		Year-round programme of Education projects including curriculum delivery and enrichment projects in schools, after-school activities including open access Youth Theatre, raising aspirations and giving high quality opportunities to young people, New Vic education organises trips to national events ('perform 2011) and brings renowned companies ( Frantic Assembly 2011) to deliver inspirational workshops.	Young People participating in positive creative activities.	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
1.		New Vic Schools Partnership project. Targeting 4 primary schools in the Borough each year with the addition , from 2011 of an extended programme for larger schools. 2011 – Silverdale CP, Springhead CP, St Margaret CE Primary, Our Lady and St Werburgh RC Primary, Ellison St CP.	To establish long term sustainable relationships with schools throughout the Borough.	2009 onwards	Activity supported through core funding
1.		Year-round programme of theatre, concerts and other live art events accessible to all and with a pricing structure to reflect this, including Under 16s Go Free, £1 entrance to those on benefits and ACE Free Theatre Initiative for under 26s.	Removal of economic barriers enabling disadvantaged young people to access to high quality performances.	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
1.		Care Ambassadors conference for young people exploring opportunities provided by becoming involved in health and social care.	Develop active citizenship. Attendance resulting in achievement of part of NVQ Develop attendees Work experience portfolio	April 11	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support

APPENDIX B

1.		The World in Our Street project in a range of identified communities youth groups and schools, encouraging young people to play their part in creating positive communities	Young people are given the opportunity to explore the role that they can play within their communities, giving them a sense of themselves as important members of society and as being able to make a positive contribution.	2010/11	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
<b>2. To provide appropriate youth provision for young people of all ages</b>	<b>PE02</b>				
2.		Christmas show accessible to children though subsidised seats and provision of facilities for schools groups including coach parking. The addition of our Christmas 'tale trail' event for young families and pre school groups from 2009 provides a creative and appropriate learning environment for our youngest participants and their carers.	Introducing young people to theatre-going and helping them to develop a local identity and a sense of belonging	annual	Activity supported through core funding
2.		Regular Youth Theatre sessions, including an annual production on the New Vic stage.	Young People participating in positive creative activities improving personal and social development and acquiring transferable communication and creative skills.	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
2.		School Holiday and half-term projects. Including make-play-in-a-week, musical theatre week, design and drama project.	Young People participating in positive purposeful activities	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
2.		Regular literacy sessions with preschool children at the New Vic and around the Borough. Tale Trail from 2008	Raising aspirations in early years and with families and developing positive attitudes to books an literacy	2008 onwards	Activity supported through core funding
2.		Young people encouraged to attend all main stage productions through the Under 16s Go Free scheme	Young people introduced to theatre-going and helped to develop a local identity and a sense of belonging	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding

2.		Under 26s encouraged to attend all main stage productions through ACE Free Theatre Initiative. Continued through revised in-house scheme with allocation of free tickets and extended discount scheme.	Young people introduced to theatre-going and helped to develop a local identity and a sense of belonging	Spring 2009 – Spring 2011 and onwards	Activity supported through core funding
<b>To deter anti-social behaviour by providing support and positive diversionary activities</b>	<b>PE03</b>				
3.		Year-round programme of Borderlines projects delivered through partners who in the past have included the Domestic Violence Unit, the Police, the Fire Service, Young People and Children's services.	Young People with increased awareness of the effects of antisocial behaviour on communities and individual citizen's rights and responsibilities and given strategies to resist peer pressure and knowledge of where to access support.	Ongoing	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
3.		Year-round Borderlines programme working young people involved in or at risk of becoming involved in antisocial and criminal behaviour delivered through partners who in the past have included the Police, Youth Offending Teams, Young People and Children's services.	Young people diverted away from anti social and criminal behaviour and accessing ongoing positive activities	Ongoing	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
3.		The Night of Breaking Glass: Active citizenship project working in local schools and youth groups tackling hate crime and prejudice and anti social behaviour with Community Safety partners	Provide young people with strategies to combat hate crime and anti-social behaviour	Throughout the year	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
3.		Celebrating Parks and Reclaiming the Parks	Creating projects in identified parks during holiday periods and encouraging families and young people to enjoy park facilities.	May – August 2011	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis

<p><b>To identify NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and encourage their engagement</b></p>	<p><b>PE04</b></p>				
<p>4.</p>		<p>Changing Cultures project in Knutton &amp; Cross Heath and Chesterton aiming to develop self-esteem and skills which will enable NEETS to enter either training or education In partnership with Staffordshire Social Care Work Force Partnership</p>	<p>Young people achieving National Preparation for Work qualification from Open College Network</p> <p>Participants have increased awareness of and access to training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Increased self esteem confidence and aspiration.</p>	<p>April to July 09</p>	<p>Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis</p>
<p>4.</p>		<p>Get Up Get Out Get In A range of participatory workshops with unemployed young people and Adults which help them to identify their own value and transferable skills, develop within them a sense of themselves as productive and positive elements within teams and working environments, and give them a taste of purposeful activity and the 'feel good' factor which comes with being engaged.</p>	<p>Participants perceive themselves differently, and gain an understanding of their own intrinsic value and the value of being engaged through work or training or volunteering.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis</p>

To encourage more people to lead healthier lifestyles with a particular focus on children and young people	PE05				
5,		Bridging the Gap project with young adults with learning disabilities	Develop self-esteem, build confidence, enable young people with learning disabilities to become more involved with their own communities	Throughout the year	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
5.		Project working with Home educated children and their families	Improve personal and social development for home educated children	Throughout the year from 2007	Activity supported through core funding
5.		Changes: a peer-led project for young people with mental health issues in partnership with Changes and North Staffs Users' Group  Presenting, in partnership with Keele university and Staffordshire university an arts and health day conference in may 2011 to promote healthy choices and showcase work in this field.	Enable young people to develop strategies for staying emotionally healthy  Raise awareness about mental health issues  Signpost young people to agencies and services	Throughout the year	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
5.		Develop a project around issues effecting sexual health for young people	Raise awareness about sexual health issues and issues around early parenthood.		Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis



APPENDIX B

To encourage parental responsibility and provide more parental support	PE06				
6.		<p>Special Matters project working with families who have a child with special needs.</p> <p>Culminating in a conference attended by voluntary and statutory sector professionals</p> <p>In partnership with SureStart</p>	<p>Increase the quality of life of whole families and encourage mutual support.</p> <p>Enable access to service providers and agencies and input into shaping services.</p> <p>Conference</p>	<p>Project throughout the year.</p> <p>Conference tbc</p>	<p>Projects that happen regularly, with partner support</p>
6.		<p>Perform a play about a single teenage mother on the main stage</p>	<p>Raised awareness of the implications of early parenthood</p>	<p>Summer 2009</p>	<p>Activity supported through core funding</p>
To reduce the number of families reliant on benefits	PE07				
To significantly increase the number of children participating in PE and OSHL (Physical Education and Out of School Hours Learning)	PE08				
8.		<p>Involve out of schools groups in creating presentations exploring prejudice and discrimination for United Nations Holocaust Memorial Day</p>	<p>Improve community cohesion</p>	<p>Annual event in January</p>	<p>Projects that happen regularly, with partner support</p>
8.		<p>Year-round programme of Education projects including open access Youth Theatre (10-18), drama club (6-10) and after school activities. Groups participating in Regional and National Youth Theatre Festivals (2008 &amp; 2009)</p>	<p>Young people participating in out of hours learning</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Activity supported through core funding</p>
To increase the number of older people living independent lives	PE09				

To improve the quality of life of older people	PE10				
10.		Organising social and cultural events for New Vic friends and continue the role of New Vic Volunteers	Participants greater awareness and understanding of the theatre production process and greater engagement with the New Vic. Developing social networks and combating isolation.	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
10.		Captioned and audio-described performances for those with impaired hearing or sight	Increased quality of access to performances for disabled	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
10.		Engagements with older learners through Revolve programme. working with staff from Staffordshire and Keele universities to develop this project, in order to challenge and stimulate older participants.	Enabling greater awareness and understanding of theatre Developing social networks and combating isolation.	2007 Onwards	Activity supported through core funding
10.		We are currently (2011) in our second year of the Ages and Stages intergenerational project with Keele university. this will culminate in an international conference in Newcastle under Lyme in July 2012	More contact and engagement between generations leading to improved mutual understanding	September 2009 onwards (subject to funding)	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
10.		Provide free carers and companions tickets to assist disabled theatre goers	Increased access to performances for disabled	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding

APPENDIX B

To tackle domestic abuse	PE11				
11.		All Our Daughters? Touring play with workshops that explores family relationships friendships through the themes of Forced Marriage	Young people become aware of how and where to access support, . National Conference designed, delivered and hosted by the New Vic Ensuring that agencies are more able to put into practise adequate responses to address and support the needs of children and young people.	April 10	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Home Office and Partnership Funding
11.		CRUSH Touring play and workshops on adolescent relationships	Participants are able to explore issues around positive and healthy relationships, identifying issues around the misuse of power within relationships which can lead to abuse, and identify how and where to access appropriate and adequate support advice and help.	May 09  To be repeated Feb March 11 (funding pulled)	
11.		Provide workshops for young people at the New Vic, in schools and in community centres. In partnership with Domestic Abuse Unit.	Enable young people to identify abusive relationships and break the pattern of abuse	October/November	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
11.		Work with Borough and partners towards a conference for National Domestic Violence Week	Conference held and attended by the voluntary and statutory sector professionals	November 2009	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
11.		CRUSH DVD with young people from Chesterton Youth Club premiered at the Vue cinema Newcastle	Young people participate in workshops exploring issues surrounding domestic violence and create a short film which can be shared with other young people	May 2010	

<b>PLACES</b>					
<b>To improve facilities and infrastructure across the borough</b>	<b>PL01</b>				
<b>12.</b>		Provide a year round programme of performances. At least 300 performances of professional drama, dance and music.	Help to develop local identity and a sense of belonging	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
<b>12.</b>		Continuous programme of investment in the New Vic building and grounds including building of New Vic Workspace, a purpose built facility to enhance work with young people	First class facilities maintained and developed	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
<b>To build stronger neighbourhoods enabling communities to actively participate and influence service delivery</b>	<b>PL02</b>				
<b>13.</b>		In partnership with Aspire Housing work with 80 resident families as part of national project 'The Big Conversation'	Empower families to influence and shape service delivery	Conference in April 09	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
<b>13.</b>		Engage with 100 local people who volunteer to support on site presentations	Volunteers greater awareness and understanding of the theatre production process leading to greater engagement with the performing arts. Developing social networks and combating isolation.	Throughout the year	Activity supported through core funding
<b>13.</b>		Juventus project working with young refugees and asylum seekers to promote understanding and integration	Young participants pass Citizenship exam  Integration into local community  Developing language and understanding of British culture	Throughout the year	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support

13.		The World in Our Street	Community members are given the opportunity through workshops to explore a range of themes including 'Comings and Goings' who leaves and who arrives in our neighbourhoods, 'Love Thy Neighbour?' How communities welcome new people into the Neighbourhoods? ' The Language of Hate and why do people hate, and What can we do to make our community a safe and welcoming place for everyone.	March 10 – May 2011	
To build community pride through the provision of cleaner, safer neighbourhoods	PL03	See in particular Borderlines projects		Ongoing	
14.		Respect  Workshops and performances throughout Newcastle giving young people an opportunity to express their ambitions for their communities and neighbourhoods	Young people explore issues which cause their communities to fragment and which make their neighbourhoods unpleasent. Through drama they develop positive solutions and create performances presented at the New Vic Theatre for community members families and VIP's	April 2010	
14.		The World in Our Street	A range of community workshops, consultations and performances throughout the borough of Newcastle Including hosting a community cohesion conference at the New Vic.	March 2010 – May 2011	
14.		Hosting Newcastle and Regional Britain in Bloom Award Ceremony		2009, 2010 and 2011	
To improve opportunities to recycle and encourage more people and businesses to participate	PL04				
To raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage action using a think global, act local approach to enable more people to lead sustainable lifestyles	PL05				

14.		Explore revival of Local Agenda 21 projects in partnership with Borough and local schools. Britain in Bloom projects 2011	Increased awareness of Agenda 21 objectives	tbc	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis
14.		Theatre grounds maintained as a Wildlife garden	Enhancing the aesthetic quality of the area and encouraging environmental awareness	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
To develop and promote energy efficiency measures contributing to the global challenge of tackling climate change	PL06				
<b>PROSPERITY</b> To provide opportunities for upskilling the working age population	<b>PR01</b>	See Changing Cultures project above			
15.		Provide a programme of Professional work experience	Young people introduced to the world of work and made aware of opportunities for careers in the performing arts	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
15.		Provide training for Library staff in the Borough to deliver storytelling and literacy sessions for children and families	Library capacity to support literacy and family learning improved.	2009	Projects that are developed with partners on a one-off / occasional basis

APPENDIX B

15.		<p>Primary Teachers consortium</p> <p>Through our partnership with Staffordshire qls and Wolverhampton University, our science learning programme for key stage 1 and 2 teachers, based at the New Vic, Keele science learning centre and the Seabridge centre, provides professional development and valuable tools for delivering innovative approaches to teaching, with a view to raising achievement.</p>	Teachers within the Borough share good practice and participate in skills building workshops	2007 Onwards	Activity supported through core funding
To enable young people to achieve their potential and encourage their investment in the local economy	PR02	See PE04			
16.		Supporting Newcastle College to deliver the new Creative and Media diploma by providing training and access to industry professionals	Newcastle College capacity to enable students to achieve recognised qualifications and enhance their employability	2009 onwards	Projects that happen regularly, with partner support
To transform the perception of Newcastle and the North Staffordshire region	PR03				
17.		Maintain the New Vic's profile as multi award winning international class arts organisation recognised as a model of best practice for the ways a theatre can contribute to the economic social cultural and education life of its community.	Regional, National and International profile and reputation	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
17.		Inform the national and regional press and trade publications of activities and events at the New Vic resulting in revues, editorial coverage and listings	Raised regional and national awareness of Newcastle as the home of the New Vic, a centre of excellence and a model of good practice	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
17.		Investigate possibility of transferring a production to an international festival	Raised national and international awareness of Newcastle as the home of the New Vic producer of high quality theatre	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
17.		Attract theatre professionals to work here on a freelance basis and ensure they go away with a perception of the New Vic as a centre of excellence	Raised national awareness of Newcastle as the home of the New Vic a centre of excellence and a model of good practice	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding

17.		New Vic work seen in other theatres across the country through the development of partnerships and co-productions	Raised national awareness of Newcastle as the home of the New Vic producer of high quality theatre	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
<b>To maximise the benefits of investment coming to the borough for businesses and local people</b>	<b>PR04</b>				
18.		Ensure maximisation of external funding through partnerships with Staffordshire County Council, Stoke City Council and Arts Council England	Every pound of NBC investment generating at least £10 of external funding	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
18.		Maximise the economic impact of the New Vic including through tourism and supporting the Think Local campaign.	Every £ of NBC investment generating turnover of at least £30 and impact on the local economy of at least £40. 75% of turnover spent locally.	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
18.		Promote the New Vic to tourism markets	25,000 tourist visits per year	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding
18.		Maintain the New Vic as a significant local employer, participating in NSCCI, Newcastle Business Panel and Newcastle Town Centre Partnership	95 FTE posts sustained	Ongoing	Activity supported through core funding



## CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13 TO 2014/15

**Submitted by:** Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships

**Portfolio:** Customer Services and Transformation

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To consider the Corporate Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15

### **Recommendation**

**That Members approve the adoption of the Corporate Plan for 2012/13 to 2014/15**

### **Reasons**

The Corporate Plan underpins the whole planning structure of the Authority. The Corporate Plan should be the document which clearly informs the organisation and should act as the major driver behind any budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and also the service planning process.

## 1. **Background and Issues**

- 1.1 Cabinet adopted a new style Corporate Plan for the period 2010/11 to 2012/13 last November and the refresh is routine at this point.
- 1.2 Consultation on the priorities and values are covered in the next section.
- 1.3 The priorities are proposed as:
  - Promoting a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough,
  - Promoting a Borough of opportunity,
  - Promoting a healthy and active community and
  - Transforming our Council to achieve excellence.
- 1.4 The values, that are the key ideas underpinning everything that the Council does in delivering its priorities, were also reconfirmed as:
  - Putting people first,
  - Delivering excellent and sustainable services, and
  - Making the best use of our resources
- 1.5 The draft plan attached at **Appendix A** incorporates the information from both Cabinet and the public and has been reviewed to check for Plain English.

## 2. **Review of the Corporate Plan**

- 2.1 Officers have reviewed the Corporate Plan, its contents, targets and layout. This was to ensure that
  - the overall ambition of the council is reflected;
  - the context set out for the Plan is still relevant;

- the Council's vision is clearly articulated;
- that the four key priorities remain relevant and meaningful;
- the current state of the partnerships agenda is reflected;
- the measures and targets presented in the Plan are the right ones.
- the Corporate Plan sets out the Council's commitment in a number of key cross-cutting issues – equalities and diversity; climate change; value for money; .

2.2 The conclusions made about the existing Plan include the following:

- The Plan format agreed in 2010 , which is shorter and less detailed, is easy to read
- The sequence of sections based on Portfolios is helpful
- The conclusion was that it would still be useful to have a single mission or vision
- The presentation of the Corporate Plan allows for effective monitoring of progress.

2.3 Members have expressed a wish to retain a vision statement for the Council, which is found on page three of the attached draft. This statement – “our vision is to make the Borough a better place to live, work and invest” is recommended.

2.4 The Plan explores the drivers for change but at the same time reaffirms the council's values and principles. The Plan has been written to reflect these developments.

2.5 The overall priorities of the council remain as set out previously and are a good basis for stating concisely what the council intends to achieve. It provides a clear focus for planning activity and resource allocation.

### 3. **Consultation and other influences**

3.1 Both the priorities and the values have been considered at a Cabinet Away Day. The Portfolio Holders confirmed the general political direction, including the broad priorities.

3.2 The council has carried out a number of detailed surveys over time, with the User Satisfaction Survey 2010 / 11 which was administered and analysed by the Borough Council Communications Section between November 2010 and March 2011 being the most recent. These type of surveys have in the past been undertaken regularly. Also services undertake satisfaction surveys in-house on a regular basis to inform the management of service delivery.

3.3 A draft of the plan was sent to a number of partner agencies who attended the recent focus groups on the Performance Management Review for their comments.

3.4 Demographic and other “profile” data, and changes observed that suggest trends, are covered in the section of the plan entitled “key drivers for change”. These drivers can be summarised as:

- Our area and its people;
- The public sector funding review;
- The Government agenda;
- Rising expectations and demands;
- Rising energy costs and reducing the carbon footprint;
- Local political priorities;
- Consultation feedback.

#### 4. **Options, Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution**

4.1 Effective strategic planning benefits from a single document outlining issues and assumptions and stating the general direction for the organisation in question.

4.2 The Corporate Plan should be the document which clearly informs the council and should act as the major driver behind any budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and also the service planning process.

#### 4.3 **Option 1: Accept the draft layout as provided**

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

#### 4.4 **Option 2: Request significant further changes**

Cabinet may wish to propose significant changes to the document.

4.5 **Option 3: no change to previous plan.** While this is an option, it neglects the opportunity to reflect some changes in our political and economic environment.

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

5.1 This document identifies the corporate priorities of the Authority aligned to those of the Sustainable Community Strategy, linked to expected outcomes.

#### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

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

#### 7. **Equality impact**

There are no differential impacts in this report.

#### 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The plans in this report are to be considered against the overall Budget Strategy of the Council.

#### 9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The plans in this report are to be considered against the overall Risk Strategy of the Council. This is done as part of the Service and Financial Planning process.

#### 10. **Key Decision information**

10.1 This report is in the Forward Plan.

#### 11. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Cabinet Agenda: November 2010 Corporate Plan 2011/12-2013/14

#### 12. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Draft Corporate Plan

13. **Background Papers**

Corporate Plan 2012/13 files

Making the borough a better place to live, work and invest

Photo

**MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Welcome to our Corporate Plan. This important document reflects the views of our residents and drives forward what we want to do over the next few years.

This Corporate Plan: -

- Sets out our vision
- Shows where we want to be in three years' time
- Shows how we will continue to put people first and deliver the best possible services

Our political coalition demonstrates our commitment to focus on what is best for Newcastle-under-Lyme. We, alongside our partner organisations are committed to improving all aspects of life in the borough.

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN SWEENEY  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

photo



Making the borough a better place to live, work and invest

**WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

We want to make the borough a better place to live, work and invest.

Our Corporate Plan sets out how the council will seek to achieve this over the next three years.

In these very challenging economic times it is important that we use resources prudently and effectively.

Our plan focuses on doing those things which will deliver our priorities and on ensuring that we continue to deliver high quality services for our customers.

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

**JOHN SELLGREN  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Photo



This Corporate Plan takes account of seven drivers for change:-

- Our area and its people
- The public sector funding review
- The Government agenda
- Rising expectations and demands
- Rising energy costs and reducing the carbon footprint
- Local political priorities
- Consultation feedback

**PRIORITIES**

**Vision**

Our vision is to make the borough a better place to live, work and invest.

We will deliver this vision by achieving our four priorities. These will be the focus of our activities and resources.

**Promoting a cleaner, safer and sustainable borough**

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

**Promoting a borough of opportunity**

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

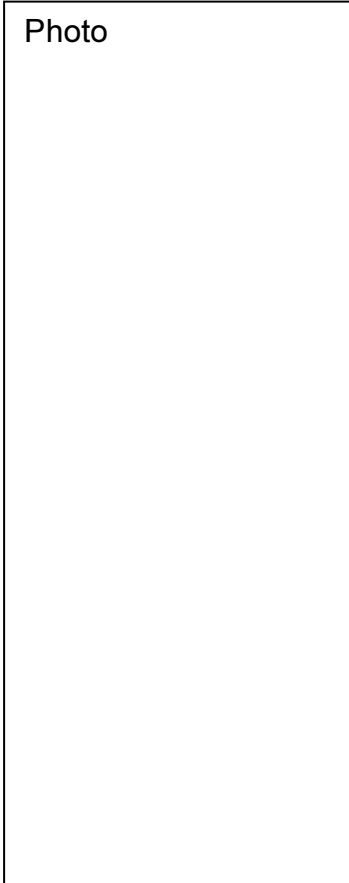
**Promoting a healthy and active community**

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

**Transforming our council to achieve excellence**

We want to become a modern, streamlined, effective council which delivers a range of excellent services that the public need. We will do this by working in partnership, wherever appropriate, to maximise the resources at our disposal.

Photo



**VALUES**

As we deliver our vision and our four priorities we will apply three important values to everything we do:-

**Putting people first**

We will put our customers at the centre of what we do. We will make best use of information to target services to groups and individuals in our communities in the most efficient and effective way. We will develop approaches aimed at supporting people in their communities.

**Delivering excellent and sustainable services**

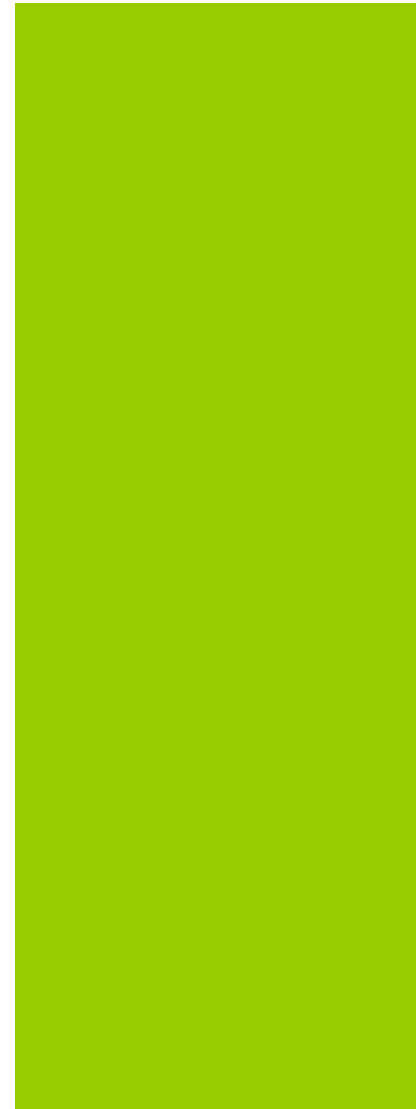
We will strive to deliver excellent services at all times. This will apply when our customers contact us and when we deliver services in the community. We will continually review the impact of our services on the environment and the way we deliver those services.

**Making the best use of resources**

We will strive to deliver all our services in the most cost-effective way.

This will be achieved through a number of ways including direct delivery, sharing services with other local councils or public sector bodies and commissioning from the private and/or voluntary sectors. We will create a more flexible organisation that communicates well both internally and with customers.

**APPENDIX A**





## APPENDIX A

### DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

We have many things to consider when delivering a service to residents, such as:-

#### **Our area and its people:**

We expect our population to grow over the next 20 years and become older in profile. Two thousand more residents are over retirement age than 10 years ago.

Dealing with issues around poverty and financial hardship is a key consideration for this council. We have variations in the level of employment, health, economic well-being, housing and overall living standards. Life expectancy differs by almost 10 years between the most affluent and the most deprived wards.

#### **Public Sector Funding**

The main driver for change is the state of the UK economy. There have been and continue to be reductions in public spending. This will challenge the council in its efforts to maintain essential services.

Ongoing efficiencies have helped the council, but they are not sufficient by themselves. With less money, we have to think differently about the way that we

deliver our services in future, this will be based on a better understanding of how our customers want to make the most of the services we offer.

### The Government agenda

Major themes which the Government has outlined are:-

- Giving communities more power
- Encouraging people to take an active role in their communities
- Transferring power from central to local government.
- Supporting co-operatives, mutuals, charities and social enterprises
- Transparency and accountability in publishing key data

The reorganisation of health is also a significant factor. The Council will need to monitor local health services and play its part as necessary to deal with the many health inequalities in the Borough.

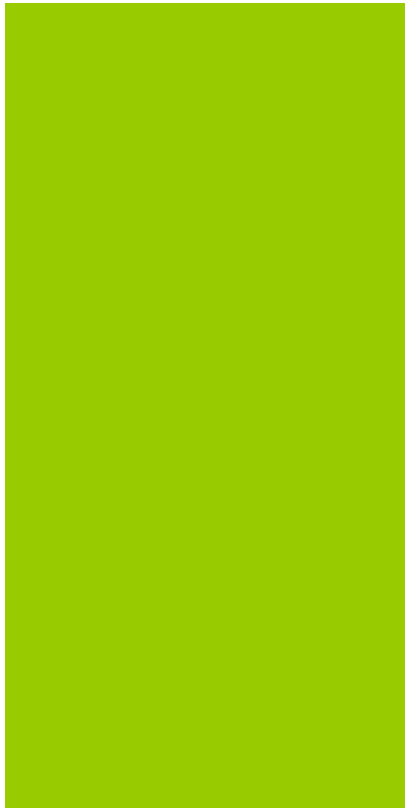
**Rising public expectations and demands**

Residents can take advantage of some high quality, low cost council services. However, recent surveys show that people expect better services but do not wish to pay more. Our residents want to be convinced that we are spending their money wisely.

**New technology**

Online access to services can be much cheaper than face-to-face service provision. And it can be better targeted at individual needs. We can also learn more about our customers and what they want. However many residents cannot get on to the internet at all.

We have made major inroads in our drive for fully interactive online services. But we want to do more as part of a wider approach to making it easier for local people to “do business” with the council. We also need to equip our staff with the modern tools to be efficient in their work.



**Rising energy costs and reducing carbon footprints**

We will reduce how much our workforce travel and become greener as the cost of fuel increases.

We will encourage communities to be at the centre of decision making and action, using local communities as local service hubs. We will work with partners to make more services accessible locally where possible. We will ensure shared buildings use is more energy efficient.



**ACTIVITIES IN THE CORPORATE PLAN**

The following pages are in the order of the Cabinet portfolios and they set out their responsibilities and activities. We include:-

- Desired outcomes for each portfolio – what this will mean for residents.
- How we will do this – activities and projects.
- The measures for success.

The priorities, portfolio activities and their corresponding details give the lead to our Heads of Service. The information feeds the service planning process through to individuals' appraisals.



### **Leader of the Council and Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio**

Councillor Stephen Sweeney

The role has direct accountability for the leadership of the Cabinet and for issues of council structure and democracy. It includes working on a number of strategic decisions and being the representative and ambassador for the council and partnerships. This role is also combined with the responsibility for the Safer and Stronger Communities portfolio.

The Leader will take a lead on the Partnership and Community involvement functions set out in the Drivers for Change section.

This portfolio aims to build a safer and stronger Newcastle, where communities and the Borough Council work with each other to solve local problems through the identification of local priorities and the delivery of local plans.

We want to create a borough where vulnerable members of the community and victims of crime get the support and high quality service they deserve.

We will do this by working in partnership to support victims of anti-social behaviour, crime and domestic violence.

We will be engaging expert service providers to support victims and offer help and assistance, particularly for domestic violence and anti-social behaviour.

We will ensure relevant partners take appropriate action against perpetrators.

We will work on the root causes of problems, such as alcohol and substance misuse, parenting issues and challenging the culture of acceptability in some communities concerning domestic violence.

We will continue to work with other partners to implement the Big Society, localism and locality working approaches.

#### **Portfolio as A-Z:-**

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Civil Contingencies
- CCTV
- Community Cohesion and Safety
- Community Safety and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act
- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement and On Street Parking
- Emergency Planning

- Older People
- Partnerships, including the Newcastle Partnership
- Safer and Stronger Board (Community Safety Partnership)
- Street and Community Wardens



## APPENDIX A

Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?
Achieving a thriving and safe evening and night-time economy across the borough
Offer high quality support to vulnerable citizens and victims of crime
Building relationships so that people work together to solve local problems

Directorate	How will we do this?
Chief Executive/Operations	Work in partnership to support victims of anti-social behaviour, crime and domestic violence
Chief Executive	Work on root causes of problems through challenge in communities
Chief Executive	Focus with partners on empowering local people in communities

Directorate	How will we measure our performance? Indicator	Ref
Chief Executive	Violence with injury	SSC1
Chief Executive	Business crime	SSC2
Chief Executive	Serious acquisitive crime	SSC3

## Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration and Planning Portfolio

Councillor Robin Studd

Central to the work of the portfolio is the economic development of the borough. We want to work with partners to generate prosperity through job creation in all sectors. We want to attract high value businesses and for the town centre to be more vibrant.

Regenerating the area will continue to be challenging because opportunities to attract external funding are limited, but we still intend to be extremely active, through our own initiative and also through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

This portfolio is responsible for monitoring the delivery of regeneration projects in the borough. We will work with business, universities, colleges and other partners to create an environment where business can thrive. We will assist business in taking a lead role and we will support the process of economic growth.

The portfolio oversees action to facilitate housing development and redevelopment to improve choice and quality to meet aspirations for a range of available housing. The Local

Investment Plan (LIP) aims to prioritise investment in new housing.

In addition, we have duties to provide housing advice and assistance, preventing homelessness and improving people's lives through emergency assistance and adaptations. We have strategies in place to support all of these activities.

Planning is a major part of the portfolio. We need to make sure there is high quality urban design, where development and redevelopment is sympathetic to what was there before but we also want to see our planning policies supporting opportunities for economic growth, where possible. We are committed to working with local businesses to achieve these ambitions, both through the formulation of policy and determination of planning applications.

Land and property are significant assets which enable not only service delivery but regeneration too. We need to ensure that these are central to our plans, deriving maximum benefit and value for residents in order to achieve "best consideration" for the borough. We will continue to monitor our property needs and undertake rationalisation where appropriate, to both facilitate development and

to generate receipts to fund our capital programme. Public consultation will be a central feature in any such plans.

### Portfolio A-Z:-

- Building Control
- Design and Heritage Champion
- Economic Development
- External Regeneration Funding
- Housing and Homelessness
- Inward Investment/ Marketing
- Land and Property (Asset Management)
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Planning Policy and Development Control
- Transport Strategy and Policy (Planning)



## APPENDIX A

Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?
Make the town centre more vibrant and attractive
Promotion of economic growth in all service delivery
Aim to reduce levels of worklessness through educational achievement and skills development
Ensure a good range of housing is available

Directorate	How will we do this?
Regeneration and Development	Review the council asset management strategy, aiming for optimal use of the council's asset portfolio
Regeneration and Development	Implement the refreshed Economic Development strategy
Regeneration and Development	Supporting economic growth through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Regeneration and Development	Prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan document
Regeneration and Development	Implement a new Housing Strategy and guide investment through the Local Investment Plan

Directorate	How will we measure our performance? Indicator	Ref
Regeneration and Development	Percentage of investment portfolio which is vacant	LI
Regeneration and Development	Processing planning applications	RP3
Regeneration and Development	Number of affordable homes provided	NI 155

**Customer Service and Transformation Portfolio**  
Councillor Nigel Jones

The portfolio covers the communication function of the council. Under this heading are key areas including the public website and elected Members' website.

A further major role for this portfolio is to challenge why and how we deliver services. This will help us provide effective and efficient services to local communities. We engage with residents to establish strategic priorities and to inform resource allocation.

The council considers the results of equality impact assessments in all its decision making.

A major component of customer service is to be clear that what we do is really benefitting residents. This is why we carry out surveys of residents views. Once we have heard those views, we try to turn them into actions. We have recently invested in new systems in Revenues and Benefits, and have made huge progress in Customer Relations and Customer Services, and acknowledge it is important to continue to improve the service

for residents, some of whom will be vulnerable.

The portfolio is responsible for the transformation programme - this will help the council to become more efficient and to provide better value for money for those we serve. Savings achieved through smarter working and improved use of technology will be critical to help us successfully handle the significant challenges to our budget which lie ahead.

**Portfolio A-Z:-**

- Communications and Consultation
- Council Structure and Democracy
- Customer Contact and Customer Service Centres
- Member support and development
- Performance Management and Monitoring
- Putting People First.
- Revenues and Benefits
- Risk Champion
- Transformation Programme





## APPENDIX A

<b>Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?</b>
High performing services for all residents and customers
Services shaped to respond to needs of diverse communities, based on cross-cutting approaches between council services and in conjunction with other partner organisations
Develop the Council's response to the Government's localism and public services agenda, in ways which are beneficial in terms of more community focused services and more resident engagement
Developing an improved scrutiny process

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>How will we do this?</b>
Operational Services	Develop responses to the Government's localism and public services agenda
All Directorates	Develop the existing transformation programmes to build on the council's track record of delivering efficiencies and effectiveness
Chief Executive	Review the way which the council performance manages its services and functions
Chief Executive	Improving the support for elected Members and officers in undertaking the business of the council

Directorate	How will we measure our performance? Indicator	Ref
Chief Executive	Resident perceptions that the council is making the area better	LI
Resources and Support Services	% of requests resolved at first point of contact	CST1
Chief Executive	Staff perceptions of changes to the council's ways of working	LI
Resources and Support Services	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax new claims and change events	CST15

## Resources and Efficiency Portfolio

Councillor Ashley Howells

A key element of this portfolio is overseeing delivery of services, efficiently, both in performance and costs.

There is a need to continue to review how we work to ensure that structures, working practices and skills are appropriate.

In these very challenging economic times it is vitally important the Council optimises value for money in its use of all resources.

As buying champion, the role is to ensure the council commissions and procures quality services and supplies, as cost effectively as possible. We must understand the market and seek to influence and develop it, for the benefit of delivering low council tax.

As the lead member on finance, there is a role to oversee capital and revenue expenditure to deliver on our corporate priorities, as established through public consultation.

Technology has the potential to change the way that we do business and live -we need to make the best use of IT to be efficient.

## Portfolio A-Z:-:

- Accountancy.
- Budget
- Capital and Revenue Expenditure
- Efficiency Savings
- Financial Monitoring
- Health and Safety Champion
- Human Resources
- Member Development and Support
- Information and Communication Technology
- Procurement Champion
- Treasury Management
- Workforce Development



## APPENDIX A

Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?
Deliver efficiencies, ensuring that resources follow priorities
Take advantage of procurement and cost saving opportunities
Develop staff and members

Directorate	How will we do this?
Resources and Support Services	Conduct reviews of services directed at creating larger scale efficiencies
Resources and Support Services	Further develop the workforce
Chief Executive	Encourage partners to co-operate with the council in providing services

Directorate	How will we measure our performance?	Ref
Resources and Support Services	% invoices paid on time within 30 days	RE2
Resources and Support Services	Days lost to sickness	RE1
Resources and Support Services	% projected variance against full year council budget	RE3

## Environment and Recycling Portfolio

Councillor Marion Reddish

A major part of the portfolio involves improving our ability to understand and quantify our use of natural resources. The role ensures that the council has coherent sustainability policies. Management and elected Members must take ownership of environmental sustainability issues in service delivery.

The Council remains committed to reducing its carbon footprint as demonstrated by the range of measures within the Carbon Management Plan.

The Council supports partnership working measures to promote energy efficiencies in homes.

In the area of food safety and health and safety, the portfolio is concerned with making sure places that serve food are safe.

Safety campaigns giving advice and enforcement action are part of that process. Investigating circumstances around infectious diseases and work-related injuries are also part of our responsibility.

Environmental protection, including monitoring smoke control areas, investigating noise

control complaints, dealing with asbestos removal and contaminated land are a priority

within the environmental health service.

The portfolio is responsible for the integrated recycling and waste strategy. It has moved from enhancing the dry recycling service to weekly food waste collections, extending the garden waste collection service and reorganising collection days. Residents are important to us and assisting residents to minimise waste and increase recycling by campaigns and interaction with them are a key part of our strategy to success.

Streetscene are managing, maintaining and improving the borough's green spaces and public realm. We intend to continue our high standards of street cleansing, litter clearance, graffiti removal and abandoned car removal.

