

Date of meeting Tuesday, 3rd December, 2024
Time 2.00 pm
Venue Leader's Office - Castle House
Contact Geoff Durham 742222



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Cabinet

AGENDA

OPEN AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.
- 3 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** **(Pages 5 - 10)**
To consider the Minutes of the previous meeting.
- 4 **WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR ISSUE** **(Pages 11 - 36)**
- 5 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2025/26 - FIRST DRAFT SAVINGS PLANS** **(Pages 37 - 64)**
- 6 **ONE COUNCIL REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS** **(Pages 65 - 96)**
- 7 **PROCUREMENT OF CORPORATE CRM AND CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM** **(Pages 97 - 104)**
- 8 **CAR PARKING STRATEGY 2019-29 UPDATE** **(Pages 105 - 122)**
- 9 **FORWARD PLAN** **(Pages 123 - 128)**
- 10 **URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 11 **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.

12 PROCUREMENT OF CORPORATE CRM AND CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM- CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX (Pages 129 - 134)

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 of 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 S Tagg (Leader) (Chair), Sweeney (Vice-Chair), Heesom, Fear, Skelding and Hutchison

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 :- Where the total membership of a committee is 12 Members or less, the quorum will be 3 members....Where the total membership is more than 12 Members, the quorum will be one quarter of the total membership.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER SCHEME (Section B5 – Rule 2 of Constitution)

The Constitution provides for the appointment of Substitute members to attend Committees. The named Substitutes for this meeting are listed below:-

Substitute Members:

If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to appoint a Substitute to attend on your place you need to identify a Substitute member from the list above who is able to attend on your behalf

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

NOTE: IF THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS, PLEASE LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE FIRE EXIT DOORS.

ON EXITING THE BUILDING, PLEASE ASSEMBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING BY THE STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA. DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL ADVISED TO DO SO.

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CABINET

Tuesday, 5th November, 2024
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Fear Hutchison
Heesom Skelding

Officers: Gordon Mole Chief Executive
Simon McEneny Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Wilkes Service Director - Finance /
S151 Officer

Also in attendance: Councillor Mark Holland Deputy Leader of the
Conservative Group

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th October 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

[Watch the debate here](#)

3. **WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES**

The Chief Executive introduced the report on Walleys Quarry odour issues.

The complaints to both the Council and the Environment Agency had continued to ramp up since the summer and an information update had been published by the operator suggesting activities to be undertaken in the near future.

A response from the Minister of Nature had also been received regarding the letter from the Leader requesting a public inquiry. The Chief Executive had written back asking for confirmation that ministers and civil servants had read and understood the report.

The Leader commented on the worsening situation which was discouraging, reiterating the need for the Environment Agency to ensure the site was run correctly and for a public inquiry to be undertaken.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning expressed his disappointment at the response received from the Government in relation to the Environment Agency which in his opinion was failing to do their job.

There was incidentally a growing tendency for vehicles to park near the roundabout which should be reported to the police.

The Deputy Leader reported that KCs from the FTB Chambers had now been appointed by the Council to initiate legal action.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment wondered if a letter could be sent to the recently elected MP asking for comments on residents' concerns and the inactivity of the Environment Agency as well as whether he supported the Minister's claim that a public inquiry was not required.

The Chief Executive confirmed this could be taken forward.

The Leader commented that the MP had been so far copied in all communications and his opinion would indeed be valuable.

- Resolved:**
1. That the contents of the update report be noted.
 2. That the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme to seek their view on the recent response from the Minister on calls for a public inquiry and to support actions arising from the Committee of Inquiry report.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. **CONTRACT AWARD FOR YORK PLACE**

The Leader introduced the report on the regeneration of York Place.

The Deputy Leader praised the ethos of Capital and Centric who would not just flatten buildings but save what could be saved from existing structures.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning echoed the Deputy Leader adding there would be expectations for the works to move quickly which he would be looking forward to.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress made to date by Capital & Centric on the York Place project in Newcastle Town Centre, be noted;
 - (ii) That expenditure of up to £836,843, be approved, to develop the scheme to the end of RIBA Stage 4, for construction drawings, tender of a contractor, programme and agreement of a final project costs for the build out of the scheme to completion (subject to a separate Council approval at a future date);
 - (iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships, be authorised to progress legal agreements to enable the appointment of Capital & Centric under a Pre-Development Services Agreement (PDSA) for the development of the scheme through a direct award under the Pagabo Development Management Framework;

(iv) That the future submission of a separate Council Report for the final authorisation to award a construction contract for the build out of the scheme, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. CONTRACT AWARD FOR RYECROFT

The Leader introduced the report on the regeneration of the Ryecroft site where the civic offices and old Sainsbury's used to be. The Council was not exclusively working with Capital & Centric but also Mc Carthy Stone and Aspire Housing.

The Deputy Leader commented that as for the previous site what needed to be done now was awarding the contract and then the construction would start. It was an exciting time after 10 to 15 years seeing this site empty.

The Leader added that accomodations on the site and possibly a new hotel would fit very well within the town bringing footfall back.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the progress made to date by Capital & Centric on the Ryecroft project in Newcastle Town Centre, be noted;
 - (ii) That expenditure of up to £748,329 be approved to develop the scheme to the end of RIBA Stage 4, for construction drawings, tender of a contractor, programme and agreement of a final project costs for the build out of the scheme to completion (subject to a separate Council approval at a future date);
 - (iii) That expenditure of up to £174,920 be approved to develop the Aspire element of the wider scheme to the end of RIBA Stage 4, for construction drawings, tender of a contractor, programme and agreement of a final project costs for the build out of the scheme to completion (subject to a separate Council approval at a future date);
 - (iv) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships be authorised to progress legal agreements to enable the appointment of Capital & Centric under a Pre-Development Services Agreement (PDSA) for the development of the two schemes through a direct award under the Pagabo Development Management Framework;
 - (v) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships be authorised to progress legal agreements to enable the sale of a portion of the site to Aspire Housing for their residential development (site boundaries and sale price to be determined through the next stage of design development), and reclaim the monies spend on this section of the site, namely £541,258;
 - (vi) That the future submission of a separate Council Report for the final authorisation to award a construction contract for the build out of the scheme, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. CONTRACT AWARD FOR MIDWAY

The Leader introduced the report on the regeneration of the Midway car park which Capital & Centric had been working on recommissioning into apartments.

The Deputy Leader shared his enthusiasm for the project which would be inspirational for the town as well as for other towns.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning added that it was an interesting and innovative scheme. The Midway structure was not fit for purpose which is why it was replaced by a new car park and having people living on the site would be a good way to bring social dynamism into the town centre.

Resolved: (i) That the progress made to date by Capital & Centric on the Midway Car Park project in Newcastle Town Centre, be noted;

(ii) That expenditure of up to £854,117 be approved to develop the scheme to the end of RIBA Stage 4, for construction drawings, tender of a contractor, programme and agreement of a final project costs for the build out of the scheme to completion (subject to a separate Council approval at a future date);

(iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships be authorised to progress legal agreements to enable the appointment of Capital & Centric under a Pre-Development Services Agreement (PDSA) for the development of the scheme through a direct award under the Pagabo Development Management Framework;

(iv) That the future submission of a separate Council Report for the final authorisation to award a construction contract for the build out of the scheme, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER AMENDMENTS

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the amendments to a Traffic Regulation Order to enable the opening of the new Castle Car Park and the closure of the Midway Car Park and Ryecroft surface car parking provision.

The Leader mentioned the Christmas parking arrangements and the Deputy Leader confirmed there would be three weekends of free parking as well as on the night of the lights switch on.

Resolved: That the Traffic Regulation Order Amendments, as set out in Appendix 1, to open the new Castle Car Park and close the Midway Car Park and Ryecroft surface car park provision along with introducing a 20 minutes parking stay provision at the bottom of High Street, near the existing taxi rank, be adopted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. **QUARTER 2 - FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25**

The Deputy Leader introduced the Financial Performance report. There was a positive variance of £11,000 in the first half of the year and £780,000 left from the £11.48 million which had been awarded.

The Leader then went through the corporate performance indicators, asking portfolio holders to comment as required.

Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People

On food business inspections, staff illness had prevented to reach the target at the time of the survey but this had been resolved since 17th October 2024.

On online transactions, an increase had been recorded over the last few years with the new website. As more and more information and guidance were made available and people would reach out by phone or in person the number of enquiries had decreased.

Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

On enforcement actions, a lot was done informally without recourse to legal action which did not show in the measurements. It was suggested that different sorts of metrics may be used going forward to capture the picture more accurately.

Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

On items collected that went to recycling and composting, the target was met and the dip was attributed to garden waste having gone down.

On the number of people accessing museums collections in person, the graph was showing a steady growth with yet another award received in October.

On antisocial behaviours and crime reduction the Borough was working with Staffordshire police and data was showing a reduction in cases.

On homelessness and housing applications these had been increasing. The management of the Disabled Facilities Grants had a lot of backlog when transferred to the Council but things were now improving with the extra staff.

Priority 4: Town Centres for All

On car parking the trend had come back to where it was expected to be.

On town centre footfall, data was now available and the figures would likely increase going forward with the regeneration projects.

On market stall occupancy the figure of 40% for the general market could be improved and initiatives such as free Mondays would help achieve this along with additional efforts in terms of advertising.

Resolved: That the contents of the attached report and appendices be noted and that the Council's service and financial performance for this period, continue to be monitored and challenged.

Cabinet - 05/11/24

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Leader went through the Forward Plan.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

11. **DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There was no disclosure of exempt information.

