

# Public Document Pack

**Date of meeting** Wednesday, 11th November, 2020  
**Time** 2.00 pm  
**Venue** Cabinet – Virtual Meeting - Conference  
**Contact** democraticservices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk



**NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Castle House  
Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Staffordshire  
ST5 1BL

## Cabinet

### AGENDA

#### PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.
- 3 MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 8)  
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- 4 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE** (Pages 9 - 14)  
This item includes a supplementary report.
- 5 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 to 2025/26** (Pages 15 - 44)
- 6 KIDSGROVE TOWN DEAL** (Pages 45 - 98)
- 7 KNUTTON MASTERPLAN** (Pages 99 - 186)
- 8 PROPOSED EXTENSION TO NEWCASTLE CREMATORIUM  
GROUNDS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADJACENT LAND OFF  
CHATTERLEY CLOSE** (Pages 187 - 216)
- 9 NEWCASTLE CREMATORIUM - PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT  
OF THE CREMATORS** (Pages 217 - 222)
- 10 LAND AT MARKET DRAYTON ROAD, LOGGERHEADS** (Pages 223 - 228)
- 11 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT SECOND  
QUARTER (JULY - SEPTEMBER) 2020 - 2021** (Pages 229 - 256)
- 12 FORWARD PLAN** (Pages 257 - 262)
- 13 URGENT BUSINESS**

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

#### **14 DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following reports, because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **15 ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS**

##### **Councillor attendance at Cabinet meetings:**

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

##### **Public attendance at Cabinet meetings:**

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

**Members:** Councillors Simon Tagg (Chair), Stephen Sweeney (Vice-Chair), Trevor Johnson, Helena Maxfield, Paul Northcott and Jill Waring

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

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



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**CABINET**

Wednesday, 14th October, 2020  
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

<b>Present:-</b>	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	Stephen Sweeney, Trevor Johnson, Helena Maxfield and Paul Northcott
Officers	David Adams, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Simon McEneny, Daniel Dickinson and Denise French
Apologies	Councillor(s) Jill Waring

29. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jill Waring

30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

31. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September be agreed as a correct record.

32. **BACK ON TRACK - CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a report on actions being taken across the Council to recover from the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The Leader noted that the Borough was currently in Tier 1. He explained that a letter had been sent to businesses and a separate letter was to go out to households thanking them for the sacrifices made so far in response to the pandemic and reminding them of the need to continue following the rules to keep the virus under control.

He is a member of the County Council's Local Outbreak Board which was now meeting weekly. Councillor Sweeney as Deputy Leader is chair of the Multi Agency Board which was particularly focusing on young people due to the number of students recently arrived in the Borough. Councillor Sweeney advised that the Multi Agency Board included representatives of the Students' Union as well as Borough and County Council representation and the Police.

The Leader commended the work of the Environmental Health Team in ensuring local hospitality venues operated with Covid safety measures. There had also been Government funding used to provide Covid Marshalls in the Borough using a low level approach.

The written report outlined the 5 areas of the Recovery Plan:

*Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres*

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney, outlined that the Castle Artisan Market was to take place on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October and all stalls were now fully booked. The Leader also noted that there was free parking on Sundays in the Council car parks. Councillor Maxfield reported on increased footfall in Kidsgrove showing good support for local businesses.

*Supporting Health and Wellbeing*

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Helena Maxfield, reported that there were currently 19 people in emergency accommodation and further information on the services for homelessness would be outlined later in the meeting.

*Economic Recovery*

The Leader referred to the major regeneration and growth schemes as set out in the report. The two Town Investment Plans for Kidsgrove and Newcastle were scheduled for submission to the Government – this would be October for the Kidsgrove Plan with the Newcastle Plan targeted for submission in January. The latest unemployment figures showed the Borough as being slightly below the Staffordshire average. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Northcott, reported on work with the Skills and Training Group to manage the employment situation including skills matching; part of the funding through the Advanced Town Deals would be used for a Training and Skills Enterprise Centre.

*Stepping-up Council Services*

A number of services had reopened including J2 and the Brampton Museum. Councillor Sweeney reported that the backlog with taxi licensing was being cleared and should be up to date in a few months. Councillor Northcott noted the important work of the food hygiene inspection service as more restaurants and pubs reopened. The Environmental Health Team had increased workload and responsibilities which was kept under review by Executive Management Team and Cabinet.

*Financial Recovery*

Councillor Sweeney referred to the additional funding received from Government amounting to £1.743 to date. There was also funding for income losses after the first 5% at the rate of 75p in the pound. Councillor Northcott referred to business rates and that there were currently low numbers of vacancies in business units.

Members expressed thanks to officers of the Council for their hard work during the ongoing pandemic.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted and the work being undertaken to recover from the pandemic be endorsed.

33. **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION FROM 1ST NOVEMBER 2020 - 31ST MARCH 2021**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to let two short term contracts for temporary accommodation for homeless people. Councillor Maxfield explained that a review of Temporary Accommodation had been undertaken following rising demand for homelessness services, escalating costs and the Governments “everyone in” policy in response to the pandemic. The Review had recommended a mini procurement exercise be undertaken and the results were presented in the report. One tender had been received for each of the two lots; it scored highly on ‘project purpose’ and ‘impact and project outcomes’ and was from the current supplier and therefore represented continuation of the current service and costs.

**Resolved:** That:

- 1) Subject to finalising the legal agreement with the Specialist Homeless Advisor at Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:
  - a. A five month (1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021) contract be let to Open Door Stoke-on-Trent for the provision of supported accommodation for rough sleepers from the street with complex and high level support needs.
  - b. A five month (1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021) contract be let to Open Door Stoke-on-Trent for the provision of shared houses to provide lower level supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs.
- 2) The financial needs regarding the above services for 2021/22 be noted and that subject to successful allocations of Central Government funding the above contracts be extended for 2021/22.
- 3) Officers bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 funding for medium term self-contained supported accommodation for homeless people with complex needs.

#### 34. **JUBILEE 2 UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a report on the ongoing building defects at Jubilee 2 and the actions being taken to resolve the issues. The building had been constructed by Morgan Sindall and opened in 2012 but had experienced a number of issues that had compromised both effective service delivery and reputation. Some issues had been addressed but three longstanding building defects were highlighted in the report – leaking roofs, defects within the aqua sauna and the failure of the main pool circulation system. Works to repair the roof leaks had been completed in September 2020 but there were still some issues which Morgan Sindall had given a commitment to work with the council to address along with any future issues. The closure of the Aqua Sauna had given an opportunity to review its use with the preferred solution being to repurpose as a Pilates Studio; the tender process was now underway. The main pool had been closed on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 due to a significant loss of water; the likely cause had been identified and repairs were due to be completed shortly with the aim to reopen the main pool by the end of October 2020.

Members suggested a review of the historical issues be undertaken and reported back to Cabinet and Scrutiny noting it was important to ensure any lessons were learned.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the information and the approach outlined in the report be noted and endorsed to address the ongoing building defects and further reports be received to update Members on progress made.
- (ii) the Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth arrange for further survey work to be undertaken to identify any further undiscovered defects; and

(iii) a review of the historical issues with the building since the opening of Jubilee 2 in 2012 be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet and Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

**35. FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan listing upcoming key decisions to be made by Cabinet.

**Resolved:** That the Forward Plan be received.

**36. URGENT BUSINESS**

In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to take the following item of business as urgent:

**Resolved:** That Cabinet supports the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism and Officers be asked to prepare a report for the next Council meeting to enable this definition to be endorsed for inclusion within the Council's policies and practices.

**37. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There were no items in Part 2.

**COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.36 pm



## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S

#### REPORT TO CABINET

Choose an item.

**11 November 2020**

**Report Title:**            **Coronavirus Update**

**Submitted by:**       **Chief Executive**

**Portfolios:**           **All**

**Ward(s) affected:**   **All**

**Purpose of the Report**

To inform the Cabinet of the actions being taken across the Council in response to the Coronavirus restrictions on the Borough.

**Recommendation**

**1. It is recommended that Cabinet note this report and endorse the work being undertaken in response to the Coronavirus restrictions.**

**Reasons**

To allow Cabinet to publicly consider the actions being undertaken in relation to the coronavirus pandemic and the associated restrictions.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Cabinet has regular reports detailing the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and delivery of the recovery plan.
- 1.2 At time of writing, the 7 day infection case rate in Newcastle under Lyme was 430 cases per 100,000 population. This is above the England average (240/100,000), and the Staffordshire average of 382/100,000. The figures include a cluster associated with students at Keele University.
- 1.3 From 5<sup>th</sup> November the Borough has been subject to the national restrictions announced by the Government as part of the national lockdown, having previously briefly moved into Tier 2 of the previous three tier system of restrictions. As such, the Council's efforts have shifted to responding to the new restrictions, as detailed in this report.
- 1.4 With the infection rate at its current level, the Council is heavily engaged in its outbreak control work, with specific avenues of work being progressed:
  - The Leader of the Council sits on the County-wide Local Outbreak Board which has regular oversight infection rates and action being taken to respond. This Board is intensifying its work in light of the increased infections.

- The Leader of the Council is chairing a Local Incident Management Team, drawing together expertise from the Borough Council, County Council, health sector, and other agencies actively involved in responding to the pandemic;
- A multi-agency board, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Leader, Cllr Sweeney, has been convened to ensure that all possible steps are being taken across the key anchor institutions to reduce infection rates in the Town Centre, particularly in the 18 to 25 year old age group.
- Colleagues from Environmental Services continue to work closely with the Director of Public Health and colleagues from across the public sector to investigate infections in high risk premises in the borough and provide advice to those running high risk premises to minimise infection spread. Government funding of c£115,000 has been secured, via Staffordshire County Council, to assist in resourcing this work;
- A team of colleagues has been assembled from across the Council to work as “Covid Marshalls”, who have recently switched their emphasis away from encouraging the public to socially distance and to practice good Covid security in the town centre, to supporting businesses to adhere to the new restrictions.

## 2. **Priority Actions**

- 2.1 In response to the move to national restrictions, the Council has stepped up work in two key areas – support for businesses and support for the vulnerable.

### **Support for Businesses**

- 2.2 The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) will be paid by Government to support businesses forced to close or severely affected by local or national restrictions. There are four elements of funding:
- Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) - to meet the cost of payments to businesses within the business rates system that are required to close. Newcastle’s initial allocation is £1.674m.
  - Additional Restrictions Grant - to be used as discretionary grant funding to support businesses that are either closed but not in the business rating or open but severely impacted (e.g. because of closure of their suppliers or the customers they supply to). (£2.588m Newcastle allocation).
  - Local Restrictions Grant (Open) – backdated funding for the period between NUL going into tier 2 restrictions and the start of the national lockdown to enable grants to be made to businesses that were severely impacted during that period.
  - Local Restrictions Grant (Sector) – backdated funding from 1<sup>st</sup> November to meet the cost of grants to businesses that have been required to close on a national basis since 23 March 2020 – i.e. nightclubs, dance halls, discotheques, hostess bars, etc.
- 2.3 The Council has immediately begun to process the non-discretionary grants, with the 230 businesses being paid within days of the scheme going live. The other schemes will go live from later this week. This funding is crucial to enable businesses to weather this particular phase of the pandemic, and be in a position to recover once restrictions have been eased.

## **Support for Vulnerable People**

2.4 The Council has stepped up its support to vulnerable people, with three specific lines of work being prioritised:

- The support service delivered through the Realise Foundation has stepped up in readiness to receive calls from people made vulnerable by the restrictions. Typically this call centre and web portal provides advice and support to individuals who are isolated, or who need help to access food and medicine.
- The Revenues and Benefits team are processing applications for payments to individuals who have been required to self-isolate as a result of either contracting the virus, or being in contact with someone who has, and as a result are unable to work. The Test & Trace Self Isolations Support Scheme is focussed on individuals in receipt of particular benefits and aims to incentivise people required to self-isolate, but who would lose income by doing so.
- The Council's homelessness team continues to work with vulnerable people who are sleeping rough, or who are at risk of homelessness, placing them into temporary accommodation.

## **Council Services**

2.5 As with the previous national restrictions, some Council services have been impacted, although the nature of the current restrictions has meant that this is less severe than previously. Key areas of impact are:

- J2 Leisure Centre has been required to close, although the centre staff are providing an extensive on-line offer to the centre's membership. Classes are available either "on-demand" where the customer may download a class and take part at a time that suits them, or can take part in "programmed" classes which take place at set times, led by members of the team;
- Brampton Museum, in line with other such venues nationally, has been required to close.
- Customer Services – all services continue to be available on-line or on the phone, but face to face service at Castle House is now restricted.

2.6 Other services continue to be available with minimal disruption.

## **Economic Recovery**

2.7 The Council is continuously monitoring the situation and is making preparations for a successful reopening of the town centre and other high streets in time for Christmas. Notwithstanding the shift in restrictions, the Council is continuing to work towards the recovery of the local economy, focussed on progressing the major regeneration and growth schemes.

- As previously reported, a bid has been submitted to the Future High Streets Fund for schemes to facilitate the regeneration of Newcastle Town Centre, with a specific focus on the Ryecroft site;
- Advance Town Deal Funds of £1.75m have been secured for initiatives in Newcastle & Kidsgrove
- Town Investment Plan for Kidsgrove has been prepared, and will be considered elsewhere on this agenda as part of the Government's Town Deal programme
- Town Investment Plan for Newcastle is in preparation with the Town Deal Board

### **3. Financial Recovery**

- 3.1 The Council's revenue budget relies on service income from fees and charges of c£850k per month across a wide range of services, with a significant proportion coming from J2 and car parking. Taking account of the current lockdown period it is forecast that income losses for the financial year will amount to £2.475m. The Government's income compensation scheme offset these income losses to the amount of £1.700m, the first instalment of this is due imminently.
- 3.2 To date emergency Coronavirus Government funding of £2.152m has been secured (including £170k of new burdens funding to offset the costs of administering Coronavirus business support grant and hardship relief schemes), which has reduced the immediate pressure on additional spending and on the Council finances. The current forecast is a net revenue overspend of around £0.350m in this financial year, this assumes that the current lockdown period is not extended. Close management of the financial position will continue and remains absolutely essential.
- 3.3 The Council continues to work closely with the Borough's Members of Parliament and the Local Government Association to lobby central government for the ongoing support which will be required.

### **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 Cabinet are recommended to note this report.

### **5. Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 5.1 This report serves to brief Cabinet on the work being undertaken to address the Coronavirus pandemic, and the financial impact that the pandemic is having on the Council, and the recovery arrangements being put in place.

### **6. Options Considered**

- 6.1 N/A

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

- 7.1 Addressing the impact of Coronavirus locally has involved adjustment to some service provision. When making such changes there are a number of legal and statutory implications to take into account. These are all appropriately factored into decision taking by the Incident Management Team.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 The Council's General Fund balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 was £1.548m. Careful monitoring of the financial position will be required over coming weeks and months leading to prompt corrective action where necessary to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget position in the current financial year and beyond.

10 **Major Risks**

10.1 The Coronavirus pandemic, in the round, represents a significant risk to the Council. This report sets out how that risk is being addressed.

11 **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 N/A

12 **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This is not a key decision.

13 **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 None

14 **List of Appendices**

14.1 None

15 **Background Papers**

15.1 None

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**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO**

**Cabinet**  
**04 November 2020**

**Report Title:** Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26

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

**Portfolios:** Finance and Efficiency

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

To present updated financial forecasts for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 and set out how the Council will allocate its resources over the medium term to deliver its objectives.

**Recommendations**

**Cabinet are asked to:**

1. Endorse the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. Note the funding gap of £1.790m in 2021/22 and £5.911m over the 5 year period covered by the MTFs.
3. Agree the approach to develop savings and income generation proposals in the medium term.
4. Note the current uncertainty regarding the medium term impact of Covid and local government funding and the need for scenario planning and identification of savings options for best, worst and medium case scenarios.
5. Refer the draft MTFs to Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views.

**Reasons**

To ensure the Council meets its statutory duty to set a balanced budget in February 2021.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 in October 2019. This report updates the assumptions from that time and sets out the strategy for development of the 2021/22 budget and MTFs for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The strategy is set out in twelve sections and the key elements of each section are summarised below.
- 2.2 The MTFs provides an overarching framework for the allocation of resources to the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Plan. A mid-term review of the Council Plan has been carried out and has confirmed that the priorities remain unchanged.

- 2.3 After a ten year period of austerity the financial strategy focuses on the need for the Council to become self-sustaining through developing a strong and growing tax base, making best use of its resources, promoting a One Council culture in which there is widespread ownership of the Council's financial position, a robust financial position and a fair funding settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 2.4 It is currently unclear whether the Government will press ahead with plans for a business rates reset in 2021/22 which would see the accumulated growth built up since 2013/14 being redistributed across the system. As a member of the Staffordshire business rates pool the Council currently saves £1.5m per annum on the levy that would otherwise be payable to the Treasury. A 50% reset would reduce this saving to £0.766m. In the event that a reset goes ahead strong lobbying will be required to ensure that appropriate transitional arrangements are in place to cushion the impact locally and that continuing Government support is made available for collection fund losses due to COVID-19.
- 2.5 Whatever funding system is in place, it will require relevant up to date information to ensure its effectiveness. The Census in 2021 will be key. Locally there was a 94% response in 2011 – whilst this matched the national average it was the lowest rate in Staffordshire; it is therefore important for the Council to promote the importance of the Census and ensure the maximum possible engagement across the Borough.
- 2.6 Finally the Council will need to continue to lobby to ensure that the resources required to regenerate the borough are secured via Town Deals and Future High Street Fund and continue to work closely with the county and LEP to secure inward investment in the borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.
- 2.7 The third and fourth sections of the MTFs cover the context in which the Council operates – the global and UK economy and the specific characteristics and challenges of the borough.
- 2.8 The coronavirus pandemic has precipitated a worldwide recession which is the most severe in generations. This, together with demographic trends, will have a significant impact on employment and demand for Council services over the next five years.
- 2.9 The current MTFs approved by Cabinet in October 2019 forecast a budget gap of £4.446m over the period 2021/22 to 2024/25. The MTFs is being rolled forward by a year and assumptions revisited. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the position significantly creating financial challenge and uncertainty in equal measure. Most challenging is the forecast of the tax base for both Council Tax and Business Rates. The current central forecast is for a gap in 2021/22 of £1.790m and over the 5 year period of the MTFs of £5.911m.
- 2.10 In the current financial year the Council has received significant additional Government support in the form of emergency Covid grants of just under £2m plus a compensation scheme for lost income from fees and charges. However, at this time it is unclear what the medium to long term impact of Covid will be on the Council's tax base and the level of Government support for any continuing losses and additional expenditure requirements. In addition the shape and timing of changes to the local government funding regime including business rates retention and a potential reset have not been confirmed. The level of uncertainty is unprecedented and consequently there is a need to develop alternative scenarios which will enable the Council to plan on the basis of a range of potential outcomes reflecting a deeper and longer lasting impact of the crisis.
- 2.11 Over the summer and early autumn the groundwork for the MTFs has been undertaken including review of the Borough Profile and assessment of the longer term impact of COVID-19, a full benefit opportunity assessment and extensive benchmarking to give a clear context in which to identify areas for investment and redirection of resources, opportunities for efficiency and income generation and service reconfiguration.



- 2.12 Based on this work, key themes have been identified for further exploration including digital transformation, organisational structure, commercial opportunities and asset management.
- 2.13 In view of the uncertainty around the longer term impact of COVID-19 and local government funding, work is taking place to develop and refine alternative scenarios for planning purposes. Under the medium and worst case scenarios there would be a need to draw down from reserves to fund further income losses and additional expenditure and consequently a requirement to replenish reserves in later years which would add between £0.75m and £1.5m to the forecast gap over the life of the strategy. A best case scenario in which collection fund losses are shared on a 50/50 basis with Government and other income recovers to pre-COVID-19 levels by the end of this financial year would result in a reduction of £0.54m over the five year period and £0.31m in 2021/22.
- 2.14 A full risk assessment is being carried out of the Council's reserves. A preliminary assessment suggests that a minimum contribution to the General Fund reserve of £0.8m will be required to provide sufficient cover for potential risks. Government proposals for apportionment of collection fund losses which are expected to be announced in November may provide scope for some of the accumulated business rates surpluses currently held in the Business Rates reserve to be released to the General Fund in a phased manner over the first 3 years of the MTFS.
- 2.15 The Council agreed a 10 year capital strategy in February 2020. The capital strategy sets out how the Council will invest capital resources to support service delivery and facilitate the achievement of key objectives. The strategy has been reviewed and updated in light of the impact of COVID-19, expected capital receipts from asset disposals and the decision to press ahead with the refurbishment of the Kidsgrove Sports Centre. The capital financing requirement is set to increase by £22.629m by 2029/30 and the revenue implications have been reflected in the revised MTFS.
- 2.16 Work on the detail of the 2021/22 budget including investment and savings proposals is at an advanced stage and is being overseen by a Financial Recovery Board chaired by the Leader of the Council. Draft budget proposals will be presented to Cabinet and Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee in December and finalised in January following public consultation and receipt of the Council's final funding settlement.

### 3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Cabinet endorse the draft MTFS, note the funding gap of £1.790m in 2021/22 and £5.911mm over the life of the MTFS and agree the approach to develop savings and income generation proposals in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable financial position, including planning for best, medium and worst case scenarios.

### 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by February 2021. Best practice is for financial planning to take place over a 5 year period in the form of a Medium Term Financial Strategy that sets out how the Council plans to allocate resources to meet its objectives.

### 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 None.

### 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 Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably due to protected characteristics. It is important to consider the potential impact on such groups and individuals when designing or delivering services and budgets. Budget proposals requiring changes or new services and policies will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments including consultation with affected people and organisations.

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

8.1 These are addressed in the body of the report.

## 9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Acts 2003 places a duty on the section 151 officer to report on the robustness of the budget. The main risks to the budget include spending in excess of budget; income falling short of the budget (including capital receipts from disposal of assets); and unforeseen elements such as changes to Government funding. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty regarding Government funding reforms there are significant budget risks that will need to be managed. It will be essential the Council has sufficient reserves to call on if required. The draft MTFS assumes a minimum General Fund reserve of £3.2m. This will need to be kept under review as risk assessments are updated.

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

10.1 In shaping detailed budget proposals consideration will be given to the need for investment in order to deliver the Council's Sustainable Environment Action Plan.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Final approval of the MTFS will be a key decision.

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

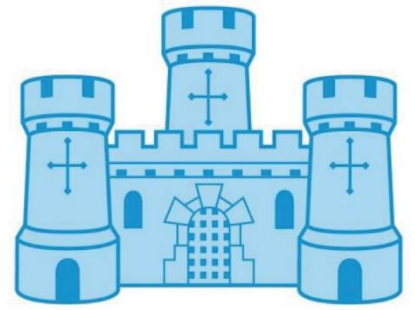
12.1 None

## 13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26.

## 14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None.



**NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2025/26



# Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26

## 1. Corporate Plan

- 1.1 The Council agreed a Council Plan setting out its key priorities in 2018. A mid-term review of the plan has recently been completed and is shown at Appendix A.
- 1.2 The four key corporate priorities remain:
  - Local services that work for local people
  - Growing our people and places
  - A healthy, safe and active borough
  - A town centre for all
- 1.3 These priorities are underpinned by the existence of a modern council with
  - A skilled, empowered and responsive workforce
  - Accessible and efficient services
  - Financial resilience and good governance
  - A strong culture of partnership working

## 2. Financial Strategy

- 2.1. A sound financial strategy is key to the delivery of the Corporate Plan and financial resilience.
- 2.2. There are five key strands to the strategy:
  - A financially self-sustaining Council
  - Value for Money
  - A One Council culture
  - Underpinned by robust financial position
  - Ensuring a fair financial settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme

### Financially Sustainable Council

- 2.3. The change in the balance of funding to local authorities has shifted over the last ten years with the reduction of Revenue Support Grant by Government being replaced by income from retained Business Rates and Council Tax. This has led to a need for local authorities to be increasing self-financing with a need to grow local economy and Council Tax bases to provide prosperity and reduce need alongside delivering efficiencies and generating more commercial income.
- 2.4 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a growing population (despite a small fall from 2018-2019), but in recent decades it has seen low levels of house building which have not kept up with housing demand. The resulting affordability gap for residents puts pressure on our homelessness service but also has dampened council tax income.

- 2.5 Newcastle-under-Lyme's industrial and retail sectors have remained relatively healthy in recent times and the business rates base has grown significantly (current rateable value of £90.940m) since the borough joined the Staffordshire business rates pool in 2013/14 (rateable value of £83.842m).
- 2.6 Alongside the growth in the tax base the rates need to keep base with the Council's inflationary and demand pressures. Accordingly the MTFS assumes annual increases up to the referendum threshold of the greater of 2% or £5.

### **Value for Money**

- 2.7 It is essential that the Council makes best use of its finite resources. In simple terms this means evidence based decisions, testing the market, strong business cases, delivering to the corporate objectives.

### **One Council Culture**

- 2.8 The Council's finances need to be everyone's responsibility. It is not the sole responsibility of the Council's S151 Officer, ownership is required across the entire Council, the Cabinet, Chief Executive, Executive Directors and their management teams, senior manager and front line workers. This has increasingly been the case through ten years of austerity and now more than ever with the huge financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

### **Robust Financial Position**

- 2.9 There needs to be clear, transparent and integrated service and budget planning to ensure the Council's finite resources are directed to where they are most needed. It is essential that the finances are understood by members, senior officers, managers and the community. The finances need to be sustainable. A single year budget is not enough, the finances need to be planned over the medium term and good practice is for this term to be five years.
- 2.10 The budgets need to be robust with realistic savings plans to avoid in year volatility. The five year plan needs to recognise all future pressures and income flows. Local Government is a dynamic environment with many demand led services and the growth in demand for services needs to be accurately modelled. The same applies on the income side with a clear understanding required of changes to the Council Tax and Business Rates tax bases and the level of Government support.
- 2.11 There is inevitably a gap between the two or the need to invest in priority areas which will need to be met by changing the way in which the Council operates. This will be through delivery of efficiencies, reducing services or generating more income. All of these measures need to be realistic with appropriate processes in place to ensure their delivery.
- 2.12 Finally, the Council needs to hold an appropriate level of reserves to ensure that it can continue to deliver its objectives in times of financial uncertainty. These reserves will cover the smoothing of spend areas that are known to move from year to year, for specific and general risks and a general provision for unknown risks. In light of Covid-19 it is likely that the Council will need to increase the level of reserves it holds.
- 2.13 Much work has been done over the past two years to put the Council's finances on a robust sustainable footing. Undeliverable savings and historical overspends have

been built back into the base budget, there is a more focussed view of the medium term and there is a far more realistic assessment of future demographic pressures and investment needs. In addition, a new Ten Year Capital Strategy has ensured that decision making considers this wider, long term context. This Strategy will set out how this approach can be taken further forward.

- 2.14 The Council has been operating in a period of great uncertainty with Brexit and a snap general election and delays in essential reforms to the local government financial framework. This uncertainty has been taken to another level with the impact of the worldwide Covid-19-19 Pandemic. Detailed scenario planning will therefore be required to identify the different actions that may be necessary to ensure the Council's continued financial sustainability depending on the financial impact in 2020/21 and any potential ongoing consequences.

### **A fair financial settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme**

- 2.15 The Government introduced its Business Rates Retention model for funding local government in 2013/14. It however relied on the historical needs data and damping arrangements from the previous model. At the time government committed to address both of these issues and also set out plans to reset the business rates growth on a regular basis.
- 2.16 Government has been developing Fair Funding proposals to remedy the position but this is now years overdue and local authorities have been disadvantaged by both the lack of an update of the underlying data and the damping arrangements. Implementation has been held up due to Government being stretched with Brexit, a snap General Election and now the Covid-19 pandemic and it is currently unclear whether the Government will press ahead with plans for a business rates reset in 2021/22 which would see the accumulated growth built up since 2013/14 being redistributed across the system.
- 2.17 As a member of the Staffordshire business rates pool the Council currently saves £1.5m per annum on the levy that would otherwise be payable to the Treasury. A 50% reset would reduce this saving to £0.766m. In the event that a reset goes ahead strong lobbying will be required to ensure that appropriate transitional arrangements are in place to cushion the impact locally and that continuing Government support is made available for collection fund losses due to Covid-19.
- 2.18 Whatever funding system is in place, it will require relevant up to date information to ensure its effectiveness. The Census in 2021 will be key. Locally there was a 94% response in 2011 – whilst this matched the national average it was the lowest rate in Staffordshire; it is therefore important for the Council to promote the importance of the Census and ensure the maximum possible engagement across the Borough.
- 2.19 Finally the Council will need to continue to lobby to ensure that the resources required to regenerate the borough are secured via Town Deals and Future High Street Fund and continue to work closely with the county and LEP to secure inward investment in the borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.

## **3. Economic Context**

- 3.1 The following economic commentary has been provided by the Council's treasury advisers Arlingclose from their September Economic Update.

*The medium-term global economic outlook is weak. While the strict initial lockdown restrictions have eased, coronavirus has not been suppressed and second waves have prompted more restrictive measures on a regional and national basis. This ebb and flow of restrictions on normal activity will continue for the foreseeable future, at least until an effective vaccine is produced and importantly, distributed.*

*The global central bank and government responses have been significant and are in many cases on-going, maintaining more stable financial, economic and social conditions than otherwise. This has supported a sizeable economic recovery in Q3.*

*However, the scale of the economic shock to demand, on-going social distancing measures, regional lock downs and reduced fiscal support will mean that the subsequent pace of recovery is limited. Early signs of this are already evident in UK monthly GDP and PMI data, even before the latest restrictions.*

*This situation will result in central banks maintaining low interest rates for the medium term. In the UK, Brexit is a further complication. Bank Rate is therefore likely to remain at low levels for a very long time, with a distinct possibility of being cut to zero. Money markets have priced in a chance of negative Bank Rate.*

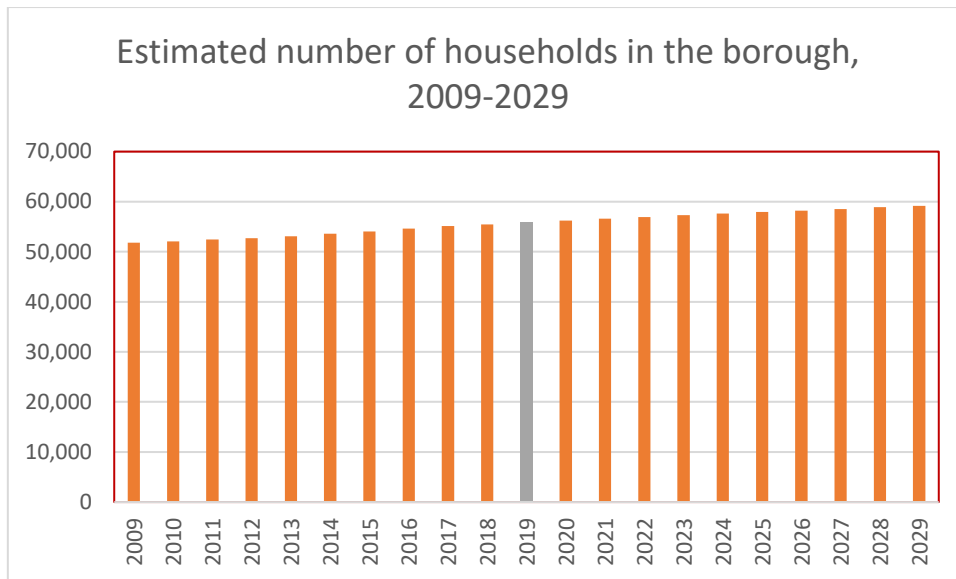
*Longer-term yields will also remain depressed, anchored by low central bank policy rates, expectations for potentially even lower rates and insipid inflation expectations. There is a chance yields may follow a slightly different path in the medium term, depending on investor perceptions of growth and inflation, or if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.*

*Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to remain at the current 0.10% level and additional monetary loosening in the future most likely through further financial asset purchases (Quantitative Easing). While Arlingclose's central case for Bank Rate is no change from the current level of 0.1%, further cuts to Bank Rate to zero or even into negative territory cannot be completely ruled out.*

*Downside risks remain in the near term, as the government dials down its fiscal support measures, reacts to the risk of a further escalation in infection rates and the Brexit transition period comes to an end.*

#### **4. Borough Profile**

- 4.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 129,400 (2019 Mid-Year Estimate). Over the past decade the general population has grown by 5.2% but the over 65 population has increased by 29.6% and is projected to increase by a further 14.6% over the next decade. In the five years from 2014-2019, the percentage of the borough's population aged 70+ increased from 13.4% to 15.2% which is higher than the average for both the West Midlands region (13.6%) and England (13.4%).
- 4.2 Between 2009 and 2019 the number of households in the borough increased by 7.8% to 55,800 and further growth is projected to 59,200 by 2029, and to 62,100 by 2039.



- 4.3 Newcastle-under-Lyme is the 150th most deprived local authority in England, out of 317 overall, a slight improvement on its ranking in 2015. In terms of Health Deprivation and Disability the borough is the 80<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority.
- 4.4 Parts of the borough including Cross Heath and Knutton are in the 10% most deprived areas in England. Further parts of Holditch and Chesterton, Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe, Crackley and Red Street, Town and Westlands are also in the 20% most deprived. However, parts of Loggerheads, Westbury Park and Northwood, Madeley and Betley and Westlands are in the top 10% least deprived parts of England, with parts of Clayton, Crackley and Red Street, Thistleberry, Westlands, Bradwell, Madeley and Betley, Newchapel and Mow Cop in the top 20% least deprived.
- 4.5 Across the borough, the age-standardised mortality rate of 1,014.8 is significantly higher than the Staffordshire rate of 964.9.
- 4.6 The latest available local estimates from the ONS (Life Expectancy at Birth 2017 to 2019) suggest that life expectancy at birth for males born in this period in Newcastle-under-Lyme is 79.3 years and female life expectancy is 83.0 years, both below the Staffordshire and England averages.
- 4.7 There are, however, wide variations across the borough with the inequality driven by deprivation, with life expectancy for males up to 10.1 years higher in wealthier areas than in more deprived depending on where you live in the borough. This gap has widened significantly since 2010/12 when it was 7.8 years. For females, the gap is 9.3 years.
- 4.8 Across the borough in 2019, the annual mean gross weekly pay was £517. This was lower than for the West Midlands (£551) and Great Britain (£587). Across the borough there are significant differences in income. In three areas, net annual household income in 2018 was less than £26,000.



(Gross weekly pay for full-time workers)

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
Females	£463	£495	£529
Males	£534	£589	£632
Overall	£517	£551	£587

4.9 In the year up to March 2020, an estimated 72.5% of residents aged 16-64 were classed as 'in employment', a lower rate than for the West Midlands region (73.9%) and for Great Britain (76.0%). The reduction in economic activity mirrors the increase in the over-65 population.

(dataset All people in employment) Numbers in brackets are people.

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
April 2015-March 2016	76.9% (64,300)	70.4%	73.7%
April 2016- March 2017	77.4% (66,600)	71.4%	74.3%
April 2017- March 2018	78.0% (68,500)	72.7%	75.0%
April 2018- March 2019	74.6% (63,700)	73.8%	75.4%
April 2019- March 2020	72.5% (60,000)	73.9%	76.0%

4.10 The number of recorded crimes for headline offences in Newcastle-under-Lyme between April 2019 and March 2020 was 8.738 – an increase of around 1.4% on the previous 12 month period. The overall crime rate for this period was 67 per 1,000 residents, slightly lower than the Staffordshire rate of 70 per 1,000 people.

4.11 The three most common types of recorded crime were

- Violence against the person (3,411)
- Theft offences (2,867)
- Criminal damage and arson (1,173)

4.12 During 2019/20 Newcastle's Housing Advice service dealt with 1,122 housing options/homelessness applications, 499 interviews were held and 436 households were accepted as statutorily homeless and in priority need. As at 31st March 2020, 17 households were in temporary accommodation.

4.13 88.6% of residents of working age have qualifications at level NVQ1 or above, higher than the 82.0% across the West Midlands (82%) and Great Britain (85.6%) averages. As of December 2019, an estimated 30.4% of adults aged 16-64 were qualified to NVQ level 4 or above – lower than both the West Midlands rate of 34.1% and the Great Britain rate of 40.3%.

4.14 Universal credit claimant numbers were 8,250 in July 2020 (4,883 not in employment, 3,366 in employment), higher than any Staffs district other than East Staffs. The unemployment claimant count for the borough of 5% as at August 2020 was very similar to Staffordshire's rate of 5.1% and lower than Great Britain's 6.6%. As with most of the country, there was a large rise from March 2020 when the rate was 2.4%. There is a large variance across the borough – in four wards the rate is above 7%, in three wards it is lower than 4%.

## 5. Refresh of Financial Assumptions

- 5.1 Council agreed a five year Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2020 covering the period 2020/21 to 2024/25. For 2020/21 there was Net Expenditure of £16.162m on services and a Council Tax Requirement of £7.520m. There is a Council Tax Base of 37,387 and a Band D Council Tax of £201.14. There was a balanced budget for 2020/21 but a forecast gap of £4.446m across the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.

Directorate	Expenditure (£000's)	Income (£000's)	Net Expenditure (£000's)
Chief Executive	2,238	(179)	2,059
Resources and Support Services	27,158	(23,646)	3,512
Operations	11,294	(5,024)	6,270
Commercial Development & Economic Growth	9,728	(5,407)	4,321
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,418</b>	<b>(34,256)</b>	<b>16,162</b>

- 5.2 The MTFS will need to be rolled forward a year to cover 2025/26 and the assumptions updated. This is the first refresh of those assumptions and there will be further review and refinement throughout the budget setting process.
- 5.3 Covid-19 is expected to have a long term impact on the Councils' finances, however, the degree of that impact is difficult to predict. The MTFS has been revised to reflect current information and includes an estimate of cost pressures arising directly due to the economic impact of Covid-19 which will also have both a short and medium term impact on the tax base. This is considered in the commentary below.
- 5.4 Overall, rolling the Plan forward a year the Council is forecast to have a funding gap of £5.911m over the next five years. £1.790m of this is in 2021/22 and whilst the overall strategy is to have a balanced five year plan the focus of attention will be on this first year.
- 5.5 However, the Covid-19 crisis is going to have an impact on the Council's finances beyond the current financial year. At the present time it is extremely difficult to assess this impact and for that reason a number of scenarios are put forward later in this Strategy. There are nevertheless some inevitable impacts that need to be included in this refresh and these are explored in the Income and Expenditure sections below.
- 5.6 Consequently the gap over the five year plan is forecast to be £5.911m and for the first year of the Plan will be £1.790m.

	2021/22 (£000's)	2022/23 (£000's)	2023/24 (£000's)	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	210	421	247	(100)	(108)	670
Expenditure	1,580	1,173	831	1,030	627	5,241
<b>Gap</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>1,594</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>5,911</b>

- 5.7 The year one gap has increased from £1.367m to £1.790m as a consequence of the Covid-19 impact on both income and expenditure. The cost of Council Support has increased significantly, and expenditure pressures are expected to persist beyond 2020/21.

### Income

- 5.8 There are two key changes in the assumptions which are set out in further detail below. A further provision for Covid-19 income losses of £200,000 has been built in for 2021/22 in addition to the £170,000 base budget adjustment in the existing MTFS. The assumed annual increase in fees and charges has also been adjusted from 2.5% to 3%.

	2021/22 (£000's)	2022/23 (£000's)	2023/24 (£000's)	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Government Grant	276	181	215	23	23	718
Business Rates	(397)	250	48	(78)	(80)	(257)
Fees and Charges	(151)	(202)	(208)	(215)	(221)	(997)
Council Tax Collection Fund	52	52	52	-	-	154
Council Tax Support	60	(30)	(30)	-	-	-
Income Pressures	370	170	170	170	170	1050
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>(108)</b>	<b>670</b>

### Government Grant

- 5.9 Local Government has been through an unprecedented period of austerity as demonstrated in the chart below. The Council no longer receives Revenue Support Grant and the initial assumption is for the remaining specific grant income to continue to decline over time. The chart below shows the decrease in settlement funding received from Central Government (please note that it includes the baseline funding allocation from Central Government regarding the Business Rates Retention scheme, but not the growth that the Council has generated above this).

### Business Rates

- 5.10 The MTFS approved by Council in February assumed that £0.2m of income from the Staffordshire business rates retention pilot would come to an end in 2021/22. Due to the delay in implementing the business rates retention scheme and fair funding review it is now expected that the pool will continue for a further year, resulting in additional income of £0.2m in 2021/22.
- 5.11 There have been significant impacts to Business Rates as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Firstly, there have been a wide range of interventions from Government with extensive discounts and also provision of grant to small businesses. These discounts have been matched with s31 grant and have therefore not impacted the Council's bottom line. However, during the first 6 months of this financial year there has been a like for like reduction in cash collection against the residual amount due compared to 2019/20, which equates to a potential loss across the financial year of which the

Council's share would be £0.375m. The MTFS assumes that this loss will be recovered over a 3 year period.

- 5.12 There is considerable uncertainty on the level of Business Rates for future years. The MTFS currently assumes no growth in 2021/22, an increase of 1% in 2022/23 and 2% per annum thereafter. This is in all likelihood an optimistic position to hold at this time and this assumption will need to be revisited as the longer term impact of Covid-19 on the tax base emerges over the Autumn. Further details are also expected in the November Comprehensive Spending Review of ongoing Government support for collection fund losses which may offer some mitigation.

### **Council Tax**

- 5.13 The broad assumptions set out in February for growth of 260 homes per annum in the base and a £5 annual increase in the rate are unchanged with the exception of 2021/22, where no growth in the tax base has been assumed. The estimated £0.190m yield from a £5 Council Tax increase is still a fraction of the inflationary pressures faced by the Council even before considering demand and the impact of the coronavirus crisis.
- 5.14 The Council operates a Council Tax Support scheme following the localisation of support by Government at the start of austerity. As at April 2020 the scheme cost in the order of £7.244m to operate with low income residents and pensioners only billed for a proportion of the full Council Tax charge. As at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, residents that now qualify for the scheme total a cost of £8.313m.
- 5.15 The forecast has assumed a pressure of £0.060m on the Council's share of Council Tax Support (circa 11%) in 2021/22 based on a decrease in the current levels of support claimed in 2021/22 and a gradual reduction thereafter to return to pre-crisis levels. This may be an optimistic assessment.

### **Savings/Income Generation**

- 5.16 The MTFS contained £4.522m of future year savings and there is no adjustment to these at this time other than the deferral of £0.25m of commercial income from 2021/22 to 2022/23. Work is continuing to identify additional savings proposals in order to address the increased forecast gaps in 2021/22 and beyond.

### **Expenditure**

- 5.17 At this stage there have been four significant changes to expenditure assumptions. An additional pressure of £300,000 has been built in for 2021/22 relating to irrecoverable housing benefit on temporary accommodation. It is also assumed that there will be increased costs of £80,000 associated with the provision of supported accommodation for vulnerable homeless people and an increase in licensing costs of £50,000 for Microsoft software. A revised minimum revenue provision has decreased the pressure of capital financing in 2021/22 by £28,000, further details of this can be seen at 11.2.

	2021/22 (£000's)	2022/23 (£000's)	2023/24 (£000's)	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	647	586	565	550	565	2,913
Premises	15	27	27	28	28	125
Transport	10	10	10	10	10	50
Financing	478	550	229	442	24	1,723
Pressures	430	-	-	-	-	430
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>5,241</b>

- 5.18 It is clear that the financial impacts of Covid-19 will be felt well beyond the 2020/21 financial year and this will require continual reassessment.

### **Inflation**

- 5.19 An additional £0.119m has been built into the 2021/22 base to reflect the full cost of the April 2020 pay award.

### **Investment**

- 5.20 The base budget includes an annual contribution to the Borough Growth Fund of £0.25m to fund investment in key Council priorities. At the present time the assumption is that this level of investment will continue over the life of the MTFs. However this will be reviewed during budget finalisation.

### **Capital financing**

- 5.21 The Council published a 10 year capital strategy in February 2019. This reassessed capital financing commitments arising from the historical schemes in the capital programme and future spending plans. At the time the strategy was agreed it had not been anticipated that long term borrowing would be required to finance the capital programme before 2022/23. However, in view of the need to accommodate additional costs for refurbishment of the Kidsgrove Leisure Centre and lower expectations of in-year capital receipts due to the impact of the coronavirus, borrowing will have to be brought forward. Further details are shown at 11.2.

### **Other financing adjustments**

- 5.22 The Council budgeted to finance £0.4m of one-off costs from flexible use of capital receipts in 2021/22. The current assumption is for further use of £0.2m capital receipts to finance revenue expenditure in 2021/22, however this will be reviewed over the Autumn in light of emerging investment requirements in order to deliver future years savings.

## **6. In Year Response to Financial Pressures Arising from Covid-19**

- 6.1 The additional cost, lost income and impact on savings programmes of Covid is being kept under continuous review. Additional Government support in the form of emergency Covid-19 grant funding of £1.981m and a scheme to reimburse councils for a proportion of lost income from fees and charges has to a large extent cushioned the in-year impact. In addition a number of immediate steps have been taken in year to ensure that the Council remains financially resilient including:

- A review of Covid-19 expenditure and income forecasts.
- Ensuring that 2020/21 budget savings are implemented.
- Maintaining spend within the existing budget envelope as far as possible.
- Identifying management action to reduce in year cost pressures.
- Re-focusing the income collection approach to reduce the impact of bad debt.
- Reassessment of Capital Programme commitments.
- A comprehensive review and risk assessment of the Council's reserves.
- Use of grants to substitute for existing spend wherever possible.
- Asset review to maximise receipts from disposals.

6.2 Where the impact of actions to reduce expenditure or generate additional income extends beyond the current financial year, these will come forward as early savings for the MTFS and base budgets will be adjusted accordingly.

## 7. Approach

7.1 The following section sets out the central approach to developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26. However, notwithstanding the significant additional financial Government the Council has received to date there is considerable financial uncertainty about the longer term impact of Covid and it is therefore essential to have a Plan B. Section 8 of this Strategy considers a number of Scenarios for which the Council will need to develop further actions.

### Foundation analysis

7.2 Over the summer and early autumn the groundwork for the MTFS has been undertaken which is primarily the review of the Council Plan, refresh of the Borough Profile and assessment of the longer term impact of Covid-19, a full benefit opportunity assessment and extensive benchmarking to give a clear context in which to identify areas for investment and redirection of resources, opportunities for efficiency and income generation and service reconfiguration. Service level benchmarking has primarily been based on MHCLG Revenue Outturn data focussed on the Council's CIPFA statistical "nearest neighbours" and Staffordshire geographical near neighbours. Spend has also been mapped to strategic priorities and outcomes.

7.3 Based on this work, the following key themes have been identified for further exploration:

#### 7.3.1 Digital

The Council has been modernising its web access and has recently completed an upgrade of its Customer Management Resources (CRM) system to support digitally enabled customer self-service. System thinking and transformation now needs to be undertaken to drive out savings based on systemic service by service review of opportunities based on the 4 key benefit drivers of demand management, customer self-service, internal service reconfiguration and technology and process improvement.

#### 7.3.2 Organisational Structure

The Council currently has an annual salary bill of £14.856m (including national insurance and superannuation) and it is appropriate to regularly review how these resources are utilised to deliver essential services and strategic priorities and provide

assurance that organisational structures are fit for purpose and match the ambitions of the Council as well as representing value for money.

In year, it is normal practice for the Council to keep under review long-term vacancies, use of honoraria, agency workers, market supplements, call out rates, allowances and overtime spend.

As part of the foundation analysis for the MTFS a high level business case is currently being developed for a new council operating model building on the digital opportunities outlined above. This will include a new organisational design informed by benchmarking of the Council's current pay and grading structure and supported by a culture that promotes flexible and agile working practices.

It is important to continue to explore how to prioritise and develop talent within the Council apprentices and trainees. Too often, structures become more expensive because of lack of internal development, hiring experienced but not necessarily high performing staff at the top of the scale and not building from the 'bottom up'. Career pathways for existing staff must be a priority. It is also a great time to prioritise entry level recruitment encouraging university talent in such a challenging employment market, so the Council needs to advertise its exciting opportunities widely.

### **7.3.3 Commercial**

The Council approved its Commercial Strategy in October 2019 with the objectives of maximising commercial opportunities as Government support drops away, requiring councils to become more self-financing.

Key themes set out in the Commercial Strategy include:

- Creating and nurturing commercial and development opportunities
- Greater focus on procurement and contract management
- Creating a sustainable commercial programme
- Establishing a strong commercial culture and investing in staff and member skills
- Extracting maximum value from our land and property assets and income streams
- Challenging where services can be commissioned
- Driving our digital agenda forward

Progress in implementing some aspects of the commercial strategy in the current year has been limited due to the impact of Covid-19 and diversion of resources for preparation of Future High Street Fund and Town Deal bids. However, going forward this remains a key supporting strand of the MTFS and will need to be properly resourced.

### **7.3.4 Property**

The Council last updated its Asset Management Strategy in 2018. A further review now needs to be undertaken to provide clarity about those assets which generate value and should be held and maintained and those which are not adding value and can be developed, backed up by a sound business case, or disposed of. It is imperative that as part of this review a planned maintenance schedule for Council owned assets is devised in order for this to be built into the Council's medium term financial planning.

## 8. Scenario Planning

8.1 To date the Council has received significant additional financial support from Government to help it manage in-year financial pressures arising from Covid, including £1.981m of emergency grant funding. However, given the high level of uncertainty around the longer term impact of Covid-19 and local government funding reforms the Council needs to plan for a number of eventualities and ensure that there is sufficient headroom and flexibility in the budget to respond effectively as developments unfold and new risks emerge.