## APPENDIX A

### Portfolio A-Z:-

- Buses and Concessionary Travel and Taxis
- Car Park Management
- Climate Change, Sustainability and Energy Efficiency
- Environmental Enforcement;
- Environmental Health
- Flooding and Drainage.
- Highways and Transport (Operational)
- Recycling and Waste Management
- Streetscene – Litter, Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Gardens

## APPENDIX A

Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?
Ensure streets and opens spaces are clean and clear
Ensure sustainable initiatives for the environment
Ensure high standards of safety and public health

Directorate	How will we do this?
Operational Services	Improve efficiency of recycling and waste: Increase participation and promote waste minimising initiatives
Operational Services	Continue to develop kerbside and increase recycling at schools and business
Operational Services	Commence a review of our recycling and waste strategy
Regeneration and Development	Implement our climate change and carbon reduction plans
Regeneration and Development	Inspect food businesses and continue the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to advise the public of our findings

Directorate	How will we measure our performance? Indicator	Ref
Operational Services	Residual waste	ER1
Operational Services	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	ER2
Operational Services	Improved street and environmental cleanliness	ER3
Regeneration and Development	Carbon emissions by the council	NI 185
Regeneration and Development	% category A+ B food businesses inspections completed in time.	ER4
Regeneration and Development	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	LI

## Culture and Active Communities Portfolio

Councillor James Bannister

The council provides and supports a wide range of sports, leisure and cultural facilities, some directly managed and others through partnerships. An ambitious programme of events takes place all year round across this portfolio.

The opening of the new leisure facility, Jubilee2, in the town centre coincides with Olympic year. Facilities in the new building include a 25-metre pool, a training pool with moveable floor, fitness centre, climbing centre, two studios, a children's activity zone, exhibition space and a café.

The Borough Museum and Art Gallery is accredited to the Learning Outside the Classroom scheme, the benchmark for excellence in heritage education. From this year it offers three different gallery spaces for contemporary art exhibitions and gift shop, all supported by committed and knowledgeable volunteers.

The council is encouraging and supporting the use of community buildings, involving partners and the community.

The council successfully manages 750 hectares of parks and green spaces across the borough, including outdoor sports facilities, 50 playgrounds, seven allotment sites, seven cemeteries and a crematorium. Six sites hold the prestigious national Green Flag Award and the council has succeeded in winning the Small City category at the regional Heart of England in Bloom awards, as well as a silver medal in the national Britain in Bloom awards representing small cities in Britain.

### Portfolio A-Z:-

- Arts Development
- Britain in Bloom
- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- Children and Young People
- Children's Trust/ Community and Learning Partnerships
- Active Lifestyles
- Cultural Development
- Health and Wellbeing
- Leisure Facilities
- Museum
- Sport



## APPENDIX A

Desired outcome – what will this mean for residents?
Promote healthy lifestyle choices, encouraging participation in sport and physical activity
Promote cultural activity, and participation in arts
Provide high quality facilities for those who live, work, visit or study in the borough

Directorate	How will we do this?
Operational Services	Enhance our leisure and recreation offer in the borough through robust management arrangements
Operational Services	Work with key partners by implementing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to reduce health inequalities in the borough.
Operational Services	Develop our role in arts and cultural activities to offer vibrant cultural sites and activities for the education and enjoyment of everyone

Directorate	How will we measure our performance? Indicator	Ref
Operational Services	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	CA1
Operational Services	Number of people visiting the museum	CA2
Operational Services	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	LI
Operational Services	Satisfaction with leisure and cultural services	LI

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## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 TO 2016/17

**Submitted by:** Executive Director – Resources and Support Services

**Portfolio:** Resources and Efficiency

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide 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.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) To approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 to 2016/17.
- (b) That the report be referred to the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment.

### **Reasons**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy underpins the whole financial planning structure of the Authority. It is closely aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan and focuses on targeting its financial resources in line with its stated aims and objectives.

## 1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Borough Council is committed to achieving excellence in its service delivery and considerable progress has been made in recent years with significant improvements in performance indicators and positive feedback from external auditors. Integral to this ambition is the need to effectively target its financial resources in line with its stated aims and objectives.
- 1.2 The document attached as **Appendix A**, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period from 2012 to 2017, demonstrates alignment with the Corporate Plan and will be the main vehicle in assessing the Council's financial position, ensuring efficiency in service delivery and targeting resources to agreed priority areas.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Local government in general, and district councils in particular continue to face the prospect of operating within a severely challenging financial environment. With further large decreases in general government grant forecast, the Council has had to review the services that it provides and its approach to value for money to keep council tax increases as low as possible.
- 2.2 Local authorities were informed of their allocations of formula grant (comprising Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates Grant) for 2012/13 when they received notification of the amount for 2011/12 in January 2011. Formula Grant for 2011/12 was £8.285m, whilst the amount notified for 2012/13 is £7.315m, an 11.7% reduction. However there are no details of the formula grant amounts for the following years, so an assumption needs to be made about further reductions in respect of those years. Accordingly, the MTFS

incorporates the known 11.7 per cent reduction in grant for 2012/13 and has assumed that there will be a further 5% reduction in 2013/14 and each of the next three years.

- 2.3 The Government is currently carrying out the Local Government Resource Review, which is looking at how local authority services should be funded. One of the primary proposals contained in consultation published in July 2011 is that local authorities should be allowed to retain their locally raised business rates, to take effect from the financial year 2013/14, which is within the period covered by this MTFS. There will be an effect on individual authorities' finances; some will gain from the change whilst others will lose resources. However, there are numerous technical issues to be determined before a concrete picture of the revised arrangements will emerge, which means that the impact on the Council cannot be predicted at this stage. Therefore, an assumption relating to any gains or losses arising from this change has not been included in the MTFS.
- 2.4 The purpose of the comprehensive five year MTFS is to illustrate how the Council's Corporate Plan is driving the medium term financial plan over the next five years. Whilst standing on its own as a strategy, it is an integral part of the Council's overall planning process comprising service delivery plans, the Corporate Plan and the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 2.5 The MTFS identifies significant budgetary shortfalls over the next five years that will need addressing with robust financial and budget strategies. The Council has made a good start in identifying areas where savings can be made by carrying out a comprehensive budget service review programme during 2010/11. This focussed on:
- Areas of activity undertaken and whether these are statutory or discretionary and how many staff are involved.
  - The impact of withdrawing discretionary duties and reducing statutory duties.
  - The potential for outsourcing and shared services.
  - Opportunities to generate or increase income.
- 2.6 Specific areas looked at in the budget service review included:
- Income generation and marketing strategy
  - Management of vacant posts
  - Review of overtime budgets
  - Use of consultants/professional fees
  - Modernisation/transformation of the council
  - Specific services reviews
  - Joint working with other local authorities
  - Accommodation and energy efficiency
- 2.7 Some of these savings were built into the 2011/12 budget, however, there are further savings opportunities arising from the review which can be included in the 2012/13 and future years' budgets.
- 2.8 The MTFS sets out the significant savings deriving from the review which can be made in the 2012/13 budget and shows how these plus some other savings and additional income streams can be used to bridge the gap identified for 2012/13.

### 3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Members approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 - 2016/17.

#### 4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 4.1 Without a Medium Term Financial Strategy it would be difficult to demonstrate the alignment of resources with the Corporate Plan. It is also the main vehicle for assessing the Council's position, ensuring efficiency in service delivery and targeting resources to agreed priorities.

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

- 5.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies the resources to deliver the corporate priorities of the Authority linked to expected outcomes.

#### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy is not a statutory document but it is considered best practice.

#### 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 Differential equality impact issues will be identified against the key strategies, policies and functions of the Council and will be considered in producing future service improvements, which will then be reflected within the Council's budgets.

#### 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies future years' shortfalls in financial resources which will need to be addressed as part of the Council's budget strategies.

#### 9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Finance Officer to report on the robustness of the budget. The main risks to the budget include:

- Spending in excess of the budget
- Income falling short of the budget
- Unforeseen elements, e.g. changes in interest rates

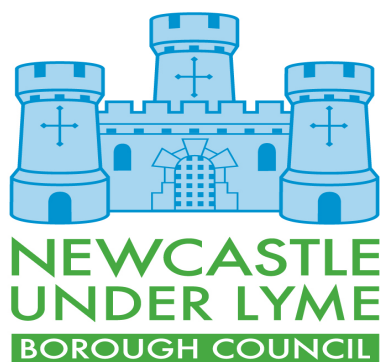
Such risks require regular and careful monitoring and it is essential that the council has sufficient reserves to call on if required, e.g. the council has a general fund balance of £1.75 million. In previous years the Chief Finance Officer has believed that the assurance required under Section 25 can be given and, with careful budget planning, robust monitoring and adequate level of reserves, there should be no reasons to alter that view.

#### 10. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2016/17.

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# Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 to 2016/17



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## Foreword

The Council is committed to achieving excellence in its service delivery and considerable progress has been made over the last year with significant improvements in performance indicators and positive feedback from external auditors. Integral to this ambition is the need to effectively target its financial resources in line with its stated aims and objectives.

It is the Council's ambition to continue to substantially improve its service delivery over the next five years. Sound and effective financial planning has a vital role to play in ensuring that ambition is realised, through providing sufficient resources to enable the services that matter most to our citizens to be delivered and to respond to the increased demands placed upon the Council. A key element will also be the need to improve the value for money that is given to council taxpayers.

The current recession and the reductions in central government support to local authorities, particularly for second tier district councils such as Newcastle, reinforces the need for sound financial planning, not just for the year immediately ahead (2012/13) but over the medium term as well.

To meet this need, a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has been developed for a period spanning five years, from 2012/13 to 2016/17. The MTFS demonstrates alignment with the Corporate Plan and will be the main vehicle in assessing the Council's financial position, ensuring efficiency in service delivery and targeting resources to agreed priority areas. It illustrates how the Council's Corporate Plan is driving the medium term financial plans for each block of services over the next five years.

It is a key document informing the 2012/13 budget process. Indeed the assumptions about future costs and income together with those relating to investment and efficiency savings will be incorporated in the 2012/13 budget and will account for the majority of the change in net spending between the 2012/13 budget and that for 2011/12. The indications given in the MTFS concerning the gap between future years' expenditure levels and available resources will enable the Council to draw up an informed strategy, in advance, to bridge those shortfalls.

The MTFS will be used during 2012/13 as the basis for reviewing the Council's financial position. The assumptions contained in it will be regularly reviewed and amendments made to the plan, where necessary. If any consequences in terms of significant adverse budget variations become apparent, this information will be used to formulate an action plan to deal with the budget shortfall. Conversely, if a significant positive variance is indicated, and likely to persist, this knowledge will enable the Council to decide whether to use this to increase reserves or to reallocate some or all of it to additional investments in line with corporate priorities

Whilst the MTFS stands on its own as a strategy, it is an integral part of the Council's overall planning process comprising service delivery plans (Service and Financial Plans), the Corporate Plan and the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **National context - background**

Central government support for local authorities' revenue budgets is provided in the form of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and National Non Domestic Rates grant (NNDR). The amounts to be paid to local authorities as a whole and to individual authorities are announced via the annual local government finance settlement, provisional figures being announced usually in December and final ones in January.

Under existing arrangements NNDR (business rates) revenue collected by local authorities is pooled for redistribution to local authorities as the NNDR grant. So while local authorities have a vital role to play in supporting the local economy, there is limited fiscal incentive to do so.

The Government is currently carrying out the Local Government Resource Review, which is looking at how local authority services should be funded. One of the primary proposals contained in consultation published in July 2011 is that local authorities should be allowed to retain their locally raised business rates, to take effect from the financial year 2013/14, which is within the period covered by this MTFS. There will be an effect on individual authorities' finances; some will gain from the change whilst others will lose resources. However, there are numerous technical issues to be determined before a concrete picture of the revised arrangements will emerge, which means that the impact on the Council cannot be predicted at this stage. Therefore, an assumption relating to any gains or losses arising from this change has not been included in the MTFS.

## **Links to other strategies and plans**

The MTFS has links to a number of other Council and wider community strategies and plans. Where these have financial consequences for the Council, these are reflected in the MTFS. Those which have a particularly significant input are:

### ***Corporate plan***

The Corporate Plan is based on community needs and describes the key actions that the Council will take over the next three years. It sets out the priorities based on needs so that local people can see what is being done on their behalf. Resources will be allocated in line with these priorities. There is thus a clear and direct link to the MTFS from the Corporate Plan

The Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan are:

- Promoting a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough
- Promoting a Borough of opportunity
- Promoting a healthy and active community
- Transforming our Council to achieve excellence

The schemes/initiatives identified below reflect the Council's determination to ensure that resources follow priorities:

### ***Promoting a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough***

- Improve efficiency of recycling and waste, increase participation and promote waste minimising initiatives
- Continue to develop kerbside and increase recycling at schools and business



- Fully review our recycling and waste strategy
- Implement our climate change and carbon reduction plans
- Work in partnership to support victims of anti-social behaviour, crime and domestic violence
- Work on root causes of problems through challenge in communities
- Focus with partners on empowering local people in communities

*Promoting a Borough of opportunity*

- Review the Council's asset management strategy, aiming for optimal use of the Council's asset portfolio
- Implement the refreshed economic development strategy
- Implement the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the aim of seeking funding for regeneration
- Prepare a site allocations development plan
- Implement a new housing strategy and local investment plan

*Promoting a healthy and active community*

- Enhance our leisure and recreation offer in the borough through robust management arrangements
- Work with key partners by implementing the Health and Wellbeing strategy to reduce health inequalities in the borough
- Develop our role in arts and culture activities to offer vibrant cultural sites and activities for the education and enjoyment of everyone

*Transforming our Council to achieve excellence*

- Respond to service aspects of the decentralisation and localism bill
- Implement equalities legislative requirements as appropriate
- Develop the existing transformation programme to build on the track record of delivering efficiencies
- Developing our role with the aim of seeking funding for regeneration
- Conduct reviews of services directed at creating larger scale efficiencies
- Further develop the workforce
- Encourage partners to co-operate with the Council in providing services

Other strategies and plans are compiled in line with the principles contained in the Corporate Plan and take account of its content.

**Values**

We have three underpinning key values that will remain constant through the delivery of our specific priorities:

*Putting People First*

We will put our customers at the centre of what we do. We will make best use of information to target services to groups and individuals in our local communities in the most efficient and effective way.

*Delivering excellent and sustainable services*

We will strive to deliver excellent services at all times. This will apply when our

customers contact us and when we deliver services out in the community. We will continually review the impact on the environment of our services, and the way we deliver them.

#### *Making the best use of resources*

We will strive to deliver all our services in the most cost effective way. This may include direct delivery, sharing services with other local councils our public sector bodies, and commissioning from the private sector. We will create a more flexible organisation that communicates well both internally and with customers.

#### ***Capital strategy and capital programme***

The Capital Strategy sets out how the Council proposes to deploy its capital resources in order to assist it to achieve its corporate and service objectives. It also takes into account the resources which are likely to be available to the Council to fund capital investment and the effect of that investment on the Council's revenue budget.

The Council's detailed capital investment plan is contained in its Approved Capital Programme. The current programme was approved by Full Council on 23 February 2011. This programme provides for £21,638,800 of investment over a two-year period in projects across all of the Council's priority areas.

The Capital Strategy has been prepared against a background of unprecedented reductions in funding provided to local authorities by central government and its agencies, arising from the need to restrain public expenditure owing to the ongoing economic recession and to rebalance public finances. At the same time, the Council's own resources available to finance capital projects are running out and will need replenishing before any substantial further capital investments can be made. Whilst the Council has benefited from an ability to recycle income derived from the disposal of land and property over many years, it became evident that a more focused programme of asset disposals would be required to counteract the effects of reduced external finance.

The Council is presently debt free, having no long term loans outstanding. However, if further capital receipts do not materialise borrowing may be the only option to finance proposed capital expenditure in future years. This will have an effect on the general fund revenue account as financing charges are funded from revenue, reduced funds available for investment would reduce investment income.

#### ***Asset management strategy***

The asset management strategy encapsulates the Council's response to national policies and guidelines; it sets out the processes for the strategic management of the Council's property assets in order to ensure the best use of assets to meet corporate objectives in an efficient and effective manner. These processes resonate with the Capital Strategy and in turn may result in projects being included in the capital programme.

Through a planned and ongoing review of the asset register, against current and anticipated usage, disposal of surplus property will provide investment into the Council's capital programme. In parallel the Council will seek partner contributions (for example through external grants, partner organisation use of Council assets to contribute to revenue streams and joint venture opportunities).

### ***Treasury management strategy***

This is approved annually and sets out the Council's strategy for investment of its surplus funds. The investment strategy, together with the prevailing market conditions in relation to interest rates and counterparty security will be the major factor in determining the return which is obtained on investments. Interest on investments has been a source of income in the revenue budget.

### ***Human resources strategy and workforce development plan***

The Human Resources Strategy provides the strategic linkages in people performance and management to enable the Council to meet the Corporate Plan objectives. The Workforce Development Plan sets out how the Council will develop the skills and capacity of its staff in line with the Human Resources Strategy. Where there are costs associated with this, these will be included in the MTFS.

### ***Charging policy***

The policy sets out what the Council intends to achieve through the charges it makes and the criteria which it will use to determine the level of charge for individual services. The annually approved scale of fees and charges is compiled in line with the principles set out in the policy. Income from fees and charges comprises a significant proportion of the income included in the revenue budget.

### ***Reserves and balances strategy***

The Council's Reserves and Balances Strategy indicates that, following a risk assessment, the minimum prudent level of general fund balance to hold is £1.75 million and that there should also be a contingency reserve of £100,000. Current indicators are that this strategy will be delivered.

### ***Departmental service delivery plans***

Service and Financial Plans (Delivery Plans) are an integral part of the Council's planning process and demonstrate the actions and targets of each directorate in order to achieve the Council's corporate objectives and priorities.

### ***Other strategies which may influence the MTFS***

There are a number of other Council strategies whose contents may have implications for the MTFS. These are:

- Value for Money Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- North Staffs Green Spaces Strategy
- Leisure Strategy
- Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Customer Access Strategy
- Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Reduction Plan.

## Compilation of the MTFS

### *Principles*

The MTFS considers changes to the 2011/12 base budget by breaking this budget down into its subjective cost and income components; pay, pensions, utilities, fuel, supplies and services, investment income, income from fees and charges, etc. An assessment is then made, in respect of each of these components, of the factors which might affect their cost or the amount of income receivable and whether there is likely to be a change in this cost or income, and if so how much it will amount to, in each year over the five year period. Also taken into consideration are any additional pressures which may apply to services over the five year period, plus any savings which have been identified and agreed or approved investments in services over the five years. The MTFS therefore shows the changes from the initial 2011/12 base budget through to 2016/17, demonstrating the variances between each of the years.

### *Base budget components assessed for cost variances*

These are set out in detail in Appendix A, which shows by how much in monetary terms the estimated budget for each of the five years varies by comparison to the previous year on account of these factors alone. Also shown are the assumptions about price changes that have been made in respect of each component.

In summary, the components examined and the factors which were taken into account to assess the changes were:

- Levels of Revenue Support Grant/NNDR Grant (known and estimated) as referred to in the National Context section of the strategy (page 4);
- Pay awards;
- Incremental pay increases;
- National Insurance increases, linked to increased pay;
- Superannuation increases, both to take account of increased pay and changes in contributions to the pension fund;
- Energy costs, based on advice from the Council's Procurement Officer and its energy consultants;
- Business rates increases on Council properties;
- Fuel for vehicles, based on advice from the Council's Procurement Officer and allowing for changes to fleet numbers and in vehicle types;
- General inflation in relation to supplies and services;
- Levels of grants and contributions paid by the Council to external bodies;
- Contract increases;
- Changes in amount of non-subsidisable rent allowances;
- Increase in income from customer receipts;
- Changes in specific government grants receivable;
- Changes in amounts of investment income receivable, both as a result of changes in forecasted interest rates and changes in relation to the capital sums available for investment;
- Contributions from reserves and
- Ongoing effects of previous savings exercises or investments associated with them

The following key assumptions were made:

- Full provision for known pay increases from incremental progression.

- Flat rate pay increase of £250 for staff earning £21,000 and below, there will be no pay award in the first year then 1 per cent thereafter.
- Central Government Grants (Revenue Support Grant and NNDR Grant) will decrease by 11.7 per cent in 2012/13 with an assumed further 5 per cent reduction thereafter.
- A 15 per cent increase in transport fuel in each of the five years, as assessed by the Council's Transport Manager and Procurement Officer.
- An increase in pension contributions (source - Staffordshire County Council).
- An increase of general inflation on supplies and services, contracted services and ICT.
- Energy costs are based on an assessment by the Council's energy management consultants and Building Surveyor.
- Increases in line with inflation for most income heads.
- Interest rates based on projections supplied by the Council's treasury management advisors.
- Investment income takes account of the latest capital programme expenditure forecasts.

Whilst all of these are important and of some significance, a sensitivity analysis has been undertaken on the following four issues for which the main findings are:

- The level of Revenue Support Grant and Business rates which is received  
*These support over 60 per cent of the budget so have a major impact. A variation of 1 per cent in the level of external support via these two sources would amount to £80,000.*
- How movements in interest rates will affect the Borough Council  
*The Council has no external debt but does generate income from its investment portfolio. The Bank of England base rate is currently 0.50 per cent. It is estimated that a change of 0.50 per cent in the interest levels on the Council's investments would lead to £44,000 (based on anticipated investment levels) more or less interest.*
- How changes in nationally agreed pay awards will impact  
*There is no provision for the pay award in the first year and 1 per cent thereafter. With a pay bill of £17m, a change of 0.50 per cent would save or cost £88,500. An allowance of a £250 increase per employee has been made for those employees with a salary of below £21,000.*
- How actuarial changes in the Staffordshire County Council pension scheme will affect the Council  
*Pension costs are currently 23 per cent of salaries for all of those staff in the pension scheme. Over the next five years forecast increases have been factored in. A variation of 1 per cent would save or cost £116,000.*

### **Investments**

Despite the current financial crisis the Council is still investing in the following:-

- Decisions already taken by the Council in respect of new investments targeted at priority areas; for example, repair work to the Midway Multi-storey car park, and Newcastle Town centre works.

## Assessment of what the MTFs means

The implications of the MTFs forecast will be taken into consideration in the preparation of detailed budgets for 2012/13 and give guideline figures for the budgets for the following four financial years. Details of the timetable, which is being followed, are shown later.

The summarised MTFs illustrates that the Council would have the following shortfalls over the next five years which need to be addressed by a combination of efficiency measures, better procurement, service reductions, council tax increases, support from reserves, etc.

- £2.141m in 2012/13
- £709,000 in 2013/14
- £696,000 in 2014/15
- £673,000 in 2015/16
- £718,000 in 2016/17

As a percentage of the net budget, the potential shortfall in 2012/13 represents 14 per cent of the current year's net revenue budget.

## Budget strategy

The shortfalls identified above need to be eliminated so that balanced budgets are compiled with spending matched with resources. A strategy has been developed identifying proposals to bridge the gap. These proposals will be considered by the Cabinet in January and Full Council when setting the council tax in February.

Budget Service Reviews carried out during 2010/11 identified potential saving areas. All heads of service were asked to produce a piece of work which explored:-

- Areas of activity undertaken by their teams, whether these were statutory or discretionary and how many staff are involved.
- The impact of withdrawing discretionary duties and reducing statutory duties.
- The potential for outsourcing and shared services.
- Opportunities to generate or increase income.

The budget "service review areas" exercise will form a key element in the plan. These and other savings, income streams and use of reserves will be used to bridge the gaps. They include:-

- Leisure Services – net effects of the closure of Jubilee 1 and Knutton and the opening of Jubilee 2
- Restructures of:
  - Environmental Health
  - Operations
  - Customer and ICT Services
  - Central Services
- Vacant posts review
- Housing advice contract - renegotiation of the current contract
- Homelessness prevention schemes - review of type of assistance
- CCTV shared services - liaison with other local authorities
- Energy – retendering of contracts

- Statutory inspection services - retendering of contracts
- Allotments - review of charges
- Summons and distress costs - review of costs passed to defaulters where successful liability orders are made
- Accommodation – income (both rental and service charges) from new partners in both the Civic Offices and Kidsgrove
- Other sources of funding including:
  - Homelessness grant – additional funding
  - New homes bonus – new funding in respect of both revenue and capital
- Use of budget support fund
- Council Tax Grant – based on a 2.5% increase

## Timetable and procedure

There are two key groups who are involved in the financial management of the Council.

- The Cabinet
- The Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Further reports will be made to these key groups in advance of the final recommendations to Council in February 2012. The key dates in the timetable are currently: -

Action	Date
MTFS to Cabinet	19 October 2011
MTFS to Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee	2 November 2011
Cabinet to approve council tax base	18 January 2012
Draft Budget to Cabinet	18 January 2012
Draft Budget to Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee	18 January 2012
Budget approved by Cabinet for proposal to Full Council	1 February 2012
Budget approved by Full Council	15 February 2012

## Risk statement

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Finance Officer to report on the robustness of the budget. The main risks to the budget include:

- Spending in excess of the budget
- Income falling short of the budget
- Unforeseen elements, e.g. changes in interest rates

Such risks require regular and careful monitoring and it is essential that the Council has sufficient reserves to call on if required, e.g. the Council has a general fund balance of £1.75 million. In previous years the Chief Finance Officer has believed

that the assurances required under Section 25 can be given and, with careful budget planning, robust monitoring and an adequate level of reserves, there should be no reasons to alter that view.

## **Collection fund and taxbase**

The Council's taxbase represents the average "value" of the properties in its area as set against a standard band D property. For example a band D property is expressed as one whilst a lower value band A property is calculated as 6/9 of the band D. On the other hand, the highest value property is band H which is calculated at 18/9 of band D.

The calculation of the taxbase has an important effect on the level of council tax in that an increase in the taxbase (say, from new building) will mean that the amount to be raised is spread over more properties whilst a reduction (say, from demolitions) will mean that it has to be spread over fewer properties.

For 2011/12 the taxbase was calculated at 39,061 properties.

The collection fund is the vehicle for which all council tax is collected. The Council makes an assumption as to the percentage of council tax which will be ultimately collected. That decision will be made in January 2012. If that target is not met then there will be a deficit which will have to be accounted for in the next financial year whilst if there is a surplus then this can be used to offset whatever council tax is levied in the next financial year.

## **Efficiency and improving value for money**

The MTFs has identified gaps totaling £8.866m over the financial years 2008/09 to 2011/12. The gaps were plugged by efficiencies and savings (£6.246m), use of general reserves (£0.35m), use of the budget support fund (£1.676m) and Council Tax increases/use of the Council Tax freeze grant (£0.594m).

There is a significant need to continue to review how we work to ensure that structures, working practices and skills are appropriate and that in turn, they provide efficient and value for money services.

## **Environmental footprint**

One of the four priorities in the Corporate Plan is "Promoting a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough" so it is clear that there is a wide understanding of the impact and implications of the Council's policies on the environment and hence the need to develop and maintain a sustainable approach. In formulating the MTFs as a means of enabling the achievement of its priorities and to improve service delivery, it is essential that all staff, members and stakeholders are aware of the requirement to consider the environmental impact of their actions and how these relate to the VfM Strategy. In the Corporate Plan, key activities will focus on continuing to increase waste recycling, to reduce carbon emissions through a review of energy consumption and transport costs and through awareness raising of the whole issue of climate change.



## **Procurement**

The Council has an approved Procurement Strategy which encompasses every aspect of the purchasing process from determining the need for goods, works or services, to buying and delivery in order to help achieve the Council's key priorities and outputs.

The procurement role is to ensure the Council commissions and procures quality services and supplies, as cost effectively as possible. We must understand the market and seek to influence and develop it for the benefit of delivering low council tax. As part of this role all contracts that the Council currently has are to be reviewed in order to ensure that they are efficient and cost effective.

## **Equalities**

Differential equality impact issues will be identified against the key strategies, policies and functions of the Council and will be considered in producing future service improvements, which will then be reflected within the Council's budgets.

**MTFS Summary**

**Appendix A**

Summary	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Notes
<b>Changes to Base Budget</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	
Employees:						
▪ Incremental Increases	65	36	15	2	0	As per Payroll
▪ Pay Awards	61	130	131	132	134	0% increase in year 1, 1% after and £250 for staff <£21k for year 1
▪ Superannuation Increases	131	124	115	108	102	As per Staffordshire County Council – note, all staff are not in the LGPS
▪ Vacancy Factor	65	72	78	81	84	3% in year 1 reducing by 0.5% each year until 2016/17
▪ National Insurance	4	3	1	0	0	Government increase of 1%
Premises (e.g. Business Rates)	22	23	24	25	26	Based on 3.5% increase
Transport (e.g. Fuel)	54	62	71	82	94	Based on 15% increase
Other Costs (e.g. General Inflation, Grants and Contributions)	141	132	137	141	144	General inflation on supplies and services, contracted services and ICT
Adjustments to 2011/12 base re.non-recurring items eg waste partnership grant	282	0	0	0	0	Expenditure taken from/income added to 2011/12 budget for 1 year only
New Pressures eg revenue costs associated with the Ryecroft acquisition	204	0	0	0	0	Proposals for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Strategy
Investment Income	34	(76)	(56)	(54)	0	Based on forecasted interest rates
Use of Budget Support Fund in 2011/12 Base	368	0	0	0	0	
Government Grants	970	366	347	330	314	Settlement decreased by 11.7% in 2012/13 and 5% thereafter
Fees and Charges	(260)	(163)	(167)	(174)	(180)	Increase based on 3.5% increase in 2012/13 and 2% thereafter
<b>TOTAL MTFS SHORTFALLS</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>718</b>	

## **APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

**Submitted by:** Head of Revenues and Benefits

**Portfolio:** Customer Services & Transformation

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

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

### **Recommendation**

**That, in accordance with Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted in respect of the organisations and premises detailed in Appendix A of this report**

### **Reasons**

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

#### **1. Background**

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

#### **2. Issues**

2.1 Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables charitable or not for profit organisations to make application to the Council for consideration of assistance or additional assistance, with the statutory rates liability in respect of the premises they occupy for the furtherance of their activities. 25% of any discretionary relief granted and 75% of any additional discretion relief granted is paid for by the Borough Council. The remaining elements are offset against payments made to the National Non Domestic Rate Pool.

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

#### **3. Options Considered**

Not applicable

#### **4. Proposal**

4.1 That the discretionary relief set out in the attached appendices be approved.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 Legislation enables the Council to provide financial assistance for the payment of business rates for charitable and not for profit organisations. The roles of these organisations contribute to the health, wellbeing and activity of the area, often contributing to the creation of opportunities for individuals and groups who would otherwise be unable to access such services.

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

- 6.1 Granting the discretionary relief will fit well with the Council's corporate priorities of Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough, Creating a Borough of Opportunity and Creating a Healthy and Active Community.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

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

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 25% of the cost of any discretionary relief granted and 75% of the cost of any additional discretionary relief is met by the Borough Council.

10. **Major Risks**

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

11. **Key Decision Information**

Not applicable

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Not applicable

13. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Local Government Finance Act 1988 – Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988**  
**– APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

1. East Lancs Moneyline (IPS) Ltd., 25 Bridge Street, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 2RY

East Lancs Moneyline (IPS) Ltd is a not for profit organisation which aims to relieve poverty by providing financial services and the advancement of education and self help in financial matters to the community. It occupies 25 Bridge Street to provide a regional centre for carrying out these objectives.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 85% discretionary rate relief, 25% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers.

The rates payable for the current financial year are £2,381.50. The cost of granting the discretionary relief would therefore be £506.07.

2. Douglas Macmillan Hospice (Staffordshire) Enterprises Ltd., 18 The Parade, Silverdale, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 6LQ

Douglas Macmillan Hospice (Staffordshire) Enterprises Ltd is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief. It is an organisation which provides specialist palliative care for people facing cancer and other life limiting illnesses and help and support for their families and carers. It occupies 18 The Parade as a charity shop for the sale of goods donated to the organisation.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 5% additional discretionary rate relief, in addition to the mandatory charity relief it already receives, 75% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers

The rates payable for the current financial year are £1,472.20. The cost of granting the additional discretionary relief would therefore be £55.21

3. Newcastle Bangladeshi Cultural Association, 18 George Street, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 1DJ

Newcastle Bangladeshi Cultural Association is an organisation which promotes the well being of its community residents. It occupies the Meeting Hall to provide a meeting place for carrying out these objectives.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 95% discretionary rate relief, 25% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers.

The rates payable for the current financial year are £3,704.07. The cost of granting the discretionary relief would therefore be £879.71

4. Rotary Club of Kidsgrove, Units 1 & 2 Kidsgrove Town Hall, Liverpool Road, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4EL

The Rotary Club of Kidsgrove is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief. It aims to give assistance to the poor and needy and other charitable pursuits. It occupies units 1 & 2 Kidsgrove Town Hall to provide storage of equipment and associated accessories used for carrying out these objectives.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 5% additional discretionary rate relief, in addition to the mandatory charity relief it already receives, 75% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers

The rates payable for the current financial year are £606.20. The cost of granting the additional discretionary relief would therefore be £22.73.

5. Silverdale Youth & Community, 65 Mill Street, Silverdale, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 6PF

Silverdale Youth & Community is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief. It occupies 65 Mill Street to provide a venue for meetings and events for youth and community activities.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 5% additional discretionary rate relief, in addition to the mandatory charity relief it already receives, 75% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers

The rates payable for the current financial year are £2,717.62. The cost of granting the additional discretionary relief would therefore be £101.91.

6. St Thomas Parochial Church Council, The Wade Centre, The Avenue, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 1AG

St Thomas Parochial Church Council is a not for profit organisation. It occupies The Wade Centre to provide nursery provision for the local community as a ministry of St Thomas Church and for general church activities.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 85% discretionary rate relief, 25% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers.

The rates payable for the current financial year are £9,105.25. The cost of granting the discretionary relief would therefore be £1,934.87

7. People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, 36 Hanover Street, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 1AU

People's Dispensary for Sick Animals is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief.

The organisations aims are to provide free veterinary care to the sick and injured pets of needy people and to promote responsible pet ownership. It occupies 36 Hanover Street as a veterinary clinic to assist with these aims.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 5% discretionary rate relief, in addition to the mandatory charity relief it already receives, 75% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers.

The rates payable for the current financial year are £9,434.34. The cost of granting the additional discretionary relief would therefore be £353.79.

8. Madeley Village Hall, The Madeley Centre, New Road, Madeley, Crewe, CW3 9DN

Madeley Village Hall is a registered charity and as such already receives 80% mandatory charity relief.

The organisations aims are to provide services and accommodation for activities within the Madeley community and the wider Newcastle rural area. It occupies Madeley Village Hall for this purpose.

It is your usual practice to grant such an organisation 15% discretionary rate relief, in addition to the mandatory charity relief it already receives, 75% of which cost will be met by the council tax payers. The previous Madeley Village Hall Committee received additional discretionary relief for the former Madeley Village Hall.

The rates payable the current financial year are £23,557.68. The cost of granting the additional discretionary relief would therefore be £2,650.24.

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## SITE ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – SCOPE OF CONTENTS AND DRAFT TIMETABLE

**Submitted by:** Regeneration and Development

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To agree a revised timetable for the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) That Cabinet agree to proceed with the preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document in accordance with the draft timetable set out in the report.**

**(b) That a further report is submitted to a subsequent meeting on an Issues paper together with further details of the consultation arrangements for the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.**

### **Reasons**

The preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document is included in the Council's approved Local Development Scheme and is a very important priority in the Local Development Framework. Formal changes to the Local Development Scheme are required to be approved by Cabinet.

## **1. Background and Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the preparation of a Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (the Plan) forms part of the Council's Local Development Scheme (the document that explains the programme in respect of planning policy documents) which was 'brought into effect,' in January 2009.
- 1.2 This report proposes a revised timetable for this important development plan document (DPD) and describes the role of the different timetable stages. The Planning Committee are considering a report on the Site Allocations Development Plan and Policies on 11 October, 2011 and are being asked for their views and these will be reported orally to Cabinet.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the progress of this DPD has been delayed due to the need to pay regard to the scrutiny review of the Newcastle Development Programme. Nevertheless the new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places a strong emphasis on having up to date plans in place and further increases the pressure on Councils by proposing that planning permission should be granted 'where the plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date.' The adopted Core Spatial Strategy places the Council in a relatively strong position, however, your officers consider that the Council should take the necessary steps through the preparation of a Site Allocations and Policies DPD to put in place 'proactive' policies that provide an even greater degree of 'certainty' to facilitate sites coming forward 'efficiently' and in a managed way.

- 1.4 The recent Cabinet resolution 'to test the appropriateness of development of the Council's surplus non-operational land through the preparation of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document process' further, increases the importance of progressing the Plan as quickly as possible.
- 1.5 Once adopted the Plan will form a part of the Development Plan and as such will carry full weight in the determination of planning applications. It will remain in force until the end of the plan period until 2026.

## 2. **Scope and Content**

- 2.1 The Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy, adopted in November 2009, provides the overarching framework to develop and support detailed planning policies. The Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (the Plan) will be a more detailed plan and once adopted will: direct where future housing, retail, leisure facilities and employment should be located; which areas of the Borough should be protected and safeguarded from future development; and the main tests that the Council should take into account when deciding whether to grant planning permission for new development.
- 2.2 In respect of the latter this will involve the generation of criteria based policies relating to specific site allocations and a limited suite of generic development control policies giving clear guidance on what will or will not be permitted and where. In due course these generic policies will supersede many of the policies 'saved' from the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011, adopted in 2003, and its supporting supplementary planning guidance.
- 2.3 Housing and employment sites will only be allocated if they are of strategic importance, or required to ensure that the delivery targets set in the Core Spatial Strategy can be met. However, additional evidence will be needed to justify the site, including whether the site is suitable for the intended purpose (the issue of suitability is intimately related to viability) and available and furthermore that a high quality and sustainable development can be achieved.
- 2.4 All allocated sites will be identified on an updated version of the Proposals Map.

### 2.5 **Local and National Priorities**

In addition to issues of local importance, issues of national importance like climate change will need to be reflected in the Plan. However, it will be possible to put a local interpretation and weight on any such issues, although overall the Plan will need to be in conformity with national policy.

### 2.6 **Managing Delivery**

The Plan will set out implementation strategies for housing and employment land. The aim will be to describe the approach to managing the delivery of allocated sites to ensure a flexible supply of land able to respond to changing economic circumstances.

### 2.7 **Place Shaping**

It will be a key objective of the Plan, when allocating land, to seek to create attractive neighbourhoods that function and relate well together. In respect of housing the aim would be to bring forward new housing schemes that benefit places socially, economically and environmentally.

- 2.8 Indeed the preparation of the Plan presents an excellent opportunity for the local community (includes the business community) to become actively involved in shaping their

neighbourhoods. However, it will be inevitable that the process of place shaping will have to balance competing, and often conflicting, objectives and needs within a community. At the end of the day it will be necessary to take a holistic view of the challenges the Borough faces even though there may be difficult and contentious choices.