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 2.53 pm

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S

REPORT TO CABINET

03 December 2024

Report Title: **Walleys Quarry – Odour Issues**

Submitted by: **Chief Executive**

Portfolios: **Sustainable Environment; One Council, People & Partnerships**

Ward(s) affected: **All**

<p><u>Purpose of the Report</u></p> <p>To update Cabinet on the latest position regarding the problematic odours in the Borough associated with Walleys Quarry.</p>	<p><u>Key Decision</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <p>1. Note the contents of this update report.</p>	
<p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>To ensure Cabinet is kept updated on the ongoing work regarding the problem odours associated with Walleys Quarry landfill.</p>	

1. Background

- 1.1 For a number of years, parts of the borough have suffered from foul odours from the Walleys Quarry Landfill Site in Silverdale operated by Walleys Quarry Ltd. The Environment Agency (EA) is the lead regulator for such sites, testing and enforcing compliance with the permit under which the site operates. The Council also has a role in influencing the operation and performance of such sites, where an operator fails to comply with actions required under an abatement notice issued by the Council in relation to any statutory nuisance caused by the site.
- 1.2 In March 2021, Council held an extraordinary meeting to receive the report of the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee review into the Walleys Quarry issues, and to debate a motion demanding the immediate suspension of operations and acceptance of waste at the Walleys Quarry Landfill site.
- 1.3 Following extensive work, officers determined that the odours from the Walleys Quarry site amounted to a Statutory Nuisance and, on 13 August 2021, served an Abatement Notice on Walleys Quarry Ltd. (WQL). Following an appeal by Walleys Quarry Ltd, and a successful mediation process, His Honour District Judge Grego approved the settlement that the parties had reached and issued a court order upholding the Abatement Notice and dismissing WQL's appeal on 6 October 2022.

- 1.4 The Council continues to assess the prevalence of odours off site. If there are further instances of statutory nuisance identified which amount to a breach of the Abatement Notice, the Council's Enforcement Policy will guide the process to be followed [Reference: [Environmental Health enforcement policy – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council \(newcastle-staffs.gov.uk\)](https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)]. This would determine what action the Council would take, and whether that would be formal or informal. Enforcement is usually considered sequentially but should the circumstances or nature of the breach be such, escalation direct to prosecution is possible. The Council needs to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State before it is able to prosecute an offence of breaching an abatement notice, as the site is permitted by the Environment Agency. Such consent has been obtained.
- 1.5 Members and Officers have attended Liaison Meetings to maintain contact with Walleys Quarry Ltd, and with other agencies involved with the issue. Cabinet has received monthly updates on the issues relating to the odours, and Council has also been regularly updated.

2. Complaint Data

- 2.1 Below is a schedule of complaints received by the Council and by the Environment Agency from September 2024, reported on a weekly basis. Historical complaint data is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

	Complaints to NuLBC	Complaints to Environment Agency
September 2024		
26/08/24- 01/09/24	7	46
02/09/24 -08/09/24	14	42
09/09/24 -15/09/24	25	95
16/09/24 -22/09/24	43	118
23/09/24 -29/09/24	16	53
October 2024		
30/09/24 -06/10/24	52	147
07/10/24 -13/10/24	80	187
14/10/24 - 20/10/24	37	136
21/10/24 - 27/10/24	100	311
November 2024		
28/10/24 -03/11/24	41	163
04/11/24 – 10/11/24	41	153
11/11/24 – 17/11/24	251	793
18/11/24 – 24/11/24	251	842
25/11/24 – 01/12/24	514*	

*Figure may alter due to backdated complaints received

- 2.2 October 2024 update – revised to 292 complaints due to back dated complaints being entered by complainants.
- 2.3 The number of odour events has increased to 21 in the month of November compared to 12 odour events reported in October:
- Friday 01 November
 - Wednesday 06 November
 - Monday 11 November

- Tuesday 12 November
- Wednesday 13 November
- Thursday 14 November
- Friday 15 November
- Saturday 16 November
- Sunday 17 November
- Tuesday 19 November
- Wednesday 20 November
- Thursday 21 November
- Friday 22 November
- Saturday 23 November
- Sunday 24 November
- Monday 25 November
- Tuesday 26 November
- Wednesday 27 November
- Thursday 28 November
- Friday 29 November
- Saturday 30 November

2.4 There were 12 consecutive days where the community reported 10 or more odour complaints from 19 November to 30 November.

2.5 The highest number of odour complaints was reported on 28 November 2024 with 192 complaints and an monthly total of 1060* complaints.

NULBC Odour Assessments

2.6 Officers have undertaken odour assessments. The monitoring has been reactive to odour complaints and proactive where low odour dispersion is predicted.

The type of monitoring includes spot assessments (instantaneous assessments) and assessments made over a 5-minute period where the odour intensity is recorded every 10 seconds.

In November, 32 assessments were undertaken over a 5-minute period:

- Each assessment detected landfill related odour.
- 2 of 32 assessments recorded a maximum intensity rating of 3 (distinct odour)
- 15 of 32 assessments recorded a maximum intensity rating of 4 (strong odour)
- 14 of 32 assessments recorded a maximum intensity rating of 5 (very strong odour).
- 1 of 32 assessments recorded a maximum intensity rating of 6 (extremely strong)

141 spot assessments were undertaken of which 85 detected landfill related odour ranging from a rating of 2 to 5.

NULBC Mobile Air Quality Monitoring (using Jerome monitor)

2.7 Officers have monitored the levels of hydrogen sulphide within the community using the mobile Jerome monitor. The highest level of hydrogen sulphide recorded in the community was 153ppb on 27 November 2024 at 21:28.

NULBC Actions

2.8 Critically, under the law, whilst odours may exist off site at levels which could be considered a breach of the notice, that breach would be unenforceable (or a defence

against creating a statutory nuisance) if the operator can show that Best Practical Means (BPM) are routinely deployed in the management of the site. Whilst the existence or not of BPM can be debated, it would be a court which would determine whether BPM was in place at the time of the breach. That said, prior to entering any formal legal action it is necessary for the Council to formulate a view with regard to this matter, this is ongoing.

- 2.9** At the core of next steps are two issues – whether the action taken by the Environment Agency as the primary enforcement agency for this site have been successful in remedying the issues; and whether a defence of BPM exists. Where either of these are assessed to be in place it would not be in the public interest for the Council to pursue this matter further.
- 2.10** On 29 July 2024 the Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP, Secretary of State Environment, Food and Rural Affairs responded to the Leader’s request for permission to prosecute Walleys Quarry Ltd. under statutory nuisance legislation, confirming that he would grant consent for the prosecution to proceed.
- 2.11** On 30 September 2024 the Chief Executive confirmed an intention to move to legal action, noting “We are moving as quickly as possible in a complex situation. There are very few precedents for taking legal action against an operator regulated by a Government agency, so there is a great deal of legal advice and preparation involved, however I believe we will be ready to take the next step by the end of October.”
- 2.12** On 31 October 2024 the Chief Executive Gordon Mole, Chief Executive of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, updated by noting “The process is underway now that we have appointed Jeremy Phillips KC and Horatio Waller, both of FTB Chambers, which has a strong reputation in this field. There is a complex, detailed process to be followed and whilst understandably we cannot provide a running commentary on progress we would hope to share the latest position with the public in the next few weeks.”
- 2.13** An update report was brought to full Council on 20 November 2024.
- 2.14** On 28 November the EA served a closure notice on Walleys Quarry Ltd (see section 2.22 to 2.24). The Council is currently taking account of this evolving situation.

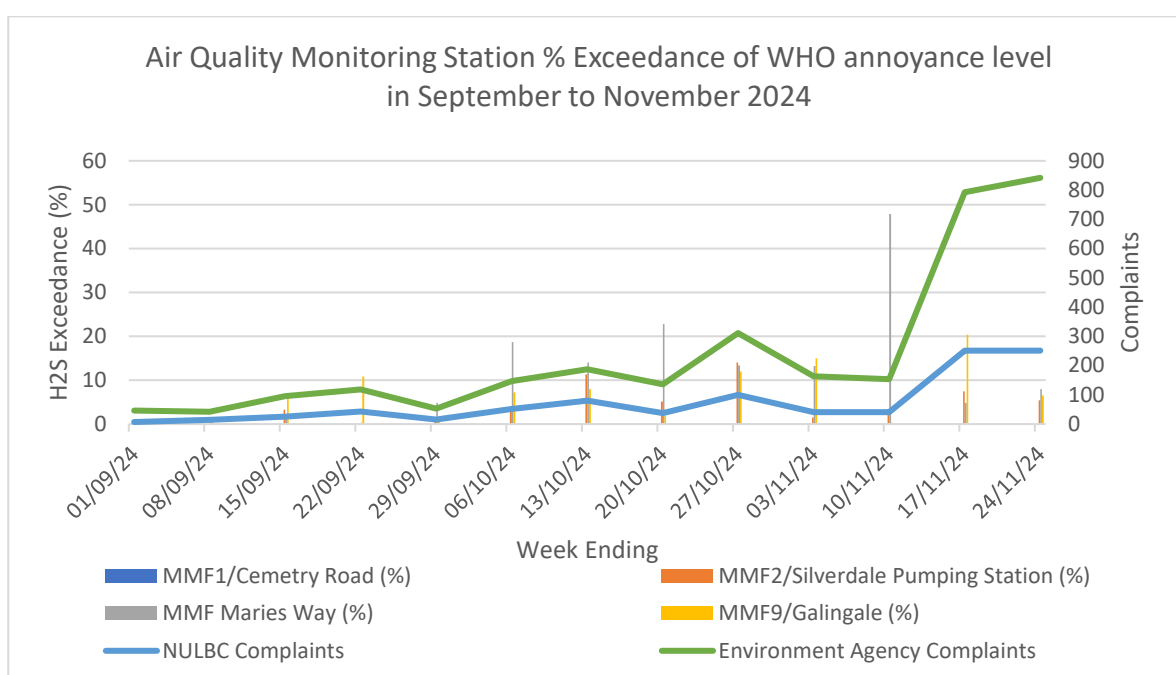
Air Quality:

- 2.15** The Council, Staffordshire County Council, and the Environment Agency have jointly funded a campaign of air quality monitoring utilising three static air monitoring stations. The Environment Agency manage and operate these air quality monitoring stations. Data from these stations has been routinely published weekly by the Environment Agency (EA).
- 2.16** The latest H2S data is set out in the table below, defining the proportion of the time periods where H2S levels were above the WHO Odour Annoyance guideline of 7ug/m³. Historic data is available in Appendix 2.