8.2 The following alternative scenarios have therefore been considered alongside the central forecast:

**Worst case** – this assumes that the Council incurs additional costs and income losses in excess of the initial forecast resulting in £1m being drawn down from reserves in 2020/21 and a further £0.5m in 2021/22. These sums would need to be replenished over the medium term requiring additional base spending reductions of £1.5m on top of those set out in the MTFS.

**Middle Case** – this assumes that the Council incurs additional costs and income losses in excess of the initial forecast resulting in £0.5m being drawn down from reserves in 2020/21 and a further £0.25m in 2021/22. These sums would need to be replenished over the medium term requiring additional base spending reductions of £0.75m on top of those set out in the MTFS.

**Best Case** - this assumes that the Council's costs and income losses do not exceed the initial forecast and recover by the end of the 2021/22 financial year and that collection fund losses are shared on a 50/50 basis with Government. This would reduce pressures by £0.54m over the life of the MTFS and by £0.31m in 2021/22.

8.3 Options to address each of these scenarios will need to be developed alongside the main MTFS programme.



## 9. Reserves

9.1 Forecast balances for the Council's reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are as follows:

Reserve/Fund	Balance at 31 March 2020 (£'000's)	Forecast Balance 31 March 2021 (£'000's)
General Fund (£1.241m)	1,241	2,356
Contingency (£0.100m)	100	100
Equipment Replacement (£0.462m)	462	365
ICT Development (£0.021m)	21	46
Budget Support (£1.312m)	1,312	0
Borough Growth (£0.030m)	30	104
Conservation & Heritage (£0.027m)	27	27
Mayor's Charity (£0.008m)	8	0
Museum Purchases (£0.136m)	136	0
Business Rates (£0.209m)	209	7,509
Keele Master Plan (£0.024m)	24	0
Elections (Nil)	0	50
Clayton Community Centre (£0.004m)	4	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,574</b>	<b>10,566</b>

9.2 A full reserves risk assessment will be completed as part of the 2021/22 budget preparation. However, based on a preliminary assessment an additional contribution to the General Fund reserve of at least £0.8m will be required (i.e. £3.2m in total) to provide sufficient cover for foreseeable risks.

9.3 It should be noted that the forecast balance of the Business Rates reserve is inflated for 2021/22 due to s31 grants received to cover the cost of business rate reliefs in the current financial year. The true underlying position is closer to £1.5m which represents cumulative collection fund surpluses in previous years. This sum will be held to mitigate against future collection fund losses. However, following the announcement of Government proposals for apportionment of Covid-19 related collection fund losses later in the Autumn it may be possible to transfer some of these surpluses to top up the General Fund reserve in a phased manner over the first 3 years of the MTFS.

## 10. Capital Strategy

10.1 The Council agreed its Capital Strategy and Ten Year Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2029/30 in February 2020. The Capital strategy explains how the Council invests its capital funds and the various sources of funding and how this facilitates the delivery of its objectives.

- 10.2 The main governance of the Capital Strategy is through the Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group which:
- Reviews and recommends to Cabinet all new General Fund Capital projects
  - Ensures capital resources are viewed corporately demonstrating a clear link to corporate objectives
  - Ensures any revenue costs are identified and considered in the Treasury management strategy and the Council's MTFS
  - Develops a capital strategy which supports the delivery of the Councils corporate objectives
  - Oversees the development and implementation of the asset management and commercial strategies
  - Reviews new capital project and commercial investment requests on behalf of Cabinet.
- 10.3 In the move to a Ten Year Programme in 2019/20 the Board reviewed every capital scheme and in-year capital commitments have been reviewed again in light of Covid-19.
- 10.4 The ten year Capital Programme provides for total investment of £69.27m. This programme will be funded by capital receipts, external contributions and borrowing. As a large proportion of the programme will be required to be funded through borrowing, the revenue impact of these borrowings has been included within the MTFS.

## 11. Treasury Strategy

- 11.1 The Council agreed its Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 February 2020.
- 11.2 The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase by £22.629m 2029/30. The funding profile over the 5 year period covered by the draft MTFS is as follows:

<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>2021/22 (£000)</b>	<b>2022/23 (£000)</b>	<b>2023/24 (£000)</b>	<b>2024/25 (£000)</b>	<b>2025/26 (£000)</b>
Capital Receipts	2.875	0.628	0.500	3.187	4.825
External Contributions	2.317	2.065	1.065	1.030	1.075
Borrowing	6.734	5.293	6.931	0	0
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>11.926</b>	<b>7.986</b>	<b>8.496</b>	<b>4.217</b>	<b>5.900</b>

- 11.3 The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) has recently completed a "Future Lending Terms" consultation, which sought views from local authorities and other stakeholders. This consultation period closed on 31 July 2020 and the results are currently being analysed, however there is speculation that the outcome of this review will see the PWLB reduce its borrowing rates.
- 11.4 The PWLB is one of the borrowing options the Council is currently reviewing to fund its capital programme and will await the outcome of the consultation before securing borrowing requirements for the capital programme.

11.5 The strategy will be reviewed and updated alongside the development of the MTFS and Capital Programme.

## 12. Budget Preparation Timetable

12.1 Work on the development of budget proposals for 2021/22 has already commenced with the foundation analysis work at an advanced stage. Draft savings proposals will be considered by Cabinet and Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee in December and the final revenue budget and Council Tax proposals, along with the Capital Strategy, capital programme and Treasury Management Strategy will be presented for approval at Council in February 2021.

12.2 A Financial Recovery Board chaired by the Leader of the Council was established in June 2020 and has played a key role in shaping the MTFS and providing input and challenge to savings and investment proposals.

12.6 The decision making timetable is as follows:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Body Affected</b>	<b>Date</b>
Consideration of draft MTFS	Cabinet	4 November
Consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	2 December
Budget consultation	Proposed to run from 3 December to 10 January	
Scrutiny of draft MTFS and budget proposals	Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee	14 December
Approval of MTFS	Cabinet	13 January
Scrutiny of final budget proposals	Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee	January – date tbc
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	2 February
Full Council to approve Budget	Full Council	17 February

## **Appendix A – Council Plan Mid Term Review**

### **PRIORITY ONE:**

#### **Local Services that work for Local People**

The Council committed to prioritise the delivery of services that local people want and need, whilst responding to the challenging local government environment. Key achievements include:

- ✓ The new Recycling Service has been successfully rolled out, with over 53,000 new wheelie bins and 53,000 bags for cardboard delivered in the summer of 2020. By the end of July 2020 every household had migrated to the new system, with separate food waste collection to re-start in August 2020; These changes will improve the overall efficiency of the collection service resulting in a recycling service which is simpler for residents to use, but maintains high quality material availability for recycling;
- ✓ All of our services have been migrated from an outdated Customer Relationship Management system to a modern system, ensuring that the public get access to information, or can transact business with the Council at the time that suits them.
- ✓ The Planning service is now fully online and the public can inspect and comment on planning applications via our website.
- ✓ Transformed the Council's Customer Services teams, establishing a single team, capable of addressing the majority of service requests at the point of contact, saving the Council in excess of £300,000 whilst improving services.
- ✓ Established with partners the Town Centre Communications Group to provide a positive social media profile for Newcastle town centre and the Market.

#### **What is planned for 2020-22?**

##### **We are committed to:**

- A new Digital Strategy was agreed by Cabinet, outlining the Council's digital aspirations over the next few years, covering action to improve digital accessibility and infrastructure development. Delivering on this strategy will be fundamental to driving further cost and service improvements. Key priorities for the years ahead will include:

- Continuing to redesign Customer facing services to ensure they focus on customer need and deliver consistent, reliable outcomes.
  - Invest in the use of automation of and AI technologies to improve our service offering and ensure that we are able to meet public expectations.
  - Develop our internal processes, focusing on what is possible with modern technology to remove inefficiency and waste.
  - Ensuring that the wider Newcastle communities are digitally enabled and individually capable, working with partners to ensure that no one is left behind
  - Encouraging investment in the Newcastle area to ensure our infrastructure is capable of supporting our digital future – for both residents and businesses
  - Deliver a new council website that meets modern accessibility standards and supports the customer experience with accurate and up-to-date content and enhanced self-service features.
- Building on the experience of the Covid19 pandemic, when the Council needed to respond swiftly to the needs of the most vulnerable, there is an opportunity to build on both the community and council response to ensure that services are designed in ways which respond directly to customer need. Priorities for action will be:
- Review our Customer Access Strategy, focusing on how we continue to offer safe and reliable customer services from our customer service centres and within the community.
  - Engage with the Borough’s distinct communities to ensure the Council has a current understanding of community activity and vulnerability, to better target services and support community action
  - Explore the opportunity to secure (digital) service access points in community locations around the borough.
- We will respond to changing Government Funding and White Paper on Devolution:
- Develop a new Operating Model and medium Term Financial Plan for the Council building on the Covid19 lessons and service benchmarking.
  - Work closely with neighbouring Councils to establish a clear North Staffordshire narrative in preparation for the devolution agenda

## **PRIORITY TWO:**

### **Growing our People and Places**

**The Council wants to grow to borough’s economy and build on its many strengths. Our aim is to strive for a borough where the economy is strong and sustainable, where local people have the skills and opportunities to take up the good jobs that are created. This also means good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live. Key achievements include:**

- ✓ We have secured real growth opportunities for our communities by building a Future High Streets Fund bid around the redevelopment of the Ryecroft site following the stalling of the previous retail led development
- We have progressed masterplans for land at Chatterley Close/ Bradwell crematorium, Knutton and Birchenwood, and brought forward the former Registry Office site for redevelopment;
- We are developing of Town Deal Investment Plans for Kidsgrove and Newcastle, including development of Town Deal Boards to drive development of the Investment Plans.
- ✓ We have adopted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and agreed a Joint Housing Allocation Policy with Aspire Housing to ensure there is a single policy and application process for all our customers;
- ✓ The historic Guildhall has reopened as a community and voluntary sector hub and, following a successful first year of operation, the Council has signed 3 year lease with Support Staffordshire to retain community access to this historic building;
- ✓ The feasibility work to refurbish the transfer Kidsgrove Sports Centre, in line with the design commissioned by the Community Group, has been completed using the SCAPE Framework and the essential legal work to transfer the facility from Staffordshire County Council has been progressed.

### **What is planned for 2020-22?**

#### **We are committed to:**

- Secure delivery of a new Local Plan, following the proposed policies being presented to Planning Committee and Cabinet in February 2020.
  
- Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and action plan with the focus on Town Centres in line with the Future High Streets and Town Deals, to include:
  - Redevelopment of Ryecroft
  - Redevelopment of Midway Carpark
  - Improvement of the market
  - Improvement of public realm
  - Development of a Kidsgrove Town Centre plan
  - Implement the Chatterley Close, Knutton and Birchenwood masterplans
  
- Deliver the Commercial Strategy adopted as part of this plan, as part of the re-set of the Council's finances.

- Secure the re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre under community management
- Grow the Council Tax and NNDR Base for the Council, through securing higher value development of Council sites
- Establish a fresh focus on homelessness and homeless prevention, building on the work undertaken during the Covid19 pandemic.

### **PRIORITY THREE:**

#### **A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough**

**We want communities that are happy, healthy and active and able to enjoy living in a safe environment. We will work with partners to ensure there are opportunities for residents to enjoy an active lifestyle. Key achievements include:**

- ✓ We have made a range of improvements to Jubilee 2, introducing energy efficiency measures delivering £1,000 per month in savings and worked with the original construction contractor to remedy a range of significant and long standing defects
- ✓ Alliance Leisure have been contracted to support the development of commercial operation of J2, with a specific focus on supporting the team to drive memberships and associated income
- ✓ Through the Daily Vulnerability Hub, our multi-agency team addresses the specific and complex needs of the borough's most vulnerable citizens.
- ✓ Work on the Air Quality Local Development Plan has been undertaken with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council to create the North Staffs Local Air Quality Plan to bring about improvements in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) levels.
- ✓ The Licensing and Public Protection Committee has approved and implemented a new taxi policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of passengers.
- ✓ In 2019-20, the Council secured its 18th Consecutive Gold Award in the Heart of England in Bloom competition and was awarded 6 Green Flag Awards.

#### **What is planned for 2020-22?**

##### **We are committed to:**

- Establish an Environmental Sustainability strategy for the Council and the Borough, linked to government targets;

- Prepare the Council and the community for “life with Covid19”, with services aligned to government guidance and supporting the County Council in the Covid track and trace requirements for high risk premises.
- Develop work with volunteers to assist the socially isolated and those with low level mental health needs to prevent escalation. To work towards the creation of a community anchor model with the Realise Foundation.
- Secure the reopening and development of the Kidsgrove Sports Centre site with the re-tender and agreement of a project plan for construction to start
- Grow membership of Jubilee 2 as it recovers from the Covid19 shut down period.

#### **PRIORITY FOUR:**

##### **A Town Centre for All**

**We want our Town Centres in Newcastle and Kidsgrove to be the vibrant and successful centres of life in the borough We ant to ensure they have the right retail, public service, leisure, cultural, business and residential facilities that work for local residents and attract visitors and businesses to the town centre Key achievements include:**

- ✓ Following the stalling of the retail led scheme for Ryecroft, we have developed fresh proposals for the site as a focus for the Future High Streets Fund bid. These will see the site used for a mix of office accommodation, residential and car parking. The site will become a significant driver of footfall for the town centre and represent a significant diversification of town centre land uses.
- ✓ We established a Town Centre strategy, including appointment of a Town Centre Officer for Newcastle town Centre to focus on improvement of Newcastle market and promotion of Newcastle as a place to visit.
- ✓ Following a review of Newcastle market, we established an improvement plan with additional visiting markets and better recruitment of traders
- ✓ With Newcastle Business Improvement District, we invested in a new comprehensive CCTV system, with improved technology and monitoring
- ✓ Through the Town Deal programme, we are developing a Town Investment Plan for Kidsgrove. This will form the basis of a bid for investment funding for the town.
- ✓ We adopted a Car Parking Strategy to set out a range of short, medium and long term plans for improvements to our service, introduced parking offers and invested in new parking infrastructure



## What is planned for 2020-22?

### We are committed to:

- Delivery of the key projects identified in the Future High Streets Fund and two Town Deal Investment Plans utilising government funding as confirmed including:
  - Redevelopment of Ryecroft
  - Redevelopment of Midway Carpark
  - Delivery of Nipper Parking in lower High Street
  - Improvement of the market
  - Improvement of public realm
  - Development of a Kidsgrove Town Centre plan
  
- Delivering a range of town centre activities to improve vacancy rates, retain retailers and business, revitalise the market and promote events

## Covid-19 – The Council’s Response

Covid19 has required the Council to rapidly adjust how it works in order to sustain core services and simultaneously respond to the significant new demand to support vulnerable residents and local businesses. Many of the technologies we have introduced have been novel for the authority, but the effectiveness and efficiency with which they operate will ensure they continue to be used for years to come.

- ✓ **Enabling remote business activity** - since lockdown the Council has moved to address the needs of changing services to:
  - accommodate contract signing by switching the Legal team to an online signature platform;
  - launch an online video streaming service for Cremation ceremonies;
  - empower staff and members with video conferencing facilities
  - review and relaunch several online forms to make services available more easily.
- ✓ **Handle increased demand** - The Contact Centre saw a significant increase in the number of calls – particularly for benefits related enquiries, increased uptake of the Council’s Garden Waste Subscription Service during the first few weeks of lock down, and requests for assistance from concerned residents. Despite a daily increase in calls which saw the service deal with over 28,000 calls, performance improved with less than 6% of calls being abandoned and an average call answering time of 1 minute 38 seconds.
- ✓ **Recycling & waste services** worked as normal throughout the C19 pandemic, despite workforce absences as a result of the pandemic. From the announcement of the lockdown to the end of May 2020, the service have handled the following-

Total of 2,055,000 containers emptied  
 Total tonnage collected 8,364.97 tonnes  
 Recycling increased 3.6%  
 Garden Waste increased 15.87%  
 Refuse increased 21.83%

- ✓ **Leisure and Cultural Services** ceased operation with the museum service at the Brampton closing on 19 March and Jubilee2 and all community centres closed on 20 March 2020. Instead of running leisure services, the staff provided a critical resource for the vulnerability help line,
- ✓ **Business Support Team** processed in excess of 2,000 business support grant applications at the start of the Covid crisis, paying out over £20 million to local businesses. In addition a 100% Retail Relief Discount was provided for the financial year 2020/21. The Council’s website signposted businesses to business support and information during lockdown and recovery, and provided a business enquiry form for businesses enquiring about sources of government support and grants.

- ✓ **Hardship payments** offered additional support to more than 4,000 households where entitlements of up to £150 were automatically deducted from Council Tax accounts for all working age benefit claimants in the borough.
- ✓ **Our Planning Committee**, on the 14th April, was one of the first in the Country to host a post lock-down online planning committee with its Members debating applications and making decisions on planning applications. As the Planning Service is able to host applications on line, officers were able to successfully maintain an ongoing service through the peak of the crisis.
- ✓ **Environmental Services** – shifted their focus to Covid related work, playing a central role in managing local outbreaks and providing crucial advice to businesses.
- ✓ **The Partnerships Team** led on work with the Realise Foundation and Support Staffordshire to ensure vulnerable people access to food and medical supplies and ensured that temporary accommodation was made available for anyone rough sleeping or homeless.
- ✓ **The Bereavement Team** responded to a significant increase in demand, and successfully managed crematorium and cemeteries with essential social distancing and established live streaming of funeral services

**Appendix B - Refreshed MTFS Assumptions**

	Existing MTFS 2021/22	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Employees	529	647	586	565	550	565
Premises	30	15	27	27	28	28
Transport	6	10	10	10	10	10
Income	(2)	210	421	247	(100)	(108)
Financing	754	478	550	229	442	24
Spending Pressures	50	430				
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>1367</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1594</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>519</b>
<b>Savings</b>						
Income	(50)	(50)				
Digital	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)
Commercial	(250)	0	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)
Staffing Related	(37)	(631)				
Good Housekeeping	(13)	(46)				
Tax Base	(150)	0	(109)	(167)	(170)	(172)
Council Tax Increase	(227)	(187)	(188)	(190)	(191)	(191)
Financing		(125)	(125)	(125)		
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(877)</b>	<b>(1189)</b>	<b>(822)</b>	<b>(882)</b>	<b>(761)</b>	<b>(763)</b>
<b>Gap</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>(244)</b>



**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO**

**Cabinet**  
**11 November 2020**

**Report Title:** Kidsgrove Town Deal

**Submitted by:** Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth

**Portfolios:** Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships

**Ward(s) affected:** Newchapel & Mow Cop, Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe, Talke & Butt Lane, Bradwell

**Purpose of the Report**

To update on the work to produce the Town Investment Plan for the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and consider the next steps in its delivery.

**Recommendation**

**That**

1. Cabinet formally endorses the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan and will receive a further report on the outcome of the Town Investment Plan submission at the point that this is received from government
2. That The Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to work within existing Council resources to continue to support the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development of projects in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment
3. That a multi-disciplinary officer group is established to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

**Reasons**

To enhance the economic, social and community wellbeing of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area. To deliver on the Kidsgrove Town Centre objective in the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023. To pursue Council Plan Objective Four A Town Centre for All as it relates to Kidsgrove.

1. **Background**

1.1 In September 2019 the government invited 100 places to develop proposals for a Town Deal as a part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Within the Borough both Newcastle and Kidsgrove were invited to participate in this valuable opportunity to drive significant investment into the Borough. This report focuses on the Kidsgrove element of that work.

1.2 The objective of the Towns Fund is to drive long-term economic growth and resilience, and to improve living standards, productivity and sustainability in these areas. It will support the long-term transformation of towns through investment in connectivity, place, enterprise and skills. Including:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by: increasing density in town centres;

strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.

- Skills and enterprise: driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development.
- Connectivity: developing local transport scheme that complement regional and national networks, as well as supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity

1.3 Since the announcement officers across the Council have worked with Members to drive activity, establish a Town Deal Board and develop a Town Investment Plan (“TIP”).

## 2. **Issues**

2.1 In line with guidance set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus, the Council established a Town Deal Board for the Kidsgrove area. The Board membership includes public, private and voluntary sector representation. The Board has been responsible for shaping the proposals for the Town Investment Plan with support from the Council in its role as accountable body for the Kidsgrove Town Deal.

2.2 The Town Deal Board has a Terms of Reference that is in line with Government requirements for the Town Fund programme and has adopted a number of the Council’s policies to ensure good governance standards.

2.3 Development of the Town Investment Plan was also supported by the appointed consultancy AECOM who were selected following a competitive procurement process.

2.4 To support development of proposals that respond to local need and opportunity, consultation with a wide range of local stakeholders took place including:

- Individual consultation sessions were held with both Board members and members of the local community. Consultees were drawn from a number of sectors and a variety of interests to ensure the TIP drew from a diverse range of opinions and priorities for the future success and long-term sustainability of Kidsgrove.
- A “Call for Projects” survey was used to encourage residents, organisations and businesses to submit project or investment ideas that were in line with the three themes of the Town Deal Fund and which offered good prospects of delivery. The call for projects was distributed through various channels, including the social media profile of the local MP, community organisations such as VAST, the Town Council, Locality Action Partnerships and Ward Members.
- MHCLG’s #MyTown campaign provided a platform for communities to outline how Town Deal funding could transform their town. Kidsgrove received 46 responses which were analysed and used to shape the vision and interventions outlined within the TIP.
- The team preparing the TIP has presented at various local stakeholder group sessions to inform them of the work being undertaken such as the Newcastle-under-Lyme Employment and Skills Group, and to gain a greater understanding of local conditions, examples of best practice and priorities.
- A “Vision Survey” was developed and distributed to Board members to inform the development of the vision for Kidsgrove, supplemented by #MyTown responses and

conversations with individual stakeholders to ensure the vision was representative of the views of the broad Kidsgrove community

2.5 Small project groups, comprising Board members, project stakeholders, AECOM and the Council were used to develop the priority projects that the Board agreed to take forward in the Town Investment Plan.

2.6 The Town Investment Plan has projects proposed within 3 strategic objectives

- a. Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove
  - i. Investment in enabling works at Chatterley Valley to release a significant employment site.
  - ii. Investment in enterprise units.
- b. Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove and delivers and drives new demand and footfall.
  - i. Upgrade facilities at Kidsgrove station to complement improvements funded by the Access for All programme.
  - ii. Canal enhancements to create a safe attractive canal corridor
  - iii. Shared service hub & housing investment, to bring together services that are currently dispersed through the town into a one stop shop.
- c. Objective 3: To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing.
  - i. Kidsgrove Sports Centre
  - ii. Park Improvements

Further detail is set out in the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan which is Appendix One to this report.

2.7 The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is asking for circa £25 million funding from Town Deal monies. This investment will be matched from a number of other sources as set out in the Town Investment Plan representing a significant investment in the Kidsgrove town Deal area.

2.8 Following submission of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan, the Investment Plan will be assessed by the Government's Town Hub who will offer feedback and progress to Heads of Terms for projects selected for further business case development. On this basis it is expected that project delivery would take place from April 2021 onwards. The results of the Government's assessment will be reported to Cabinet at the point when it is received by the Council.

2.9 Following the award of Advance Town Deal Funding (considered by Cabinet in September 2020) an internal multi-disciplinary officer group was established to ensure the proper oversight and administration of Town Deal grant monies. Whilst this group is currently focused on the delivery of the Advance Town Deal projects it is proposed that the function of this group should evolve to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Deal programme and ensure the Council fulfils its obligations as accountable body for the Town Deal. Terms of Reference for this group have been established to set out its remit and reporting responsibilities within the Council and to the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board.

2.10 At this stage of development the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is not expected to present a fully worked up business case for each project but it is expected

to give a level of detail to enable Government to assess the strategic fit and deliverability of the projects proposed within the Investment Plan. It is important however that development of the projects does not stall whilst feedback from Government is awaited as there is a body of good will and a degree of momentum that has been gained that would risk being lost if project development is suspended. It is proposed that working within existing Council resources Officers will continue to work with stakeholders to progress projects so that they are ready to proceed as quickly as possible to full business case development.

### 3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Cabinet formally endorses the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan and will receive a further report on the outcome of the Town Investment Plan submission at the point that this is received from government.
- 3.2 That The Executive Director Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to work within existing Council resources to continue to support the Town Deal Board and other organisations as necessary to progress development of projects in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Plan.
- 3.3 That a multi-disciplinary officer group is established to oversee delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

### 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 Delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is a significant opportunity to attract Government funding to the Kidsgrove Town Deal area to support its economic, social and community wellbeing.
- 4.2 To deliver on the Kidsgrove Town Centre priority of the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023.
- 4.3 To maintain momentum of delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

### 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council is not obliged to pursue delivery of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan but its delivery is in line with Council Plan Objective four A Town Centre for All and the priorities of the Growth Deal for Newcastle-under-Lyme 2019 – 2023.

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

- 6.1 As Accountable Body for the Kidsgrove Town Deal the Council has a number of obligations, including to ensure that decisions made by the Town Deal Board are in accordance with good governance principles and to support transparent delivery arrangements for the Town Deal. These obligations include:
  - Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles) in all of the Board's activities;
  - Developing a delivery team, transparent delivery arrangements and agreements;
  - Ensuring that decision are made by the Board in accordance with good governance principles;
  - Ensuring transparency requirements are met through publication of information on the Council's website or on a Town Deal specific website;
  - Developing agreed projects in detail and undertaking any necessary feasibility studies;
  - Undertaking any required Environmental Impact Assessments and meeting all Public Sector Equalities Duties



- Develop detailed, costed business cases;
- Liaising with potential private investors in identified local projects and schemes;
- Signing the Heads of Terms Agreement with Government;
- Monitoring and evaluating the delivery of individual Town Fund projects;
- Submitting regular monitoring reports to the Towns Hub;
- Receiving and accounting for the Town's funding allocation.

## 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The nature of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is intended to seek benefits for all residents of the Kidsgrove Town Deal area. Individual projects will require Equality Impact Assessments as their business case development is done.

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

8.1 The Council was allocated £162,019 development funding to support development of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan.

8.2 In delivering the Town Deal the Council will be expected to manage the grant payments as needed. Subject to all projects being successful this equates to £25 million over 6 years from 2020/21.

8.3 The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan funding includes an element for project management/Board support and assurance and business case development. In line with Town Fund guidance this is allocated within individual projects. It is likely that the Council will need extra capacity in some form to fulfil its obligations as set out in 6.1 above, and to resource the additional professional support (i.e. legal services) required to support projects which are outside of the core provision currently budgeted for.

## 9. **Major Risks**

9.1 At this stage the critical risk would be that the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is not accepted by Government. The mitigation against this is that the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan is fully compliant with the guidance received and has robust governance arrangements in place. However should the full Town Investment Plan not be accepted by Government the Town Deal process does allow for a period of further negotiation and development at the Heads of Terms stage which is set out in The Government's Towns Fund Guidance document.

9.2 Individual project specific risk assessments will be developed as a part of the business case development process.

9.3 A further risk is inadequate management of projects to ensure delivery on time and within budget. This is mitigated through proper project planning, resourcing and compliance with governance arrangements.

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

10.1 Clean and inclusive growth is a cross cutting theme of the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan. Projects in the Investment Plan include improvements based around a key public transport hub at Kidsgrove Railway Station and the aspiration to improve the flow and pedestrian connectivity between Kidsgrove's key assets including the train station, canal and town centre.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The Town Deal area includes the Wards of Newchapel & Mow Cop, Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe, Talke & Butt Lane and Bradwel

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 4 December 2019
- 12.2 9 September 2020

13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 Kidsgrove Town Deal page on the Council's website: <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/business/business-information/kidsgrove-town-deal>
- 14.2 Kidsgrove Town Deal submission video: <https://youtu.be/kFw635Iijlo>
- 14.3 Towns Fund Prospectus November 2019 (MHCLG)
- 14.4 Towns Fund Guidance June 2020 (MHCLG)

# Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

October 2020



DWP Department for Work and Pensions



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*Kidsgrove town centre*

# 1. Foreword

We are proud to present this Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan to Government.

The Plan outlines a strong vision and set of objectives for capitalising on Kidsgrove's strengths; addressing the town's historical lack of investment and the complex challenges it faces. This Plan has been developed and agreed by the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board. It has been informed by a public call for project ideas. This was supplemented by extensive consultation with stakeholders including Kidsgrove's local community as well as the private, public, and voluntary sectors to identify and develop our investment priorities.

We are clear about the issues faced in Kidsgrove and now have an agreed and cohesive plan to address them. Many of the challenges and opportunities identified in this Plan are long-standing in nature. However, a historical lack of investment in Kidsgrove has meant the challenges have remained unaddressed and the opportunities unexploited. The need for investment has never been greater given the social, health and economic challenges we are now facing from COVID-19.

Our Plan presents a comprehensive programme of investment to meet local needs and contribute to the Government's 'levelling up' agenda. This includes investment in:

- Chatterley Valley - Kidsgrove's only strategic employment and Enterprise Zone site – and employment units at West Avenue;
- A comprehensive package of investment to redevelop and revitalise Kidsgrove Town Centre:
  - Land acquisition and delivery of a Shared Service Hub.
  - A new rail station and transport interchange;
  - Access, towpath and public realm improvements along the Trent and Mersey canal that runs directly through Kidsgrove town centre;
- The re-development and re-opening of Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; and
- Kidsgrove's Parks to provide high quality green spaces and outdoor sports facilities for all.

Town Deal investment will deliver transformational change in Kidsgrove including the redevelopment of the town centre; creation of over 2,000 jobs and approximately £80m of operational GVA. In addition, Town Deal investment will increase aspiration, confidence and pride in Kidsgrove whilst also raising the town's profile and finally ensuring it can achieve its potential.

On behalf of the Kidsgrove Town Deal board, we endorse this plan and stand ready to deliver the programme of investment we outline in this document. We are now asking Government to support Kidsgrove to realise our long-term vision; unlock the town's significant potential; and make Kidsgrove a place where existing and future residents choose to live.



**Dan Gray**  
Executive Director, Property – Aspire.  
Chair of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board



**Simon Tagg**  
Leader of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council  
Vice Chair of Kidsgrove Town Deal Board

## 2. Executive Summary

Kidsgrove is located on the North Staffordshire and South Cheshire border. It is a growing, well-connected town with a strong community, proud heritage and rich natural environment. Kidsgrove and its satellite villages offer residents an attractive, affordable location to live with excellent road and rail links to major nearby cities.

This Town Investment Plan presents a long-term strategic vision to unlock Kidsgrove's potential via a co-ordinated programme of regeneration. This Plan therefore represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kidsgrove to build on its strengths and assets and address the challenges that impede its goal of becoming a more desirable place to invest, work, live and visit. It sets out that, by 2030, Kidsgrove will be:

*“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”*

Kidsgrove's community is at the heart of this Town Investment Plan, underpinned by extensive public, private and voluntary sector engagement. This has developed buy-in, ensured the priority projects reflect local needs, and forged effective linkages to existing and proposed activity. Town Deal funding will therefore maximise investment, catalyse Kidsgrove's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and create the conditions for sustainable long-term economic growth. This Town Investment Plan ask is for £25m of investment to deliver a holistic programme of regeneration activity framed around seven priority projects:

- **Chatterley Valley** – Investment to bring forward the development of the only strategic employment site in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, located within the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, to drive inward investment in Kidsgrove, with the potential to generate 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area once developed.
- **West Ave: light industrial units** – A 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses, to meet commercial demand in the local economy.
- **Kidsgrove Station** – Delivery of a new station building for Kidsgrove and contribution to a multi-modal interchange and expanded 200-space station car park to meet the needs of station users and the local community and capitalise on the longer-term opportunity presented by HS2.
- **Canal enhancement** – A programme of interventions to create a safe new, attractive canal corridor, high quality public realm and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove.
- **Shared Service Hub, land assembly & Housing investment** – Delivery of a Shared Service Hub, bringing together public sector assets to provide a one stop shop from which residents can access services, alongside the delivery of new older persons housing and a wider programme of land assembly to “create” a town centre, increase footfall and improve accessibility.
- **Kidsgrove Sports Centre** – Investment to refurbish and re-open Kidsgrove Sports Centre to the public under community management. This presents the opportunity to secure a vital asset within Kidsgrove town centre to provide leisure opportunities to Kidsgrove residents and address local health and wellbeing challenges.
- **Kidsgrove Parks** – A programme of investment in Clough Hall Park and Newchapel Recreation Ground – key recreational sites/green spaces within the Town Deal Investment Area – to improve the quality of the facilities on offer, widen the audience and promote year-round use.

These projects will address the key challenges facing Kidsgrove that are articulated in the Investment Plan. The town suffers from low levels of productivity and a weak employment base which is being exacerbated by COVID-19. Kidsgrove lacks a defined town centre which is characterised by a poor sense of arrival and outdated buildings; residents experience poor health outcomes and have low levels of physical activity; and Kidsgrove's key heritage assets - the canal and its parks - are underexploited and suffer from a historic lack of investment.

The wide-ranging programme of regeneration activity proposed in this plan will address the issues identified, maximise Kidsgrove's strength and positively benefit the town's current and future residents. Specifically, this plan will deliver:



- The redevelopment of 52.2 hectares of land;
- 142,522m<sup>2</sup> of additional, high-quality commercial floorspace;
- 1,494 temporary jobs during construction, translating into a GVA impact of £66.3m; and
- 2,118 FTE jobs upon completion of the programme of investment, translating into a GVA impact of £79.7m per annum

This programme of investment will transform Kidsgrove by delivering both new and well-established projects reflecting community priorities. Town Deal investment represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kidsgrove. It will deliver investment to reinvigorate the town centre and its key assets and employment sites. This Town Deal will therefore deliver significant and wide-ranging benefits for both current and future residents and demonstrate confidence in Kidsgrove's long-term future.



*Small independent shops line the A50 Liverpool Road, which bisects the town centre.*

### 3. Contextual analysis

Kidsgrove is a unique, well-connected town of 23,663 people<sup>1</sup> in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire. The town lies near the Staffordshire and Cheshire border, between the Midlands Engine and the Northern Powerhouse and has excellent transport links. It is located on the A500 within a ten-minute drive from the A34 and the M6 connecting it to and from the West Midlands, the North West and further afield, with Manchester, Liverpool and East Midlands Airports less than 50 miles away by road. Kidsgrove also benefits from excellent rail links with a mainline rail station, providing services to local centres such as Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent as well as direct links to large cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and London. Nearly a quarter of a million people enter and exit the station annually, with this number nearly doubling in the last decade. Station usage will increase further once rail services are improved through the introduction of HS2. This comprehensive mix of connectivity gives Kidsgrove superior accessibility to and from regional and national networks unrivalled by other nearby towns.

Kidsgrove's transport infrastructure has been vital in allowing the town to develop strong advanced manufacturing, logistics and trade sectors, which are key employers in the local area. In recognition of this strength and the area's ability to drive significant demand for industrial floorspace, the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, comprising six key sites totalling 140 hectares, was formed along the strategic A500 corridor. One of the Enterprise Zone's sites, the 38-hectare Chatterley Valley West, is located within the Kidsgrove Town Deal area and represents a significant opportunity for employment growth, the importance of which is heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kidsgrove has a strong history of coal mining and pride in its industrial heritage. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Clough Hall estate and other coal mines and ironworks grew and became vital for regional and national industries. To this day Kidsgrove retains a range of unique heritage assets including the Harecastle Tunnel on James Brindley's Trent and Mersey Canal. Built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to service the coal mines, and at 1.6 miles is one of the longest in the country. It is currently used for leisure purposes, with 8,000 boats passing through annually, providing Kidsgrove with untapped leisure and tourism opportunities. The town centre also retains some high-quality heritage architecture from this period, including Kidsgrove Town Hall, the former Methodist Church and the Masonic Hall.

Today, Kidsgrove is a well-connected, growing town with a strong community and competitive house prices. However, Kidsgrove lacks an attractive residential offer to appeal to higher income residents, which – teamed with the closure of valuable community facilities – often sees it lose out to nearby Cheshire market towns. Town Deal investment presents the opportunity to unlock Kidsgrove's potential via a co-ordinated programme of regeneration that builds on its strengths and assets to become a more desirable place to invest, work, live and visit. However, this potential is hampered by a number of issues facing the town centre:

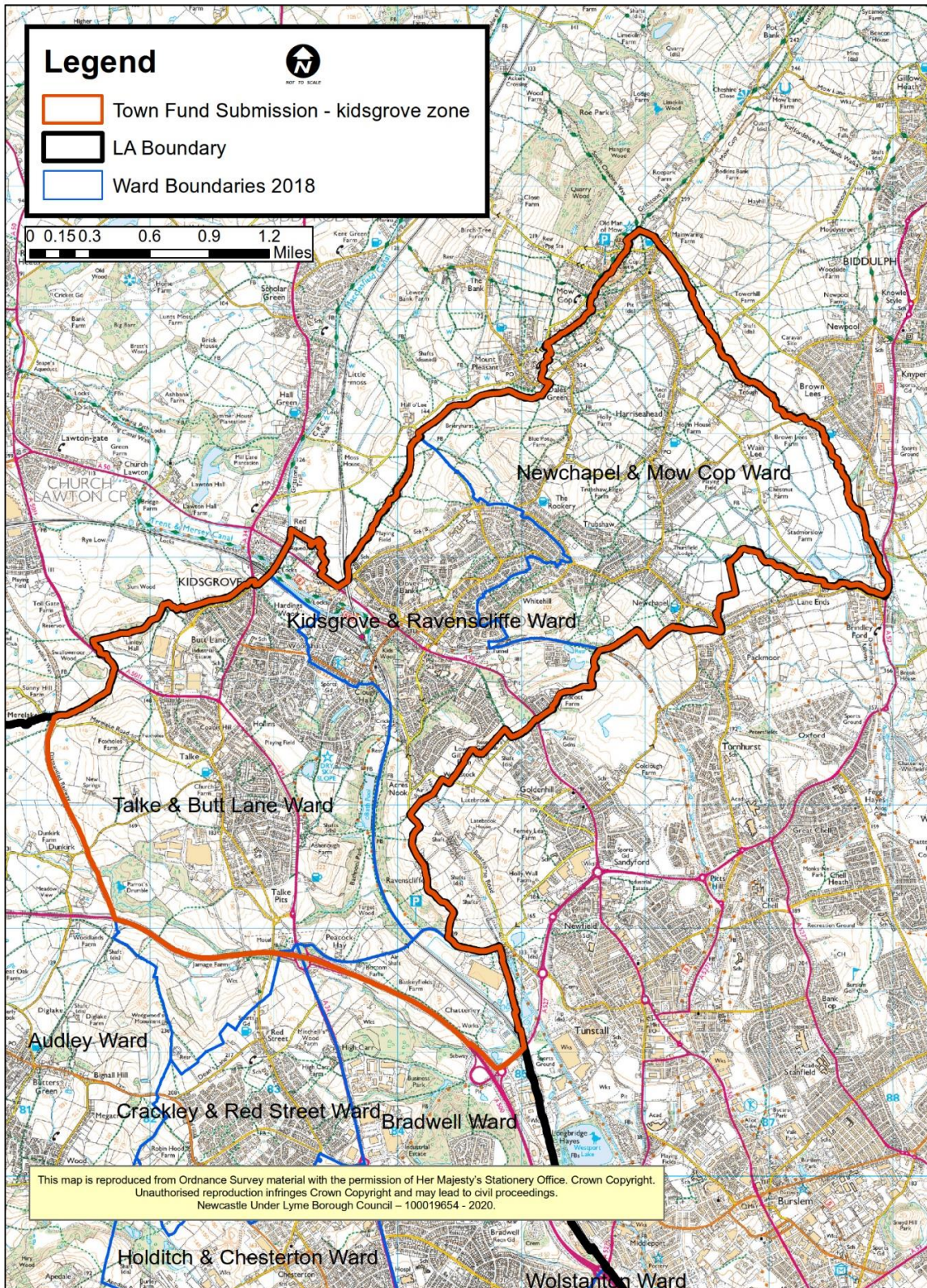
- The town lacks a defined “centre” and is split across the A50 Liverpool Road, a main thoroughfare, which impacts pedestrian flow and gives the town a disjointed feel;
- While there are pockets of quality independent retailers, there is a proliferation of value-oriented stores which impact the vibrancy of the town centre. The presence of two supermarkets located on the edges of the town centre limits connectivity to the remainder of the centre and the ability of smaller operators to benefit from the presence of these stores; and
- A number of valuable town centre assets are significantly underutilised. For instance:
  - Kidsgrove rail station is outdated, in need of investment and offers a poor sense of arrival.; active and public transport links to and from the station are poor; while the station is virtually invisible in the town centre with no clearly legible connection to/from it.
  - Kidsgrove benefits from a number of parks and green spaces. They are characterised by a lack of quality leisure facilities and, in some instances, high levels of anti-social behaviour.
  - Kidsgrove Sports Centre closed due to its deteriorating condition and is now in a state of disrepair which is symbolic of historic under investment in Kidsgrove. Kidsgrove now lacks any public leisure facilities, exacerbating the poor health outcomes recorded for Kidsgrove's residents.

<sup>1</sup> ONS Population estimates - small area based by single year of age - England and Wales 2018

# Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area

The Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area consists of the Newchapel and Mow Cop, Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe, Talke and Butt Lane wards, and part of the Bradwell Ward to the North East of the A500 that includes the Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone. Kidsgrove is the main retail and service centre, while other small nodes of convenience retailing and services exist, such as Butt Lane village centre. Affinity Staffordshire, a 40-store retail outlet including major names, such as M&S, Nike, Sports Direct and Gap, is located in Talke Pits, to the South West of Kidsgrove.

Figure 1. Kidsgrove Town Deal Boundary



The Kidsgrove Town Deal boundary includes areas with strong logistics and advanced manufacturing capability, along the A34 and A500 corridors. Central to Kidsgrove's request for Town Deal funding is Chatterley Valley West, a 38-hectare strategic employment site which forms part of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone. It offers the potential for over £2.5 billion of investment over the next decade<sup>2</sup>, and represents a strategic growth opportunity for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough and the wider Staffordshire economy. The area takes in Talke, home to Jamage Industrial Estate which has a range of warehousing, and industrial units, Butt Lane's Nelson Business Estate and Linley Trading Estate with key employers including AAH Pharmaceutical, Arnold Clark and Reliance Medical.

The Town Deal area includes large quantities of green and open spaces for residents and visitors to use including Clough Hall Park, Newchapel Recreation Ground, Bathpool Park, Birchenwood Park and the Trent and Mersey Canal. This broad composition of uses make the Town Deal Investment Area an interesting and unique regeneration proposition.

## Kidsgrove's assets and strengths

Kidsgrove has a variety of strengths and assets that the Town Investment Plan will build upon and exploit:

### Urban Development<sup>3</sup>

Kidsgrove and its satellite villages offer an attractive, affordable location to live, with average house prices at £146,123 well below the West Midlands figure of £229,597<sup>4</sup> and prices recorded in neighbouring Cheshire (£255,653<sup>5</sup>). Kidsgrove has an opportunity to develop an attractive new build offer appealing to higher income residents. This is currently lacking within Kidsgrove's residential offer and often sees it lose out to nearby Cheshire market towns despite it having a prime location on the West Coast mainline link.



*New build housing in Kidsgrove – Cooper Place*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/news/ceramic-valley-already-attracting-significant-interest>

<sup>3</sup> Cooper Place, Kidsgrove. Source of Photograph – Primelocation.co.uk

<sup>4</sup> HM Land Registry

<sup>5</sup> Source: Rightmove. Data based on past twelve months of sales from August 2020.

## Parks and Green Spaces

Kidsgrove possesses several outdoor green spaces that provide leisure opportunities for residents and visitors such as Clough Hall Park, Newchapel Recreation Ground, Birchenwood Park and Bathpool Park, which includes Kidsgrove Ski Centre. The town's rich coal mining heritage and legacy infrastructure, such as the canal system, act as a focal point of visitor activity and provide an amenity benefit for its residents. Consultation with stakeholders and residents highlighted the importance of Kidsgrove's heritage as a source of pride and assets such as the Trent and Mersey Canal, Harecastle Tunnel and heritage architecture provide a strong foundation to build upon.



*Bathpool – one of the recreational beauty spots for Kidsgrove residents and visitors.*

## Economy, enterprise infrastructure and skills

Kidsgrove has a strength in logistics and advanced manufacturing sectors linked to its strategic location and excellent connectivity. Key local employers include JCB, which occupies a 35000 sq. m warehouse in Chatterley Valley, AAH Pharmaceuticals, Arnold Clark and Reliance Medical and market data suggests there are further opportunities to build upon these sectoral strengths.

Kidsgrove has strong performing schools. Primary and secondary schools such as The King's CofE (VA) School, St John the Evangelist Catholic, Dove Bank and St Thomas Primary schools all received Good OFSTED ratings in their most recent inspections. As a Borough, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a higher proportion of intermediate apprenticeship achievements (52.9%) than the national average (46.9%). This extends to higher apprenticeship achievements and links to high-performing institutions such as Newcastle and Stafford College, rated Outstanding by OFSTED. Kidsgrove also benefits from close proximity to both Keele and Staffordshire Universities, while its transport connectivity provides opportunities for students to commute to institutions in Manchester and Birmingham. This makes Kidsgrove a very attractive place for families and offers the potential to build a strong community of skilled workers alongside a programme of investment to revitalise the town centre.

## Connectivity

Kidsgrove has excellent transport connectivity. Its geographical location positions it as a gateway to North Staffordshire with easy access to major motorway and arterial road networks, including the A50, A34, A500 and the M6, with Manchester, Liverpool and East Midlands Airports lying less than 50 miles away by road. Kidsgrove station is one of the town's strongest assets, registering 235,000 entries and exits in 2018/19, up from 141,000 at the turn of the decade<sup>6</sup>. It provides quick and regular access to nearby Stoke and Crewe as well as hourly services to Manchester and London via Birmingham. These connections will become faster and more frequent via the introduction of HS2 meaning Kidsgrove will have a direct rail links to the nearby HS2 Hub at Crewe.

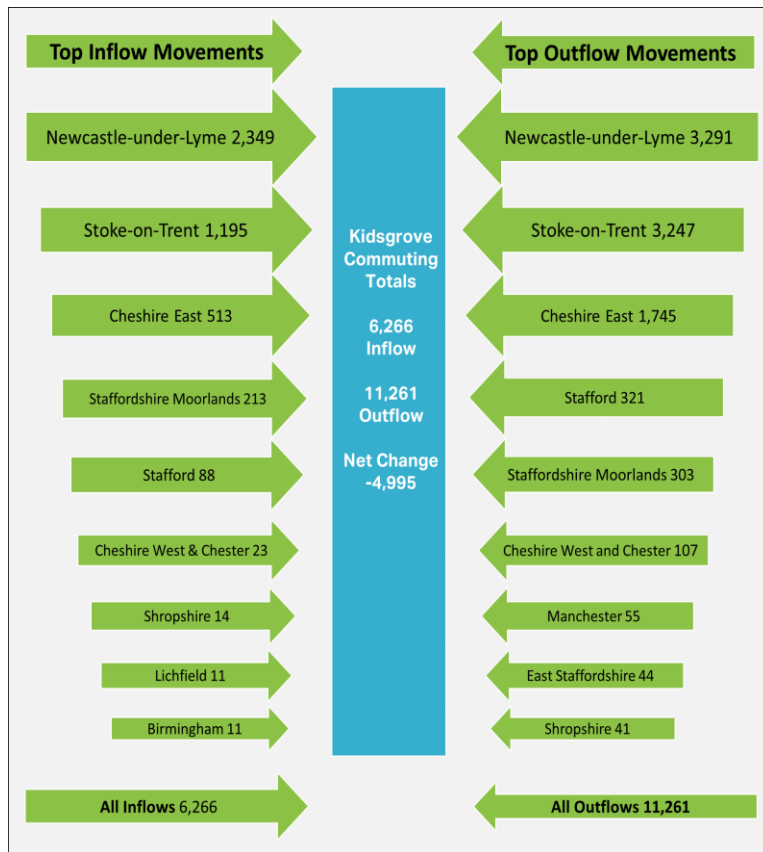
The Borough also has an extensive network of routes for cyclists away from roads along greenways, canal towpaths and riverside paths, plus a large network of less busy roads many of which are traffic calmed but fully open and permeable to cyclists. National Cycle Network Route Five runs through Kidsgrove on its journey from Reading to North Wales.



*Despite its central location, Kidsgrove station is of poor quality and lacks status and visibility within the town centre.*

<sup>6</sup> ORR Estimates of station usage

Figure 2. Kidsgrove's Prominent Inflow and Outflow Journey to Work Movements<sup>7</sup>



Kidsgrove's close proximity to Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme means the town is a net exporter of labour – 11,261 people travel out of Kidsgrove for work compared to 6,266 that commute in. A significant amount of people work and live within the town (1,564).

Kidsgrove excels in digital connectivity. Superfast broadband is almost universally available with higher average speeds than both regional and national averages<sup>8</sup>. This further strengthens Kidsgrove's ability to attract and host firms. Kidsgrove is also in position to benefit from Staffordshire's 5G demonstrator programme that aims to provide a blueprint for 5G in the UK and enable Staffordshire to grow to a £36bn economy<sup>9</sup>. As working from home becomes more prevalent, Kidsgrove's digital capability leaves the town perfectly poised to take advantage of increased home working whilst also offering excellent transport links and competitive house prices.