## 2.9 Infrastructure

In addition to providing guidance for achieving the best arrangement of land uses and activities the Plan will seek to ensure that the allocated sites are supported by an adequate social and transport infrastructure.

- 2.10 This will involve a fresh iteration of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) prepared in support of the Core Spatial Strategy. The IDP will seek to set out when and what infrastructure is required and also, as far as possible, how and by whom this will be provided. To do this it will be necessary to liaise with service providers, including the County Council. In addition it will identify strategic infrastructure to be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy and individual site specific infrastructure to be funded through planning obligations.

## 3. Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.1 To comply with both European and National legislation, the Plan will be accompanied by a 'Sustainability Appraisal,' which is an assessment of its effect on the environmental, social and economic condition of the Borough. It will involve an assessment of the policies and proposals against indicators of sustainable development and targets in accordance with the methodology used during the production of the Core Spatial Strategy.
- 3.2 The indicators and targets will be decided following consultation with bodies such as the Environment Agency, community groups and individuals with expertise in sustainability appraisal.

## 4. Objective Assessment

- 4.1 The allocation of a site will not happen without an objective assessment of a site's suitability and deliverability. Such an assessment will include giving consideration to how the allocation of a site will help to deliver the aims and objectives of the Council's Joint Core Spatial Strategy, how well it is backed up by evidence from technical studies and databases and information held by both the Council itself, and other public and voluntary bodies (several of the main evidence documents are reported elsewhere on this agenda) and critically the views of the community, which have been obtained through a lengthy process of community collaboration.

## 5. Community Collaboration

- 5.1 The involvement of the community will be integral to the way in which the Plan is prepared and will be conducted through an iterative process of informal and formal consultation. This will involve engagement and partnership working with other council services, community groups, the third sector, the business community, including the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership, neighbouring authorities and statutory consultees like the Environment Agency and English Heritage.
- 5.2 The Plan is likely to be the focus of intense public interest not least as a result of the review of the Newcastle Development Programme, by the Council's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. Lessons learnt during this scrutiny process regarding public communication will enable the Council to manage public expectations more effectively, but it is evident that the

preparation of the Plan will impose very large demands on the Council and will require significant resource planning and very robust consultation and communication processes.

- 5.3 It should be noted that the information from local residents, given to the Council during the Review of the Newcastle Development Programme, will be taken into consideration.
- 5.4 Similarly the results of a survey of all businesses in Newcastle and Kidsgrove Town Centres, undertaken in June 2011, as part of the Borough Council's recent Retail and Leisure Capacity Study, will be taken into account.
- 5.6 The Council will take into account all comments made during the community engagement stages of the preparation of each DPD prior to publication of the DPD.

## 6. **Draft Timetable for the Site Allocations and Policies DPD**

### 6.1 **Stage One – Developing the Evidence Base**

The creation of a robust but proportionate evidence base remains critical to the plan making system. Work on the evidence base for the Plan is largely complete and includes: a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010 (subject to annual review); an updated Retail and Leisure Capacity Study for the Borough, the North Staffordshire Executive Housing Market Study and a Joint Employment Land Review conducted with the City Council.

- 6.2 Assessing whether a site is suitable will involve making a judgment that there is a reasonable prospect that development will occur on the site. Therefore, detailed assessments will be required in the case of sites where the costs of developing are expected to undermine the suitability and viability of the site. In some cases it may also be necessary to undertake work to assess flood risk so that potential mitigation works can be identified.

### 6.3 **Stage Two – Discussion of Issues and scoping of Options**

An 'Issues' paper will be prepared, which will work to 'set the scene' and get people up to speed with the issues impacting on the Borough, as well as, presenting a variety of policy options to resolve the main issues and take forward the policy objectives of the Core Spatial strategy.

- 6.4 It is the intention that this paper will form the basis of early discussions with: residents; representatives from the business community; partners; landowners; and developers and will provide them with an opportunity to consider and evaluate the different issues and potential options. The effectiveness of this 'frontloading' will be considered during an Examination in Public – a stage later on in the process (see 6.11 - Stage six).
- 6.5 It will also provide an opportunity to consider the Council's various evidence reports, as well as, identify their infrastructure requirements. People will also be able to nominate sites for development, including telling the Council about land that should be identified for new uses. It will not be the intention to seek views on detailed site proposals, but a long list of sites, accompanied by maps, will be made available for comment.
- 6.6 This 'frontloading' stage will be quite informal and is likely to be conducted via a range of workshops, forums and public meetings.

## 6.7 Stage Three - Options

This next stage will involve formal consultation on an "Options" document over a six week period and will aim to focus on the timing and location of available site options to be taken forward into the Draft Plan. At this stage it will remain open for people to express a preference for any option including stating the Council's proposals should be rejected. Similarly it will be possible to comment on any alternative options not being taken forward (those options, which are not seen as being suitable), as well as any new evidence reports used to justify the Council's position.

6.8 It may be necessary to consult more than once to refine and improve the options and then again on more detailed policy criteria relating to the implementation of a particular site option.

## 6.9 Stage Four – Publication of the Draft Plan

At this stage a Draft Plan will be published so that representations can be received, but solely on whether the proposals will be effective and can be justified and are consistent with national policy. This 'Publication' stage again will require a minimum six week consultation period prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

## 6.10 Stage Five - Submission Draft

The final plan will be 'Submitted' to the Planning Inspectorate for Public Examination following a review of the representations submitted after Publication. In addition a statement will be formally submitted setting out what consultation took place, a summary of the issues raised by any representations and the Council's response to each point.

## 6.11 Stage Six – Examination in Public

An Inspector will be appointed to undertake an Examination in Public on the Plan. A 'Hearing' will be held during the Examination period to provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the Examination in respect of any matter or topic identified by the Inspector. The role of the Inspector is to consider whether the document is legally compliant and satisfies the criteria for soundness, or in other words is fit for purpose.

6.12 At the Examination the Council will need to show a clear trail of option generation, appraisal, selection or rejection and the role that the Sustainability Appraisal and community engagement have played.

6.13 Should the proposals in the draft NPPF come into force it will also be necessary to demonstrate evidence of having successfully cooperated with neighbouring authorities to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts.

6.14 Planning positively to meet the infrastructure requirements of a locality has also been added to the existing tests of soundness.

## 6.15 Stage Seven – Adoption

Once the Plan has been found sound it will be necessary for the Council to formally adopt the document. This will be a decision of Council.

## 7. Timescales

Stage	Key activities	Start Target Date	End Target Date	Consultation Status	Decision Process
1	Preproduction evidence gathering	Pre Core Strategy	ongoing	Informal	N/A
2	Discussions on Issues	Jan 2012	End March 2012	Informal	Planning Committee/Cabinet
3	Representations invited on Options	July 2012	End Aug 2012	Formal	Planning Committee/Cabinet/Council
4	Representations invited on Publication of Draft Plan.	Mid Dec 2012	End Jan 2013	Formal	Planning Committee/Cabinet/Council
5	Representations invited on Submission Draft	April 2013	Mid May 2013	Formal	Proceed to submission assuming no substantive amendments
5	Submission to the Secretary of State		End June 2013		
6	Examination in Public	July 2013	Mid Sept 2013	Formal	Planning Inspectorate
6	Hearing		End Aug 2013	Formal	Planning Inspector
6	Final Inspector's Report		End Sept 2013	N/A	Non binding report
7	Adoption		Oct 2013	Formal notice	Council

7.1 Delays to the timetable could arise from the need for additional evidence, as well as, the need to repeat a stage, or conduct additional consultation. The timing of the independent examination will be dependent upon the Planning Inspectorate and will be subject to negotiation.

7.2 The intention is to prepare the Plan concurrently with the process of preparing a charging schedule under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, with a view to the examination of the charging schedule following on from the examination of the DPD. Accordingly Officers are currently exploring the possibility of a joint economic viability assessment with the City of Stoke-on-Trent. The feasibility of this will take into consideration any potential impact on the Plan's draft timetable.

## 8. Next Steps

8.1 Steps will be taken to publicise the timetable set out in this report, so that people are aware of the forthcoming opportunity to take part in the production of the Plan. People will be encouraged to engage in shaping their surroundings to help create strong Town Centres, as well as, distinctive settlements and neighbourhoods, which better reflect their needs and priorities.

8.2 Through this process of advanced publicity your officers will seek to find out how communities, including representatives from the business community, wish to be involved during the informal and formal processes of consultation. A further report will then be presented to the January Cabinet meeting, setting out in more detail the consultation arrangements and presenting the draft 'Issues and Options' paper which will be used to hold informal discussions with stakeholders

8.3 The ultimate aim will be to produce a Plan that is: distinctive to Newcastle; which is an effective response to local issues and priorities and which contributes to our corporate priorities.

## 9. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

9.1 All the documents prepared as part of the Council's LDF are intended to be "spatial", in that they are limited only by the definition of the area they cover and should take into account all the plans and strategies of the Council and other partners. They should therefore affect directly every aspect of the Council's priorities. Development Plan Documents are also required to set out specific performance data on which their success can be monitored.

## 10. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

10.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the requirements for the production of Local Development Plan Documents. However, local authorities have to adapt their approach to plan making as Government's requirements are subject to frequent change and to conform to national policies unless a different local solution can be justified.

## 11. **Financial/Resource Implications**

11.1 With the exception of the Examination in Public the cost of preparing the DPD is already included in the budget.

## 12. **Equality Impact Assessment**

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the final draft DPD.

## 13. **Major Risks**

13.1 Consultations will take place with the Planning Inspectorate in the development of the DPD, so that the timing of the examination of the DPD can be confirmed. The Planning Inspectorate will also assess whether the DPD is 'sound.'

## 14. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

14.1 The Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Development Scheme, was brought into effect by the Cabinet at its meeting in January 2009.

14.2 Cabinet resolved on 7 September 2011 'to test the appropriateness of development of the Council's surplus non-operational land through the preparation of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.'

## 15. **Background Papers**

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Development Scheme (2009)

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## HIGH VALUE HOUSING – NSRP STUDY FINDINGS

**Submitted by:** Regeneration and Development

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To present the findings of the RENEW North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP) 'Executive Housing Market' Study to help inform both the development of the Council's Asset Management Strategy and the formulation of planning policy, to be set out in the Local Development Framework.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) That Cabinet resolve to agree that the 'RENEW NSRP Executive Housing Market Report' is taken into account in any update of the Council's Asset Management Strategy, so that action can be taken to intervene in the 'Executive' housing market, if considered appropriate and necessary and that a further report be submitted for approval if this is deemed to be the case.**

**(b) That the 'RENEW NSRP Executive Housing Market Report,' be noted as a technical background document to inform the formulation of planning policies through the Local Development Framework.**

### **Reasons**

The 'Executive Housing' market is a very limited niche market, but in appropriate locations new build 'executive housing' has the potential to have a significant beneficial impact on both the local and wider economy by retaining and attracting new economically independent households into the area, and encouraging entrepreneurs and business leaders to establish new local businesses.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 For some time there has been a local aspiration to grow high value housing as a proportion of the total stock. This has been seen as an important means of retaining and attracting economically independent households, which is vital to tackling the underperformance of the area and ensuring that the strategic vision set out in the adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy is achieved.
- 1.2 Prior to it ceasing operations, the 'North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership,' (NSRP) was committed to assisting its local authority partners (Stoke, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands) in framing effective policy responses to the demand for 'executive' housing and through RENEW commissioned 'Arc4' consultants to conduct an assessment of the evidence, so that it might be possible to a) define 'executive' housing and b) quantify the requirement for 'executive' housing in terms of market demand and developer potential. Stakeholder and consumer consultation (including focus group work with local agents and residents) was an important component of the research and ensured that a wide range of views and expertise were captured.

1.3 This report presents the findings of this study of the North Staffordshire Housing Market and sets out some pointers, based on recommendations set out in the Report, to help the Council take the action to stimulate the development of high value housing if deemed necessary and appropriate.

## 2. **Definition of Executive Housing**

2.1 The EHM report describes 'executive housing' as, '*High quality accommodation in low density, suited to the needs and aspirations of highincome households*'.

2.2 An 'executive' housing market can be defined using the property's value and a suite of other elements such as density, design, location and specification. A typical 'executive' house will be built at low density, of bespoke design with large floorspace (in excess of 185.8 sq m or 2,000sqft), offering facilities such as 4 plus bedrooms, double garages and en-suite bedrooms, and located in desirable locations. The market for 'executive' housing is regional with purchasers often travelling large distances to places of work.

2.3 Although in many areas and in normal market conditions property regarded as 'executive' housing attracts prices in excess of £450,000, the EHM report defines 'executive' housing in North Staffordshire as being within the top two council tax bands (E-F and G-H) in excess of £400,000. This takes into consideration the feedback from considerable focus group work with local agents and residents identified this level at which properties were considered to be upper market in Stoke.

2.4 It is also important to note that the consultants stress the fact that the concept of 'quality of place' is central to the location of 'executive' housing. This incorporates a number of factors such as: environmental quality; access to excellent services such as high performing schools; quality healthcare; good shops; attractive parks and open spaces; and on a city/regional level incorporates factors such as city centre lifestyle offer, cultural offer and the presence of higher education institutions. Thus if the Borough Council is to be successful in retaining and attracting 'high earners' a holistic approach is needed.

## 3. **Key findings from the EHM report**

### Current market

3.1 The 'executive' property market for North Staffordshire is seen as cross-regional covering a wide area including South Cheshire, Stafford and North Shropshire.

3.2 In the Borough, there appears to be a clear divide within the local authority area itself with a low representation of high valued stock in the north and east compared to the south of the Borough. High value property appears to represent a greater proportion and wider distribution of property stock in Staffordshire Moorlands than elsewhere in North Staffordshire, particularly towards the east of the district in the National Park. High value property makes a nominal contribution to the overall housing stock in Stoke as a local authority.

3.3 The three wards of Loggerheads and Whitmore Westlands and Keele contain the majority of all Newcastle-under-Lyme properties within bands E – H.

3.4 There is a very low supply of new build 'executive' housing throughout North Staffordshire, with only 13 new build sales within bands E-H recorded 2007-2009.

3.5 High value detached property represented 5.7% of all residential property transactions in Newcastle under Lyme 2007-2009. For the same time period transactions in Staffordshire

Moorlands and Stoke were 6.9% and 3.8% respectively.

- 3.6 The report states that the housing provision at the high end of the market, in the overall North Staffordshire market, does not seem to be seriously out of balance with demand.

#### Impact of income on demand for 'executive' housing

- 3.7 There is a clear correlation between those wards recording the highest property transaction levels and values, to the highest average household incomes.
- 3.8 The income data shows that there are relatively few very high earners in the North Staffordshire market as compared to the adjacent South Cheshire and Stafford areas; the relatively low levels of activity in the North Staffordshire 'executive' housing market may be reflecting this fundamental level of demand.
- 3.9 In other words it is the lack of potential to earn high incomes locally rather than the availability of high value housing that is acting as an important constraint on this market. For this reason the EHM report strongly suggests that there is currently an overall balance of housing in the North Staffordshire market area.

#### Population projections

- 3.10 Trend-based population projections reveal that Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent will record losses within the main economically active resident population through net out-migration in age bands 35 to 59 year olds. This is important as, based on the desk research and estate agent evidence, this 35 to 59 age group represents the main group with potential demand for 'executive' housing.

#### 'Executive' housing benefits

- 3.11 The EHM report states that broadly there is much evidence to suggest that provision of the right type of housing in the right locations serves to attract the key economically independent households and can have a significant beneficial impact on the wider economy.
- 3.12 The evidence also suggests that residents of 'executive' housing include a high proportion of entrepreneurs, with a consequent high level of business start-ups. This leads to the establishment of new employment opportunities, often in locations convenient to the home of the entrepreneur. A broader housing choice is essential to accommodate the changing aspirations of the resident population and to retain graduates and attract new economically active households into the area. This being the case there are potentially considerable economic advantages for Newcastle under Lyme in providing high quality family and 'executive' housing provision.

#### Developing an 'Executive' Housing market

- 3.13 Location is important and features heavily in the decision making of purchasers and vendors; there needs to be a 'quality of place' to encourage the creation of demand from the most affluent households in the region.
- 3.14 A key factor in the growth of a robust, competitive economy is the extent to which places have a skilled, creative and entrepreneurial workforce. With the modern knowledge economy relying on people and their skills, businesses are choosing to locate in areas with a well-educated workforce. Consequently to become competitive in attracting these businesses it is important to provide the conditions that will attract and retain the most mobile and skilled workforce.

### Estate agent evidence

- 3.15 The evidence from agents is important to understanding the nature and possible changes in the 'executive' housing market. Purchasers moving into the 'executive' housing market are reported by agents as being predominantly wealthy working executives, such as industry leaders and sportsmen.
- 3.16 In terms of location, accessibility is a principal reason influencing locational choices for primary residences. The main reasons being ease of access between their property, work or leisure pursuits and access to international airports. Purchasers in this category tend to gauge accessibility in terms of travel time. Agents noted that accessibility to transport links and major employment centres would be a key contributory factor to purchase.
- 3.17 For the primary residence to be accessible a maximum daily journey time to a place of work should be no more than one – one and a half hours. This highlights both the generally accepted assumption that the 'executive' housing market operates beyond local authority boundaries and is characterised more on the scale of sub-regional and regional scales.
- 3.18 Agents see Staffordshire Moorlands and South Cheshire as the principal search areas for 'executive' properties across the sub-region, catering for both housing offer and the desired locational aspects. New build properties within this market are limited and the area of search for new build within the high-end market extends beyond North Staffordshire to Stafford in the south and South Cheshire to the north.

### Developer views

- 3.19 Developers are constantly looking for opportunities and feel that in relative terms there is a potential demand pool of professionals in the sub-region who could be a ready market for new build 'executive' products. However, delivery of this market product in the right location, in semi-rural/rural, must be in tandem with a wider strategy to develop the lifestyle offer, including leisure, retail and educational offer.

## **4. EHM Report Recommendations**

- 4.1 The EHM report makes three recommendations, set out below for convenience, followed by an officer comment.
- 4.2 *“The evidence indicates that current provision of true 'executive' housing is limited and the offer may not meet the aspirations of the potential 'executive' purchaser and existing wealthy residents. This has a number of economic implications such as loss of council tax revenue, lack of local entrepreneurs and business leaders and reduced demand within the leisure and service sector. “*

This recommendation appears to contradict some of the advice contained within the report which suggests an overall balance in the EHM. However, it makes the point that if we want to attract more high earners and new businesses and reap benefits in terms of both increased council tax revenue and use of leisure services, then action needs to be taken to attract new high earners.

- 4.3 *“However, the overall size of the market is modest, and North Staffordshire will be in competition with south Cheshire and the rest of Staffordshire to increase the size of its 'executive' housing market. It seems to us that a target of 10 – 20 new-build 'executive' homes (in the £500k+ price-band) per year across North Staffordshire would be ambitious but realistic. So over a 20-year period there is a case for earmarking land with capacity for 200-*

400 top-end market 'executive' homes.”

Your officers have noted that there is no evidence in the report to support these targets. Furthermore, no recommendations are made on how the target should be split between the three Local Authorities. However, given that there is clearly a finite need, in your officers' opinion, it would seem reasonable to gauge developer and agent views and interest on a site-by-site basis, before the Council considers proposing to market any Council owned sites.

- 4.4 *“In a few especially attractive locations there may be market pressure for such development. But generally the economics for this type of development in North Staffordshire will not favour low density, high specification 'executive' housing. In this context, there appear to be two main routes that may be able to encourage the provision of new 'executive' housing, including locations in Stoke where the strategy seeks to focus much new development.*

**The lower risk approach** is to focus upon existing desired locations in close proximity to existing high value properties. This would build on the positive “Quality of Place” factors such as access to lifestyle amenities, leisure facilities, good transport links and open space will influence demand and viability. It would focus upon short-term, relatively easy-win sites to generate interest and build for a nascent market by development of select bespoke 'executive' properties.

**The bolder approach** would be to develop a larger scale 'executive' housing scheme in a premium location that would have sufficient scale to establish an image and character even if not set immediately adjacent to existing 'executive' housing. Some of the successful schemes elsewhere have done this, but scale would be needed – probably at least 20 new homes offer.”

It is your officers' opinion that either approach could work successfully in the Borough. The Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document will consider this matter in detail by assessing and consulting on appropriate locations for high value housing and potentially allocating specific sites.

#### Next steps recommended in EHM Report

- 4.5 It is further recommended that a phased programme of development should be pursued identifying the short-term, 'easy win' sites for delivery of a select number of bespoke detached, new 'executive' dwellings to stimulate a niche market, in locations contiguous to high value properties.
- 4.6 The approach suggests that this will require establishing a clear policy framework with a vision of North Staffordshire involving clear workable partnerships between the local authorities, landowners and developers.

#### 5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The EHM report states that the local 'executive' housing market is not as well developed as neighbouring areas, which have a better offer in terms of choice and 'quality of place' together with populations with larger average work and household incomes than in North Staffordshire. Nevertheless overall North Staffordshire is catering for its 'executive' housing demand. On this basis it could be argued that there is little justification to intervene to support the growth of this sector.
- 5.2 However, notwithstanding these limitations the EHM report recommends that if we want to attract new high earners, which will in turn generate a demand for new build 'executive' housing, then the Council need to intervene to provide the necessary flexible planning policy

(e.g. to allow low density) and land supply (attractive sites in established areas or one larger new site in an attractive area) in order to stimulate the market. This should all be undertaken in consultation with agents and developers to ensure that the Council is catering for the 'executive' market and that high value housing is viable in those chosen locations.

- 5.3 It is essential to recognise that both opportunities for high earners and creating attractive, quality places are fundamental to establishing a successful 'executive' housing market. The focus must remain on quality in terms of design of buildings and public realm, in order to alter the perception of the area and take advantage of the assets such as access to open space. Your officers, therefore, consider that until there is an overall improvement in Newcastle's 'quality of place' and high earning potential that the growth of this niche sector will remain limited.
- 5.4 Nevertheless the Borough already has a ready made 'executive' housing market and the Council could try to capitalise on this to improve the market and reap the wider economic benefits that this may provide. However, it should be noted that the limited number of 'executive' housing that the report suggests may be viable, may only bring very limited economic benefits in the short-term.
- 5.5 Given that the definition of 'executive' housing is based on market value rather than the type of householder it is your officers' opinion that it makes sense, for reasons of consistency, to agree in the future to refer to this type of housing as 'high value' housing.

## 6. **Borough Council Next Steps**

- 6.1 Through the development of its asset management strategy the Council could take positive steps to intervene to facilitate the development of the high value housing in the Borough, but it is recommended that this should be the subject of a further report taking account of the outcome of the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group's review of the Newcastle Development Programme and related Cabinet resolution.
- 6.2 The forthcoming Site Allocations Development Plan Document will assess the appropriate locations for specific types of housing, including high value housing and, following extensive public consultation, will seek to allocate land accordingly.

## 7.0 **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 7.1 Taking steps to intervene to increase the amount of high value housing on offer in the Borough will have a potential impact on the priority of "creating a borough of opportunity" and also has positive implications on the priority to: 'transform our council to achieve excellence.'

## 8. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 8.1 At this time there are no legal or statutory implications; this report has been provided for information purposes only. However, it should be noted that the EHM report is now a technical background document to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Development Framework and is therefore capable as being treated as a 'material consideration' in planning decisions.

## 9. **Financial/Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Borough Council arising from the EHM report. That said there may be indirect implications should the Council seek to dispose of surplus land in the future to facilitate such development.

10. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 10.1 There are no equalities issues directly associated with this report. An Equality Impact Assessment on the overall Planning Policy service is to be carried out in the current financial year in accordance with the corporate programme.

11. **Major Risks**

- 11.1 The Borough Council will not be subject to major risks by taking into account the findings of this report.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

None

13. **Background Papers**

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (2009)  
RENEW, NSRP, Executive Housing Market Executive Summary, September, 2010.

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## **A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE BOROUGH**

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

**Principal author:** Simon Smith, Regeneration Manager

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To report, for Members' consideration a, first draft, new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) That the Draft Economic Development Strategy, subject to modifications suggested by Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee, be used as a basis for consulting with partner organisations, the local business community, LAPs and the Economic Development strand of the Newcastle Partnership.**

**(b) That comments received are reported back for Cabinet's consideration.**

### **Reasons**

To act as a basis for taking action to strengthen the local economy.  
To develop consensus amongst local partners about priorities for action.

## **1. Background**

1.1 Cabinet approved work on the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough at its meeting in July ('A proposed new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough', Cabinet 20 July 2011). Appended to this report for your consideration is the first draft of that proposed strategy. This was considered by Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. A summary of the Committee's comments is contained in section 4 below.

1.2 The strategy is reported here in draft form and this will be Cabinet's first opportunity to comment and shape it. Comments are therefore invited. The level of support given to the broad direction and content of the strategy will clearly have a strong bearing on its success. Similarly, the wider consultation process is designed to:

- (a) inform partners of the Borough Council's draft proposals,
- (b) allow partners to influence and refine those proposals, and
- (c) influence the partners' own proposals.

## **2. Issues**

2.1 The strategy is designed to form a basis for the Borough Council's intervention and policies to promote the development of the local economy. It is also intended to influence the plans of other bodies also involved in the economic development of the Borough.

- 2.2 It is a common complaint that North Staffordshire has had a plethora of strategies in recent years and while its shortcomings are well enough understood (low incomes, poor skills, poor external image, underdeveloped centres), *what is required is investment and action*. With this in mind, this strategy accepts the thorough and comprehensive analysis of the local economy undertaken by the Work Foundation in its well thought out and highly inclusive study 'Transforming North Staffordshire (TNS)' which was adopted by the three North Staffordshire Councils as the sub-regional economic development strategy in 2008. The key recommendations of that strategy are adopted by this strategy. This strategy goes on to attempt to answer the pragmatic issue of 'what therefore can Newcastle Borough Council and its partners do to take forward the recommendations agreed in TNS?'
- 2.3 The economic and public finance circumstances of the country have altered over the past three years as have organisational structures (e.g. the replacement of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership and AWM and the formation of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP)). This has implications for *how* issues can be tackled but the underlying priorities for action remain as in TNS.
- 2.4 On a point of presentation it is envisaged that any finally approved Strategy will be structured and presented in a more concise format than the draft document attached with much of the current version being contained in a background report. This should ensure that the reader can capture the key messages at a glance whilst being able to delve a little deeper into the supporting document as required.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Having taken the decision to adopt the key recommendations of TNS the draft strategy then proposes a number of actions in each area of activity. Consultees may offer other more effective or more achievable actions. These will be considered and reported back. This draft document is not the final proposal; it provides the basis for a discussion with our partners.

### 4. **Comments Received from Scrutiny Committee**

- 4.1 The following comments were made regarding the draft Strategy:
- That it would benefit from the inclusion of a timetable highlighting the aspirations and intent of the Council.
  - That it was vital to liaise with other Borough and District Councils to ensure harmony with their Strategies.
  - That the Council should consider how it provided advice to businesses and shops to help guide them through the current economic climate
  - That the importance of redevelopment to encourage people to visit Newcastle under Lyme and not just the main shopping centres be noted
  - That consideration be given to the mix and use of executive housing as there were concerns that customers looking for executive housing could be dissuaded from buying if the property was in close proximity to affordable housing.
  - That the importance of well paid jobs in the Borough be noted. The Committee cited the fact that many of the young Doctors trained at Keele University then left the Borough for higher salaries elsewhere.
  - That consideration be given to the mix of home owners and those renting properties as it was thought that the balance was moving towards a larger percentage of renters which would have a knock on effect regarding where these people spent their money (home owners were expected to spend money on their properties whilst those who rented spent more of their money on luxury items).

- That it was vitally important to raise the skills level in the Borough.
- That the Strategy must remain as a living document and once agreed be revisited every 6 months if possible.

**Resolved:** - (a) That the comments of the Committee be fed back to Informal Cabinet at its meeting on Thursday 29 September 2011.

4.2 Most of the above comments will enable practical improvements to the draft strategy and, rather than respond immediately, your officers recommend that they be added to the list of comments and/or additional suggestions which are expected to be received when the draft is consulted on more widely. It is intended that all of these comments will be reported to you with recommendations for modifications as appropriate, later in the year, along with any indications of previously unknown implications for the Borough Council.

#### 5. **Proposal**

5.1 That the Draft Economic Development Strategy, subject to modifications suggested by Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee, be used as a basis for consulting with partner organisations, the local business community, Locality Action Partnerships and the Economic Development group of the Newcastle Partnership. That comments received are reported back for Cabinet's consideration.

#### 6. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

6.1 The draft strategy appended to this report has been developed with the recommendations of the Work Foundation's report, 'Transforming North Staffordshire' in mind, together with the more specific needs of the Borough (in the context of the wider sub-region) and from initial soundings from four sounding groups which have helped shape and add content. Further refinement (and challenge) will be provided through the consultation process.

#### 7. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

7.1 The preparation of this strategy is in response to the Council's priority of 'Creating a Borough of Opportunity'.

#### 8. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

8.1 There is not a strict requirement on the Council to prepare an economic development strategy though clearly developing policies, committing resources and making investment against a rational set of agreed objectives is good business practice.

#### 9. **Equality Impact Assessment**

No differential impact had been identified.

#### 10. **Financial and Resource Implications**

10.1 There are staff resource implications arising from the preparation of the strategy and these are built into current work programmes. There will be also be a modest financial cost to cover printing costs once the strategy has been agreed and approved (although promotion of the document on the Council's website should reduce demand for hard copies).

#### 11. **Major Risks**

- 11.1 The principal risk of *not* preparing a strategy for the promotion of economic development is that staff resources are committed and financial investment made without reference to the things which the Council and its partners consider to be most important. This would most likely cause the Council's actions to be ineffective (or at best, not as effective as could be).
- 11.2 There is no obvious risk to preparing a strategy in itself, other than perhaps raising expectations from Members, staff and partners that everything in it will be achieved – but this simply reflects the inherent risk of setting objectives and targets. The strategy itself does not commit the Council to specific actions; these will be the subject of more detailed reports.

12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 This strategy will impact on two or more wards and has been included in the Forward Plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

- 13.1 'That work on the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough be approved and that arrangements for consultation on this, both with Cabinet and external bodies, be considered at a later meeting of Cabinet'.

'A proposed new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough', Cabinet 20 July 2011.

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix A - Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Economic Development Strategy 2012-17

### Newcastle-under-Lyme Economic Development Strategy 2012-17

*In a nutshell:*

This strategy is about how Newcastle Borough Council, working with the business community and local partners can improve the economic prospects of the area. It has been shaped with the following aspects in mind:

*Our approach:*

The strategy has four themes, arranged in the following sections

- ‘*Economy*’ – Transforming the business base
- ‘*Place and Infrastructure*’ – Physical transformation
- ‘*People*’ – Transforming ambition
- ‘*Image and Marketing*’ – Transforming perceptions

Each section then sets out a series of actions we propose to undertake (or work with others to undertake).

In each section we look at the **strengths** which the Borough has to offer and the **opportunities** which we may be able to capitalise on and we develop **proposals** which take advantage of these;

We identify a number of **shortcomings** in the economy / skills mix / image etc. of our area and identify interventions to address them (or at least, mitigate them);

In spite of the present economic circumstances and the impact this has on public finances, we will still approach this strategy with reasoned **ambition**. That is, we will set ourselves stretching goals and set out a programme of action which will seek to improve the economic fortunes of the Borough.

We will do this by building a broad **consensus**, through consultation with our partners and with the local business community who will both help influence the work that the Borough Council should undertake and will also play their own parts in delivering elements of this strategy.

A key element of our approach will be **prioritisation**. The Council cannot do everything. It is important therefore to focus on the things which are going to have the greatest impact and which the Council is best placed to influence. Where possible, we will follow the principal that ‘resources follow priorities’. In doing so, it will be necessary to also make clear what are *not* our priorities.

Some of our priorities are, by their nature, sub-regional (rather than specific to the Borough) and here we will work closely with partners from throughout North Staffordshire.

This strategy is a framework for getting things done - ultimately we will only be judged on getting things done and it is only by achieving things (as often as not in partnership with others) that the Borough will enhance its reputation for being effective.

We will learn from past interventions and use this **experience** to overcome barriers to change; we will be open to external challenge and use this to learn from others' experiences too. (In some instances we will be doing the right things already in which case our approach may be to carry on).

Our strategy is not a detailed delivery plan but it does include indicative actions to show how the stated objectives will be taken forward. The strategy will be exposed to challenge, will be widely consulted upon to gain broad support, and will then be used to set the context for long term investment and develop more detailed **action plans**.

### *'Transforming North Staffordshire'*

'Transforming North Staffordshire' (North Staffordshire's Economic Development Strategy) was adopted by the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership and the three North Staffordshire local authorities in 2008 following detailed and thorough economic analysis, optioneering, consultation and participation between The Work Foundation (the principal authors) and local partners. It provides the **sub-regional framework** for pursuing the economic development of the area as a whole.

This wider strategy provides much of the analysis, evidence base and rationale for this Borough-specific strategy. 'Transforming North Staffordshire' has a number of detailed recommendations, arranged by:

- Economy
- Place and Infrastructure
- People, and
- Image and marketing

This format is adopted as an appropriate framework for this strategy, demonstrating how the Borough Council and its partners propose to take forward its recommendations with the specific objective of improving the fortunes of the Borough.

### Newcastle-under-Lyme: A Borough Profile in figures

The Borough of Newcastle and is based around the historic 800 year old **market town** of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Kidsgrove, six miles to the north, is the Borough's second town. The Borough is part urban (together with neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent forming the western part of the North Staffordshire conurbation) and part rural. The Borough is also home to the country's largest campus university, Keele University.

The town lies along the A34 and is also well served by the M6, the A500 and the A50. Lying on the West Coast Main Line, four trains an hour connect Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station, 3 miles from Newcastle Town Centre, to London Euston (1 hr 27mins) and Manchester (37 mins). Four airports, Manchester, East Midlands, Liverpool and Birmingham lie within 50 to 75 minutes drive.

The Borough's **population** has grown from 122,200 in 2000 to around 125,000 today and is projected to grow to 130,700 in 2025.

Around 50,400 people **work** in the Borough, of which 6100 are self employed and 44,300 are employees. The 70:30 split between full-time and part-time employment closely reflects the national pattern. The level of self-employment (6.9%) is lower than the GB average of 9.1%.

Manufacturing accounts for 9.2% of **employment** (c.f. GB: 10.2%), retailing and hospitality 30.2% (GB: 23.4%), transport and communications 14% (GB: 5.8%), finance, IT and business services 12.4% (GB: 22.0%) and local government, education and health 25.5% (GB: 27.0%).

Amongst the Borough's more significant private sector **employers** are Phones 4U Ltd., Leoni Wiring, Ibstock Brick, science park companies such as Bio composites, Siemens Wind Power and Cobra Therapeutics, engineering firms such as Converteam, KMF Engineering and Simon-Hartley, in the logistics field, New Look, George, TK Maxx, and AAH, and a wide range of professional services firms including Knights, MHL, Hacking Ashton and The Aspire Group. Keele University and Newcastle College are significant employers in the HE / FE sectors.

The local resident workforce is slightly **better qualified** than of the country at large, i.e. 32.5% are qualified to degree level (c.f. GB 31.3%, West Midlands region 26.0%), 53.5% have 2 or more A levels (GB 51.0%, West Midland region 45.4%), though the numbers with no qualifications (13.4%) is a little higher than GB (11.3%), but less than the West Midlands region (15.1%).

**Earnings** on the other hand lag behind the national average with median earnings for male full-time workers £479.5 compared with a GB figure of £541.9.

**Job seeker** numbers in the Borough (2.6%) are below the average figure for GB (3.4%) but the numbers on Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefits (7.3%) are higher (GB 6.6%). (All figures November 2010). At July 2011 there were 158 'NEETs' in the Borough (16 to 18 year old not in employment, education or training), the wards with the highest numbers being Holditch (16), Chesterton (11) and Cross Heath (10).

Rates of **new business formation** (based on the number of new VAT registrations as a % of total stock) at 9.6% is a little lower than the national average of 10.2% but higher than the regional average of 9.4%.

**Shop vacancy** rates in Newcastle Town Centre (11.1% in May / June 2011) are broadly the same as the average for town centres across the UK (11.2%).

Newcastle Under Lyme Town Centre has a **commercial floorspace** of 105,343 sq m. and this compares with Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (203,077 sq m.); Stafford Town Centre (110,282 sq. m.); Macclesfield Town Centre 96,680 sq m.; Stoke Town Centre 75,391 sq m. ; Longton Town Centre 66,965 sq m.; and Leek (46,580 sq. m.).

There are currently 50,738 **households** in the borough and over the next five years it is planned that this will rise by 1591 to 52,329. Over the five year period 2005-10, 1485 new houses were completed, an average annual rate of house building of 297. The figure for Staffordshire as a whole over the same period was 13,580 (2716 p.a.)

Over the ten year period 2000-2010, 89.3 hectares of **employment land** was developed in the Borough, an average annual rate of development of 8.93 ha p.a. Across Staffordshire as a whole 583.7 hectares were developed (58.3 ha p.a.)

Further information about the Borough can be found on the ONS (Office for National Statistics) website.



### 'Building Prosperity'

Building Prosperity was the title of the Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy 2005-10. This was built around six core priorities

- Creating a strong and vibrant town centre
- Encouraging the growth of high value business clusters
- Encouraging entrepreneurialism and the development of the small firms sector
- Demanding high quality built design and investing in the quality of the public realm
- Promoting the Borough, and
- Linking the benefits of new investment and new jobs to the less well off sections of the community.

While not everything which the Borough Council set out to do in 2005 was achieved, it's possible to identify a number of notable successes in this time:

- Developing Jubilee 2, the £10.5 million new Health & Wellbeing Centre.
- Maintaining a strong independent retail sector in the town and a busy open market
- Refurbishing Lancaster Building (now partly re-let for offices), and The Guildhall, (now a customer centre),
- Enabling the development of the magnificent new FE College
- Developing an informal partnership with the business community that has delivered a programme of town centre events
- Developing an investment framework (SIF) for the town centre
- Fighting the expansion of Tesco at Trent Vale to protect Newcastle Town Centre
- Completing the site preparation and infrastructure for the 70 acre expansion of Keele Science Park
- Developing innovation centres to encourage high value businesses
- Business Boost competition – rewarding high growth potential
- Enterprise in Schools (developing the 'world of work' programme with FineST, the Carousel of Opportunity in primary schools, support for the career academy at Newcastle College)
- Launch of the Town Centre shop-front grants award project in the town centre conservation area
- established an annual Design Awards scheme led by the Civic Society
- Working with both Instaffs and Make it Stoke-on-Trent to attract new businesses
- the completion of the Lymedale Park (3600 jobs) and High Carr Business Park ((650 jobs) development schemes together with the smaller Knutton and Silverdale industrial estates..
- Produced Town Centre investment brochure
- Significant housing development begun at the former Silverdale Colliery and former Collins & Aikman (Cross Heath) sites having secured considerable sums of external funding and investment in partnership work.