Time Period	MMF Maries Way (%)	MMF Silverdale Pumping Station (%)	MMF Galinagle View (%)
02 September - 08 September 2024	0.6	0.0	1.1
09 September - 15 September 2024	1.8	3.3	5.7
16 September - 22 September 2024	0.3	0.0	10.8

23 September - 29 September 2024	4.8	0.6	0.6
30 September - 06 October 2024	18.7	3.6	7.2
07 October - 13 October 2024	14.0	11.3	8.0
14 October - 20 October 2024	22.8	5.09	1.8
21 October - 27 October 2024	13.4	14.0	12.0
28 October - 03 November 2024	13.2	1.5	15.0
04 November - 10 November 2024	47.9	2.1	0.3
11 November - 17 November 2024	4.80	7.49	20.40
18 November - 24 November 2024	8.0	5.4	6.5

2.17 The complaint data and weekly % exceedance of the WHO annoyance level have been combined and is shown on the graph below:



2.18 On 15 November the EA updated on the latest air quality figures: 'We are aware of the significant deterioration in conditions over the last few weeks and particularly this week. We have every sympathy with the local community, which has recently experienced increased odour levels around Walleys Quarry.'

We have made it clear to Walleys Quarry Ltd (WQL) that the odour experienced by the community remains unacceptable and that WQL must provide a sustained, and sustainable, solution to the problem of fugitive landfill gas emissions.

An increase in odour report numbers between 10 – 12 November 2024 corresponded with higher levels of hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) recorded by the mobile monitoring facilities (MMFs) on the evening of 11 November. This coincided with a period of still weather and poor dispersion conditions. During recent off-site odour assessments on 12 and 13 November, our officers detected intermittent odour. On a site inspection on 13 November officers also detected some landfill gas odour in the area where works are progressing to complete the installation of permanent geomembrane capping.

Through our ongoing regulation, we have required action by WQL to minimise fugitive landfill gas emissions, including steps in respect of leachate management and further permanent capping on the northern area of the site.

The data published for the period 4 – 10 November 2024 shows that the percentage of time the MMF at Marie’s Way recorded H2S above the WHO odour annoyance guideline was 47.9%. We would remind the community that this raw data is only indicative and should be used to look at trends rather than to make direct comparisons with specific numerical guidelines. We have shared, and will continue to share, this sort of information when it is available, because we know the community is interested in comparisons with health-based guidelines.

Nevertheless, these results are indicative of unacceptable impacts in the community. We continue to press WQL to take the appropriate measures specified in its Odour Management Plan to reduce fugitive landfill gas emissions’.

Environment Agency Regulatory and Enforcement Action

2.19 The Environment Agency has continued to provide updates on its regulatory activity on the Walleys Quarry Landfill and can be accessed here: <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/walleys-quarry-landfill>

2.20 There have been no further published Compliance and Assessment Reports published on the EA website since the previous Cabinet report.

Lorries outside the site

2.21 On 15 November 2024 the EA issued an update, noting that:

‘There has been an increase in reports regarding lorries queuing to enter Walleys Quarry Landfill Site. As we set out on our FAQ page in relation to working with partners, the Environment Agency is not responsible for lorries and road safety. Please share any concerns you have about lorries outside the site with Staffordshire County Council (SCC), which is the highway authority, or the local Police. You can contact SCC at contactus@staffordshire.gov.uk (External link) or on 0300 111 8000 or the Police on the non-emergency number 101’

Closure Notice

2.22 On 28 November 2024 the Environment Agency issued a Closure Notice to Walleys Quarry Ltd (WQL).

‘We have concluded that management of Walleys Quarry is poor and that further operation of the site may result in significant, long-term pollution. The notice is the first step towards permanently closing the Newcastle-under-Lyme site.

A Closure Notice is used as a last resort once all other enforcement options have been exhausted.

We have every sympathy with the local community and our decision to issue a Closure Notice demonstrates our commitment to doing all we can to resolve the problem of fugitive landfill gas emissions from the site.

We are satisfied that WQL has failed to demonstrate that it can exercise the appropriate level of control necessary to manage fugitive landfill emissions effectively, so that they do not have an adverse impact outside the site boundary.

The failure of WQL to manage the site effectively to prevent fugitive emissions of landfill gas has resulted in odour pollution over an extended period, and a risk to human health experienced by the community, as described by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in its Health Risk Assessments.

In regulating Walleys Quarry our aim has always been to bring the operator into compliance with its permit. The decision to issue a Closure Notice is not one we take lightly. We have given WQL sufficient time to put in place effective measures to manage emissions and it has failed to do so.

The Closure Notice will require WQL to cap operational areas of the site and install additional gas extraction infrastructure. It will also require WQL to provide appropriate plans for the closure process and aftercare. WQL will be required to cease accepting waste for disposal from Friday 29 November but will be able to accept suitable material for capping works, such as clay or plastic liner / geomembrane. We expect there to be improvements in levels of off-site odour when waste ceases to be disposed of at Walleys Quarry, and WQL makes progress with the other measures required.

WQL has a right of appeal against the Closure Notice, which must be made within 2 months of the date the Closure Notice is issued. If there is an appeal, an Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate will hear it and decide whether to quash or affirm the Notice.

We appreciate that the community may have questions about the Closure Notice and what happens next. We have created a new Engagement HQ page with an explainer video and Frequently Asked Questions. We will also be holding a virtual meeting on 9 December 2024 at 7.00pm – 8.30pm, you can access the meeting using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/92996077152>(External link)

We understand that some members of the public may not be comfortable speaking in a public forum or may not be able to attend the meeting. We have therefore set up an online page where questions can be anonymously submitted prior to the event, which can be accessed using this link:

<https://app.sli.do/event/9kcYmbnowGn3kdfEayRQw3>

2.23 Schedule 2 to the Closure Notice contains steps to be taken to initiate closure which are listed in two stages. A copy of this is provided in Appendix 3.

2.24 Given the Closure Notice noted above, only lorries carrying inert material and materials for the remedy of the site will be permitted entry.

Walleys Quarry update

2.25 In response to the Closure Notice WQL issued the following information update:

“We have received a closure notice from the Environment Agency. We are clear that keeping the site open delivers greatest benefit and sustainability for the site. We will challenge this decision using all available options. Walleys Quarry have made extensive factual and legal submissions to the Environment Agency which in our view they have not substantively engaged with. As a business we completely reject the accusations made by the Environment Agency relating to poor management of the landfill site.”

Impact Study

- 2.26** An Impact study, commissioned jointly by a group of public bodies, including Staffordshire County Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, the Environment Agency and UK Health Security Agency, will be carried out by the independent Arcadis Consulting.
- 2.27** The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Staffordshire County Council is considering the report at its meeting on 2 December 2024. The Arcadis report is available at [Appendix 1 - Walleys Quarry Community Impact Study Arcadis November 2024.pdf](#)

Key Performance Data

- 2.28** Through the settlement agreement both Walleys Quarry Ltd and the Council have developed key performance indicators in relation to relevant data from each organisation. The key performance indicator for NuLBC are shown in Appendix 4.
- 2.29** The data from the Council covers the period from September 2024 to November 2024 and provides complaint numbers and officer assessments.
- 2.30** The data from Walleys Quarry Limited provides data on waste acceptance, odour management, landfill operations, landfill gas management, leachate management and information relating to the EA regulator as the primary regulator of the site. The KPI data from September has not been submitted by the operator.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note the contents of this update report.

4. Reasons for Proposed Solution

- 4.1** To ensure Cabinet is kept updated of the ongoing work to address the issues associated with the odours from Walleys Quarry landfill and to keep under review opportunities to further action.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1** To provide regular updates to Cabinet.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1** Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 is the legislation concerned with statutory nuisances in law. This is the principal piece of legislation covering the Council's duties and responsibilities in respect of issues relating to odour nuisance:
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 79 sets out the law in relation to statutory nuisance. This is the principal piece of legislation covering the Council's duties and responsibilities in respect of issues relating to odour nuisance.

- The relevant part of Section 79 defines a statutory nuisance as any smell or other effluvia arising on industrial, trade or business premises which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance. The Council is responsible for undertaking inspections and responding to complaints to determine whether a statutory nuisance exists.
- Where a statutory nuisance is identified or considered likely to arise or recur, section 80 of the Act requires that an abatement notice is served on those responsible for the nuisance. The abatement notice can either prohibit or restrict the nuisance and may require works to be undertaken by a specified date(s).
- It is then a criminal offence to breach the terms of the abatement notice. Because the site is regulated by the Environment Agency under an Environmental Permit, the council would need to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State before it is able to prosecute any offence of breaching the abatement notice.
- The Act provides powers in respect of a breach. If a person on whom an abatement notice is served, without reasonable excuse, contravenes or fails to comply with any requirement or prohibition imposed by the notice, they shall be guilty of an offence. If this is on industrial, trade or business premises shall be liable on conviction to an unlimited fine. It is a defence that the best practicable means were used to prevent, or to counteract the effects of, the nuisance.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The work of the Council in this regard recognises that the problematic odours in the area may impact on some groups more than others. The work is focussed on minimising this impact as soon as possible.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 Dedicated officer resource has been allocated to continue the Council's work regarding Walleys Quarry Landfill.
- 8.2 From April 2024 there is a £300k reserve for works associated with Walleys Quarry Landfill site. Should further funding be required, up to £300k can be made available through the transfer of useable reserves (£100k from the Borough Growth Fund and £200k from the Budget and Borrowing Support Fund). These funds can be transferred without Council approval.
- 8.3 On 20 November 2024 Council approved the sum of £400k (£250k from the General Fund Reserve, £150k from the Budget and Borrowing Support Fund) for costs associated with action to prosecute, and delegate to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for One Council, People and Performance and Town Centres and Finance, to draw down and remit such funds as are necessary for this action.