Entrance to the 1.6 mile long Harecastle tunnel on the Trent & Mersey Canal built by Thomas Telford in 1827.

<sup>7</sup> Census 2011 Location of usual residence and place of work (OA level)

<sup>8</sup> Think Broadband – 2019 UK Superfast and Fibre Coverage

<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire 5G demonstrator



## Challenges facing the town

### Urban Development

One of Kidsgrove's major weaknesses is the lack of a defined town centre. The town is bisected by the A50 Liverpool Road meaning it lacks a coherent retail and business core. Key public sector and community assets, such as the library, job centre and post office, are in separate, ageing buildings that restrict ease of access, particularly for the older<sup>10</sup> and vulnerable residents who typically rely on these services. In addition, while the station and canal are key local assets, stakeholder feedback highlights that these lack status and visibility due to the current configuration of the town centre and are widely considered to be run down and in need of modernisation.

Kidsgrove town centre has suffered from a historic lack of investment. As a result, some existing retail stock is dated and in need of renewal. Consultation feedback reported the town centre lacks vibrancy and an offer that encourages people to 'dwell' which impacts town centre footfall and levels of spending. This is exacerbated by the presence of two supermarkets located on the edge of town centre, neither of which are well connected to the remainder of the centre, which limits the potential for smaller operators to benefit from the footfall they generate.

Kidsgrove has also been impacted by the closure of its leisure centre in 2017, as a result of its deteriorating condition and increasing maintenance costs. This has left a prominent town asset in a state of disrepair whilst leaving a significant gap in the town's ability to meet the health and wellbeing needs of its residents. Kidsgrove records a higher proportion of children with excess weight in Reception Year and obese children in Year 6<sup>11</sup> and performs poorly compared to the England averages in terms of average life expectancy and the proportion of residents with limiting long term illnesses<sup>12</sup>. Closing the leisure centre has exacerbated this situation with community consultation identifying that 63% of the population no longer participate in sporting activities since the closure of Kidsgrove Sports Centre. Well documented links between poor health and wellbeing and the ability to secure or sustain employment and educational opportunities, as well as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, justifies the health and wellbeing focus within this Town Investment Plan.



*Empty shops on the main road through Kidsgrove town centre highlight the need for investment.*

<sup>10</sup> 22.7% of the population in Kidsgrove are aged 65 or over, compared with 18.2% nationally

<sup>11</sup> Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019

<sup>12</sup> Source: Fingertips, Public Health England

## Skills & Enterprise Infrastructure

Despite a network of good performing schools and high-quality universities and FE colleges nearby, Kidsgrove currently has a significantly higher proportion of those without qualifications (32.5%) compared with the West Midlands (26.6%) and national averages (22.5%). This reflects relatively poor GCSE attainment and is exacerbated by poor physical access to the main local FE colleges. The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation highlight that areas within the Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe and Talke and Butt Lane wards fall within the 10% most deprived in terms of Education, Skills and Training nationally<sup>13</sup>.



*The King's CE (A) School opened in 2015. It sits opposite Kidsgrove leisure centre. Its lack of quality outdoor sports facilities is being addressed by the Town Deal Advance Payment.*

This has implications for the town's productivity performance, as reflected in Borough-wide statistics which show Newcastle-under-Lyme as having a GVA per head of £16,588, significantly lower than West Midlands (£23,964) and England (£29,356) averages. It will be vital to address the relative dearth of high-level skills in the economy and ensure that educational attainment improves at all levels to turn around the town and Borough's productivity record.

While Kidsgrove and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough have registered low levels of unemployment in recent years, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are pockets of long-term and inter-generational unemployment within more deprived, former industrial communities. COVID-19 is likely to have a severe impact on Kidsgrove's labour market. 30% of Newcastle-under-Lyme's working age population was furloughed or accessed the Self-Employment Income Support Schemes (SEISS) as of June 2020, representing 16,600 of a total 55,200 eligible employments. Furthermore, the claimant count had risen from 2.0% in June 2019 to 4.8% in June 2020<sup>14</sup>. COVID-19 raises the prospect of scarring effects on the labour market, leading to the depreciation of skills and human capital, wage decline and increases in generational and long-term unemployment and underemployment, exacerbating the challenges the labour market was experiencing before the pandemic. These impacts also extend to happiness, health, and job satisfaction, sometimes experienced years after economic shocks such as that associated with COVID-19<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> MHCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2019

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Business/Coronavirus-COVID-19-support-for-businesses/Economic-Bulletin-Issue-1-July-2020-final.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/cepeo/2020/07/02/the-coming-storm-the-long-term-harm-that-unemployment-causes/>

## Connectivity

Whilst Kidsgrove benefits from good rail connectivity, access to and from the town by bus, car and active travel modes are all in need of improvement. Local bus provision is characterised by long journey times, poor timetabling, reliability and cost, a situation that has been further exacerbated by a contraction of commercial bus services<sup>16</sup>. North Staffordshire saw bus journeys reduce from 10.4 million in 2017/18 to 9.3 million in 2018/19. This comes against the backdrop of a 40% reduction in journeys over the past decade<sup>17</sup> reflecting the fact that just 5.0% of journeys to work were by bus in Kidsgrove<sup>18</sup>, compared with 8.1% across the West Midlands. Over three-quarters of journeys to work were made by private car, compared with the national average of 60.2%. A reliance on car journeys means Kidsgrove also suffers with traffic congestion. The A50, A5011 and A34 are significant sources of air pollutants affecting air quality. The A50 is particularly prone to congestion at peak times, resulting in it being designated as part of an Air Quality Management Area<sup>19</sup> in 2015 due to exceedance of NO<sub>2</sub> levels.



*A southbound train speeds across the canal in Kidsgrove.*

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/your-bus-service-being-cut-1731795>

<sup>17</sup> Travel Choices 2020

<sup>18</sup> ONS Census 2011 QS701EW - Method of travel to work

<sup>19</sup> 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)



*JCB World Logistics Centre on Chatterley Valley - the innovative building has a BREEAM 'excellent' rating.*

## Key opportunities for the town

As outlined above, Kidsgrove faces a wide range of challenges and opportunities that can be addressed via Town Deal funding to unleash the town's potential as a destination of choice to invest, work, live and visit. The Town Investment Plan recognises the immediate challenges of COVID-19 for Kidsgrove and includes investment to support and create employment, exploit locational advantages as well as provide the basis for the long-term economic wellbeing of its residents.

### Employment and Economic growth

Chatterley Valley West is a strategic employment development site within the Kidsgrove Town Deal Investment Area. It sits in the A500 corridor, the location of an industrial and logistics cluster of activity. Chatterley Valley gives access to the M6 motorway, A50 trunk road and the West Coast Mainline via a live railhead. It comprises 38 hectares (94 acres) of employment land with outline planning consent for high quality B1, B2 & B8 uses. The site is part of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, six areas that will regenerate over 240 hectares of largely brownfield land over the next decade<sup>20</sup>.

Chatterley Valley West has the potential to bring a further 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area and therefore represents a significant economic growth opportunity for Kidsgrove, the wider sub-region and the Midlands Engine. Its importance is only reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic as the site could drive inward investment and secure jobs to spearhead Kidsgrove's economic recovery.

### Promoting enterprise

An independent property review, commissioned by Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to inform this TIP, identified the industrial market as performing particularly strongly with robust interest recorded in recent years. It found:

- Deals of 10,000+ sqm demonstrate opportunities for businesses requiring larger stock with notable deals including 35,675 sqm of land sold to JCB Group;
- Kidsgrove has industrial estates with adjacent land that offer opportunities to accommodate further growth compared to the industrial estates along the A34.

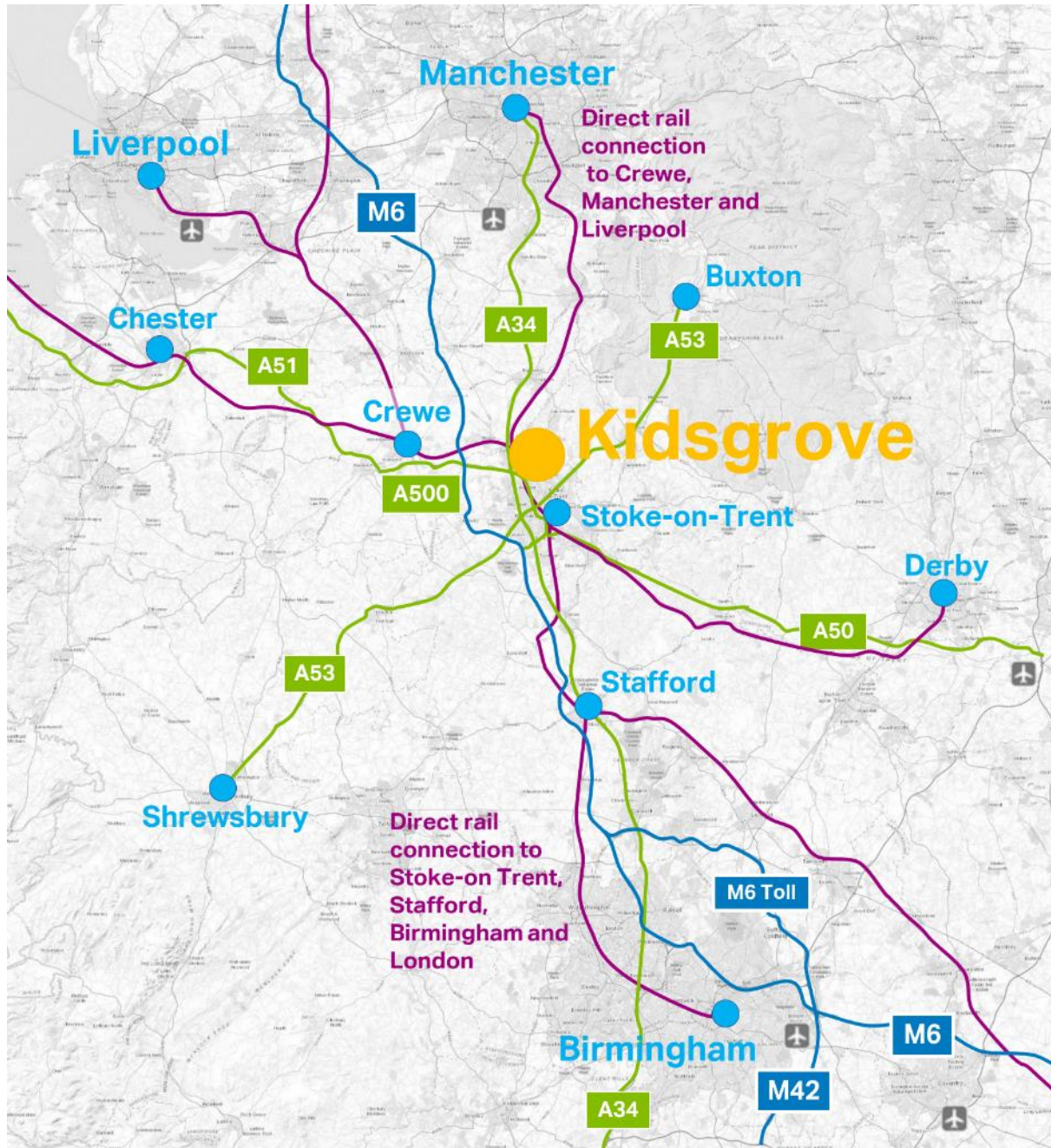
The provision of new light industrial units at West Avenue has been identified as a priority through the development of this TIP to take advantage of opportunities to provide additional employment space within Kidsgrove and generate/safeguard employment at a time when the impact of COVID-19 is adversely affecting economic performance and livelihoods.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/news/ceramic-valley-already-attracting-significant-interest>

**Maximising connectivity**

*'Kidsgrove Station is in a poor state yet used by many commuters. The bridge feels unsafe and rotting away, and most of the station is inaccessible with barriers up. The ticket office and facilities are not good enough, and the carpark is full during the week. It could be a hugely successful station at a crossroads, but most trains pass through. Please invest in Kidsgrove Train Station for a better future for the town and nearby residents.'* - Kidsgrove resident

Figure 3. Kidsgrove's key transport links



Kidsgrove Station, and future linkages to HS2 services in particular, represents a key growth opportunity for the town. Crewe is a 15-minute rail journey from Kidsgrove with 34 trains travelling from Crewe to Kidsgrove on an average weekday. The Crewe HS2 Hub will see 18 trains per hour running to and from London by 2033, and an additional 12 trains per hour to and from Birmingham<sup>21</sup>. It will therefore transform Kidsgrove's rail connectivity and attractiveness as a place to live and invest. The redevelopment of Kidsgrove station has been a long-term priority with widespread local support. Network Rail's Access for All programme is currently funding an upgrade to the station's footbridge whilst plans are in place for a new 200 space car park and station interchange, coordinated and funded by East Midlands Rail and Staffordshire County Council. Town Deal funding will maximise the impact of these commitments by delivering a modern station and gateway to Kidsgrove town centre.



*Kidsgrove station - in need of investment to improve accessibility and user experience.*

### Creating a new Town Centre

*'Improve the town centre aesthetic and architecture. There are some good buildings to work with. Improvement should be achievable. There is a fantastic community culture within the town, and they deserve to benefit from an improved environment' - Kidsgrove resident.*

The opportunity to create a coherent town centre would transform Kidsgrove by providing a focal point for town centre activity and ensuring services are provided from modern and welcoming facilities. The Town Deal could lead to the first steps being taken in re-developing Kidsgrove Town Centre through land acquisition and the development of a shared service hub and improved residential offer. This would provide a spatial focus and development opportunity that could transform the town when combined with investment in Kidsgrove rail station. A significant part of the land required for assembly is in public ownership giving greater certainty, reducing risk and allowing a major step in the longer-term development of the town as a whole. Furthermore, consultation to date with relevant Local Government, Public Health, Housing and Government departments with an interest and land holding in Kidsgrove has identified strong support for the shared service hub concept and the wider redevelopment of the town centre.

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways\\_and\\_roads/roadworks/major-projects/hs2\\_in\\_cheshire\\_east/hs2\\_stations\\_and\\_trains.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/hs2_in_cheshire_east/hs2_stations_and_trains.aspx)

**Improving health and wellbeing**

*Kidsgrove is in need of sports and leisure facilities therefore I would like to see Kidsgrove swimming pool and leisure centre upgraded and reopened with particular focus on sports youth clubs and activities for the local young people who currently have no provisions here' – Kidsgrove resident*

The derelict Kidsgrove Sports Centre is owned by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and its local community delivery partner, Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group. Proposals have since been drawn up for the phasing of capital works to enable the dry and wet-side facilities at Kidsgrove Sports Centre to be brought back into use, overseen by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and thereafter operated by the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group. This represents a major opportunity to address the health and wellbeing needs of Kidsgrove's residents and to secure a vital community, health and leisure hub within the town centre to further drive footfall. The project has received overwhelming support from the local community and is a key priority for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.



*The now derelict Kidsgrove Leisure Centre. Reopening the centre is the focus of overwhelming support from the community and has been accelerated by the Town Deal Advance Payment.*





*Kidsgrove Town Hall, one of several attractive heritage buildings in the town.*

## 4. Strategy

This strategy has been developed to build on Kidsgrove’s strengths, address its challenges and capture the opportunities identified. It centres on the need to capture the opportunities presented by the strategic employment site within the Town Deal Investment Area; to define the town centre and maximise the impact of Kidsgrove Station; and to enhance and broaden the leisure offer to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. This context has informed the vision and objectives for the Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan developed by the Town Board.

Vision	
<p><i>“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”</i></p>	
Objectives	Cross Cutting Themes
<p>To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove</p>	<p>Diversification and consolidation</p>
<p>To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall</p>	<p>Clean and inclusive growth</p>
<p>To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>

### Vision

The Town Investment Plan’s vision is that, by 2030, Kidsgrove will be:

*“A dynamic and well-connected town via its rail station and access to and from the M6, which is strategically located on the border of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Kidsgrove will capitalise on its location; strategic employment sites and heritage and leisure assets, including the canal network, to forge a reputation as an attractive, welcoming and successful town which is a desirable place to live and invest.”*

The vision reflects the importance of Kidsgrove’s strategic location, which has been key to the development of strong logistics and advanced manufacturing industries, with its proximity to and from the strategic road network and mainline station being key to driving inward investment and retaining residents to the town. Feedback received from local stakeholders outlined the importance of the town’s heritage assets, such as the Harecastle Tunnel and Trent and Mersey Canal, to Kidsgrove’s identity and sense of place, which should be celebrated and enhanced through the Town Deal. The historic lack of investment in the town is reflected in the need to regenerate the town centre, rail station and leisure centre to attract new residents, drive footfall, expenditure and secure a sustainable future for the town.

## Objectives and Cross Cutting Themes

The vision for Kidsgrove is underpinned by a set of three strategic objectives and cross-cutting themes.

### Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove

Facilitating inward investment and promoting business growth relies on having an appropriate business environment in terms of the supply of sites and premises which provides sufficient capacity for growth, physical and digital infrastructure and an appropriately skilled workforce. This will be important for Kidsgrove to retain its competitiveness and continue to stimulate business activity and secure the jobs of the future. Improvements to the town's enterprise infrastructure will help to promote the town as a place for business, while supporting growth of its existing businesses and to build a more productive economy. This is particularly pressing considering the need to secure access to new opportunities and drive the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall

Improving the flow and pedestrian connectivity between Kidsgrove's key assets, including the rail station, canal and the town centre, is a vital objective of the Town Investment Plan. It will ensure the station buildings and linkages to the station; public sector services; areas of public realm; and key pedestrian routes into the town areas are welcoming and attractive for town centre users by promoting footfall and usage. Enhancing the area around the station, pedestrian routes linking the town and redefining the town centre to consolidate service delivery and increase demand and footfall will be crucial in delivering the vision for Kidsgrove.

### Objective 3: To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing

The need to enhance Kidsgrove's leisure offer is a significant community issue, reflected in a third of the #Mytown responses for Kidsgrove and the community's interest in taking ownership of, and running, Kidsgrove Sports Centre. Activities delivered under this objective will ensure that Kidsgrove Sports Centre, a vital local asset, is reopened. Town Deal monies will also be invested to ensure Kidsgrove's parks and playing facilities are vibrant, well maintained and provide a broad, accessible range of activities to meet the needs of Kidsgrove's residents across all ages.

Three cross-cutting themes will be critical in the successful delivery of the vision across all objectives. These are:

#### Diversification and consolidation

Improving the resilience of the town centre by bringing in new uses to capture activity, act as service hubs and to support economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;

#### Clean and inclusive growth

Ensuring investments benefit Kidsgrove across all demographics, targeting places of need which will help to promote growth that is clean and equitable.

#### Collaboration

Continuing the partnerships between Kidsgrove Town Deal Board members, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and local stakeholders in identifying, developing and delivering projects. The vision

will not be delivered in isolation and requires ongoing collaboration between stakeholders to ensure opportunities in Kidsgrove are effectively identified, realised and embraced by the community, applying the knowledge and expertise of partners.



*The transformational plans for Kidsgrove will benefit future generations.*

## Prioritisation of Town Investment Plan Projects

The Kingsgrove Town Deal priorities have been identified via an extensive period of consultation and engagement. Project ideas that emerged from this process were scored using a prioritisation process that was tested and agreed by the Kingsgrove Town Deal Board. It scored long-listed projects based on a two-phase method using the following criteria:

- **Strategic fit** – Assessing a scheme's fit with the Town Deal objectives, namely:
  - Urban regeneration and land use;
  - Skills and enterprise infrastructure; and
  - Connectivity.
- Projects identified were also tested against economic development priorities within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy and the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (SSLEP) Local Industrial Strategy. Weighted scores were applied to each scheme based on their fit with both Town Deal and local policy priorities. The scoring was weighted towards the Town Deal intervention objectives whereas a project's fit with the local and SSLEP priorities were given an equal weighting meaning schemes with poor alignment to the Town Deal intervention framework were given a low priority.
- **Assurance** – Schemes were tested against the parameters of the Green Book and typical approaches to business case appraisal. A proportional approach was taken to testing scheme assurance as most of the schemes identified are at an early stage of development. A full 'assurance process' (e.g. undertaking a detailed assessment of scheme BCRs and a full options assessment) was not considered appropriate at this stage. Instead, schemes were tested against the following criteria in line with the principles of the Green Book:
  - Economic case
    - Is the scheme potentially transformational in its impact?
    - Would the scheme provide a positive economic return?
  - Financial case:
    - Is the scheme's Town Deal Funding request affordable?
    - Will the scheme leverage funding from non-Town Deal sources?
  - Commercial case:
    - Does the scheme demonstrate clear evidence of demand, need, or support?
    - Is the scheme viable and sustainable?
  - Management case:
    - Do the scheme's timescales fit with Town Deal funding?
    - Does the lead body have a track record of successfully delivering similar schemes?

The approach to prioritisation provided a scored and ranked list of projects. High priority projects were approved by the Town Deal Board for development work by dedicated project working groups. This resulted in some early projects being discounted due to uncertainties with, for instance, demand or short-term deliverability being identified. However, the prioritisation process also resulted in the identification of a sizeable project pipeline to take forward in Kingsgrove in the medium to long term. The priority projects to be taken forward are summarised below:

Project	Description	Town Deal Ask
<b>Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove</b>		
<b>Chatterley Valley</b>	Chatterley Valley West represents the only strategic employment site in Kidsgrove and the wider Borough and is a priority for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and SSLEP. The 38-hectare site, located within the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone and allocated to B1, B2 and B8 uses, could drive inward investment to Kidsgrove and generate 1,940 jobs and £72 million GVA per annum in the local area once developed. However, the development of the site is constrained by high upfront abnormal costs owing to the undulating profile of the site and ground conditions linked to the area's coal mining heritage, which has caused a significant viability gap for the developer, Harworth Group. In order to address this, Town Deal funding is required to deliver site access and associated water main diversions, as part of the project's Section 278 agreement, to de-risk the site and allow it to be brought forward.	£3.68m
<b>West Avenue light industrial units</b>	West Avenue is a 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses. This has been developed in response to the lack of capacity in other sites, with a limited supply of appropriate units south of the A34 corridor; robust demand for B2 and B8 uses in the Kidsgrove town deal area and the lack of fit-for-purpose start-up and grow on space available locally. Furthermore, the associated plans to encourage industrial uses away from Kidsgrove town centre through the land assembly associated with the Shared Service Hub would provide capacity to rehouse town centre businesses and encourage the development of a more sustainable, attractive town centre.	£1.10m
<b>Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall</b>		
<b>Kidsgrove Station</b>	<p>Town Deal investment will deliver a new station building for Kidsgrove. It will include a new ticket office, back office facilities, toilets, retail space and communal areas. Town Deal investment will also contribute to a new multi-modal interchange, real-time bus passenger information, improved cycling and walking facilities, a dedicated drop-off and pick-up areas for taxis and buses and improved access to the Trent and Mersey Canal which runs adjacent to the rail station, as well as a new 200-space station car park to benefit station users.</p> <p>The Town Deal investment will maximise the impact of ongoing investment from Network Rail's Access for All programme, which has allocated funding for a fully accessible footbridge to three platforms, remediation works to the four platforms due to historic coal mining. In addition, to enable passenger service vehicles to directly serve the Station, the road access bridge over the canal requires strengthening, with Network Rail having confirmed the delivery of these works.</p>	£5.17m
<b>Canal enhancement</b>	In order to address years of underinvestment, a range of interventions are proposed to the canal to create a safe new, attractive canal corridor and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove. These include: an upgraded towpath and the installation of solar lighting; the provision of a continuous sealed surface suitable for all users; high quality areas of public realm; improvements to access points at key locations to improve safety and provide access for all; installation of orientation signage; and the realignment of the pathway at Harecastle Tunnel to provide better all year-round access.	£2.20m

<b>Shared Service Hub, land assembly &amp; Housing investment</b>	Kidsgrove town centre is currently “bisected” by the A50 Liverpool Road, resulting in the lack of a defined centre and impacting footfall within certain parts of the town. In order to address this challenge and redefine the town centre, the Shared Service Hub will bring together public sector assets – the library, job centre and post office and a range of health services – to provide a one stop shop from which residents can access these services which are currently dispersed across the town. The Shared Service Hub proposal will link to a satellite facility providing targeted youth services in response to an identified lack of existing facilities and high levels of antisocial behaviour in Kidsgrove. The land take for the Shared Service Hub will also be used to define a clear route to link Kidsgrove Station through to the town centre with this currently obscured by a number of low quality, older industrial and retail premises which blight the town centre and reduce footfall between the station and town centre. The proposal will be delivered through a partnership approach with Aspire (housing provider) to deliver new housing and provide a consolidated hub for services and community activity.	£8.29m
<b>Objective 3: To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing</b>		
<b>Kidsgrove Sports Centre</b>	Kidsgrove Sports Centre was mothballed in June 2017 as a result of its deteriorating condition and increasing maintenance costs and is now in a state of disrepair. This has not only resulted in a vacant building in a prominent town centre location but has left a significant gap in the town’s ability to meet the health and wellbeing needs of its residents. The project is for the refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre, to allow the re-opening of the dry and wet-side facilities to the public under community management, with proposed designs to satisfy user requirements and provide a 25-year life span for a key community asset. This presents the opportunity to secure a vital asset within Kidsgrove town centre to provide leisure opportunities to Kidsgrove residents.	£2.45m
<b>Kidsgrove Parks</b>	Clough Hall Park and Newchapel Recreation Ground are key recreational green spaces within Kidsgrove. Both parks have seen limited recent investment leaving them in need of modernisation. Investment in Clough Hall Park will upgrade the pavilion to facilitate community uses and greater use by sports teams such as the rugby club; enhanced security measures to address antisocial behaviour; and improvements to pitches, paths and tennis courts to encourage greater all-year round use of the park. In the case of Newchapel Recreation Ground, the proposed investment will introduce planting and wildflower meadows to bring year-round interest and increase biodiversity, play facilities, formal footpaths for improved connectivity and accessibility, seating and disabled parking to widen the audience and use.	£2.10m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£24.99m</b>

The Town Deal ask of £25m will result in a programme of investment totalling £165.6m within Kidsgrove. This stands to have a transformational impact on Kidsgrove and its residents and address years of underinvestment in the town.

Indicator	Output
Land redeveloped	51.3ha
Floorspace delivered	138,742m <sup>2</sup>
Jobs (Temporary - Construction)	1,494
GVA (Construction)	£66.3m
Jobs (FTE - Operation)	2,118
GVA per annum (Operation)	£79.7m

## Strategic Plan

The strategy to deliver the Town Investment Plan is based on a clear understanding of Kidsgrove's strengths, assets, challenges and opportunities. The ambition of the Town Investment Plan is to create the conditions for sustainable long-term economic growth and achieve the vision for Kidsgrove.

Below we set out the rationale and need for intervention under each objective, with key priorities over the short, medium and long term and programmes which will enable this to be achieved.

### Objective 1: To drive growth and opportunity through enhanced enterprise infrastructure in Kidsgrove

#### Rationale

Kidsgrove has established a strength in the manufacturing and logistics industries, linked to the skills of its workforce and unrivalled connectivity. An independent review of Kidsgrove's industrial property market has indicated further growth potential such is the robustness of demand for large scale industrial space. Feedback also suggests a lack of appropriate start up and grow on space within the Town Deal boundary. As such, there is potential for further growth, investment and job creation within the industrial segment. This would support the findings of the Staffordshire Recovery Plan<sup>22</sup> which identifies the need for continued development of employment sites to support growth and investment within the county, particularly within the clean, digital, highly productive businesses that will generate future jobs growth.

#### Short term priorities

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. These interventions will build growth and resilience in the local economy, ensuring a suitable mix of sites and premises is ready and available to take advantage of future business investment opportunities, in particular the clean, digital, highly productive businesses that will provide the jobs of the future:

- **Chatterley Valley** – Site access and associated water main diversions for the 38-ha Chatterley Valley site, helping de-risk the development and address high upfront costs for the developer, and bring forward investment to deliver 1,940 jobs and £72m GVA to the local economy.

<sup>22</sup> Staffordshire County Council Our five-year strategy to respond to the COVID-19 crisis





- **West Avenue light industrial units** – Bring forward the West Ave scheme, a 2.83-hectare site to be taken forward as a multiple unit scheme focused towards B2 and B8 uses. This will capitalise on robust demand for these uses south of the A34 corridor and the lack of fit-for-purpose start-up and grow on space available locally.



**Medium to longer term priorities**

The following medium to long term aspirations are focused on the development at key sites in Kidsgrove town centre and the A34 corridor, capitalising on strategic location and attracting further investment. Priorities include:

- Mixed use development in proximity to the station and canal network;
- Secure high value, high growth businesses within Chatterley Valley to drive productivity improvements;
- Staffordshire 5G demonstrator.

**Objective 2: To create a connected, accessible town centre which links key assets, retains the heritage and uniqueness of Kidsgrove, promotes active travel and diversifies and drives new demand and footfall**

**Rationale**

The need to focus interventions within Kidsgrove town centre was clearly identified during consultation with local stakeholders. This is in recognition of the challenges facing the town centre in terms of its current configuration, with the lack of a defined centre and disconnect between key assets within the town. The focus on the town centre is also reflective of the opportunities available to Kidsgrove and the assets within the town that are currently underutilised. In particular Kidsgrove station, whilst seeing significant growth in station patronage, lacks status within the town centre, offers a poor sense of arrival due to the quality of the station buildings, has poor links via public or active modes to the town centre. In its current condition, the station lacks the infrastructure to realise growth opportunities offered by the Joint Local Plan and HS2. The Trent and Mersey Canal was identified as a unique, heritage asset which is perceived as an underperforming, underutilised asset by the local community, with the need for investment to reinvigorate the canal-side environment and promote active travel.

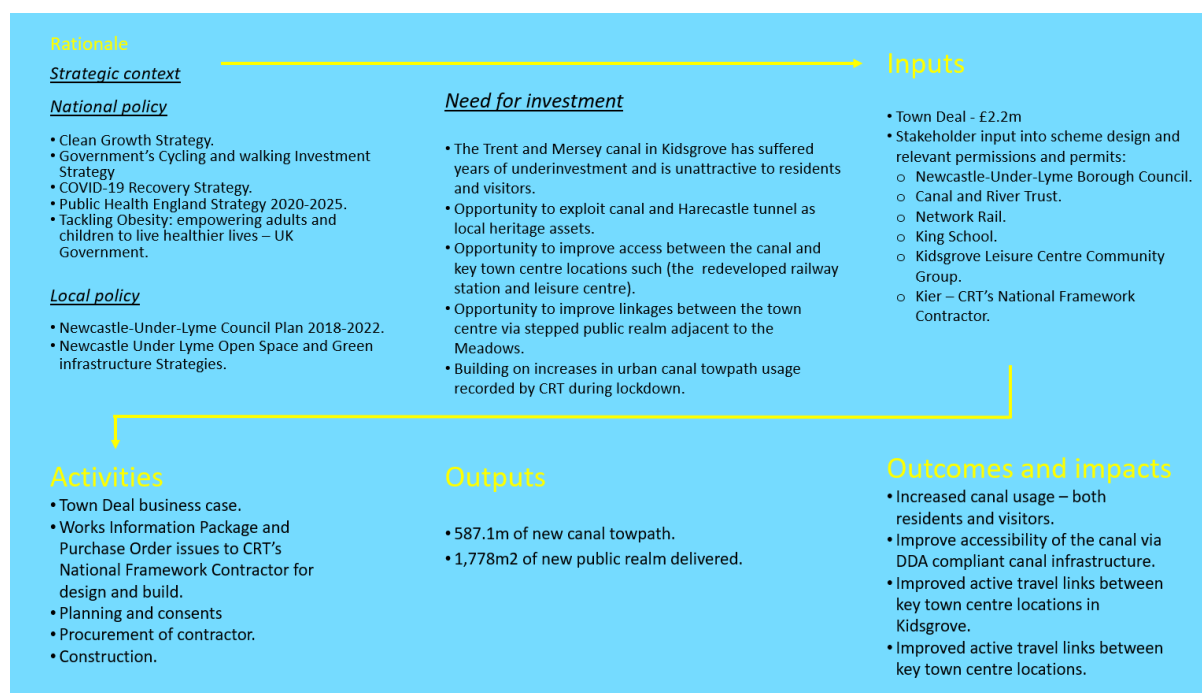
**Short term priorities**

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. They are designed to increase footfall and breathe new life into Kidsgrove town centre, building resilience and creating the conditions to unlock growth and future development. The short-term focus of the Town Investment Plan will deliver:

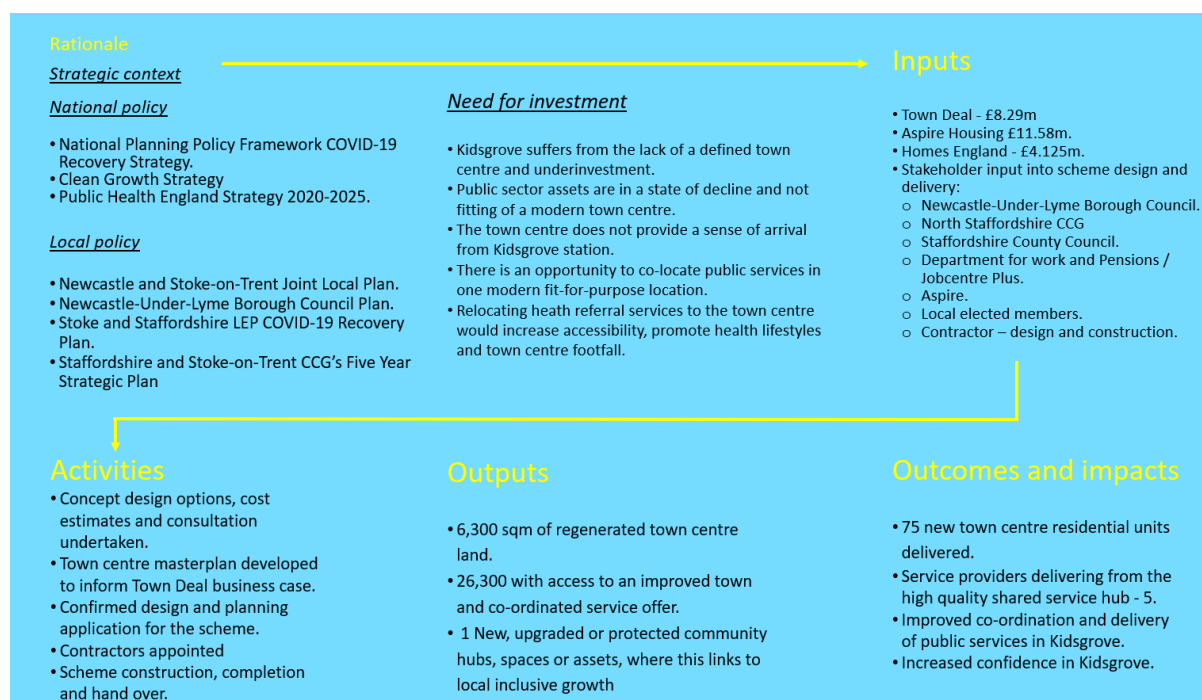
- **A new station and transport interchange for Kidsgrove** – Delivery of a new, modern station building, a new multi-modal interchange, and 200-space car park at Kidsgrove Station, with improved access to the Trent and Mersey Canal which runs adjacent to the rail station.



- **Investment along the Trent and Mersey Canal at Kidsgrove** – A safe, attractive canal corridor and an alternative off-road routeway to benefit both visitors and the residents of Kidsgrove with continuous sealed pathway, lighting and attractive public realm.



- **A town centre shared service hub** – The shared service hub will provide a modern facility that brings together key public sector assets – including a Health Hub, library and Job Centre – which are currently dispersed across the town centre in poor quality buildings. This will provide a one-stop-shop from which residents can access these services and will link to a satellite youth centre which will provide activities and services for young people such as careers advice and guidance. The land take for the Hub will also be used to define a clear route to link Kidsgrove Station through to the town centre with this currently obscured by a number of low-quality, older industrial and retail premises.



**Medium to longer term priorities**

The medium to longer term priorities are focused on opportunities to redevelop or repurpose vacant or underutilised town centre buildings and accommodate high-quality mixed-use developments, with areas in proximity to the station and high-quality canal corridor likely to drive demand. Priorities include:

- The redevelopment of vacant/underutilised town centre buildings such as Kidsgrove Town Hall;
- Supporting Aspire's investment strategy for Kidsgrove;
- 5G demonstrator; and
- Mixed use developments to accommodate residential and commercial uses in Kidsgrove town centre.

**Objective 3: To maximise the leisure and recreation opportunities available in Kidsgrove, providing facilities that are supported by communities and opportunities for residents to improve their health and wellbeing**

Kidsgrove residents of all ages suffer from poor health outcomes compared to national averages. This includes low average life expectancy at birth; high levels of limiting long term illnesses, hospital admissions and deaths from circulatory and respiratory diseases and cancer<sup>23</sup>. Poor health outcomes have been exacerbated by the closure of Kidsgrove Sports Centre, which was mothballed in 2017 due to the building's condition, leaving Kidsgrove without any formal leisure facilities. COVID-19 raises the potential for further impacts on both residents' mental and physical health and subsequently their ability to access employment. For instance, almost one in five adults (19.2%) was likely to be experiencing some form of depression during the coronavirus pandemic as of June 2020<sup>24</sup>. High quality, affordable, and accessible leisure facilities, combined with easily accessible support services, will help to reverse trends in health outcomes seen in Kidsgrove and promote healthy lifestyles within the community.

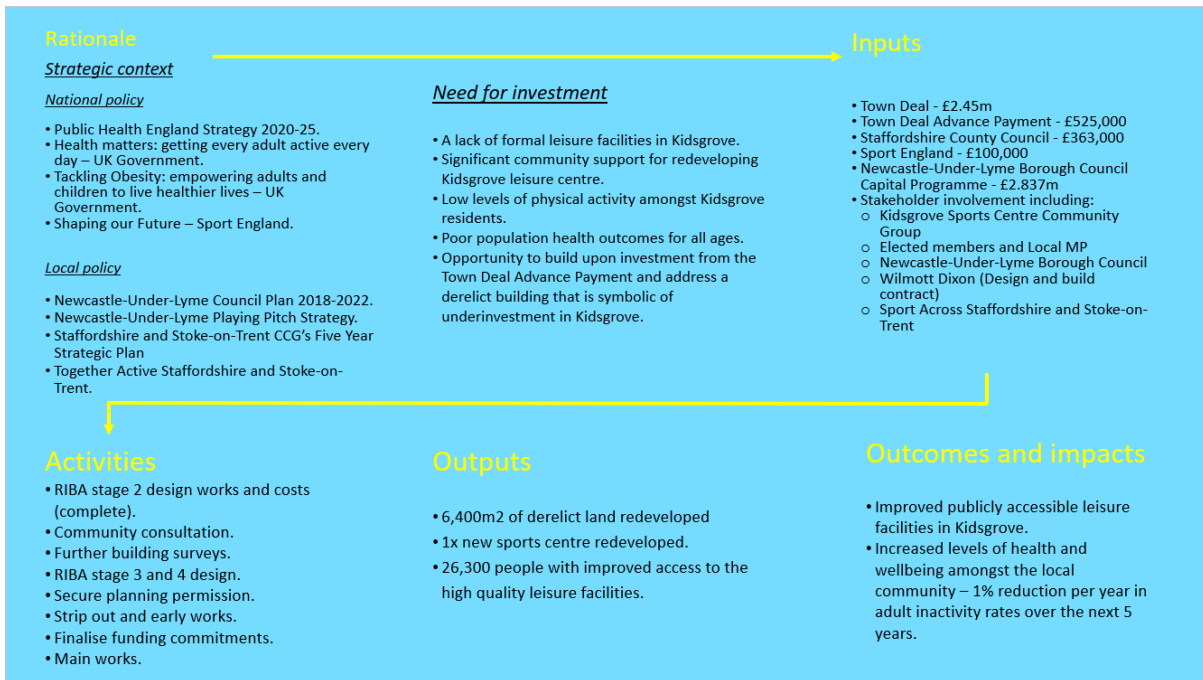
<sup>23</sup> Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019

<sup>24</sup> ONS Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: June 2020

**Short term priorities**

The key short-term priorities of the Town Investment Plan under this objective are outlined below. These interventions will support improved access to sports and leisure opportunities, boosting participation, activity levels and health and wellbeing outcomes for Kidsgrove’s residents. The short-term priorities will build on the investment delivered through the Towns Fund Accelerated Funding and create conditions for further investment in Kidsgrove’s leisure assets:

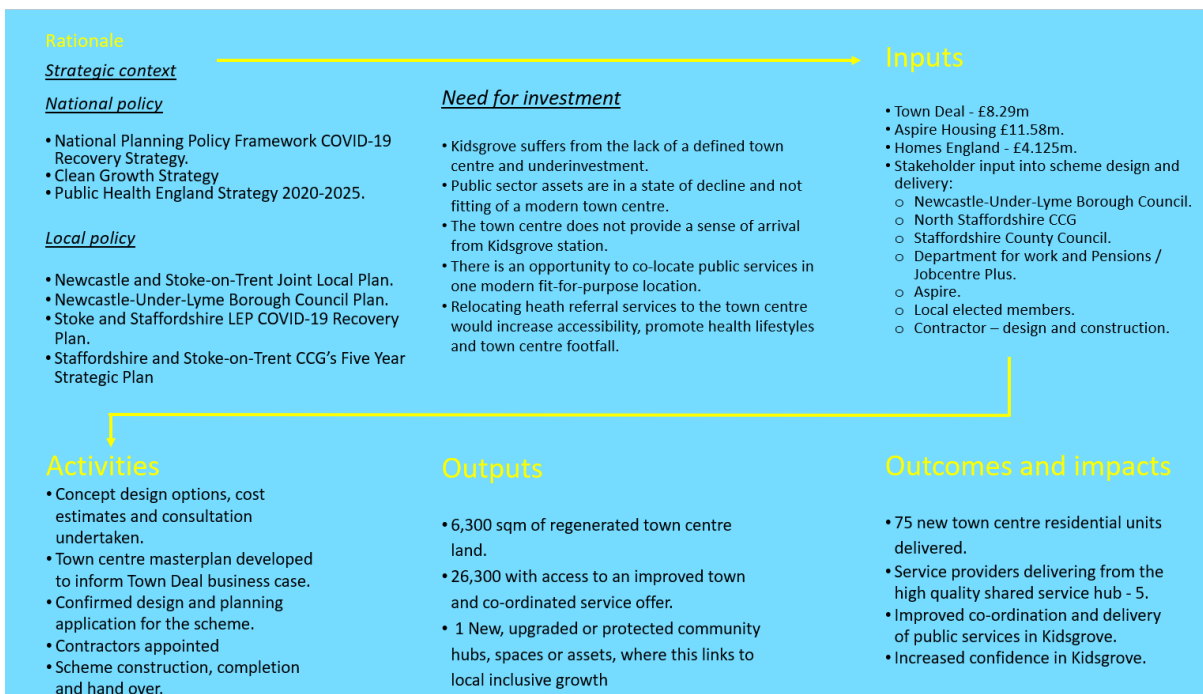
- **Investment in Kidsgrove leisure centre** – The refurbishment and re-opening of the dry and wet-side facilities at Kidsgrove Sports Centre, to be managed by the local community. Town Deal investment will address the community’s priorities; transform the town’s leisure facilities; and replace a symbol of under-investment in Kidsgrove with a modern and community-led facility.



- Upgrades to Kidsgrove's parks** – Improvements to Clough Hall Park, including refurbishment of the pavilion; enhanced security measures; improvements to drainage for both pitches and paths; and improvements to the tennis courts; and Newchapel Recreation Ground through the introduction of planting and wildflower meadows, play facilities, formal footpaths, seating and disabled parking to widen the audience and use.



- Delivery of a town centre 'Health Hub'** – Provided as part of the Shared Service Hub within the town centre to deliver a range of services and support including screening, disability support, mental health care services, physiotherapy and dispensing with links to existing GP delivery through referrals and link workers and to activities at the redeveloped Kidsgrove Sports Centre.



**Medium to long term priorities**

The medium to long term priorities for Kidsgrove focus on embedding a life-long activity habit in Kidsgrove's residents. This will be secured by investment in new assets and the refurbishment, modernisation and upkeep of existing facilities, supported by improvements to transport infrastructure to encourage active travel. Key priorities are:

- Further pedestrian and cycling network investments to promote active travel (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)/ explore DfT's new £2bn walking and cycling package); and
- Improvements to playing pitches/sports facilities in line with NuLBC's Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy.

## Spatial strategy

The Kidsgrove Town Investment Plan has a strong spatial focus on channelling investment towards the town centre; strategic employment sites and key community leisure assets. This is based on a number of key factors outlined within this section, namely:

- The lack of a defined, accessible town centre and perceived falling footfall and vibrancy;
- The need to redevelop or upgrade key assets to deliver the aspirations of the local community and change perceptions of Kidsgrove as a place to live and invest; and
- The lack of an appropriate mix of commercial floorspace in suitable locations to drive employment growth and create opportunities for Kidsgrove's residents, businesses, and inward investors.

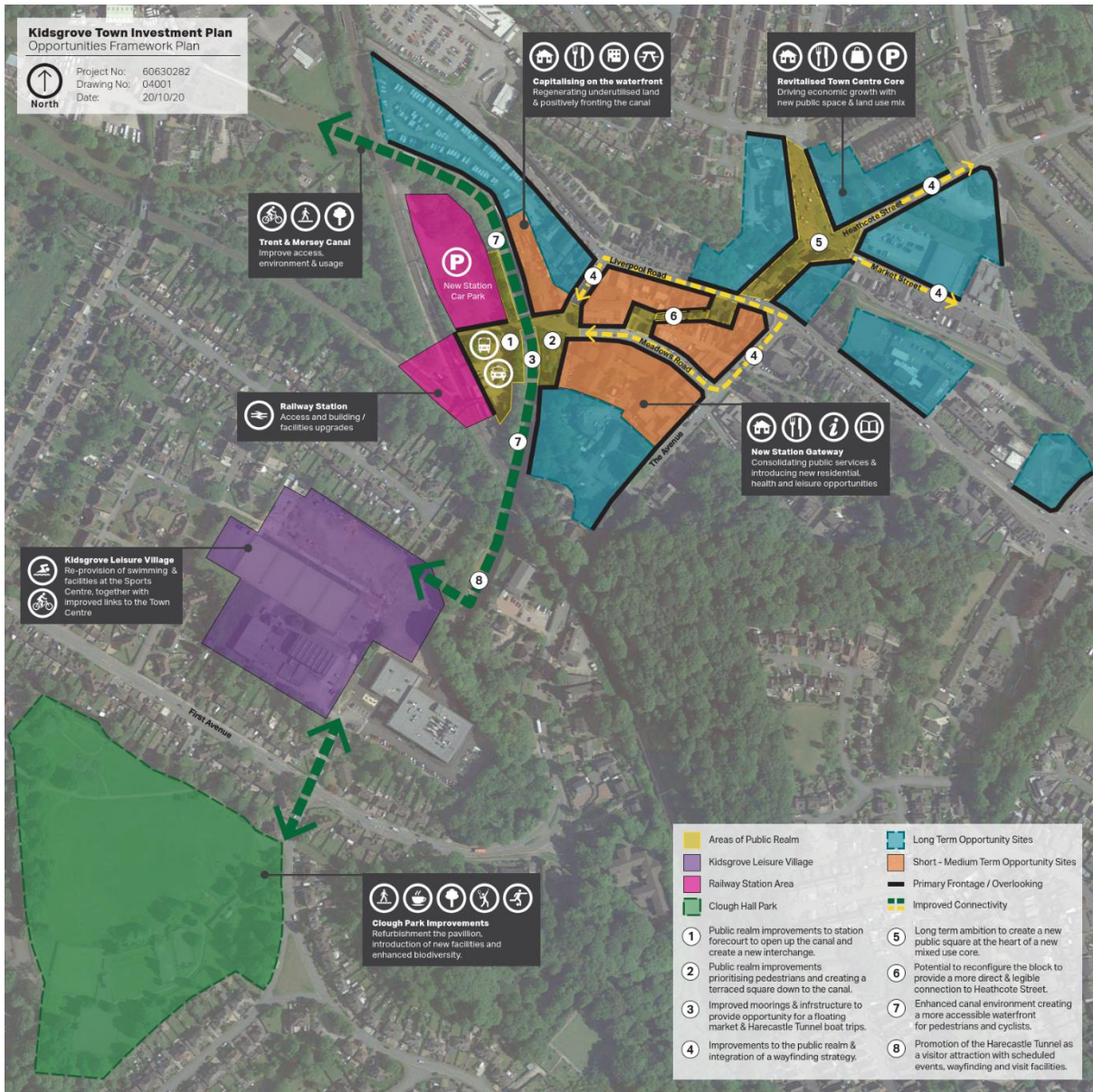
Focusing on these priorities will supercharge the regeneration and long-term economic sustainability of the overall Town Deal Investment Area, spreading prosperity across communities and driving the area's recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

The overview, presented below, provides the spatial context for the projects within the Town Deal Investment area.





Figure 5. TIP Town Centre plan



## Mapping of aligned and complementary strategies, programmes and investments

The programme of investment put forward in the Kidsgrove TIP delivers against numerous UK Government policy priorities. The focus on upgraded enterprise infrastructure and transport accessibility will work towards “maintaining livelihoods and restoring the economy” in line with the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, whilst also supporting economic growth and productivity improvements, key focuses of the UK Industrial Strategy. The reconfiguration proposed to Kidsgrove town centre and its key assets including the station and canal will support the delivery of Clean Growth and align with the Cutting Carbon White Paper alongside the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy through encouraging active travel and more sustainable modes. Moreover, improvements to parks and green spaces align with DEFRA’s 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, while the re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre will empower adults and children to live healthier lives, in line with government plans to reduce obesity.