## APPENDIX A

- secured substantial investment that delivered the 'BREEAM Outstanding' 'Blue Planet' development in the Chatterley Valley
- Business Panel still going strong
- The successful delivery of the Housing Market Renewal Programme in Newcastle centred on the Knutton, Cross Heath and Silverdale areas (new housing, skills training, building facelifts and investment in public realm)
- The establishment of the Jobs, Employment and Training Scheme (JETS) and the Family Employment Initiative (FEI) supporting people into training and work.

These successes are important not only in their own right but also as a means of inspiring the Borough Council and the partners with which we work that things can be achieved over the long run as long as we have

- Clarity about what it is we consider to be important
- Are prepared to collaborate between our different organisations (and not be precious about allocating or claiming credit)
- Are prepared to commit time and the necessary resources and
- Stick with it.

### The Strategy at a glance

- *'Economy'* – Objective: Transforming the business base

1. We will develop a long term economic strategy built on 'diverse specialisation', aiming to increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution.
2. We will develop a co-ordinated enterprise strategy.
3. We will invest in emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher and further education expertise.
4. We will invest in the development of the professional and business services sector.
5. We will make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector.
6. We will seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.

- *'Place and Infrastructure'* – Objective: Physical transformation

7. We will draw up a Masterplan to guide the future development of Newcastle Town Centre
8. We will bring forward proposals for retail and business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre with priority placed on growing its professional services and a distinctive retail offer.
9. We will promote the further development of Keele Science and Business Park.
10. We will endeavour to enable the development of higher quality housing for current and future residents, with an explicit aim to increase the attractiveness of North Staffordshire as a home to affluent residents.
11. We will bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough.

- *'People'* – Objective: Transforming ambition

12. We will raise skills, reduce worklessness and raise aspirations as a core element of all transformational strategies.
13. We will work towards getting the right skills mix to increase productivity.
14. We will stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire skills for current and future industrial structure.
15. We will develop a long term strategy to address worklessness.

- *'Image and Marketing'* – Objective - Transforming perceptions

16. We will develop an external marketing strategy for the Borough
17. We will improve the quality of life offer for current and future residents.
18. We will support the development of North Staffordshire's 'experience economy'

19. We will use the Strategic Investment Framework as the basis for investment in the cultural and retail experience of Newcastle Town Centre
20. We will develop a network of North Staffordshire 'ambassadors'.

*'Economy'* – Transforming the business base

**1. We will develop a long term economic strategy built on 'diverse specialisation', aiming to increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution.**

The Work Foundation 'Ideopolis' research, which studied how places thrive in the knowledge economy, concluded that the most successful places are those that

- (a) build on their existing strengths and
- (b) develop 'diverse specialisms'.

This recommendation developing 'diverse specialisms' goes to the heart of the Borough Council's approach to promoting the Borough, attracting new business and increasing employment opportunities. While the Borough Council will, of course, continue to work with its partners across North Staffordshire to help deliver sub-regional objectives it will also seek to play to Newcastle's distinctiveness, as reflected in:

- A differentiated town centre offer (compared with Hanley or out of town locations such as Festival Park)
- A strong professional and financial services sector
- Prospects for accommodating executive housing
- A thriving research based university and a science park housing numerous high technology companies
- Borough-specific (and or town centre-specific) marketing initiatives aimed at attracting inward investment.

These are reflected over the course of this strategy.

**2. We will develop a coordinated enterprise strategy**

North Staffordshire region needs to become more enterprising *across the board*. This encompasses business start up and growth for all companies, not purely those that are high value or high growth. Specific actions advocated include:

- Encouraging Keele & Staffordshire University to develop a joint enterprise to help 'spin-out' more knowledge intensive businesses
- Developing an innovation framework
- Developing academic & business networks to support the growth of innovative and knowledge intensive businesses
- Investing in high growth businesses regardless of sector
- Developing more customer-focused business support across North Staffordshire and
- Regularly conducting reviews of business needs

Joint work between Keele and Staffordshire Universities is being taken forward in the Business Innovation Group (details following page), whilst the LEP is taking on some aspects of enterprise coordination as described below.

In 2011, the business support delivery network is undergoing change with the wind down of Business Link West Midlands and the need to create something new that is responsive to local need. The LEP has recognised the challenge of filling this gap and is taking a lead role in creating an Enterprise Action Plan and has identified the following areas for attention:

- Analysis of the current Stoke and Staffordshire business environment.
- Work towards a collaborative business support package that reflects the variation inherent between businesses
- Bringing together key business support agencies under a LEP agreed strategy to improve the coordination and consistency of the area's business support offer

The Borough Council will support development and delivery of the LEP enterprise action plan and any enterprise action groups that sit within this.

The LEP has stated that it will continue to develop a host of measures designed to put business first including:

- the 'red carpet treatment' – local councils working as one to streamline planning and other technical processes to make it easy for businesses to invest
- the creation of a LEP growth fund to provide start up finance for business investment
- the creation of an Educational Trust by the universities, working with the LEP to develop Enterprise Skills to meet business needs
- support for the drive to ensure superfast broadband is available across the area and
- lobbying to promote the area as a premier investment location at a national and international level.

Whilst the delivery of business advice, coaching or mentoring is clearly something which sits outside of the normal activity of the Borough Council we will seek to support the services of our partners by promoting them to local businesses and signposting to the services on offer. Where we are able to add value, for example through co-ordination or hosting activity this will also be on offer to our partners. Although the opportunity to attract external funding to support enterprise activity is now much reduced, the Borough Council will support co-ordinated bids, where the opportunity arises, to attract funding for enterprise activity. Such opportunities include ERDF and the Government's Regional Growth Fund.

Further actions include:

- Business Enterprise Support (BES): we will work with BES to help in the delivery of its enterprise support schemes, including the New Enterprise Allowance Scheme, setting up a network of volunteer mentors and the ERDF funded business coach in Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- Promoting Enterprise in Schools: We will continue to promote enterprise in schools, predominantly through the District Employer Education Partnership (DEEP) which brings together schools, colleges, training providers and local employers to influence educational delivery to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Notable past successes have been an awards ceremony to recognise the contribution of local businesses and the development of the 'Carousel of Opportunity' aimed at introducing primary school children to the wide range of potential jobs open to them.
- Business Boost: we will support the continuation of the annual Newcastle Business Boost competition. This brings together public, private and education sectors in support of local businesses and, since its inception in 2008, has provided in excess of £40,000 direct investment in their growth and development.

### **3. We will invest in emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher & further education expertise.**

North Staffordshire enjoys enormous benefit from its being home to two Universities, Keele and Staffordshire, that offer a range of science, creative, technology, business and humanities opportunities for research and study. To a large extent these are the drivers of knowledge intensive jobs through the support that they give to graduates in starting their own business and the services that they offer to business. The Borough is also home to Newcastle under Lyme College, which is consistently in the top 25% of further education colleges nationally for success rates in AS/A level and advanced vocational courses and has excellent progression rates to Higher Education. In partnership with Staffordshire University, the College offers the opportunity to study Foundation Degree and Foundation year courses.

With the closure of Advantage West Midlands and Business Link West Midlands (the latter to be replaced by a national web-based support service), much of the strategic co-ordination work on enterprise, which includes sector specific actions, will transfer to local partners and the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP). Specifically, the Borough Council will work closely with the LEP and its partners in the higher and further education sectors aiming to develop superfast broadband, encourage the growth of creative industries, promote technology transfer and provide specialist business accommodation:

- Superfast broadband

Superfast broadband is an area where the LEP is taking a lead both in collecting evidence and bidding to Broadband Delivery UK to attract resources

to upgrade the Staffordshire broadband network. The LEP has recently celebrated an award of £7.4 million to support broadband provision in Staffordshire and the Borough Council will support the LEP delivery plan for broadband and will continue to advocate for the delivery of superfast broadband in the key areas of Keele University & Science Park, Newcastle town centre and across the North Staffordshire conurbation

- Creative industries

Partners to this economic development strategy have identified that digital creative firms are a potential growth area for the Borough. Attracting this type of firm relies on the availability of superfast and reliable broadband, discussed above. Further, the right style of business premises and the opportunity to cluster with other digital technology firms is another factor that will encourage the growth of digital creative firms in the Borough. Delivery of this type of accommodation relies on external funding opportunities being available to the Borough Council or through delivery in partnership with other organisations to achieve an attractive offer to the market.

Recognising the role of the creative industries in the local economy, every encouragement will be given to the re-use of existing property in the town for businesses such as graphic design, film and media, publishing, animation, music and computer/console games software development including, where suitable, the re-use of council-owned premises.

- Technology Transfer

The recently established Business Innovation Group (BIG), a partnership between Keele University Science Park, Keele University, Staffordshire University and the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce will be the prime driving force to provide businesses with specialist and strategic advice. Targeted sectors will include professional services, creative, medical, manufacturing technology and environmental and the group will work closely with the LEP to deliver the service.

Whilst the Business Innovation Group is a new addition to the portfolio of services offered by the two partner Universities, both have existing expertise in providing services to business whether it be through Knowledge Transfer Partnership, consultancy and research or enterprise support. More specialist areas are also provided such as the Keele Hub for Sustainability and the Staffordshire University ARBOR European Funded project which is pursuing excellence in the use of biomass and its Environmental Chamber which allows businesses to test out the effects of the weather on new materials and products.

- Specialist business accommodation

Keele University & Science Park, in terms of business accommodation is the Borough's flagship offer to knowledge intensive industries. Tenant businesses provide a variety of jobs spanning ICT, Medical Technology and



Healthcare (see further 'Place and Infrastructure' section). A recent survey demonstrated the value that the Science Park delivers in creating higher skilled jobs, it found that employees based at the Science and Business Park were paid a higher weekly salary than average for the North Staffordshire area, indicating a requirement for a higher level of employee skills from Science Park tenant businesses.

The high specification of the Innovation Centre buildings and the proximity to the University naturally attracts businesses with a vested interest in research and development, higher level skills and or the kudos of association which could benefit their bottom line. The Borough Council will continue to work with Keele University & Science Park to encourage development of Keele Science Park Phase 3 and attract knowledge intensive businesses to Keele Science Park through marketing support, lobbying for infrastructure investment and planning advice.

Keele University Science Park is continuing to innovate the way in which it supports knowledge intensive businesses. The Nova Centre, which will open in January 2012 in the refurbished Farm House on Keele campus, is designed to offer a follow-on support package for these early stage companies that will benefit from a 2-year business growth programme and office accommodation. For those that are not ready to take business accommodation there is also an offer of a Virtual Office. The Nova Centre will favour businesses that can demonstrate their plans for significant growth, employment opportunities, provision of new products and services, introduction of new skills to the area, or are highly innovative.

The Borough is working with Keele University to explore means by which this initiative might be rolled out to suitable businesses in Newcastle Town Centre.

#### **4. We will invest in the development of the professional & business services sector**

Professional & business services are an important knowledge intensive sector that offers the potential for further growth in Newcastle. Our approach is based around three main activity areas:

- Appropriate accommodation (both commercial and residential),

The provision of appropriate commercial and residential accommodation is necessary to attract and retain highly skilled workers in these sectors. Proposals for new business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre and new executive housing are contained in the Place and Infrastructure section

- Working with FineST

FineST is the umbrella professional services network in North Staffordshire and is host to future FineST, which aims to develop and create opportunities for the future leaders of North Staffordshire. As members of FineST, the

Borough Council will continue to work with them in promoting networking, good practise and opportunities for increasing business opportunities and by hosting events.

- Supportive procurement policies

We will continue to work with FineST to ensure that local businesses have access to procurement opportunities. This has included working on the development of a 'highway code' for collaboration, assisting smaller companies to work together to bid for larger contracts.

### **5. We will make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector**

Logistics has been a major growth area in the North Staffordshire economy over the past decade, due largely to the good connectivity that the area enjoys (now it has the A50 east-west route as well as the M6 connecting the north-west and the Midlands) and our position close to the centre of the country. We will continue to court such development.

It is mistakenly believed that logistics employs fewer people (in relation to floorspace occupied) than manufacturing, pays poorer wages and requires a poorer range of skills. Recent research from inward investment agency Instaffs UK suggests that this is not necessarily the case. For instance, the three large distribution firms based at Lymedale Park, New Look, TK Maxx and George are all national or regional headquarters and, as a result, employ a considerable number of managers, finance, IT, legal and HR staff, logistics engineers, and technical people as well as drivers and warehouse staff. These three firms employ around 2100 people between them. Most manufacturing firms occupying similarly sized buildings would not necessarily employ more people, offer better pay or require a greater range of skills than these (though clearly high value-added, high technology manufacturers would and hence the priority given in this strategy to the further development of Keele Science Park).

At the time of writing there are two large distribution buildings, Alto 415 at Lymedale and Blue Planet at Chatterley Valley (415,000 sq. ft and 385,000 sq. ft. respectively), both commissioned in advance of the current economic downturn, which remain unlet. These are being actively marketed by their developers. These buildings are also capable of being occupied by large scale manufacturing firms should there be development enquiries from manufacturers seeking space of this size. The Council will work with their developers and their agents to find suitable occupiers for these buildings, each of which, when occupied could potentially bring 500 or more new jobs to the area.

The Council has plans to continue the development of the Chatterley Valley site on land to the west of the Blue Planet building, (described as Chatterley Sidings and Peacock Hay). The high cost of site preparation and off site highway improvements (in the absence of further financial support from

Advantage West Midlands) may now make this difficult to realise, particularly given the slow down in the economy in general and in the market for large scale logistics development since 2008. The Council will work with the landowners and their agents to explore alternative means of bringing forward Peacock Hay for light industrial development without the need for such extensive ground modelling and highway investment as was previously envisaged.

We recognise the marketing value of having such an environmentally prestigious building as Blue Planet in the Borough and will continue to specifically promote this in marketing literature produced by the Borough Council and work with partners to secure a tenant for the building.

### **6. We will seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.**

The Borough Council spends around £20 million each year on procuring goods and services. A number of actions has already been undertaken to make doing business with the Council as easy as possible for local businesses. This includes a dedicated procurement section of the website, work undertaken with FineST to develop a 'Highway Code' for collaboration, and regular contact with local business organisations.

Sensitive procurement can also have a positive effect on the local economy and the environment. Larger contracts frequently include a requirement for companies to explain how they would 'increase the local pound' and minimize environmental impact. Information is also required on the sustainability of a provider's supply chain and sourcing arrangements. For example, the tender specification for the café within Jubilee 2 required the identification of average food miles linked to the provision of the service, and the use, where possible, of local trainee placements and apprenticeships.

We will continue to support local people and businesses through the council's procurement policies. This will include improvements to the website to allow easier access to contract information and wider dissemination of relevant information through websites such as Build-up North Staffordshire (BUNS) and Think Local 4 Business (TL4B). We will support local people into jobs through use of the 'Public Procurement Framework for Jobs and Skills' which comprises several approaches to securing contractor support for training and recruitment initiatives, thereby securing greater access to jobs and skills for local people.

*'Place and Infrastructure'* – Physical transformation

## **7. We will draw up a Masterplan to guide the future development of Newcastle Town Centre**

The Borough Council and its partners have developed a 'Strategic Investment Framework' (SIF) as a vision for the future development of the town centre and to frame a series of actions to raise the attractiveness and appeal of the town (see further 'Image and Marketing').

Taking its lead from the SIF the Borough Council commissioned master planners Broadway Malyan (supported by commercial agents Cushman & Wakefield) to undertake a series of development options and commercial development appraisals of development sites in Newcastle Town Centre and this makes a number of recommendations about the planning and development of the three key development sites in the town, Blackfriars, Ryecroft and Nelson Place.

A key recommendation is that new retail led regeneration is the catalyst for further regeneration of the town centre and that

- the Ryecroft site (based on the site of the former Sainsburys supermarket and land adjoining, including potentially that of the present Civic Offices) is identified as the priority site to develop this.
- Nelson Place (a block of sites to the east of Barracks Road) is identified as suitable for the creation of a new Civic Quarter and,
- in the case of Blackfriars (the block between Blackfriars Road and Pool Dam), a range of uses complementary to the town centre, including bulky goods retail; residential or civic uses are proposed. Retail development here would be considered to be in competition with, rather than complementary to, the town centre.

This development options study was based on optioneering against objectives for the town centre and viability assessments of those options. The delivery strategy sets out the option of a development agreement approach (between the Council and a selected developer) to achieving the preferred form of development for Ryecroft and Nelson Place. Finally each site is subject to design briefs which set out the design principles which should be followed when developing proposals for each of the three sites. An excerpt from these is provided below:

**IMPORT SPD DIAGRAMS HERE**

Converting this master plan into realisable development projects is the subject of the next section.

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

Plans for Newcastle Town centre's retail and business accommodation are contained in the masterplanning work discussed above.

New Retail Development

The Ryecroft site based on the site of the former Sainsburys supermarket and the present Civic Offices is identified as the key retail opportunity in the town as this lies inside the town centre ring road and would therefore work with the grain of existing pedestrian shopping flows based around the High Street, Castle Walk and The Ironmarket.

The development strategy for the Ryecroft site envisages a development of around 180,000 sq. ft. of new retail space comprising a 60,000 sq. ft. department store and a quality food store of around 35,000 sq. ft. (acting as co-anchors to the scheme), a further 60-90,000 sq. ft. of retail units designed to satisfy the current lack of modern purpose built retail floorspace in the town and a 750 space car park. Only with this scale and level of ambition, it is felt, can the town achieve the necessary 'step-change' in its shopping fortunes and turn back the long-term loss of trade to out-of-town retail parks.

The first step in realising this was made with the acquisition of the former Sainsburys site in July 2011, in partnership with Staffordshire County Council. The next key step is the marketing of the development opportunity in order to seek a development partner to work with the Borough Council to realise a retail development of the scale and character described above. Once this is achieved, then a decision by the Borough Council will be made on the relocation of its offices (to enable the developer to assemble a large enough site for the scheme).

The Ryecroft scheme will accommodate retailers which have not up to this point have been able to locate in the town due to the limitations of current property offer (typically historic, narrow, deep and multi-level).

Consideration will also be given to managing the change in the retail focus of the town centre which is likely to result from the Ryecroft scheme and the impact this may have on the more peripheral shopping areas of the town. For instance, a complementary string to the Council's development strategy is to play to the town's strength in independent shops, many of which are clustered in areas like Bridge Street, Merrial Street, King Street and Lower High Street. It is anticipated that custom in these areas of town will be increased if and when the Ryecroft scheme is completed as a result of increased numbers of shoppers and visitors to the town but in addition to this, these clusters of independent shops will be more actively promoted (see further 'Image and Marketing') as one of the town's distinctive attractions along with 'town centre events', 'where to eat', 'town centre trails' and 'the food market'.

### New Business Accommodation

Town centres are the most sustainable locations for new office development as day time workers help to support nearby business in shops, leisure and food and drink without the need to make additional journeys. The Borough Council will promote the further development of offices in the town (and promote the availability of available offices in the town such as Lancaster Building) and will work with Instaffs and the North Staffordshire Inward Investment team to attract and steer office enquiries to the town.

Discussions are underway about the possible co-location of the Borough Council, Newcastle Police Station, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and County Council staff based in the Borough. Depending on the outcome of the Ryecroft redevelopment, see above 'New Retail Development', this could take the form of a new consolidated offices providing substantial financial savings to all parties.

In private sector terms, there are a number of suitable development opportunities in the town, including land adjoining the new Travelodge, the former Maxims Nightclub site (together with land adjoining), the former Blackfriars Bakery site, land adjoining the new Sainsburys store and the site of the former Zanzibar nightclub in George Street. Achieving that investment will, of course, depend on the strength of market interest and the appeal of the sites available.

Currently much of that interest is finding its way not to Stoke-on-Trent City Centre or Newcastle Town Centre (the key development priorities for the two local authorities) but to out of town locations. With this in mind, sketch schemes have been prepared to demonstrate how office developments of between 8000 and 50,000 sq. ft. might be accommodated on four sites in Newcastle Town Centre, each capable of accommodating modern open plan style buildings, generally of three storeys in height, each with plentiful car parking. These are illustrated below:

### **IMPORT ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS HERE**

Just as the Borough Council successfully challenged the decision to allow the doubling of the size of the out of town Tesco supermarket at Trent Vale in 2010 (a decision, which, if permitted, would have had drawn significant levels of trade out of Newcastle town centre), the Council will also challenge proposals to continue the leakage of jobs in the professional and financial services sectors out of Hanley and Newcastle to out of town centres where there are suitable, available and attractive alternative development opportunities in Hanley or Newcastle Town Centre. Some of these are demonstrated by the sketch schemes illustrated above.

### Complementary interventions

Complementary factors in making Newcastle Town Centre a more desirable location for new investment in both retail and offices are also

- Investment in the quality of the public realm: a £1.2 million start on the town centre public realm project will be made in 2012 with the closure of Hassall Street to through traffic, new paving and street furniture and investment in attractive new market stalls. However, in the long term, significantly greater investment is required to enhance the fabric, look and feel of the town to visitors, office workers and shoppers. Sources of funding this will continue to be explored.
- A better food and drink 'offer': while the town has a number of good restaurants, it is planned to support these by promoting what we have and through improvements to the 'visit Newcastle' and 'Places to eat in Newcastle' web sites
- Increased town centre living: a number of edge of town sites suitable for housing development exist (the former Tittleys Fruit and Vegetable Warehouse in George Street, The First Bus Depot on Liverpool Road, and the former Bristol Street Motors site off London Road, and developers will be encouraged to bring forward residential-led schemes on these sites
- Improving the management of town centre car parks (this could include, for example, a review of the pricing structure, pay-on-exit arrangements and payment by card)..
- Creating a clearer 'sense of arrival' in the town centre through VMS (variable message signs) drawing attention to where to park in the town and forthcoming town centre events.

Some of these actions are discussed further in the section 'Image and marketing'.

### **9. We will promote the further development of Keele University Science and Business Park**

The Borough Council will continue to work closely with Keele University to realise its plans for the further development of its Science and Business Park, including the development of the next phase of the park, the development of a Conference and Training Centre, further Innovation centres, and increased promotion and marketing for inward investment.

Phase 3 of Keele Science Park comprises 70 acres (28 ha) of prime development land adjoining Keele University. The science park to date comprises a Postgraduate Medical School and four Innovation Centres with a combined floorspace of 110,000 sq. ft. of high tech business space

accommodating 50 technology based companies employing around 700 people. Bio-composites, Erigal, Siemens Wind Power, Cobra Therapeutics, Recipharm Cobra, Dermal Technology, Internet Central, Navman Wireless, Synetrix and TRB Chemedica are amongst the firms based here. These represent high value, high growth, high tech businesses with first class pay and career prospects and skills requirements – opportunities for local people to aspire to (both as prospective employees and to establish like enterprises themselves) and as a magnet for bringing fresh blood into the area.

The new phase of development comprises 13 development plots which could potentially accommodate around 600,000 sq. ft. of new business space and around 2500 new jobs. The frontage plot is planned to be developed for a major Training and Conference Hotel expected to be developed in 2012 and the existing Home Farm building, to be known as the Nova Centre, is currently being renovated for business occupation.

The University is also exploring the use of Home Farm for graduate enterprise. With the support of Staffordshire County Council, a fifth Innovation Centre, 30,000 sq. ft. in size, is due to be completed by the end of 2012 and this will accommodate the needs of two growing technology firms (currently housed in smaller premises on the science park) as well as space for new businesses. Plans for a sixth and seventh Innovation centre are also being drawn up, though the timetable for their construction will depend on market demand.

The pace of development on the park will be increased through greater proactive marketing of the site using the host of blue chip companies located on the park as a key selling factor.

Whilst the Staffordshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP)'s proposal to create a North Staffordshire 'enterprise zone' (based on a portfolio of three sites - Etruria Valley, the former Creda factory at Blythe Bridge and Keele Science Park phase 3) was unsuccessful, the submission process demonstrated the will amongst the local authority and business community to push for new inward investment.

The establishment of a four star conference hotel, which could start development in 2012, will help showcase the area, the Science Park and the businesses based here as well as hosting their international visitors. This would be a significant economic boost for the area (many business visitors currently often stay outside the area altogether e.g. near to Manchester Airport) as well as providing an important marketing tool for the area in its own right.

**10. We will endeavour to enable the development of higher quality housing for current and future residents, with an explicit aim to increase the attractiveness of North Staffordshire as a home to affluent residents**



Newcastle (and North Staffordshire as a whole) would benefit enormously if a larger proportion of the higher income people who work in the area were to choose to live in or close to the urban area. The impact would be felt in terms of the range of the local retail, food and drink and cultural offer the area is able to maintain, the make-up of the school population as well as the harder economic consequences of higher rate income and consumer spending. Importantly (in the context of an economic development strategy) housing high earners locally would also help to retain local entrepreneurs (and would-be entrepreneurs) and business leaders close to the area in which they work.

Currently around 13,000 professional people and senior managers commute to work into Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle from the surrounding Districts of Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands and (the former local authority districts of) Congleton or Crewe and Nantwich. There are many reasons why people chose to live a distance from their place of work including schooling, lifestyle, the environment, a certain retail offer and availability of the right type of property. These reasons provide the starting point for establishing what can be done to reverse (or, at the least, reduce) this.

In the 1930s Newcastle Borough Council established a residential area to the south west of the town centre (The Westlands) with the explicit objective of housing higher income groups. So it can be done. Recent research from consultants Arc4 suggests that the market for top-end executive housing (of a value of £500,000 or more) across North Staffordshire as a whole may not be large and could be satisfied by the provision of 10 to 20 new build properties per year (i.e. this may only therefore account to around 200-250 properties over a 15 year period).

Housing high earners locally is a North Staffordshire-wide objective, not limited to the Borough alone and the Borough Council will work with our planning colleagues across the area to identify suitable locations for what is sometimes referred to as 'executive housing'.

Newcastle Council is shortly to prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to identify suitable sites for new development in the Borough and one of its objectives will be to make some provision for higher value housing. A clear pointer to geographical preference is illustrated by the fact that nearly half of all E to H banded residential properties in the Borough lie in just three wards, (Keele, Loggerheads and Whitmore, and Westlands).

While it is not envisaged that this will be proposing new development in the open countryside, or in the form of 'gated developments', one option it may explore could be to permit the small scale growth of established villages such as Madeley, Loggerheads or Keele which have schools, shops and community facilities so allowing for a more sustainable form of development. Opportunities may also lie in the provision of development plots suitable for self-build housing.

**11. We will bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough**

The private sector is the principal engine of growth; but that growth can be frustrated by a lack of suitable and viable development opportunities which are attractive to the market. This includes the availability of sites, modern infrastructure and a supportive and easy to use planning regime.

In the short term there is sufficient land for new housing development and new employment development but to avoid the prospect of future growth being artificially held back by a sites shortage, work is now underway to prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan Document to make provision for new land allocations up to the year 2026.

Feedback from the development industry makes it clear that developers and their industrial clients (whether factories and logistic companies) are looking for sites which are relatively close to the principal road network (which in Newcastle terms means the A34 or the A500). In recent years the success of Lymedale Park, Parkhouse East and West and High Carr Business Park provides clear evidence of this and the Council in its role as local planning authority will aim to bring forward future land of this calibre and type to meet the needs of the next decade and more.

The Borough Council has also jointly commissioned an independent review of its employment land portfolio (with Stoke-on-Trent City Council) against the projected employment land needs of the area over the next 15 years and the recommendations from this study will be used to inform decisions on future site proposals (The Development Plan Document (DPD) referred to above)..

Much of Newcastle's success in attracting new industrial employment to the area in recent years can be attributed to a central location and good accessibility to the nation's motorway network via the M6 and A50. Connectivity via rail is also a key asset for the area's businesses with frequent direct rail services to London Euston. Long term, the area may be served by the high-speed route, HS2, which will operate a 200 - 240 mph service between London and the regions (akin to the French TGV). There will be stations serving this route to the east of Birmingham and at Manchester Airport but it is not known whether this will make provision for a stop in North Staffordshire. If this cannot be secured, then future Government lobbying will focus on retaining the quality and frequency of service to and from Euston that the area currently enjoys.

### Theme C, 'People' – Transforming ambition

It is widely recognised that the changing national economy requires that we provide a labour market with the right skills to participate fully in the local economy. This is especially important in North Staffordshire as evidence indicates that we have not yet addressed the demands of a changing economy.

Although post industrial decline has left a legacy of low paid industrial jobs we have made much progress and will continue to build on our successful track record of economic development, regeneration and inward investment.

It is acknowledged that in Newcastle under Lyme and North Staffs we rely too much on low wage sectors such as call centres and distribution, which keeps the economy at the low value end. (The imbalance between gross weekly pay is currently Newcastle 404.5, West Midlands 467.5 and Nationally 500.4) Evidence also suggests these jobs are necessary in order to provide a mix of opportunities for the wider community.

The positive legacy of the Housing Market Renewal Programme has seen local areas uplifted through new housing developments, housing refurbishments and environmental improvements. All of which make Newcastle a more attractive place to live and work and encourage new people and businesses to move into the area – reversing the negative perception held by some.

However, evidence also suggests that skilled young people are more likely than anyone else to leave the area. We will work with the LEP and other partners in order to address this issue.

In 2008 the Work Foundation report suggested the implications for long term economic development are significant and that the situation needs to be addressed. Since 2008 much has been achieved through close working with our partners to concentrate our efforts on key priorities. An example of this is the more strategic and joined up approach in North Staffs to address worklessness. This approach was initiated by the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP), which brought partners together in order to work collaboratively to address the issue.

### **12. We will raise skills reduce worklessness and raise aspirations as a core element of all transformational strategies**

We know that skills are integral to accelerating economic prosperity; creating competitive business advantage and empowering individuals to change their own lives for the better and we recognise that higher and further education has a critical role to play in ensuring that we have the right skills mix to help build a stronger, evenly balanced and more vibrant economy.

As well as having the right skills mix, employers require people with employability skills. Important elements of employability skills include a positive attitude, a professional approach, being well motivated, displaying appropriate work behaviour, good communication skills, a flexible approach, an ability to present themselves appropriately, turn up on time and be committed to the work. This is echoed in the Staffordshire Employers Skills Survey 2010 (phase 1), which states that employability skills were considered to be of more importance than vocational and formal qualifications.

Also, a recent survey by the Institute of Directors found that 90% of its members believed that not only could the education system do more to prepare young people for the world of work, but that businesses should do more too.

### The role of schools

Schools need to know what businesses are looking for and employers need input from schools to better understand how businesses can make effective contributions to the curriculum. In Newcastle schools the District Employer Engagement Group (DEEP) is a delivery mechanism for the Staffordshire Partnership, which has a county-wide responsibility for employer engagement with respect to work experience, work-related learning, the new Diplomas and professional development for teachers.

### The Family Employment Initiative

Skills gaps issues are also being addressed locally in Newcastle through partners such as the Family Employment Initiative, Newcastle under Lyme College (NULC), the Aspire Group, Newcastle CVS and through The Work Programme. However we still have many issues to address regarding our supply of readily employable people.

There is a particular challenge in providing the right kind of training for those people who have been unemployed over a long period of time and especially those who have never worked. In July 2011 2,406 people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, which is 1.8% lower than the West Midlands figure and 0.8% lower than the Great Britain figure. However the total claimants stand at 11,350 and 5,860 of these are claiming Employment Support Allowance, which is slightly higher than the West Midlands and Great Britain percentage.

In order to address these issues Newcastle under Lyme College (NULC), Employer Engagement Team work closely with employers to better understand their demands for skills and to ensure that the college delivers the correct training to meet their needs.

The Skills Funding Agency's (SFA), invest £4 billion annually into colleges, (including NULC) providers and other training organisations to provide the education and training needed by employers, employees and future employees to progress and improve what they do - increasing the chances of success for all.

Here in Newcastle we work in partnership to support the SFA mission to ensure that people and businesses can access the skills training they need to succeed. This is informed by the needs of businesses, communities and sector and industry bodies. Our formal link with the SFA is through the LEP Enterprise and Skills Implementation group.

As stated earlier in 2008 we saw more emphasis placed by partners on joint working to agree targets, identify gaps and reduce duplication of services. Partners worked together to produce the North Staffordshire Employment and Skills Business Plan 2008-2011. The overall aim of the plan was to reduce worklessness and develop a highly skilled local workforce to improve economic performance and competitiveness.

### The Jobs, Enterprise and Training Service

A key initiative prioritised within the plan was the establishment of the Jobs Enterprise and Training Service (JETs) which integrated worklessness support measures for those people furthest away from the workplace. In addition to the JET service, in Newcastle the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, the Borough Council and Aspire worked together to establish the Family Employment Initiative, which has been based in Knutton since 2009.

As well as the wider employment and skills partnerships, a local employment and skills partnership group was established - Newcastle Employment and Skills Group (NESG) to bring partners together to oversee the JET and FEI as well as providing valuable networking time to share good practice and to ensure that partners added value to each others work rather than duplicate services, which had happened in the past.

Since February 2009 FEI have engaged with over 600 people, provided training for over 200 and supported almost 200 people back into work. Evaluation carried out by Ekosgen in July 2011 shows that FEI delivers good value for money with an average cost of £1,813 per client supported back into work. This compares very favourably with similar programmes and equates to a social return on investment of up to £22.28 for every £1 invested.

The work of the FEI combined with a more joined up approach with partners has also addressed a number of the recommendations in the North Staffs Skills for Life Research and Evaluation Study 2010. Recommendations include better collection, management and sharing of data, clear indicators of priority wards, geographic targeting of provision and measures to maximise participation and most importantly accessible service delivery.

### Volunteering

As part of the journey back into training and work it is widely recognised that volunteering can provide unemployed people with skills, experience, increased confidence and self esteem. 'Work Together' is a Great Britain wide initiative that aims to encourage unemployed people to consider

volunteering as a way of improving their employment prospects while they are looking for work. Locally voluntary and community organisations play a significant role in the 'Work Together' programme. Jobcentre Plus recognises the important role that voluntary work can play and is encouraging unemployed people to consider taking up volunteering whilst they are looking for paid work, as well as ensuring they are fully aware of what they are able to do.

### **Actions**

- Continue to support the successful FEI model in Newcastle
- Explore funding options to sustain the FEI model post March 2013
- Continue to work with the LEP E&S Implementation Group to address priorities identified in the work plan
- Re-establish NESG in order to ensure effective communication between service deliverers
- Work with partners to address employability issues
- Continue to work with Staffordshire Partnership and the DEEP group to raise ambitions of the young people in schools

### **13. We will work toward getting the right skill mix to increase productivity**

As stated earlier, evidence suggests that as well as having the right skills mix, employers require people to be employable. This issue is recognised by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Enterprise and Skills Group, (a partnership of local employers with a shared interest in transforming the local economy and providing public agencies with the knowledge and expertise necessary to ensure that provision meets the needs of local business, now and in the future).

The LEP Enterprise and Skills Group have identified eight priorities, which will be progressed by the Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group through the work plan, which is updated annually:

- Apprenticeships
- Enterprising Culture
- Life Skills / Foundation Learning
- Science / Technology / Engineering / Maths as a career path
- Future Skills / Jobs
- Graduate Implementation
- Business Support / Start up advice
- Communication

The Implementation Group will focus on issues relating to the provision of skills (for both adults and young people); the employability of the Stoke and Staffordshire workforce; barriers to business start ups/enterprise; and

supporting small and medium enterprises (including social enterprise) to thrive and grow.

Keele University addresses the LEP priorities by offering professional development courses and training for industry, public sector and a range of other organisations in a variety of study options. Many of the courses are accredited by professional bodies and count towards continuing professional development portfolios.

Keele University also have access to hundreds of highly skilled and enthusiastic graduates and students who can bring fresh ideas to benefit business. The University is currently working on a range of initiatives to suit different employers and different students with various commitments. Opportunities include:

- Graduate internships of up to 12 months
- Student placements to take place either during vacation periods or part time during term time
- Work experience opportunities of up to 4 weeks

### **Actions**

- Continue to work in partnership with the LEP Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group to address priorities
- Continue to work in partnership to support Keele University, Finest and NULC to address skills gaps

### **14. We will stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire relevant skills for current and future industrial structure**

To stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire higher skills the Borough Council will work with the LEP and support the work of the lead organisations in this field: Keele University, Staffordshire University, The North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, Newcastle under Lyme College, Stoke on Trent College and the LEP.

The issue of relevant skills is recognised by the Keele employability charter, which states that a degree alone is not enough. The aim of the charter is *to prepare graduates for their future in work and as citizens by developing breadth of vision understanding and ability to be effective in different environments.*

Keele University is committed to ensuring that in addition to subject knowledge, all students will acquire generic employability skills and to have the opportunity to develop these further through the completion of a personal

development portfolio, Keele Certificate of Employability and through work placement and internships.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) reinforces the view that employers are looking for more than just technical skills and knowledge. They particularly value skills such as communication, team working and problem solving. Evidence suggests that job applicants who can demonstrate they have developed these skills will have a real advantage.

The Keele offer has been further enhanced by the recent announcement that Keele University Science and Business Park (KUSBP) and Keele University have teamed up with Staffordshire University and the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce to form the Business and Innovation Group (BIG) – see 'Economy' section for more details..

This work is complemented by Finest, professional services network. The Finest mission is to be a catalyst for the growth and development of member businesses and the professional services sector in North Staffordshire, through its Projects Group key objectives are the recruitment and retention of skills in North Staffordshire along with supporting and raising aspirations in all tiers of education

Gaps in training have also been highlighted as an issue by the Local Enterprise Partnership. Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) as a career path have been highlighted as an area to improve. A key action of the LEP Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group Workplan is to ensure that training providers have the capacity to ensure that employer demands are met.