9. Major Risks

- 9.1 A GRACE risk assessment has been completed including the following main risks:
- Failure to achieve a reduction in odour levels;

- Community dissatisfaction at odour levels;
- The ability to take enforcement action against abatement notice;
- Failure to evidence a breach of the abatement notice;

9.2 Controls have been identified and implemented in order to control these risks; the main controls include:

- Provisions in settlement agreement ensures greater transparency for public;
- Provisions in settlement agreement ensures regular meetings with Walleys Quarry which enable issues to be discussed;
- Dedicated officer resource for Walleys Quarry work has been secured;
- Continued air quality monitoring provision;
- Robust procedure for investigating complaints with experienced officers;
- Specialist expert advice maintained;
- Multi-Agency partnership working continues.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



11. One Council

11.1 Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

One Digital Council

The Council will use all available monitoring data and digital tools in making strategic and operational decisions in relation to Walleys Quarry.

One Green Council

The Council is not a user of Walleys Quarry. Within its restricted powers, the Council is committed to ensuring that waste does not cause a nuisance for residents and ultimately wishes to see the end of landfill, with a site that is successful closed, capped off and restored.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 As an update report, this is not a Key Decision.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 This matter has been variously considered previously by Economy, Environment & Place Scrutiny Committee, Council and Cabinet on 21 April 2021, 9th June 2021, 7th July 2021, 21st July 2021, 8th September 2021, 13th October 2021, 3rd November 2021, 17th November, 1st December 2021, 12th January 2022, 2nd February 2022, 23rd February

2022, 23rd March 2022, 20th April 2022, 7th June 2022, 19th July 2022, 6th September 2022, 18th October 2022, 8th November 2022, 6th December 2022, 10th January 2023, 7th February 2023, 13th March 2023, 5th April 2023, 6th June 2023, 18th July 2023, 19th September 2023, 17th October 2023, 7th November 2023, 5th December 2023, 16th January 2024, 6th February 2024, 14th February 2024, 19th March 2024, 10th April 2024, 4th June 2024, 16th July 2024, 10th September 2024, 25th September 2024, 15th October 2024, 5th November 2024, 25th November 2024.

14. List of Appendices

- 14.1** Appendix 1. Historical Complaint data
- 14.2** Appendix 2. Percentage exceedance above WHO odour annoyance guideline
- 14.3** Appendix 3. Landfill Closure Notice dated 28 November 2024
- 14.4** Appendix 4. NULBC Key Performance Data

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Appendix 1 – Historic Complaint Numbers

Week Ending	Complaints to NuLBC	Complaints to Environment Agency	Week Ending	Complaints to NuLBC	Complaints to Environment Agency
2022			25-Sep	14	79
09-Jan	73	352	02-Oct	13	58
16-Jan	258	1045	09-Oct	42	102
23-Jan	134	651	16-Oct	52	165
30-Jan	25	139	23-Oct	73	186
06-Feb	16	64	30-Oct	30	82
13-Feb	31	120	06-Nov	27	116
20-Feb	49	166	13-Nov	23	86
27-Feb	40	264	20-Nov	60	113
06-Mar	118	571	27-Nov	2	70
13-Mar	72	285	04-Dec	19	47
20-Mar	224	1126	11-Dec	43	163
27-Mar	412	1848	18-Dec	22	114
03-Apr	243	1072	25-Dec	12	45
10-Apr	132	895	2023		
17-Apr	156	752	01-Jan	11	39
24-Apr	65	310	08-Jan	12	32
01-May	49	213	15-Jan	13	25
08-May	39	193	22-Jan	47	118
15-May	35	160	29-Jan	51	149
21-May	43	134	05-Feb	13	66
29-May	20	81	12-Feb	26	115
05-Jun	27	169	19-Feb	7	39
12-Jun	42	234	26-Feb	3	15
19-Jun	25	263	05-Mar	7	13
26-Jun	28	208	12-Mar	12	74
02-Jul	9	54	19-Mar	23	63
09-Jul	4	34	26-Mar	19	56
16-Jul	14	72	02-Apr	51	103
23-Jul	21	52	09-Apr	45	152
30-Jul	12	93	16-Apr	11	64
06-Aug	22	124	23-Apr	48	101
13-Aug	32	133	30-Apr	148	278
21-Aug	11	79	07-May	50	150
28-Aug	12	89	14-May	53	164
04-Sep	10	30	21-May	147	320
11-Sep	9	64	28-May	90	210
18-Sep	13	83	04-Jun	24	43

Week Ending	Complaints to NuLBC	Complaints to Environment Agency	Week Ending	Complaints to NuLBC	Complaints to Environment Agency
11-Jun	19	75	24-Mar	120	330
18-Jun	76	154	31-Mar	81	254
25-Jun	80	170	07-Apr	56	220
02-Jul	40	99	14-Apr	17	75
09-Jul	18	46	21-Apr	32	145
16-Jul	20	54	28-Apr	55	196
23-Jul	15	73	05-May	41	167
30-Jul	28	97	12-May	75	311
06-Aug	21	67	19-May	76	192
13-Aug	7	30	26-May	89	240
20-Aug	10	44	02-Jun	75	207
27-Aug	8	38	09-Jun	38	114
03-Sep	11	59	16-Jun	50	147
10-Sept	26	71	23-Jun	67	189
17-Sept	12	72	30-Jun	117	298
24-Sept	8	31	07-Jul	45	103
01-Oct	8	26	14-Jul	52	155
08-Oct	8	37	21-Juy	118	277
15-Oct	29	64	28-Jul	93	189
22-Oct	22	81	04-Aug	61	162
29-Oct	26	115	11-Aug	53	143
05-Nov	5	15	18-Aug	50	160
12 Nov	40	123	25-Aug	35	185
19-Nov	35	119			
26-Nov	36	135			
3-Dec	115	265			
10-Dec	83	151			
17-Dec	48	180			
24-Dec	28	79			
31-Dec	44	129			
2024					
07-Jan	236	627			
14-Jan	76	268			
21-Jan	270	824			
28-Jan	86	261			
04-Feb	133	416			
11-Feb	382	905			
18-Feb	186	527			
25-Feb	397	1264			
03-Mar	333	990			

10-Mar	218	694			
17-Mar	103	374			

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Time Period			
	MMF1 (%)	MMF 2 (%)	MMF 9 (%)
02 October – 08 October 2023			0
09 October – 15 October 2023			9.4
16 October – 22 October 2023	0.9	0	7.8
23 October – 29 October 2023	13.7	3.0	10.4
30 October – 5 November 2023	7.8	0.6	NR
6 November – 12 November 2023	8.9	1.5	5.6
13 November – 19 November 2023	6.9	0.6	3
20 November – 26 November 2023	3.3	2.9	14.33
27 November – 3 December 2023	14.9	7.4	26.2
4 December – 10 December 2023	21.4	3.0	10.2
11 December – 17 December 2023	13.4	2.68	8.33
18 December – 24 December 2023	0	0	0.6
25 December- 31 December 2023	23.21	0.3	1.9
01 January – 07 January 2024	16.9	8.7	17.7
08 January – 14 January 2024	0		5.0
15 January – 21 January 2024	17.4		18.4
22 January – 28 January 2024	37.8		11.6
29 January – 04 February 2024	18.6		23.4
05 February – 11 February 2024	20.8		22.6
12 February – 18 February 2024	30.8		9.6
19 February – 25 February 2024	27.4		21.1
26 February – 03 March 2024	33.7		20.1
04 March – 10 March 2024	34		13
11 March – 17 March 2024	17.0		6.0
18 March – 24 March 2024	8	1.8	4.5
25 March – 31 March 2024	37.8	1.8	2.1
01 April - 07 April 2024	15.6	1.2	5.4
08 April – 14 April 2024	10.7	0	4.8
15 April – 21 April 2024	0.9	1.2	7.9
22 April – 28 April 2024	1.8	0	6.7
29 April – 05 May 2024	2.4	0.6	9.0
06 May – 12 May 2024	6.85	0.3	14.3
13 May – 19 May 2024	3.3	0	12.2
20 May – 26 May 2024	1.8	0.6	8.6
27 May – 02 June 2024	5.7	1.2	6.0
03 June – 09 June 2024	0.0	0.0	8.1
10 June – 16 June 2024	0.6	0.0	4.2
17 June – 23 June 2024	0.9	0.6	8.7
24 June – 30 June 2024	0.0	0.3	6.9

01 July - 7 July 2024	0.6	0.0	4.2
08 July - 14 July 2024	0.3	0.0	8.9
15 July - 21 July 2024	7.2	7.5	16.5
22 July - 28 July 2024	2.7	0.0	15.2
05 August - 11 August 2024	1.2	2.1	5.4
12 August - 18 August 2024	1.2	0.3	1.8
19 August - 25 August 2024	0	0	0
26 August - 01 September 2024	0	0	0.6

**Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016
Regulation 35(2)
Schedule 10, Paragraph 10(1)**

LANDFILL CLOSURE NOTICE

To: Walleys Quarry Ltd
Suite B, Fairgate House
205 Kings Road
Tyseley
Birmingham
England
B11 2AA

Company No. 09910638

Environmental permit number: EPR/DP3734DC
Regulated facility: Walleys Quarry Landfill, Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 6SH


We require you to initiate the closure of the landfill at Cemetery Road, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 6SH as shown for the purposes of identification edged in red on the attached plan.