**Table 1. Kidsgrove TIP Alignment with National Policy**

Intervention	COVID-19 Recovery Strategy	Clean Growth Strategy	Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	Culture White Paper	Post 16 Skills Plan	A Green Future	UK Digital Strategy	UK Industrial Strategy
Kidsgrove Station Interchange								
Canal								
Shared Service Hub and older persons housing								
Chatterley Valley								
West Avenue Light industrial units								
Kidsgrove Sports Centre								
Health Hub								
Clough Hall Park								

At the local level the programme of investment delivers the priorities of SSLEP’s Local Industrial Strategy, particularly through its focus on Chatterley Valley and the West Avenue light industrial units. The focus on Kidsgrove Station and associated interventions within the town centre to support active travel and modal shift directly address the objectives of the Joint Local Plan (JLP), Local Transport Plan, NuLBC Air Quality Action Plan and Staffordshire County Council (SCC) Climate Change Strategy. The re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre and renovation of Kidsgrove’s parks meets the objectives within the SCC Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Active Lifestyles Strategy. Furthermore, the Shared Service Hub and focus on Enterprise Infrastructure align neatly with the Staffordshire County Council’s five-year strategy to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Table 2. Kidsgrove TIP Alignment with Local Policy

Intervention	Joint Local Plan	SCC Local Transport Plan	SSLEP Local Industrial Strategy	SSLEP Strategic Economic Plan	NuLBC Economic Development Strategy	SSLEP Skills Strategy	NuLBC Air Quality Action Plan	SCC Climate Change Strategy	SCC Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Active Lifestyles Strategy	SCC Recovery Strategy
Kidsgrove Station Interchange	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Canal	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Shared Service Hub and older persons housing	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Chatterley Valley	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
West Avenue light industrial units	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Clough Hall Park	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned

## Engagement and delivery

Local stakeholders have been at the heart of the development of the Kidsgrove TIP and will continue to drive the second stage of agreeing a Town Deal, which will include completing business cases based on the selected content of Town Investment Plans with government. Engagement has taken place via the diverse membership of the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board and by the approach to engagement adopted by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

### The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board

The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board has guided the development of the Town Investment Plan, acting as the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town has been defined. Board members are listed in Figure 6. The Board is chaired by the Executive Director of Property at Aspire, a leading housing provider, property developer and local employer, and includes representatives from the private sector, local government, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the third sector, the Member of Parliament and other local organisations including North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Keele University and The King's CE School<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, with two TIPs being developed within the Borough – Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove – there is co-membership across Boards which has facilitated collaboration and read across between the two areas to ensure complementarity and that the plans are more than the sum of their parts.

**Figure 6. Kidsgrove Town Deal Board members**

- Dan Gray (Chair) – Aspire Housing Group
- Cllr Simon Tagg (Vice Chair) – Leader, Newcastle-Under-Lyme BC
- Jonathan Gullis, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North
- Cllr Paul Waring, Kidsgrove Town Centre CIC
- Cllr Gill Burnett, Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group
- Cllr Phillip White, Staffordshire County Council.
- Cllr Kyle Robinson, Kidsgrove Town Council
- Ian Donaldson, Autonet Insurance
- Lisa Healings, VAST
- Paul Hodgkinson, Keele University
- Rob Leese, DWP
- Zoe Papiernik-Bloor, The Audience Agency
- Nicola Lewis Smith, Canal and River Trust
- Dr Emma Sutton, NHS
- Andrew Thompson, Kidsgrove Neighbourhood Plan
- Mark Parkinson, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP
- Emily Verow, The King's CE (A) School

### Consultation and engagement – plan development

Outside of monthly Board meetings, Board members and project stakeholders have also been tasked to develop the priority projects that were agreed to be taken forward within the TIP. These working groups were based on the three objectives of the TIP and were instrumental in developing the project detail, providing advice rooted in the local experience and constructively challenging proposals.

A range of wider stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken to inform the TIP and ensure it is owned by the local community:

- MHCLG's #MyTown campaign provided a platform for communities to outline how Town Deal funding could transform their town. Kidsgrove received 46 responses which were analysed and used to shape the vision and interventions outlined within the TIP.
- A "Vision Survey" was developed and distributed to Board members to inform the development of the vision for Kidsgrove. Eleven detailed responses were received. This feedback, along with the discussion at Board meetings, the #MyTown responses and conversations with individual stakeholders ensured the vision was representative of the views of the broad Kidsgrove community.
- Individual consultation sessions have been held with both Board members and members of the local community, to provide their views on Kidsgrove's key strengths, the challenges facing the town, opportunities for improvement and associated priorities and what they want the town to look like by 2030. Consultees were drawn from a number of sectors and a variety of interests to ensure the TIP drew from a diverse range of opinions and priorities for the future success and long-term sustainability of Kidsgrove.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/business/business-information/kidsgrove-town-deal>

- A commercial property market assessment was undertaken with feedback being sought from 22 local property agents and prominent landowners.
- All 63 property owners and businesses within the central area of Kidsgrove that is the focus of this TIP were formally contacted about the Town Fund opportunity and their investment priorities. One-to-one interviews were conducted with those who were willing to participate.
- A “Call for Projects” survey was distributed to allow residents, organisations and businesses to submit project or investment ideas that fit against three themes of the Town Deal Fund and could be included the Town Deal Investment Plans. This was distributed through various channels, including the social media profile of the local MP, community organisations such as VAST; the Town Council and Kidsgrove focused social media accounts. A total of 22 project ideas were submitted for the Kidsgrove TIP via this survey.
- Project working groups were also established for key stakeholders to shape priority projects such as Kidsgrove Leisure centre; Kidsgrove town centre; ‘Enterprise’ (Chatterley Valley and West Avenue); and Kidsgrove station. These groups built on previous engagement activity such as:
  - **Kidsgrove Sports Centre** – This has been subject to significant community engagement with consultations having reached over 4,000 respondents in total, which has informed the plans for refurbishment and operation of the Centre. The TIP is delivering the aspirations of the community that were identified by this previous consultation activity.
  - **Kidsgrove Rail Station** – The station has been a priority for the local community for many years. The successful Access for All funding application had 23 letters of support and a petition with 642 signatures while a consultation event hosted by the Kidsgrove Rail Station Regeneration Project saw over 150 attendees across members of the public, rail users and local businesses, with overwhelming support for the project which forms part of this TIP.

### Consultation and engagement – ongoing

Consultation and engagement have been central to the development of this TIP. The involvement of local stakeholders will be vital to develop the projects within the TIP. The following processes will be adopted to maintain buy-in and successfully deliver projects that receive Town Deal funding:

- The Kidsgrove Town Deal Board will continue to meet on regular basis to guide and provide oversight on all the projects that are shortlisted for Town Deal funding.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will appoint a dedicated Project Manager and an Officer who will oversee the process.
- Working groups for priority projects have met regularly throughout the TIP development process. These groups will continue to meet during the business case and scheme development process.
- Drop-in and virtual consultation sessions will be held with residents, business and any interested stakeholders to collect feedback on high profile projects such as Kidsgrove Station and redeveloping Kidsgrove Town centre.
- Regular updates on key projects will be highlighted in the local press, via a quarterly Town Deal newsletter, and the Kidsgrove Town Deal pages of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council website.
- Finally, engagement and consultation will continue via Kidsgrove Neighbourhood Plan which is currently under development. The Plan shares the same timescales and themes of the TIP. The Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to extensive local public consultation and this will also be an opportunity to inform and promote the TIP initiatives and benefits to the wider public by creating links and narrative with the Neighbourhood Plan process over the period of the plan (which in most cases is 10 years).
- A stakeholder engagement plan is outlined below. This will be updated throughout the process of delivering Kidsgrove’s Town Deal projects.

**Table 3. Stakeholder engagement plan**

Stakeholder Groups	Project	Objective for Engagement	Type of Engagement	Frequency
Kidsgrove Town Deal Board – including local MPs and elected members.	All Kidsgrove Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	To drive delivery; monitor progress; and make key decisions that direct the implementation of Kidsgrove’s Town Investment Plan.	Zoom or face-to-face meetings.	Monthly
Kidsgrove residents, businesses and visitors.	All Kidsgrove Town Deal Projects awarded Heads of Terms by MHCLG.	<p>Enable residents, businesses and visitors to input and provide feedback on project plans and scheme designs. It will also enable Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to communicate the benefits Town Deal investment will deliver and provide updates on project delivery.</p> <p>To mobilise local people in project delivery, for example Friends of Park; Social enterprise at the Railway Station; and Go Kidsgrove CIC.</p> <p>To catalyse local people as advocates for their local area and its future prospects.</p>	<p>Public engagement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drop-in consultation sessions including engagement held in public spaces (e.g. on the canal, at Kidsgrove Railway Station, Kidsgrove’s Parks and town centre) via events and outreach work.</li> <li>- Kidsgrove Town Deal website.</li> <li>- Press releases to local print media outlets.</li> <li>- Presence on social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook.</li> <li>- E-Newsletters – General and Business.</li> <li>- Information Leaflets / Brochures.</li> </ul> <p>The format of any consultation activity will be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions. A more detailed community engagement plan will therefore be developed upon award of Heads of Terms and updated regularly to reflect any changes to COVID-19 guidance.</p>	As and when required
Landowners, agents and investors	Chatterley Valley; West Avenue; Kidsgrove Town Centre and Shared Service Hub.	Identify potential investment and development opportunities in Kidsgrove; leverage private sector funding and maximise the potential of Town Deal funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted drop-in sessions.</li> <li>- Kidsgrove Town Deal website.</li> <li>- Formally writing to businesses if required.</li> <li>- Individual meetings where required.</li> <li>- Formal partnerships or legal agreements.</li> </ul>	Quarterly including on-going engagement as and when required.
Key public sector stakeholders – Staffordshire LEP; Staffordshire County Council; DWP; North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; and Kidsgrove Town Council	Chatterley Valley; Kidsgrove Town centre and Shared Service Hub; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; Kidsgrove Station; Parks Investment.	Informing scheme and business case development including shaping a project’s technical requirements; reflecting service or facility user requirements; identifying appropriate links to complimentary investments and securing match funding.	<p>Engagement will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular and ad-hoc email and written correspondence.</li> <li>- Formal face-to-face or Zoom meetings as and when required.</li> <li>- Formal legal agreements to take forward scheme delivery.</li> </ul>	Ongoing.

Project sponsors and user groups – Aspire; Kidsgrove Rail Station Group; Canal and River Trust; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre Community Group; Newchapel Residents Association.	Kidsgrove town Centre and Shared Service Hub; Kidsgrove Station; Canal Improvements; Kidsgrove Leisure Centre; Parks Investment;	These groups will inform project delivery by advising on design options and providing specialist, technical expertise to inform project delivery (e.g. operational rail industry expertise). They will also provide a means by which community or user engagement can take place.	Engagement will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal engagement will take place via working groups that will be established to take forward any project awarded Heads of Terms.</li> <li>- Formal agreements to take forward scheme delivery.</li> <li>- Ad-hoc communication by email and telephone calls as required.</li> </ul>	Monthly meetings
Rail and public transport users and representative groups (North Staffordshire Rail Partnership)	Kidsgrove Railway Station; Kidsgrove Town Centre and Shared Service Hub; Canal improvements	Raise awareness and gain feedback on the proposed investments in Kidsgrove.	Engagement will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular scheduled user group meetings to provide progress updates and consultation sessions to inform scheme design.</li> <li>- Regular email newsletters to inform of project progress and ensure engagement is maintained in between six monthly meetings.</li> </ul>	Bi-Annual meeting.  Bi-annual email newsletter updates



## Delivery Plan

The following table sets out the phased delivery of the Kidsgrove TIP:

**Table 4. Kidsgrove TIP Delivery Plan**

	Agree Heads of Terms with MHCLG	Business case development (inc optioneering)	Funding Release	Planning	Start construction	Completion
Chatterley Valley	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	May – Nov 21	Mar 22	Jul 24
West Avenue light industrial units	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan – Jun 22	Jul 22	Apr 23
Kidsgrove Station	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Mar – May 22	Jan 23	Dec 24
Canal	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	2024/25 <sup>26</sup>	2022/23	2025/26
Shared Service Hub	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan 22 - June 23	Jul 23	Oct 25
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	December 2020	N/A Shovel Ready Scheme	Jan 21	N/A	Jan 21	Nov 21
Kidsgrove Parks	December 2020	Jan – Dec 21	Jan 22	Jan – Jun 22	Sept 22	Apr 23

The proposed Towns Fund investment programme is deliverable in its entirety by 2025/26. The Delivery Plan and its associated milestones have been developed by stakeholders with a significant track record of project delivery and oversight, including Aspire, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, the Canal and River Trust and Network Rail. Technical input has been provided by a range of specialists including AECOM's Economic Development; Master Planning; Transport; Cost Consultancy; and Landscape Architecture teams. This Plan also draws on expertise from Harworth Group/Cushman and Wakefield (Chatterley Valley), Kier (Trent and Mersey Canal), Network Rail and East Midlands Rail (Kidsgrove Station) and Willmott Dixon (Kidsgrove Sports Centre), therefore providing assurance as to its deliverability.

### Business case development

Business cases will be developed for Town Deal projects once Heads of Terms have been agreed. The Town Deal Board will oversee the development of business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, ensuring compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government. During the business case development process, project owners will be required to report any progress, issues and delays to the Town Deal Board to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner, through the coordination of resources and engagement of additional stakeholders. Upon implementation of the projects, the Board will receive Progress Monitoring Reports and collation of information submitted by each project to record activity, achievement, financial draw down and outputs and to explain variation from expected profiles.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will remain the Accountable Body for the implementation of the TIP. The Council will adopt a programme management approach to support the development of detailed business cases and subsequent delivery of the TIP, preparing and monitoring a comprehensive programme and delivery plan for the TIP priority projects; monitoring and evaluating project and overall programme progress and submitting periodic monitoring reports to the Towns Hub.

<sup>26</sup> Note overlap due to phasing of works. Planning not required for canal-side improvements to be delivered but is needed for the stepped public realm element of the scheme.



## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CABINET

**Report Title:** Knutton Masterplan

**Submitted by:** Executive Director, Commercial Development & Economic Growth

**Portfolios:** Planning and Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** Knutton and Silverdale

#### Purpose of the Report

To report on the Knutton Masterplan, prepared by planning consultants White Young Green, and jointly commissioned and overseen by Newcastle Borough Council, Aspire Housing and Staffordshire County Council which assesses the opportunities for bringing forward new housing investment in the Knutton area and for making improvements to the quality of the community facilities and the physical environment enjoyed by the people of Knutton.

#### Recommendations

1. That the Knutton Masterplan be approved in principle for public consultation and the result of that consultation be reported back for Cabinet's consideration.
2. That opportunities be explored and taken to pursue funding through the Government's Town Deal programme for Newcastle to provide some of the resources necessary to deliver some of the investment proposals contained in the Knutton Masterplan.
3. That when the outcome of the Newcastle Town Deal submission is known and therefore the fuller financial implications of delivering the Knutton masterplan are clearer, a more complete report is brought to Cabinet.
4. That a Project Board be established to take forward the masterplan and any subsequent delivery plan, with membership including Newcastle Borough Council, Aspire Housing and Staffordshire County Council and that this council's representation to include officers, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency.
5. That discussions are held with Aspire Housing to explore options for the early redevelopment of the Borough Council-owned sites identified for possible housing development as a means for expediting the delivery of this aspect of the masterplan.
6. That should any suitable sites become available in the area that authority is given for the Council to directly purchase or work in partnership with Aspire to make appropriate purchases.

#### Reasons

To establish a clear and agreed approach to meeting the investment needs of the Knutton area, to assess the opportunities for new housing development and for the improvements which might be made in the community and business infrastructure of the area.

## 1. **Background and issues**

- 1.1 Knutton is one of the more deprived areas of the Borough and is an area characterised by low incomes and a housing mix mainly comprising older terraced housing and post war social housing. The area, together with neighbouring Cross Heath and Silverdale has been the focus of regeneration activity in the past, i.e. through an SRB Programme and the Housing Renewal Pathfinder programme, which helped bring about initiatives such as the local Children's Centre (the Sure Start Centre), the redevelopment of the former Eternit Tileries (now a small business park), investment in the 'Knutton Terraces' Facelift project, and the redevelopment of the former Collins and Aikman factory for the new housing development at Millrise including the provision of a new medical centre and pharmacists.
- 1.2 Knutton has a number of social and community facilities which are now in very poor physical condition, and has a very limited High Street retail offer with only a small number of basic convenience shops. There is a sizeable vacant site in the centre of the village which was the site of the former recreation centre (demolished some years ago following the building of Jubilee 2 in the town centre). A County Council run enterprise centre is located on the High Street, providing some local employment, but, as a converted pre-war middle school, is not really fit for the needs of modern business and visually is a negative feature in the townscape. Two local Aspire owned and run residential schemes in the area are also now showing their age and they too are no longer considered to be fit for purpose. The major outdoor recreation facility in the area, 'The Wammy', is the base for a number of local sports pitches but is unable to operate to its full potential as it doesn't have the benefit of changing and showering facilities.
- 1.3 Knutton could be so much better, but it lacks investment and with appropriate targeted investment, it is considered that Knutton could be a much more attractive place in which to live and work. The purpose of commissioning a masterplan for the area is to assess the needs of the area and the opportunities for investment, both in new housing development and in improved social and community facilities.
- 1.4 In May last year, the Borough Council was offered £50,000 from OPE (the government's 'One Public Estate' programme, which encourages collaboration amongst public landowners) to commission a masterplan for the area. To this, a further £25,000 was added by Aspire Housing so that it would come aboard the commissioning team helping to shape and oversee the project. This work stream was reported to Cabinet in November 2018 (One Public Estate – Knutton Masterplanning Project, Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018).
- 1.5 A brief was prepared for the study and in August last year, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, planning consultants White, Young, Green (WYG) were commissioned to undertake the masterplan. Since this time, WYG has been working closely with representatives of the three commissioning bodies to take the work forward and develop emerging options and proposals.
- 1.6 In March this year, when options and proposals were beginning to emerge, a workshop was held with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, the two ward councillors and representatives of Knutton Community Centre and Knutton Ex Servicemen's Club. A number of messages emerged from this, three key ones being;
  - broad political support, in principle, for the development of land at Black Bank Road for new housing, particularly if linked to improvements in sports facilities on The Wammy,

- concern / objection to the idea of re-locating the community centre to The Wammy, as this was seen as too far from the village centre (in spite of the financial benefits to be gained by co-location with a football club), and
- the expectation / demand that all s.106 monies arising from housing or other development in the Knutton area must be retained within the Knutton area and not added to a wider Borough-wide 'pot' used for funding infrastructure projects elsewhere.

Consequently WYG prepared a draft masterplan for discussion with the commissioning team, and this has since been developed further and revised. This work was substantially completed in May since which time the consultants and the commissioning team have been discussing how to undertake a public consultation on the Plan given the constraints of Covid. A plan for this has now been drawn up comprising local posters drawing attention to a dedicated web site, together with a social media campaign.

## 2. Proposal

2.1 The Knutton masterplan and its sister document, the implementation plan, which sets out how the three commissioning bodies might go about delivering the recommendations made, runs to 80 pages and for this reason an 11 page excerpt is reproduced as an appendix to this report (the full report is, of course, available and will be posted out to Members on request). The plan comprises:

- A market review of the area, assessing, amongst other things, a realistic expectation of land values and house values in the area (necessary to ensure that the proposals are grounded in financial realism)
- A review of the local context including the physical characteristics of the area and relevant planning policy
- An assessment of the key development opportunities
- Optioneering
- the recommended masterplan, and
- An assessment of viability and delivery.

2.2 The key features of the Plan are:

- The provision of a **new village hall**, together with the creation of a new **village green** with **equipped play facilities** close to the High Street frontage of the former Recreation Centre site. This has three important benefits, it would allow Knutton's existing ageing and rather dilapidated community centre to be replaced, it would help to 're-make' the fractured High Street, both in terms of physical presence and in terms of helping generate greater footfall and, together with the new village green, it would create **a stronger focus** of activity to the centre of the village (The High Street).
- This would allow for the redevelopment of the present community centre site to be redeveloped for (about **23 units of**) **housing**. (It is also recommended that the now

closed PCT health clinic next to the community centre might be acquired in order to create a larger site for redevelopment. This is being pursued through the Town Deal bid)

- The Orange telecom mast located at the centre of the former Rec. site would then need to be re-located to a site elsewhere in the Knutton area allowing the remainder of the Rec site, together with open land to the south, currently occupied by disused tennis courts and an old 3G five a side pitch, to be redeveloped for (around **65 units of**) **housing**.
- **A new pavilion** would be built at the front of the Wammy, beside the existing car park, providing changing and showering facilities and meeting space for teams using the grouped football pitches located there, allowing the pitches to be used to their full potential. The Borough Council already has some s. 106 monies 'banked' from an earlier development for this facility to help pay for its cost..
- This development would allow for land to the west of the Children's Centre off Black Bank Road to be developed for (around **123 units of**) **housing**. This site probably offers Knutton with its best opportunity to attract higher income families to the village which, in turn, helps to raise local property values and broaden the range of people using local facilities, including the local school.
- The plan puts forward proposals to **replace two wings of the Knutton business centre** which occupies a prominent site on the south side of The High Street, next to the former Rec. site. This would enable some of the more outmoded accommodation to be replaced with that better suited to modern business needs. Development of the Black Bank Road site (see above) would provide the County Council with some additional financial resources which would, with County Council agreement, be available to be re-invested into modernising the business centre. As well as creating better business accommodation, this investment would also, like the new village hall and green, enhance the townscape and appearance of the centre of the village.
- Proposals are put forward for '**traffic calming**' to reduce the speed of traffic from both commuters and HGVs, passing through the centre of the village and so improve pedestrian safety along Black Bank Road and Knutton High Street, making Knutton a more attractive and safer living environment..
- WYG have met with but have been unable to persuade the owners of the **Ex-Servicemen's Club** to pool resources with the Community Centre and house the two together in a purpose designed new building which would meet the needs of both on one site as the Club did not wish to move from its current premises. In this one respect, one of the hoped for outcomes of the brief could not be met. The Plan does though provide for a modest (three unit) housing development on the corner of the car park to the Ex-Servicemen's Club, land which is owned by the Borough Council, and this would provide something of a new gateway to what is presently an open bare and visually unappealing site at the entrance to The High Street.
- The Aspire-owned housing sites at **Gordon Court and Castletown Grange** (the latter located a little to the east of The Wammy) would be redeveloped in situ with a form of housing which Aspire considers to be more appropriate to modern needs.
- Proposals are included in the Plan for a re-configuration of the **junction arrangement** at Milehouse Lane / Church Lane, together with improved pedestrian crossing facilities here, designed to both improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

- **Implementation and funding** for much of the new social, leisure and business investment would come primarily from a bid to Government for Town Deal funding (to be submitted in January next year), together with complementary funding from the County and Borough Councils, Homes England and Aspire Housing in the case of the affordable housing provision and the private sector (the largest element of the overall programme) in the case of the private sector housing development proposed.

### 3. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

3.1 The masterplan is recommended for adoption as a basis for future targeted investment in the Knutton area, as it fundamentally meets the objectives of the brief, which are to:

- increase and speed up the pace of new housing development in and around the centre of Knutton
- create a stronger focus to the High Street (both functionally and in townscape terms) and
- modernise local community, leisure and business facilities, specifically in this case in providing a new Village Hall and village green, a new Sports Pavilion on The Wammy and improvements to the business centre. (The decision by the PCT to close the small PCT health clinic next to the existing community centre is outside the Borough Council's influence).

3.2 Clearly to take ideas set out in the draft masterplan will require significant investment and dedication of resources. In order to effectively manage this it is recommended that a Project Board is established to take forward the masterplan and any subsequent delivery plan. It is recommended that the membership of this Board includes Aspire, the County Council, with Borough Council representation to include Officers, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency.

### 4. **Options Considered**

4.1 Much debate has taken place between the consultants and the client team over whether a new community centre might be better co-located alongside an existing sports club based on The Wammy as this was seen as being more financially sustainable in the long run. This option however was rejected at the stakeholders' workshop as it was seen as taking (another) facility out of the centre of the village.

4.2 Similarly, there has been much debate about the future of the after school club, currently located next to the community centre and whether this could be provided within either the Children's Centre on Black Bank Road or within St Mary's Primary School. It has financial implications for the proposed village hall as it requires the hall to be bigger to accommodate it. On the other hand, it generates footfall and provides the village hall with further purpose and this is the option recommended.

4.3 Options for *how* the plan might be delivered has been the subject of more discussion amongst the client group than the recommended land use proposals themselves (since they are largely uncontroversial). This is because many of the proposals listed in para 2.2 above, other than the proposed new privately funded housing, will need to be funded and these costs will largely fall on the local authorities. One of the reasons why the proposals show the level of ambition set out in the plan is that during the life of the commission, it became clear that Newcastle could / would be the recipient of funding from the Government's Town Deal programme, and consequently elements of the emerging masterplan have been shared with the Town Deal team and a project has been devised, 'Putting the Heart back into Knutton Village'. This has formed part of

Newcastle's Town Deal Board's submission, the outcome of which will be known in the new year.

## 5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

5.1 There are none.

## 6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 Knutton is one of the Borough's more deprived neighbourhoods and therefore investment in this area of the Borough would have the effect of improving the local housing offer, the quality of the physical environment, local social facilities and the local business infrastructure and, together, would have the effect of reducing Borough inequality.

## 7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 Most of the overall cost of the full scheme set out in the masterplan is in the form of housing and would therefore fall on the private sector in the form of most of the new housing proposed and Aspire Housing (backed by Homes England) in providing new affordable housing.

7.2 The remainder will fall on the local authorities to meet. Until the result of the submission for Town Deal funding is known, the extent of the financial costs to the Borough and County Councils is not known and it is suggested, that following that decision, a follow-up report is made which clarifies the financial implications arising from the proposals on the Borough Council more precisely.

7.3 The Town Deal Board (and through them, Government) has been asked to provide:

- £200,000 to cover the cost of acquiring the former Knutton Clinic and clear the site for redevelopment
- £200,000 toward the cost of de-risking the former Recreation Centre site (much of which is made up of the cost of relocating the telecom mast on the site)
- £250,000 to cover the cost of drilling and grouting the two key development sites in the masterplan - former Rec site and the land at Black Bank Road
- £790,000 to meet the cost of building a new village hall and a new village green and play area
- £200,000 toward the cost of building a new sports pavilion at The Wammy to provide changing and showing facilities (toward which the Borough Council will also contribute)
- £300,000 for a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS) on the Black Bank Road site
- £920,000 toward the cost of remodelling the business centre, with the provision of two modern wings, of purpose built business centre accommodation (toward which the County Council will also contribute),
- £150,000 to pay for the cost of traffic calming measures on Black Bank Road and The High Street, and
- £400,000 toward the cost of implementing the redesign of the Knutton Crossroads highway junction, including the provision of a pedestrian crossing.



7.4 The development of the Black Bank Road site will provide a financial surplus for the County Council, some of which can be used to meet the cost of the business centre improvements not met by the Town Deal (see 7.3 above).

7.5 Part of the cost of redeveloping the former recreation centre site, the community centre site, a small part of the Ex-Servicemen's Club car park and Aspire's two existing housing schemes, will be the subject of detailed discussions between Aspire Housing and Homes England.

7.6 Aspire Housing have offered to project manage the redevelopment of the housing sites listed above in a collaborative arrangement between themselves and Newcastle Borough Council (this will not necessarily involve the County Council) and it is recommended that this is explored further as it may provide a quicker means of delivering the desired form of development proposed than to negotiate the sale of individual development sites. This will need to take account of the value of the Borough Council's land holdings (the former Rec. site, the Acacia Avenue site, part of the Club car park and the community centre site), which will be the subject of negotiations between the two parties in the normal way. The financial implications of this approach are not known at this stage.

## 9. **Major Risks**

The major risks are as follows:

### 9.1 Some of the identified housing sites not being viable.

- Likelihood: medium to high
- Impact: high
- Mitigation: early engagement with Homes England with a view to their providing gap funding

### 9.2 Unforeseen development costs, e.g. In terms of ground conditions and / or drainage

- Likelihood: medium to high
- Impact: medium to high
- Mitigation: as above - early engagement with Homes England with a view to their providing gap funding:

### 9.3 Lack of sufficient demand for housing

- Likelihood: low to medium
- Impact: medium to high
- Mitigation: the provision of quality homes at an affordable price, together with the improved social and environmental conditions in the Knutton area would be expected to drive up appeal of the area and the demand for the new housing

### 9.4 The failure of the Town Deal bid / inability to fund the proposed improvements to social and business infrastructure

- Likelihood: low to medium
- Impact: high
- Mitigation: ensuring a well-argued quality Town Deal submission. Scale back proposals if this is unsuccessful.

### 9.5 Lack of public support for the proposals

- Likelihood: medium
- Impact: medium to high
- Mitigation: the clear demonstration of the benefits of the scheme as a whole to the people of Knutton.

## 10 **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 The proposals contained in the masterplan support the principals of urban renewal and urban regeneration by investing in the infrastructure and in the housing environment of an existing urban village, re-employing (mainly) brownfield sites and supporting the retention and growth of the population in the urban area rather than following the market-driven trend of moving into suburbia or the wider countryside, which are less sustainable locations in the long term, being less accessible by means of travel other than the car and being more demanding of green field land.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The proposals are expected to lead to a need to make financial commitments to the area, though the details of this are not yet known. This will be reported in more detail to Cabinet once the result of the Town Deal submission is known.

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

12.1 'One Public Estate – Knutton Master Planning Project', Cabinet 7th November 2018.

## 13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Knutton Village Master Plan; White Young Green and Thomas Lister.

**KNUTTON**

**MASTERPLAN**



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### Document verification

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# INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1

# INTRODUCTION

## Aims & Objectives

WYG has been commissioned by Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council, Stafford Borough Council and Aspire Housing to prepare a regeneration masterplan for the centre of Knutton, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The aim of the masterplan is to put the heart back into the centre of Knutton. This will be achieved through creating a greater sense of place and a strong gateway to the High Street; by providing facilities for the local community; and by delivering new, aspirational housing for the local centre.

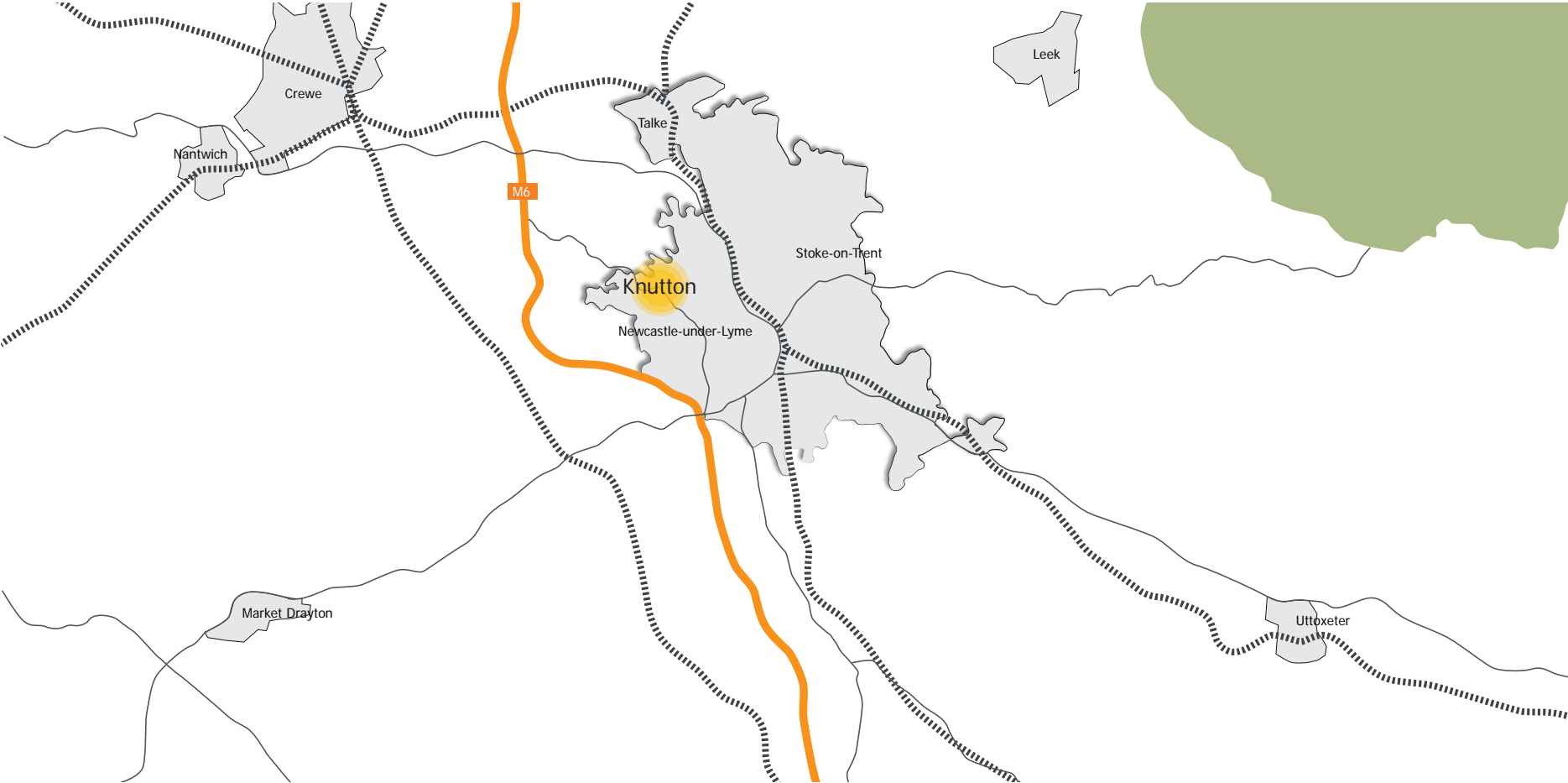
*"Putting  
the heart  
back into  
Knutton"*





# CONTEXT

## Wider Context



# MARKET REVIEW



# MARKET REVIEW

## Summary

This section provides a summary of the full Market Assessment, produced by Thomas Lister as appended to this document. It aims to inform the masterplan by undertaking a review of the current market conditions for both residential and employment uses within the vicinity of Knutton.

The review has taken into account competing schemes within the area and potential demand based on current market activity.

### **Knutton**

As you may expect from a former mining village location, Knutton's facilities are limited with only a few small local shops. The area benefits from a primary school, St Mary's C of E Academy, which is OFSTED rated Good.

There are a number of community facilities within Knutton, including an Ex-Serviceman's Club, Community Centre, Medical

Centre, Enterprise Centre and a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), which form part of the identified sites to be considered as part of the masterplanning proposals.

Knutton is served by an hourly bus service that runs along Lower Milehouse Lane and Church Lane. The service provides public transport access to Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre, as well as Meir situated off the A50 and Audley situated to the north of Knutton.

### **Economic Overview**

Broad baseline statistics have been gathered from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and NOMIS, along with generic housing market information in order to set out the context for more detailed analysis in relation to proposals to bring forward the subject area, detailed later within this report. The statistics opposite relate to the area of Newcastle-under-Lyme.



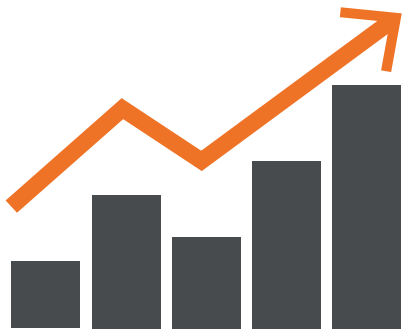
76.7% of population economically active



Over 46% of employed residents estimated to be working in higher income occupations



37.5% achieve NVQ4 and above, 4.4% higher than West Midlands average



Wholesale & retail trade and repair of vehicles are most dominant business sectors



87.4% of businesses are micro enterprises



Gross weekly pay of £494.50 against GB average of £571.10

## Residential Overview

### Current Market Conditions

A detailed analysis of supply, demand, take up rates and values has been undertaken in order to ascertain the current position within the market and any variations between demand and supply.

### Housing Stock

Dwelling Type	Existing Stock Numbers		Percentage Stock Total	
	Knutton and Silverdale	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Knutton and Silverdale	Newcastle-under-Lyme
Detached	126	13,301	6.6%	24.5%
Semi-detached	971	23,761	51.1%	43.8%
Terraced	667	10,963	35.1%	20.2%
Flats	138	6,180	7.2%	11.4%
Other	0	49	0	0.1%
Total	1,902	54,254		

Source: Census 2011 via Nomis

### Property Type & Price

A review of the Land Registry Price Paid Database has been undertaken in relation to existing stock sold within the ST5 post code over the last 12 months. A total of 1,038 transactions have taken place over this time and an overview of these have been provided within the table below:

Property Type	Number Sold	Average Price Paid	Highest Price Paid	Lowest Price Paid
Detached	248	£276,019	£1,000,000	£90,000
Semi-detached	441	£152,497	£373,000	£50,000
Terraced	311	£104,105	£418,000	£45,000
Flats	38	£100,475	£230,000	£46,000

## Rental Values

A breakdown of the median rental values established based on the number of bedrooms is provided within the table below:

Size of Property	Number of Properties Surveyed	Average Rent Per Month
Room	30	£345
Studio	-	N/A
One Bedroom	60	£420
Two Bedrooms	330	£500
Three Bedrooms	220	£600
Four or more Bedrooms	60	£850

Source: Valuation Office Agency, 2019

Following a Rightmove search, it was noted that there are currently some 241 properties advertised as being available to let within the Newcastle-under-Lyme area, there are only seven available to let within Knutton with four of these being rooms within shared accommodation. By extending the search area by a radius of 0.25 miles from Knutton, a total of 29 properties are being advertised as being available. The average asking rents per calendar month are as follows:

Property Type	One Bedroom	Two Bedrooms	Three Bedrooms	Four or More Bedrooms
Detached	-	-	£900	£1,000
Semi-detached	-	£690	£795	£820
Terraced	-	£668	£475	-
Flat	-	£550	£625	-
Shared Accommodation	-	-	£920	£1,518

Source: Rightmove, 2019

### Affordable Housing

As reported within the updated SHMA in 2017, there is a total affordable housing need within Newcastle-under-Lyme of 242 dwellings per annum, which is considered required for a period of five years from 2017 to meet the unmet demand for affordable housing within the Borough. After this unmet demand is met, it is considered that there will be a demand for 199 dwellings per annum. The affordable housing need by size for the Borough is reported within the below table:

	One bedroom	Two bedroom	Three bedroom	Four plus bedroom	Total
Shortfall in affordable housing	23	17	2	2	44
Annual net new need	58	45	88	7	199
Net annual affordable housing need (five years)	81	63	90	9	242
Percentage	33%	26%	37%	4%	

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, June 2017

It is clear that there is a need for affordable housing across the Borough and there is a historic unmet need, that is increasing the requirement for delivery of new accommodation. It is considered that there is a requirement for a range of property types within the Borough, however, the focus should be on the delivery of smaller properties of between one and three bedrooms, with the greatest need being for three bedroom properties. This requirement is broadly in line with the likely demand for open market sale units.

**Older Persons Accommodation**

Elderly persons accommodation is considered a key area for review and therefore a review of existing elderly persons accommodation has been undertaken. The search has reviewed elderly persons accommodation within a circa 2 km radius of Knutton.

Based on those properties found within the search there is in region of 288 flats for older people, which predominantly comprise of affordable rent units. There are in the region of 161 bungalows within the area for older people and as with the flats are predominantly on an affordable rent tenure. 369 care home beds have been identified as part of the research undertaken, these are owned and managed by a mix of private care providers (or individuals) and social landlords.

As reported within the updated SHMA in 2017, it is predicted that

the growth in the older population will increase the number of residents living in communal establishments and there will be a requirement for circa 1,450 bed spaces between 2013-2039.

It is clear that there will be demand for older persons accommodation on the basis of the predicted growth in the older population within the area. It is noted that generally care and retirement living providers look to deliver schemes that are within close proximity to local facilities such as shops and therefore Knutton may not be an attractive opportunity. There may, however, be an opportunity to deliver single level private accommodation, such as bungalows. Whilst not specifically aimed at older persons this accessible accommodation type could be attractive to the older persons demographic, such as bungalows. Bungalows could also help meet the affordable housing

need for smaller properties of one and two bedrooms.

The map opposite identifies the location of older persons accommodation within the vicinity of Knutton.





### **Over 55s Housing**

It is noted that based on those properties found within the search that there is in region of 288 flats for older people, which predominantly comprise of affordable rent units. There are in the region of 161 bungalows within the area for older people and as with the flats are predominantly on an affordable rent tenure.

It is clear that there will be demand for older persons accommodation on the basis of the predicted growth in the older population within the area. It is noted that generally care and retirement living providers look to deliver schemes that are within close proximity to local facilities such as shops and therefore Knutton may not be an attractive opportunity for older persons accommodation such as an extra-care facility, unless a greater range of facilities are provided as part of the wider proposals.

There may, however, be an opportunity to deliver single level private accommodation, such as bungalows, or maisonettes, aimed at over 55's without any care or communal facilities, aimed at those looking to downsize. Bungalows and maisonettes could also help meet the affordable housing need for smaller properties of one and two bedrooms.

It is noted from the above information that there are far more older persons accommodation available on an affordable rent basis, than that of shared ownership / market sale. It is possible that within any new scheme the older persons accommodation provision of either maisonettes / bungalows, or both, could be a mixture of market sale, shared ownership and affordable rent.

### **Employment & Commercial Market Overview**

Research has been undertaken to assess the current employment and commercial market and market conditions within Knutton and the surrounding areas.

The location of Knutton itself is not a predominantly commercial area with the current commercial / employment uses within the immediate vicinity of the high street extending predominantly to small locally operated retail outlets, servicing the residential catchment, in addition to The Enterprise Centre, a collection of workshop / starter units, owned and managed by the council.

There is a cluster of units to the south west of the high street, on Brock Way, off B5368 and on Stonewall Way, off B5044 which comprise of units of a variety of sizes and specifications, including yards, warehouses and small

industrial units. Further commercial properties are located to the north of Knutton, in Cross Heath / Broad Meadow providing a wide variety of commercial and employment properties including trade counter, automotive, distribution warehouses and office accommodation of varying sizes.

Given the current offering of retail and convenience stores within Knutton and the surrounding areas, including a large Morrisons supermarket, a Co-op Food store and Sainsbury's (all within 1 mile) in addition to smaller retail stores in closer proximity (Knutton Village Stores, Bargain Booze and Barmy Bills), it is unlikely that there would be demand for any further retail or convenience within the locality, particularly given the close proximity of Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre and the strong retail offering there.

It is also likely that the sites currently under consideration would not support retail development given the area that would be required.

### Newcastle Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre, owned and managed by Staffordshire Council provides 36 workshop units ranging from 14 to 59 sqm (151 to 601 sq ft) on flexible rolling monthly licence agreements. The workshops are provided with communal and fully maintained WC's and kitchen areas. The accommodation provides basic, storage / workshop units, which are occupied by a variety of businesses. It is understood that there are currently vacant units to let within the Enterprise Centre.

Our team met with Nicola Kent who represents the Enterprise Centre at Staffordshire County Council in October 2019.

Nicola informed the group that there are 36 units at the Centre, the majority of which are small workshop units. There are four offices, however there has been no market interest in these for some

time. There are current plans to knock together two of these office spaces to form another workshop space. One of these spaces is used by the caretaker and one for desk storage.

The Council do not make a large profit on the NEC, but that the low rents provide a niche opportunity for local small businesses. If we were to provide a new Enterprise Centre elsewhere the investment in the facility would require an increase in rents, thereby driving out many of the existing businesses. It was therefore agreed that retaining the existing facility would be preferable.

There are a number of businesses with similar uses within the Centre. It would be useful to cluster these together. It was suggested that a local produce small store might work at the front of the site adjacent to High Street. Occupiers have included caterers,

brewers, metal and wood workers. Occupants make lunch time trips to the local shop in Knutton.

The building at the front of the site, closest to High Street, has the lowest occupancy level. This building and the parking in front could potentially be used to improve the setting to High Street.

# LOCAL CONTEXT



# LOCAL CONTEXT

## Constraints & Opportunities

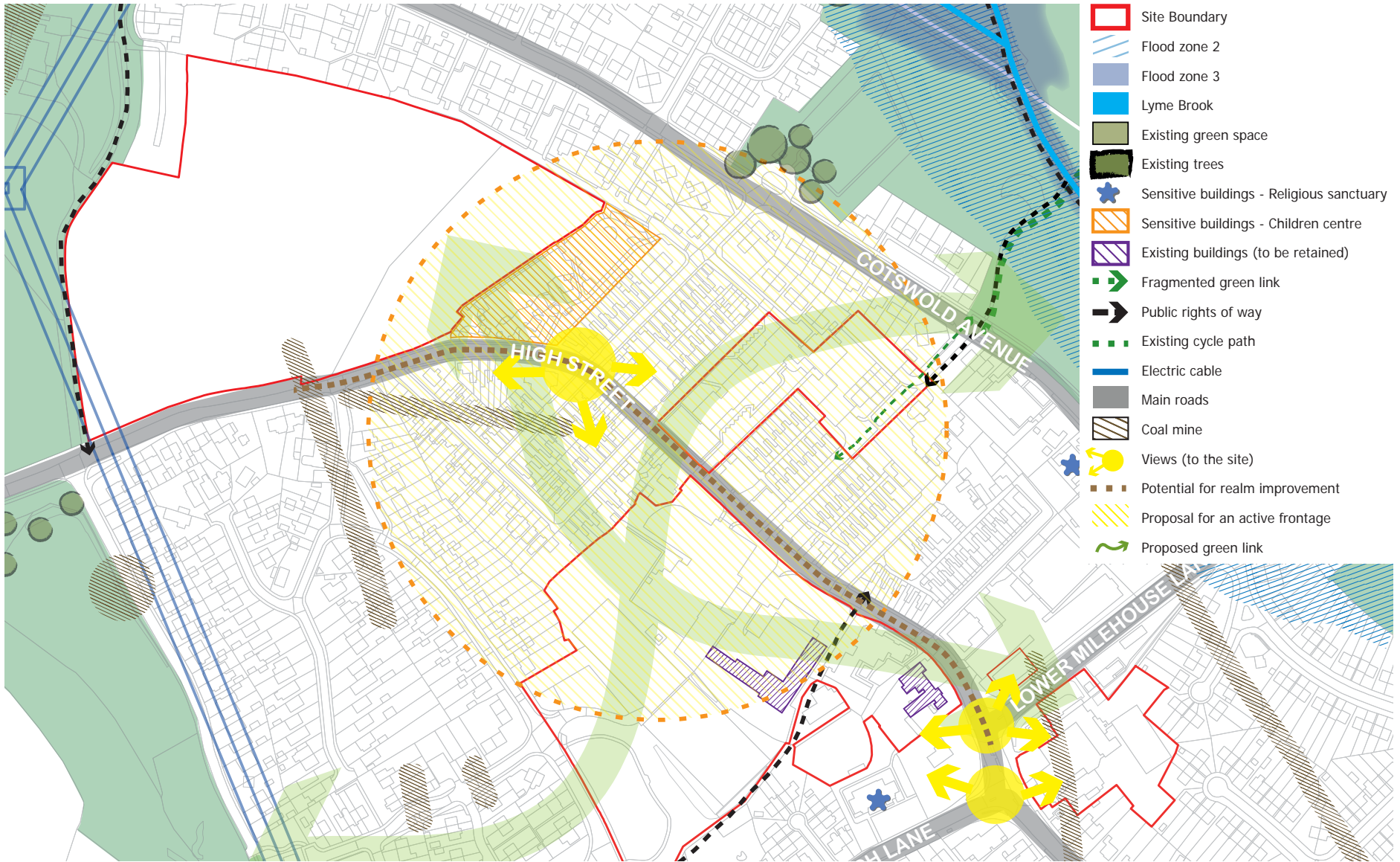
Although detailed technical constraints studies have not been undertaken at this stage, a review of available constraints information for Knutton has been undertaken. The plan opposite illustrates these constraints, alongside opportunities for improvement and development. A number of potential constraints have been highlighted, which include:

- Ground conditions associated with coal mining
- Barriers created by traffic on High Street
- Flood risk
- Existing uses adjacent to potential development sites
- Potential demolition costs

Opportunities include:

- Vacant sites including the former recreation centre
- Opportunity to create a strong gateway to Knutton
- Change of character at High Street











# LOCAL CONTEXT

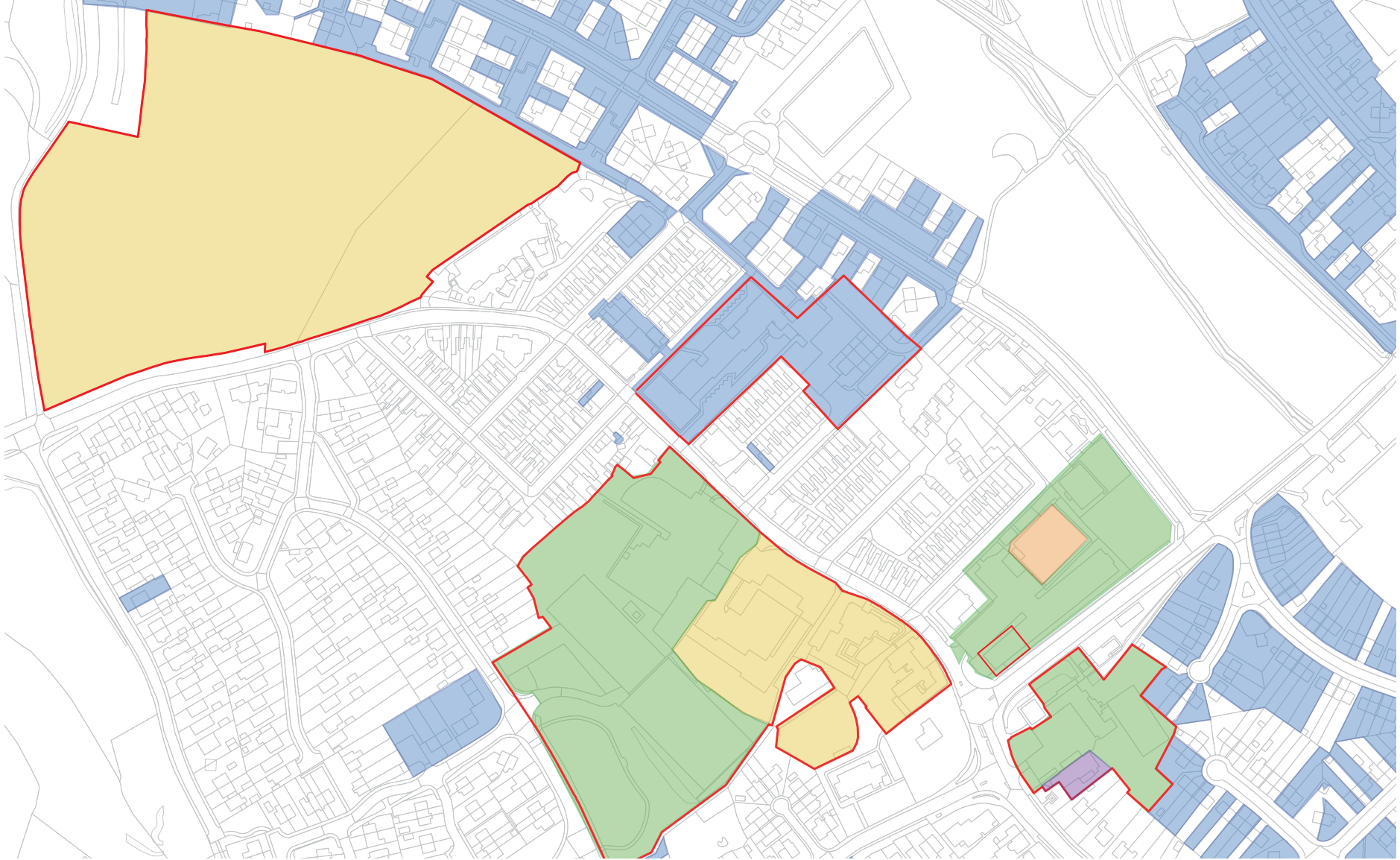
## Land Ownership

There are a number of large areas in Knutton which are owned by Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council and by Staffordshire County Council. The plan opposite illustrates these land ownerships, along with land owned by Aspire Housing and the NHS.