Evidence suggests that we don't have enough young people choosing science related subjects; consequently we cannot meet the demands of the sector. Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has raised this as a serious issue for the UK and suggests that we need to double the number of new science graduates over seven years or see skills jobs disappear. This issue is echoed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS), which aims to inspire young people (16 – 19yrs) to take up science and maths post 16.

A positive example, which addresses this issue locally is Staffordshire University who currently provide a work based MSc in professional engineering. The work based approach provides both direct and indirect benefits for the employer by avoiding costs associated with having key personnel away from work for extended periods. Study and the assessment material is negotiated individually with each student so as make maximum use of what is needed by the employer

### **Actions**

- Work with Keele University and Staffordshire University to identify opportunities for graduate placements



- Work with Staffordshire University to prioritise engineering training to meet local firms requirements
- Continue to work with Finest focusing on support for the business and professional sectors
- Work with partners to provide more focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)
- Continue to work with the LEP to address current and predicted future skills gaps

### **15. We will develop a long term strategy to address worklessness**

Although the claimant levels in Newcastle continue to fall, as stated earlier there are currently 5860 Employment Support Allowance claimants in Newcastle. This figure remains persistently high. These are the people who are furthest from the jobs market and who require tailored support to re-engage with the training and jobs market.

Get Britain Working is the Governments approach to reform the welfare system in order to fight poverty, support the most vulnerable and help people break the cycle of benefit dependency.

The Work Programme is a key strand of this approach, which aims to ensure good value for money for the taxpayer by basing payments largely on results, and paying providers from the benefits saved from getting people into work. It is very much a partnership between Government and providers from across the public, private and third sectors - including social enterprises.

It is anticipated that the Work Programme, which will see the expansion of the private sectors role in the welfare state will guide the long term unemployed back into work.

The issue for Newcastle is to ensure that the Work Programme compliments existing programmes such as Family Employment Initiative, which continues to have a positive impact across the Borough and has achieved good results.

We will continue to work closely with the Aspire Group which plays a key role in addressing worklessness in Newcastle. Aspire's Employment and Skills Strategy March 2010 clearly describes their approach to deliver on the employment and skills needs of residents and is viewed as part of the Aspire Groups core business. This focuses on work placements, apprenticeships, qualifications, jobs, self-employment, training and support for new businesses and enterprises.

PM Training, which is part of the Aspire Group, is one of the largest social enterprises in the country. It aims to tackle worklessness among young people by offering those with limited or no formal qualifications an alternative route into employment. PM Training is currently establishing a new training centre in Newcastle. The centre will provide more opportunities for local young people to access training and apprenticeship opportunities. The centre will feature workshops, training areas, classrooms and offices and will help young

people to develop essential skills in the construction and housing sectors. It is anticipated that the centre will create training for 150 young people and 100 of these will go on to apprenticeships. PM Training helps to support around 200 apprentices each year across a wide range of service areas.

It is widely recognised that apprenticeships give people the chance to learn and gain nationally recognised qualifications - while getting a weekly wage. The Staffordshire Providers Association (SPA) acknowledges that an apprenticeship is one of the best ways to fill the skills gap in the UK workforce. SPA provides a communications network with member organisations and encourages links with other professional bodies to improve the quality of learning with regional and national developments.

By signing the Memorandum of Understanding the Council will seek whenever possible (subject to compliance with its Standing Orders) opportunities for work with PM Training either directly or via its list of suppliers of services, sector firms and other third parties. PM Training will seek to secure maximum local benefit from projects through the provision of training and supply of apprentices. For instance, in the Housing Market Renew Programme, PM Training carried out work on the gateways project along Knutton Lane and Lower Milehouse Lane as well as facelift work on Knutton High Street and St Bernards Road, creating apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds, adult apprenticeships and training through 'Train to Gain', in total providing training and employment opportunities to 75 people.

### **Actions**

- Ensure join up between existing initiatives and Work Programme
- Continue to work with the FEI and Aspire Group to address the worklessness agenda and especially the promotion of apprenticeships through PM Training building on the Aspire Group's employment and skills strategy
- Work with partners to host a high profile apprenticeship event for local employers
- Continue to work in partnership with the LEP to address worklessness, and
- Locally we will continue to work in partnership with Newcastle-under-Lyme College, which delivers a range of apprenticeship frameworks as well as bespoke training to employers through 'Straightforward Training', its employer engagement department.

Theme D, *'Image and Marketing'* – Transforming perceptions

### **16. We will develop an external marketing strategy for the Borough**

Whilst much of this strategy is focussed on making a tangible transformation, unless people are aware of the changes taking place and the assets currently on offer, transformation is unlikely to happen. The Borough, and the role it plays in the wider sub-region, needs marketing – and this is not simply synonymous with advertising. Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that both the 'product' and the 'price' are right to elicit a response from our target markets. In addition, marketing messages must be based on reality rather than aspiration. The SIF has provided a clear and strong framework around which to base town centre marketing initiatives but the Borough has much more to offer both as an inward investment and a tourism destination.

**How:** Specific actions are

#### Market Newcastle's assets as an inward investment location

Within North Staffordshire, enquiry handling and promotion of the area as an inward investment location is primarily carried out by two organisations, Invest Staffordshire and Make It Stoke-on-Trent, the former (previously Instaffs) based in Stafford and covering the whole county and the latter (previously the North Staffordshire Inward Investment team) based in Stoke. The first priority of our approach to future marketing will be to ensure a seamless service is created between these two teams to maximize the benefit to the area.

The focus of these two organisations is sub-regional, but as far as the Borough itself is concerned the principal objectives of our marketing strategy are:

- To raise the profile and investor-awareness of Newcastle Town Centre, its qualities and development opportunities; this will include office development, leisure and retail, food and drink and residential development, all of which we will seek to bring in greater numbers to the town centre.
- To promote Keele Science Park for high tech inward investment including new Innovation Centres, and a new Training and Conference Hotel.
- To attract manufacturing and other employment investment to sites and premises around the Borough including land at Chatterley Valley, Chesterton, Lymedale Park, Cross Heath and Silverdale.

To do this we will work with our colleagues at the City and County Councils, and with agents, land owners and intermediaries to identify prospective investors, present investment opportunities to them and help them to overcome obstacles which may stand in the way of their development intentions.

We will use digital media, including the Borough Council's own website and that of Instaffs and the 'Make it Newcastle' brand, as well as the printed media, including the preparation of a new Employment Land Compendium. Regular dialogue with local and regional agents, architects and commercial advisors will also play a part in promoting the Borough and its investment opportunities.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent LEP should agree how the area will be marketed externally

The LEP has proposed the development of a unified strategy for Stoke and Staffordshire for tourism, and the same for inward investment, with delivery thereafter.

- NBC will work closely with the LEP in marketing the area and will ensure that its voice is heard in the development of strategies and subsequent action plans

### **17. We will improve the quality of life offer for current and future residents**

North Staffordshire needs to improve the quality of life offer for current and future residents based around the different selling points for different groups. Newcastle has a key role to lay in the differentiation of the sub-region and so it is vital to work with partners on the development of our offer. Because of the varying needs and expectations of different groups we will need to emphasise a variety of different selling points.

**How:** Specific actions are

Develop 'offers' for key target markets of high skill workers

Typically these might include young professionals seeking affordable housing and an easy commute or more experienced professionals looking for 'executive homes' and access to schools. Before developing offers it is essential to define our target markets, therefore we undertake a review to determine customer profile and define target markets.

Use the SIF to deliver 'quality of life' improvements in Newcastle Town Centre.

The town centre is at the heart of the Borough community, and a key economic driver and improvements here will demonstrate a shift in organisational and partnership culture towards a more creative, proactive and co-ordinated approach to delivering local quality of life. Through the SIF, we will aim to develop the distinctiveness of the place and facilitate, through development where required, a balance of appropriate town centre uses that supports this, particularly focussed on the cultural and retail offer but also seeking to enable offices, leisure and housing of appropriate scale.

We will seek to maintain and develop a complementary and distinctive offer to that of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre, consistent with the North Staffordshire brand and in a reciprocal strategic manner.

We will specifically develop the town's role as a 'character centre', focussing particularly on revitalising the soul of the town centre, notably its street markets (The Stones) and marketplace.

We will 're-imagine' and re-assert Newcastle as an urban market town – a key part of the quality of life offer that in turn supports our longer term aim of becoming more recognised as a 'University Town'.

We will promote, modernise and upgrade the quality of the street markets, keeping them relevant to our local community as well as developing a higher quality, sustainable markets culture that is distinctive and, over time, attracts a wider range of visitors..

### **18. We will support the development of North Staffordshire's existing 'experience economy'**

The annual tourism economic impact assessment, undertaken by the Enjoy Staffordshire Partnership, shows that in 2009 1.6m trips were taken to Newcastle, with an estimated total spend by visitors of £94m. Furthermore, almost 2,500 jobs are supported by the tourism sector in the Borough.

Gradually increasing affluence has led to the growth of the 'experience economy', whereby consumers are seeking added value from retail, leisure and tourism sectors. There are many gems in the North Staffordshire experience economy, including Alton Towers, Trentham Gardens, ceramics, canals, etc, all of which are easily accessible from Newcastle.

**How:** Specific actions are:

#### Identify joint projects as a sub-region to develop local tourism

Tourism is an area where all local authorities in the sub-region benefit from working together to build on assets across the area, such as theme parks, ceramics, gardens and canals to increase the proportion of visitors staying overnight and thereby spending more in the area. The LEP has identified a growing rural economy supported by the tourism and food and drink sectors as a key attribute of the county. Furthermore, the LEP Board acknowledges its need to work with existing partnerships and specialist sector interest groups, one of which is the Destination Management Partnership (DMP). The DMP, known as the Enjoy Staffordshire partnership, has made a significant contribution to tourism within the area but more needs to be done to create a clearer tourism offer.

With the pending increase in student fees, all universities will be seeking ways of differentiating their offer. Although, as a campus university, Keele is a self-contained unit, it recognises that it needs to offer potential students an excellent experience package. For example, students tend to live off campus in their second year and quality of life factors in the vicinity play a more important role, e.g. good transport links and a vibrant retail, leisure and cultural offer.

- NBC will support LEP marketing and tourism related initiatives to attract visitors, business tourism, inward investors, students.
- NBC will continue to support the Enjoy Staffordshire Partnership and will seek ways to play a more active role.
- NBC will work with Keele to improve the student experience and links with the town centre.

### Investigate options for improving the quality of hotels, conference and eating/drinking facilities in the area.

As the recession continues to bite and more people choose to holiday within the UK, the scope for attracting UK visitors to the Borough grows. The opening of the town centre Travelodge, plus plans for the Keele conference hotel has increased the number and range of bed spaces available to visitors.

Business tourism is another area for development and Keele campus is a consistently popular and award-winning destination.

- NBC will work with Keele University to promote the development of the Keele Sustainability Hub. Based on the Home Farm site, this will be used to house and demonstrate the latest environmental technologies. This facility will be open for businesses, schools and the public to learn about environmental technologies and will also be available to the community for exhibitions/lectures, etc relating to environmental technologies.
- NBC will seek to bring the former St Giles & St George's school back into use, possibly as a conference/training centre, for the benefit of the town centre generally and for the wider benefit of the local business community.

### **19. We will use the Strategic Investment Framework as the basis for investment in the cultural and retail experience of Newcastle Town Centre**

Newcastle town centre plays a pre-eminent role in the economic future of the Borough. In response to this a Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) for the town centre has been developed with considerable input from partner organisations providing a context and a delivery vehicle for actions to improve the economic well-being of the town centre. Although the SIF represents a long term commitment, the action plan is revised annually.

The over-arching aims and principles of the SIF were to develop the distinctiveness and character of Newcastle town centre. The SIF summarised Newcastle as an urban market town with a progressive campus university. The inter-relationship between these two identities lies in a collective need for maturing and expanding the Borough's overall quality of life offer, investing in both housing development and proactive place marketing that expands the critical mass to support an enhanced town centre.

Pillar 1 of the SIF, 'Retail Remade' proposes actions to improve the 'core business' of the town, significantly improving the retail offer, environment and experience by building on existing strengths and character. Pillar 2, 'town and culture' is about creating reasons to dwell in the town centre, specifically growing the cultural and leisure offer and housing.

**How:** Specific actions are:

Retail should continue to play a strategic part, particularly as it can contribute to the quality of life for visitors and for current and potential residents. Over the last two years, during the worst part of the recession, the vacancy rate within the town centre has consistently been lower than the national average. Whilst a number of high street chains may have disappeared, the independent sector has remained fairly robust over the period, suggesting a certain resilience amongst local businesses. However, the town currently lacks floorspace of sufficient size to attract key multiples. Attracting large scale developer investment into the town centre is covered in the section Place and Infrastructure.

- Retail networking and communication

The development of the retail offer needs to be a partnership between all town centre stakeholders. Based on SIF recommendations, steps have been taken to set up a town centre partnership, which will have a legal entity and bring together retail, leisure, food and drink businesses, local authorities, police, educational establishments, etc, to develop Newcastle as a destination.

- NBC will work with existing town centre businesses to set up a town centre partnership (TCP). The TCP will develop initiatives to raise the profile of the town and increase footfall.
- Retailers, possibly through the TCP, will be encouraged to consider a loyalty card scheme.
- NBC, with other partners, will explore the possibility of a town centre website, listing shops, restaurants, etc alongside other relevant information.

- Investing in the quality of the public realm

The SIF recognised that there was a need to improve the environment within Newcastle Town Centre to improve its attractiveness to shoppers. The identity and performance of the street market is critical to this.

Locally, research conducted for the Borough Council has shown that the market suffers from a poor layout in the town and that the market stalls are urgently in need of replacement. The Borough Council, in partnership with Staffordshire County Council, has prepared proposals to close Hassell Street to through traffic in the daytime and re-align the street market whilst providing new modern market stalls and re-paving the Hassell Street / High Street junction to reinforce its status as a pedestrian area. Associated works will also take place to introduce a bus lane on Barracks Road and create a new taxi rank at the entrance to the Ironmarket. Following public consultation on the proposals, the Borough Council's Cabinet has approved this scheme for implementation and delivery will begin in 2012.

- Shops for art

A scheme will be developed in conjunction with relevant partners to make vacant shop units look more attractive. This has already been trialled and it is planned to build on the work already undertaken. Typically this might include artwork displays and possibly other cultural uses such as 'shop front theatre'.

Pillar 2 of the SIF, 'Town and Culture', is about creating reasons to dwell in the town centre, specifically developing the cultural and leisure offer. One of its key recommendations is consolidating the local food and drink offer and seeking ways of promoting the offer within the town centre. In this respect, the Borough Council will

- work with partners to develop the 'local food' offer for the town centre. This could include simple actions, such as encouraging market traders and other outlets to promote the origin of the foodstuffs, to more complex solutions such as a food festival,
- explore, in conjunction with partners, the possibility of setting up a local tourism group. The Borough Council has worked with retailers during 2010 and 2011 to deliver a series of events, in addition to the popular Jazz & Blues Festival, designed to raise the profile of the town and increase footfall. Some key retailers have become more involved with event organisation and this good work will be further developed.
- establish a cultural partnership. Design and innovation emerged as key drivers across the sub-region in the North Staffordshire Tourism Strategy 2004-2014 and prominent amongst the innovative actions have been tourism-related projects such as festivals and events. Events programming (in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent) is a significant area of development for the *city region* - encompassing sports, cultural, business and other events - and will be a key plank of our image-building work.

The Jazz & Blues festival, started in Newcastle town centre in 2006, provides an excellent example of how partnership working can develop and sustain a successful event. Furthermore, in 2010, a small amount of funding from the



County Council provided the spur for a number of successful events aimed at raising the profile and increasing footfall in the town centre. These included a Mad Hatter's tea party, an Oatcake festival and a summer holiday themed event with a children's treasure hunt. The Breast Cancer Campaign also organised a very well supported 'Pink' day in the town centre raising over £6000 for the charity. In 2011, the Oatcake festival and the 'Pink' day have been reprised, along with trialling new ideas including an 'Historic Frolic', a festival of dance and a week-long programme of circus related activities.

- An events group was formed in spring 2011 and this group will develop an annual programme of events which will contribute towards the aims of the TCP. As well as building on the successful Jazz & Blues festival, other key events will be developed. This might include, for example, building the Oatcake festival into a more extensive food festival, or taking advantage of Newcastle's historical connection with the development of the modern circus.
- Market the town centre to supplement tourism and inward investment objectives

The SIF highlights the fact that several of the challenges faced by Newcastle are interlinked and thus any potential solution must be cross-cutting. Property consultants Alder King suggest that the main reason for the lack of retail investment in Newcastle is that there is a general lack of awareness of the town within North Staffordshire and elsewhere, as well as it being blurred amongst neighbouring and competing centres such as Hanley. This suggestion clearly paves the way for, and exemplifies the benefits of, a coordinated marketing campaign for the town centre. However, in developing a marketing strategy for the town centre, it is essential to treat the town as a product.

NBC, in conjunction with partners will produce a marketing strategy for the town centre

### **20. We will develop a network of North Staffordshire ambassadors**

We recognise the value of good publicity for North Staffordshire as a whole and the need to highlight and celebrate our successes. The report 'Transforming North Staffordshire' recommends the creation of a network of Stoke and Staffordshire Ambassadors who are passionate about what the region has to offer. The ambassador network should be made up of individuals passionate about the area who are seen as volunteering their time and enthusiasm (rather than 'hired celebrities' employed to promote a region about which they have no intimate knowledge or empathy. The network also requires clear objectives and a clear, unambiguous and consistent message promoting the benefits of investing, living, working and studying in North Staffordshire.

There are a number of models already in existence for ambassador schemes; some involve small number of high profile, well known ambassadors, deployed carefully and sparingly at high profile events, others use large numbers of less well-known ambassadors from a broad range of backgrounds. Both models have their strengths and weaknesses.

**How:** Specific actions are

As this is a North Staffordshire-wide issue, NBC will work with the LEP, the County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the universities to encourage the development of ambassadors willing to promote the area within their fields of influence.

Alongside this, the Borough Council will continue to run its business forum, the Newcastle Business Panel, to discuss issues of strategic importance to the Borough.

### Monitoring and Review

The Borough Council will publish an evaluation and review report at the end of the five year period covered by this strategy (2017) and a mid-point report, two and a half years from adoption, reviewing progress against the objectives set.

The mid-point review will give decision makers in the borough Council and their partners the opportunity to assess success to date, remind ourselves why initiatives are being pursued and the join-up between them. The review may also take the opportunity of fresh initiatives or changes in the economic or financial landscape and capitalize on them. It may also suggest changes in emphasis or priority.

A more detailed review will be undertaken after five years, after which changes in the economic and financial circumstances of the country (and the area) will be more clear and it may then be more appropriate to consider more fundamental changes in direction, including new initiatives.

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## RENEW NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PATHFINDER 2003-2011

**Submitted by:** Executive Director Regeneration & Development

**Principal author:** Kim Graham

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** Knutton, Cross Heath, Chesterton, Kidsgrove and Town, Silverdale, Holditch, Poolfields

### **Purpose of the Report**

To inform Members of the conclusion of the Renew Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder initiative 2003-2011 and its achievements within the Borough.

### **Recommendations**

- a) **That the Renew HMR Pathfinder Programme 2003-2011 and its achievements in Newcastle are noted.**
- b) **That the Council continues to work with both funding and delivery partners to optimise the prospects of further development/initiatives being implemented that are consistent with the objectives of the Renew Programme.**

### **Reasons**

Due to the change in government spending priorities, funding for Housing Market Renewal ended March 2011, subject to a small programme supported by transitional funding.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 North Staffordshire was one of nine areas in the country which was designated as a Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder area in recognition of housing market failure.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the Government's HMR programme (Renew North Staffordshire) has been in operation since 2003 mainly focusing on the urban core of Stoke on Trent and in a number of communities of the Borough. The Newcastle wards covered are Knutton and Cross Heath, which was designated as the Borough's Area of Major Intervention (AMI), Chesterton, which was designated as a General Renewal Area (GRA), Town and Kidsgrove (Galley's Bank ex mining estate), Silverdale, Holditch and Poolfields.
- 1.3 In 2003 an initial £6.6M HMR funding was allocated for the period 2004 – 2006 to develop the plans required to carry out early work across North Staffordshire. The plans, which were informed by extensive stakeholder and public consultation, were submitted to Government to secure funding for what was envisaged to be a 15 year programme.
- 1.4 In line with delivery of the HMR programme and the Market Restructuring (Implementation) Agreement 2004, the council has demonstrated its commitment to direct and align its investment into the target neighbourhoods. To this end the council identified a capital sum of £5M to support specific HMR and regeneration activity in Newcastle. This was funded through the ring-fencing of some "Right-to-buy" receipts (derived from the sale of former Council houses since the transfer of the council's housing stock to Aspire Housing). As well as addressing HMR priorities, this approach has also addressed priorities in the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy and the council's own corporate priorities.

- 1.5 Members may recall that the original “BM3” 2005 Masterplan for Knutton and Cross Heath recommended large scale clearance and new build to deliver a broader mix of tenures with a view to improving long term sustainability. However, a critical challenge and economic appraisal of the proposal resulted in smaller scale demolition of less popular stock and a recommendation for a more tightly focused new build programme.
- 1.6 The Council has worked in partnership with Renew, Aspire Housing, the Homes and Communities Agency, Staffordshire County Council, the Primary Care Trust and the private sector to deliver the largely successful Newcastle programme. In line with the HMR vision and objectives the programme has focused on stimulating demand and creating sustainable communities where people want to live, work, invest and study.
- 1.7 Key areas of investment have addressed housing supply and demand to facilitate housing choice and the provision of good quality housing stock. Investment has also focused on encouraging population retention, improving the local environment, enhancing our heritage and improving the public realm. This has supported social cohesion and economic regeneration objectives, which contributes towards achievement of a more sustainable community.

## 2. **Programme Overview**

- 2.1 Successful partnership working has been at the heart of the Newcastle programme delivery. The programme has included clearance, targeted refurbishments, environmental improvements, heritage facelifts, eco terraces, strategic gateway improvements and new build across all areas within the designated Renew area of the Borough, although focused predominantly upon the AMI. The programme has also focused on improved communications and engagement with local residents across the Renew area and especially focusing on the Galleys Bank estate in Kidsgrove and in the AMI. In the AMI there has been reduction of anti social behaviour through a successful programme of diversionary activities working with young people at Ramsey Road Community Centre (which has provided a central hub for this work). The programme has also enabled research and feasibility studies focusing on the AMI as well as town centre, Chesterton and Kidsgrove. In the following paragraphs there is a summary of the key projects undertaken as part of the programme in the Borough.

### 2.2 **Group Repair, Facelifts and Environmental Improvements**

The early years of the programme 2004 – 2006 focused on group repair in the town centre and master planning in the AMI. The town centre scheme “Town Centre Living” completed external repairs to 55 houses in the John Street, Wharf Street and Albert Street area. The £632,500 scheme was totally funded by Renew and showed their early commitment to actively supporting and facilitating Housing Market Renewal in the Borough.

Improving existing housing has been central to the Newcastle HMR programme and has created uplift to priority areas. Further group repair schemes were successfully completed in Knutton – 32 houses in John Street and High Street and in Chesterton – 72 houses on London Road.

In response to the English Heritage review of terraced properties in Knutton, which was considered alongside a stock and ground condition survey, the award winning Knutton Heritage Facelifts were successfully completed in 2008. 73 houses were externally refurbished to a very high standard which restored heritage features to their former glory. The quality of the streetscape as been greatly improved and local community engagement increased. The £1.2M scheme was funded by Renew and the Borough Council.

The work in Knutton has been further enhanced by a range of environmental improvements delivered through Aspire and PM Training (with the added value that the latter provides for). These were in response to consultation with local residents whose views informed the Knutton Environmental Strategy, which was produced by Taylor Young in 2007. £600,000 funding for the improvements was provided by the Borough Council, Renew and Aspire. The cumulative effect of group repair, heritage facelifts and environmental improvements has provided a visible uplift to the area as well as increased community safety through alley gating schemes. This work in Knutton has been further enhanced through additional funding to deliver environmental improvements to 18 commercial and residential properties on the High Street and 91 residential properties on Silverdale Street along with 66 properties in St Bernards Road.

### **2.3 Chesterton Eco Homes**

The eco homes scheme involved the purchase of 7 empty properties in Chesterton, particularly targeting empty commercial properties that had previously been in residential use. By refurbishing the properties and bringing them back into use the scheme contributed to the uplift of the area and supported other Renew and Council investment in the General Renewal Area.

The refurbishment focussed on creating modern family homes within traditional terraced properties. By maximising solar gain and increasing insulation the scheme was successful in meeting the Ecohomes "Excellent" standard and making significant carbon savings for the future occupiers.

### **2.4 Chesterton London Road Housing Scheme**

Most recently the build programme for the London Road housing development has started. This development to build four houses for rent is being delivered by Staffordshire Housing. The council provided the land for a nominal fee to support this development, which will improve the main route into Chesterton and compliment previous group repair, eco homes and environmental improvements.

### **2.5 Knutton Village Options Appraisal**

In order to protect the village identity of Knutton and to create a stronger and more diverse community, Renew and the Council commissioned DTZ to develop an options appraisal into publicly owned Knutton Village centre sites. The sites were originally highlighted as a key opportunity for mixed use developments with a residential lead. Two reports - Knutton Village Options Final report June 2009 and Knutton Village Option 4 Financial and Deliverability Assessment, March 2010 were produced.

In summary the reports demonstrated that it would not be commercially viable to bring forward a comprehensive regeneration programme for the area. Consequently Cabinet resolved at its meeting on 15 June 2011 to take forward the disposal of the Knutton Recreation Centre site and adjoining land to enable a housing-led redevelopment (broadly consistent with the DTZ reports). This decision was the subject of a "call-in" and a scrutiny review undertaken; the current position in this matter is reported separately on this agenda.

### **2.6 Clearance Programme**

As stated earlier, the programme of clearance in Newcastle has been tightly focused on two areas – the Lower Milehouse Estate, where 188 houses have been demolished and Charter Road where 59 houses have been demolished.

With regard to the Charter Road area Aspire Housing have been working with a development partner, the HCA and your officers with the intention of bringing forward a development of 116 houses, including 25% affordable provision. A consultation exercise has been undertaken with local residents to inform design of the detailed scheme.

Insofar as the cleared part of the Lower Milehouse Lane estate is concerned it is being managed and maintained by Aspire Housing. It was always envisaged that redevelopment of this area would be sequenced to follow the development of the former Collins and Aikman site and the Charter Road area. Whilst the pace of development has been adversely affected by a combination of the global recession and the withdrawal of Market Renewal funding, the site is in a condition that would enable redevelopment in the medium term.

## **2.7 Former Collins and Aikman Site**

The Council was a key partner in the development of the multi award winning £15m Mill Rise extra care village on the former Collins and Aikman site, which opened in 2009. This has set an excellent standard and acted as a catalyst for further development in the area. 60 high quality apartments for rent and sale have been provided for people aged over 55. Mill Rise also provides a modern healthcare facility along with restaurant, café, hairdresser, and pharmacy and piazza area

March 2011 saw the completion of 80 new houses built on the site adjacent to Mill Rise (Lymebrook Way). This development received £7.5M investment from the HCA Kick Start scheme and has provided 72 affordable properties (40 for rent) and 8 for sale.

Phase two of the successful Lymebrook Way was recently granted planning approval for 127 houses. The scheme will include 36 two bedroom units, 46, three bedroom units, 43 four bedroom units and 2 five bedroom units.

## **2.8 Strategic Gateway Improvements**

In order to blend the new developments with the existing housing a range of environmental improvements was funded by the Council, Renew and Aspire. The £1.3M scheme was undertaken in the Knutton Lane and the Lower Milehouse Lane, which are the main gateways into the area. The schemes were delivered through Aspire and PM Training and as well as uplifting the area, the schemes also provided valuable on the job training for young people.

In Knutton Lane residents were consulted on their preferences for improvements, which resulted in low maintenance gardens, improved driveways and boundary walls and more formalised parking areas. The work has helped to blend the existing housing with the new college and has strengthened links between the town centre and Knutton Lane. Initially it was planned to improve 87 houses however, the scheme was extended through additional funding from Renew to improve an extra 47 houses on Church Lane.

A similar approach was taken with residents living on the Lower Mile House estate, which has seen improvements to 125 houses and has also provided low maintenance gardens, improved driveways, boundary walls and a number of properties have been re-rendered and painted to reflect the colour palette of Mill Rise and Lyme Brook Way.

## **2.9 Kidsgrove - Galleys Bank Former Miner Estate (overview)**

A number of initiatives have taken place on the estate in response to residents concerns.

The Pilot House project has undertaken work on one of the defective houses on the estate to investigate whether a cost effective repair is possible. After an extensive period of testing the property is currently being refurbished.



Communications on the estate have been greatly improved by the establishment of a Community Steering Group for the Pilot House Project as well as regular bi-monthly newsletters, which have been delivered to every house on the estate since 2008.

In 2008 targeted inspections to 42 privately rented homes were carried out on the estate. The inspections were followed up with enforcement action where appropriate. The successful project helped to reduce the risk of residents having to tolerate disrepair through fear of eviction.

A number of clean up days have been held on the estate which has helped to address problems created by short term tenants moving on and leaving items behind which have created an unsightly mess.

A more detailed review of the work undertaken on the Galleys Bank estate is attached at Appendix A. Whilst there is not a key decision to be made in this regard it is important that members (and other stakeholders; particularly the local residents) have the opportunity to reflect upon the initiatives undertaken and have a shared understanding of the medium to long term prospects for the estate.

### 3. **Proposal**

- (a) That the Renew HMR Pathfinder Programme 2003-2011 and its achievements in Newcastle are noted.
- (b) That the Council continues to work with both funding and delivery partners to optimise the prospects of further development/initiatives being implemented that are consistent with the objectives of the Renew Programme.

### 4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 4.1 To acknowledge the legacy of the Renew North Staffs Programme and to demonstrate a continuing commitment from the Council to the local communities and other stakeholders with regard to future opportunities that may arise to reinforce the achievements of the programme.

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

- 5.1 The HMR programme has positively addressed all the council's corporate priorities and some of those in the Sustainable Community Strategy (People – PE03 and PE10. Places – PL02 and PL03. Prosperity – PR01, PR03 and PR04). It has done this by providing high quality, sustainable housing and environmental improvements to those people living in the boroughs most deprived wards. This has supported stronger neighbourhoods and community pride where people have actively participated and influenced service delivery. The programme has helped to improve the perception of certain areas by creating a more attractive environment which benefits people and business.

### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The programme has been successfully delivered in line with the partnership agreement signed in 2004 along with the Deed of Variation, agreed and signed off annually.

### 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The HMR programme has focused on the most deprived wards of the borough as identified in the IMD. The programme has contributed to improving the lives of the people living in those areas. Equality Impact Assessment was submitted January 2009.

## 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The council's investment of approximately £2.8M has levered in £14M Renew investment into the borough during the life of the programme. This is approximately 7% of the overall HMR allocation for North Staffordshire. A total in excess of £27M has been invested by partners into the AMI area.
- 8.2 Whilst there are no direct resource implications arising from this report it is likely that future regeneration initiatives undertaken within the designated Renew areas will necessitate support from the Council. Such support will often be assimilated into day to day work programmes but any initiatives requiring new funding would be the subject of the Council's normal decision-making procedures.

## 9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 As indicated above a number of the significant Renew-led interventions have been completed or remain subject of delivery commitments. The major risks arising from the demise of the Renew Programme are:
- Lack of public sector funding to pump-prime or provide gap financing for capital schemes;
  - Loss of partnership infrastructure that could diminish the prospects of efficient/effective initiatives and;
  - Change in focus of partner priorities.
- 9.2 In mitigation it is considered that the programme has helped to galvanise key partners around mutually agreed priorities which are reflected in the approved Local Investment Plan. Whilst the lost of external funding, coupled with the global recession, will have slowed down the pace of delivery, the programme has helped in providing the building blocks and confidence in investors to continue the good work undertaken to date.

## 10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 Eco homes and improved design standards has positively impacted on this.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

There is no key decision. Cabinet members are asked to note the report.

## 12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 Renew North Staffs HMR programme
- 23/02/2004 – Cabinet
  - 02/06/2004 – Cabinet
  - 22/09/2004 – Cabinet
  - 14/02/2005 – Cabinet
  - 27/05/2005 – Cabinet
  - 22/06/2005 – Cabinet
  - 17/10/2007 – Cabinet
  - 17/06/2009 – Cabinet
- 12.2 Galleys Bank
- 23/07/2003 Cabinet
  - 15/10/2003 Council

- 2/05/2006 Cabinet
- 28/06/2006 Council
- 25/10/2006 Cabinet
- 17/10/2007 Cabinet
- 17/06/2009 Cabinet

13. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Overview of work undertaken regarding the Galleys Bank Estate.

14. **Background Papers**

The Renew final report produced by the City Renewal Team will be available in the Members room.

Copies of the structural and repair options reports relating to the Galleys Bank Pilot House Project will be available in the Members Room.

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**GALLEYS BANK PILOT PROJECT RESULTS – APPENDIX A****1. Background**

- 1.1 The Galleys Bank Estate is a former National Coal Board housing estate located in Kidsgrove. The area was included within the Renew Housing Market Pathfinder boundary because it was acknowledged that whilst Galleys Bank was not suffering from housing market failure (as measured by conventional indicators) the area has a number of underlying issues which are likely to cause problems in the future if left unaddressed.
- 1.2 There are issues relating to “Schindler” properties, which are of non-traditional construction and designated under the 1984 Housing Defects Act. 40% of the properties on Galleys Bank were improved through a 90% Government reinstatement grant in the 1990s but over half were not and the grant is no longer available. This has resulted in potential owner-occupiers finding it difficult to secure mortgages on the properties. The designation of Schindler properties means that mortgages on unimproved properties require at least a 25% deposit. Below average incomes on the estate and the effects of the current economic climate mean that it would be extremely difficult for someone wishing to purchase an unimproved Schindler property. This has led to a proliferation of private landlords who have taken advantage of the situation and bought large volumes of stock on the estate through cash purchases at auction. At 2006 33% of all properties on the estate were in this form of ownership. High levels of private-renting causes problems such as poor maintenance, deteriorating environment and an influx of transitory tenants which, in turn, can cause social problems.
- 1.3 In 2006 Renew invited DTZ to apply its expertise of working in similar ‘at risk’ housing areas across the country to identify if Galleys Bank could benefit from a private sector approach, given that public money was not available to provide a solution. Cabinet decided that no single option from the resulting options appraisal was viable but that further investigative work should be undertaken.
- 1.4 The economic downturn meant that a cost-effective solution became even more challenging. It was unclear what structural condition the properties were likely to be in. It was agreed that the condition could be tested in order to look at whether a more cost-effective repair method that would not require a rebuild could still achieve mortgageability.
- 1.5 A consultant facilitator, Peter Bevington was funded by Renew and Newcastle Borough Council to set up a Community Steering Group from December 2008. All residents on the estate were invited to join and a group of around 15 residents have acted as an advisory body to Renew and Newcastle Borough Council.
- 1.6 Newcastle Borough Council employed an experienced Environmental Health Officer to work for four months, funded by Renew and working specifically on the estate. The officer carried out 42 inspections of privately rented homes followed by enforcement action where appropriate. The aim of proactive inspections by the Council was to reduce the risk of residents having to tolerate disrepair through fear of eviction. There were no reported cases of tenant harassment for the duration of this project. Tenants on the estate have actively sought inspections and some landlords responded in anticipation of enforcement although work in default has been undertaken on properties owned by a small number of landlords.

**2. Issues**

- 2.1 Renew presented the opportunity of finding out more about the possible cost implications of repairing the unimproved Schindler properties and Cabinet approved to release match funding (£55k for the pilot study and continuation of the steering group Chair) and further investigation into the scheme on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

- 2.2 In November 2009, a long-term empty property on the estate was purchased as a 'pilot house'. With assistance from three members of the community, consultants Building Research Establishment (BRE) and Michael Dyson Associates were appointed in January 2010 to undertake detailed structural testing and devise a repair method for the pilot house that was both cost effective and could achieve mortgageability.
- 2.3 The consultants produced a structural report and a repair options report. The structural report indicated that although workmanship was variable throughout the property, there was confidence that the property was structurally sound and that the level of degradation of the concrete structure was low. The repair options report outlined five possible repair methods, ranging in cost and level of intervention from thermal cladding to protect the existing structure to complete removal of the concrete frame.
- 2.4 Through discussion with the Community Steering Group and Project Steering Group, it was decided that option three (where the outer layer of brick was removed and block brick work was built in between the concrete frame to take the load away from the concrete structure and the new layer would be over-clad to improve thermal performance) was the only viable option. This is because the occupant could remain in the house for the duration of the works which would mean no decant expenses and costs would be reduced because the repair work would be less invasive than the replacement of the frame. Because a private sector solution is the only option for repairs on the estate at this time, cost effectiveness is the key factor. It is already known that the houses can be repaired by removing the concrete frame as this method was used during the 1990s under a Government funded repair programme. This method was deemed too costly to be within financial reach of most estate home-owner who may wish to undertake repair works through property appreciation loans that are reliant on the works boosting the post-works property equity to higher than the original value after the cost of works.
- 2.5 Whilst investigative work was taking place, Renew were in contact with leading mortgage indemnity providers. If an indemnity insurer is prepared to provide a certificate of insurance for the repair method on an individual property then mortgage lenders have the confidence to offer mortgages on that property (also dependent on financial circumstances of the buyer).
- 2.6 Whilst the commercial arm of the indemnity provider was interested in a possible certification scheme, the technical inspectors were concerned about the variability in workmanship of the pilot house. In order to satisfy the Council of Mortgage Lenders, a 60 year guarantee on the lifetime of the property must be agreed. Technical officers argued that, having inspected the property, that the retained concrete frame (even with the weight bearing load removed) could not be guaranteed for 60 years. This meant that a certificate of mortgageability could not be secured using the preferred repair method.
- 2.7 Discussion has taken place within the Project Steering Group and the Community Steering Group about what repair method is appropriate for the pilot house now it was clear that the preferred repair solution was not viable. The purpose of the study was to undertake the preferred repair method on the pilot house and sell it on the open market as a test of mortgageability. As it had become clear that a cost effective repair solution was not possible, it was agreed to undertake a Non Traditional Housing Appraisal Scheme approved repair under which a 30 year guarantee could be obtained. The pilot house has been valued before and will be valued post completion to test the effect of the works and certification on the property value and to test whether the certification has any affects on mortgageability as this is unknown.
- 2.8 The pilot house was purchased with funding from Renew and Newcastle Borough Council. Since the repaired property can not achieve mortgageability, the pilot house has been transferred into permanent ownership of Aspire who have funded the structural repair and refurbishment.
- 2.9 Residents on the estate have been notified about the latest findings through the residents' newsletter and through the Community Steering Group.