The reasons for this decision are set out in Schedule 1 to this notice.

You are required to take the steps set out in Schedule 2 by the date(s) specified.

Date: 28 November 2024

Signed 


Area Director, West Midlands

Environment Agency
Sentinel House
9 Wellington Crescent
Fradley Park
Lichfield
WS13 8RR

Please see over for notes.

Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016

Regulation 35(2)

Schedule 10, Paragraph 10(1)

Notes:

1. Paragraph 10(1) of Schedule 10 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 requires us to set out this decision in a closure notice. Accordingly, this notice requires you to close your landfill for the acceptance of waste from the date specified and take the steps specified in Schedule 2.
2. Closure of the landfill does not relieve you of your liability to comply with the conditions of your environmental permit. Failure to comply with these conditions is an offence and legal action may be taken against you.
3. Failure to comply with this notice is an offence under Regulation 38(3) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 and may result in legal action being taken against you.
4. The Environment Agency may take proceedings in the High Court under Regulation 42 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 for the purpose of securing compliance with this notice.
5. You may wish to seek independent legal advice.

Appeal provisions

You are entitled to appeal against this notice under Regulation 31(1)(f) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. Notice of appeal must be made within two months of the date of this notice. An appeal does not affect the requirements of this notice.

You must send written notice of the appeal and the documents listed below to:

Secretary of State
The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3A Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

At the same time, you must send a copy of the appeal notice and documents to us.

The required documents are:

- a statement of the grounds of appeal;
- a copy of any relevant application;
- a copy of any relevant environmental permit;
- a copy of any relevant correspondence between the appellant and the regulator;
- a copy of any decision or notice which is the subject matter of the appeal; and
- a statement indicating whether you wish the appeal to be in the form of a hearing or dealt with by way of written representations.

You may withdraw an appeal by notifying the Secretary of State in writing and sending a copy of that notification to us.

Further information about making an appeal and the forms that you will need are available from the Planning Inspectorate.

In addition, you can request an independent internal review of our decision to issue this notice. Asking us to review our decision will not affect the time limits within which any statutory appeal must be made. We expect any request to review a regulatory decision to be made promptly, usually within 14 days.

Public Registers

A copy of this notice will be placed on the public registers held by the Local Authority in whose area the installation is located and by the Agency.

SCHEDULE 1 REASONS FOR DECISION

1. The Environment Agency considers the management of Walleys Quarry Landfill Site to be poor, and that further operation of the site may result in significant long-term pollution from fugitive emissions of landfill gas.
2. The site operator has not installed capping systems or gas collection infrastructure promptly to minimise fugitive gas emissions. In addition, the site operator is not controlling leachate formation adequately or managing surface water to alleviate hydrogen sulphide generation. The site operator has been unwilling or unable to prevent acceptance of waste that has continued to produce hydrogen sulphide. The site operator has failed to manage the phasing and deposit of waste at the site to minimise emissions of landfill gas and facilitate the installation of capping and gas collection infrastructure in a timely manner. The site operator has had ample opportunity to address these shortcomings but has failed to do so.
3. The failure of the site operator to take the measures necessary to reduce fugitive gas emissions, with unacceptable levels of hydrogen sulphide, has resulted in odour pollution over an extended period and a risk to human health experienced by the community, as described by the UK Health Security Agency in its Health Risk Assessments.
4. The Environment Agency has therefore concluded that the site needs to close as the risk of significant odour pollution will continue as long as the site operator continues to accept waste.

SCHEDULE 2 STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO INITIATE CLOSURE

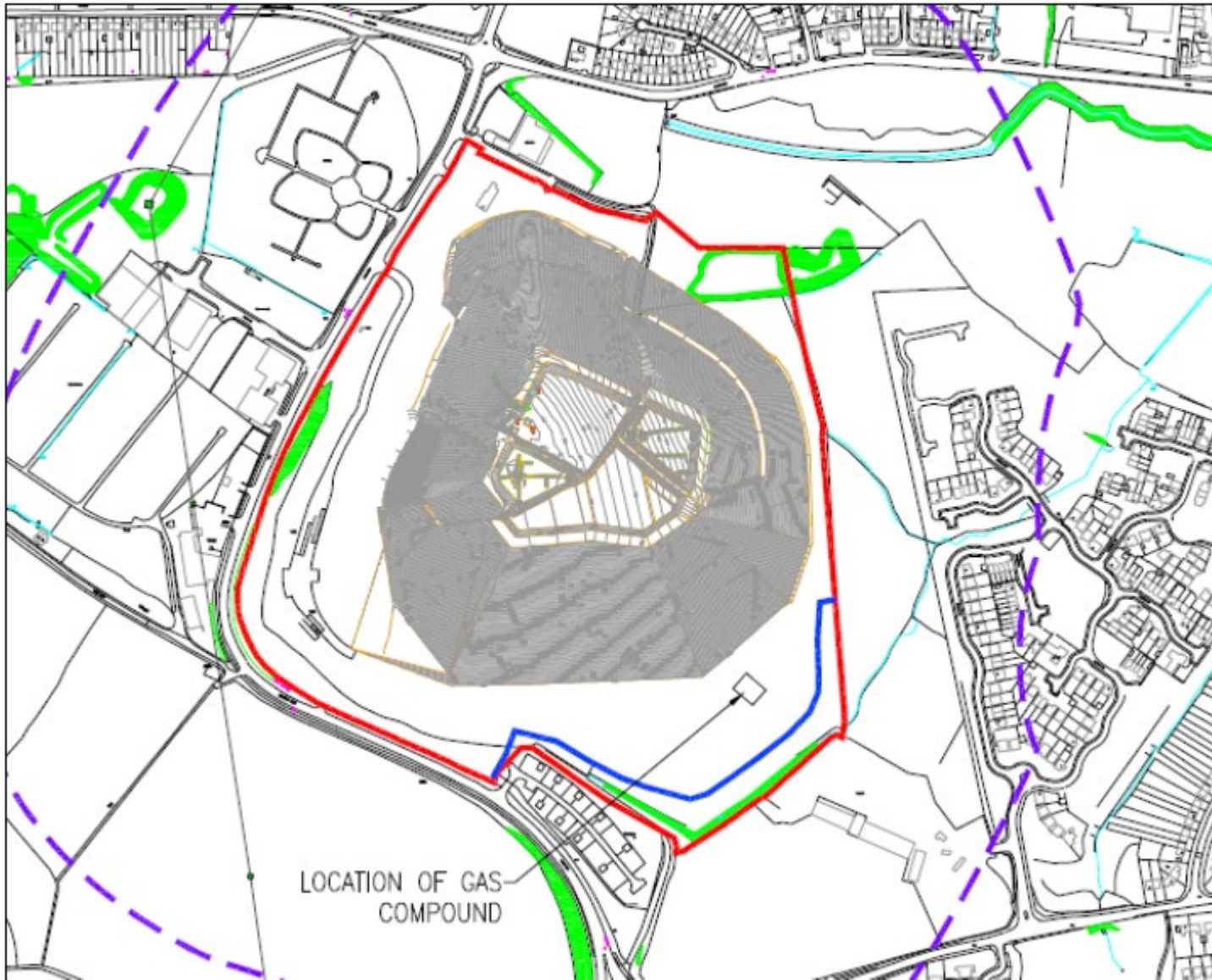
Stage 1

1. With effect from **00:01 on 29 November 2024** cease accepting waste and do not recommence the acceptance of waste for disposal or recovery at the landfill.
2. By **13 December 2024** construct bench-like horizontal platforms within the waste flanks on the uncapped former active tipping (operational) areas to facilitate access, maintenance and monitoring for the installation of gas control infrastructure (gas wells and connecting pipelines). This shall be undertaken in accordance with Section 3.7 of Walleys Quarry Ltd Landfill Gas Management Plan v3.10 dated September 2024 (the LGMP).
3. Any waste left exposed following construction of bench-like horizontal platforms in the former active tipping (operational) areas shall be covered with non-waste material by the end of each working day.
4. By **24 December 2024** install permanent gas extraction wells as set out in Walleys Next Phase Gas Infrastructure Design 18.11.2024, reference CLP3573 and in those former active tipping (operational) areas without gas extraction, in accordance with the design and specification set out in the LGMP.
5. Connect all installed gas extraction infrastructure to the operational gas control system and place it under extraction. This shall occur no later than the end of the day of installation of the specific infrastructure.
6. By **31 January 2025** install temporary geomembrane capping to any uncapped part of the former active tipping area of the landfill. Once installed, the capping shall alleviate gas emissions so that they do not exceed 50 parts per million (ppm) methane.
7. Collect and remove surface water run-off from capped areas in accordance with Temporary Surface Water Management Layout, drawing ECL.9311.D05.001 Rev C dated 10.07.2024. Any contaminated surface water shall either be removed from site or treated via the leachate treatment plant.
8. By **7 February 2025** a surface gas emissions survey shall be undertaken in accordance with [LFTGN07 v2 2010 Guidance on monitoring landfill gas surface emissions](#).
9. By **14 February 2025** submit a report to the Environment Agency demonstrating that emissions of methane do not exceed 50 parts per million (ppm) methane.
10. With effect from **14 February 2025** conduct surface gas emission surveys every four weeks until the permanent cap is installed to ensure that the temporary cap is alleviating methane emissions to below 50 ppm.