-  Site Boundary
-  Aspire Owned Land
-  Newcastle Borough Council Owned Land
-  Staffordshire County Council Owned Land
-  Privately Owned Land
-  NHS Owned Land

The areas identified on the plan illustrate key opportunities for development by the Councils and Aspire Housing and provide a strong starting point for the consideration of masterplanning proposals.





# AREAS OF FOCUS



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Key Development Sites

Section 2 highlighted the land within Knutton which is owned by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Aspire Housing. As the three key stakeholders in the masterplanning process, their landholdings formed a starting point from which to consider proposals to improve the centre of Knutton. A series of development opportunity sites have been identified, these include:

- Land between High Street / Acacia Avenue
- Land at Blackbank Road
- Community Centre and former Knutton Clinic
- Land at Lower Milehouse Lane
- Gordon Court (Aspire)
- Castletown Grange (Aspire)

The following section sets out the constraints and opportunities associated with each of these sites. These factors will feed into the development appraisal and delivery strategy for each site.

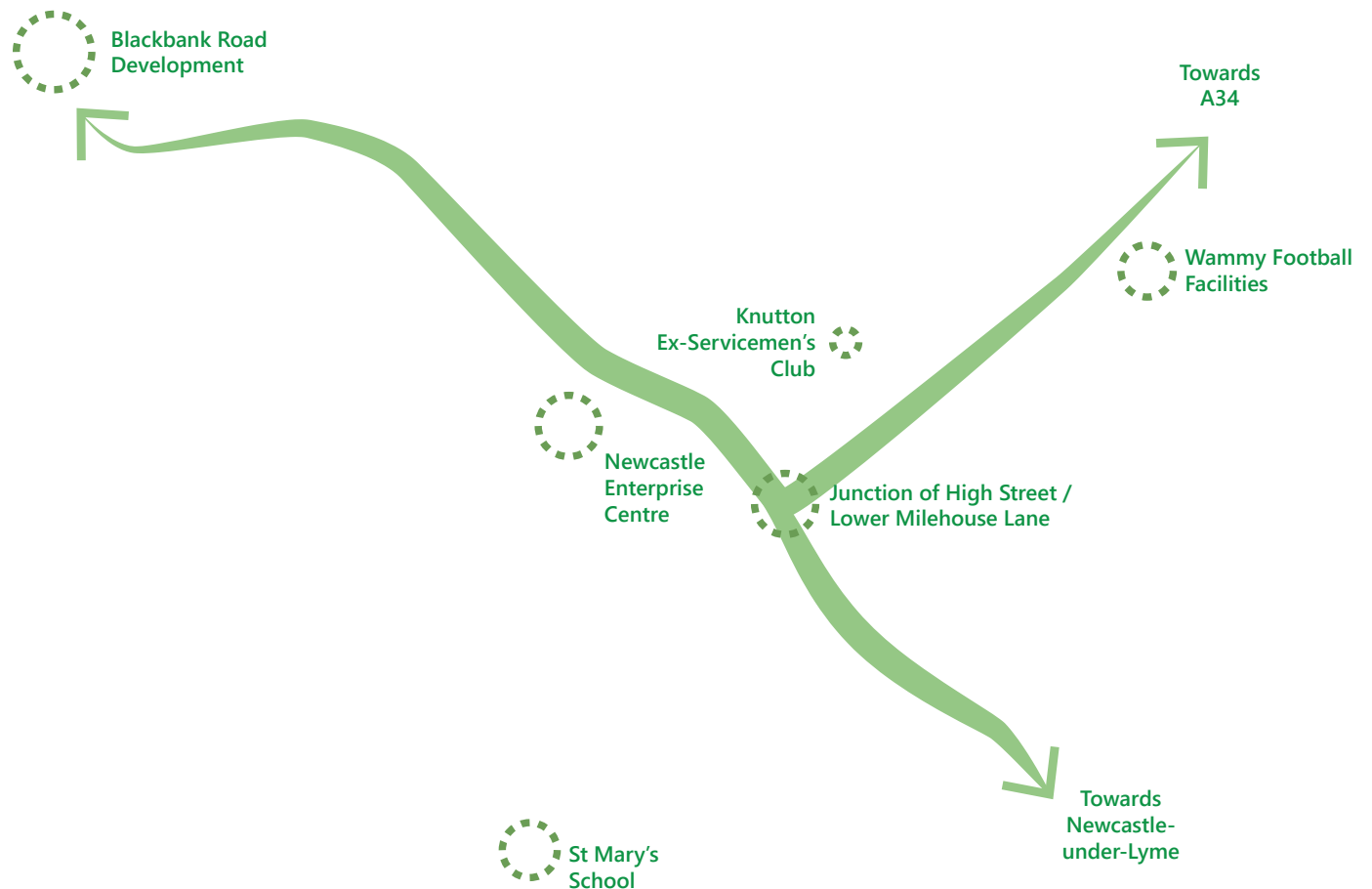


The sites identified will be considered in the context of the wider area, including how they link together and to existing facilities.

Consideration needs to be given to the overall picture of Knutton and how these development sites work together to deliver the Vision. Phasing will be important, as will a strategic view regarding the type and tenure of development and how this is strategically located throughout Knutton.

This will be particularly important with regard to Aspire Housing's wider housing provision strategy and how development at Gordon Court and Castletown Grange is incorporated.

A strategic consideration will also be important with regard to the proposed delivery strategy. Due to the achievable sales rates locally, viability will be a constraining factor, meaning that these sites will need to be considered as a whole.



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Aspire Housing

The most central area of Knutton, between High Street and Acacia Avenue, forms one of the key redevelopment opportunities. Knutton Recreation Centre was formerly located on High Street, in the northern corner of this site. The Centre had been vacant since 2012 and was demolished and the site cleared in 2016.

A bowling green was formerly accessed through the site, however this is now inaccessible and is no longer in use.

### Existing Buildings

Three buildings remain on the site, these include Newcastle Enterprise Centre, the CEDARS short stay school and pupil referral unit and the former School House.

The Market Review in Section 2 summaries the Council's position with regard to the Enterprise Centre. It is important that this building remains in Knutton as it provides a specialist service which could not be replicated elsewhere. There is an opportunity to improve the visual amenity of the buildings and the Centre's presence on the High Street.

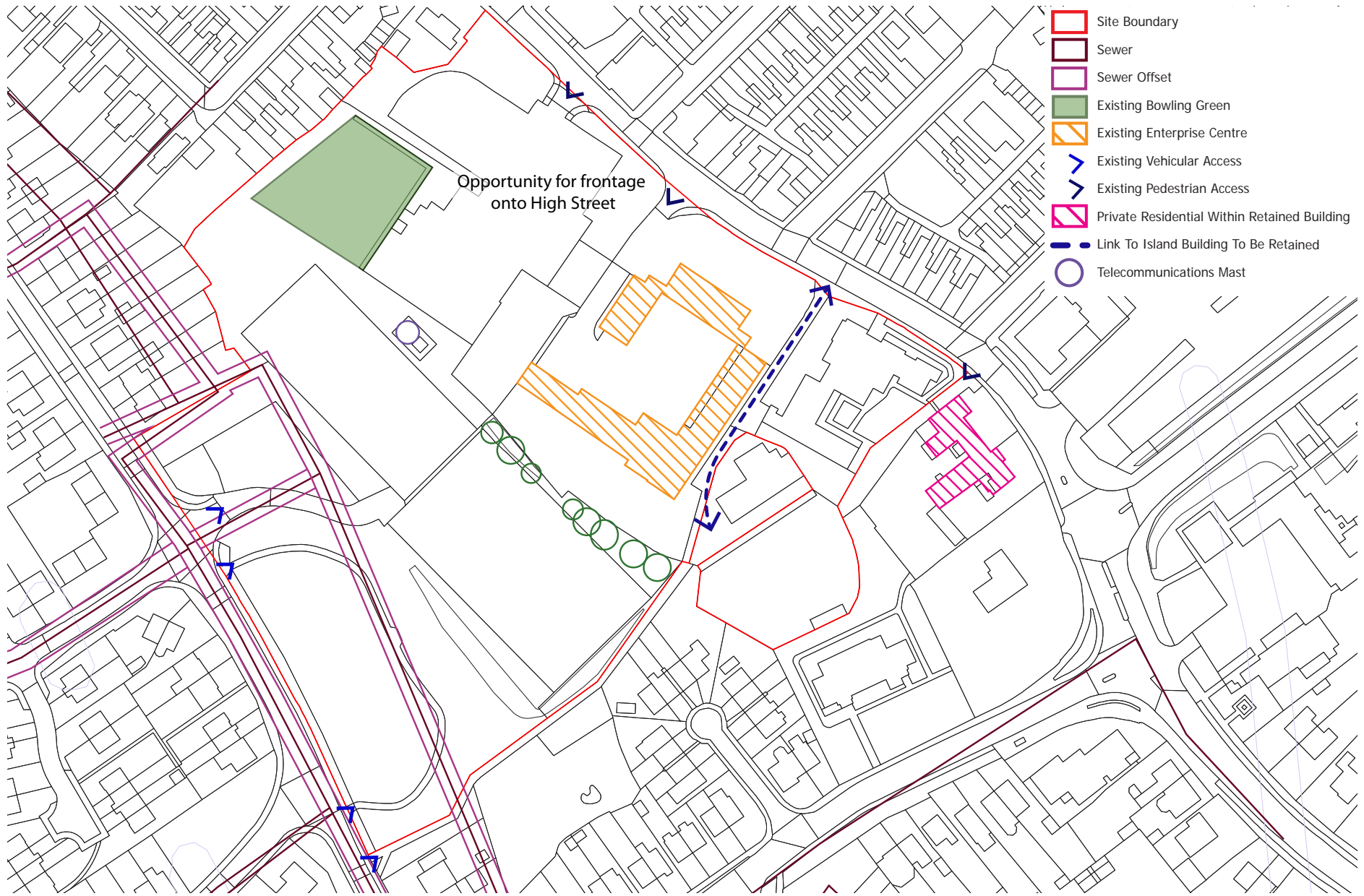
At the time of writing, Staffordshire County Council are undertaking a review of the CEDARS pupil referral unit and its location. It is understood that a new purpose built facility is likely to be best provided in Newcastle-under-Lyme or surrounding area.

The former School House, located adjacent to St Mary's Vicarage, is privately owned. It is understood that the current owner has plans to convert this building to residential use.

### Utilities

Severn Trent Water combined and surface water sewers run across the south-west of the site.

A telecoms communication mast is located in the centre of the site. At the time of writing, contact had been made with the service provider's agent. It is recommended that the mast is moved away from the site. The associated cost is included in the appraisal produced by Thomas Lister which sits alongside this document.



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## High Street / Acacia Avenue

### Sports Facilities

An assessment has been undertaken of the sports facilities associated with the site. This includes the former 3g pitch located to the south of the County Council's Enterprise Centre and the former tennis courts and bowls green, located to the south of the site of the former Recreation Centre.

Through site visits a further grassed space was identified in the masterplan area, adjacent to the former Recreation Centre, part of the land adjoining Acacia Avenue. The site is general open space and its status and future use / replacement should therefore be subject to general open space policy and considerations as opposed to playing fields policy. It was therefore not included in the formal sports facilities assessment.

In terms of the 3g pitch the Council confirm that the pitch was grant funded in 2005 by the Football Foundation. The grant conditions are in place for 21 years, however, negotiations have been held and accepted for these conditions to be transferred to the new 3g pitch at Keele University, for the balance of the agreement. The football development programme previously run at Knutton now takes place at Keele in partnership with Port Vale FC.

These arrangements are reflected in the PPS and Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP), which in terms of 3g pitches, identifies King's School in Kidsgrove as a priority.

Nothing has changed since the 2015 PPS. The former 3g pitch is therefore considered to have been ad-dressed in planning terms, with mitigation via the new 3g pitch at Keele University. The site can therefore be re-developed without any further mitigation.

In terms of the former tennis and bowls provision the 2015 PPS states the following. Significant spare capacity is identified on the bowling green and given the rest of the site is unsustainable, the PPS recommends relocation of the current bowls usage to Silverdale.

In terms of tennis, four disused tennis courts were identified but there was no identified demand to retain these courts and they were deemed suitable for disposal. This position has not changed since 2015 and in policy terms it is considered that the tennis courts can therefore be classed as surplus to requirements.

Further detail on the former sports facilities on this site is included in Knutton Masterplan Sports Planning Statement, prepared by WYG in November 2019.





**Top left - bottom right**  
Knutton Enterprise Centre  
'Kick-about' space at  
Acacia Avenue  
Former 3G pitch  
Old School building at  
High Street  
Children's play area and  
telephone mast

# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Blackbank Road

There is an opportunity to expand the housing type and tenure in Knutton through the development of the land at Blackbank Road. The development of this site would infill the western edge of Knutton.

### Opportunities & Constraints Boundaries

To the north of the site is existing residential development off Cotswold Avenue. The eastern edge of the site bounds the Newcastle-under-Lyme Children's Centre. To the south the site is bounded by High Street, from which access would be taken. Adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the site are allotments.

### Utilities

Overhead electricity cables run north-south adjacent to the western edge of the site. The cable crosses the south-westernmost corner of the site. The stand-off distance may vary dependent on the height of the pylon and specific

requirements of National Grid. This will need to be explored further through a utilities survey.

### Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within flood zone 1. Anecdotal evidence suggests that flooding may have occurred on the site historically. It is therefore recommended that a drainage assessment is undertaken for the site.

### Sports Facilities

The Knutton Masterplan Sports Planning Statement, referenced in the previous spread, provides an assessment of the sports facilities provided at Blackbank Road.

Sport England confirmed that the 2015 PPS identifies Blackbank Road as a site for disposal in the PPS Action Plan (extract below). Given it is listed as providing two youth pitches, but has no changing facilities/car parking on site (as illustrated by the aerial shot below), Sport England were happy to

accept £140,000 compensation (the cost equivalent of two youth pitches) to be re-invested into football within the local catchment in accordance with the priorities set out in the PPS and agreed via the leisure team at the Borough and Sport England.

The strategic site identified at the time for the Knutton area was the Wammy and it was agreed that any mitigation should be available to support this site. There have however been developments over the past 4-years, in respect of Blackbank Road. Where the site was previously un-used, Knutton Community FC have now been given a new 3-year lease on the site, its previous status as lapsed / disused is therefore less certain. The lease was completed to Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services, at £1 per annum, term of 3 years from 30/08/2018 ending 29/08/2021 - subject to 3 months-notice/break date at any point. Furthermore, the Council's existing Playing Pitch Strategy

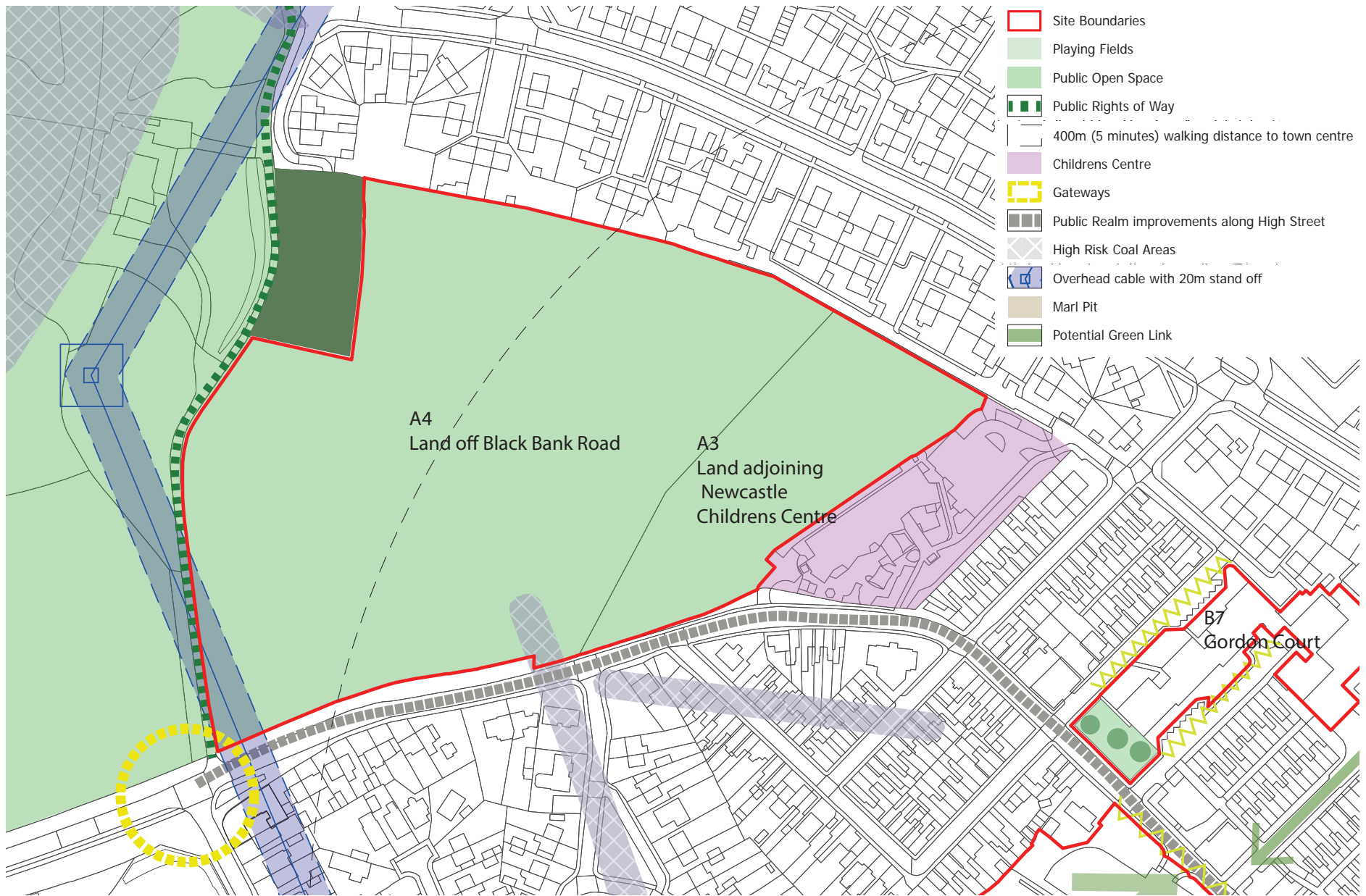
(PPS) is also being updated, as at over 3-years old it is considered to be out of date. This is likely to be completed in September 2020. A detailed assessment of the site was undertaken, and concluded that the existing demand at Blackbank Playing Fields can be relocated to the Wammy without displacing any teams that already use the facility.

### Mining

The areas hatched purple on the plan opposite identify areas of high coal mining risk. There is however limited data available on ground conditions for the site. It is therefore recommended that a ground investigation assessment is conducted.

### Landscape planning

The site is designated as an area of landscape regeneration – Policy N22. Where development can be permitted, developers will be expected to use the opportunity provided by the development to make a positive contribution towards landscape regeneration.



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Community Centre & Clinic

The site to the south-east of the High Street / Lower Milehouse Lane junction is currently occupied by three buildings; Knutton Community Centre, the former Knutton Clinic (now vacant) and the privately owned First Scan Clinic.

The Community Centre is owned by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and is run by a team from the local community. The building is in need of significant investment. A Building Condition Survey was undertaken by WYG in September 2019. The survey identified a number of elements of the building which are in poor or unacceptable condition and estimated a significant projected expenditure associated with repair and replacement works required.

The Council have indicated that there is limited funding available to address these costs and that the relocation of the Community Centre would be the preferred option.

Early stage discussions are currently taking place with regard to providing a replacement community facility alongside changing facilities adjacent to the football pitches at the Wammy Football Field.

### **Additional Care Facility Opportunity**

Staffordshire County Council have identified a future opportunity to provide a service hub for an additional care facility in Knutton. The support is currently provided directly to residents' homes, but would benefit from a central live-in facility for c. 20 people, with up to 40 residential staff. This is considered as an option for this site.





# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Lower Milehouse Lane

To the north of the Lower Milehouse Lane / High Street junction is the Knutton Ex-Servicemen's Club. The Club is set back from High Street, with a large car park adjacent to the road. A number of mature trees are situated along the boundary of the site.

Early consultation has been undertaken with the Ex-Servicemen's Club. Representatives from the Club highlighted the success of the business, related to the size of the facility and associated parking available. They are therefore keen to retain both of these assets.

### Gateway to Knutton

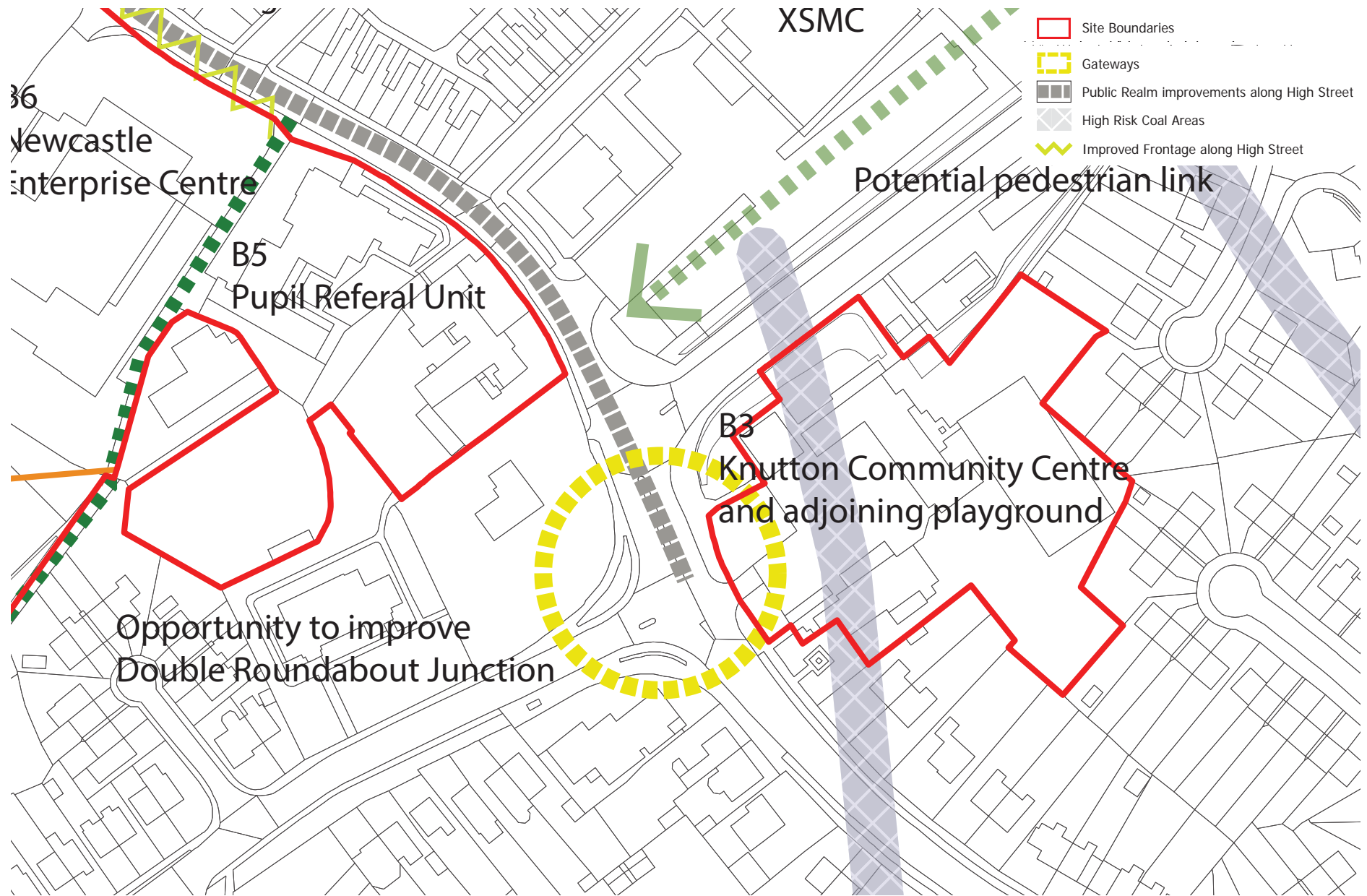
The southernmost corner of this site sits at the gateway to the High Street. At present there is nothing to highlight arrival into the local centre. This corner provides a major opportunity to locate a focal building.

### Connectivity to the Wammy

This site sits along a strategic pedestrian link between the High Street and the Wammy leisure facility. These two important parts of Knutton are not far from one-another, but the route between them is not attractive.

There is an opportunity to provide an improved pedestrian and cycle experience between High Street and Lower Milehouse Lane, including new activity on a small part of this site. .





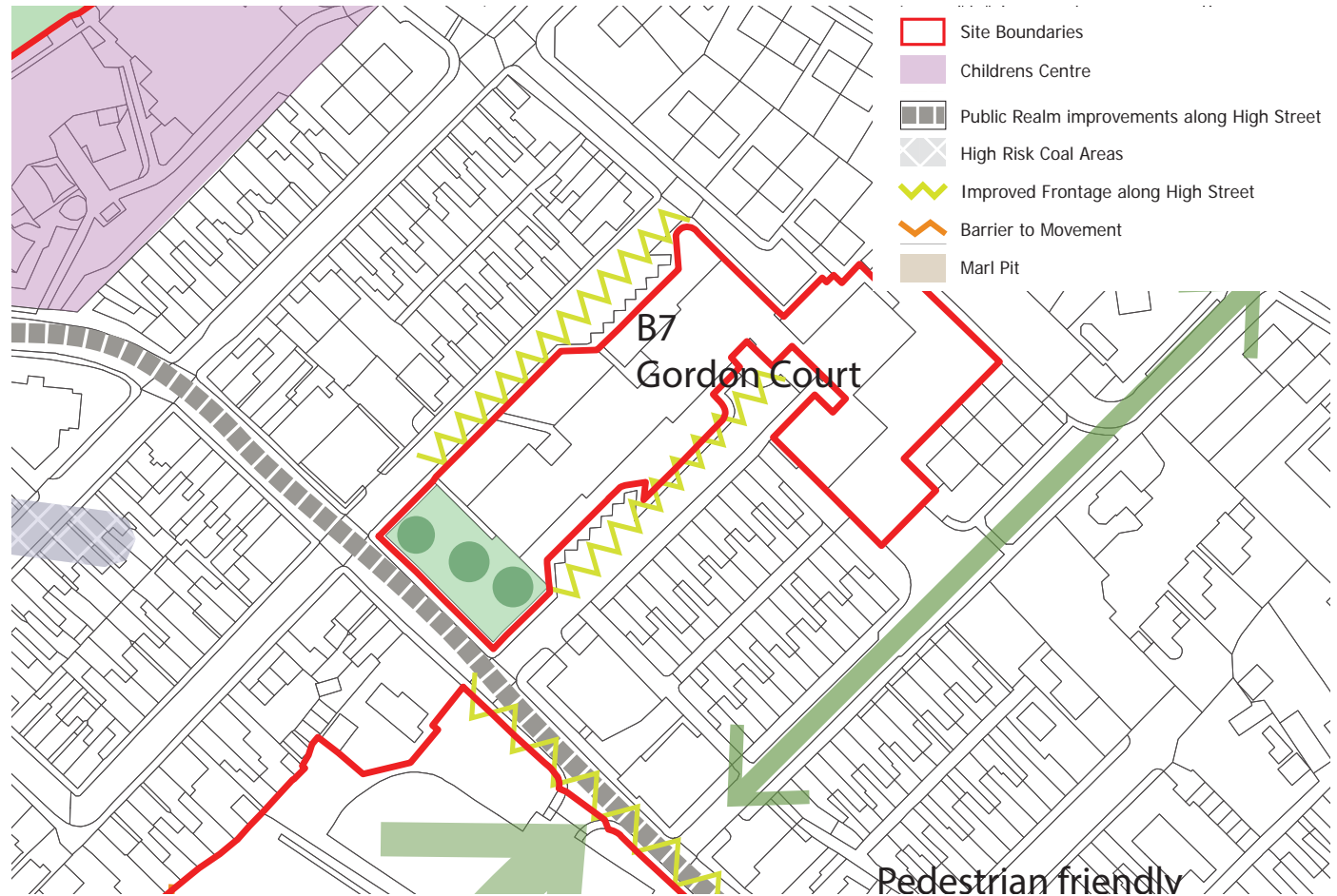
# AREAS OF FOCUS

## Aspire Housing

### Gordon Court

The current Aspire Housing properties at Gordon Court are identified for renewal in the wider Aspire housing strategy. There is therefore an opportunity to provide some new, aspirational housing in the centre of Knutton. Due to their central location the site would potentially be appropriate for older-persons accommodation. Aspire provide a range of house types and tenures and have suggested that maisonettes or two bed houses would be appropriate in this central location. This is supported by the Market Assessment produced by Thomas Lister.

Site constraints are likely to include risks associated with mining. It is recommended that a ground investigation study is undertaken.





### Castletown Grange

Although Castletown Grange is not situated in the centre of Knutton, it is an important site in Aspire Housing's strategic provision. The existing Castletown Grange block is located between Ronaldsway Drive and Tynwald Grange. The level of the site drops significantly from north-west to south-east. There are a number of mature trees within the site which should be retained where possible.

A second site is situated to the west of Ronaldsway Drive. The site currently includes bungalows situated around parking courts. There is a significant amount of open space and vegetation to the rear of these homes.



# MASTERPLAN



# MASTERPLAN

## Strategic Plan for Knutton

The strategic masterplan has been developed through an assessment of the opportunities for regeneration, along with improved landscape, public space and connectivity.

The strategic opportunities for Knutton have been considered in conjunction with individual assessments of, and masterplans for key development sites. The key features of the masterplan include:

- 1** Improved frontage and increased activity on High Street. A new community centre will replace the existing provision. New wings will be added to the Enterprise Centre
- 2** Residential development will infill the area between Acacia Avenue and High Street
- 3** Aspirational new housing at Blackbank Road
- 4** Improved gateway to Knutton
- 5** Improved public realm including links along High Street, Lower Milehouse Lane and Peake Street
- 6** New changing facility for Knutton Football Club at the Wammy



# MASTERPLAN

## High Street / Acacia Avenue

### Existing Site

The site includes the former recreation centre and associated tennis courts, former 3G pitches, bowling green, children's play area and informal open space. These sit alongside the Enterprise Centre and the Pupil Referral Unit.

The site is bounded by High Street to the north-east and by Downham Road / Acacia Avenue to the south-west. There is an existing public footpath which runs adjacent to and through the site. This route is not well overlooked, it is therefore considered that re-routing this link through the site would be of benefit.

The following pages provide an overview of the options which have been considered for the redevelopment of this site. A preferred development option and associated appraisal is provided.



## SITE COMPONENTS OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

## BENEFITS

## CONSTRAINTS

### New Residential

There is an opportunity to provide new, aspirational housing in the centre of Knutton. This would create a strong presence on High Street and provide a range of types and tenures, including homes for older people.



- Development of currently vacant sites
- New, quality housing including bungalows
- Presence onto High Street

- Viability of the development when taking into account ground conditions and other technical constraints as well as local values

### New Community Centre

The current Community Centre is not fit for purpose and so there is an opportunity to provide a new facility which could create a new central hub on High Street.



- Central community hub
- Quality building
- Presence on High Street

- Funding for a new Community Centre at this location is less likely to be achieved than at the Wammy
- Revenue and running costs constraints

### Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre provides an important facility for local businesses. Retention of this building is important and there is an opportunity to enhance the presence onto High Street through a new northern wing.



- Expansion of niche provision for local businesses
- Presence on High Street

- Funding source to be identified for refurbishment / rebuild of High Street wing

### Pupil Referral Unit

Staffordshire County Council are in the process of assessing the options for a new, purpose built facility. It is considered that the current site is not the optimum location.



- Awaiting outcome of Staffordshire County Council assessment

- Awaiting outcome of Staffordshire County Council assessment

### Village Green & Play Space

High Street would benefit from a new village green style open space, including children's play facilities. A replacement 'kickabout' space would also need to be provided.



- New attractive open space
- Community space on High Street
- Required by NULBC Landscape

- Reduces the amount of built form on the site, therefore impacting on viability of the development

### Retail Offer

Local residents would like to see a new convenience store with post office in the local centre.



- Expanded local retail offer
- Within walking distance of Knutton residents

- Market Assessment states that there is not a market for retail in Knutton

# MASTERPLAN

## Hight Street / Acacia Avenue

### Village Green

Two masterplan options have been considered as follows:

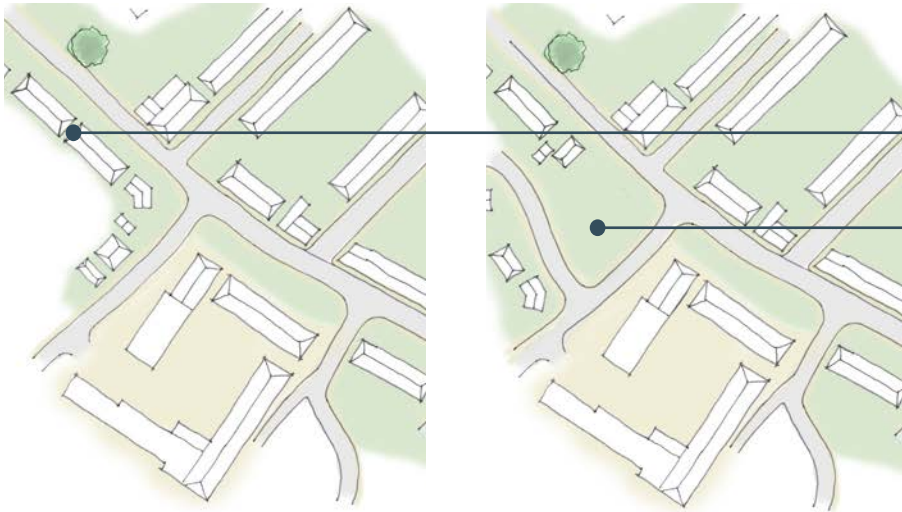
- village green on High Street
- no village green, open space provided elsewhere on the site

By providing a village green on the site, fewer residential units could be provided. This is however offset by the placemaking benefits of the open space adjacent to High Street, in the centre of Knutton. The open space in this location creates a strong central space in the village to be used by the community.

An identified outcome of the stakeholder consultation workshop held in March 2020 was the opportunity to situate the war memorial in the centre of Knutton. Following the reconfiguration of the double-mini roundabout junction, the memorial was moved from its former location in the centre of the main roundabout, to its current position adjacent to the former clinic.

Although relocating the memorial a second time would need to be addressed in a sensitive manner, there is a real opportunity to locate this symbol of local pride within the centre of the village.

Knutton Masterplan



Providing dwellings to the north west of the site will create additional frontage onto High Street

The alternative option at this location is to create a village green. The war memorial would be positioned in a prominent position and there is also the opportunity to provide a children's play area







Indicative images of how the village green could look

# MASTERPLAN

## Hight Street / Acacia Avenue

### Community Centre

Consideration has been given to the opportunity to co-locate community services in a single building in the centre of Knutton. Services such as the former clinic are no longer located in Knutton. An indicative plan of the preferred community centre layout is provided opposite.

The layout is based on discussions with the existing community centre and before- and after-school club, and provides a compact facility from which to run events, meetings and to undertake child-care.

Through stakeholder consultation it is clear that providing a facility on High Street is important in putting the heart back into Knutton. Providing a new space to replace the existing Community Centre which is not fit for purpose will be important. There is an opportunity to link the Community Centre to a village green and children's

play facility and potentially to a community cafe associated with the Enterprise Centre.

It is estimated that the cost to construct the new community centre will be in the order of £790,000, which would not be covered by the capital receipt received from the disposal of the sites. There is also a viability consideration with regard to the running costs of a new community centre.

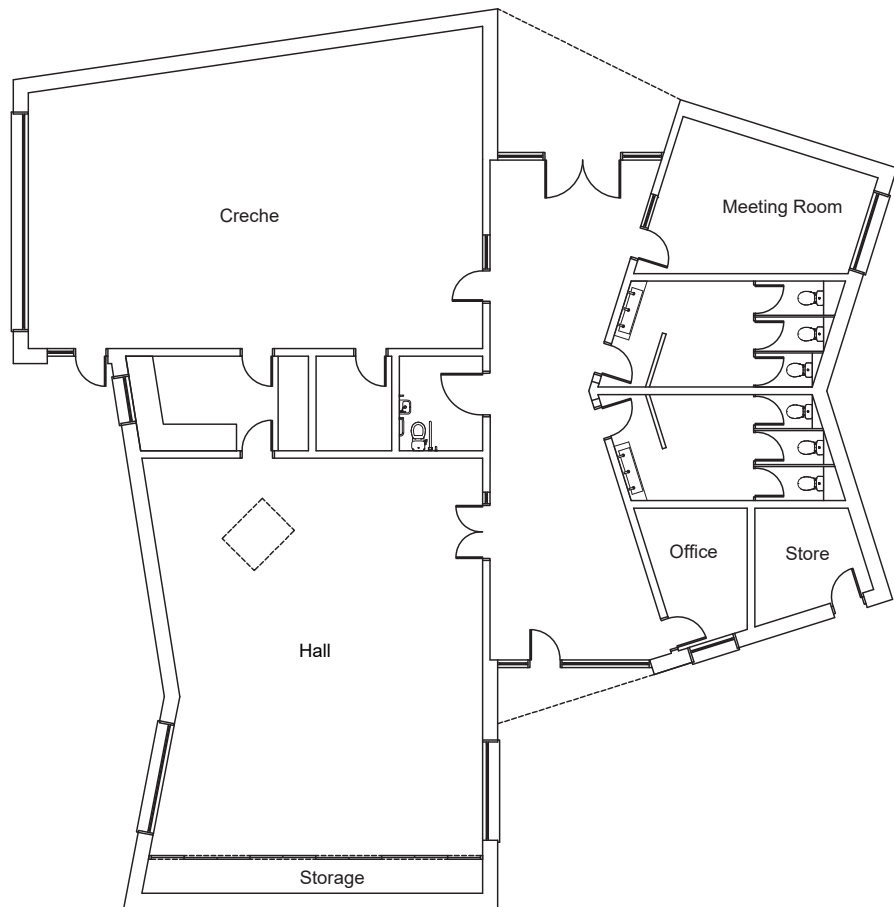
Due to the constraints with regard to the viability of the new facility, consideration has been given to the costs / benefits of providing a facility which does not provide space for the existing before and after school club. It is estimated that the construction of the reduced size building would be £550,000. This would be a small community hall with associated kitchen, meeting room and toilet facilities.

### Positives of Reduced Size Centre

- Cost saving with regard to construction and management requirements

### Negatives of Reduced Size Centre

- Smaller community hub building
- Potential increase in child care cost for existing users
- Opportunity to share supporting facilities between two uses in preferred option



Indicative images of how the community centre could look

# MASTERPLAN

## High Street / Acacia Avenue

### Enterprise Centre

Newcastle-under-Lyme Enterprise Centre provides commercial space for local businesses. The size and rental price of the units serve a niche market, targeting smaller local enterprises. It is therefore important that this facility is retained.

It does not currently positively support the placemaking value of the High Street as the buildings are set back from the street, separated from High Street by a small car park.

Discussions with the Council's Enterprise Centre Manager have revealed that there are a number of office units within the Enterprise Centre which have a low occupancy rate. It is therefore recommended that two new wings are redeveloped to replace the existing north-western and north-eastern wings.

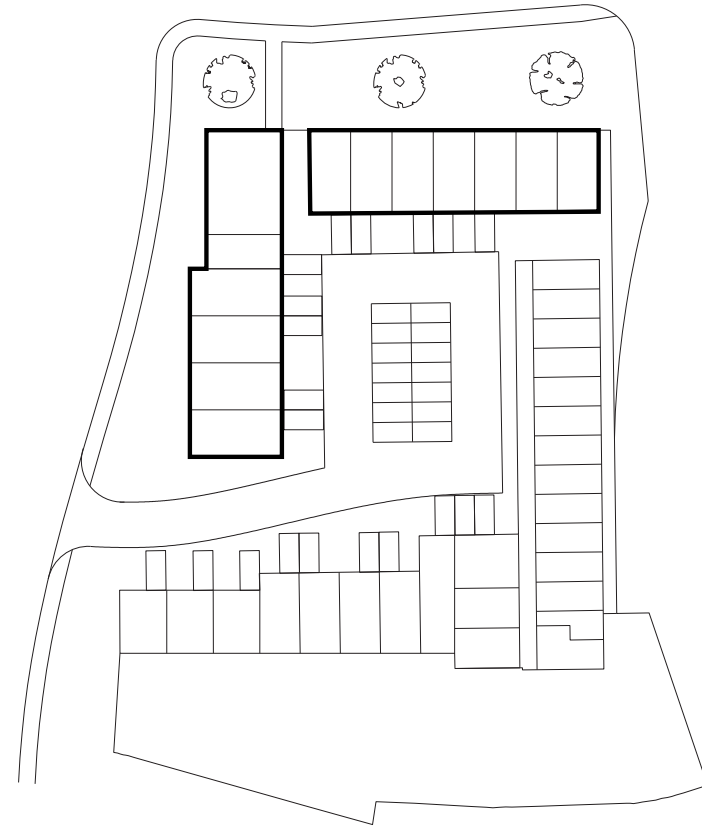
These would be situated so as to provide more direct frontage to High Street and the car parking moved into the central courtyard.

The new wings to the north and west could provide 11 new business units. The northern wing totals 347sqm and the west wing 409sqm.

There is a potential opportunity to provide a community cafe connected to the Enterprise Centre to provide a hub for activity in the centre of Knutton.

A consequence of an increase in activity will be a visual indicator to passing traffic that slower speeds should be adopted through the village.

The north-western wing is made up of two new buildings totalling 371sqm. The north-eastern wing totals 354sqm.



**Pupil Referral Unit**

The High Street masterplan shows the relocation of the PRU and development of 5no. 2 bedroom mews houses and 4no. 3 bedroom detached houses. The associated appraisal produced by Thomas Lister shows the impact on viability of retaining the PRU.



# MASTERPLAN

## High Street / Acacia Avenue

### Preferred Masterplan Option

The key elements of the preferred masterplan option, as illustrated opposite, include:

- 1 new, quality residential units
- 2 new green space with children's play facilities
- 3 opportunity to relocate war memorial to new village green
- 4 new community centre
- 5 attractive new frontage to Enterprise Centre and opportunity for community cafe
- 6 new open space adjacent to Downham Road
- 7 attractive landscaping along High Street

Having considered the benefits and constraints, the masterplan shows the PRU as being relocated. The existing PRU building is replaced with new mews style housing, creating an attractive frontage onto High Street. It is assumed that demolition of the existing building and construction of new properties would be the most viable option. It is however recommended that, upon confirmation of the relocation of the PRU, a demolition survey is undertaken on the existing building.



### Schedule

House Type	No.	%
2 bed mews	15	22.1
2 bed semi-detached	14	16.3
2 bed bungalow	3	8.3
<b>2 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>45.6</b>
3 bed semi-detached	27	31.4
3 bed detached	16	18.6
<b>3 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>54.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Indicative images of house types





# MASTERPLAN

## Blackbank Road

### Existing Site

The site at Blackbank Road is currently used by Knutton Football Club, however as noted in Section 4, the current Council guidance states that the club is to be relocated to the Wammy. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy is currently being revised. A detailed review of the sports requirements is included as an appendix to this document.

There is an opportunity to develop this site, infilling the western edge of the developed area of Knutton. The development of this site would provide attractive, quality homes and would maximise the opportunities associated with the views to the Apedale Valley to the north-west. This site would support residential values towards the higher end of those seen in Knutton. An associated developer contribution would be sought towards the provision of new changing facilities for the Football Club at the Wammy.





### Open Space

As noted in Section 4 of this document, Policy N22 of the Local Plan states that developers will be expected to use the opportunity provided by the development of this site to make a positive contribution towards landscape regeneration. This will include retaining and enhancing the setting of existing trees and hedgerows, as well as providing new areas of open space and pedestrian and cycle links to existing open spaces.

There is also an opportunity to orientate houses so as to benefit from the views to the west of the site towards the open countryside.



# MASTERPLAN

## Blackbank Road

### Preferred Masterplan Option

The Market Assessment undertaken by Thomas Lister provided guidance on the mix of residential units appropriate for this site. As an edge of urban area site, there is an opportunity to provide some larger, high quality homes maximising the views across the open space to the west.

It is important that the development is sympathetic to the existing buildings adjacent to the site, particularly the houses to the north off Cotswold Avenue.

The masterplan should provide a landscaped buffer, with development density decreasing towards the western edge of the site. Higher density development should be provided adjacent to existing residential development to the north. Landscaping is used to provide a central community green space, as well as an offset from the children's centre.

### Schedule

House Type	No.	%
<b>1 bed</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.3</b>
2 bed mews	24	27.9
2 bed bungalow	5	4.1
<b>2 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23.6</b>
3 bed semi-detached	48	39.0
3 bed detached	34	27.6
<b>3 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>66.7</b>
4 bed detached	8	6.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Indicative images of house types



# MASTERPLAN

## Former Community Centre

### Preferred Masterplan Option

The proposals for this site include the demolition of the community centre and acquisition and demolition of the former clinic building. Discussions are currently ongoing between the County Council and NHS regarding the acquisition process, supported by guidance from Thomas Lister.

Section 6 of this document outlines the viability assessments and delivery advice with regard to each of these sites. It is proposed that this site is delivered by Aspire Housing, providing a mix of affordable and market housing. These units could be appropriate for older persons accommodation, including maisonettes.

### Schedule

House Type	No.	%
<b>1 bed maisonette</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47.6</b>
2 bed semi	11	52.4
<b>2 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>52.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>



### Alternative Options

Options were produced which illustrate alternative ways in which the opportunities and constraints of the site, including the existing trees, level changes, electricity substation and private clinic, can be addressed. It is noted that there is an opportunity to relocate the war memorial to the centre of Knutton, however, as this has not yet been tested through public consultation, these options allow for its retention in-situ.

It is noted that in all options the existing private clinic is retained as the acquisition of the building would have a negative impact on viability.



Option B



Option C

Option B below left uses a bespoke house type to maximise the number of units on the site. This house type is architecturally interesting and supports the aspirational goal of the strategic masterplan. Use of this house type would however have a negative impact on the viability of the site.

Option C below right uses a more traditional combination of two and three bedroom houses.