- 2.10 It is unlikely that any significant public sector funding will be available for a comprehensive refurbishment programme on the estate. However, there are indications that Aspire Housing may be prepared to invest in incremental, ad hoc refurbishments as opportunities arise and where it can access Homes and Communities Agency funding.
- 2.11 Of course it will be a matter for any future investor to determine the nature and extent of property repairs they deem appropriate. But it is noteworthy that any RSL investment would, in the majority of cases, improve the houses to 'Decent Homes Standard' which is the critical outcome from a tenant's perspective.
- 2.12 On a broader note, as market conditions increase and property values rise, the benefits of residents undertaking their own repairs on their home may be a more attractive option.

### **3. Position Statement**

- 3.1 In view of the cessation of the Renew Programme and the general reduction in public sector capital funding it is necessary to take stock and agree with stakeholders what future actions may be appropriate. There are four main considerations in this regard:
- Completion of the refurbishment of the pilot house and dissemination of information
  - Enforcement of housing standards with private landlords
  - Continuation of support for the Community Steering Group
  - Future funding opportunities for any improvement schemes

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

- 4.1 Pilot House Results - The refurbishment of the Pilot House is planned for completion by October 2011. Once work on the pilot house is complete, an information day will be held inside the property so that residents can discuss the investigative process and pilot study and to get more information about the consultant's repair options and discuss any concerns or address rumours they may have heard about the regeneration work on the estate. Once the house has been refurbished it will be let by Aspire Housing.
- 4.2 Housing Standards - The completion of the pro-active inspection programme is seen as a success with 42 inspections undertaken and enforcement action completed where necessary. It is recommended that the Council continues to highlight that inspections are available and where a request for an inspection or a complaint about housing conditions is received that the Council undertakes action in line with the Housing Standards and Public Health Enforcement Policy. Further information advertising the availability of support from the Council could be undertaken at the proposed open day.
- 4.3 Community Steering Group - Housing Market Renewal funding withdrawal at the end of the financial year 2010/11 meant that financial support for the continuation of the independent Community Steering Group Chair, Peter Bevington has been withdrawn. The group therefore has the option to; continue and meet independently if and when additional resources are available, become part or sub-group of the Kidsgrove Locality Action Partnership group, or revert to the Galleys Bank Residents Association to actively look for options for the estate through lobbying or community action. The group has discussed their future and suggested that they will continue to meet until the completion of the pilot study, which was the purpose of the group set out in their Terms of Reference. It is envisaged that your officers would continue their involvement with the group as part of current work programmes, given the limited scale of activity anticipated. The group may then disband but should further opportunities arise, residents would be invited to join a new task-specific steering group.
- 4.4 Future Funding - The Community Steering Group is keen for the local MP and Ward Councillors to become more involved in the project (after previously asking that politicians step back and allow residents to lead on the project) by investigating likely local, regional, national and

European funding streams and making the case for prioritisation of funding for this estate. At the moment your officers are unaware of any large-scale external funding opportunities for tackling the physical condition of the unimproved properties on the estate.

Nevertheless, with regard to potential future housing investment the Council has prepared a Local Investment Plan (LIP) in response to a request from the Homes and Communities Agency. In the LIP, Kidsgrove is recommended as a spatial priority. This does not mean that any funding will be allocated to the area but does enable the Council in partnership with Registered Landlords to consider schemes with the HCA in future years if national funding is available.



## DISPOSAL OF KNUTTON RECREATION CENTRE

**Submitted by:** Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Planning

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** All (property located in Knutton and Silverdale ward)

### **Purpose of the Report**

To report back to Cabinet the outcome of the scrutiny review process and to seek a decision on how to proceed in this matter.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) To receive the comments from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to thank them for their views.**

**(b) That members reaffirm the Cabinet decision made on 15 June 2011 with the additional recommendations as follows:**

- **That the Council commits to undertaking a public consultation process supported by any preferred purchaser prior to the submission of any planning application for development of the subject land.**
- **That any marketing particulars clarify:**
  - (i) the Council's expectation of compliance with the current policy regarding the provision of affordable housing and;**
  - (ii) the potential for inclusion of a convenience store.**
- **That the outcome of any public consultation process be reported back to Cabinet as part of any final report to dispose of the subject land.**

### **Reasons**

To enable Cabinet to respond to the views arising from the Scrutiny call-in process and to make a final decision in this matter so that progress can be made to secure a comprehensive redevelopment programme for this surplus site.

## **1. Background**

1.1 Cabinet resolved, at its meeting on 15 June 2011 to dispose of the Knutton Recreation Centre site. In particular the following resolutions were made:-

- (a) That officers be authorised to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to dispose of the Knutton Recreation Centre site for redevelopment as soon as practically possible after the new Jubilee 2 centre is completed.**
- (b) That the redevelopment of this site should be primarily housing-led with provision also made for a replacement bowling green and pavilion and the potential for a small convenience store.**

- (c) That, in principle, the existing '3G' football pitch should be retained and options for its future local/community-led management arrangements be explored (including the bowling green), the outcome of which would be reported to Members.
  - (d) That consideration be given to the inclusion of adjoining land in the Council's ownership in order to optimise the prospects of securing a comprehensive redevelopment scheme.
  - (e) That officers be authorised to engage suitably qualified specialist advisors to prepare both marketing particulars for sale of the subject land and a planning brief (reflecting the Council's ambitions for comprehensive redevelopment of the site).
- 1.2 The above decision was called in for review by the Council's scrutiny process on the following two grounds:-
- (a) The local residents are unhappy with a decision to remove the recreation centre without consultation following Renews demise, the regeneration programme for Knutton is in doubt.
  - (b) The revenue budgets, contrary to the report, are not needed for running Jubilee 2.
- 1.3 The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee scoped the call-in at its meeting on 26 July 2011 and identified the following by lines of enquiry:-
- (a) What is the current position regarding the regeneration programme for Knutton following the demise of RENEW?
  - (b) How have local residents been consulted over the decision to remove the recreation centre?
  - (c) What impact does the disposal of the site have on the council's revenue budget, specifically in relation to the running of Jubilee 2?
  - (d) What will be the impact on Knutton and its residents e.g. What facilities are and will be available for residents at the college and the fire station
  - (e) Is executive housing what is really needed in this area?
- 1.4 The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the call-in at its meeting on 19 September 2011 and resolved:
- (a) That Cabinet reconsider the decision made at its meeting on 15 June 2011 in light of the following specific points that were raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee:**
    - (i) The block booking of the Gordon Banks Sports Centre**
    - (ii) The mix of affordable and social housing**
    - (iii) Full Consultation with residents, users and other interested parties**
    - (iv) The impact of a convenience store**
    - (v) Parking provision and concerns at Jubilee 2**
  - (b) That Cabinet report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating its response to this recommendation.**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will be in attendance at the meeting to provide feedback to the Cabinet.

## 2. **Issues**

2.1 Procedurally it is necessary for Cabinet to review its previous decision in this matter in light of the Scrutiny Committee's views so it is appropriate to consider each of the five points listed above before making a final decision.

## 2.2 **Housing**

2.2.1 The Scrutiny Committee did not object to the principle of housing-led redevelopment of the site, their lines of enquiry sought greater clarity about the tenure mix (the discussion focussed upon the ongoing need for social housing in the area as well as identifying concern if 'executive housing' were to be promoted).

2.2.2 As I confirmed at the Scrutiny Committee:-

- There is no intention to promote the site for executive housing (indeed I indicated that it would be very unlikely that a market-led scheme would bring forward such housing).
- The affordable housing element envisaged would be consistent with the Council's policy in this regard – i.e. 25% provision overall, split along the lines of 15% social housing and 10% otherwise affordable (e.g. shared ownership).

2.2.3 Subject to the comments above, I consider it most appropriate to allow the prospective purchaser/developer of the site to prepare detailed proposals based upon their own market analysis and community/stakeholder consultation (see below). For the sake of clarity I feel it would be appropriate to state the Council's expectations with regard to affordable housing provision in any marketing particulars.

## 2.3 **Convenience Store**

2.3.1 Within the existing centre of Knutton there is a small number of existing retail premises which the Scrutiny Committee felt may be adversely affected if a convenience store were to be built as part of the redevelopment.

2.3.2 The previously commissioned DTZ reports attempted to formulate an appropriate form of development on the Knutton Recreation Centre site – in scale, form and nature (land uses) – that would create an urban village square feel.

2.3.3 Whilst this piece of work envisaged housing as the primary land use it did propose a convenience store and potential community facilities as a focal point at ground floor level, to frame the new square, notwithstanding the potential impact upon local businesses.

2.3.4 Clearly it is within the Council's gift to constrain any potential disposal to exclude such a facility, if that were considered to be preferable. In view of the recommended arrangements for consultation (see below) I consider there may be merit in eliciting the views of any prospective developer and local people about this matter as part of the said consultation arrangements. Any final decision in this regard could be aided by an appreciation of the views of local residents and businesses.

## 2.4 **Community Consultation**

- 2.4.1 In view of the demise of the Renew programme and the extent of previous public consultation undertaken as part of the master planning, the Scrutiny Committee felt that consideration ought to be given to further consultation prior to making any disposal decision.
- 2.4.2 Whilst I concur with the general principle I do feel that there would be limited value in consulting local people without the benefit of any indicative plans, particularly given that a housing-led scheme is known to be the most appropriate form of redevelopment (as elicited through the previous Renew master-planning work).
- 2.4.3 I am keen to ensure that residents have their say about the nature of any such plans but my preference would be to market the site to prospective developers with a view to the engaging the community/stakeholders before submitting formal proposals to the Council. Any final disposal decision would be based upon a combination of both the purchase price and a qualitative assessment of the scheme.
- 2.4.4 Of course the above process would be complemented by a formal consultation process undertaken by the Council as local planning authority.
- 2.4.5 Most importantly, as far as I am concerned, is the potential opportunity presented by the redevelopment of this site to complete the work begun during the Renew programme's existence – i.e. to establish the sense of place envisaged for this central part of the High Street – and ensuring that local residents can engage in a meaningful dialogue would be best facilitated by the prospective developer in my view.

## 2.5 **Block Bookings of alternative Recreation Centres**

- 2.5.1 The Gordon Banks Sports Centre was officially opened on 22nd April 2010. The centre comprises a 4- badminton court sports hall with “futsal”, 5-a-side football, netball, and basketball and cricket lane facilities. Also the centre includes a 12.8m x 16m air-conditioned dance studio and a 25 station gym. Outdoors, along with grass playing pitches, there is a full size, floodlit “3G” pitch.
- 2.5.2 The centre operates both pay and play and fitness membership for the gym and studio classes. Monthly members also have access to the health spa, sauna and steam room across at the main college.
- 2.5.3 For sports clubs and community groups, the Sports Hall, 3G pitch, grass pitches, seminar room and dance studio are all available for hire. Enquiries can be made via the website or telephone.
- 2.5.4 The Sports Centre is open 7 days a week, throughout the year as follows:

Monday to Friday: 7am to 10pm  
 Saturday/Sunday: 9am to 6pm  
 Bank Holidays 10am to 4pm

Although it should be noted that during College / School term times public access to the centre is not available between the hours of 8.45am to 6pm.

- 2.5.5 It is acknowledged that, in common with most popular sports/leisure centres, block bookings of facilities by Sports Clubs and local teams does occur. However given the availability of a wide range of such facilities serving the local communities, along with less formal community facilities (such as community centres, church halls, etc) it is considered that accessibility to facilities by local people is satisfactory.

2.5.6 For the sake of clarity the range of indoor and outdoor community facilities within the immediate Knutton Village area which offer a range of opportunities for residents include:

- St Mary's Primary School,
- St Mary's Church,
- Knutton Children's Centre (Sure Start),
- Knutton Community Centre,
- Knutton Working Men's Club,
- Knutton Youth Club,
- Knutton Methodist Church,
- Knutton Training and Activity Centre,
- Black Bank Football Pitches,
- Cotswold Avenue Football Pitches,
- The Wammy Football Pitches.

## 2.6 **Car Parking Provision at Jubilee 2**

2.6.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee expressed concern about the current users of Knutton Recreation Centre being deterred from using the new Jubilee 2 Centre because of having to pay car parking charges.

2.6.2 Cabinet Members will recall that this matter was the subject of a report at your last meeting which demonstrated the availability of free weekend parking nearby as well as free weekday provision before 8.00am and after 6.00pm.

2.6.3 Specifically the following arrangements were agreed:

- Free parking on the King Street Car Park, School Street Car Park and Windsor Street car park before 8.00 am
- Free parking on the King Street Car Park, School Street Car Park and Windsor Street Car park after 6 pm.
- Free parking on the King Street Car Park all day Saturdays.
- Free parking on the King Street Car Park, School Street Car Park and Windsor Street Car park all day Sundays.
- Free on-street car parking on School Street after 6.00 pm.

At all other times outside of the above times, standard car parking charges apply.

2.6.4 Additionally, it should be noted that free parking is presently available at the following locations where alternative sports centre provision can be accessed by local residents.

- Newcastle College's Gordon Banks Centre;
- Proposed new Centre at Chesterton;
- New Community Fire Station at Knutton Lane;
- Lilleshall Road Sports Centre.

## 3. **Options Considered**

3.1 Having reviewed the Cabinet decision the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee could have chosen to reject the call-in and note the original decision or to accept the call in form and refer the decision back to Cabinet with its additional comments to be considered by Cabinet at its next scheduled meeting.

3.2 Cabinet may now amend the decision or not before adopting its final decision.

3.3 In order for Cabinet members to review its decision it is important to note that the following asset management options have been considered in relation to the Knutton Recreation site:

- The development of new facilities
- The redevelopment of existing facilities
- The divestment of facilities
- The provision of alternative facilities

#### 4. **Proposal**

4.1 That Members receive the comments from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to thank them for their views.

4.2 That Members reaffirm the Cabinet decision made on 15 June 2011 with the additional recommendations below as follows:

- That the Council commits to undertaking a public consultation process supported by any preferred purchaser prior to the submission of any planning application for development of the subject land.
- That any marketing particulars clarify:

4.3 The Council's expectation of compliance with the current policy regarding the provision of affordable housing and;

4.4 The potential for inclusion of a convenience store.

4.5 That the outcome of any public consultation process be reported back to Cabinet as part of any final report to dispose of the subject land.

#### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating resolved that the decision be referred back to Cabinet as it considered that there were specific issues in need of further consideration.

5.2 As Portfolio Holder I am satisfied that the Cabinet's previous resolutions, supplemented by the additional recommendations above, will facilitate the optimum development for the Knutton Recreation site, consistent with the Council's corporate objectives set out below.

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

- creating a Borough of opportunity
- creating a healthy and active community
- transforming our Council to achieve excellence

More specifically the provision of well served affordable housing and accessible community facilities contributes to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the corporate plan, in particular the positive impact of affordable housing and sport and active lifestyles opportunities on improving health and regeneration.

#### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The Call-in has been carried out in line with the Council's Constitution.

6.2 The Council has the necessary powers to determine the future/ change of use for the site and has a duty to achieve 'best consideration' in any property disposal.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 No adverse impact has been identified. On the contrary, in planning the relocation of sport and active lifestyles opportunities to new facilities at Newcastle College and Jubilee 2 and the development of the facilities themselves. full consideration has been given to improving equalities issues.

7.2 Further analysis will be undertaken in relation to social housing and other development on the site as plans for its' development come forward.

8. **Financial/Resource implications**

8.1 The proposed actions are necessary to achieve the objectives of the Council's financial strategy and Asset Management Strategy.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Vacation of the site has been subject to the Council's normal risk management approach and this will also be deployed as development plans for the site are formulated

10. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Cabinet Report – Proposals for the Redevelopment and Disposal of Knutton Recreation Centre: 15 June 2011

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee: 19 September 2011

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee: 19 September 2011

11. **List of Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Cabinet Report – Proposals for the Redevelopment and Disposal of Knutton Recreation Centre: 15 June 2011

**Appendix B:** Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 19 September 2011

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**PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSAL OF KNUTTON RECREATION CENTRE**

**Submitted by:** The Executive Director, Regeneration and Development

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning

**Ward(s) affected:** All (property located in Knutton and Silverdale)

**Purpose of the Report**

To seek Members' formal approval for the disposal of Knutton Recreation Centre.

**Recommendations**

- (a) That officers be authorised to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to dispose of the Knutton Recreation Centre site for redevelopment as soon as practically possible after the new Jubilee 2 centre is completed.
- (b) That the redevelopment of this site should be primarily housing-led with provision also made for a replacement bowling green and pavilion and the potential for a small convenience store.
- (c) That, in principle, the existing '3G' football pitch should be retained and options for its future local/community-led management arrangements be explored (including the bowling green too), the outcome of which be reported to members.
- (d) That consideration be given to the inclusion of adjoining land in the Council's ownership in order to optimise the prospects of securing a comprehensive redevelopment scheme.
- (e) That officers be authorised to engage suitably-qualified specialist advisors to prepare both marketing particulars for sale of the subject land and a planning brief (reflecting the Council's ambitions for comprehensive redevelopment of the site).

**Reasons**

To optimise the prospects of regenerating the centre of Knutton, to enable the potential retention of local recreation provision and to secure a capital receipt in line with the business case for the Jubilee 2 project.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 "Jubilee 2", the new Health and Wellbeing Centre currently under construction in Newcastle Town Centre, will be opened for public use at the start of the Olympic year in January 2012. This new facility will not only replace the ageing Jubilee Swimming Baths and the indoor sports facilities at Knutton Recreation Centre but will also provide the Borough's residents with additional sport and recreational facilities such as a climbing wall.
- 1.2 The new facility in the town centre will render the Jubilee Baths and the Knutton Recreation Centre redundant and it has always been the Council's stated intention that when Jubilee 2 is open, that these two facilities will then be closed and the respective sites disposed of for redevelopment.

- 1.3 The business case for Jubilee 2 is predicated upon the realisation of a capital receipt in line with the Council's Capital Strategy and current capital programme
- 1.4 This report considers proposals for the disposal and redevelopment of the Knutton Recreation Centre site.

## 2. Issues

- Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy
- Planning and urban renewal, including urban design considerations and housing need
- The Knutton retail offer
- Leisure provision in the Knutton area.

### 2.1 Asset Management and Capital Strategy

The Council's Asset Management Strategy clarifies our strategic approach to property ownership. It states that it will be guided by the clear understanding that property is being held for one (or more) of the following reasons:-

- (a) to meet the Council's statutory obligations;
- (b) to enable the provision of its operational/direct services to the local community;
- (c) to support and achieve the Council's objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and supporting/related plans (particularly Service and Financial Plans);
- (d) to generate income.

In terms of the Council's approach to 'stock rationalisation' the Strategy notes that the ownership of the properties contained in both our operational and commercial portfolios present not only opportunities but responsibilities and liabilities. Hence it notes that there remains the ongoing need to challenge whether we need to own the property, particularly in view of the management and maintenance responsibilities. The Strategy goes on to explain the approach to disposal of surplus property.

The purpose of the Capital Strategy is to set out how the Council proposes to deploy its capital resources in order to assist it to achieve its corporate and service objectives and it seeks to align with other key strategies and plans (including the Asset Management Strategy). Notably the Jubilee 2 project is listed as one of the key projects requiring capital funding and the current capital programme anticipates the realisation of a capital receipt in the order of £1m.

In accordance with the above strategies the Council has made the decision to close the Recreation Centre once the Jubilee 2 centre opens. The said decision was based upon a strategic assessment of leisure needs and there is no operational need to retain the facility. Consequently the decision to dispose of the property, in principle, is a straightforward one that accords with approved strategies/plans.

### 2.2 Planning and Urban Renewal

Knutton is part of Renew North Staffordshire's Area of Major Intervention (AMI) for Housing Market Renewal. As such, a programme of public realm works and refurbishments, including the Knutton Heritage Facelift scheme, have taken place in the area. These projects have been carried out in line with the Knutton and Cross Heath Masterplan that was supported by the community following extensive consultation in 2005/06. As part of this

masterplanning a number of public sector owned sites within the heart of Knutton Village were identified as potential development opportunities and the Masterplan put forward proposals for their redevelopment for mixed use purposes and residential. Clearly it would be prudent to scope in adjoining Council-owned land to any Planning Brief and marketing exercise in the interests of securing a comprehensive overall scheme.

In 2008, Renew commissioned consultants DTZ to produce an options appraisal for strengthening the centre of Knutton village through a combination of new development, including housing, retail and leisure provision, stronger urban design and investment in environmental improvements.

The DTZ strategy recommended a number of improvements and investments in Knutton Village, some of which have been implemented (such as the environmental improvements to strategic gateways). Whilst some aspects of the strategy were evidently undeliverable, because of the significant reduction of public funding (particularly with the demise of the Renew programme), the broad thrust of it has been used as a basis to inform the proposals for the Recreation Centre site and adjacent Council-owned land.

### 2.3. Retail Provision

The DTZ report recommended that the recreation centre site, together with adjoining council-owned land, is redeveloped for housing, a replacement bowling green and pavilion, a small public seating area beside the High Street and a small convenience store and car park to meet the needs of local shoppers.

The report notes that retail provision in Knutton High Street could be improved. The addition of a small convenience store would undoubtedly improve this level of provision. On the other hand it has the potential to cause an adverse effect upon existing local shops (unless additional trade is attracted to the High Street by the establishment of a greater critical mass of retail provision).

Clearly, as land owners of the Recreation Centre site, the Council is in a position to influence such provision as part of any disposal. Consequently it may be prudent to advertise the property in due course indicating a potential for such a store with a view to prospective purchasers/developers providing market intelligence; you could make a final decision on this element at that time.

### 2.4. Leisure Provision Serving the Knutton Community

Members will be aware that in considering the business case for proceeding with the Jubilee 2 scheme the closure of both the Knutton Recreation Centre and existing Jubilee Baths was agreed. In reviewing the potential local impact of the former members were cognisant of the then emergent provision of new facilities at both the Newcastle College scheme (Gordon Banks Sports Centre) and the Community Fire Station on Knutton Lane. Additionally the Council has directed S.106 funds to secure the significant improvement of The Wammy to incorporate new formal recreation provision in the form of both playing pitches and more general play facilities.

Nevertheless local members wished to see the retention (or relocation) of the existing bowling green on site and for the existing 3G football pitch to be retained. Subject to funding, there may be merit in the provision of a modest pavilion alongside the bowling green (providing showers and changing facilities) for club members.

In terms of background the Knutton Recreation Centre was established in 1990 when the former Knutton High School was converted to provide the following range of sports facilities:

- Sports Hall (limited height)
- Studio
- Castle Gym
- Outdoor bowls green
- Astro turf Pitch (opened October 2005 with a £174,000 grant from the Football Foundation)
- Outdoor tarmac surfaced tennis/netball courts (disused since 2005 due to poor condition and apparent lack of demand given the availability of the extensive tennis facilities at Westlands)

However the layout of the facility is awkward and does not conform to current design guides, for example access to the sports hall and gym are through the changing rooms and the sports hall does not allow for some sports to be played competitively (because of its overall dimensions).

There are also a number of offices and a meeting room which are currently used for storage, rather than any form of recreational activity. These were previously occupied by the Council's Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Team and by the Neighbourhood Police Unit; these operational requirements no longer exist in respect of this building.

The centre attracted 64,741 users in 2010/11 which was down significantly on 2009/10 (82,000). This is across all areas and due to the following factors:

- The provision of new facilities, in particular the Gordon Banks Sports Centre, Newcastle High School, Keele University and now the new 3G pitch at Chesterton High School.
- Recognition that the facility will close when Jubilee 2 opens.

Officers began to talk to user groups in April 2011 as part of the exit strategy for the centre and some groups have already taken the initiative to find themselves alternative accommodation. The Parkinson's group, for example, have moved to a local church hall and some of the football teams have moved to the Gordon Banks Sports Centre.

### **Current Activity Levels**

The Sports Hall has three regular bookings for badminton, one for five-a side. It is also booked for 'Zumba', kick boxing and for one session a week by a special school. In addition the centre offers trampoline, circuits and is hired every day on a pay and play basis for badminton and five-a-side.

The Studio is hired every day by keep fit instructors who offer various classes in addition to those provided by the centre.

The Castle Gym has 1,027 direct debit members that are spread across the Borough, with approximately a quarter coming from the Knutton and Cross Heath wards. The table below details all members at the Centre

Ward	Customer Count	%
Newchapel Ward	1	0.10%
Ravenscliffe Ward	1	0.10%
Kidsgrove Ward	3	0.29%
Keele Ward	5	0.49%
Town Ward	8	0.78%
Butt Lane Ward	8	0.78%
Loggerheads and Whitmore Ward	12	1.17%
Talke Ward	12	1.17%
Westlands Ward	13	1.27%
Clayton Ward	16	1.56%
Seabridge Ward	17	1.66%
Madeley Ward	26	2.53%
Porthill Ward	30	2.92%
Thistleberry Ward	34	3.31%
May Bank Ward	45	4.38%
Holditch Ward	62	6.04%
Wolstanton Ward	64	6.23%
Chesterton Ward	69	6.72%
Bradwell Ward	73	7.11%
Silverdale and Parkside Ward	86	8.39%
Audley and Bignall End Ward	89	8.67%
Halmerend Ward	101	9.83%
Cross Heath Ward	117	11.39%
Knutton and Silverdale Ward	135	13.15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1027</b>	<b>100%</b>

In addition 3,982 'pay and play' visits were made to the gym in 2010/11 and a similar number is projected for 2011/12.

The Outdoor Bowls Green is well used by the local club who play in four different leagues during the summer. Pay and play use of the green is minimal (14 hires in 2010/11).

The Astroturf Pitch has the potential to be used for 78 hours per week. Regular bookings account for use 23 hours a week as follows:

Council CRS and Football Development	8 hours
Audley Football Club	8 hours
Three other football clubs	4 hours
Two local businesses	2 hours
Youth Club	1 hour

In addition it is booked every day for casual use (typically this will amount to 30 hours per week).

### High Level Exit Strategy

Sports hall users will be directed towards the local schools and community centres, whilst some may choose to access the new Gordon Banks Centre at Newcastle College (during the public access times). The trampolines will be transferred to Kidsgrove Sports Centre along with the classes, but as an alternative Chesterton High School also offer trampoline classes. Furthermore a new 3-court sports hall will be available from January 2012 at

Chesterton (London Road). Other existing sports halls within reasonable proximity of Knutton exist at Keele University and Clayton Road.

The Studio usage will be accommodated within an enhanced studio programme at Jubilee 2. Also local residents may choose to make use of facilities at the Gordon Banks Sports Centre or the new Community Fire Station.

The Outdoor Bowls Green could remain in situ (or be relocated if preferable), but the arrangements for any pavilion building would need to be confirmed based upon funding and long term needs.

The Astroturf Pitch usage could be signposted to a similar facility at locations including Kidsgrove Sports Centre, Gordon Banks Sports Centre, Chesterton High School, Newcastle Community High School and Keele University. Should the pitch stay in situ, it could be operated by the Council's Football Development staff (on a break-even basis) or leased to a local football club with permission to sub let.

### 3. **Options Considered**

The key options for consideration are:

- (a) Do nothing – this is not an option once the building becomes operationally redundant.
- (b) To dispose of the Knutton Recreation Centre site in isolation without any restrictions.
- (c) To dispose of the Knutton Recreation Centre site as part of a comprehensive treatment of the surrounding area and including the retention of the Bowling Green and 3G pitch (with 'local management').

Should the latter option be pursued then members are invited to consider:

- The inclusion (or not) of a small convenience store as part of the redevelopment proposals,
- The role and specification of the proposed replacement bowling green pavilion,
- The possibility of future community-led management arrangements for both the bowling green and 3G pitch and
- The inclusion of adjacent Borough Council-owned land in the scope of any Planning Brief and marketing exercise in order to secure a comprehensive solution for the overall benefit of the area.

### 4. **Proposal**

Option (c) is preferred because it strikes a balance between the simple realisation of a capital receipt with the longer term improvement and sustainability of the Knutton village community. Additionally Members are recommended to agree to the four additional matters listed above.

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

- 5.1 Proposals for the redevelopment of this site fall within the Council's priority of 'Creating a Borough of Opportunity'. It will also have implications for the Council's policies on the environment and sustainability.

### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is not under any statutory duty to act but is under a duty to seek 'best

consideration' when disposing of any land.

### 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 No discernable differential impact has been identified by the possible disposal of this site. There will be a requirement that 25% of any housing built on the site shall be 'affordable'.

### 8. **Financial and resource implications**

- 8.1 A capital receipt from the sale of the Knutton Recreation Centre is expected to realise around £1million, including covering the restrictions that the County Council retain over the site. This requirement formed part of the initial business case for Jubilee 2, which was agreed before the construction contract was tendered.
- 8.2 The revenue funding from Knutton Recreation Centre (along with that from the existing Jubilee Pool) is required to operate Jubilee 2. The net cost (excluding central recharges) for Knutton for 2011/12 is £131,270. The net cost for Jubilee Pool for 2011/12 is £255, 410 (£386,680). The net cost (full year) for Jubilee 2 is £363,808.
- 8.3 There is no revenue finance to operate Knutton Recreation Centre, once Jubilee 2 opens.
- 8.4 There is a claw back clause associated with the 'Football Foundation' grant for the Astro turf (3G) pitch (on a sliding scale over 21 years). If the pitch was to be removed this currently stands at around £90,000 and therefore your officers have assumed that it should remain in order to improve the viability of any redevelopment scheme. The two key issues that will inform members' decision about retention or removal of the pitch will be: (a) the appetite of local community groups to take responsibility for the long term maintenance and management of the facility and; (b) any prospective developer's view in this regard.
- 8.5 There would be a cost to commissioning the preparation of any site-specific brief and marketing particulars; these costs would be met from any subsequent capital receipt.
- 8.6 Clearly there would be capital costs arising from any decommissioning / demolition works as well as for the establishment of any interim use. There may also be interim costs arising from holding the redundant asset. All such details would be the subject of a later report, once the Planning Brief and marketing particulars have been prepared.

### 9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 The key risk is the uncertain level of demand for the redevelopment of the site. This will have three main consequences – a delay in providing the Council with a capital receipt; a delay in delivering regeneration in the centre of Knutton and; the potentially damaging effect on local morale of prolonged land vacancy.

### 10. **Key Decision Information**

- 10.1 This proposal has the potential to generate a significant capital receipt for the council to support the execution of the Council's Capital programme.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**19 September 2011**

**Present:-** Councillor M R Clarke – in the Chair

Councillors Miss Cooper, Gilmore, Mrs Heames, Mrs Heesom, Olszewski, Mrs Shenton, Snell and Wilkes

**305. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Becket, Boden, Mrs Hailstones and Williams.

**306. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Shenton requested that a note be made regarding her Membership of the Newcastle under Lyme Sports Council.

**307. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2011 be agreed as a correct record.

**308. CALL-IN REGARDING PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSAL OF KNUTTON RECREATION CENTRE FOLLOWING THE CABINET DECISIONS OF 15 JUNE 2011**

The Chair welcomed the Committee and explained the procedure to be followed for the Call-in.

The Lead Call in Member explained the reasons for the call in. The following issues were of concern:

- The perceived lack of consultation with local residents in Knutton
- The regeneration programme in Knutton following the demise of RENEW
- The revenue budgets stated in the original report to Cabinet
- The proposed mini supermarket that could potentially take business away from the high street in Knutton.

The relevant Cabinet Member responded to the issues and drew the Committees attention to the report that was submitted to the Cabinet on 15 June 2011. The Cabinet Member stated that consultation had been undertaken with members of the public and through meetings of the AMI briefing group. Members and residents had been kept constantly informed of the issues relating to Knutton Recreation Centre through this group and it was thought that all decisions made had kept faith with the outcomes of consultations. The issue regarding the opening of a new mini supermarket was not yet set in Stone and was still subject to discussion as were issues relating to the retention of the 3G football pitch and the Bowling Green.

The Committee questioned the Lead Call in Member and Cabinet representative and further concerns were raised regarding the perceived block booking of the Gordon Banks Leisure.

The following was resolved:

**That the item be sent back to formal Cabinet to reconsider the decision in the light of the following specific points that were raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee; and that Cabinet formally respond back to this committee:**

- **The block booking of the Gordon Banks Sports Centre**
- **The mix of affordable and social housing**
- **Full consultation with residents, users and other interested parties**
- **The impact of a convenience store**
- **Parking provision and concerns at Jubilee 2**

**309. UPDATE REGARDING SCRUTINY BRIEFS CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED**

The Committee considered the report regarding the Scrutiny Briefs. It was noted that not all of the work currently being carried out by the Scrutiny Committees was included in the report including projects being undertaken by the Transformation and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**Resolved:** That the Scrutiny briefs be agreed and the report noted.

**310. FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD COVERING SEPTEMBER 2011 TO DECEMBER 2011**

The Committee received a report regarding items that were currently on the forward plan. Concerns were raised regarding the format of the forward plan and it was agreed that steps to be taken to improve both the lay out of the plan and the timescales it covered. The Chair also raised concerns regarding the timing of the Committee meetings and requested that steps be taken to ensure that all future meetings were held prior to meetings of the Full Council in order to enable him to feed back to the Council any reports or comments from the Committee.

**Resolved:** (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a meeting be arranged with the Chair and Officers to discuss the forward plan.

(c) That the Calendar of meetings be changed where possible to ensure that meetings of this Committee fell before meetings of the Full Council.

**M R CLARKE**  
**Chair**

## **RYECROFT CAR PARK (ADJACENT TO FORMER SAINSBURY'S)**

**Submitted by:**            **Engineering Manager – Graham Williams**

**Portfolio:**                **Environment and Recycling / Regeneration & Planning**

**Ward(s) affected:**       **Newcastle Town**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek authority to introduce an off street parking order, to enable the Ryecroft Car Park to be used as a public car park.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That Members approve the introduction of an off-street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park.**
- (b) The charges be approved as set out in the report.**
- (c) That the portfolio holder be authorised to confirm the order in due course.**

### **Reasons**

To enable the Ryecroft Car Park to be opened to members of the public as part of the wider car parking provision which supports the town centre economy.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the former Sainsbury's site has been acquired jointly by Newcastle Borough Council (NBC) and Staffordshire County Council (SCC) with a view to enabling a comprehensive retail-led redevelopment in this part of the town centre. Members will also be aware that during the period between the store closing and the acquisition (November 2010 to August 2011) the car park has been privately operated as a public car park.
- 1.2 As part of the business case for the site acquisition it was indicated that interim uses would be sought to both promote economic activity in this part of the town centre and to help defray the 'holding costs' of the premises. Subject to the precise nature of any letting of the building, the interim use of the former Sainsbury's car park as a public car park had been envisaged.
- 1.3 Once the Councils became jointly responsible for the premises the immediate task was to review the condition of the premises along with other immediate site management responsibilities. Given that the Councils did not have the necessary statutory order to operate the site as a public car park, coupled with certain health and safety issues, the car park was closed immediately and the site secured with temporary fencing to prevent trespass.
- 1.4 Representations have been received from some local businesses about the reduction in footfall at this end of the town centre since the car park's closure.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Further to the above information it is proposed to operate the surface and ground floor level of the multi-storey building as a public car park, at least in part and subject to the terms of any letting of the former Sainsbury's building and/or Civic Offices.
- 2.2 In order to operate a public car park from the site it is necessary to introduce an off-street parking order which, in turn, will enable appropriate traffic management to be undertaken.
- 2.3 Since the intention is for this car park to become pay and display, and as it is situated within the town centre ring road, it is proposed that the charges are consistent with the Midway Car Park, as set out in the table below:

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Charge £</b>
0.5 hr	0.70
1 hr	1.10
2 hr	2.10
3 hr	3.20
4 hr	4.25

- 2.4 At this stage, given the plentiful availability of other town centre car parking and due to the condition of the multi-storey car park (MSCP) it is appropriate to restrict access to the ground floor levels only (since access to the two surface level car parks is gained via the multi-storey car park). For the sake of clarity your officers consider that, in view of the medium term aspirations of redeveloping the site (including demolition of the MSCP), any necessary repairs of the current structure to enable public use would not represent good value for money.
- 2.5 Finally, it is important to note that in order to provide a suitable and safe environment for prospective users of the car park, minor concrete and lighting repairs are required. Also ticket machines and the necessary signage will need to be installed.

## 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 To do nothing would not assist the existing local businesses with the loss of footfall in the area; neither would it help the Councils to defray some of their holding costs.
- 3.2 The option of "pay on foot/exit" has been considered, however the cost would not represent good value for money given that this proposal is an interim car parking solution. The additional costs of such an arrangement compared to "pay and display" arise from both the ticket machines (significantly more expensive) and the need for increased manning/supervision to deal with the typical problems associated with this form of parking (lost tickets/tokens, barrier faults, insufficient funds, etc).
- 3.3 To establish a "pay and display" car park consistent with the operation and management of the Council's other town centre car parks.

## 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 That Members approve the introduction of an off-street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park.

- 4.2 The charges be approved as set out in the report.
- 4.3 That the portfolio holder be authorised to confirm the order in due course.
- 4.4 This proposal will require the installation of ticket machines and information signs and completion of necessary repairs to the car park.
5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**
- 5.1 To assist the existing businesses in the area, by increasing the potential footfall.
- 5.2 To help defray the holding costs associated with the site, consistent with the business case for the acquisition.
- 5.3 To enable the car park to be available for public use as soon as practically possible, certainly in good time for the Christmas shopping period.
- 5.4 To provide the most cost-effective public car parking solution for the site in the short to medium term.
6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**
- 6.1 These proposals are consistent with the objectives of the corporate priorities relating to the creation of a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough and promoting a Borough of opportunity.
7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**
- 7.1 To enable the Borough Council to operate a car park open to the public an off street parking order is required.
8. **Financial and Resource Implications**
- 8.1 The estimated costs to bring the car park into use are:
- Off street parking order - £2000
  - Ticket machines & signage - £20000
  - Repairs - £8000
- 8.2 The capital costs and revenue costs for this scheme will be shared jointly by NBC and SCC in accordance with the joint venture agreement (in the ratio 25:75). Provision has been made in the appropriate budgets for these costs.
9. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**
- 9.1 The car park lighting will be reduced outside normal operational hours.
- 10.1 Key decision information
- 10.1 This item is included in the forward plan.