11. No later than 7 days after each survey carried out in accordance with Step 10 above, submit a report to the Environment Agency demonstrating that emissions of methane do not exceed 50 ppm methane.
12. Repair any defects or leaks in the cap giving rise to methane emissions greater than 50 ppm within 24 hours of detection.
13. By **28 February 2025** provide the Environment Agency with a Landfill Closure and Aftercare Plan. This plan shall take account of sector guidance [Landfill operators: environmental permits, Develop and maintain management plans](#) and include, but not be limited to:
 - a. timebound proposals to achieve a stable final landform, using the minimum amount of material, accompanied by plans and cross sections at an appropriate scale and an updated stability risk assessment;
 - b. timebound proposals for final permanent geomembrane capping of the landfill, to be installed as specified in [Capping and Restoration Works Construction Quality Assurance Plan, Document Ref ECL.8445.R02.001 Rev.D, April 2022](#) or as may otherwise be agreed in writing by the Environment Agency;
 - c. an updated leachate management plan which includes timebound proposals to achieve and maintain compliance with permitted leachate levels within the landfill;
 - d. an updated surface water management plan, which includes timebound proposals to achieve and maintain effective surface water management;
 - e. an updated landfill gas management plan in accordance with [Walleys Next Phase Gas Infrastructure Design 18.11.2024, reference CLP3573](#) which incorporates timebound proposals to complete any outstanding actions in the LGMP Appendix A;
 - f. a groundwater management plan.

Stage 2

1. By **30 May 2025, or such date otherwise agreed in writing by the Environment Agency** provide the Environment Agency with a closure report which specifies how closure has been achieved and how the activities at the site will be managed, monitored and maintained during the aftercare phase. The closure report shall take account of sector guidance [Landfill operators: environmental permits, Close your landfill site](#) and include:
 - a. a plan identifying the area(s) of the site which is/are to be considered definitely closed;
 - b. evidence that the waste mass is stable;
 - c. procedures for the management and control of landfill gas, leachate, groundwater and surface water;
 - d. procedures for monitoring landfill gas, leachate, groundwater and stability/ settlement during the aftercare phase for that/those area(s);
 - e. a procedure for reporting any significant environmental effects during the aftercare phase.



Appendix 2 – NULBC Key Performance Indicators

NULBC		Information	Measurement	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024
KPI 1		Complaints reported to NULBC	Number	100 Number of unique properties reporting complaints = 50 Rating 0 = 0 complaints Rating 1 = 0 complaints Rating 2 = 3 complaints Rating 3 = 8 complaints Rating 4 = 24 complaints (24%) Rating 5 = 20 complaints (20%) Rating 6 = 45 complaints (45%) % of complaints reporting odour entering the property = 81 (81%) % of complaints reporting health effects = 69 (69%)	292* *Revised to include back dated complaints Number of unique properties reporting complaints = 106 Rating 0 = 0 complaints Rating 1 = 1 complaints Rating 2 = 2 complaints Rating 3 = 12 complaints Rating 4 = 60 complaints (20.5%) Rating 5 = 76 complaints (26.0%) Rating 6 = 141 complaints (48.3%) % of complaints reporting odour entering the property = 227 (77.7%) % of complaints reporting health effects = 241 (82.5%)	1060 % of complaints reporting odour entering the property = 878 (82.8%) % of complaints reporting health effects = 780 (73.6%)
KPI 2		Complaints reported (daytime 07:00-23:00)	Number	94	255	877
KPI 3		Complaints reported (night-time 23:00-07:00)	Number	6	37	183
KPI 4		Highest number of complaints during the period	Date (number of complaints)	19/09/24 (18 complaints)	26/10/24 (33 complaints)	28/11/24 (192 complaints)

		Information	Measurement	MMF Location Name	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024
KPI 5	AIR QUALITY	Percentage exceedance Odour Annoyance Guideline (Hydrogen Sulphide 30-minute average)	%	MMF Maries Way	2.5%	21.8%	Awaited
				MMF Silverdale Pumping Station	1.1%	8.4%	Awaited
				MMF Galingale View	3.6%	7.4%	Awaited
KPI 6		Monthly Average H ₂ S	ug/m3 over the month	MMF Maries Way	2.0 ug/m3	4.2ug/m3	Awaited
				MMF Silverdale Pumping Station	1.2ug/m3	3.3ug/m3	Awaited
				MMF Galingale View	1.4ug/m3	2.8ug/m3	Awaited
KPI 7	H ₂ S PEAK LEVEL	Level measured over a 5-minute period Date & Time	ug/m3	MMF Maries Way	22.68ug/m3	68.95ug/m3	Awaited
				MMF Silverdale Pumping Station	34.40ug/m3	287.54ug/m3	Awaited
				MMF Galingale View	46.58ug/m3	114.63ug/m3	Awaited
KPI 8	OFFICER ASSESSMENTS	Odour Rating - Officer odour assessment (5 minute)	Max Odour Rating		10 assessments – of which 7 recorded a max rating of 4 on 12/09/24 & 13/09/24	12 assessments - of which 10 recorded a max rating of 4 and 2 recorded a max rating of 5 on 22/10/24	32 assessments of which 30 recorded a max rating of 4 or above on 11/11/24, 20/11/24, 21/11/24, 27/11/24, 28/11/24



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

**Cabinet
03 December 2024**

Report Title: Revenue and Capital Budget 2025/26 – First Draft Savings Plans

Submitted by: Service Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>To present the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy including the first draft savings proposals being considered to balance the 2025/26 revenue budget and the proposed capital programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>			
<u>Recommendations</u>			
<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the first draft savings proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report. 2. Note the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap (Appendix C). 3. Approve any surplus funds identified when setting the budget to be transferred to Reserves in order to achieve future financial resilience. 4. To note the commencement date of the Budget Consultation period as mid-November to mid-December 2024. 5. Refer the first draft savings proposals to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views (Appendix A and Appendix B). 6. Refer the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Appendix D) to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views. 7. Approve the Mid-Year Capital Estimates for 2024/25. 8. Notes the proposed setting of Council Tax at 1.99 per cent for 2025/2026 			
<u>Reasons</u>			
<p>To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to set a balanced budget in February 2025.</p>			

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The funding pressures facing the Council for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 were presented to Cabinet on 10 September 2024. The report indicated that there would be a budget 'gap' of £1.429m in respect of 2025/26 (£5.251m over the 5 year period of the MTFS) and that this will need to be closed in order to produce a balanced budget.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The MTFS provides an overarching framework for the allocation of resources to the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Plan. The Council Plan for 2022-2026 was approved by Cabinet on 6 September 2022 and noted by Full Council on 28 September 2022.
- 2.2 The financial strategy will continue to focus 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 an "everyone's responsibility" 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.
- 2.3 The MTFS funding gap is constantly reviewed and assumptions made are challenged and amended as circumstances dictate. A small number of changes have been made to the budget 'gap' for 2025/26 of £1.429m reported to Cabinet on 10 September 2024 resulting in a revised budget 'gap' of £1.453m. It is also likely that a reset of the Business Rates Retention funding scheme will be undertaken during the medium term. Initial forecasts indicate that the funding the Council currently benefits from will reduce to a lower baseline. The MTFS phases this potential loss over a 3 year period from 2025/26 onwards.

The revised budget 'gap' therefore amounts to £1.453m for 2025/26 and £4.033m over the 5 year period of the MTFS (Appendix C).

Proposed Savings and Funding Strategies

- 2.4 A number of savings and funding strategies have been identified as being both feasible and sustainable, via a vigorous Financial Efficiency Board process including challenge sessions for each of the Cabinet Portfolios involving Cabinet Members, the Corporate Leadership Team, Service Directors and the Finance Manager. The proposed savings identified to date for the period of the MTFS, and the remaining funding gaps have enabled a balanced financial position and a contribution to reserves to be proposed for 2025/26. Further details for 2025/26 are shown in Appendix A.

Detail	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
<i>Income</i>	235	-	-	-	-
<i>Staffing Related</i>	189	-	-	-	-
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	179	-	-	-	-
<i>Tax Base</i>	425	306	345	430	401
<i>Council Tax Increase</i>	175	177	180	184	188
<i>Government Grants</i>	300	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SAVINGS	1,503	483	525	614	589
UPDATED MTFS GAPS	1,453	959	783	290	548
REMAINING GAP	(50)	476	258	(324)	(41)

2.5 The savings and fundings strategies are provided using current intelligence around the Local Government Finance Settlement (notification is due in December) and around the Extended Producer Responsibility funding (notification is due during November), estimates are provided for both regarding likely funding but may be subject to change.

Capital

2.5 The Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 (Appendix B) is based on new schemes which are vital to ensure continued service delivery and in assisting the Council to achieve its corporate and service objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2022-26. These schemes total £94.604m including major investment into the Borough via external funding in terms of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deals Fund for both Newcastle and Kidsgrove.

2.6 The Capital Programme will require to be financed by borrowing, primarily for cash flow purposes, whilst assets are procured and constructed, after which time significant capital receipts are expected. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS. The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the current financial year and the financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 (£13.323m).

2.7 The Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 includes an estimate for the development of York Place, this assumes spend of £16.8m over the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 and a subsequent capital receipt of the same value during 2026/27. This is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.8 The Capital Programme for this period also includes an estimate for the redevelopment of the Midway Carpark and assumes spend of £28.6m over the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 and a subsequent capital receipt of the same value during 2027/28. This is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.9 In addition, the Capital Programme also includes an estimate for an Aparthotel on the Ryecroft site of £30.0m over the period 2026/27 to 2027/28 together with a subsequent capital receipt of the same value in 2027/28. Again, this is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.10A mid-year review of the Capital Programme for 2024/25 has been undertaken as part of the Efficiency Board and budget setting process in order to identify any projects that may need to be re-profiled from 2024/25 into future years. The revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 totalling £51.295m can be seen at Appendix B.