# MASTERPLAN

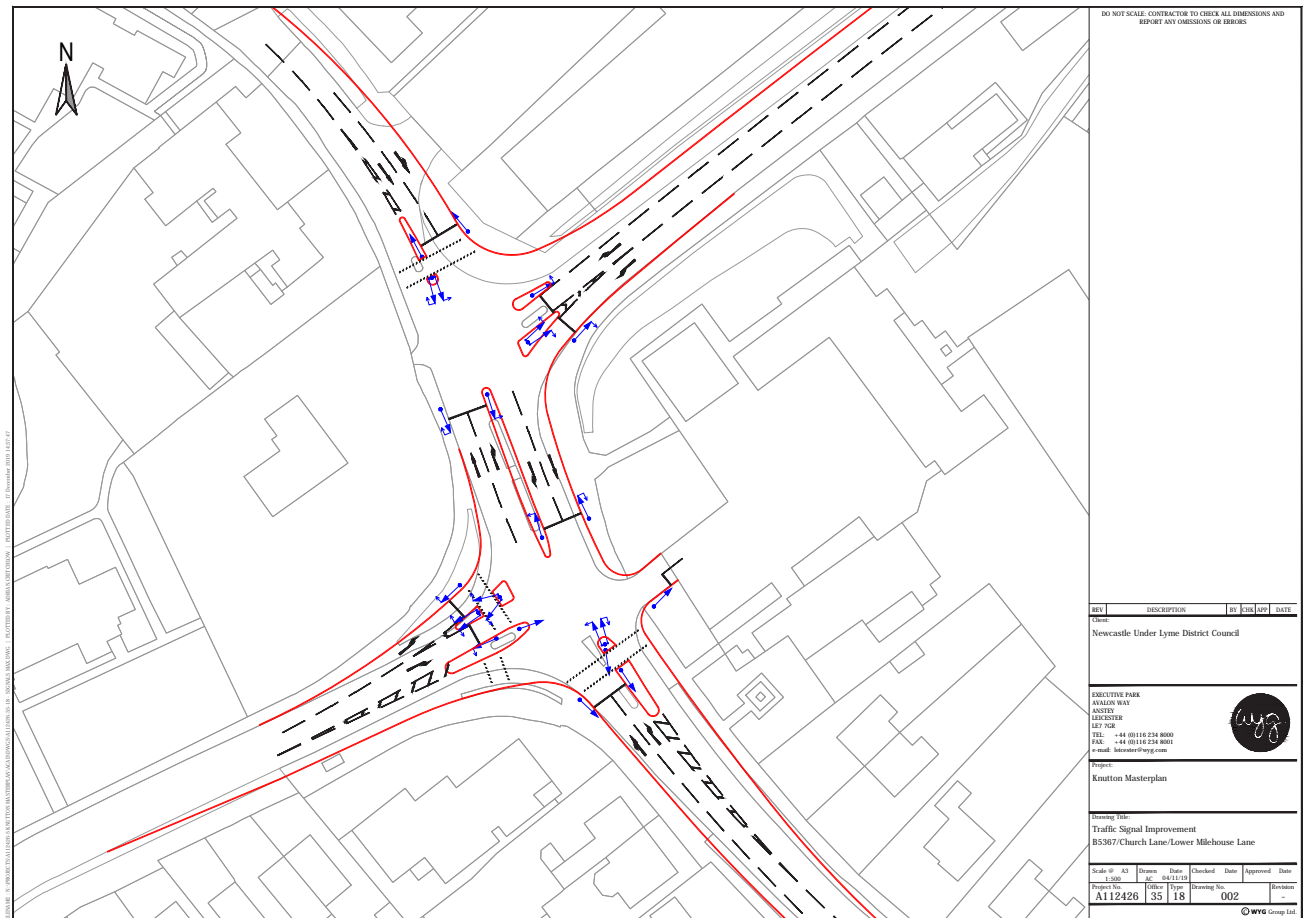
## Lower Milehouse Lane / High Street

### Preferred Masterplan Option

The double mini-roundabout junction at High Street / Lower Milehouse Lane is the gateway to the centre of Knutton, although at present there is no indication that you are approaching a local centre.

A modelling exercise undertaken on the junction confirms that it currently operates over capacity. The inputs and results of which are appended to this document. The assessment takes into account future development and uplift in traffic and based on this an indicative layout has been designed to improve the junction capacity.

Although the improvements would not allow the junction to operate under capacity, it would lead to an improvement in traffic flow.

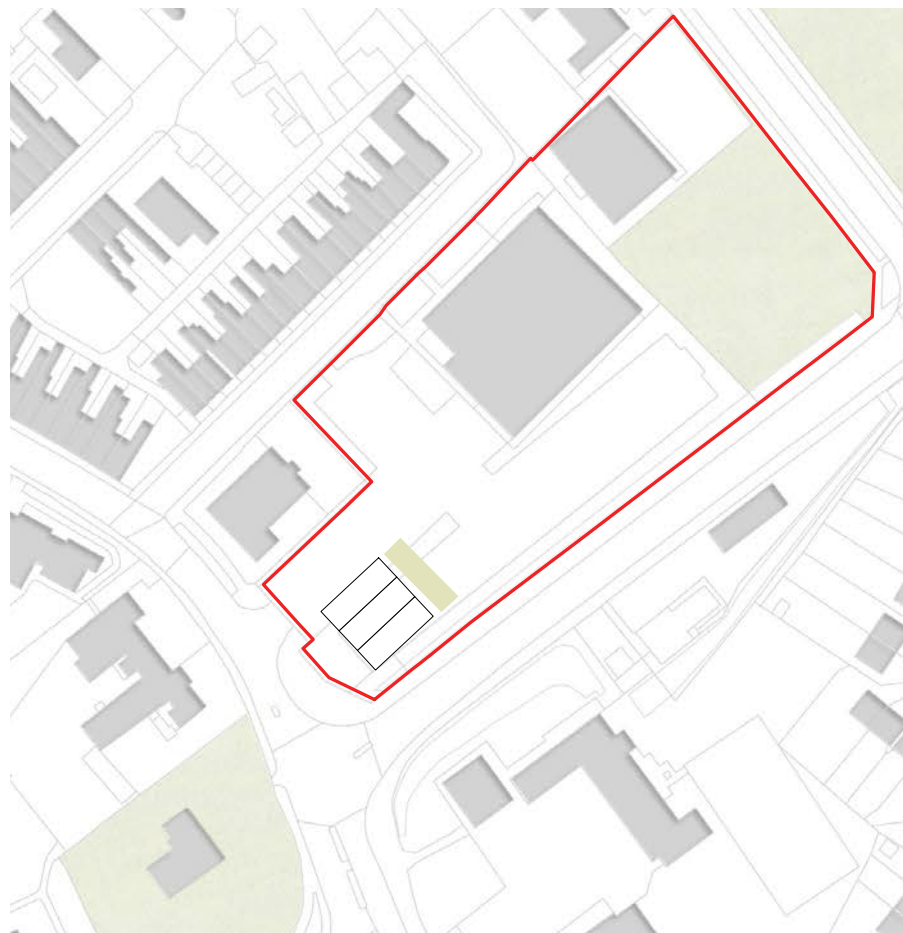


At present development is set back from the road in this area, however there is an opportunity to provide a 'gateway' marking a sense of arrival to the local centre using aspirational, high quality architecture.

This would take the form of three residential units sited on the corner of the site currently occupied by the Ex-Servicemen's Club car park. Agreement is required between Newcastle Borough Council and the Ex-Servicemen's Club with regard to development of this land and the associated opportunities for investment in the Club building.

**Schedule**

House Type	No.	%
3 bed mews	3	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Indicative images of house types

# MASTERPLAN

## Gordon Court

### Preferred Masterplan Option

A number of options have been considered at Gordon Court. The proposals include the demolition of the existing Aspire Housing buildings and replacement with new, high quality homes. Due to the location in the centre of Knutton, close to local facilities, it is considered to be an appropriate location for an element of older persons accommodation.

The preferred option uses classic house types to improve the viability of the site, in a back-front arrangement to ensure that both Gordon Street and Chapel Street benefit from active frontage.

At this strategic stage consultation has not been undertaken with the local planning authority. This would be undertaken at planning application stage. It is however considered that the preferred option would be planning policy compliant, as would options B and D. Although in option C back to back distances do not meet recommendations they are in keeping with the surrounding environment.

### Schedule

House Type	No.	%
2 bed semi	27	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.0</b>





**Alternative Options**

Consideration has been given to alternative layouts which could be considered at Gordon Court. **Option B** illustrates how a bespoke dual-fronted house or maisonette could be used to provide frontage onto Gordon Street and Chapel Street. These units would be served by frontage parking.

**Option C** most closely replicates the existing street structure, with a terrace of houses reflecting the surrounding area. It is noted that this layout does not provide the 21m distance between backs of houses which is typically requested by planning authorities.

**Option D** uses maisonettes across the site, with a communal open space. This option does not provide the active frontage onto Gordon Street.



Option B: 24 units



Option C: 34 units



Option D: 28 units

# MASTERPLAN

## Castletown Grange

### Preferred Masterplan Option

The masterplan opposite illustrates how new housing and maisonettes could replace the existing Aspire Housing provision at Ronaldson Drive. The proposals for the eastern site take into account the site levels and retain all existing trees. The layout for the western site maximises the use of this space, but does not impose upon the mature trees around the edges of this site, some of which will fall within rear gardens.

### Schedule

House Type	No.	%
<b>1 bed Maisonette</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32.6</b>
2 bed semi	12	27.9
2 bed detached	3	7.0
<b>2 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34.9</b>
3 bed semi	11	25.6
3 bed detached	2	7.0
<b>3 bed TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32.6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>





# VIABILITY & DELIVERY



# VIABILITY & DELIVERY

## Viability

In order to assess the viability of the sites proposed for residential development, development appraisals have been undertaken in order to derive the residual land values for each of the sites, so as to ascertain the potential receipt generated for the landowner. Other costs associated with the overall project, including the construction of a new community centre and improvement works to the Enterprise Centre have then been considered to understand whether the potential land receipts could also cover those costs.

The gross development value has been estimated for each site, with total development costs and an allowance for developer's profit deducted, in order to arrive at a residual land value. For the purpose of this exercise, initially the proposed schemes have been assumed to be planning policy compliant, with affordable housing provision of 25%, to be split between social rent (50%)

and shared equity / intermediate housing (50%).

To inform the development appraisals, research has been undertaken to establish comparable residential sale transactions within Knutton and the surrounding areas – ST5 postcode, in order to arrive at an opinion of value on a £ per sq m basis. Residential values within Knutton and the surrounding areas, including Cross Heath and Silverdale within the ST5 postcode are relatively low. From the comparable evidence gathered, it is noted that the Baldwins Gate residential development scheme has achieved significantly higher values than other schemes. It is considered that this is due to the more rural setting of the development and it is considered that the Blackbank Road site, would achieve values closer to those achieved at Baldwins Gate given its slightly more rural nature than that of the other two sites. Therefore, values circa 10% higher have been

adopted for the Blackbank Road scheme compared to the other two schemes, and this is akin with the council's instructions.

A number of indicative costs have been provided by the council and Aspire Housing and by various teams within WYG, highlighting a number of 'known' abnormal development costs. Each site has 'known' abnormal costs, which are listed below, though the figures themselves are estimates provided by WYG, based upon existing information. These costs impact considerably on viability, both with regard to the capital cost but may also take considerable time to be resolved, which would delay any development from commencing.

### **Blackbank Road**

- Provision of sports changing facilities at a new site - £250,000

### **High Street**

- Relocation of telephone mast - £165,000

- Potential demolition of the PRU building - cost not provided

### **Community Centre**

- Acquisition of former NHS building - £62,000
- Demolition of existing community centre & NHS building - £40,000

In addition to the above known costs, it is considered likely, following conversations with Aspire Housing, having regard to the investigations carried out by WYG and the ex-mining nature of the locality, that there will be other abnormal costs associated with the developments. At the current time site investigations have not been undertaken, and therefore indicative abnormal foundation costs has been estimated at a rate of £4,000 per dwelling, on each of the sites. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the site at Blackbank Road experiences flooding, therefore it is considered likely that abnormal drainage costs may be associated with any development

on that site – however, no allowance has been made for this within the development appraisal.

In the scenario whereby the PRU is demolished, the construction of 75 units is possible on the High Street site. Demolition of the existing PRU building would be required, though no allowance has been made for this cost as the costs have not been provided, this would therefore impact further on the negative land value of the scheme. The other scenario for the High Street site is that the PRU remains, which would result in a 66-unit scheme, a loss of 9 units. An appraisal has been carried out on both scenarios.

Construction costs within the appraisals have been based upon a base cost of £968.75 per sq m (£90 per sq ft), excluding external and preliminary costs. Externals have been allowed for at 10% of construction costs, whilst preliminary costs have been allowed for at 12% of base construction costs.

Section 106 contributions have been estimated at a rate of £3,000 per market home and £500 per affordable home. These figures are assumptions and would need to be verified with planning officers.

Professional fees have been calculated at 8% of total construction costs, with contingency at 5% of total construction costs. A finance rate of 6% has been adopted.

Planning and Building Regulation fees have been estimated at £50,000 for the sites at High Street and Community Centre and £75,000 for the Blackbank Road site, given the larger number of units. Sales agents and legal fees have been calculated at 1.5% and 0.5% respectively of gross sales figures.

As per standard market rates, developer's profit has been calculated at 20% of gross development value on market sales

and a reduced profit of 6.5% on the affordable housing value, to reflect the reduced risk, assuming that all affordable homes would be sold to a registered affordable housing provider.

None of the three identified sites are cleared, readily developable sites and this, coupled with relatively low local residential

values causes viability issues, when the sites are appraised on a market basis, i.e. assuming a developer's profit and a planning policy compliant scheme.

The residual values arrived at from the development appraisals for each of the sites is included in the table below:

Site	Number of Units	Residual Land Value
High Street	75	-£151,722
High Street retaining PRU	66	-£182,901
Community Centre	21	-£195,526
Blackbank Road	123	£920,287
<b>Overall position without PRU</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>£573,039</b>
<b>Overall position retaining PRU</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>£541,860</b>

Based upon the assumptions listed above, and the relative 'high level' appraisal undertaken, adopting the limited information available, the Blackbank Road site is the only viable scheme in its own right. The overall position would therefore be a land receipt available to the council of c.£570,000.

It is estimated that the cost to construct the new community centre will be in the order of £790,000, which would not be covered by the capital receipt received from the disposal of the sites, nor would the costs of the improvement works to the Enterprise Centre be capable of being met.

Further appraisals have been undertaken on a non-policy compliant basis, assuming no affordable housing requirement, but including s106 costs as these are likely to be required. The appraisals have been prepared to demonstrate whether a relaxation in planning policy could result in the High Street and Community Centre schemes becoming viable. The residual land values arrived at on this basis are shown opposite:

Site	Number of Units	Land Value
High Street (no affordable)	75	£335,191
High Street retaining PRU (no affordable)	66	£463,177
Community Centre (no affordable)	21	£43,527
Blackbank Road (policy compliant)	123	£920,287
<b>New Overall Position Without PRU</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>£963,814</b>
<b>New Overall Position Retaining PRU</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>£1,426,991</b>

When a non-policy compliant scheme (no affordable housing) is adopted the Community Centre and High Street sites both become viable, resulting in an overall potential capital receipt for the three sites of between £1,425,000 and £1,520,000 depending on the number of units developed at the High Street site. As noted above, it is understood that the to construct the new community centre would cost in the order of £790,000, in

addition to the capital expenditure required to improve the Enterprise Centre, it is likely that there would still be a shortfall of capital receipt to be able to meet these costs in full, although this would be lower than in the scenario whereby the schemes were delivered on a policy compliant basis. The section 106 contributions received from the developments may also help to contribute to the costs, though the proposed junction improvement

works are likely to be costly and it is unlikely that the total capital expenditure required can be obtained solely through the disposal of the sites.

It is not considered that the values could be increased or the costs reduced enough to make the High Street or the Community Centre developments viable, coupled with the additional risk that costs potentially may increase once further site investigations have been undertaken.

We are aware from experience on other projects that Homes England operate funding programmes in order to assist Local Authorities and County Council's with housing delivery. Homes England is the government's housing accelerator and the main objective is for Homes England to assist in getting housing stock delivered. This is achieved by providing financial assistance where necessary to address viability issues, which could



arise due to infrastructure costs or other abnormal development costs associated with a particular development, due to market failure, or a combination of these issues.

These programmes (subject to discussion with Homes England) could present an opportunity to secure funding to address the viability issues presented at the subject sites. The programmes which could assist with the identified development sites include the Small Sites Fund (SSF) and the Local Authority Accelerated Construction Programme (LAAC). The primary objective of these programmes is to unlock delivery of housing projects, addressing viability and wherever possible accelerating the pace of housing delivery.

The SSF can provide loan funding to meet upfront infrastructure costs or grant funding to meet any cost/value deficit that has been demonstrated to exist. This

funding programme may therefore be able to bridge the viability gaps demonstrated in the Community Centre site and the High Street Site appraisals. This would result in a more positive overall position for the council, and would likely require less additional funding to construct the new community centre and carry out the Enterprise Centre improvements.

The LAAC programme can provide loans or grants to viable development sites, with the primary objective of accelerating the delivery of housing beyond the pace that the market would typically deliver. Where this results in a reduced land value or viability gap, funding can be provided under the programme to mitigate impacts.

For example, given a greater number of dwellings that would be bought to the market at the same time, this can serve to reduce values of the dwellings

which becomes necessary in order to increase sales. Developer's profit also increases to reflect the higher risk faced by the developer through releasing dwellings at a rate in excess of perception of market rates. The purpose of the funding programme is to fund the costs of accelerating the construction of the scheme by covering the difference in land value and/or viability between a normal delivery scheme and an accelerated delivery scheme.

In respect of the subject sites, it is considered that the SSF could be investigated in respect of the High Street and Community Centre site, with the LAAC programme investigated in respect of Blackbank Road. It is considered that given the High Street and Community Centre schemes are not viable in their own right, the LAAC would not be appropriate for these schemes.

Further appraisals have been undertaken for the Blackbank Road site assuming accelerated

construction of 50% and 100% to show the impact this has on the residual land value. The impact on values is contained within the table below:

Profit	Increased Pace of Acceleration	Land Value
20%	0%	£920,287
22%	50%	£365,361
24%	100%	-£48,801

In conclusion it is considered that public sector assistance, either from an external source such as Homes England, or from the council's own resources will be required to bridge the viability gaps associated with the High Street and Community Centre schemes and to cover the overall costs of the proposed improvements to Knutton.

# VIABILITY & DELIVERY

## Deliverability

The overall ambition of the council is to regenerate Knutton village centre, to improve the quality of the housing stock within the village, whilst accelerating housing delivery if possible. When assessing the deliverability options, it is essential for the council to consider how it can retain an element of control over the quality of the housing that is to be delivered.

The three identified development sites at the Community Centre, Blackbank Road and High Street provide for a total of 210-219 residential units. In addition, the council wish to improve the existing Enterprise Centre and to construct a new community centre upon the High Street site, whilst exploring the potential of improving the highway network in the village.

Each of the identified sites has development constraints that would need to be overcome / resolved in order to pursue delivery of the proposed residential

schemes, without which it is considered unlikely that the new community centre would be constructed or the improvements to the Enterprise Centre would be undertaken.

The Blackbank Road site (parcels A3 & A4) requires removal of the allocation as football pitches from Sports England, which is understood requires the provision of changing room facilities at another location along with the reprovision of the football playing pitches. The council's playing pitch strategy is currently under review and the outcome of this will be known at the end of the year – which will either present this opportunity as one to be progressed, or could sterilise the development opportunity.

It has been suggested that the Wammy could provide adequate space for the reprovision of the pitches and it is understood that circa half of these costs are already

available to the council, with a further sum potentially available from other funding sources – this should be investigated at the earliest opportunity.

Also to consider is that there is an existing lease in place at Blackbank Road, which is understood to expire in 2021. Therefore the delivery of this scheme cannot be bought forward prior to the lease expiry.

The High Street site (A1 & A2) requires the EE telephone mast to be re-located at the cost of the site owner, which involves identifying a suitable alternative site and obtaining planning permission for the erection of a new telephone mast. The process for the removal of the mast is indicatively described below;

The existing Community Centre site (B3 & B4) requires the acquisition of a property owned by a third party (the NHS) and demolition of the existing buildings on site.

Prior to the existing Community Centre site being available for development, the new community centre on the High Street site would need to be constructed.

Each of the sites also requires planning permission for the proposed developments, in addition to an agreement between the three parties (Aspire, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council) as to how they can work collaboratively in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Given the constraints presented at each of the sites, it is considered unlikely that a developer would be prepared to acquire these sites prior to what surmounts to considerable risks being alleviated by the land owners. It is therefore considered that the land owners should seek to de-risk the sites as much as possible, prior to offering the sites to the market in order enhance prospects of sale

in a low value area and maximise potential sales receipts. It is therefore considered that formal arrangements should be pursued with Sports England in relation to Blackbank Road, EE in relation to the former Recreation Centre site and NHS in relation to the Community Centre site.

There are a number of methods of disposal available to the land owners in relation to the potential development sites in order to deliver the proposed schemes.

The sites could be packaged together or offered to the market individually by way of traditional marketing, instructing an agent to promote the sites, directly advertise and seek bids from the private sector. This method of disposal is likely to represent the fastest method of disposal, once the constraints have been addressed and sites effectively de-risked. The sites could then be sold either on a subject to planning basis or by way

of an option agreement.

The council could look to undertake development, which would negate the need for the typical 'developers' profit' and may therefore lower the viability gap created on the High Street and Community Centre site and thus reduce the overall public sector financial subsidy required. It may also be possible for the local authority to borrow money more cheaply than the private sector, through prudential borrowing. This method of disposal / delivery would ensure that the residential schemes were delivered in-line with the council's timescales, and offer the quality that the council is hoping to achieve in the area and ultimately would mean that the council retains control over the delivery of the developments. This may also make it easier to control the delivery of the new community centre building and the improvements to the Enterprise Centre.

The council could look to partner with Aspire or A.N. Other organisation and deliver the developments by way of a joint venture / partnership agreement - this method of delivery may assist with some of the viability issues presented and may also assist with the council's wider housing strategy. It is understood that Aspire and both the County and Borough council are already in dialogue regarding council owned land elsewhere and how Aspire and the council could work in partnership to deliver required housing, using council owned land.

The council could seek to utilise Homes England's Developer Partner Panel (DPP3) to market and dispose of the properties. This method of disposal is not reliant on Homes England having any financial involvement with the schemes but does require consideration of accelerating delivery and utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). Although not legal

obligations, as there are standard overage provisions incorporated within the disposal documentation, the incentive to developers is to maximise pace and MMC so as to reduce future overage. This method of disposal, should in theory result in a faster disposal of the sites, and is therefore likely to secure delivery more quickly, however it does limit developers that can be approached, and a number of developers have previously intimated that the bidding process is too onerous and would prefer to acquire sites through normal disposal procedures.

It is considered that the Community Centre site (B3 & B4) is the site most 'readily available' for disposal and delivery, however it is noted that in order for this site to be bought forward, the new community centre / village hall would require construction, to ensure the continuous delivery of services. It is considered that the

new community centre, could be constructed prior to the telephone mast being relocated, which would allow for the delivery of the proposed 21-unit scheme on the existing Community Centre site. It is noted that the council is considering applying for Town Deal funding in order to assist with delivery of 'putting heart back into Knutton' and this could cover or contribute to the costs of constructing the new community centre.

If the construction of the new community centre / village hall cannot be funded prior to the disposal of any land, it is considered that the delivery of sites A3 & A4 could be pursued in the first instance in order that the parties could generate a land receipt which could assist with the construction of the new community centre, thus freeing up sites B3 and B4 for development. This could however take some time, given that the development of the Blackbank

Road site (A3 & A4) is itself reliant upon other factors.

It is also considered unwise to 'flood' the relatively weak housing market at this time. Therefore, it would not be recommended for both the Blackbank Road site and Community Centre site to be bought to the market at the same time.

In the scenarios outlined above, it is considered that prior to making a decision as to the course of action to be adopted, the land owners should establish contact with Homes England, to discuss the potential of any financial assistance that may be available to assist with the viability issues identified above. It is considered essential that any correspondence with Homes England is carried out on a transparent and open basis collectively by all land owners in order that they can appraise the three sites to consider what, if any funding may be available to deliver

the proposed residential schemes.

The Towns Fund should be pursued in order to obtain funding to assist with the Enterprise Centre Improvements and the construction of the Community Centre.

Given the number of scenarios that could occur with this masterplan, it is considered difficult to set out a defined implementation plan, as until further information is understood and investigated, the proposed programme is difficult to establish. This is due to the extent of identified development constraints requiring further investigation and clarification from external parties, which will in-turn feed into any proposed programme to bring forward the proposed developments.

Given the issues highlighted above, at this stage in the masterplan it has only been possible to create an indicative, high level implementation plan for each of

the individual sites, which sets out the processes required in order to facilitate delivery on each of the identified proposed development sites. This plan assumes that public consultation has been undertaken, the three parties have agreed a collaborative approach and any required financial assistance has been obtained and therefore demonstrates a 'best case scenario'.

In conclusion, the deliverability of the residential schemes and the proposed improvements to the Enterprise Centre and the construction of the new community centre is reliant upon financial assistance in some capacity, given that the overall land receipts potentially available to the council from the proposed developments, would not cover the total costs of the community centre and Enterprise Centre improvements. Funding options that should be explored are that of Homes England to bridge the viability gaps associated with the residential

developments, and the Towns Fund to contribute to the costs associated with the construction of the community centre and the Enterprise Centre improvements.

# VIABILITY & DELIVERY

## Implementation Plan

Due to the strategic nature of the proposals for Knutton the implementation plans produced for each site have been undertaken at a high level and are dependent on the more detailed work required, including technical investigations as per the commentary throughout this document.

### Blackbank Road

	Stage	Timescale
1.	Review published playing pitch strategy	3 months
2.	Relocate Knutton Football Club to Wammy Site	3 months
3.	Conclude discussions with Sports England to remove the site from its current allocation	3 - 6 months
4.	Submit and outline planning application and undertake site investigations and drainage surveys	6 months
5.	Discuss site with Homes England in relation to the Local Authority Accelerated Construction funding programme	3 - 6 months
	<b>Total programme time to commencement of delivery (either by sale or development)</b>	<b>24 months</b>

## High Street Site

	Stage	Timescale
1.	Commence negotiations with EE regarding the relocation of the telephone mast	3 months
2.	Identify potential relocation sites	3 months
3.	Whilst the above is being undertaken, submit a planning application for the construction of the new Community Centre and construct	18 months
4.	Agree site with telephone mast operator and submit planning for the proposed new site	3 - 6 months
5.	Relocate PRU to another council owned building in the County (subject to Country Council decision)	3 - 6 months
6.	Submit an outline planning application and undertake all necessary site investigations and surveys	6 - 9 months
7.	Discuss site with Homes England in connection with the Small Sites Fund programme in order to address viability issues	3 - 6 months
	<b>Total programme time to commencement of delivery of residential (either by sale or development)</b>	<b>36 months</b>

## Telecoms Mast Relocation Process

The process for moving a telecoms mast are as follows:

- Establish who it belongs to – in this case it is an EE/Three mast. The asset is managed by agent GVA
- Request that the agent organise a survey of the mast and surrounding area to find a new suitable location (survey is chargeable to the client) this may be on a public road or could allocate a better position on the site. There will be specific location criteria required by EE including topographical level, distance from existing position and potential barriers.
- Planning permission may be required for the new site to be arranged by the agent
- Agent will arrange for building of new mast then swap over of the service – any new

utility connections and utility disconnection would also be arranged by agent. The old mast site would not generally be decommissioned until the new site is up and running.

This process usually takes a minimum of 12 months to arrange the move including gaining planning permission (where necessary).

We would recommend allowing minimum of £150K to move the mast plus additional for surveys (£10-15K).

Wayleaves should pick up lease arrangements for the site – rent details etc.

## Existing Community Centre Site

	Stage	Timescale
1.	Negotiate acquisition of NHS building	3 - 6 months
2.	Whilst the new community centre is under construction, submit an outline planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of the site	6 months
3.	Discuss site with Homes England in relation to the Small Sites Fund programme to address viability issues	3 - 6 months
4.	Once new community centre is constructed, demolish existing buildings	3 months
	<b>Total programme time to commencement of delivery (either by sale or development)</b>	<b>40 months</b>

## Ex-Servicemen's Car Park

	Stage	Timescale
1.	Obtain full lease documentation and review	3 months
2.	Commence discussions with Ex-Servicemen's Club owners	6 months
	<b>Total programme time to commencement of delivery (either by sale or development)</b>	<b>40 months</b>







**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**Cabinet**  
**14 October 2020**

**Report Title:** Proposed Extension to Newcastle Crematorium Grounds and Development of Adjacent Land off Chatterley Close

**Submitted by:** Head of Operations – Roger Tait; Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth – Simon McEneny

**Portfolios:** Environment and Recycling

**Ward(s) affected:** Bradwell directly; All indirectly

**Purpose of the Report**

To seek the approval of Cabinet to extend the grounds of Newcastle Crematorium into adjacent land within the Council's ownership, and to develop the remainder of the adjacent land for residential use with associated green infrastructure and community facilities.

**Recommendation**

That;

1. The Masterplan to extend Newcastle Crematorium and to redevelop the remaining Council owned land off Chatterley Close is received.
2. The scheme to extend the grounds of the Crematorium is approved in principle.
3. The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to consult with appropriate stakeholders on the proposals in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy 2018-21 and to report the results to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
4. The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare a hybrid planning application for the extension to the crematorium grounds (full) and, subject to the outcome of the consultation with stakeholders and public, residential development to the remainder of the site (outline).
5. Subject to a detailed financial analysis, the scheme to extend the crematorium grounds is funded from the capital receipt gained from the sale of the remaining land for development.
6. The Head of Operations is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare an outline business case for an improved memorialisation offer in the crematorium grounds with a view to generating increased revenue and provision of £14,000 is made available for this support in the General Fund Capital Programme/Borough Growth Fund in 2020/21.

**Reasons**

To ensure that Newcastle Crematorium can continue to meet the needs of the residents of the Borough for a further 30 years and that the Council's land assets, where appropriate, are used to facilitate the meeting of identified housing, community facility and green infrastructure needs to encourage economic growth.

- 1.1 Newcastle Crematorium, situated on Chatterley Close in Bradwell, was opened in 1966. As well as the crematorium building and offices, it consists of extensive grounds which have been laid out in phases over the last 50+ years to accommodate the burial of cremated remains and various forms of memorialisation, including small headstones, benches, trees, shrubs and scattering of ashes into lawned areas.
- 1.2 The grounds are now nearing capacity for burials and memorialisation and it is considered appropriate to seek to extend them onto an adjacent open space, which is in Council ownership, thus creating additional capacity of an estimated 30 years. The extension would take up approximately 2.64ha of the adjacent 6.77ha site, leaving approximately 4.13ha which currently contains a children's play area, MUGA, and general amenity open space.
- 1.3 The Council's Open Space Strategy, adopted in 2017, identifies this site as suitable for master-planning to facilitate alternative uses and in September 2018, Cabinet approved the commissioning of a study to explore this. Consultants were appointed and a Vision and Viability Appraisal was produced. The study was completed in July 2020 and concluded the following:– the site offers the opportunity to extend the crematorium whilst creating new play and recreational facilities in the retained green spaces and the development of new homes. The crematorium shall expand into the site, improving its access and movement as well as providing space for new memorial gardens. The green infrastructure would cover almost 40% of the residential area of the site. It would accommodate an enhanced and refurbished play area and MUGA, develop new ecological habitats, retain the existing woodland and re-provide green space. The remaining site would provide the opportunity to build high quality homes.

## 2. Issues

- 2.1 The proposed extension to the crematorium grounds would consist of boundary treatments (railings/hedges/gates), a new egress road facilitating a one way access and egress system, additional car parking, footpaths, drainage, hard and soft landscaping and associated minor structures. The estimated capital cost of this scheme is approximately £1.3 million, inclusive of fees and it is proposed to fund this from the capital receipt gained from the disposal of the remaining land.
- 2.3 Memorialisation is a popular choice for bereaved families at the crematorium and a range of modest options are currently offered for sale or lease by the Council, including small headstones, benches, trees and shrubs. However, it is anticipated that there may be a latent demand for further options in this area and it is therefore proposed to commission a feasibility study to explore the market and determine the range that could be incorporated into the layout of the extended grounds. The estimated cost of this study is approximately £14,000 and it is proposed that provision of this amount is made in the General Fund Capital Programme/Borough Growth Fund in 2020/21.
- 2.3 The existing play area and MUGA on the site is aged and in need of updating to reflect current needs in relation to play and recreation for children and young people. The masterplan provides the opportunity to facilitate this as part of a comprehensive site redevelopment and improvement.
- 2.4 The masterplan provides for a range of new homes with a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses, and 25% affordable housing. These are only indicative figures and would be firmed up during the planning process. The Joint Local Plan identifies the need for 27,800 new homes between 2013 and 2033 (1,390 new homes per year) as a minimum across the plan area. In the latest consultation version (February 2018) insufficient development sites were identified to meet the need in the Newcastle-under-Lyme authority area. These homes, if built, would contribute to this shortfall.

2.6 In accordance with the Asset Management Strategy 2018-21 the public and ward Councillors should be consulted on any proposal to dispose of a surplus asset of this type. The primary purpose of the consultation is to identify any physical, technical or other constraints that might affect the scope/opportunity for alternative use or development being pursued. The outcome of such consultation exercises, taken together with desktop technical assessments, allows the Council as a landowner to consider its options.

The consultation process involves Ward councillors being notified prior to the start of the process; notices being placed on site and the adjacent property owners being notified along with the Parish/Town Council, where relevant. Within the Strategy there is a consultation timetable, for a site that is accessible green space that is over 0.5 ha Ward councillors should be given 3 weeks to consider the proposals prior to a further 6 week consultation with the general public. Therefore, subject to the approval of Cabinet, the consultation period will commence on or around 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and run for 9 weeks up to the Christmas period in accordance with the approved process in the Asset Management Strategy.

### 3. **Proposals**

- 3.1 The Masterplan to extend Newcastle Crematorium and to redevelop the remaining Council owned land off Chatterley Close is received.
- 3.2 The scheme to extend the grounds of the Crematorium is approved in principle.
- 3.3 The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to consult with appropriate stakeholders on the proposals in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy 2018-21 and to report the results to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
- 3.4 The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare a hybrid planning application for the extension to the crematorium grounds (full) and, subject to the outcome of the consultation with stakeholders, residential development to the remainder of the site (outline).
- 3.5 Subject to a detailed financial analysis, the scheme to extend the crematorium grounds is funded from the capital receipt gained from the sale of the remaining land for development.
- 3.6 The Head of Operations is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare an outline business case for an improved memorialisation offer in the crematorium grounds with a view to generating increased revenue and provision of £14,000 is made available for this support in the General Fund Capital Programme/Borough Growth Fund in 2020/21.

### 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 To ensure that Newcastle Crematorium can continue to meet the needs of the residents of the Borough for a further 30 years and that the Council's land assets, where appropriate, are used to facilitate the meeting of identified housing, community facility and green infrastructure needs to encourage economic growth.

### 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Vision and Viability Appraisal explored a number of options before arriving at the current proposal.

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

6.1 The Council has a duty, both fiduciary and operationally to utilise its Assets for the benefit of the community.

6.2 Local Government Act 1972 – Section 123 - the Council has a duty to achieve best consideration for its assets.

6.3 Local Government Act 2000 - powers to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Not applicable at this stage.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The financial appraisal which formed part of the commissioned Masterplan estimated the capital receipt for the residential development land to be in excess of £2.5m. This is based on the assumption that there are no abnormal costs relating to the site and Covid does not have an impact moving forward on land values.

8.2 It is estimated that £100,000 is required to cover the fees for commissioning consultants to prepare and submit a planning application and any associated reports.

8.3 The estimated capital cost of the works to extend the crematorium grounds is approximately £1.3 million inclusive of fees. It is proposed to fund the work from the capital receipt gained from the sale of the residual land.

8.4 The cost of the various fees associated with the seeking of planning permission and the preparation of a business case for memorialisation options will be derived from the capital programme.

8.5 This would result in an estimated residual capital receipt of approximately £1.2 million, subject to the assumptions above.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 There is a risk that there will be community and political resistance to the proposals, to mitigate against this the masterplanning seeks to consider issues and potential ways in which they can be mitigated. The proposals seek to find a way to extend the Crematorium so that the needs of the local community can be met for the next 30 years, deliver community benefits and needed housing within the locality. Without development within the Borough the Council would need to find additional resources to provide the additional Crematorium space. The consultation on the masterplan as part of the Asset Management Strategy seeks to identify any physical, technical or other constraints that might affect the scope/opportunity for alternative use or development being pursued, hence it is recommended to proceed to this stage.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Any issues will be considered through the planning process.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The report is referred to in the Forward Plan.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Asset Management Cabinet report

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Copy of Masterplan of the site

14. **Background Papers**

Asset Management Strategy 2018-2021 – available to view on Council's website  
Confidential Vision and Viability Statement – Land Chatterley Close, Bradwell – July 2020  
Consultation letters and background information – available on request from Property Section

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# LAND AT CHATTERLEY CLOSE, BRADWELL



## Vision Statement

October 2020

<b>Quality Checked*</b>	 <p>The Studio, Hartsgrove Farm Hollin Lane Sutton Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 0NN Tel: 01260 253207 Email: <a href="mailto:hello@escape-urbanists.com">hello@escape-urbanists.com</a> <a href="http://www.escape-urbanists.com">www.escape-urbanists.com</a></p>
Document: <b>019/040/001/RevD</b>	
Compiled by: <b>RJL</b>	
Reviewed by: <b>DL</b>	
Date: <b>October 2020</b>	

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<b>1.0</b>	Introduction
<b>2.0</b>	Context, Constraints & Opportunities
<b>3.0</b>	Vision
<b>4.0</b>	Parameters Masterplan
<b>5.0</b>	Conclusion

- 1.1 The combined team of e\*SCAPE Urbanists and Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) have been appointed by Newcastle-under-Lyme Council to prepare a masterplan and viability appraisal for an area of land to the south of Chatterley Close, Bradwell hereafter referred to as ‘the site’.
- 1.2 The site is located within the north of the Borough and also north of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre, as illustrated in Figure 01:01, close to the borough boundary with the City of Stoke on Trent.

- 1.3 The site boundary is illustrated in Figure 01:02 opposite which indicates the site location sitting, as it does, to the south of Chatterley Close, west of the existing Bradwell Crematorium and behind homes fronting Arnold Grove and Hillport Avenue.
- 1.4 The brief requested that the team prepare a masterplan which sets out a clear direction for the future development of the land described and illustrated here. A viability assessment of these proposals has been developed by LSH and that report should be read alongside this Vision Statement.

- 1.5 The objectives of the masterplan were to:
  - Provide for an extension to the Crematorium grounds incorporating a new access, parking and burial ground,
  - Re-provide existing play elements to accord with Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy, and
  - Redevelop the remainder of the site for housing.
- 1.6 The consultant team has worked closely with officers of the council in developing the proposals to ensure that the above objectives have been achieved.
- 1.7 e\*SCAPE Urbanists have utilised the previously developed Phase I Geoenvironmental Assessment, as well as Utilities information provided by the council and our own assessment of the existing physical form, structure, neighbouring uses, views and topography of the site to inform the development of our masterplan.
- 1.8 Therefore, this study covers the following topics in a logical and sequential order charting the development of the masterplan and the viability of its proposals. The structure is as follows:
  - Context, Constraints & Opportunities
  - Vision
  - Parameters Masterplan
  - Conclusions
- 1.9 The scope and content of the document demonstrates the commitment of the team and client to deliver a high quality development, based on a thorough process of contextual appreciation, to ensure the proposals integrate with and are open to the established surrounding neighbourhoods, sympathetically respond to the site whilst fulfilling the needs of the crematorium and create accessible open spaces for use by all users and residents of the wider area.

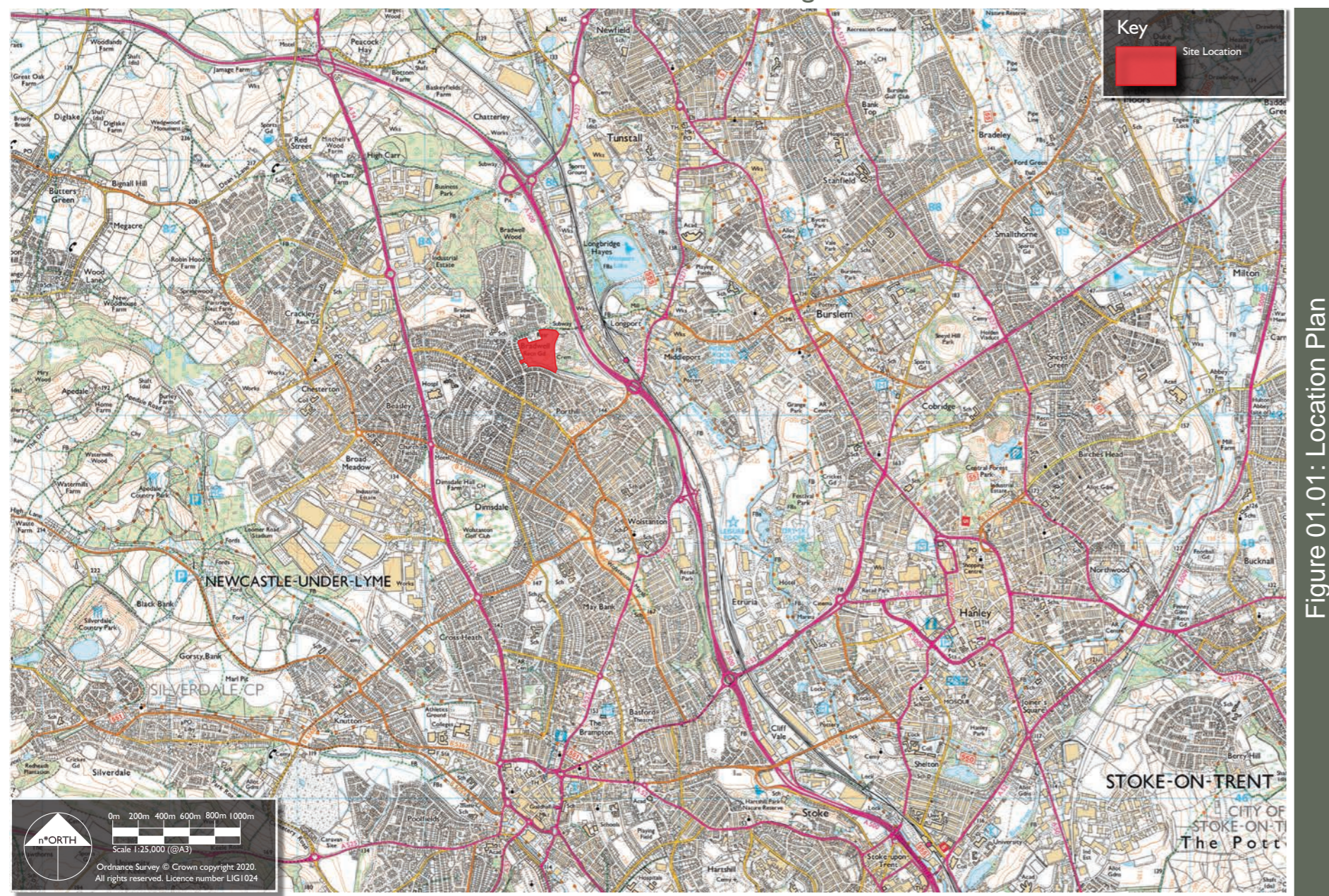


Figure 01.01: Location Plan



Figure 02.01 : Site Boundary

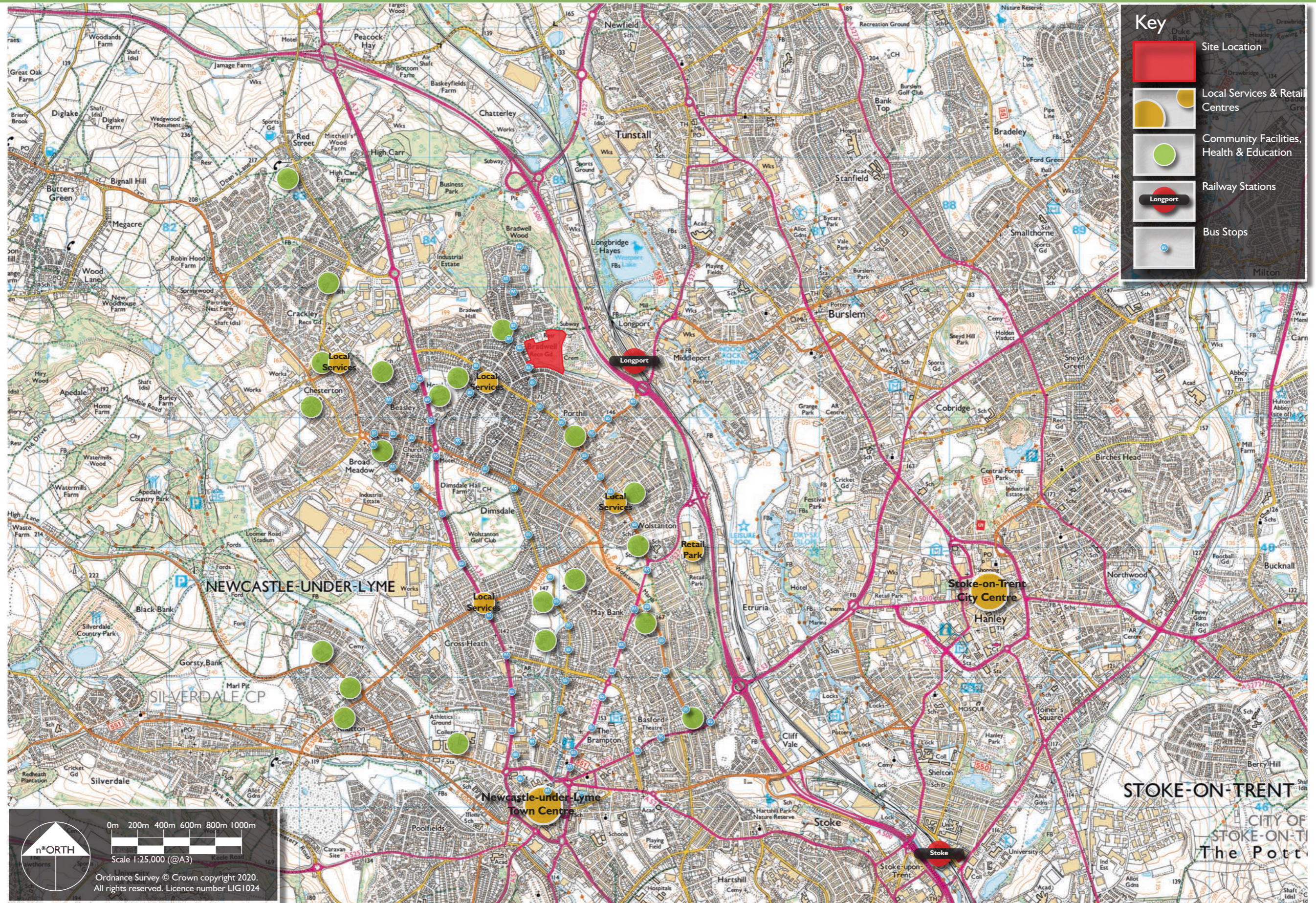


Figure 02.01: Town Context Plan

### Town Context

- 2.1 The site lies on the northern fringe of the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, as illustrated in Figure 02.01 opposite.
- 2.2 The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme lies in the County of Staffordshire on the northern fringes of the West Midlands adjoining the city of Stoke-on-Trent and close to the North West and Cheshire County border.
- 2.3 The town of Newcastle-under-Lyme is located approximately 3.7 Kilometres from Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent's City Centre, 24 kilometres from Stafford, 63 Kilometres from Birmingham and 51 kilometres from Manchester.
- 2.4 The town borders the City of Stoke-on-Trent along the Etruria Valley and some parts of the borough's settlements merge with the adjoining city.
- 2.5 Historically Newcastle-under-Lyme did not have a strong pottery industry unlike its neighbour but developed industries around coal extraction, brick manufacturing, iron casting and engineering. Modern industries focus on the service sector, light engineering and distribution.
- 2.6 The towns railway station opened in 1852 and closed to passenger traffic in 1964 with public transport currently relying on its bus services and links to railway stations in Stoke-on-Trent.
- 2.7 Stoke-on-Trent railway station lies on the West Coast main line with services running between London Euston and Manchester Piccadilly with services also to Birmingham, Rugby, Crewe and stations in between.
- 2.8 Longport Station which is just 0.6 kilometres from the site provides local services between Derby and Crewe, as well as to Manchester Piccadilly and Deansgate stations and is linked to Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre via various bus services.