11.1 **Previous Cabinet or Council Decisions**

Council 29 June 2011

Council 23 March 2011

Council 28 July 2010

All of the above reports relate to the principal decision to acquire the former Sainsbury's store.

## **PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME**

**Submitted by:** Head of Environmental Health Services – Nesta Henshaw

**Portfolio:** Environment and Recycling

### **Purpose of the Report**

To consider options for Newcastle under Lyme B.C. to form a partnership between the local authority and a business to provide environmental health regulatory advice and support by assessing both the benefits and implications of such an initiative.

### **Recommendation**

**That Cabinet agrees to pursue and enter into Primary Authority partnerships with businesses within the Borough provided that there is a business case to do so**

**And if agreed that the Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Environmental Health Services (supported by the Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships), in consultation with Portfolio Holder to:**

- (i) Explore opportunities for Primary Authority partnerships with businesses within the Borough**
- (ii) Explore opportunities for partnerships with other regulatory organisations to jointly enter into Primary Authority agreements**
- (iii) Explore pilot work areas to expand the principles of Primary Authority with the LBRO**
- (iv) Enter into Primary Authority relationships on behalf of the Council for the purpose of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (RES Act)**
- (v) Develop a process to implement the decision taken by Cabinet in line with existing legislation, regulation and good practice.**

### **Reasons**

This report advises Members of the Regulatory, Enforcement and Sanctions Act (RES Act), which enables a Local Authority to provide contractual regulatory advice and support to a local, regional or national business for Environmental Health enforcement functions. In order to decide whether to pursue such a partnership.

The report outlines the primary authority scheme where local businesses trading across two or more Council areas will be given the opportunity to enter into formal Primary Authority Relationships with Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In May 2007, the Government set up the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO). The role of LBRO is to improve local authority enforcement of environmental health, trading standards, fire safety and licensing regulations. Its aim is to reduce burdens on businesses that comply with the law while targeting those who flout it.
- 1.2 Businesses that operate across more than one site can be subject to regulation and enforcement action by multiple local authorities. As a result, LBRO has found that on occasions these organisations may find themselves subject to regulatory enforcement using different approaches in different locations.

- 1.3 The introduction of a 'Primary Authority' scheme, allows a statutory partnership between a business and a Local authority. The RES Act provides for the introduction of this statutory scheme.
- 1.4 Generally but not exclusively, the Local Authority where the businesses head office is based will become a contact point for other authorities so that regulatory issues that apply across the business can be addressed. For example, if the partnership covered health and safety, the company would agree with the Primary Authority that their policy for reporting accidents complies with the legislation.
- 1.5 Companies that enter into a Primary Authority arrangement gain the legal right to form a statutory partnership with a single local authority, which must then provide robust and reliable advice on compliance which all other councils must take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non-compliance. The scheme proposes that:
- Formal partnerships are made between businesses and a local authority for that local authority to act as a Primary Authority and provide advice and guidance on the legislation covered by the partnership.
  - Where a local authority other than the relevant Primary Authority (described as an "enforcing authority") proposes to take enforcement action against an organisation with a Primary Authority, the enforcing authority must consult the relevant Primary Authority first.
  - The Primary Authority will then have the right to direct the enforcing authority not to take the proposed enforcement action if they believe that it is inconsistent with advice or guidance that they had previously given.
  - Where a proposed enforcement action has been referred to a Primary Authority and the parties involved cannot reach an agreement as to the action that should be taken, the enforcing authority, the Primary Authority or the organisation involved can refer the action to LBRO for determination. The purpose of this determination process is to examine whether the Primary Authority's previous advice was correct, and the proposed enforcement action is inconsistent with that advice.
- 1.7 Informal approaches have been made to a number of businesses operating within the Borough in an attempt to gauge the level of interest in pursuing a Primary Authority approach. Some interest has been expressed, however to date; none of the businesses have indicated a firm commitment. Should the Council wish to pursue this approach, the proposed course of action is detailed in 4.1.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The RES Act specifies the scope of Primary Authority scheme. This is available to all businesses that are regulated by more than one Local Authority.
- 2.2 The regulatory scope is also defined to include all Local and County Authority trading standards, licensing and environmental health legislation (except fire safety, gambling, and alcohol licensing). This giving an option to work with Staffordshire County Council to provide a wider range of regulatory support, such as trading standards, fair trading or product safety, for example alongside an environmental health food safety and health and safety functions.
- 2.3 In considering whether the Council should seek a Primary Authority partner there are benefits and implications for both the Business and the Local Authority, these are summarised as follows:



**Local Authorities:**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Supporting local business and economic prosperity	Finding suitable business partners
Giving authoritative advice and ensuring consistency	Decision making is open for national scrutiny
Improved efficiency and effectiveness through better information	Advice and guidance is to be up to date and legally correct
Proportionate decision making	Resourcing and recharging the administration and professional officer time in undertaking a Primary Authority Partnership
The RES provides that the Local Authority can recharge the partner business for the costs incurred	Reputational damage to Local Authority

**Businesses:**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Reduction in risks to the business	Implementing advice given by primary authority
Reduced costs of achieving compliance	Changes to policies and procedures relating to regulation
Reduced costs in dealing with compliance failures	
Ensuring consistent and reliable enforcing advise and interpretation of Legislation	
Obtaining support of a Local Authority	
Engagement of cost effective resources	
Potential for earned recognition and reduction of regulatory burden and a reduction in national local authority inspection/regulation	
High level of regulatory compliance	

In developing and implementing its chosen approach in terms of the Primary Authority scheme, the Council will need to take notice of these issues and also develop processes to ensure that every aspect of the scheme is undertaken properly and in accordance with the law and also recognising good practice in this area.

**3. Options Considered**

3.1 Cabinet is requested to decide on the following two options:

3.2 **Option 1** – For the Environmental Health Service to seek suitable and appropriate business within the Borough to enter into Primary Authority partnerships provided that there is a business case to do so.

3.3 **Option 2** - For the Environmental Health Service to continue to provide regulatory advice and enforcement based on the Councils current policies, work plan and statutory requirements to Businesses within the Borough and not to enter into a Primary Authority partnership.

3.4 The principles of primary authority are in line with current government policies and are actively supported by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. There are also proposals to extend Primary Authority to other regulatory activities. Officers would therefore recommend Option 1 of this report.

#### 4. **Comments Received from Scrutiny**

4.1 Cleaner, Greener and Safer Scrutiny have received the report and scrutinised the benefits and implications for the Borough Council entering into a Primary Authority partnership, through consideration and discussion of the following matters:-

- Resource implications,
- Working relationships between the Primary Authority and Business,
- Working Relations between the Primary Authority and other Local Authorities
- Possible areas for conflict,
- Contractual arrangements and potential break clauses in the contracts for both the Primary Authority and the Business,
- The impact that entering into a Primary Authority has on taking enforcement actions against that business and other businesses with a Primary Authority.
- Other Local Authorities experiences of Primary Authority.

4.2 Scrutiny would support the Authority in pursuing and entering into Primary Authority partnerships.

#### 5. **Proposal**

5.1 Should the Council wish to pursue option 1 of a Primary Authority partnership, it is proposed that the following actions would be initiated:

- Contact with Businesses to advise of Primary Authority Partnerships requesting expression of interest;
- Liaise with Staffordshire County Council with regard to potential partnership arrangements for joint Primary Authority regulatory services
- Explore potential for hosting a Primary Authority open day for Business to discuss Primary Authority arrangements and benefits
- Undertake individual meetings with Businesses
- Identify and confirm Primary Authority partners
- Engage in pre-contract discussions regarding contractual requirements and resource requirements
- Application forms completed, signed and sent to LBRO for endorsement

It is envisaged that these actions will form part of a project plan so that each stage of the process is undertaken and completed at the right time and in accordance with the requirements of the scheme.

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

6.1 The proposals relate to the alternative delivery of Environmental Health regulatory advice and support on a national or regional level (depending upon potential partners), which would contribute to the following:

- Creating a Borough of Opportunity
  - By providing a partnership with a business that has interest within this and other Local Authorities.
- Transforming our Council to Achieve Excellence
  - By raising the profile of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council Environmental Health Services with other Local Authorities, local and national Businesses

## 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 provides for Primary Authority partnerships to be created.
- 7.2 The provisions of the Act for participating in the Primary Authority scheme are discretionary for the Local Authority.
- 7.3 Part 2 of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 places a statutory duty on the Council to consult a “primary authority” before taking any local enforcement action against a Company with a registered agreement with that “Primary Authority”. These duties in the main, relate to the Council’s Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing Functions.

## 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 Any actions arising from the promotion of this scheme to businesses will be underpinned by the Council’s Enforcement Policy, which provides a clear, transparent approach to ensure that there is no discrimination in the Council’s actions and that everyone is treated fairly by the Council’s officers within the legal processes. Also taken into account will be the special needs of minority groups where English may not be the first language.

## 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 A Primary Authority responsibility would be an additional function for the Environmental Health Services to undertake. The work plan for the service currently prioritises and undertakes statutory functions within existing resources. It is not envisaged that Primary Authority functions will be able to be accommodated within existing resources.
- 9.2 However, the Act provides that a Local Authority may recover its reasonable costs for acting as a Primary Authority. It is proposed that such income is used to offset the resources required to undertake the responsibilities. Should it be decided that there is a valid business case to enter into Primary Authority partnerships options for the specific resourcing, depending upon the nature, extent and duration of the partnership will be subject to a further report.
- 9.3 The RES Act states in section 31 that ‘the primary authority may charge the regulated person such fees as it considers to represent the costs reasonably incurred by it in the exercise of its functions under this Part in relation to the regulated person’. The approach that must be taken by local authorities in recovering costs is set out in treasury guidance.
- 9.4 Where a Primary Authority function is undertaken the Council will enter into formal agreement with the relevant business to make a charge for such services. This ‘charge’, which will be ratified annually by the Council as part of its ‘fees & charges’ review process, will be set based on official guidance and will reflect the level of support and assistance given to Primary Authority businesses.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The primary authority scheme is dependant upon finding a suitable partner business. This is typically a business with a head office function within Newcastle under Lyme and has to be a business that operates within at least two Local Authorities. There is a risk that these types of business are limited within Newcastle under Lyme and those that do exist may not wish to participate in a Primary Authority agreement.
- 10.2 Depending upon the partnership arrangement, the resourcing of this additional duty is a risk, as the Council would be contractually obliged to provide a level and duration of service to the business. This additional function will not be accommodated within existing resources.
- 10.3 The Council would be in breach of a statutory duty if it failed to comply with the statutory requirements in respect of notifications or determinations under Part 2 of The Act, in respect of existing primary Authority arrangements and any inspections or enforcement action undertaken by the environmental health services against business with such arrangements.
- 10.4 That any prospective partner adheres to the contractual arrangements and also undertakes and complies with their own policies and procedures in respect of regulation and therefore gaining national earned recognition for the regulatory work they undertake.
- 10.5 That the anticipated additional workload as agreed through the contact, is either over or under estimated.
- 10.6 A risk map and further action report in respect of option 1 are attached as appendix 1 and 2 respectively.
- 10.7 No risk assessment of option 2 has been undertaken as this is a continuation of normal working practices covered within the Environmental Health operational risk assessment available on GRACE.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 There are no adverse impacts to climate change or additional risks that climate change may have on the policy or strategy in respect of this proposal.

12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 This report is not a key decision as defined within the Councils Constitution. The report has been included in the Cabinets forward plan for the period.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

None

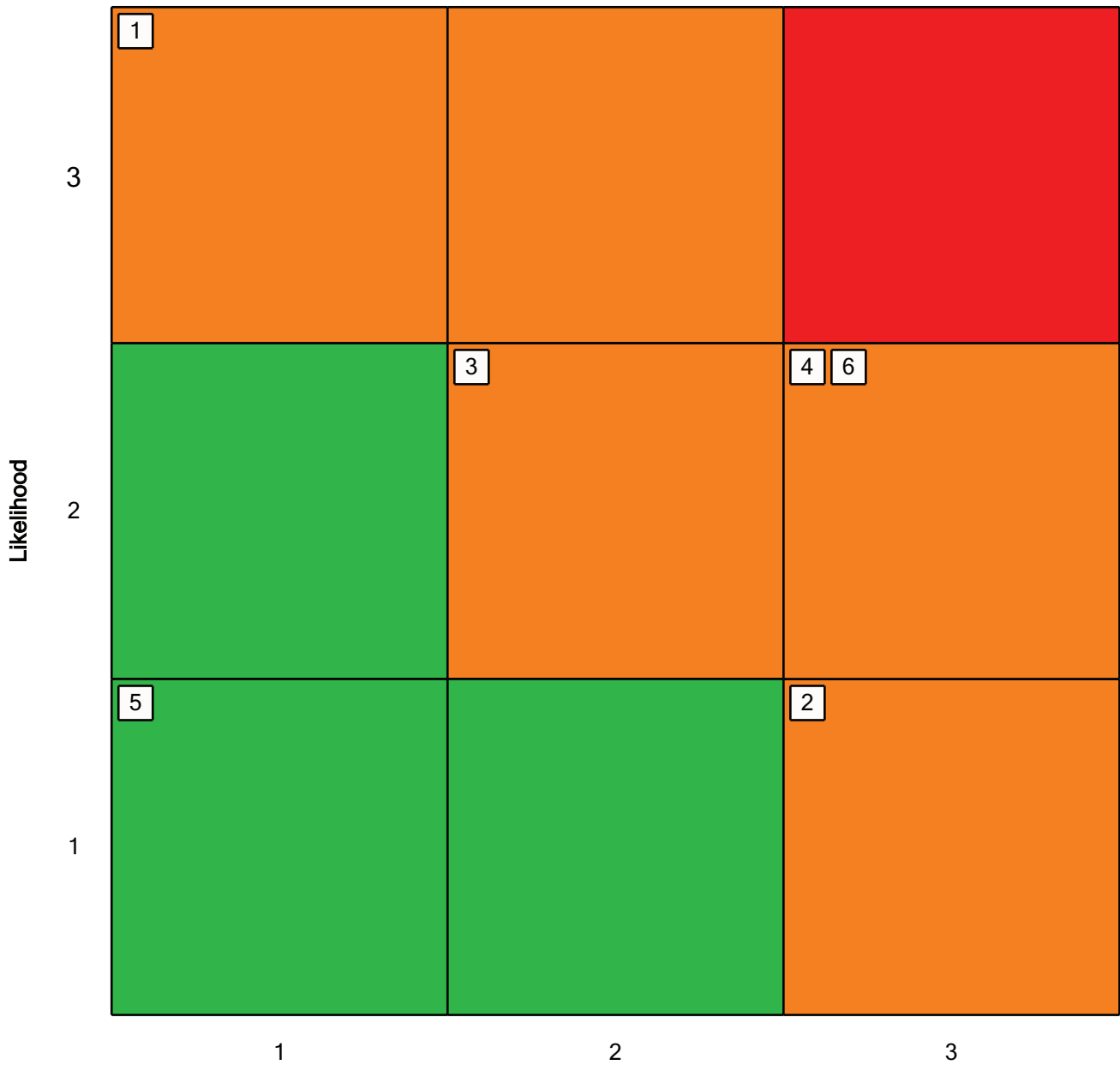
14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Option 1 Risk Map  
Appendix B - Option 2 Risk Further Action List

15. **Background Papers**

Regulatory, Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008  
[www.lbro.org.uk](http://www.lbro.org.uk)

Risk Map



No.	Risk	Control Measure	Consequence		
			Final Impact	Final Likelihood	Final Risk Rating
PAS Option 1					
Risk Count: 7					
1	Failure to identify a suitable primary authority business partner	Support of Local Better Regulation Office	1	3	7
2	Failure to provide robust advice to the primary authority	Professional, qualified and competent staff giving advice	3	1	3

No.	Risk	Control Measure	Final Impact	Final Likelihood	Final Risk Rating
PAS Option 1					Risk Count: 7
		National guidance and forums to confirm advice and set standards Professional membership of relevant bodies kept up to date Access to legislation and reference material Continuous professional development undertaken with staff			
3	Failure to provide adequate resources for the new primary authority contract (dependant on size, nature and extent of contract or business secured)		2	2	5
4	Increase in environmental health regulation workload as changing from working at a local level to a national level		3	2	6
5	Failure to re-coup costs incurred with undertaking the primary authority work  e.g 1. underestimation of contract value 2. non-payment by primary authority	Debtors recovery system Procurement framework in place	1	1	1
6	Failure of businesses to adequately implement advice		3	2	6

## PAS Option 1

### Target Dates

Risk	Further Action Required	Comment	Owner	Final Impact	Final Likelihood	Final Risk Rating
<b>31/12/2011</b>						
Failure to identify a suitable primary authority business partner	Contact with businesses	Providing this Option is chosen depends on the action date	Henshaw, Nesta	1	3	7
Failure to identify a suitable primary authority business partner	Liaise with Staffordshire County Council with regard to potential partnership arrangements for joint Primary Authority		Henshaw, Nesta	1	3	7
Failure to identify a suitable primary authority business partner	Explore potential for hosting a Primary Authority open day for Business		Bailey, Mark (Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships)	1	3	7
Failure to identify a suitable primary authority business partner	Undertake individual meetings with Businesses		Henshaw, Nesta	1	3	7
					Action Plan Count: 4	
<b>31/03/2012</b>						
Failure to provide adequate resources for the new primary authority contract (dependant on size, nature and extent of contract or business secured)	Report to Cabinet to obtain resource		Henshaw, Nesta	2	2	5
Increase in environmental health regulation workload as changing from working at a local level to a national level	Report to Cabinet to obtain resource		Henshaw, Nesta	3	2	6
					Action Plan Count: 3	

Risk	Further Action Required	Comment	Owner	Final Impact	Final Likelihood	Final Risk Rating
31/03/2012						Action Plan Count: 3
Failure to re-coup costs incurred with undertaking the primary authority work  e.g 1. underestimation of contract value 2. non-payment by primary authority	Robust discussions and contract negotiations with businesses	In conjunction with N Henshaw	Bailey, Mark (Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships)	1	1	1
31/12/2012						Action Plan Count: 1
Failure of businesses to adequately implement advice	Produce monitoring procedures and reporting contract management		Henshaw, Nesta	3	2	6



## **REPLACEMENT ROAD SWEEPING VEHICLE**

**Submitted by:** Head of Operations – Roger Tait

**Portfolio:** Environment and Recycling

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek authority to replace a road sweeping vehicle which has reached the end of its serviceable life span and which is now uneconomical to maintain, subject to approval of funding by Council.

### **Recommendation**

That subject to Council approval of the funding the Executive Director – Operational Services is authorised to seek tenders for a replacement road sweeping vehicle and, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, accept the lowest suitable tender received.

### **Reasons**

To enable the Council to continue to fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to street cleansing.

#### 1. **Background**

1.1 The Streetscene Business Unit currently delivers street cleansing services to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations in relation to this function and maintain satisfactory levels of street and environmental cleanliness across the Borough.

#### 2. **Issues**

2.1 Street Cleansing Operations are carried out using a fleet of vehicles designed to maximise efficiency and performance. The fleet includes a large road sweeping vehicle which is deployed on a year-round basis to carry out scheduled street cleaning and which is particularly intensively used for leaf clearance operations during the autumn and winter of each year. The usual life expectancy of a vehicle with this level of intensive use is between 5 – 7 years, but with prudent servicing and maintenance, the vehicle has been kept in service beyond the expected duration.

2.2 The existing road sweeping vehicle is now 10 years old and has reached the point where it is uneconomical to maintain.

#### 3. **Options Considered**

3.1 Hire – the ongoing cost of vehicle hire is more expensive than purchase over the life of the vehicle

3.2 Purchase – This option is more economical and there will be a modest re-sale value for the vehicle at the end of its useful life

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 That subject to Council approval of the funding the Executive Director – Operational Services is authorised to seek tenders for a replacement road sweeping vehicle and, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, accept the lowest suitable tender received.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To enable the Council to continue to fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to street cleansing.

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

- 6.1 Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to provide the Street Cleansing function.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 No adverse impact has been identified in relation to this report.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The estimated capital cost of purchasing a replacement road sweeping vehicle is £125,000. It is proposed to fund the cost of procuring the road sweeping vehicle from the approved General Fund Capital Programme.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The major risks associated with this report are as follows:

<b>RISK</b>	<b>CONTROL MEASURE</b>
Inability to deliver service and fulfil statutory obligation	Procure vehicle
Adverse financial impact	Purchase vehicle rather than ongoing hire costs
Reputational damage through inability to deliver service	Procure vehicle
accidents relating to leaf fall (slips/skids etc)	Implement leaf clearance programme
Inability to respond to incidents requiring the street cleansing function	Procure vehicle

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 The decision involves significant expenditure, affects all wards in the Borough and has been included in the forward plan.

12. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

None

## **IMPROVING ICT ACCESS FOR MEMBERS**

**Submitted by:** Head of Customer and ICT Services – Jeanette Hilton

**Portfolio:** Resources and Efficiency

**Ward(s) affected:** Non - specific

### **Purpose of the Report**

To formally respond to the recommendations of the Transformation and Overview Scrutiny Committee, at your meeting of 9 February 2011, detailing actions to be taken with regard to the provision of Members ICT

To update Cabinet on ICT provisions put in place since the report of 9 February 2011 and to put forward recommendations for further development.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That the use of allocated Newcastle email addresses for members Newcastle caseload becomes adopted practice.**
- (b) That Members be encouraged to use their dedicated website as their main source of information.**
- (c) That the current practice of printing emails for members should stop as soon as possible.**
- (d) That the ICT Access for Members Protocol be approved in its entirety.**
- (e) That the Members Allowance Scheme be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to ICT provision.**
- (f) That the means of access to relevant council systems be reviewed and developed in line with advances in technology.**
- (g) That printed agendas continue to be distributed to members for the Committees on which they sit.**

### **Reasons**

Effective ICT access to a number of council systems is fundamental in supporting councillors in performing their role more efficiently.

A number of recent technology developments in ICT will enable greater access to council systems by members through a secure, structured approach in line with member and constituents expectations.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** A report was received at your meeting of 9 February 2011, detailing the comments and recommendations of the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of Members' use of and access to ICT (Information and Communication

Technology). A number of changes and updates have been made since that date and this report serves to update Cabinet on those changes.

## 2. **Issues**

### 2.1 In response to the proposals put to Cabinet at that meeting:

Proposal (i) ICT is an essential tool for any Member of the Borough Council.

Response: Cabinet recognise the importance of access to technology in supporting all members in their roles, and the benefits this brings in effectively communicating with constituents and the wider political arena. Recent advances in home and mobile computing mean that councillors rightly expect to be able to have access to Council information from any location they choose.

Proposal (ii): To avoid confusion for members of the public, officers and other Members, the provision of e-mail addresses for members who are not able or willing to accept e-mails will be withdrawn.

Response: All councillors are issued with a [newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) email address on election. The use of this address provides secure access to email; residents can be assured that their data is safe and protected.

Proposal (iii) In light of (ii) above, the facility for printing e-mails for Members should stop.

Response: Printing of emails has gradually decreased following a drive which included putting agendas and minutes on line. Some members still have their emails printed. The cost of printing these items, many of which are multiple pages, can be up to £70.00 monthly, not including staff time. The councillors' courier service will continue to be used.

Proposal (iv) The facility of a members' intranet, accessed via the council's website, should be provided, with content to include access to e-mail, easily accessible information on committee agenda items and minutes, on-line training, a message board and other useful information as identified.

Response: A dedicated members' website has been developed and is available for use which includes access to secure mail, and links to other essential information for councillors. Recent enhancements include the link to [modern.gov](http://modern.gov), a computer system that assists councils in automating the key aspects of the government decision making process (known as a committee management system). This includes the management of forward plans, agendas, minutes and decisions, and these are published to the intranet and internet. The site will continue to be developed in line with councillors requirements.

Proposal (v): Members will use their basic allowance to purchase the IT equipment that they require.

Response: Modern councils and constituents expect members to be able to utilise technology to support their role as a Councillor. The Independent Remuneration Panel will be asked to look at the current Members Allowances Scheme and make recommendations regarding the future composition of the scheme. Recommendations will be made by your officers that the provision of ICT equipment be included in discussions.

Proposal (vi): Members who are not able to acquire their own IT equipment can request the loan of used council IT equipment for their period of office. In making this provision, if members are able to acquire their own equipment then they should do so without recourse

to this offer.

Response: With regard to the availability of and access to IT equipment, the proposal is to introduce an ICT Access for Members Protocol (Appendix A). In summary, the Protocol makes provision for the future supply of ICT hardware and software in order that Councillors can use technology in a safe, secure and effective way to support their duties. Access will be provided through two methods initially:

- (a) Reusable IT equipment from existing stock
- (b) Councillors existing IT equipment

The Protocol also details provisions for member printing and increasing member training.

Proposal (vii) Use of secure government e-mail by Members will have to be arranged by alternative means.

Response: The members dedicated website provides secure access to email and member specific areas of knowledge. ICT Services also provide an enhanced level of secure access to specific government departments such as Department for Works and Pensions, in compliance with government standards. These addresses are allocated following submission of a business case.

Proposal (viii) Training in basic ICT skills can be obtained from a variety of external sources, such as local libraries, that may suit Members better (and be better value for money) than training provided by the council.

Response: The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) is an internationally recognised computer qualification that teaches personal computing skills using a range of popular Microsoft Office software packages. Courses are available at a number of local sites and training can additionally be undertaken on line. Training in basic ICT skills will form part of the Member Development Programme.

Proposal (ix) The council will provide 'signposts' to suitable equipment, suppliers and trainers.

Response: The ICT Support desk is available to members in providing help and guidance on these matters in conjunction with Member Services. Signposting to equipment, suppliers and trainers will also be accessible through the members dedicated website and forms part of the Member Development Programme.

### 3. **Proposal**

3.1 Members are issued with an individual Newcastle email address on election. These provide a secure communication platform between members and their constituents. Due to the high level of security, it is proposed that the use of these addresses by members for their Newcastle caseload becomes adopted practice. Councillors may, at their own risk, forward emails to other addresses, on receipt and acceptance of a disclaimer, as detailed in the ICT Access for Members Protocol.

3.2 That members be encouraged to use their dedicated website as their main source of information to support their role as councillor. Training and support will be provided by ICT and Member Services.

- 3.3 The current practice of printing emails for those members who choose not to have email, should stop as soon as possible. This will have the added benefit of reducing the cost of printing.
- 3.4 That the ICT Access for Members Protocol be approved in its entirety.
- 3.5 That the Members Allowance Scheme be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and discussion takes place, and recommendations made, with regard to ICT provision within the allowance.
- 3.5 That the means of access to relevant council systems be reviewed and developed in line with advances in technology, to ensure a positive direction of travel.

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

- 6.1 The proposals are fundamental in delivering on the corporate priority of Transforming our Council to achieve excellence. Councillors are at the forefront of delivering increasingly more efficient, transformed services to their constituents.

## 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The information Commissioners Office (ICO) has recently published guidance for members of local authorities, with regards to their obligations under the Data Protection Act. The ICO recommends that members register as a data controller with them, as members handle personal information. Guidance on how to do this is available on the ICO website.

## 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 Members considered equalities implications in formulating the proposals detailed in report submitted by the Transformation and Overview Scrutiny Committee, at your meeting of 9 February 2011

## 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are financial implications associated with the implementation of secure supplementary hardware (identification tokens) that will not be met from existing resources. It is anticipated this will be partly financed through the review of members' allowances. The current cost is £95.00 capital cost per device, with £15.00 yearly maintenance.

## 10. **Major Risks**

There are no major risks directly associated with this report.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

This item is included in the forward plan.

## 12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

3 November 2010 – Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (401/11)  
7 June 2010 – Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (83/11)  
9 February 2011 - Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (602/11)

13. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - ICT Access for Members Protocol 2011

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# ICT Access for Members Protocol

September 2011

**Document Control**

<b>Organisation</b>	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
<b>Title</b>	NULBC Members ICT Provision Policy
<b>Author</b>	J Hilton, D Elkington
<b>Filename</b>	"\\svfs1\ICT Dept\Procedures and Policies\Policies\
<b>Owner</b>	Head of Customer & ICT Services
<b>Subject</b>	Provision of ICT to elected members
<b>Protective Marking</b>	None required
<b>Review date</b>	September 2012

**Revision History**

<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Revisor</b>	<b>Previous Version</b>	<b>Description of Revision</b>

**Document Approvals**

This document requires the following approvals:

<b>Sponsor Approval</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Executive Management Team		
Head of Central Services		

**Document Distribution**

This document will be distributed to:

All Members
All ICT Staff

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## 1. Protocol Statement

Technology is used in every aspect of council business to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to provide facilities that are more accessible and understandable by the public who use them.

Councillors are on the front line of local public service provision; there is an expectation by the public and council that elected members are confident and adept in the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology); be it email, web or utilising software. To that end ICT Services will provide a number of ways in which to help and support members in getting the most out of ICT.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Protocol is to ensure that members have adequate access to ICT equipment and services to allow them to carry out their duties.

This document describes the core services that ICT Services will provide for members in order to ensure that they can better use technology to serve their constituents safely, securely and efficiently.

## 3. Scope

The Protocol applies to all Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (NULBC) elected Members and ICT staff. All elected members and ICT staff must comply with the requirements of the Protocol.

## 4. Provision of Services

### ➤ *Secure Access to email*

Each member is automatically issued with a secure @newcastle-staffs.gov.uk email address upon election. This address will be the only email contact listed on the Authorities' website. It is expected that as email becomes an increasingly important part of everyday communications for a growing proportion of the population, all members will be expected to use email as a method of communication.

Each member's mailbox is limited to 700mb in line with the Council's

adopted mailbox policy<sup>1</sup>. When a mailbox is nearing the size limit, a warning email will appear. Upon reaching the maximum mailbox size, the member will be able to receive but not send emails until such time as the mailbox size decreases below 700mb. Guidance on how to manage your mailbox is available from ICT Services.

It is also anticipated that Members Services will have an active role in ensuring that email good practice guidelines are adhered to as part of member training and development.

ICT Services will provide secure access to email using the member's dedicated website, directly from corporate PCs, members own pcs or, where appropriate, using other remote access technology.

➤ *Member's Dedicated Website*

NULBC provides a dedicated website designed for members use. This area is restricted through the use of a secure certificate, which is issued to new members after election. Access to the site will also be provided using other means, such as secure remote access technology,

Members are encouraged to use the site as their main source of NULBC information. Members can also gain secure access to their email through the site. The site also contains a notice board, highlight information and committee reports, agendas, the forward plan and meeting schedules created using the modern.gov software.<sup>2</sup>

ICT and Member Services will continue to develop this site in order to ensure that important information continues to be delivered to support members. In the future, access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the capability to log service requests for customers and the ability to send SMS text messages directly to members of the public will be added.

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<sup>1</sup> Microsoft Outlook – Mailbox Policy July 2011

<sup>2</sup> modern.gov is a computer system that is used by democratic services to manage forward plans, agendas, minutes, and decisions, and publishes to the Intranet and Internet.

➤ *Alternative Access Methods*

The default method of providing access to Council services will be through the members' website. This is provided using a secure certificate which restricts access to dedicated devices.

It is recognised that this may not be appropriate for all members, who may have to work from different locations, using different devices. Access will therefore be provided through one of the following methods:

- i. Reusable IT equipment
- ii. Councillor's own equipment

Links to, and the use of, mobile devices (e.g. smartphones) is under review.

Member Services and ICT will also offer guidance on how to ensure that information remains safe and how "footprints" left on devices can be easily removed.

➤ *Printing Facilities*

ICT recognises the importance of providing members with access to printing services. This will be done using the Authority's Multi-Functional printers and scanners (MFDs). This removes the need for dedicated printers for members use.

These devices will allow members to print their work, including confidential items, and then collect them from any printer at the Civic Offices, Guildhall or Kidsgrove Customer Service Centres. Printing can also be facilitated through arrangements with Member Services.

Work which is un-printed after 7 days is automatically deleted. Printed materials for collection which are confidential should be indicated as such to Member Services.

Members will be issued with a tag which uniquely identifies them to the printer and ensures they have access to their printed work. This tag will form part of their ID card and is completely invisible.

The Council's printing policy will also apply to any members who choose to use the printing facilities and full training will be provided in conjunction with Member Services.

A multifunction printer (MFD) will be located in the members' room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor for your convenience.

➤ *Scanning Facilities*

As part of the drive towards greater efficiency, the Council is committed to increasing the use of electronic document scanning and storage; ensuring that all documents are scanned and stored electronically whenever possible. This has the advantages of avoiding excessive storage costs, the convenience of electronic filing, enabling greater flexible/mobile working, ensuring documents are not lost in a disaster recovery situation and the ability to benefit from the speed of email when a traditional paper document is received.

Members will be provided with access to document scanning services on both an ad-hoc and continual basis. This will be facilitated through the use of the authority's multifunction printers (MFDs).

Where appropriate, members will be offered the opportunity to have any post received for them at the Civic Offices securely scanned and emailed to their @newcastle-staffs.gov.uk email address, giving instant access to the document. Once scanned, members will be able to choose between having the document dispatched with the regular courier service, or after a set period of time, securely destroyed. Where scanning would be inappropriate, such documents will remain available for collection from the Customer Support Office or distributed by the Courier Service.

If members need to scan ad-hoc documents, this can be done using the Council's multifunctional devices (MFDs). Members can scan documents and have them sent back to their own email address to take appropriate action or store securely.

Scanning will be supported by both ICT and Member Services.

➤ *Reusable IT equipment*

Where members are unable to provide their own ICT equipment such as a laptop or PC for use in connection with their council business, ICT Services will provide a suitable PC for the duration of the member's term or until they procure suitable equipment of their own.

The equipment will be a desktop PC with 17" flat screen monitor, keyboard and mouse. The equipment will be from ICT stock of a suitable specification and quality, and will include Microsoft Office. ICT Services will support this equipment for the duration should members experience any difficulties.

The equipment will be configured such that members are not at risk of losing data if the device is stolen or lost.

Members may also request the use of Council projectors, screens or other suitable equipment for Council business. This should be arranged through Member Services.

➤ *Remotely Accessible PCs*

Where members provide their own ICT equipment such as a laptop or PC for use in connection with their council business, ICT will provide the use of a Council PC at the Civic Offices which the member's pc will connect to. This is termed as a Remotely Accessible PC.

This remotely accessed PC will have a full suite of applications such as Microsoft Office and will be part of the Councils secure network. Documents and emails created on the PC will be stored on the Council's servers.

Remotely Accessed PCs will require the use of an additional small hardware device called an Identification Token. This will identify you as a valid user of the Councils systems and allow access.

Additionally, members can request a Secure Memory Stick. This will enable the easy transfer of documents etc, and will be password protected. This will ensure that if the memory stick is lost, the information contained on it cannot be accessed by anyone finding it.



These items will be provided to members in the first instance. Loss of either of these items will incur replacement costs totalling the purchase and yearly support costs of the item, chargeable to the member.

➤ *Training and Support*

ICT in conjunction with Member Services will support:

- The members secure website
- Remote access through each members chosen method
- Secure certificate issuing and use
- Reusable IT equipment
- Remotely Accessed PCs
- Printing / scanning in relation to the council's multifunctional devices.
- Secure memory sticks.
- Outlook Web Access Issues

ICT Services will provide training in the effective use of the specific ICT equipment and software listed above. ICT services will also provide signposting to suitable courses provided through the STeP gateway or external providers, such as Newcastle College or Learning Direct. Member Services will provide specific training to new members with support from ICT as required. This will be part of the new Members Induction Programme.

## 5. **Services which NULBC will not provide**

➤ *Email Forwarding*

Email forwarding cannot be provided automatically by ICT Services due to the security implications in doing so. ICT Services provide a secure email account for each member, remotely accessible through a variety of methods. NULBC does not support automated email forwarding from members @newcastle-staffs.gov.uk email accounts to other external providers.

Whilst we will not prevent members from forwarding emails, should they so choose. In order to do this a member will be required to agree a disclaimer, indemnifying NULBC from any consequences associated with the practice.

➤ *Individual Printers*

NULBC will not provide individual printers or printing supplies for members or groups.

All members and groups will be expected to comply with NULBCs printing policies using the authorities centralised printing functions.

➤ *Support for non-Council devices*

Due to the complexity and variety in the IT equipment market, ICT will not provide support for any hardware or software which is not Council issued.

➤ *Software for use on non-Council devices*

NULBC will not provide software such as Microsoft Office for use on individual members PCs. If members require access to products such as Microsoft Office, this will be facilitated through access to a loan PC or remotely accessible Council PC.

➤ *Mobile Devices*

NULBC does not currently provide mobile devices such as Blackberry's iPhones, PDA's, etc. However, as the use of ICT by members evolves, this is likely to be reviewed.

ICT services will also not currently support access to the Council's services using members own mobile devices.

➤ *Broadband / Wi-Fi*

NULBC will not provide or support member's private broadband connections or Wi-Fi access points.

## **6. Registration with the Information Commissioners Office**

The information Commissioners Office (ICO) has recently published guidance for members of local authorities, with regards to their obligations under the Data Protection Act.

In summary, the ICO recommends that if you handle personal information, you may need to register as a data controller with the ICO.

Notification is a statutory requirement and every organisation that processes personal information must notify the ICO, unless they are exempt. Failure to notify is a criminal offence.

Registration with the ICO incurs a £35.00 annual fee.

There is a dedicated section on the ICO website <http://www.ico.gov.uk/> titled: [Do I need to notify and how do I maintain my register entry?](#) . Members can visit this site for further clarification. Members can also take part in an on-line [self-assessment](#).

NULBC recommends that all members who process constituency casework electronically register with the ICO.

## **7. Remuneration**

ICT and Members Services will be recommending to the Independent Remuneration Panel that whilst discussing future member's allowances, consideration is given to the need for ICT equipment.

## **8. Individual Responsibilities**

All members should be aware of and comply with the principals of the Data Protection Act.

Members are responsible for ensuring the safekeeping of all ICT equipment loaned to them, during the period of the loan. This includes software and hardware.

Members will also be required to attend any mandatory ICT awareness sessions such as information security principles, email and internet usage, etc.