2.11 The table below sets out the key dates of the events to take place before the budget for 2025/26 is finally approved:

Event	Committee	Date
Budget consultation	Mid November to mid	December
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	5 December 2024
Approval of final MTFS & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	7 January 2025
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	16 January 2025
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	4 February 2025
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	12 February 2025

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the first draft savings proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report.
- 3.2 That Cabinet note the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap (Appendix C).
- 3.3 Approve any surplus funds identified when setting the budget to be transferred to Reserves in order to achieve future financial resilience.
- 3.4 To note the commencement date of the Budget Consultation period as mid November to mid December 2024.
- 3.5 That Cabinet refer the first draft savings proposals to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views (Appendix A and Appendix B).
- 3.6 That Cabinet refer the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Appendix D) to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee for their views.
- 3.7 That Cabinet approve the Mid-Year Capital Estimates for 2024/25.

4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by February 2025. 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 MTFs 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.

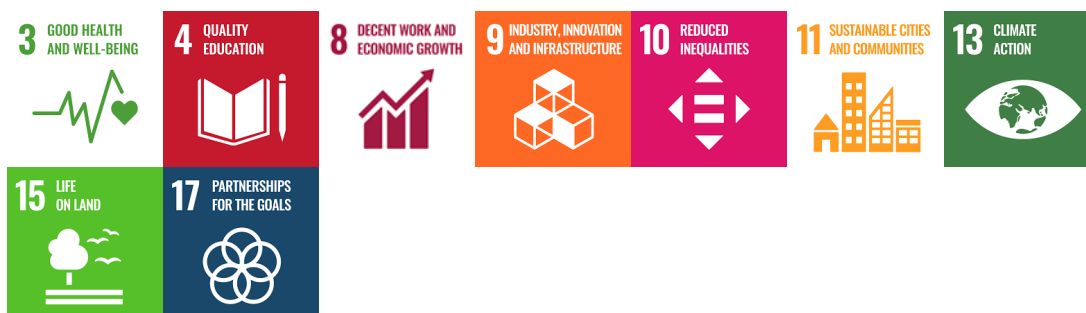
9. Major Risks and Mitigation

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 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.

9.2 It should be noted that a number of assumptions and proposals are provisional or draft, and as such the opinion of robustness will be confirmed in the Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax 2025/26 reports to Cabinet on 4 February 2025 and to Council on 12 February 2025.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

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 and the regeneration projects detailed in the Council Plan.



11. **One Council**

11.1 Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

Commercial activities have been considered and included within the budget preparation.

One Digital Council

The digital agenda has been considered when setting the budget and investment in this area has been included within the capital programme.

One Green Council

The sustainability agenda also forms part of the budget, including energy saving initiatives in order for the Council to achieve its goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. Funding for this is included within the capital programme.

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 Final approval of the MTFS as part of the budget setting process will be a key decision.

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix A – 2025/26 MTFS Funding Strategy
- 14.2 Appendix B – 2025/26 to 2027/28 Capital Programme
- 14.3 Appendix C – MTFS ‘Gaps’
- 14.4 Appendix D – MTFS 2025/26 to 2029/30

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

Appendix A – 2025/26 MTFS Funding Strategy

Ref	Service Area	Description	£000's	Detail
Income				
I1	Sustainable Environment	Trade waste	70	Introduction of recycling in respect of Trade Waste
I2	Commercial Delivery	Car Parking	91	Increased demand, pricing and permits for new car park
I3	Commercial Delivery	Leisure Memberships	28	Promotion of memberships and Skillscourt offer at Jubilee 2
I4	Commercial Delivery	Museum Donations	3	Split of donations between improvements and contribution to running costs
I5	Commercial Delivery	Direct Cremations	30	Net income following the introduction of a new fee for direct cremations
I6	Neighbourhood Delivery	Fixed Penalty Notices	5	Additional income generated from fixed penalty notices (fly tipping)
I7	Finance	Purchase Card Rebates	8	Rebates generated on credit card purchases from existing suppliers
			235	
Staffing Related Efficiencies				
S1	Commercial Delivery	Facilities/Property restructure	103	An amalgamation of the Facilities and Property functions
S2	Corporate	Vacancy factor	71	An increase in the assumed vacancy factor of posts from 3.5% to 4%
S3	Corporate	Annual leave purchase scheme	15	Scheme to enable staff to purchase additional leave
			189	
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes				
G1	Commercial Delivery	Reduction in subsidy	50	An ongoing allowance in respect of subsidy to Kidsgrove Sports Centre is no longer required, suitable provision is held in reserves
G2	Commercial Delivery	Solar Panels	20	Reduction in electricity costs following installation of solar panels on Council property
G3	Information & Technology	Internet Fibre Connections	60	Installation of internet fibre connections and associated rental
G4	Information & Technology	Printing	10	Reduction in member and staff printing volumes
G5	Corporate	Parish Councils	20	Replacement of Council Tax Support Grant with demand led contributions
			160	
Alternative Sources of Finance/Other				
A1	Corporate	Tax base – Council Tax	100	Increase in tax base based on market housing supply requirement and current year tax base forecasts
A2	Corporate	Tax base – Business Rates	190	Assumed increase in tax base of 2.5%
A3	Corporate	Single Persons Discount review	30	Assumed increase in Council Tax from a Borough wide review of claimants of discounts



A4	Corporate	Empty Homes Premium	94	The impact of the change in eligibility of a premium Council Tax charge for empty homes, this was effective from 1 April 2024 (approved in February 2024)
A5	Corporate	Second Homes Premium	11	The impact of the change in eligibility of a premium Council Tax charge for second homes, this was effective from 1 April 2025 (approved in February 2024)
A6	Corporate	Council Tax increase	175	Assumed increase of 1.99% per Band D property
A7	Corporate	Equipment Replacement Fund	9	Contributions will not be made until fund requires replenishment
A8	Corporate	Heritage Grants Fund	10	Contributions will not be made until fund requires replenishment
A9	Sustainable Environment	Extended Producer Responsibility funding	300	Estimate regarding levy paid by producers of materials collected and disposed of by Local Authorities
			919	
Grand Total			1,503	

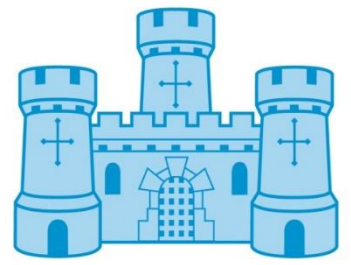
Appendix B 2025/26 to 2027/28 Capital Programme and 2024/25 Mid-Year Estimate



CAPITAL PROGRAMME	2024/25 MID YEAR	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL 2025/26 to 2027/28
	£	£	£	£	£
PRIORITY – One Council Delivering for Local People					
Service Area - Council Modernisation	1,967,318	434,000	336,000	80,000	850,000
Total	1,967,318	434,000	336,000	80,000	850,000
PRIORITY – A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough					
Service Area - Housing Improvements	1,984,832	1,670,000	1,670,000	1,595,000	4,935,000
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	12,168,633	15,843,846	39,125,982	20,495,475	75,465,303
Total	14,153,465	17,513,846	40,795,982	22,090,475	80,400,303
PRIORITY – Healthy, Active and Safe Communities					
Service Area - Environmental Health	72,000	-	-	-	-
Service Area - Streetscene and Bereavement Services	844,705	250,000	160,000	135,000	545,000
Service Area - Recycling and Fleet	2,046,150	3,169,500	6,003,100	1,222,514	10,395,114
Service Area – Leisure and Cultural	192,000	150,000	-	-	150,000
Service Area - Engineering	385,000	120,000	50,000	-	170,000
Total	3,539,855	3,689,500	6,213,100	1,357,514	11,260,114
PRIORITY – Town Centres for All					
Future High Streets Fund	2,441,925	-	-	-	-
Town Deals – Newcastle	19,828,498	807,000	-	-	807,000
Town Deals - Kidsgrove	8,415,328	1,236,000	-	-	1,236,000
Total	30,685,751	2,043,000	-	-	2,043,000
CONTINGENCY (will be carried forward to 2025/26)	948,980	51,020	-	-	51,020
TOTAL	51,295,369	23,731,366	47,345,082	23,527,989	94,604,437
FUNDING					
Capital Receipts	3,786,000	4,150,000	50,787,087	34,350,000	89,287,087
External Contributions	32,960,583	3,543,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,543,000
Borrowing	14,548,786	16,038,366	(4,942,005)	(12,322,011)	(1,225,650)
TOTAL	51,295,369	23,731,366	47,345,082	23,527,989	94,604,437

Appendix C – 2025/26 to 2029/30 MTFS ‘Gaps’