- 2.9 The M6, Junction 16 lies about 10 kilometres to the west of the town centre and under 8 kilometres from the site and is directly accessible via the main road network including the A500 'D-Road'.
- 2.10 Newcastle still has a strong and vibrant town centre with the mix and choice of retailing, cafés and restaurants, as well as a market 6 days a week, reflecting the affluent nature of the towns' surrounding rural hinterland.
- 2.11 A numberer of local service and retail centres exist between the site and the town centre as illustrated by the orange circles in Figure 02:01 opposite. These consist of a mix of community facilities and/or retail shops and are usually located within the heart of local neighbourhoods or on communication corridors, such as the A34.
- 2.12 Additional community facilities, hospitals and schools are highlighted by the green circles in the same illustration and again these lie in historic locations at the heart of neighbourhoods or within communication corridors.
- 2.13 The two railway stations described in the above narrative are also illustrated, with Longport close to the site, within the Etruria Valley and Stoke lying to the east of the town centre.
- 2.14 Finally, the bus routes between the site locality and town centre are illustrated in Figure 02:01 and indicate a strong public transport network between the site and town centre running through and past a number of the local/neighbourhood centres also illustrated.
- 2.15 In essence, the site might be located on the northern fringes of the town but it is well served by local schools, facilities and the public transport network so that there is good access to facilities in the town centre as well as locally.





Key	
	Site Location
	Local Plan Policy S3 Green Belt
	Local Plan Policy N2 Area of Landscape Restoration
	Local Plan Policy C19 Community Facilities Proposals
	Public Rights of Way
	Residential Neighbourhoods
	Educational & Community Uses
	Local Facilities
	Employment Uses
	Bus Stops

0m 20m 40m 60m 80m 100m
   
 Scale 1:2,500 (@A3)
   
 Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2020.
   
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Figure 02.02: Local Context Plan



### Local Context

- 2.16 The site is surrounded on three sides, north, west and south by the established neighbourhood of Bradwell, a suburb of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 2.17 Bradwell Crematorium borders the site on the eastern edge and is separated from it by a steel fence and hedgerow. The Crematorium serves a wide area beyond the brough boundaries including Stoke-on-Trent and adjoining areas of Cheshire.
- 2.18 The site is well located with good local and regional access via public transport and the local road network as highlighted earlier, with bus stops immediately adjacent to the site on Arnold Grove, as illustrated in Figure 02.02 over page.
- 2.19 The bus service number 94, pre Corvid19, appears to have provided connections between the site, Newcastle Bus Station and Chell, with connections on to Congleton and Biddulph. Currently there appears to be a reduced service stopping at Porthill to the south east of the site as well as other routes between Bradwell Hospital and the town centre to the west.
- 2.20 In addition to the local bus service a Public Right of Way (PRoW) 'Newcastle 11', as illustrated in Figure 02:02 over page runs east to west along Chatterley Close to the north of the site. The PRoW continues east through woodland before running under the A500 D-Road via a subway thus providing a walking route to Longport Station via Longbridge Hayes Lane some 1,000 metres/12 minutes walk to the east.
- 2.21 Whilst the site is not the subject specifically of any Local Plan spatial designations or policies in March 2017 the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council approved The Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy which identified this site as requiring masterplanning. The site was previously a recreation ground and this

use continues informally, a play area, muga and skate park is also located on a corner of the site and are in continued and active use (pre-Covid 19) and will be replaced/upgraded as part of this masterplan vision.

- 2.22 Immediately adjacent to the site and across Chatterley Close to the north east is an area of undeveloped land which is the subject of three local plan policy designations; S3, N2 and C19 as illustrated in Figure 02:02 opposite.
- 2.23 Policy S3 is the general Local Plan Green Belt policy pertaining primarily to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt through restricting development within it.
- 2.24 Policy N2 relates to development and nature conservation and requires any development covering more than 0.25 hectares to carry out and submit a preliminary habitat and protected species survey, along with a desktop study of past surveys and/or other ecological information.
- 2.25 Policy C19 relates to the allocation of the site covered by the designation as a potential location for the extension of Bradwell Crematorium burial ground.
- 2.26 Bursley Academy Nursery and Primary School is located within 400 metres or a 5 minute walk from the centre of the site, as illustrated in Figure 02.02. A second primary school; Bradwell Primary School, is located south west of the site just beyond the local centre (not illustrated in Figure 02:02) some 670 metres/8 minutes walk from the centre of the site. The nearest High School is Woolstanton which is 1.7km to the south of the site.
- 2.27 In addition to the local primary schools there are a number of food and non-food retail stores, as well as a post office and pharmacy located in the centre of the Bradwell neighbourhood, just over 400 metres/5

minutes walk from the centre of the site, as illustrated in Figure 02:02 opposite.

- 2.28 The nearest medical facilities appears to be associated with Bradwell Hospital.
- 2.29 As illustrated opposite, the site adjoins areas of public open space and green infrastructure previously associated with the boroughs' industrial past. The green infrastructure network includes the crematorium grounds, structure planting associated with the D-Road corridor, areas of open space which in turn link out to the surrounding woods and rural landscape. The site is thus part of this green infrastructure network and these connection will need to be retained and enhanced as part of the masterplanning process.

### Local Built Context

- 2.30 The Bradwell neighbourhood which surrounds the site appears to be of an inter war and post war layout and design following the local authority Garden Settlement model designed circa 1935 to 1950.
- 2.31 The movement hierarchy is laid out as a series of avenues, street and closes focused around a central local centre with associated shops, community facilities and central green. The roads radiate out from this central core with the site located on the north eastern edge of the neighbourhood.
- 2.32 The typical archetype of the neighbourhood is the semi detached home, primarily containing three bedrooms. Their style varies through the neighbourhood and looks to be dependent on which phase they were built in. Earlier phases; circa late 1930's, of the neighbourhood contain brick built homes with hipped roofs, forward facing gables and single storey entrances porches. Later post war homes appear to use mass fabricated elements such as upper floor composite panels or



Figure 02.03: Site Constraints & Opportunities

pebble dash finishes to structural masonry with limited to no architectural detailing in terms of hipped roofs, gables or porches. Some of these later properties have had bay windows or porches added later by the home owners.

2.33 Flats and maisonettes are found in local centre and look to be of a post war style with some short rows of terraced properties found enclosing gateways and junctions. It is assumed that many of these properties are of one and two beds.

2.34 The materials and detailing of the homes in the above areas are quite varied, as touched on already with the use of dark red/brown facing brick which is assumed to be from the local brick manufacturers and a similarly coloured pan tile to the roofs. Other properties are rendered in pebble dash or painted smooth render whilst others appear to be of prefabricated design finished in vertical timber cladding.

2.35 Fearn Avenue appears to be of a similar era to the above areas but consists of a street of semi-detached bungalows with hipped roofs, tall chimneys, front bay windows adjacent to an interesting hexagonal window, with front doors located to the side elevation. The facing brick is the same red/brown local brick as described above. It is assumed that these properties contain two bedrooms, although a number of them appear to have had dormer extensions in the roof spacing increasing the accommodation to three bedrooms.

2.36 Newer residential developments from the later 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are found to the north of the site. These properties are detached and look to offer 3, 4 and 5 bed accommodation and are typical of their era with front drives, integral or detached garages arranged around spine roads with a series of short cul de sacs leading off them. These layouts back onto the surrounding green space network.

2.37 The materials and detailing of these homes is typical of the era and can be found across the country with forward pointing gables, a red facing brick, buff engineering brick detailing to heads, cills, banded courses and corbels with single storey roof details over a bay window, entrance porch and integral garage. Roofs look to use 'Marley Modern' concrete roof tiles.

2.38 Later properties on the fringes of this neighbourhood extension utilise mock Tudor boarding and blue engineering brick banded courses and diamond pattern decorative brick panels.

**The Sites' Constraints & Opportunities**

2.39 The site lies to the north east of Bradwell immediately adjacent to the crematorium site as stated previously.

2.40 The site roughly forms a rectangle and is bounded by housing backing onto the site, a covered reservoir, Chatterley Close and the crematorium and burial grounds, as illustrated in Figure 02:03 opposite.

2.41 A shallow wooded valley and water course runs within the site along the southern edge of the site and is an historical feature illustrated on all of the historical mapping of the site prior to the surrounding area being developed in the 1930's onwards

2.42 A stand of native woodland has been planted in the recent past on an area of the site adjoining Chatterley Close and is yet to reach maturity.

2.43 In addition there are areas of naturally regenerated scrub woodland within the site, along with garden trees adjacent to or forming the boundary of the site with adjoining gardens.

2.44 Existing hedgerow consist of a mixture of native and ornamental hedgerows associated with the rear gardens of the homes backing onto the site, fronting Chatterley Close or forming the boundary with the crematorium.





Panorama of existing approach to Crematorium along Chatterley Close



Panorama of Crematorium boundary from within site



Panorama looking across site from north west

Figure 02.04: Panoramic Views

2.45 As stated earlier in this chapter the site links out to the surrounding green infrastructure network with a link to the shallow valley woodland sweeping through to the site via the crematorium gardens, as illustrated opposite. A second green infrastructure link runs across the sites northern edge related to the avenue trees, hedgerow and reservoir along Chatterley Close.

2.46 These links will be retained and enhanced as part of the masterplan proposals.

2.47 Existing established homes back onto the site from Chatterley Close, Arnold Grove and Hillport Avenue. These properties have a sensitive interface with the site and the residents residential amenity must be carefully considered in the development of the masterplan.

2.48 In undertaking the assessment of the site crop marks were identified within the aerial photography and subsequently these linear markings were identified as water mains crossing the site from the reservoirs. The main run is roughly a north east to south western direction, doglegging through the site as illustrated in Figure 02:03 opposite.

2.49 Whilst undertaking an initial site walk over, pre Covid19 restrictions, potential site access points have been identified as indicated by the orange arrows in

Figure 02:03. These access points could be vehicular and/or pedestrian.

2.50 In terms of topography the site gently slopes from the north to the south east and offers views from the northern areas of the site across the Etruria Valley, south west to Stoke City Centre (Hanley).

2.51 The site has remained undeveloped as the town has grown up around it and according to the historic mapping has never contained any built development. Whilst Chatterley Close and Arnold Grove lie over pre-existing tracks/lanes, as illustrated on the historical maps within the Geoenvironmental report there appears to be no archaeological or heritage assets on the site.

2.52 The flood mapping for this area has been examined and the site lies fully within Flood Zone 1 which indicates it has the lowest probability of flooding.

2.53 Section 5 of the Cremation Act 1902 states that no crematorium shall be constructed any nearer a dwelling house than 200 yards/182 metres, except with written consent from the owner/lessee/occupier of the property. It should be noted that this Act relates to new crematoria and existing homes whereas here the crematorium is in situ and prospective home buyers will be able to note the location of the crematorium prior to purchase.

2.54 In terms of emissions from the crematorium, this is covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and subsequent guidance notes. In order to comply with the emissions requirements, as set out in the Act, it is recommended that air quality monitoring takes place as part of the additional baseline survey work required for a planning application in order to affirm emissions are within the required limits, as set-out in the Act and subsequent guidance.



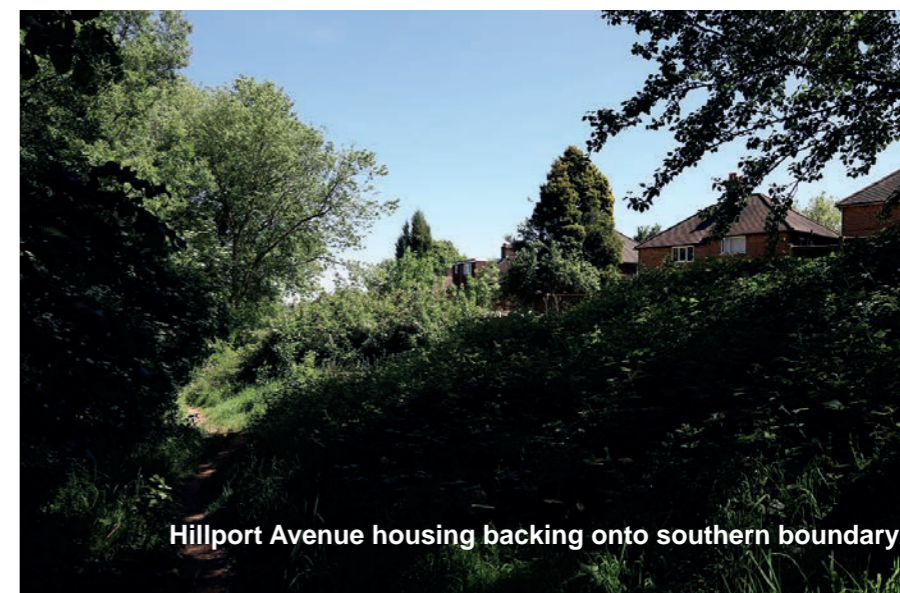
View to Stoke City Centre (Hanley)



View to St Margaret's Church Spire, Wolstanton



View looking north across site towards reservoir



Hillport Avenue housing backing onto southern boundary



**A Vision for the site**

- 3.1 Our Vision for the site has sprung out of the appreciation of the surrounding context and features of the site itself, as set out earlier in this statement.
- 3.2 This proposal will create a sympathetic and high quality crematorium extension, improved play facilities and new homes on what is left of the site.
- 3.3 The proposed development will be set into a strong network of green spaces, wildlife corridors, ecological habitats and recreational footpaths/cycleways. All these elements will form an integral part of the existing green infrastructure network, linking the site to the local facilities, adjoining suburbs and countryside.
- 3.4 The masterplanning team has carefully considered all the opportunities and constraints to inform this Vision, which demonstrates that the site can comfortably accommodate not only the burial ground extension and an extended and refurbished play area, but also a sustainably located residential neighbourhood with enough general amenity space for the proposed homes and existing adjacent neighbourhoods.
- 3.5 The proposals will enable the provision of a network of public open spaces for use by the existing and new members of the community.
- 3.6 The result will be a sympathetic crematorium-led development supported by a sustainable and integrated neighbourhood on the eastern edge of Bradwell, creating a strong addition to the wider town.
- 3.7 In addition to the crematorium extension this proposed development creates not just houses but homes, a neighbourhood rather than an estate and gives the proposals an individual identity, making it a place that people will want to live in and become a real part of the community that will emerge.

**VISION:**

“THIS SITE OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THE CREMATORIUM IN A SYMPATHETIC WAY WHILST ALSO CREATING NEW PLAY AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN THE RETAINED GREEN SPACES AND DEVELOP NEW HOMES BY WORKING WITH THE SITE’S OWN FEATURES AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.

THE MASTERPLAN SHALL BE DEVELOPED USING A LANDSCAPE-LED APPROACH WHERE VIEWS, TOPOGRAPHY, WOODLANDS, HEDGEROWS, AND WATERCOURSES ARE USED TO INFORM THE STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT OF THE MASTERPLAN.

THE DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE INTEGRATED WITH THE ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES AND BE WELCOMING TO VISITORS WITH OPEN SPACES AND THE PUBLIC REALM BEING LOCATED IN EASILY ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS.

THE CREMATORIUM SHALL EXPAND INTO THE SITE, IMPROVING THE CREMATORIUMS ACCESS AND MOVEMENT AS WELL AS PROVIDING SPACE FOR NEW MEMORIAL GARDENS IN VARIOUS SETTINGS OFFERING CHOICE TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY AS TO HOW AND WHERE THEY’D LIKE TO REMEMBER THEIR LOVED ONES.

THE SITE WILL PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH QUALITY HOMES, OPEN SPACES AND ALONG TERM FUTURE FOR THE CREMATORIUM.”



Figure 04.01: Parameters Masterplan



## Parameters Masterplan

4.1 Now that the Vision has been developed from the appreciation of the site and its context, a meaningful parameters masterplan can be developed which explores the connections, spatial relationships and potential uses of the site. Due to working with the context the concept is strong, dynamic and integrated.

### Green & Blue Infrastructure

4.2 The green infrastructure network as illustrated in Figure 04:01 creates a linked network of green spaces and corridors which runs between and around the development parcels and retains the character related to the area. This includes the ability of the existing vegetation to soften and screen views and create a setting for the development.

4.3 The green infrastructure covers some 1.65 hectares of the residential site area and can accommodate the enhanced and refurbished play area/muga/skate park and develop new ecological habitats. The green infrastructure network will ensure the retention of the much of the existing vegetation or allow space to mitigate any losses.

4.4 The burial ground could all be primarily classed as green infrastructure under the Landscape Institutes definition, however here the burial ground and proposed gardens have been split out as separate elements with the peripheral landscape setting and retained valley woodland been classed as the green infrastructure related to the burial ground extension. This area covers 0.84 hectares of that part of the site.

4.5 Set within the green infrastructure network will be the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). Consisting of new ponds, swales and water meadow style inundation zones which will have the capacity to hold and safely disperse storm water collected from the site. Wildlife

habitats and corridors will be an integral element of the green infrastructure network.

4.6 Additional detail as to the form and character of the green infrastructure network is described below as part of the landscape strategy for the site. The strategy sets out to describe the various landscape treatments associated with the proposed residential neighbourhood and crematorium extension, including the indicative proposals for the refurbishment and enhancement of the play area.

### Scale & Mass

4.7 The character of the neighbourhood that is to be created lends itself principally to 2 storey development, based on the local vernacular and designed to reflect the human scale of built form found in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

4.8 2.5 To 3 storey elements will only be used as header buildings in squares and at junctions to create announcements of arrival.

### Quantum & Mix of Uses

4.9 The location of this site for residential use is sustainably located on the edge of Bradwell, within easy reach of local facilities by walking, cycling, bus or motor vehicle.

4.10 The site is 6.77 hectares in total and will include a balanced mix of residential development, landscaped burial grounds and green infrastructure. It is proposed that the homes will be set within a strong open space network.

4.11 The highest density housing is proposed to be located in the heart of the site around the square and mews with lower density homes on the fringes to ensure it integrates with the existing neighbourhood and the

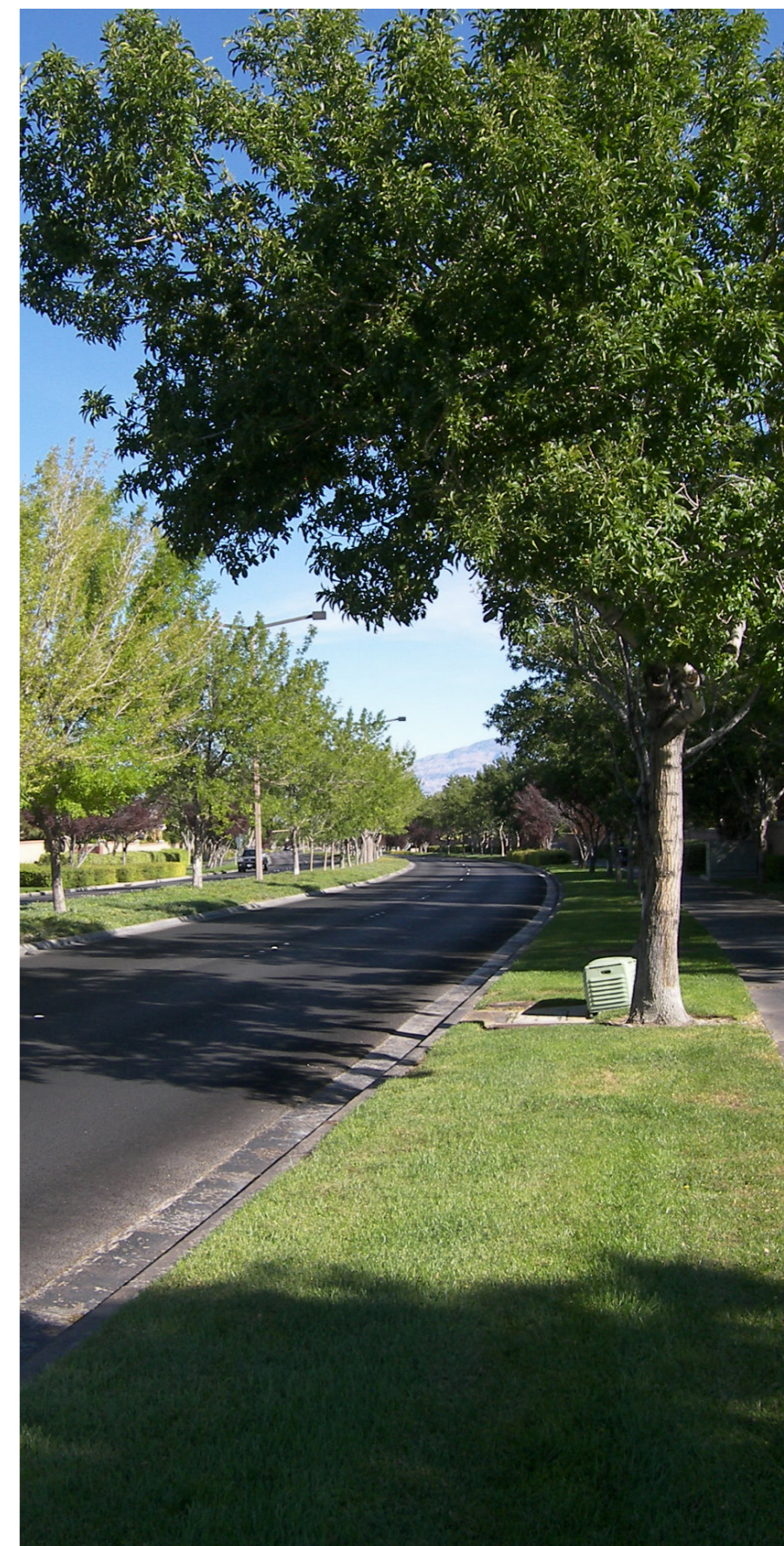




Figure 04.02: Landscape Strategy

open space to the north east. The development parcels takes up just 2.48 hectares of the overall site area.

- 4.12 The burial ground extension will take up 2.64 hectares of the site in total and beside the car parks will consist primarily of landscaped and wooded gardens, similar to those already found within the existing crematorium site.
- 4.13 Additional information on the proposals within the proposed crematorium extension can be found within landscape strategy below.

#### Gateways & Nodes

- 4.14 A series of gateways and focal points/nodes will be created within the site. These are either in primary gateway locations, announcing arrival into the site or within the heart of the site creating focal features and reference points within the development.
- 4.15 The internal nodes are focussed on creating areas of public realm in the form of shared surface squares or mews, the open space or woodland play area.

#### Sympathetic Boundaries

- 4.16 The development will respect existing residential properties by backing onto existing properties to the north and west and ensuring overlooking distances are maintained (21 metres minimum back to back) and by retaining the tree'd valley on the southern boundary which backs onto the existing housing, thus preserving the character of this area.

#### The Movement Hierarchy

- 4.17 The proposed street hierarchy is clear and logical comprising a series of inter-connected primary and secondary streets and shared drives. The arrangement of streets and other routes within the site is designed to ensure good connectivity with the surrounding street network, provide logical and efficient routes through the development and ensure a layout which is clear and legible.
- 4.18 This new movement network includes the crematorium extension by providing improved access and creating a one way processional route through the existing crematorium site and parking area on into the burial ground extension and back out via the proposed new movement network.
- 4.19 The street pattern flows with the topography of the site with the avenue gently curving with the contours along the hillside.
- 4.20 The Avenue is at the top of the route hierarchy and provides the access through the heart of the site from Arnold Grove to Chatterley Avenue. It is traditional in form with a bitmac carriageway and pavements. This is the widest street in the hierarchy with a carriageway of between 6 and 7 metres. The Avenue also contains a shared space Square to aid in slowing traffic speeds and creating a focal area at the heart of the development.
- 4.21 Streets and Lanes are secondary in the route hierarchy and provide the main accesses into the residential areas from the Avenue. They are again traditional in form, the Street carriageway width of 5.5m and the Lane 4.8m wide, with a bitmac carriageway and pavements. The built form is set back from the road, allowing sufficient room for the planting of street trees within gardens.

- 4.22 The Square and Mews are interlinked in the higher density residential heart of the development and like the Square the Mews has a shared space feel with the carriageways, pedestrian zones and green spaces defined within the space as a whole, rather than by a traditional carriageway and footpath arrangement.

- 4.23 The Shared Drives are the last element in the hierarchy of routes. They are domestic in nature, designed as a simple shared surface routes which provides access to only a small number of properties along their length (maximum of five properties if a dead end or ten if the route connects through). Shared drives are associated with the development edge and interface with the wider countryside and open spaces, often sitting alongside pedestrian/cycleways. As a rule shared drives are 4.5 metres wide and depending on length can widen locally to allow some visitor parking or a passing place to be accommodated.

- 4.24 Below the street hierarchy, a network of pedestrian routes are illustrated providing a choice of routes through and out of the site, increasing permeability and encouraging walking.

- 4.25 Where possible, footpaths are directed to pass landscape features to provide points of interest along the routes. Completed circuits through and around the edges of the site are created by linking footpaths with shared-surface lanes where appropriate. Wherever possible, footpaths follow likely desire lines.

- 4.26 Paths would be between 2 and 3 metres wide depending on the nature and intended use of the paths by pedestrians and/or bicycles. Surface finishes would again depend on amount of use, location and wear and tear expected and can vary between self binding aggregates/clays (i.e. Hoggin), resin bound aggregates and/or bitmacs.



Figure 04.03: Precedent Imagery

### Landscape Strategy

- 4.27 The proposals have been influenced by the existing green infrastructure and the potential landscape opportunities which will set Hillside within an already mature landscape structure.
- 4.28 The aim of the landscape strategy is to enhance the character and appearance of the site through the retention of the existing vegetation and the introduction of a high quality scheme that provides an attractive landscape that not only increases the aesthetic, functional and recreational value but also the biodiversity value of the site.
- 4.29 Much of the existing woodland, hedgerows and boundary treatments are to be retained, these will be maintained, and any infill planting provided where necessary. There are significant opportunities for new tree, hedgerow and shrub planting within the site. The existing ecological and wildlife corridors will therefore continue to provide ecological benefits and the proposed planting will seek to strengthen and extend the green network.
- 4.30 As the Landscape Strategy drawing (Figure 04:02) demonstrates the design of the development will bring large areas of public open space within the residential area, and provide tree lined streets, improved play provision, landscape buffers to the boundaries, gateway features and an extension to the crematorium.
- 4.31 The key elements of the Landscape Strategy for the site can be summarised as follows:
- Retention of the existing elements that make up the site's green infrastructure, such as tree and hedgerow vegetation along the boundaries and integrating these into the development, giving the scheme an immediate sense of maturity;

- Management of the woodland to open up areas and enhance the user experience along the woodland trails and to integrate this existing landscape feature into the development;
- Improve the play provision within the site by reusing the existing equipment and incorporating natural play elements along the woodland trail;
- High quality ornamental and native tree and hedge planting to be planted in and around the proposed development to soften the effects of the built form and reinforce the street hierarchy;
- Create a landscape buffer between the proposed development and the extension to burial ground;
- Enhance the permeability of the site by providing a network of footpaths providing connectivity to existing local networks and the development;
- Areas of wildflower planting to increase the biodiversity levels and provide attractive seasonal planting;
- Create attractive woodland walks through the extended burial ground;
- Columbaria walls within sensory and scented gardens to provide tranquil spaces for reflection;
- Areas of seating throughout the public open space and the burial ground woodland walk;
- Strategic tree and shrub planting around the extension to the Crematorium to create a sense of calm and peace;
- High quality materials to enhance user experience and reflect the character of the area and the functional qualities of the space;
- Mitigate any landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

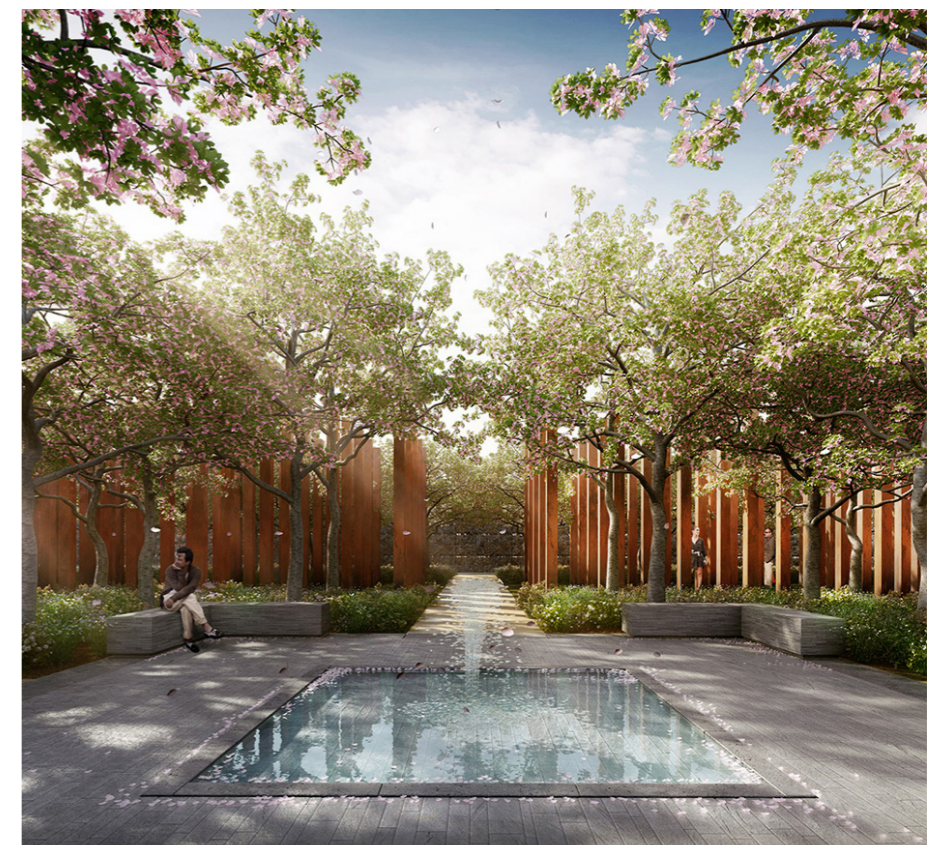




Figure 06.01: Parameters Masterplan

- 5.1 This Vision for this site at Bradwell illustrates a masterplan with a balanced mix of the new burial ground extension, open space and new homes which works spatially and is also viable and delivers capital for reinvestment in the local community in terms of improved facilities and services.
- 5.2 The burial ground has been developed to ensure there is enough capacity for the next 25 years and has been designed to flow with the current burial ground's layout whilst also enhancing the experience for those families and friends unfortunate enough to require its services.
- 5.3 The proposals enhance the current play area, making use of the retained valley woodland and creating a facility for use by not only new residents but also those in the established neighbourhoods who use the facilities already.
- 5.4 The proposed new homes are of a similar density to those in the surrounding neighbourhood so as not to be detrimental to the neighbourhoods existing character and will provide new homes in a mix of sizes and locations.
- 5.5 The proposals have been proved to be viable as stated by LSH in their Market Analysis & Viability Report which has been prepared as part of this masterplanning process.
- 5.6 Whilst the loss of any recreation ground is contentious this site has already been identified for redevelopment as part of the Boroughs' wider Green Space Strategy.
- 5.7 The proposals illustrated in this vision balances the need to accommodate an extension to the crematorium site, enhancement of the play area, retained green infrastructure network and the development of the new homes to create a sympathetic and thoughtful masterplan as a positive contribution to the well established neighbourhood of Bradwell .

## VISION:

"THIS SITE OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THE CREMATORIUM IN A SYMPATHETIC WAY WHILST ALSO CREATING NEW PLAY AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN THE RETAINED GREEN SPACES AND DEVELOP NEW HOMES BY WORKING WITH THE SITE'S OWN FEATURES AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.

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THE SITE WILL PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH QUALITY HOMES, OPEN SPACES AND ALONG TERM FUTURE FOR THE CREMATORIUM."

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**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**Cabinet**  
**04 November 2020**

**Report Title:**           **Proposed Refurbishment of the Cremators**

**Submitted by:**       **Head of Operations**

**Portfolio:**           **Environment and Recycling**

**Ward(s) affected:**   **All wards**

**Purpose of the Report**

To inform members of proposed options and funding strategies for the refurbishment of the cremators at Newcastle Crematorium. The urgent refurbishment of the cremators is essential for the continued operation of the Crematorium.

**Recommendation**

- 1. That Cabinet support the planned improvements at Bradwell Crematorium.**
- 2. That the preferred option is approved and an exception to Council Contract Procedure Rules is agreed to enable a direct award of contract without a call for competition for the refurbishment of the Council's two cremators by the manufacturer and incumbent service provider as set out in the report.**

**Reasons**

To ensure that the cremators continue operating at optimum levels for the duration of their anticipated remaining working lifespan, and in particular for the forthcoming winter period which may result in a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The two cremators at Newcastle Crematorium were last replaced in 2009/10 and were relined in September 2014. It was anticipated that full replacement would be required in 2021 and provision had been made in the capital programme, along with annual payments into the Equipment Replacement Fund to cover this cost.
- 1.2 However, due to diligent regular servicing and repair of the cremators since their installation, a recent condition survey concluded that their remaining useful working life expectancy is approximately a further 10 years, subject to continued regular maintenance.
- 1.3 Part of the maintenance requirements for the cremators is the need to reline and re-hearth the machines. The relining is usually required every 4 – 5 years and the re-hearth operation is usually required every 2 - 3 years, if using the traditional thermal brick lining, which is the current system in use within both cremators. One of the cremators is now in urgent need of a reline and new hearth, with an estimated remaining use of 200 cremations (January 2021) before the hearth degenerates to a point where it can no longer be operated correctly and safely.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Facultative Technologies, the specialist company who supplied and maintain the machines have recently reviewed the cremators and have estimated that they have an approximate 10 year period of use before they need to be replaced completely. They have also provided options and prices for relining and replacing the hearth for one of the cremators in the same traditional thermal brick materials as currently installed, as well as for a newer industry standard block system for both cremators which has a longer life expectancy between relining and installing new hearths. With the new block system, relining is estimated to be required every 8-10 years or 8,000 – 10,000 cremations and a new hearth would be required every 4 – 5 years or 4,000 – 5,000 cremations. Based on our current levels of use the 10,000 cremations would cover approximately 12 ½ years, before a reline may be required.
- 2.2 The time required to complete the relining works for either option is three weeks, and both cremators would have to be shut down completely for the duration of the work. Therefore it makes financial and operational sense to reline and hearth both cremators during a shutdown period to avoid a further shutdown at a later, not too distant date. Due to the current pandemic and the potential for increased pressure on the cremators if a second wave results in increased mortality rates, it is considered critical that the work to the cremators is programmed as soon as possible.
- 2.3 Discussions are in progress with Facultative Technologies regarding timescales for the works. The initial proposed timescale is January 2021. It is recognised that this could potentially mean a 3 week shutdown at a critically busy time and the company have been asked if this timescale could be brought forward. They have also been asked if there is any feasible short term repair option for the hearth which would extend the safe working life beyond the 2020/21 winter period, although initial discussions do not appear to be optimistic, as any repair would require a full shutdown. Should a shutdown have to take place at a critically busy time, contingency arrangements can be made via the Staffordshire Resilience Forum network for cremations to take place at other crematoria. Services could still be held in the chapel at Bradwell and administration work would continue as usual. There would be an impact on income received during the shutdown which is detailed later in this report.

## 3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed to implement the relining and new hearth work to both cremators as soon as reasonably possible as per option 3 in the table below, using the new block system which achieves greater value for money over the estimated 10 year remaining useful working life expectancy of the machines.
- 3.2 It is also proposed to enter into a maintenance and repair contract with the equipment's manufacturer as set out in section 8 below.

## 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 To ensure that the cremators continue operating at optimum levels for the duration of their anticipated remaining working lifespan, and in particular for the forthcoming winter period which may result in a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

## 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 To reline the cremators using the new block system and option three of the payment options, which is the most cost effective over the remaining lifespans of the cremators.

5.2 To reline the cremators as a like for like replacement materials, which will need replacing more frequently, and will require more shutdown periods, over the remaining lifespan of the cremators.

## 6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 The Council is a Burial Authority with a statutory duty to ensure the safe and proper disposal of the deceased.

## 7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 There is a positive equality impact resulting from these proposals, in that the proposed options enable us to continue to operate the crematorium.

## 8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 The total estimated cost of the proposed options for the project is detailed below:

Task	Initial Cost	Total Cost
Replacement traditional thermal brick liner and hearth to 2 x cremators	£85k initial cost	£226k (over 10 years including estimated costs for hearth replacement at 4 – 5 years)
New Block Liner System to 2 x cremators- Option 1 (purchase and no maintenance agreement)	£126,000 initial cost	£126,000 (plus any hearth replacement costs at 4 – 5 years)
New Block Liner System to 2 x cremators – Option 2 (purchase and 10 year maintenance agreement)	£83,884 initial cost + £10,433 per year maintenance	£188,214 (10 years)
New Block Liner System to 2 x cremators– Option 3 (annual payment for 10 years, including reline and any hearths that may be required during the period)	£16,320 per year for 10 years	£163,200 (10 years)

8.2 £66,000 is contributed to the Crematorium Equipment Replacement Fund each year, it's current balance is £375,000. The annual charge of £16,320 can be met from this balance, whilst the £66,000 contribution will enable the fund to be built up in advance of a full replacement of the Cremators being required in the long term.

8.3 It is anticipated that the reline of both cremators could take place in January 2021, this will require a 3 week shut down of the cremators and a loss of income for this period of circa £77,000. This will need to be accounted for as part of outturn forecasts for 2020/21.

8.4 Facultatieve Technologies is a specialist company who supplied the cremators and who have maintained and serviced them since their installation in 2009/10. Although the new block liner system could be provided and installed by other similar companies, Facultatieve

Technologies could not guarantee it if provided by others, and there is a risk that any future repair or maintenance issues with the liners could adversely affect the speed at which issues could be resolved. The prices provided by Facultatieve Technologies for the relining are considered to be fair and represent value for money and it is therefore proposed to waive standing orders to allow a direct award of this work, which is also of an urgent nature due to the pandemic circumstances which prevail.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 Failure to reline the cremators will lead to them being inoperable, in a fairly short period of time.
- 9.2 Delaying the works due to tender procedures could cause the cremators to be inoperable for a period of time.
- 9.3 Using an alternative provider could cause further issues in the long term for the cremators.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 None

11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 This decision will affect all wards of the Borough and the financial implications are outlined in the report.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 None

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None

**ANNEX 1**

**EXCEPTIONS TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

*This 'exceptions form' must be completed for every instance where a Chief Officer approves an exception from these Rules for contracts with a total value of £5,000 or more, in accordance with 2.3 above (The form must adequately document the reasons for the exception and an electronic copy must be retained by the Service concerned. A copy of each completed form is automatically forwarded to the Chief Officer concerned, the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit and the Strategic Procurement Team where a record of all exceptions is maintained). The Chief Officer concerned is responsible for keeping the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder informed*

<p><b>Title of Contract:</b> Newcastle Crematorium – reline and rehearth of cremators including 10 year maintenance cover</p>	<p><b>Contract Value:</b> £163,200 excl VAT</p>
<p>Date: 14 October 2020</p>	
<p><b>Description of Good or Service:</b></p> <p>To provide new block system reline and hearth to cremators FT1 and FT2 at Newcastle Crematorium including 10 year maintenance plan to cover new hearths at 5 year point.</p>	
<p><b>Reason why the exception is being sought:</b></p> <p>The existing cremators (FT1 and FT2) were supplied by Facultatieve Technologies (FacTec) and installed in 2009/10. FacTec have provided full servicing and maintenance of the cremators since this time, including a remote diagnostic link. FacTec also carried out the previous reline of the cremators in 2014. Although the proposed new block system proposed for the required reline can be supplied and installed by others, this would in effect void any guarantee which would be provided by FacTec if they supply and install the system. It would also introduce a third party into any future servicing and maintenance arrangement with the potential for disputes regarding responsibility for different elements of the overall cremator units.</p> <p>To appoint other specialist consultants would also require a significant lead in time and additional costs would be incurred for them to familiarise themselves with the existing cremators and associated diagnostic software. Fundamentally, this could result in the authority failing to meet the timescale requirements to deliver the relining of the cremators which is urgently required due to the prevailing circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic and the likelihood that the cremators will be under increased levels of use over the coming winter.</p> <p>Officers are therefore seeking approval to make a direct award of contract without a call for competition for delivery of the relining and new hearths, including a 10 year guarantee at an estimated total cost of £163,200 excl VAT (£16,320 per annum for 10 years), which will be funded in full through the Equipment Replacement Fund in the approved annual revenue budget for Bereavement Services.</p> <p>Based on the work Facultatieve Technologies have developed, officers are seeking an exception to Council Contract Procedure Rules under the following section(s):-</p> <p>Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules:</p> <p>4.1 Subject to statutory requirements, tenders need not be invited in accordance with these Rules in the following cases:</p> <p>(d) The purchase of a named or proprietary product required to be compatible with an existing installation as approved by the Authorised Officer.</p> <p>and</p> <p>(c) The contract is for the execution of work or the supply of goods or services certified by the appropriate Chief Officer to be required so urgently as to preclude the invitation of tenders. Officer will ensure that the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder shall be kept informed of such decisions.</p>	

<b>Responsible Officer:</b> Roger Tait, Head of Operations, 01782 742706	
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

01 December 2020

**Report Title:** Land at Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads

**Submitted by:** Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth – Simon McEneny, Property Manager – Louise Beeby

**Portfolios:** Planning and Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** Loggerheads

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To consider a disposal, by way of a long lease, of land at Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads to Loggerheads Parish Council

#### **Recommendation**

**That Cabinet**

- 1. Authorises the disposal of this land, by way of a long lease, to Loggerheads Parish Council for £1.**
- 2. Authorises the Executive Director – Commercial Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to agree the terms and conditions of this lease with Loggerheads Parish Council.**

#### **Reasons**

The Parish Council wish to proceed with community facility investment on land in its boundary and in order to secure funding a long term lease is required for the funding bodies to agree to fund any projects.

#### **1. Background**

Land at Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads shown edged red and hatched blue on the attached plan, which measures some 11.50 acres, was approved in the Asset Management Strategy 2018-2022 as a surplus site for disposal. This is shown on the attached plan highlighted in a hatched area.

In September 2017 Planning Committee granted outline planning permission (OPP) for 65 dwellings in respect of the land edged red only (8.87 acres). The area hatched blue (2.63 acres) was not included in the application as it was beyond the built up area of the village of Loggerheads.

Loggerheads Parish Council have requested that the land hatched blue be sold to them for £1 to use for community and sporting purposes.

#### **2. Issues**

The Loggerheads Neighbourhood Plan identifies that there is a need for community and sporting facilities within the Parish of Loggerheads and the area hatched blue is designated as recreational land in this Neighbourhood Plan.

If the Parish Council acquired this land either freehold or by way of a long lease then it would enable them to apply for funding to provide community and sporting facilities in Loggerheads that could be used by the local people.

If the land was disposed for a peppercorn sum the Borough Council would forego a potential capital receipt as the land could be marketed for sale for agricultural purposes. The estimated capital value of this land is in the region of £30,000.

3. **Proposal**

That Cabinet agree to dispose of the land hatched blue on the plan to Loggerheads Parish Council by way of a 99 year lease for a peppercorn rent with a covenant that the land could only be used for community, sporting and recreational purposes to include the erection of a pavilion/changing rooms. The Borough Council would also have the right to terminate the lease if the land was to be used for any other purpose than the proposed use.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

The Parish Council wish to proceed with community facility investment on land in its boundary and in order to secure funding a long term lease is required for the funding bodies to agree to fund any projects.

5. **Options Considered**

Do nothing was not accepted as this route would not see any community facilities come forward on the land as desired by the Parish Council

Sale of the land to the Parish Council for the full market value – unfortunately the Parish do not have the funds for such a purchase and again as with above this route would not see any community facilities come forward.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

In accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has a duty to achieve best consideration for its assets. In this case, in order to comply with that requirement, it should achieving a receipt in the region of £30,000. However, the Council can dispose of its land for less than best consideration where it considers doing so would further the achievement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the borough. Disposal at an undervalue for the reasons proposed would meet this exception, but the council must ensure adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure that the land is, within a reasonable time, put to such a use (and thereafter kept in that use). The council must also ensure that if this use ceases, it is able to re-take control of the land and/or recover any difference or uplift in value if the land is sold on to a third party or put to some other use. The Council will also have to be mindful of any liabilities it may inherit and/or ongoing revenue implications it may incur in respect of anything undertaken on or in the land if the land then reverts to the councils' ownership/control. These issues are most commonly dealt with through lease clauses, covenants and overage/claw-back provisions.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**



If the land is leased to Loggerheads Parish Council then the Borough Council would be forgoing a potential capital receipt. By selling this area of land for agricultural purposes, it would generate a capital receipt in the sum of circa £30,000 which would contribute towards the delivery of the Councils' Capital Programme. If sold for development it would generate a substantially higher capital receipt.

9. **Major Risks**

Delivery of the community facilities might be delayed due to funding availability being small or hard to obtain and the land does not get developed as hoped by the Parish Council. The Lease will contain a reversion clause that will see the land transfer back to the Borough Council if the Parish Council plans do not materialise.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

Any issues will be considered through the planning process.

11. **Key Decision Information**

The report is referred to in the forward plan

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Asset Management Cabinet report

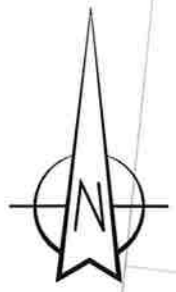
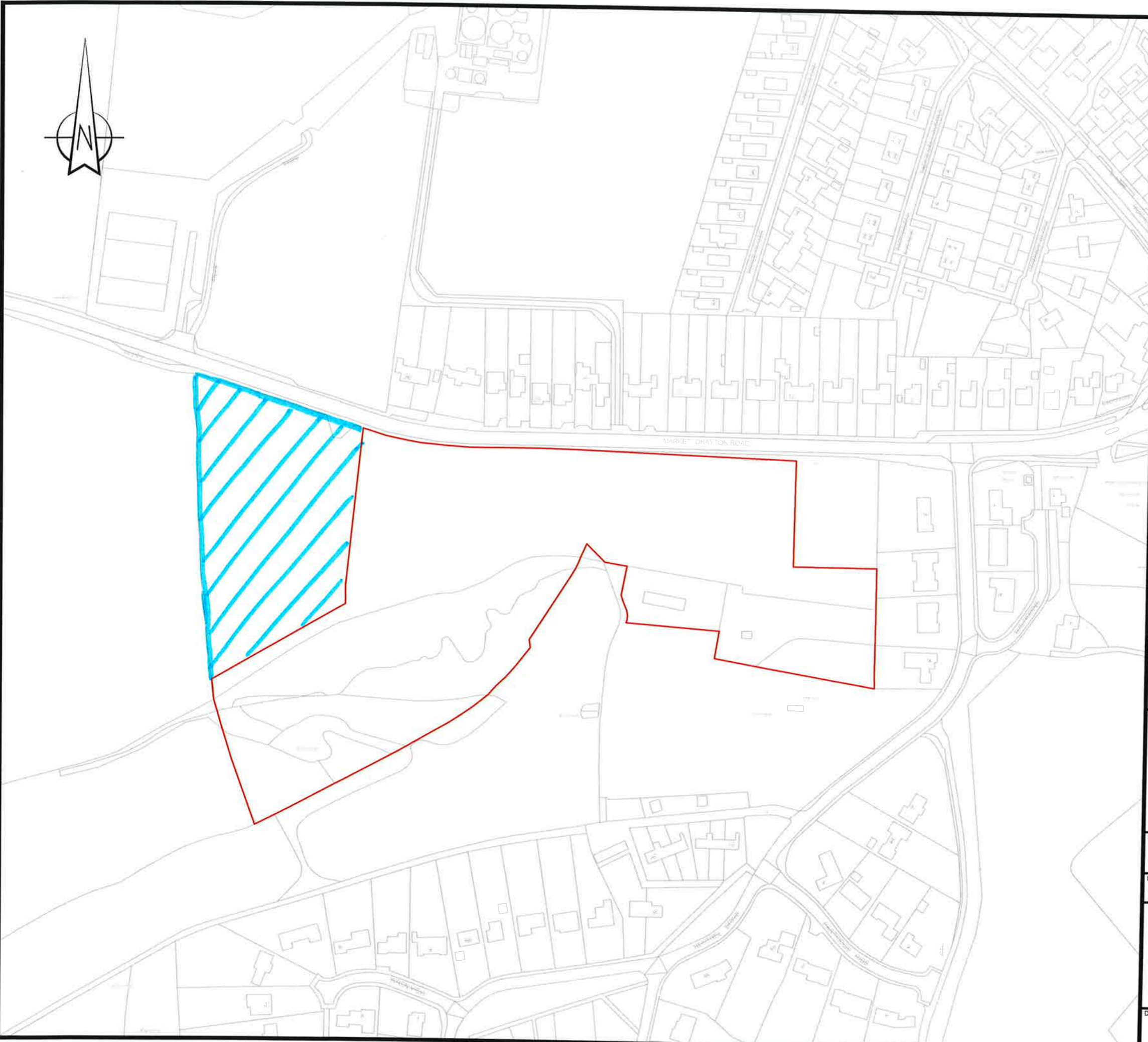
13. **List of Appendices**

Plan of Land in Loggerheads


14. **Background Papers**

Not applicable

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Key  
 — Site boundary

REV	DETAILS	DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE
CLIENT: Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council				
PROJECT: Market Drayton Road				
DRAWING TITLE: Site Plan				
SCALES: 1:2000			SHEET SIZE: A3	
DRAWN: RK	CHECKED: LW	DATE: 26/01/17		
		<b>Urban &amp; Landscape Design</b>		
DRAWING NUMBER: A091780_001				REVISION: B

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**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**04 November 2020**

**Report Title:** Financial and Performance Review report – Second quarter (Jul-Sept) 2020-21.

**Submitted by:** Executive Management Team

**Portfolios:** Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships, Finance & Efficiency

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

To provide Cabinet with the Financial and Performance Review report for the second quarter of 2020-21.

**Recommendation**

1. That Members note the contents of the attached report and Appendices A and B and continue to monitor and Challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.
2. That Members note and approve the supplementary estimates (item 4.4 Appendix A) in order for them to be included in this year's budget.