## **9. Risks**

The Council recognises that there are risks associated in providing external access to its network.

The Protocol aims to mitigate the following risks:

- 1 Insecure access to members email;
- 2 Inadequate ICT provision to members;
- 3 Uncontrolled use of ICT services or equipment;
- 4 Risk of non-compliance with legislation such as Data Protection Act, and storing information other than in accordance with agreed retention and disposal schedules - resulting in financial penalty and loss of reputation.

Non-compliance with the Protocol could have a significant effect on the efficient operations of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to its customers.

#### 10. Protocol Compliance

Protocol compliance will be monitored by ICT and Member Services.

If members do not understand the implications of this Protocol or how it may apply to you, please seek advice from the Head of Customer & ICT Services or Member Services.

#### 11. Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within the Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this Protocol The following definitions apply:

- 1 **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the Protocol.
- 2 **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the Protocol.
- 3 **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final implementation or amendment.
- 4 **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after implementation or amendment.

Responsible	ICT Operations and Development Manager
Accountable	Head of Customer & ICT Services
Consulted	EMT, Member Services, Portfolio Holder for Resources & Efficiency
Informed	Head of Central Services, ICT Staff

## 12. Policy Commencement

The recommended start date for the Protocol will be **1 December 2011**. This will allow time for staff and members to adopt the principles and make the necessary arrangements.

## 13. Review and Revision

The Protocol will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Protocol review will be undertaken by the Information Security Group and the Member Development Working Group

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**CEMETERIES MEMORIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME 2011-15**  
**INSTITUTE OF CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE ON THE**  
**MANAGEMENT OF MEMORIALS**

**Submitted by:** Head of Operations – Roger Tait

**Portfolio:** Culture and Active Communities

**Works Attended:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

To inform Cabinet of guidance on the Management of Memorials issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)

To compare the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials with the ICCM guidance

To seek the approval of Cabinet to endorse the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials and to continue to apply it to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries

**Recommendations**

**(a) That the ICCM guidance on the Management of Memorials be noted**

**(b) That the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials be endorsed and applied to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries**

**Reasons**

The Council has a legal and statutory duty to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries.

1. **Background**

1.1 Cabinet considered a report on the Cemeteries Memorial Safety Programme 2011-15 on 20 July 2011.

It was resolved:

(a) That Cabinet review the completed Cemeteries Memorial Inspection and Safety Programme and consider a follow on rolling programme to re-inspect all memorials over a five year period.

(b) That the underspend from the 2005-10 programme be rolled forward to meet the costs of year 1-4 of the new 5 year programme and that provision of £10,000 be made in the General Fund Capital Programme for year 5 (2015/16).

(c) That long-term provision be made in the General Fund Revenue Programme to meet the cost of the inspection and safety programme from 2016/17 onwards.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Subsequent to the report being considered by Cabinet, the ICCM issued updated guidelines on the Management of Memorials.
- 2.2 A copy of the guidelines is available on request.
- 2.3 Your officers have reviewed the guidelines and compared them to the Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing.
- 2.4 The Council's procedure aligns very closely with the ICCM guidelines, with the exception of the following minor differences:

(a) Inspection Process:- Memorials up to 500mm in height. The ICCM Guidelines suggest a full visual test and hand test.

- 2.5 The Council's current procedure allows for a visual test only unless obvious signs of deterioration and/or movement are evident in which case a hand test is carried out on memorials within the main burial areas (these are small in number). The cremated remains grave memorials are not inspected as they are all dowelled to a concrete slab and there are no separate component parts, therefore the risk of failure is minimal.

- 2.6 Book type memorials are all hand tested and any found to be unsafe are fitted with a temporary support if possible, but if not laid flat on a wooden frame.

(b) ICCM Guidelines categorise Memorials over 500mm into three criteria: 500mm to 1.5m, 1.5m to 2.5m and over 2.5m.

- 2.7 The Council's current procedure differs slightly from the ICCM guidelines as follows:-

ICCM Guidelines recommend a visual, hand and/or mechanical test for memorials between 500mm and 2.5m in height and an inspection by a structural engineer for memorials over 2.5m in height.

The Council's current procedure for memorials between 500mm to 2m in height consists of a visual and mechanical test carried out by trained memorial inspection officers in the Bereavement Services team. The mechanical test ensures consistency of loading across all memorials tested.

Memorials over 2m in height are inspected by the Council's Structural Engineer.

The Council's current testing procedure is more stringent in employing the structural engineer at a lesser height of memorial which your officers feel is necessary as there is a higher potential impact of damage and/or injury if larger memorials fail.

From experience of previous inspections it is observed that the structural engineer's expertise is required at the current agreed stage of 2m in height. This view was also supported by the independent structural engineer's report from the initial memorial inspection programme.

(c) Priority of Actions – The ICCM recommends 3 classifications of priority:

Priority 1 – immediate action is required to make the memorial safe or to stop the public accessing the memorial. This could be the permanent removal of the hazard or the temporary making safe of the memorial.



- Priority 2 – the memorial is not an immediate danger to the public but is not fully stable and will therefore, need to be monitored every 12 months to assess any further deterioration of the memorial.
- Priority 3 – the memorial is perfectly stable and will only need to be inspected in 5 years time.

The council's current procedure does not incorporate Priority 2, and categorises memorials as either Priority 1 or Priority 3 as defined above.

From previous experience of the Council's inspection and testing programme it is considered that if a memorial is inspected and found to be unsafe or not fully stable then immediate action should be taken to properly deal with the memorial rather than accept the risk and the resource implications of continual annual re-inspection.

- 2.8 It is considered that the Council's current approved procedure of memorial inspection and testing, which has been successfully implemented in previous phases of the memorial safety programme, is broadly compliant with the ICCM guidelines and also offers additional risk management benefits to the Council and other stakeholders as described in section 2.2.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Option 1- Adopt ICCM guidelines on Memorial Safety
- 3.2 Option 2 - Continue with the Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed to endorse the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials and to continue to apply it to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries.

### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 The Council has a legal and statutory duty to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries
- 5.2 The Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing has been successfully implemented in previous phases of the memorial safety programme, is broadly compliant with the ICCM guidelines and offers additional risk management benefits to the Council and other stakeholders.

### 6. **Outcomes linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough
- The community is not put at risk of pollution or environmental hazard
  - The natural and built environment is protected and enhanced

### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 There are legal and statutory duties incumbent on the Council to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries, crematoria, parks and open spaces.

7.2 Equality Impact Assessment

7.3 No negative differential equality impact has been identified in this report.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

None arising as a result of this report.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The major risks in relation to memorial safety management have been identified and reported in the previous report to Cabinet on 20 July 2011.

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 The issues in this report do not involve significant expenditure, affect all wards in the Borough and have been included in the Forward Plan.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN - LOCALITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (LAP) REVIEW**

**Submitted by:** Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey

**Portfolio:** Safer and Stronger Communities

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

This paper introduces the Locality Action Partnership Development Plan, requested by Cabinet on 7 September 2011. The development plan builds on the work undertaken as part of the transformation program, previous reports and the Locality Action Partnership Review recommendations submitted to Executive Management and Cabinet. Cabinet have requested that the development plan be submitted to their next meeting due to be held on 19 October 2011.

### **Recommendations**

(a) That Cabinet notes the contents of the report and the contents of the development plan.

(b) That Cabinet notes the suggested changes to the development plan from the meeting of Informal Cabinet on 28 September 2011 – to remove action 30. relating to Community Infrastructure Levy.

(c) That Cabinet agrees to the actions and milestones contained in the development plan which may impact on their portfolio areas.

(d) That Cabinet supports the development plan being presented to the wider Newcastle Partnership

### **Reasons**

Cabinet approved the Locality Action Partnership review report – The Story of ‘Our Place’ on 7 September 2011 with the caveat that a development plan be put together to support the report. The development plan was requested to enable actions, milestones, leads and timeframes to be clearly set out and to ensure that progress is made and monitored.

## 1. **Background**

### **Locality Action Partnership Development Plan**

1.1 The development plan has been constructed following the priority areas, as presented in the recommendation section of the full Locality Action Partnership Review: The Story of ‘Our Place’ report. The priority areas are:

- RESOURCE – Chairs, community/residents, partners and Councillors
- COMMUNICATION – Partner, social media, website and newsletter.
- COMMUNITY PRIDE – Structured approach.
- FUNDING – Current, future, external and LAP Support.

- GENERAL FUNCTION – Definition, constitution, terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, action planning, ‘step-in’ mechanism, branding, reward scheme and community engagement.
- 1.2 Actions, milestones, lead/others involved and timeframes form key elements of the development plan. Many of the recommendations are the responsibility of Business Improvement and Partnerships, however, there are a number of actions that will include input from other Borough Council service areas and also from external partners.
  - 1.3 There remains challenges in some areas as many of those involved in Locality Action Partnerships give their time on a voluntary basis and therefore some actions will need to be approached with caution.
  - 1.4 The development plan has been put together by request of Cabinet at their meeting on 7 September 2011 and incorporates many of the suggestion made throughout the review.
2. **Options Considered**
    - 2.1 **Option A – Support the proposed development plan**
      - (i) This option is intended to strengthen and develop the service delivery link to LAPs.
    - 2.2 **Option B – Support the proposed development plan with addition of any additional actions considered important**
      - (i) This option will enable any additional actions that are considered important to the development of LAPs to be included in the planned work.
3. **Proposal**
    - 3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agree to the development plan to enable actions to be carried out at the earliest opportunity.
    - 3.2 It is also proposed that Cabinet identify any additional areas of development that they feel may have been missed out of the report.
4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**
    - 4.1 Locality Working has operated in different guises over a number of years and LAPs have been under various review processes since 2007. The current review links into developing policy, strategy and legislation and therefore the recommendations are integral to the ongoing development of LAPs, to ensure delivery against the emerging agendas. Additionally, LAPs are part of the transformation programme and as such have already been highlighted for development.
    - 4.2 The recommendations have been identified through detailed consultation with partners, LAP chairs, elected members and the community and attempt to meet a broad range of requirements.
5. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**
    - 5.1 Locality Action Partnerships were initially developed to deliver local solutions to both Corporate and Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. It is proposed that the LAPs continue to focus on local priorities and deliver against the local Sustainable Community Strategy priorities.

## 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 None at present although the review has established a widely acknowledged opinion that LAPs are a good structure for the emerging agenda. There may be future implications based around the proposed Localism and Decentralisation Bill and other statutory duties.

## 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment of the review has been completed and is available. The review has not raised any specific issues relating to equality, however, the recommendations in the partnership report have areas of work that have potential relevance to equality and they will be identified and impact assessed.

## 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 Locality Action Partnerships were allocated £5,000 each to develop local solutions to issues with the community. Funding was identified as a priority area as part of the review and therefore will need consideration. A separate paper relating to this issue is being submitted by the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships.
- 8.2 The review has a number of recommendations that require officer time both from the Business Improvement and Partnerships team and other departments across the borough council. Current administration support to the LAPs is provided by a LAP Administration Assistant who's Fixed Term Contract is due to end in March 2012. This is currently being investigated by the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships and therefore may be a future decision item.

## 9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 The GRACE risk assessment for Locality Action Partnerships is currently being reviewed and is being linked with the wider Newcastle Partnership risks. Two areas of potential future risk are the emerging gaps in Big Society and the delivery against the proposed Localism and Decentralisation Bill.

## 10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 As one of the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, where possible issues are identified by individual Locality Action Partnerships relating to sustainability and climate change and the work is subsequently linked to the Newcastle Partnership Sustainable Development group.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 This item is included in the forward plan.

## 12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

5 Sept 2007 – Partnership & Neighbourhood Working  
20 February 2008 – Ward Councillors and community leadership  
17 February 2010 – Developing Locality Working  
7 September 2011 – Locality Action Partnership Review – The Story of 'Our Place'

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix A – Locality Action Partnership Development Plan

14. **Background Papers**

None.



**The Story of 'Our Place'**  
**Development Plan - A review of Locality Action Partnerships, in the Borough**



**This development plan is a product of the Newcastle Partnership and Borough Council review of Locality Action Partnerships. Please also see full review report – The Story of 'Our Place'.**

Newcastle Partnership – Locality Action Partnership Review – Development Plan

Priority Area		Key Subject Areas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RESOURCE</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairs</li> <li>Community/Residents</li> <li>Partners</li> <li>Councillors</li> </ul>			
Action	Milestones	Lead	Others involved	Timeframe	Comments
1. Chairs – Develop a ‘training offer’ for chairs	Determine with chairs the training required (Effective chairing/delegating, I.T. Skills, developing social media)	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs	December 2011	Some of this work will link with the Community Leadership work and Business of the Council Board
	Develop programme of training	Naomi Chesters	NBC Human Resource	February 2012	
	Identify chairs requiring training	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs	February 2012	
	Deliver training	TBC		April 2012 onwards	
2. Chairs – Compile database of community and resident groups for each area for LAP chairs to be aware of and contact.	Letter to be sent via NCVS/Aspire to Resident and Community Groups.	Robin Wiles	NCVS and Aspire	November 2011	
	Compile database	Robin Wiles		December 2011	
	Link information to Area Profile (see 8)	Jane Sheldon		January 2012	
3. Community/Residents – To encourage and improve resident involvement with the LAPs.	Letter from chairs to invite residents associations to nominate a representative to attend LAPs.	Irene Lee on behalf of LAP Chairs	LAP Chairs	November 2011	
	LAP chairs to continue to address this locally with support from Business Improvement and Partnerships Team	LAP Chairs	Naomi Chesters	From November 2011 onwards	



	Increase communication methods advertising the work of LAPs (See Priority Area – COMMUNICATION).	Naomi Chesters/Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	November 2011	
4. Partners – Develop a core membership and reporting mechanism for the Partnership Delivery Group to monitor attendance/non-attendance and barriers	Chairs to manage locally initially.	LAP Chairs Group		September 2011 onwards	
	Draft reporting mechanism – Sign-up from Partnership Delivery Group. (PDG responsible for ensuring that officers attending, have delegated responsibility).	Partnership Delivery Group	Naomi Chesters	December 2011	
	PDG investigate allocating staff to lead on localities	Partnership Delivery Group	Naomi Chesters	April 2012	
	Pilot reporting.	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group	December 2011	
	Establish link between Newcastle Partnership and LAPs through Partnership Constitution (Strategic to Local).	Partnership Delivery Group	Naomi Chesters	Constitution signed off December 2011	
5. Partners – Engage health sector in LAPs	To be established as policy and legislation is developed.	TBC	TBC	To be monitored	
	Partnership Delivery Group monitor health developments and identify opportunities to engage health sector with LAPs.	Partnership Delivery Group		As above	
	Engage Healthwatch with LAPs (LiNK) – Staffordshire Engaging Communities project	Naomi Chesters	Engaging Communities	November 2011	
6. Partners – Engage school councils with LAPs	Schools information provided to LAP chairs	Irene Lee	Kevin Byrne	November 2011	
	Letter to school councils from chairs inviting them to raise issues for the LAPs	Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	November 2011	

7. Partners – Improve communication and links with LAPs internally.	Pilot a mapping exercise within Newcastle Borough Council to engage departments and improve links with LAPs	Naomi Chesters	Executive Management Team	January 2012	
8. Partners - Provide data to be included in profiles to LAPs and Councillors (including Customer Insight)	Develop template with LAP chairs and Councillors to include Customer Insight information.	Jane Sheldon	NBC Customer Services/LAP Chairs	First draft September 2011 – Final January 2012	
	Partners to establish information/data that can be included.	Partnership Delivery Group	Naomi Chesters	December 2011	
	Provide support and guidance to LAP chairs on understanding data.	Naomi Chesters/Jane Sheldon	LAP Chairs	January 2012	
	Determine frequency of data.	Partnership Delivery Group	Naomi Chesters	January 2012	
9. Councillors – Develop programme of training	Determine with Councillors training required (Effective chairing/delegating, I.T. Skills, developing social media – blogs, Facebook, Twitter)	Naomi Chesters/Duncan Whitehouse – Staffordshire County Council	NBC Democratic Services – The Business of the Council Board.	December 2011	Linking with Staffordshire County Community Leadership Development
	Develop programme of training	Naomi Chesters/Duncan Whitehouse – Staffordshire County Council	NBC Democratic Services – The Business of the Council Board.	March 2012	Met with Duncan Whitehouse early September 2011 – Cllr. Loades is nominated district representative on the project.
	Deliver training.	Naomi Chesters/Duncan Whitehouse – Staffordshire County Council	NBC Democratic Services – The Business of the Council Board.	April 2012 onwards	

10. Councillors – Raise awareness and the benefits of LAPs for community engagement with Councillors and secure sign-up from party leaders.	Develop induction process from best practice models	Through Community Leadership training above.		April 2012 with delivery on new induction – 2013	
	Work with member services to encourage locality working in day to day thinking.	Naomi Chesters	Julia Cleary – The Business of the Council Board	First meeting August 2011.	Further meeting end of October 2011 to help identify where reports could link to locality working.
	Develop peer mentoring programme.	Naomi Chesters	Group Leaders and nominated reps.	January 2012	
	Include feedback from full council on LAP agenda. (Constitution)	Naomi Chesters		December 2011 – Sign off	
	Include Councillor attendance as part of the Partnership/LAP constitution	Naomi Chesters		December 2011 – Sign off	
	Establish mechanism for Councillors to step in where a LAP isn't progressing.	Naomi Chesters		December 2011 – Sign off	
	EMT to determine best approach with party leaders	John Sellgren	Naomi Chesters/Group Leaders	October 2011	
	Negotiate with group leaders – Confidential report of Councillor attendance at LAPs	Naomi Chesters/John Sellgren	Group Leaders	November 2011	Initial meeting with John Sellgren – September 2011.

Priority Area		Key Subject Areas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COMMUNICATION</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner Communications/Partnership</li> <li>Social Media</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Newsletter</li> </ul>			
Action	Milestones	Lead	Others involved	Timeframe	Comments
11. Partner Communications – Improve use of partner communications to promote LAPs	Map current communications available including community newsletters.	Robin Wiles	NCVS	November 2011	
	Investigate increased use of Reporter for promoting the work of the LAP.	Naomi Chesters	Phil Jones	December 2011	Reduced to four editions per year – identify other options for promotion
	Investigate bringing partnership communications together – Newcastle Partnership communication.	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group	January 2012	
	Develop handbook for chairs including communications and key contacts.	Irene Lee	Naomi Chesters	November 2011	
12. Social Media – Improve use of social media in relation to LAPs.	Encourage use of Partnership Facebook and Twitter.	Naomi Chesters	LAP chairs	December 2011	
	Engage with Newcastle College to investigate project to develop social media for LAPs including 'App for your LAP'	Naomi Chesters	David Matthews	Proposal put forward September 2011.	
	Raise awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of using social media.	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs	December 2011	
13. Website – Increase use of Newcastle	Presentation to LAP chairs on the tools of the website.	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs	September 2011	Planned for LAP Chairs Group 22 September 2011

Partnership Website	Encourage Partners to include links from their web pages to the Partnership website	Naomi Chesters	Newcastle Partnership members	December 2011	
	Promote Partnership website.	Naomi Chesters	Business Improvement and Partnerships	September 2011 onwards	
	Continue to develop web tools	Naomi Chesters		September 2011 onwards	
14. Partnership Newsletter – Include promotion of LAPs in the Newsletter	Include projects and progress of all LAPs in the Partnership Newsletter.	Naomi Chesters		October 2011	
	Use partnership networks to disseminate newsletter.	Naomi Chesters		October 2011	
	Pilot a 'true' Partnership Newsletter – 'You said, we did' style.	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group	April 2012	Investigating possibilities with Newcastle College

Priority Area		Key Subject Areas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COMMUNITY PRIDE</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish programme of Pride Events</li> <li>Encourage use of Partnership website to advertise 'other partner and partnership events'</li> <li>Encourage LAPs to lead on the development of Pride/Partnership Event</li> </ul>			
Action	Milestones	Lead	Others involved	Timeframe	Comments
15. Community Pride Events	Identify group to lead – Possibly Task and Finish	Naomi Chesters	Kevin Byrne – Partnership Delivery Group	November 2011	
	Establish a commitment to deliver x amount of pride events in a 12-month period (minimum number to be identified).	Kevin Byrne	Partners	December 2011	
	Identify localities and engage with LAPs	Kevin Byrne	Partners	December 2011	
	Identify partners based on local need.	Kevin Byrne		December 2011	
	Develop programme.	Kevin Byrne		January 2012	
	Develop consistent advertising and reporting of events.	Kevin Byrne		January 2012	
	Market/Promote events.	Kevin Byrne	Partners	March 2012	
16. Newcastle Partnership Website	To establish if partners can have administrator rights to the website or to establish a resource where events are to be added to the website.	Naomi Chesters	Akeel Ahmed	November 2011	
	Partners to encourage and promote use of Partnership website throughout their organisations.	Partnership Executive Board		December 2011	

17. Encourage LAPs to lead on Pride/Partnership Events	Produce 'a guide to' putting on a community event (Where LAPs are willing to take ownership without a partnership lead)	Kevin Byrne	Naomi Chesters	December 2011	
	Raise and promote through LAP chairs group.	Kevin Byrne	LAP Chairs	January 2012	

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Priority Area		Key Subject Areas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FUNDING</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current funding</li> <li>Future funding</li> <li>Application for LAP funding process/criteria</li> <li>External funding</li> <li>LAP Support</li> </ul>			
Action	Milestones	Lead	Others involved	Timeframe	Comments
18. Current Funding – Monitor use and expenditure of current LAP funding	Ensure applications meet current criteria.	Naomi Chesters		September 2011	
	Encourage localities with an underspend to highlight potential projects.	Irene Lee/Kevin Byrne	Naomi Chesters/LAP chairs	September 2011	
	Investigate setting up bank accounts for LAPs (pilot with a LAP)	Naomi Chesters	Irene Lee	December 2011 – along side constitution	Kidsgrove has a bank account – this can be looked at in other areas.
19. Future Funding – Negotiate and establish options for future funding.	Investigate potential funding with NBC for next financial year.	Mark Bailey	Executive Management Team and Cabinet	September 2011 onwards	
	Negotiate with Partnership Delivery Group potential funding options including pooling local budgets into community based budgets.	Partnership Delivery Group		December 2011	
	Explore external funding.	Robin Wiles		September 2011 onwards	



<p>20. Application for LAP funding process/criteria – Review current process/criteria to ensure fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Review current process to ensure fit for purpose Make minor amendments to application form.</p>	<p>Naomi Chesters</p>	<p>Irene Lee/LAP Chairs</p>	<p>October 2011</p>	
<p>21. External funding – Develop mechanisms to disseminate funding information.</p>	<p>Develop a Newcastle Partnership funding newsletter – linked to Partnership Newsletter</p>	<p>Robin Wiles</p>		<p>November 2011</p>	
<p>22. LAP Support – Investigate options to maintain and continue funding for LAP administrative support.</p>	<p>Investigate with partners, options for future funding of the LAP support – administrations</p>	<p>Mark Bailey</p>	<p>Executive Management Team/Cabinet/Partnership Delivery Group</p>	<p>September 2011 onwards.</p>	

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Priority Area	Key Subject Areas				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GENERAL FUNCTION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of a LAP</li> <li>Constitution</li> <li>Terms of Reference</li> <li>Roles and Responsibilities</li> <li>Action planning</li> <li>'Step-in' mechanism (LAPs struggling to progress)</li> <li>Branding</li> <li>Reward Scheme</li> <li>Community Engagement</li> </ul>				
Action	Milestones	Lead	Others involved	Timeframe	Comments
23. Review Basic Function of LAP	Develop: Definition of a LAP and localism .	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group and Executive Board	December 2011	
	Constitution of the Partnership including the establishment of the fundamental link between Newcastle Partnership and LAPs (LAPs as branches forming the constitution – therefore not individually constituted)	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group and Executive Board to sign off	December 2011 – final sign off by Executive.	
	Generic Terms of Reference – with defined membership.	Naomi Chesters/Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	December 2011	
	Roles and Responsibilities – including review of length of service for chairs	Naomi Chesters/Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	December 2011	
	Process for action planning	Naomi Chesters/Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	January 2012	
	Clearly establish the links and separate operating models with Parish Councils	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs and Parish Councils	December 2011	Build in to Constitution/ToRs.

	'Step-in' mechanism	Naomi Chesters	LAP Chairs	January 2012	
24. Branding – linked to Newcastle Partnership	Work with those LAPs who currently don't have a brand to develop one.	Irene Lee	LAP Chairs	October 2011	
	Assist in the production of a small amount of branded stationery – future supplies will need to be budgeted for.	Irene lee/Naomi Chesters		November 2011	
25. Reward Scheme	Work with LAP chairs to develop a Reward/Flag Scheme for locality working.	Robin Wiles	LAP Chairs	April 2012	
26. Community Engagement	Develop a brief Partnership Engagement Strategy with LAPs as the 'hub' – Linked to Community Strategy/Shared Vision.	Naomi Chesters	Partnership Delivery Group	December 2011	
	Partners sign up to the strategy and promote LAPs in all work undertaken relevant to localities.	Partnership Executive Board		December 2011	
	Communicate strategy.	Partnership Executive Board		January 2012	
	Partners agree to LAPs being the 'initial' point of contact for community engagement – taking responsibility for communicating this through their organisation.	Partnership Executive Board and Delivery Group.		December 2011	

**The following areas will be monitored by Newcastle Borough Council, Business Improvement and Partnerships Team**

<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Key Subject Areas</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>POTENTIAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy and Legislation changes</li> </ul>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Responsibility/Reporting</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
27. Healthwatch	Negotiate the use of LAPs through the development of Healthwatch.	Partnership Manager, Business Improvement and Partnerships and Staffordshire LINK	
28. Community Organisers	Monitor the development of Community Organisers through Locality and identify opportunities to engage.	Partnership Officer, Business Improvement and Partnerships, Chief Officer, Newcastle Community and Voluntary Support and Joining Big Society Group	
29. Neighbourhood Planning	Monitor development of neighbourhood planning and the link with locality working	Partnership Manager, Business Improvement and Partnerships and NBC Planning Policy	
30. Localism- Right to Buy/Challenge	Observe the development of the Localism Bill and identify those areas that are key to the development of LAPs	Partnership Manager – Business Improvement and Partnerships	
31. Health Reforms	Monitor opportunities to engage localities in any potential developments around the health agenda – GP Commissioning, Health Improvement, Awareness raising.	Partnership Manager, Business Improvement and Partnerships	

## STATEMENT OF INTENT – VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

**Submitted by:** Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey

**Portfolio:** Safer and Stronger Communities

**Ward(s) affected:** Non-specific

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek support for a statement of intent that outlines Newcastle Borough Council's ongoing commitment to the voluntary and community sector (Department for Communities and Local Government have recently released Best Value statutory guidance, setting out some reasonable expectations of the way best value authorities should work with voluntary and community groups when facing difficult funding decisions).

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That Cabinet notes the report.
- (b) That Cabinet endorses the proposals contained in the report.

### **Reasons**

To identify Newcastle Borough Councils commitment to the voluntary and community sectors.

## 1. **Background**

- 1.1 Newcastle Borough Council (NBC) have consistently considered the voluntary and community sector as a key partner in the delivery of services across the borough and have implemented a number of initiatives to support this concept including Locality Action Partnerships and a Third Sector Commissioning Framework.
- 1.2 Newcastle Borough Council committed to a local compact in November 2007. The local Compact clarifies the relationship between voluntary and community sector organisations in Newcastle-under-Lyme and local public bodies in terms of how they work together and the expectations of each party.
- 1.3 In May 2011 the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships was approached by the Chief Executive Officer of Newcastle Community and Voluntary Support to request that Newcastle Borough Council produce a 'statement of intent' to outline their commitment to the voluntary and community sector.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The coalition government have set out their commitment to deliver the Big Society which aims to put more power into people's hands and transfer decisions, intervention and power from central government to local communities. There are three key parts to the Big Society agenda:
  - (i) **Community Empowerment** – giving councils and neighbourhoods more power to take decisions and shape their area.
  - (ii) **Opening up public services** – enabling charities, social enterprises, private companies and employee-owned co-operatives to compete to deliver services.

- (iii) **Social Action** – encouraging and enabling people to play a more active part in society, particularly through volunteering opportunities
- 2.2 The voluntary and community sector are considered integral to the development of the Big Society.
  - 2.3 There is general recognition that there are already significant amounts of ‘Big Society’ already being delivered.
  - 2.4 Due to national reductions in public spending and grants, a number of local authority areas have reportedly experienced disproportionate cuts to Voluntary and Community sector organisations.
  - 2.5 Newcastle Borough Council is currently undertaking a number of changes internally and externally, including a review of spending, services, priorities and partnership arrangements.
  - 2.6 During the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NVCO) annual conference, the Secretary of State for Department of Communities and Local Government has stressed that:
    - (i) councils should not pass on disproportionate cuts to local voluntary and community groups or inflict bigger reductions to budgets than they take on themselves.
    - (ii) councils should talk to voluntary and community groups at a very early stage about how services need to change.
    - (iii) organisations should be given at least three months’ notice about the need to end or alter a grant or other support.
  - 2.7 The Department of Communities and Local Government have recently released ‘Best Value – statutory guidance’ which sets out some reasonable expectations of the way best value authorities should work with voluntary and community groups when facing difficult funding decisions.
3. **Options Considered**
    - 3.1 **Option A – To support and agree the statement of intent and promotion of the statement**
      - (i) This option will assist in maintaining and developing the relationship between Newcastle Borough Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
      - (ii) This option also anticipates and supports the governments’ statutory guidance.
    - 3.2 **Option B – Not to support the statement.**
      - (i) This option may have a negative impact on the good relationship that Newcastle Borough Council currently have with the voluntary and community sector
4. **Proposal**
    - 4.1 The proposal is to agree with Option A to support the statement of intent and to agree to it being promoted through the partnership voluntary sector forum.
5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**
    - 5.1 The statement is aligned with the ‘Best Value Statutory Guidance’, however, outlines the local commitment to the sector.

5.2 Any support to the voluntary and community sector is considered important given the emerging agenda of Big Society, localism and public sector reform.

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

6.1 The voluntary and community sector are key partners of the Newcastle Partnership and therefore are a direct link to the Sustainable Community Strategy. Both sectors work closely with Newcastle Partnership to deliver services to meet the partnership priorities. The voluntary and community sector are considered integral to the development of Big Society and public sector reform.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 None currently although there is likely to be statutory guidance in the near future.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

No specific equality issues identified.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 No additional financial or resource implications at present. The statement is intended to reflect the ongoing commitment to the voluntary and community sectors.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 No major risks identified. Although failure to invest in the sector will contribute to the risk associated to the delivery of Big Society and public sector reform.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

None

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This is not a key decision item.

12.2 This items is included in the forward plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

None.

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A -Statement of Intent

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**Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**  
**Statement of Intent to the Voluntary and Community Sectors**

Newcastle Borough Council have consistently considered the voluntary and community sector as a key partner in the delivery of services across the borough and have implemented a number of initiatives to support this concept including Locality Action Partnerships and a Third Sector Commissioning Framework.

Newcastle Borough Council is currently undertaking a number of changes internally and externally, including a review of spending, services, priorities and partnership arrangements.

Newcastle Borough Council will in whatever ways it can, continue its commitment to the voluntary and community sector.

The Borough Council will continue to work with the voluntary and community sector to deliver key outcomes for the benefit of the community.

The Borough Council will be active in looking for ways to deliver government policy, including consideration of how they can collaborate more frequently with the voluntary and community sectors in the shaping and delivery of public services.

Newcastle Borough Council will be sensitive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community groups and set out the following reasonable expectations as part of their continuing and ongoing commitment to the sector:

- Continued commitment to the development of locality working that aims to empower voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises.
- Requirement that internal departments consider the role of voluntary and community groups in the delivery of public services relevant to their service area and an ongoing commitment to the use and development of Newcastle Borough Council's Third Sector Commissioning Framework.
- Agreement to continue to comply with the requirements of the local Compact and resource allocated to monitoring developments of the National Compact.
- Engagement and consultation will continue through the Partnership structure.
- Ongoing commitment to work closely with infrastructure organisations to deliver positive outcomes for the community.
- Where NBC does intend to withdraw or reduce funding to a voluntary or community group, they will provide appropriate notice, outlining clear reasons for the withdrawal and where the service is to be re-commissioned, the opportunity for the local community to be involved in the redesign of the service.

Newcastle Borough Council will monitor their compliance with the Department for Communities and Local Governments' Best Value Statutory Guidance relating to work with voluntary and community groups and where necessary will review this statement in the future.

September 2011

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## JUBILEE 2 UPDATE

**Submitted by:** Executive Director - Regeneration & Development

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and Planning/Culture and Active Communities

**Ward(s) affected:** All (particularly Town)

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Members with information about progress relating to the Jubilee 2 since your last meeting.

### **Recommendations**

(a) That the progress in delivery of the 'Jubilee 2' is noted.

(b) The Cabinet endorse that Officers in Consultation with the Cabinet member for Culture and Active Communities and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Efficiency enter into contract with a facilities management company for the maintenance of the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2.

### **Reasons**

To facilitate the decision-making and delivery processes regarding the provision of the Jubilee 2 centre for the residents of the Borough and to achieve the Council's aspirations of delivering the project before the end of 2011.

## 1. **Background**

1.1 On 7 September 2011 Cabinet noted the progress made on Jubilee 2. Given the significance of the project Members requested that a monthly update report should be provided to Cabinet and this is the latest of such reports.

## 2. **Issues/Progress Update**

2.1 The capital build of Jubilee 2 is now seventy five percent complete, with the contractor entering into their fifty third week on site out of a contractual period of sixty two weeks.

2.2 The programme for completion of the building remains in line with the Council's aspirations of opening Jubilee 2 to the general public in January 2012, with the anticipated capital cost of the project remaining within in the budget envelope of £10.5 million.

2.3 As part of Morgan Sindall's obligations to the Council, they continue to monitor the use of local labour on site. As a result, to-date your Officers are pleased to report that in the last month, 55% percent of labour has come from within a thirty minute drive time of the site.

2.4 Since your last meeting the following works have been undertaken as part of the construction process: :

- ◇ Tiling of both swimming pools has now been completed;
- ◇ The installations of the climbing wall, boulder area and traverse climbing wall has commenced;

- ◇ The installation of the pool filtration system has commenced;
- ◇ The fitting of floor coverings to the first and second floor have commenced;
- ◇ The fit out of the health suite has been completed;
- ◇ The highways works in relation to the project are due to commence on Brunswick Street as from 10 October 2011. It is envisaged that these works will be completed in the week commencing 9 December 2011.

2.5 Officers are pleased to report that no challenge has been received to the appointment of the Facilities Partner Ltd, who were appointed to operate the cafeteria in Jubilee 2. Your Officers are now concluding the legal agreements with the operator and it is envisaged that these will be completed by early November 2011.

2.6 Members will be aware that Officers have been exploring the most effective approach to maintain the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2 following handover of the building to the Council. Initially your Officers had approached the Mechanical and Electrical installation company to undertake this work for a period of twelve months, however based on the information received there are concerns that this would not demonstrate value for money for the Council. Based on this information a procurement procedure has now commenced to appoint a facilities management company to maintain the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2 initially for a two year period with an option to extend the contract by a further year following handover of the building to the Council.

2.7 It is envisaged the cost for a two year maintenance contract will be met from the future revenue budgets allocated to the service, as indicated in the previously agreed business plan for Jubilee 2. In order to ensure that the appointment of the successful facilities management company is made in a timely manner following receipt of the tender documents it is proposed that Cabinet endorse that this is done in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Active Communities and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Efficiency.

### 3 **Proposal**

3.1 That Cabinet note the progress on project delivery (in accordance with the Project Plan).

3.2 The Cabinet endorse that the appointment of the successful facilities management company to maintain the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2 for an initial period of two years can be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Active Communities and The Cabinet Member for Resources and Efficiency.

### 4. **Reasons for the Preferred Solution**

4.1 To enable key decisions to be made in accordance with the project plan and to maintain the required momentum to deliver the development of Jubilee 2 for the residents of the Borough by the end of 2011.

5. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 5.1 It should be noted that expenditure incurred for this project to date is in line with budgetary projections.
- 5.2 That the estimated cost of entering into contract with a Facilities Management Company to maintain the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2 will be met from the revenue budgets as per the previously agreed business plan for Jubilee2.

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

- 6.1 The provision of accessible leisure facilities contributes to the delivery of the Council's Strategic Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. There will be a positive impact on those relating to health improvement, quality of life, and support for disadvantaged communities, community safety and broader regeneration objectives for the town centre. In particular it is anticipated that Jubilee 2 will assist the Council/Partners in achieving positive health outcomes thereby reducing health inequalities.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has powers, under the Local Government Act 2000, to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough's residents. The Council has general powers to provide recreational facilities whilst Planning Policy Guidance ensures that adequate resources are allocated for sport and recreation through the statutory framework of the core planning strategy and development plan documents. On a more specific note clearly it is vitally important that the Council procures appropriate and specialist legal advice to prepare the necessary contracts.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1 The proposed Centre will be designed as an inclusive facility that will seek to optimise access from all sections of the community. The project will be subject to a full equalities impact assessment. The proposed inclusion of a "Changing Places" toilet will enhance the experience of using the facilities by disabled users and their carers as well as supporting wider town centre activities.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 A full risk assessment/log for the project has been completed in conjunction with the Council's Corporate Risk Manager and continues to be subjected to regular review. The latest version of this document is available on request.

10. **Key Decision Information**

- 10.1 That the estimated cost of entering into contract with a Facilities Management Company to maintain the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2, initially for a two year period, will be met from the revenue budgets as per the previously agreed business plan for Jubilee2

11. **Previous Cabinet Decisions**

Cabinet 22 October 2008  
Cabinet 26 March 2009  
Cabinet 13 May 2009  
Cabinet 29 July 2009  
Cabinet 9 September 2009

Cabinet 21 October 2009  
Cabinet 14 December 2009  
Cabinet 13 January 2010  
Cabinet 17 February 2010  
Cabinet 24 March 2010  
Cabinet 2 June 2010  
Cabinet 28 July 2010  
Cabinet 15 September 2010  
Cabinet 2 November 2010  
Cabinet 15 December 2010.  
Cabinet 9 February 2011  
Cabinet 17 March 2011  
Cabinet 8 June 2011  
Cabinet 20 July 2011  
Cabinet 7 September 2011