**Reasons**

The Financial and Performance Management monitoring reports provide information on a quarterly basis regarding the performance of individual council services and progress with delivery against our priorities, alongside related financial information on the organisation.

It should be noted that certain activities from 20 March 2020 were impacted by Covid 19 and delivery in some cases noted in this report, continue to be affected and the resulting actions taken by the Council to protect and ensure support is available to everyone.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the second quarter 2020/21 by presenting performance data and progress summary set within a financial context. The report provides broad financial information (Appendix A) and also details service performance (Appendix B) for the second quarter 2020/21.
- 1.2 This report covers the peak period of the Covid 19 lockdown, when a number of customer facing services were required to close, or where the customer base simply stopped using the service. Despite these unprecedented circumstances, as the summary of the overall performance picture is presented in section 4 of this report reflects, performance has generally held up well.

**2. 2020-21 Revenue and Capital Budget Position**

- 2.1 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £15,690,000 on 19 February 2020. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.

### **3. Development of the Financial and Performance Report**

- 3.1 The performance section –Appendix B was reviewed and updated for 2020-21 and the indicators continue to reflect the priorities in the Council Plan. In addition to reporting on key performance indicators, the report includes a progress summary for each priority, detailing the progress with the delivery of planned activities.
- 3.2 Additional performance information is provided, not only to ensure the monitoring of the corporate activities of the council, but also to inform Members, businesses and residents of performance in their local economy.

### **4 Performance**

- 4.1 The latest performance information for quarter two has been analysed and all indicators monitored for this period are listed in the table found in Appendix B.
- 4.2 Any indicators failing to meet the set targets include a comment explaining why the indicator has not performed well, and what steps are being taken to ensure improvement in the future.
- 4.3 For this report a total of 17 indicators were monitored, and the proportion of indicators which have met their target (where set) or are within tolerance levels during this period stands at 82%. It should be noted that several indicators were not monitored this quarter due to the closure of some services for example, the Brampton Museum and leisure facilities.
- 4.4 There are 3 indicators off target this quarter, and officers consider that the performance against these indicators does not give rise to serious cause for concern at present (see commentary provided at Appendix B). The management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to deal with under achievement of targets where possible and/or appropriate, taking into account the limitations presented by the Covid19 situation.
- 4.5 Progress on delivery of planned activities is summarised for each priority and no concerns are highlighted.

### **5. Legal and Statutory Implications**

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

### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this monitoring report.

### **7. Financial and Resource Implications**

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

### **8. Major Risks**

- 8.1 The ongoing changing market conditions represents the greatest risk to the revenue budget, particularly with regard to the impact it may have upon income receivable in relation to services where customers may choose whether or not to use Council facilities or in the case of the waste/recycling service where the volume of recycled materials is liable to fluctuate. The impact of Covid 19 is more apparent in the reporting of this quarter, impacting on many areas and the situation will continue to be monitored through the normal budget monitoring procedures.
- 8.2 The capital programme will require regular monitoring to identify any projects which are falling behind their planned completion dates. This will be carried out by the Capital Programme Review Group, which meets on a monthly basis together with quarterly reports to Cabinet.
- 8.3 The above represents a high level view of risk. There are detailed risk registers available if members wish to see them.

9. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

9.1 N/A

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 Included on the Forward Plan

11. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

11.1 N/A

12. **List of Appendices**

12.1 Financial information (Appendix A), and Performance (Appendix B).

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.

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## **1. General Fund Revenue Budget**

- 1.1 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £15.690m on 19 February 2020. The actual position compared to this budget is continuously monitored by managers, EMT and Portfolio Holders in order to detect any significant variances of expenditure or income from the approved amounts contained in the budget.
- 1.2 The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the Council's financial position through a mix of lost income and additional costs. To date Government funding of £1.743m has been secured (including £170k of new burdens funding to offset the costs of administering Coronavirus business support grant and hardship relief schemes), which has reduced the immediate pressure on Council finances.
- 1.3 The Council's revenue budget relies on service income from fees and charges across a wide range of services, with a significant proportion coming from J2 and car parking. The Council has been actively monitoring the impact of the lockdown and the working practices required to ensure safe practice. The Government will fund income losses above the first 5% at the rate of 75p in the pound in the current financial year, this will to a significant degree insulate the Council from income related financial risks.
- 1.4 The scheme compensates for income that local authorities generate independently which is defined as a sale, fees and charges, and is unable to be recovered – for example, car parking charges or receipts from museum charges. It does not include commercial income, such as rents. The 5% deductible will be calculated using sales, fees and charges budgets for 2020/21 as this represents what the Council expected to collect from these income sources at the start of the year. Compensation will be provided to mitigate the net budget gap which income losses have created, i.e. after the savings that the Council has made regarding the furlough scheme.
- 1.5 In the longer term, any impact on either business rates collection (due to business failure) or Council Tax collection (due to non-payment) will materialise in 2021/22. The Government have announced that they will share collection fund losses and have advised that the Council can recover any deficits over 3 years (please see 3.3).
- 1.6 The consequences of the Coronavirus on the Council's financial position will depend significantly on the continued impact of the lockdown and on the scale and timing of further Government financial support. The Council is actively lobbying our local Members of Parliament and through national networks as part of the wider public sector family, to make the case for further Government support. Particular emphasis in our lobbying has been the impact on Business rate and Council tax collection.
- 1.7 The Council continues to strongly manage budgets and spending. A number of staff, primarily from Leisure, were furloughed for part of the first 6 months of the financial year, all staff have now resumed their roles. This enabled the Council to recoup a proportion of their salary costs from the Government. Staff continued to be on full pay, and their contracts of employment remained unaffected, Furlough funding is estimated to amount to £0.197m, with Leisure facilities reopening at the end of July.
- 1.8 Careful monitoring of the financial position will be required over coming weeks and months leading to prompt corrective action where necessary to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget position in the current financial year and beyond.

## 2. Revenue Budget Position

2.1 As at the end of the second quarter, the general fund budget shows an adverse variance of £0.175m. It is forecast that this variance will increase to £0.333m by the close of the financial year.

2.2 The main reasons for the overall adverse variance are:

- a. Income shortfalls from sales, fees and charges which are eligible for partial reclaim via the Income Losses Scheme total £1.603m at the end of the second quarter, it is forecast that these losses will increase to £2.292m by the close of the financial year.
- b. Additional expenditure pressures of £0.802m at the end of the second quarter (forecast to increase to £1.090m at the close of the financial year) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These include Waste and Recycling (£644k disposal costs and hire of vehicles to allow social distancing at the end of the second quarter), Homelessness (£41k provision of accommodation at the end of the second quarter),

- c. Housing Benefits – there has been a shortfall in the recovery of housing benefits overpayments when compared to the budget of £0.100m during the first half of the year, it is forecast that this will increase to £0.150m by the close of the financial year. In addition to this Housing Benefits payments made by the Council which are not fully subsidised by the Department of Works and Pensions are being incurred, mainly around the provision of accommodation for vulnerable people, it is estimated that the shortfall from this will amount to £0.313m by the close of the financial year.
- d. A top up of the general fund reserve to its minimum level regarding the 2019/20 deficit of £0.207m.

2.3 These adverse variances are partially offset by the following favourable variances:

- a. Government Funding to offset pressures that the Council has/will continue to face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, £1.573m had been received during the first half of the financial year.
- b. It is anticipated that the Council will be reimbursed £1.558m in relation to the Income Losses scheme for eligible sales, fees and charges income shortfalls for the year.
- c. Furlough scheme funding of £0.197m has been received.
- d. £0.170m has been paid to the Council for the administration of the COVID-19 Business grants schemes.
- e. Expenditure has been reduced wherever possible throughout the Council to ensure that only absolutely necessary spending is being incurred, this has helped to reduce the adverse variance on a service by service basis. It has been forecast, and it is absolutely imperative, that this situation continues throughout the remainder of the financial year.

2.4 Cabinet and the Executive Management Team will continue to be updated on the Council's financial position and actions taken in the forthcoming weeks and months. This will include a revised recommended level of reserves and the financial implications of this.

### 3. Collection Fund

3.1 Local tax income is collected by billing authorities and paid into local 'collection funds' (the Council is a billing authority). Where there is a shortfall in tax receipts (compared to expected levels), this leads to a deficit on the collection fund. Billing and major precepting authorities are usually required to meet their share of any deficit during the following financial year.

3.2 In response to forecast shortfalls in tax receipts relating to COVID-19, the government has announced that repayments to meet collection fund deficits accrued in 2020- 21 will instead be phased over a three-year period (2021-22 to 2023-24) to ease immediate pressures on budgets. The phased amount will be the entire collection fund deficit for 2020-21 as estimated on the 15 January 2021 for council tax and in the 2021-22 NDR1 for business rates.

3.3 The current forecast shortfalls in tax receipts, and the proposed repayments under this scheme are shown below:

<b>Tax</b>	<b>Total Deficit Forecast</b>	<b>Council's Share</b>	<b>Repayable 2021/22</b>	<b>Repayable 2022/23</b>	<b>Repayable 2023/24</b>
Council Tax	£1.292m	£0.144m (11.8%)	£0.048m	£0.048m	£0.048m
Business Rates	£15.015m	£6.006m (40%)	£2.002m	£2.002m	£2.002m
Business Rates Section 31 Measures	(£14.358m)	(£5.631m) 40%	(£1.877m)	(£1.877m)	(£1.877m)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1.949m</b>	<b>£0.519m</b>	<b>£0.173m</b>	<b>£0.173m</b>	<b>£0.173m</b>

3.4 The Government announcement made on 2 July referred to a further apportionment between MHCLG and Local Government of irrecoverable tax losses (i.e. debts required to be written off), however there has still been no further mention of this and details of how this will operate in practice are still awaited.

### 4. Supplementary Estimates

4.1 £1.750m Towns Deal Funding has been received from MHCLG for regeneration projects within Newcastle Town Centre (£1m) and Kidsgrove Town Centre (£0.750m).

4.2 A one off budget virement for 2020-21 has been completed to recognise the income receivable and an allocation against each project (all within the Economic Regeneration cost centre):

- £0.500m – Zanzibar demolition
- £0.200m – Knutton property acquisition and demolition
- £0.075m – re-purposing of Lancaster Building (employment and support)
- £0.050m – E-scooter trial
- £0.145m – Safe and secure routes
- £0.030m – CCTV
- £0.525m – Kidsgrove Sports Village
- £0.225m – Leisure facilities in Kidsgrove parks

4.3 £0.125m Next Steps Accommodation Funding has been received from MHCLG for continuing to support rough sleepers during the COVID-19 response. A one off budget virement has been completed to recognise the income receivable and an allocation against the Homelessness expenditure budget.

4.4 It is recommended that the Committee approve the supplementary estimates in order for them to be included in this year's budget.

## 5. Capital Programme

5.1 A Capital Programme totalling £12,454,103 was approved for 2020/21. Of this total £10,454,103 relates to the total cost of new schemes for 2020/21 together with £1,000,000 for schemes funded by external sources (Disabled Facilities Grants), £1,000,000 contingency. In addition £3,024,776, was brought forward from the 2019/20 Capital Programme, resulting in a total Capital Programme of £15,478,879 for 2020/21.

5.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial impact this has placed on the Council, a review of the 2020/21 Capital Programme has been completed with the assistance of Budget Holders and members of the Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group. The rationale behind this review was to establish which of the capital projects approved in the programme were essential or health and safety related, were unable to be commenced due to the pandemic, could be deferred to the following year due to resources and services available during the crisis or were no longer required.

5.3 The revised 2020/21 Capital Programme now totals £7,302,631 which includes £1,000,000 for schemes funded by external sources (Disabled Facilities Grants), £250,000 contingency to reflect the remainder of the year. A summary of these changes can be found in appendix A attached.

## 6. Capital Programme Position

6.1 The Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2020 has been updated to take account of amounts brought forward from 2019/20 where planned expenditure did not occur. This has been added to the budget for 2020/21 (apart from cases where costs have been reduced or expenditure will no longer be incurred). Following the completion of the Capital Programme review (referenced in section 2 of the report) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the revised budget for capital projects in 2020/21 now totals £7,302,631.

6.2 The expected total capital receipts due to be received this year following the sale of assets will amount to £3,745,000. Deposits in respect of the disposal of assets totalling £150,000 have been received to date. A summary of the expected income is shown in the table below.

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Amount (£'000)</b>
Proceeds from disposal of assets	2,945
Proceeds from Right to Buy sales	400
Proceeds from sale of old Waste Recycling Fleet	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,745</b>

6.3 The Capital Funding required for the 2020/21 programme includes £3,436,600 of capital receipts. The remaining projects within the Capital Programme will be funded by borrowing.

6.4 £3,702,142 of the revised budget was expected to be spent by 30 September; the actual amount spent was £3,710,924 resulting in an adverse variance at the end of the second quarter of £8,782. The expenditure in the first two quarter predominately relates

## **7. Treasury Management**

- 7.1 Borrowing is likely to be required during 2020/21 to fund the revised capital programme however no borrowing arrangements have been made to date.
- 7.2 The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) has recently completed a “Future Lending Terms” consultation, which sought views from local authorities and other stakeholders. This consultation period closed on 31 July 2020 and the results are currently being analysed, however there is speculation that the outcome of this review will see the PWLB reduce its borrowing rates.
- 7.3 The PWLB is one of the borrowing options the Council is currently reviewing to fund its capital programme and will await the outcome of the consultation before securing borrowing requirements for the capital programme.

**Appendix A**

**2020/21 Revised Capital Programme (Revised Programme shown in detail in second table)**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME	Approved 2020/21 Programme	Revised 2020/21 Programme
	£	£
Service Area - Council Modernisation	380,000	254,653
<b>Total</b>	<b>380,000</b>	<b>254,653</b>
Service Area - Housing Improvements	1,070,000	1,071,000
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	131,531	97,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,201,531</b>	<b>1,168,000</b>
Service Area - Environmental Health	10,000	10,000
Service Area – Street Scene and Bereavement Services	295,600	197,000
Service Area - Recycling and Fleet	3,766,000	3,503,703
Service Area - Leisure	3,682,000	1,135,000
Service Area - Museum	95,000	97,536
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	55,547	20,000
Service Area - Engineering	165,873	232,873
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,070,020</b>	<b>5,196,112</b>
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	1,702,553	333,866
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,702,553</b>	<b>333,866</b>
<b>CONTINGENCY/FEASIBILITY STUDIES</b>	1,100,000	350,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,454,103</b>	<b>7,302,631</b>

<b>CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>Proposed Programme 2020/21 £</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Local Services that work for Local People</b>	
<b><i>Service Area - Council Modernisation</i></b>	
Mobile Technology Roll Out	30,000
Desktop Technology Refresh	8,000
Microsoft LAR Uplifts	50,000
Digital Delivery Integration Costs	30,000
Replacement of Civica APP	30,000
Replacement of Civica Financials	30,000
Implementation of SharePoint	20,000
Mobile Telephony Refresh	10,000
Pilate Gauge Replacement	6,653
Packet Shaper refresh	20,000
E-payments replacement	20,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>254,653</b>
<b>Total Priority</b>	<b>254,653</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Growing our People and Places</b>	
<b><i>Service Area - Housing Improvements</i></b>	
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,000,000
Empty Homes Grants	6,000
Carbon Management	65,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>1,071,000</b>
<b><i>Service Area - Managing Property &amp; Assets</i></b>	
Stock Condition Survey Works	97,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>97,000</b>
<b>Total Priority</b>	<b>1,168,000</b>
<b>PRIORITY - A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough</b>	
<b><i>Service Area – Environmental Health</i></b>	
CCTV/Body worn cameras	10,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b><i>Service Area - Streetscene &amp; Bereavement Services</i></b>	
Footpath Repairs	20,000
Play Area Refurbishment	30,000
Railings/Structures Repairs	15,000
Britain in Bloom	15,000
Traveller Encroachment	5,000
Memorial Survey	5,000
Crematorium Monthly Gardens	5,000
Pool Dam Marshes LNR	87,000
Grounds Maintenance Invest to Save Programme	15,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>197,000</b>
<b><i>Service Area - Recycling &amp; Fleet</i></b>	
Replacement Bins/Containers	50,000
Wheelie Bins – New Recycling Service	870,000
Paper Recycling Internal Bin Caddie	43,703
Twin Body RCV for New Recycling Service x 7	1,650,000
New Food Waste Collection Service Vehicles x 7	490,000
Corporate Fleet Replacement	300,000

Classification: NULBC **PROTECT** Organisational

Transfer Station Alterations (New Recycling Service)	100,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>3,503,703</b>
<b>Service Area - Leisure</b>	
Aqua Sauna Refurbishment	75,000
Carbon Management	40,000
Jubilee 2 Pool Filters	20,000
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	1,000,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>1,135,000</b>
<b>Service Area - Museum</b>	
HLF Match Funding	75,000
CCTV Replacement/Upgrade	20,000
Museum Project	2,536
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>97,536</b>
<b>Service Area - Managing Property &amp; Assets</b>	
Stock Condition Survey Works	20,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>20,000</b>
<b>Service Area - Engineering</b>	
Ryehills over Marian Platt walkway	45,000
Kidsgrove Loopline Bridge Over Walkway in Park	37,865
Road Bridge over former Railway, Audley	30,000
Car Park at Butchers Arms	20,000
St James Closed Churchyard, Newchapel	12,008
St James, Church Street, Audley	88,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>232,873</b>
<b>Total Priority</b>	<b>5,196,112</b>
<b>PRIORITY - A Town Centre For All</b>	
<b>Service Area - Managing Property &amp; Assets</b>	
Stock Condition Survey Works	274,866
Midway Car Park, Newcastle	10,000
Markets	40,000
Bus Shelters	9,000
<b>Total (Service Area)</b>	<b>333,866</b>
<b>Total Priority</b>	<b>333,866</b>
<b>CONTINGENCY</b>	
	250,000
<b>FEASIBILITY STUDIES</b>	
	100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,302,631</b>



## Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2020-21

### Priority 1: Local Services that Work for Local People

#### Progress Summary

Overall, our performance with a combination of monitoring and target driven indicators for this priority is positive in this quarter but work is underway to impact on the result.

A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority One from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Increase Access to Information;**

- The Council continue to maintain services by encouraging customer self-service via the website, and through effective call centre support. Castle House is open to the public by utilising bookable appointments and self-service. The demand is extremely low, as most contacts can be addressed online or by telephone.

- **Deliver new Recycling and Waste Service:**

During this quarter the new recycling collection service has been fully rolled out to all households, and separate food waste collections were restarted from mid-August, following suspension of this service due to Covid. The rollout has been very successful with higher participation, than the previous service, and maintaining high quality material. There has been very positive feedback from residents who really like the new service, and tonnages have increased by 20.02%.

- **Establish Workforce Strategy:**

- **Develop robust, innovative and efficient work force plans**

Despite the Covid 19 situation, work has continued across services in the development of robust, innovative and efficient work force plans which align to the council vision for the future.

- **Develop organisational culture**

High on the list of priorities is the engagement of staff in the development of organisational values and behaviours; from which recognition and reward, development and learning and leadership strategies will be developed. Work was paused on this toward the end of Qtr. 4 due to significant resource channel to the Covid-19 response, however work to distribute a staff survey and develop a values realisation process to inform the culture commenced in this quarter. HR are continuing to work with all managers to coach and mentor them through all the HR policies to embed good practice and develop their skills in managing staff successfully to enable a positive working culture.

- **Ensure staff wellbeing**





We have continued our focus on staff mental health and wellbeing over the last quarter and are continuing to promote our support and counselling services. In addition we have established, in partnership with the Trade Unions, a Mental Health working group who will work with the staff to develop further our support mechanisms. We are marking World Mental Health day in October with a campaign for staff to 'do one thing' to improve their wellbeing and share their stories. The staff survey which was run in August returned positive results in terms of the support and communication staff are receiving from managers and teams and gave a clear steer to continue the work and promote the services we currently have in place.




**Progress Summary continued**






- **To review and continue to develop key People policies**

Ongoing discussions with the Trade Unions on Organisation Change and Redeployment have been paused during the Covid-19 outbreak, but the HR team has continued to work with all managers to coach and mentor them through all the HR policies to embed good practice and develop their skills in managing staff successfully to enable a positive working culture.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
1.1	Environmental Health	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating	Low	1.14% (13 out of 1,136 published premises)	-	-	5%	Delivery of this planned programme was prevented during the Covid lockdown and has not recommenced due to prioritising Covid activities. In excess of 400 Covid-19 queries and complaints received, and the team continue to communicate with food premises and other licensed premises in order to advise and record future appointments.	-
1.2 New	Environmental Health	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Percentage of category A and B food business inspections completed on time	High	100%	-	-	-		-
1.3 New	Environmental Health	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	No. Accidents/Incidents reported (RIDDOR)	Low	1	1	2	-		There have been two incidents, one due to an injury over 7 days, and one from an injury involving a member of public. Both incidents have been investigated and no further action required

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
1.4a	Recycling & Fleet	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Household collections from the kerbside (%):- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dry Recycling</li> </ul>	High	17.50%*	18.26%	20.69%	20%	<p>Dry Recycling and food collection performance significantly affected by Covid. Separate food waste collections were suspended to concentrate resources into refuse, recycling and garden waste, as the department suffered a loss of 25% of its workforce due to Covid self-isolation and shielding. Food waste collection recommenced in mid-August and tonnages are growing steadily back to pre Covid levels. Tonnage of refuse continue to remain high having increased significantly, 26.74% up on Qtr 1 and 2 figures taken over the last three years. Recycling has increased by 22.02% following the introduction of the new service, which has put recycling collections back on target. This trend remains as not unique to NuLBC, with similar patterns experienced throughout the country.</p>	
1.4b			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food</li> </ul>	High	5%*	0.10%	1.34%	5%		
1.4c			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of residual Waste per household</li> </ul>	Low	105.55 kgs*	131.19kgs	124.37kgs	107.5kgs (per household) cumulative		
1.4d	Operations	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Number of missed kerbside collections:- Total (per 100,000 collections)	Low	67	119.51	162.63	80 (per 100,000 collections)		

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
1.4	Operations	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Number of missed kerbside collections:- Total (per 100,000 collections)						Continued:- collections dropped significantly in September for all streams except food.	
1.5	Operations	Cllr. Trevor Johnson	Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	High	97.04% 96.86% 100% 100%	-	-	91% 91% 97% 99%	The surveys were postponed due to Covid situation but have now commenced. The first tranche results will be reported in Qtr 3.	-
1.6	Customer & ICT	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	High	99%	99.28%	99.64%	97%	The result demonstrates continued success in dealing with most contacts at first point of contact.	
1.7	Customer & ICT	Cllr. Simon Tagg	% Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)	Low	6.79%	10.29%	16.46%	10%	The target has not been met due to an increase of 25% of calls coming through the contact centre. As Services have come to terms with Covid19, they have increased their communication and are back on track in their business areas, thus increasing traffic through digital means or the contact centre. During Q2 the new recycling Service was embedded, affecting 54,000 properties and alongside this an Election canvass of 40,000 residents were dealt with.	
1.8	Digital Delivery	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Total number of digital on-line transactions (Jadu).	High	6,080	14,247	10,859	-	There is a reduction in the number of transactions on Q1, but some online activities are seasonal transactions.	-
1.9	Communication	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Total number of unique users to the website	High	93,982	124,917	109,142	79,500	There was a total of 109,142 unique users in this quarter, which is increased from Qtr 2 in 2019-20.	

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
1.10	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Time taken to process Housing/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	Low	4.91days	3.73 days	6.56 days	10 days	This result remains well within target.	
1.11	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Percentage of Council Tax collected	High	52.9%	26.5%	52.4%	50.11%	The Council Tax and Business Collection rates are now back on track following recovery action being taken for the first time this year in quarter 2.	
1.12	Revenues & Benefits	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	High	58.6%	20.6%	58%	52.44%		
1.13	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Average number of days per employee lost to sickness	Low	4.9 days	2.45 days	4.25 days (cumulative)	4.4 days Qtr 2 (cumulative)	The Qtr 2 sickness figure is 1.81 days and is within the target of 2.2 days. The cumulative result of 4.25 days (April-Sept) is also within the target too. It was anticipated that sickness absence may increase due to Covid-19 but it has not had a dramatic effect on this indicator.	
1.14 New	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Staff turnover	Low	8.80%	0.95%	1.35%	10%	The turnover is down on the figure for this quarter last year.	
1.15 New	Human Resources	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Staff vacancy rates	Low	11.15%	0.19%	1.74%	-	Vacancy rates are low this quarter.	-

\*The result is within tolerance

## Priority 2: Growing our People and Places

### Progress Summary

A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority 2 from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Deliver Joint Local Plan**

In February 2020, the Councils agreed to produce the Joint Local Plan in two parts; Part One Strategy and Policies and Part Two Site Allocations. There were due to be two consultations this year, with Part One being subject to consultation in April/May 2020 and Part Two in the Autumn of this year. Due to the impact of Covid 19, consultation on Part One of the Plan was postponed as it was not possible to carry out the consultation in a way which would have met the Councils obligations set out in the Joint Statement of Community Involvement. Work has continued on the Draft Joint Local Plan aiming to minimise any potential delay to the overall plan timetable despite the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic. As such, it is proposed that both parts of the Draft Plan will be subject to one 6 week public consultation at the beginning of the year.

- **Delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and action plan**

Progress with delivery of the Economic development Strategy and action plan is set out in more detail below against individual projects – One Public Estate, Prepare a Town Centre Strategy, market, and business support. Establish a Town Centre Communications Group and Develop a Kidsgrove Town Centre Investment Plan. Additionally, in response to Covid-19 the Council addressed the issue of re-opening town centres post-Lockdown through the ‘Back on Track’ recovery plan. The Council also received notification of the Restarting High Street Safely Fund and in Quarter2 has received further clarification on eligible spend. It is anticipated that a revised action plan will be submitted in Quarter 3 based on the further guidance received.

- **Progress University Growth Corridor**

While the UGC masterplan is now completed and has been submitted to the Joint Local Plan team for inclusion in the JLP, work has now turned to the ‘Keele Transport Hub’ a project designed to mitigate the traffic impacts of the development (which is expected to comprise up to 1000 houses on the site of the former municipal golf course and up to 2000 additional university and science park jobs on the university campus). This will focus on putting the conditions in place for encouraging more sustainable modes of travel than the car, including electric buses and cycles and providing the infrastructure which encourages people to use them.

- **Deliver appropriate housing to those in need:**

- **Newcastle Housing Advice to be in-house service**

Midland Heart delivers the Newcastle Housing advice (NHA) service on behalf of the Council, which is the Borough’s provision for homelessness, housing advice and housing register services. The Council has made the decision to bring the service back in-house by 1st April 2021, and over the forthcoming year the Council will be working with the current contractor to transfer the service effectively, including the TUPE of 9 staff. Quarterly performance monitoring for the NHA service is available on request. An internal working group has been created to co-ordinate the delivery of a project plan to ensure that the service can be integrated efficiently into existing Council services, with the support of ICT, HR and Customer Services.

- **Rough Sleepers and temporary accommodation**

The Council was successful in securing funding from MHCLG for the appointment of a Rough Sleeper Navigator, for a 12 month period and this post commenced in May 2020 within the NHA team and working closely with local partners to develop a temporary accommodation unit for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping with complex needs over the COVID period, because other options previously used such as hostels and bed and breakfasts have not been available. The Council has achieved funding from MHCLG of approx. £125k to contribute to the costs so that the provision

## Progress Summary continued

can be extended over the winter period in readiness for a second wave of COVID. A Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for 2020/21 is currently being developed and includes the identification and preparation of an emergency accommodation unit for those rough sleeping, supported by a local Charity, to be instigated and made available if temperatures fall to 0 degrees or below. In addition, a Housing and Policy Partnerships Officer (former Housing Strategy post) was appointed, who will oversee the use of temporary accommodation and look to develop proposals for housing pathways over the longer term to compliment the work of the NHA and rough Sleepers team and ensure that the Council has housing options for homeless households in priority need.

- **Joint allocation policy and procurement of a Choice Based Lettings system**

The Council has adopted a new Joint Housing Allocations Policy in-conjunction with Aspire Housing. This joint policy will allow customers of the Borough to access social housing owned and managed by Aspire Housing and other Private Registered Providers to whom the Council has partnerships within the Borough. The Council and Aspire Housing is procuring a joint Choice Based Letting (CBL) system during 2020/21 that will deliver the platform for the administration function of the housing register. This will allow our customers to make one application for social housing, a greatly improved approach compared to our current systems requiring 2 applications. During the first quarter the specification was developed and Locata were chosen to deliver the IT system through a framework agreement. Work more recently has been undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team as part of a working group to co-ordinate the introduction of the new system and policy and testing thereof prior to the official launch, which is planned for February 2021.

- **One Public Estate**

The Borough Council have received a sum of £50,000 from 'One Public Estate', (a body set up to encourage public agencies to work together to make better use of their property assets), to cover the cost of undertaking the masterplanning of Knutton Village. This will involve preparing proposals for the use or development of a number of cleared sites around the centre of Knutton in the ownership of the Borough and County Councils and Aspire Housing. The objective is to bring forward new housing development in the area and to assess the potential for investing in the improvement and consolidation of community facilities. Aspire Housing is also contributing to the resources of the Study with a view to it reviewing its role as a provider of affordable housing in the area, including that of housing for the elderly. In Quarter 2, White Young Green completed a draft final report which has taken into account the physical, financial and practicalities of the viability of development and considered the views of local stakeholders and ward members, and this is now being reviewed by the Borough and County Councils and Aspire Housing (all of which are significant landowners in the area). Officers are now preparing for public consultation on the proposals which will start in Quarter 4. There will be financial implications for the Council and our partners which will need to be considered. The bid for Town Deal funding may consider helping to address some of the abnormal costs of bringing forward a suitable scheme.

- **Consideration of a property investment model and Property Diversification**

Consideration is being given to the Borough Council taking a more active role in developing its sites (i.e. by way of forming a property development company or similar) either on its own or in a partnership arrangement. The Commercial Strategy 2019-24 was approved by Cabinet and commercial investment advisors appointed to review and advise in respect of the Council's commercial portfolio. Work on this is currently ongoing.






### Progress Summary continued

- **Masterplan of land at:- Chatterley Close area by Bradwell crematorium; off Liverpool Road, Keele Golf Course and Birchenwood**

The masterplan in respect of land in the Chatterley Close area, Bradwell, has now been completed and is to be considered by Cabinet, along with the next steps in respect of the extension of the Crematorium, at its November meeting. . Keele masterplan was approved in principle last year and is subject to consideration as part of the development of the Joint Local Plan. Following the Phase 1 environmental impact assessment for Birchenwood, a preliminary ground investigation survey has now been completed and next steps are currently being considered.

- **Planning Consent – Sidmouth Avenue**

Planning approval was granted in December 2019 for the partial demolition and change of use of the former Registry Office into a single dwelling and the provision of three new detached dwelling in Sidmouth Avenue. In Qtr 4 2019/20 alternative options were considered in respect of developing the site, in quarter 1 2020/21 the decision was taken to market the site and in quarter 2 2020/21 the site was marketed and terms are currently being finalised for disposal.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
2.1	Property	Cllr. Paul Northcott	Percentage of investment portfolio vacant (NBC owned)	Low	8.3%	7%	6%	12%	This indicator remains well within target.	
2.2	Planning & Development	Cllr. Paul Northcott	Speed of major development applications (P151a)	High	74.6% (Oct 17- Sept 19)	84.6% (Jul 18 – Jun 20)	89.5% (Oct 18- Sept 20)	60%	These indicators remain well within target and are improving or being maintained at an acceptable level.	
2.3			Quality of major development applications (P152a)	Low	1.5% (July 16 - June 18)	3% (Apr 17 – Mar 19)	3.4% (July 17- June 19)	10%		
2.4			Speed of non-major development applications (P153)	High	82.9% (Oct 17 - Sept 19)	88.7% (Jul 18– Jun 20)	90.9% (Oct 18- Sept 20)	70%		
2.5			Quality of non-major development applications (P154)	Low	1% (July 16 - June 18)	1% (Apr 17 – Mar 19)	1.1% (July 17- June 19)	10%		



## Priority 3: A Healthy, Active & Safe Borough

### Progress Summary

Overall the performance for this priority advises the progress where possible, however the impact of Covid 19 is considerable to service provision or where facilities have had to close during this period.

A summary of progress with planned activities for Priority 3 from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Secure J2 Remedial works**

Following consultation with Cabinet the Aqua Sauna is now being redesigned as a Pilates room. This will enhance the health and wellbeing offer at Jubilee2 and create a unique customer experience. It is envisaged that this project will be completed in the Autumn of 2020. Towards the end of quarter 2, the service experienced a failure of the main pool which had to be closed. The original contractor continues to work with the Council on this and the issue with the roof leaks.

- **Secure J2 commercialisation**

Membership numbers are circa 25% down on pre Covid numbers, which is in part due to the closure of the swimming pool. It is envisaged that the swimming pool will reopen at the end of October 2020 which will have a supportive impact on retaining members. A marketing plan is now in place until the end of this financial year to grow and retain the number of members. However due to social distancing measures operational capacity has been reduced by approximately two thirds.

- **Kidsgrove Sports Centre**

Work has continued with WDC and the community group to secure a financially viable scope of works for a budget £6m which now suits both the needs of the community groups' business model and the budgetary constraints of the Council. Additional funding opportunities have been secured in the form of Town Deal Advance Monies for advance strip out works at the centre and further Town Deal contributions are being investigated also. Advance works / internal strip out works by WDC will now commence in December upon completion of the property transfer from Staffordshire County Council.

- **Secure funds for Museum Extension**

Permission to Start from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been obtained. The building work has been out to tender and the tenders are being assessed against the project budget.

- **Open Space Strategy**

Due to the pandemic, the Heart of England in Bloom campaign and all local Newcastle in Bloom competitions and activities have been suspended for 2020 – the intention is to roll most of the planned activities forward to 2021. The Green Flag Awards scheme is proceeding on a desktop assessment basis with a mystery shop site visit. The Council has entered 7 sites.

- **Streetscene Fleet procurement**

Procurement of fleet and equipment for Streetscene is progressing, with tenders invited for 2 x large road sweepers.

- **Feasibility study for Crematorium extension**

An officer working group was established to progress the feasibility study and this work was linked into the masterplanning commission for the Chatterley Close area which has been completed. A report has been prepared for consideration by Cabinet in October 2020.

**Progress Summary continued**

- **Affordable Funeral Scheme**

A suite of tender documents was prepared for issue to local suppliers. However, the pandemic meant there was a delay due to other priorities and capacity issues across the whole sector so the timeline has been reviewed and it is intended to report progress to Cabinet in November. An option for Direct Cremation will be explored for inclusion in the tender package.

- **Deliver Capital Programme projects**

Work is in progress on a number of sites to repair railing/fencing and footpaths, and replace play equipment.

- **Protect our communities by delivering priority community safety, food safety & licensing projects:**

- **Taxi Licensing Policy**

In the first quarter of 2019-20, members of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee approved the content of the taxi policy. The policy document is a wide scale reform of the current policy, to ensure that the Council has a policy that is fit for purpose in respect of the legislative framework and administration of the service. Members of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee approved the policy resulting in full implementation of the policy in January 2020. Statutory guidance was published in July 2020, this has resulted in amendments to the taxi policy being proposed to Licensing and Public Protection committee for consideration in October 2020.

- **Environmental Health & Licensing**

A new responsibility for the authority this quarter is for the team to ensure the Covid 19 restrictions were applied and in place as directed by Government. Also the new pavement licensing regime has been implemented by the service, this is a temporary licence which allows premises to apply for a licence for tables & chairs and other furniture on the pavement outside of their premises. In addition, the service is supporting the County Council in the Covid outbreak controls for high risk premises and is continuing with advising business, responding to complaints and undertaking enforcement for non-compliance with Covid controls. It is unknown at present how long these responsibilities will remain in place.

- **Commission new CCTV Service**

Following approval by Cabinet and the Business Improvement District Board for the commissioning of the CCTV service with Stoke City Council significant work has been undertaken to make the service live by 1st April 2020. A new CCTV Policy has also been approved alongside the development of a range of documents which form the legal contract with Stoke City Council. The replacement CCTV cameras in the town centre and Midway have been successfully installed and are operational. The new cameras in Bridge Street need additional electricity supply which unfortunately was not completed prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. This will be picked up by the relevant contractors once the businesses are back operating. Work is ongoing to develop additional CCTV enhancements to the service as part of the Town Deal funding delivery.

### **Progress Summary continued**

- **Town Centre ASB enforcement**

A range of Partnership activity continues to be co-ordinated this quarter, including; the CCTV implementation and monitoring; identifying ASB hotspot areas to target harden and make more secure; working closely with partners to identify individuals in need of support, working with the rough sleepers team to ensure that appropriate support is provided, utilising the Council's civil enforcement powers such as Community Protection Notice Warnings (CPNWs ), Community Protection Notices and Injunctions, continued enforcement of PSPOs for the Town Centre and Queen Elizabeth Park, working with the Police to encourage use of Section 34/35/59 powers (criminal powers), and developing a range of community safety projects to improve the aesthetics of the town centre and contribute to improving perceptions of safety. The council has an appointed Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator to assist in galvanising partnership activity with some of our vulnerable residents. As part of the Covid-19 Everyone In response, the Council provided additional accommodation and support to Rough Sleepers to encourage engagement where possible.

- **Air Quality Local Development Plan**

Work is continuing with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council to create the North Staffordshire Local Air Quality Plan to bring about improvements in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) levels. This quarter has seen progress with development of all the business cases and drafting outline business case. This will be presented to Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee in November and Cabinet in December. Subject to approval, work upon preparation of the Full Business Case will be progressed.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
3.1a	Community Safety	Cllr. Helena Maxfield	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases:-						There are currently 21 cases discussed at the ASB, Youth Violence and Gangs Case conference.	-
			-New cases received during the quarter	Low	95	107	165	-		-
3.1b			-Current open cases at the end of the quarter	Low	17	11	21	-		-
3.1c			-Cases closed in the quarter	High	106	102	155	-		-
3.2	Community Safety	Cllr. Helena Maxfield	Number of referrals made regarding vulnerability by participating organisations at the Daily Hub	High	32	36	36	-	A total number of 36 referrals were made from Daily Hub meetings that have taken place over the period 1 July – 30 September 2020.	-
3.3	Culture & Arts	Cllr. Jill Waring	Number of people visiting the museum	High	21,847 Qtr 2 (38,622 cumulative)	0	1577	(59,000 cumulative)	The museum closed due to COVID-19 on March 20th and therefore there were no visitors until its reopening on July 27. The museum is currently open 4 hours each weekday and is having an average of 30 visitors each afternoon. Similarly, the swimming pool remains closed at J2 too.	-
3.4	Leisure	Cllr. Jill Waring	Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities	High	146,029 Qtr 2 (287,608 cumulative)	-	-	(600,000 cumulative)		-
3.5	Leisure	Cllr. Jill Waring	Net growth in J2 Membership (Quarterly)	High	-2.35% (2955)	-	-	(3,250 members) 6.31% Annual		-

## Priority 4: A Town Centre for All

### Progress Summary

For this quarter, the results demonstrate a varying level of activity and further comments are detailed in this report.

A summary of progress with planned activities for this priority from the Council Plan 2018-2022 are as follows:-

- **Prepare a Town Centre Strategy**

The Council was successful in progressing to the full Business Case stage of the Future High Street Fund and has also been invited to take part in the Town Deal. For the Future High Streets Fund the Council commissioned Stantec to assist in the development of the Business Case in line with MHCLG requirements. The final bid was approved and submitted at the end of July 2020. At the end of Quarter 2, MHCLG asked for further information to be submitted and this is due to be submitted in Quarter 3, when notification of the bid outcome is also anticipated.

In Quarter 2, the partners have come together to establish the Town Deal Board and continued to work with the appointed consultants AECOM on development of the Town Investment Plan. At this time, the Town Deal Board agreed that it would submit the Town Investment Plan as a part of cohort 3 in January 2021. This is to allow for the notification of the Future High Street Fund bid and also to allow further refinement of project proposals. The Government has also offered all Town Deal additional 'accelerated funding' to deliver quick win projects, which have to be completed by end March 2021. The council and Newcastle Town Deal Board have been working with AECOM to develop a suite of early interventions to use this additional funding in a way that is in line with the Town investment Plan proposals.

- **Market**

The Service Improvement Plan for the market was presented at the June 2019 Cabinet and the Economic Development & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee where it was approved with recommendations noted and for delivery in 12 months. The Town Centre Officer has been appointed and progress made in delivering the improvement plan, this has included moving some of the stalls to the southern side of the Guildhall where there is greater footfall and to enable use of the stalls for the farmers market. Plans were also made to focus on specialist markets such as the successful Continental Market. During Quarter 1 market activity was suspended and with the absence of the market, an opportunity was taken to appoint a contractor to install lighting on market stalls in the upper market area. Unused market stalls at the lower end of the market were also removed to condense the market to the more popular northern area. Six weeks free rent was given to traders by the Council when they returned from Lockdown restrictions upon the reduced-day market opening in June. An additional Visiting Market of a new Sunday Record Fair attended July, August and September. The Town Centre action group continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

- **Business Support**

Work continues in signposting business queries to the Growth Hub and maintenance of Business support pages on website. The Business pages on the website continue to be updated in the light of Covid-19 to signpost businesses to sources of information and support. Around 900 business have contacted the council for business advice via the online form since March 2020, plus additional queries by phone. In June, all contacts were sent a copy of the council's re-opening checklist, a link to add their details to the Shop Local page and a request to hold their contact details on file if they were interested in receiving a regular e-newsletter. Over 100 responded to this request, which gives an excellent starting point to keeping business updated in the future. Additionally, a Business Recovery page has been set up on the website, as well as a 'Shop Local' page aimed at giving consumers information about the re-opening of local businesses and the steps they are taking to protect customers. A specific business information Twitter account has also been set up. The Business Boost competition will not be going ahead in 2020 but will be re-launched in 2021 with a revised format, focusing on businesses who have survived and thrived during the pandemic.

- **Parking Policy**

The Council adopted a new Car Parking Strategy in 2019/20. The Council is working to establish card payments on the pay and display car parks which has included the purchase of 12 ticket machines, these were due to be installed at the end of March however the manufacturer had unfortunately placed production on hold due to Covid. Four of the new machines have now been installed and will be commissioned on 12th October, with the other 8 anticipated to follow shortly afterwards. The Council has also commenced in quarter 1 the procurement of a new contractor for the delivery of a mobile phone APP to enable drivers to pay for their parking and extend without the need to return to their cars. The 3 month notice has been served on the current contractor with the intention of the new service commencing in Quarter 3. This replacement service is running to programme, with the changeover taking place on 24th October.

- **Establish Town Centre Communications Group**

The Town Centre Communication Group has recommenced following the Head of Communication leaving their post. A Zoom meeting is scheduled each quarter with the first meeting held on Tuesday 29 September. The group consists of Borough Council (both Town Centre Officer and Communications Manager), Business Improvement District, Hitmix Radio, Newcastle College (NSCG), New Vic Theatre, Babababoon. Hitmix attended all three Record Fairs held in July, August and September and promoted the event on their radio broadcasts.

- **Develop a Kildgrove Town Centre Investment Plan**

Partners have come together to form a Kildgrove Town Deal Board (KTDB) which has continued to meet monthly. This is supported by the appointed consultants, AECOM, who continue to lead and develop the Kildgrove Town Investment Plan with the Town Deal Board. The Investment Plan will review and build on existing plans where appropriate; create the conditions for further investment; and realise lasting and sustainable benefits for the area's residents and businesses. The Government has also offered all Town Deal additional 'accelerated funding' to deliver quick win projects, which have to be completed by end March 2021. The council and KTDB have been working with AECOM to develop a suite of early interventions to use this additional funding in a way that will enhance the projects being included in the Investment Plan.

Ref	Service Area	Portfolio Holder	Indicator	Good is	Result Qtr 2 2019-20	Result Qtr 1 2020-21	Result Qtr 2 2020-21	Target Qtr 2 2020-21	How have we performed?	Status
4.1	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Car parking usage:- Number of tickets purchased	High	119,779	-	67,649	-	Charges for car parking were suspended in Qtr 1 due to COVID-19.	-
4.2	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Simon Tagg	Footfall (data provided by Newcastle BID)	High	822,302	211,612	541,658	-	Footfall for this quarter is 66% of the figure for the same quarter last year.	-
4.3	Regeneration & Economic Development	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Average stall occupancy rate for markets	High	42%	-	Overall 61% Monday GM 17% Tuesday AFG 93% Wednesday GM 18% Thursday AFG 74% Friday GM 52% Farmers Mkt 93% Saturday GM 51% Record Fair Mkt 87%	60%	The markets were suspended at the beginning of lockdown but have recommenced now.  When considering the overall average for all trading days it must be remembered that some markets are monthly and others four times a week.	-

**N/A** Performance information not available at this time or due to be provided at a later date



Performance is not on target but direction of travel is positive



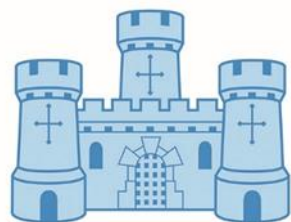
Performance is not on target where targets have been set



Performance is on or above target

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**NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Cabinet Forward Plan: Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council**

#### **Notice of Key Decisions to be taken under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings & Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

This Plan gives 28 days' notice of Key Decisions which we are expecting to take over the next few months. Councils cannot take Key Decisions without first giving 28 days' notice, unless an urgent decision is required. Urgent Key Decisions may be taken under the urgency procedures set out in the Council's Constitution. A decision notice for each Key Decision made is published within 6 days of it having been made.

"Key decisions" are defined as those Executive (Cabinet) decisions which are likely:

- a. to result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings of £100,000 or more (in the case of Revenue) and £250,000 or more (in the case of Capital); and/or
- b. to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

This Forward Plan also contains details of other important Cabinet decisions that we are expecting to take even if they do not meet this definition.

Whilst the majority of these decisions taken at meetings held in public, some decisions may be taken in private meetings because they deal with confidential information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If we intend to take a decision in private, that will be noted below with reasons.

If you object to a decision being taken in private, you can tell us why by emailing [DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or contacting the address below. Any representations received at least 8 working days before the meeting will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be reported verbally to the meeting.

The Cabinet is made up of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members with the following portfolios:

Leader of the Council (Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships)	Councillor Simon Tagg
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Finance & Efficiency)	Councillor Stephen Sweeney
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Community Safety & Well Being)	Councillor Helena Maxfield
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Environment & Recycling)	Councillor Trevor Johnson
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Leisure, Culture & Heritage)	Councillor Jill Waring
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Planning & Growth)	Councillor Paul Northcott

#### Exempt Information Categories under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals an authority proposes;
  - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime

Copies of the Council's Constitution, agendas and reports relevant to any key decision may be accessed on the Council's website [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or may be viewed during normal office hours. Copies or extracts can be obtained on payment of a fee (unless the publication contains exempt information).

For all enquiries, please contact:-

**The Chief Executive's Directorate, Castle House, Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1BL  
Telephone 01782 742222 Email: [DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)**

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Brief Description of Report</b>	<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	<b>Intended Decision Date</b>	<b>Relevant Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Reason for Determining in Private Session (if applicable)</b>
Crematorium Ground Extension Project	To approve proposals to extend the crematorium and develop adjoining land	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	Bradwell/All Wards	N/A
MTFS 2021/22	To receive proposals in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy update for 2021/22	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
Land at Market Drayton, Loggerheads	To approve a proposal to dispose of land	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
Kidsgrove Town Deal	To approve a Town Investment Plan for submission to Government	Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Knutton Master Plan Consultation	To approve a consultation exercise on a draft master plan for Knutton	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Finance & Performance Q2	To receive are report on Finance & Performance	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
Cremator Refurbishment Contract	To approve the letting of a contract relating to the refurbishment and maintenance of cremators	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 11 November 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A

Air Quality Implementation Plan	To approve the Air Quality Outline Business Case	Environment and Recycling	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Affordable Funerals	To approve an affordable funerals offer	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
Sustainable Environment Strategy	To approve a sustainable environment strategy for the Council and Borough	Environment & Recycling	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Brampton Museum Work	To let a contract in respect of works to the Brampton Museum	Leisure, Culture & Heritage	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
2020/21 Draft Savings Proposals	To consider savings proposals for inclusion in the 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Strategy	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
Local Plan Update	To receive an update on the progress of the Local Plan	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 2 December 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Newcastle BID Ballot	To support a BID Ballot process	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 13 January 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Revenue & Capital Budget and Strategies 21/22	To consider proposals for the 2021/22 Revenue & Capital Budget and Strategies	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 13 January 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A
CIL S106 Refresh	To assess the viability of implementing a charging structure on new development in accordance	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 3 February 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A

	with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and to identify how any funds raised may be utilised. The review will also consider the existing s106 charging system and the overlap between the two methods.					
Self-Build Register	To approve the introduction of a register of land suitable for self-builders	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 3 February 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Economic Development Strategy Action Plan	To approve the economic development strategy action plan	Planning & Growth	Cabinet 3 February 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Newcastle Town Deal	To approve a Town Investment Plan for submission to Government	Corporate & Service Improvement, People & Partnerships	Cabinet 3 February 2020	Economy, Environment and Place	All Wards	N/A
Revenue & Capital Budget and Strategies 21/22	To approve proposals for the 2021/22 Revenue & Capital Budget and Strategies	Finance & Efficiency	Cabinet 3 February 2020	Finance, Assets & Performance	All Wards	N/A

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