Detail	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Description
Employees:						
Increments	60	60	60	60	60	<i>Employees due an increment</i>
Pay awards	594	446	461	477	493	<i>3.5% pay award assumed for 2025/26 plus £1,290 per FTE re. 2024/25, 3% thereafter</i>
Members pay awards	8	7	8	8	8	<i>3.5% pay award assumed for 2025/26, 3% thereafter</i>
Superannuation increases	144	111	115	118	122	<i>22% of increase in salaries</i>
Superannuation lump sum	41	43	45	45	45	<i>Net increase of lump sum pension payment</i>
National insurance rate	120	-	-	-	-	<i>Increase of employer rate from 13.8% to 15%</i>
National insurance threshold	283	-	-	-	-	<i>Change in employer threshold from £9,100 to £5,000</i>
National Insurance	90	76	78	80	83	<i>National insurance on increase in salaries</i>
Premises:						
Business Rates	26	27	28	29	30	<i>Inflationary increase in business rates (per CPI)</i>
Utilities	127	31	33	34	35	<i>Inflationary increase in gas and electric (per CPI), additional pressure in 2025/26 to reflect current costs</i>
Transport:						
Fuel	11	12	12	12	13	<i>Inflationary increase in fuel (per CPI)</i>
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil	8	8	8	9	9	<i>Inflationary increase in HVO (per CPI)</i>
Financing:						
Borrowing costs	45	136	(48)	(47)	206	<i>Borrowing costs regarding the financing of capital</i>
New Pressures:						
ICT software	16	10	10	10	10	<i>ICT costs re. systems maintenance and licences</i>
Restructuring	100	-	-	-	-	<i>Potential additional resource requirements</i>
Commercialisation	64	-	-	-	-	<i>Introduction of Commercialisation post</i>
Income:						
Fees and charges	(408)	(399)	(415)	(431)	(449)	<i>4% increase to enable continued cost recovery</i>
National insurance	(403)	-	-	-	-	<i>Re. National Insurance contribution changes</i>
Business Rates Retention reset	500	500	500	-	-	<i>To allow for a reset of the scheme in 2027/28</i>
Business Rates baseline funding	(73)	(109)	(112)	(114)	(117)	<i>Inflationary increase in baseline funding level (per CPI)</i>
Income Pressures	100	-	-	-	-	<i>To correct income shortfalls from budget</i>
TOTAL GAPS	1,453	959	783	290	548	



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30



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Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30

1. Corporate Plan

- 1.1 The Council Plan for 2022-2026 sets out the Council's priorities for the next four years and serves to focus the work of everyone at the Council.
- 1.2 The Council Plan is shaped around our four key priorities:
 - One Council Delivering for Local People
 - A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough
 - Healthy, Active and Safe Communities
 - Town Centres for All
- 1.3 The Council Plan sets out how we will work to make Newcastle-under-Lyme a better place for everyone who lives here or comes here to work, to study or for leisure. Our aims can only be achieved by taking advantage of every opportunity available and developing further opportunities through innovation and collaborative working.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to strong and sustainable economic growth for the borough, focusing on opportunities around Keele University, Newcastle Town Centre and Kidsgrove.
- 1.5 The Council has worked hard to secure more than £50m from government programmes aimed at boosting the economic fortunes of areas such as ours. This plan includes a transformational portfolio of major projects but also reflects our ambition to attract yet more funding and take this work even further.

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
 - Everyone's responsibility 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. The reduced Revenue Support Grant awarded by Government has been replaced by income from retained Business Rates and Council Tax. This has led to a need for local authorities to increase self-financing with a need to promote and grow the local economy and Council Tax bases to provide prosperity and reduce need alongside delivering efficiencies and generating more income.
- 2.4 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a growing population, 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 influenced by the cost of living puts pressure on our homelessness and temporary accommodations services but also has the risk of dampening council tax income.

- 2.5 Newcastle-under-Lyme's industrial and retail sectors have remained healthy in recent times and the business rates base has grown significantly (rateable value of £101.912m for 2024/25) 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, whilst also reflecting the financial pressures facing our residents. Accordingly the MTFs assumes annual inflationary increases in the tax base.

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 on the corporate objectives.

Culture

- 2.8 The Council's finances need to be everyone's responsibility. It is not the sole responsibility of the Council's Section 151 Officer. Ownership is required across the entire Council. This has increasingly been the case through years of austerity and the financial impacts of the Covid-19 and Cost of Living crises and the continued uncertainty around Local Government funding.

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.
- 2.13 Much work has been done 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 '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.

A Fair Financial Settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 Government has been developing Fair Funding proposals to remedy the position, this is now overdue and local authorities have been disadvantaged by both the lack of an update of the underlying data and the damping arrangements. Implementation was held up due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is currently unclear when the new Government will press ahead with plans for a business rates reset which would see the accumulated growth built up since 2013/14 being redistributed across the system.
- 2.16 As a member of the Staffordshire Business Rates Pool the Council currently saves £0.814m per annum in levy payments which would be payable to the Treasury if the Council ceased to be part of a pooling arrangement. In addition to this, growth within the Borough has enabled a further £2.705m of business rates income to be retained by the Council (this has been recognised in previous savings) over and above the funding baseline set by Central Government. In the event that a business rates reset goes ahead strong lobbying will be required to ensure that appropriate transitional arrangements are in place to cushion the impact locally.
- 2.17 The MTFS assumes that a business rates reset will occur during the medium term with a strong likelihood of this taking place during the 3 year period 2025/26 to 2027/28. Initial forecasts assume that this reset will eliminate around half of the benefit that the Council current incurs from the scheme. The MTFS phases the loss over a 3 year period and assumes utilisation of the Business Rates reserve to assist with the transition if the reset occurs in 2025/26 or 2026/27. The Business Rates reserve was established to be utilised in this way.
- 2.18 Finally the Council has been successful in ensuring that significant resources required to regenerate the borough have been secured via Town Deals and Future High Street Fund (a number of projects are well underway). The Council will continue to work to secure inward investment in the borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.

3. Economic Context (at October 2024)

- 3.1 UK inflation fell to around the Bank of England's target, dropping from 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May, then rising slightly to 2.2% in July and August. Core inflation remained higher at 3.6% for general goods and 5.6% for services. The UK economy grew more slowly, expanding by 0.5% in the second quarter, down from 0.7% in the first, and showed no growth in July. The job market is easing, with unemployment dropping to 4.1% and employment rising to 74.8%. Average regular earnings increased by 5.1%, leading to real pay rises when adjusted for inflation.
- 3.2 In response to lower inflation, the Bank of England reduced interest rates from 5.25% to 5.00% in August, maintaining this rate in September, though concerns about persistent inflation remain. They expect the economy to grow through 2024 but predict inflation will rise again before falling below 2% by 2025.

- 3.3 The US Federal Reserve cut interest rates to a range of 4.75% to 5.00% in September, with plans for further cuts in the coming years. Meanwhile, the European Central Bank reduced its main interest rates to 3.65% in September, but hasn't provided a clear future path for rates, anticipating inflation to stay above 2% until 2026.
- 3.4 Sentiment in financial markets mostly improved, but bond yields remained quite unpredictable. While yields generally increased early on, they later settled close to where they began. This meant bond investors faced a lot of ups and downs due to various economic and global events.
- 3.5 For example, the yield on the 10-year UK government bond started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00%, peaking at 4.41% in May and dropping to 3.76% in mid-September. Similarly, the 20-year bond yield rose from 4.40% to 4.51%, reaching a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. Throughout this period, the average overnight interest rate was 5.12%.

4. Borough Profile

- 4.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 128,100 (2023 mid year estimate), an increase of 5000, or 4.1%, since the 2021 mid year estimate. This is a far large increase than for the national, regional or county – England's population increased by 2.0%, the West Midlands region by 2.2% and Staffordshire's by 2.4%.
- 4.2 In the ten years from 2013-2023, the percentage of the borough's population aged 70+ increased from 13.3% to 15.8%, keeping this rate higher than across the West Midlands region (13.9%) and England (13.7%), though slightly lower than Staffordshire's rate of 16.6%.
- 4.3 The general population has increased by 3.4% over the past decade (2013-2023), but with the number of residents over 65s increasing by 12.8%, lower than the Staffordshire increase of 17.8%, the England increase of 16.1% and the West Midlands increase of 14.3%.
- 4.4 The 2023 median age for the borough is 42 years, higher than for the West Midlands (40) and England and Wales (41) but lower than Staffordshire (43). The borough's median is the same as it was in 2010.
- 4.5 It is estimated that the number of households in the Borough will increase to 59,200 by 2029, and to 62,100 by 2039.
- 4.6 Measured through the average rank for IMD 2019, Newcastle-under-Lyme is the 150th most deprived local authority in England, out of 317 overall. Newcastle's ranking compared with other local authorities in England has improved slightly from 156th in 2015. In terms of Health Deprivation and Disability the borough is the 80th most deprived local authority but 197th most deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services.
- 4.7 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.

4.8 Across the borough in 2023, the annual mean gross weekly pay for full-time workers was £629. This was lower than for the West Midlands (£652) and Great Britain (£683).

(Gross weekly pay for full-time workers)

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
Females	£594	£594	£629
Males	£664	£695	£728
Overall	£629	£652	£683

4.9 In the year up to June 2023, an estimated 79.0% of residents aged 16-64 were classed as 'in employment', slightly higher than the West Midlands (74.3%) and Great Britain (75.6%).

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

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
July 2017- June 2018	75.7% (64,900)	72.8%	75.0%
July 2018- June 2019	74.9% (64,200)	73.5%	75.6%
July 2019- June 2020	71.0% (60,100)	74.2%	75.9%
July 2020-June 2021	69.0% (57,700)	73.5%	74.4%
July 2021- June 2022	77.8% (64,500)	73.5%	75.5%
July 2022-June 2023	79.0% (67,300)	74.3%	75.6%

4.10 As of 2022, a little over two-thirds (69%) of residents' jobs were full-time, with the remaining 31% part-time. This is very similar to the rate for the West Midlands (58%) and Great Britain (69%).

4.11 According to official crime summary data, the number of recorded crimes for headline offences in Newcastle-under-Lyme between April 2023 and March 2024 was 8,287.

4.12 The crime rate for headline offences from April 2023 to March 2024 was 66 per 1,000 residents, slightly lower than the Staffordshire rate of 75 per 1,000 people and in the middle of the Staffordshire boroughs.

4.13 In Newcastle-under-Lyme the three most common types of recorded crime were:

- Violence against the person (3,731)
- Theft offences (2,106)
- Stalking and harassment (1,590)

4.14 The latest available local estimates from the ONS (Life Expectancy at Birth 2022) suggest that life expectancy at birth for males born in Newcastle-under-Lyme is 79.2 years, which is broadly similar to the Staffordshire (79.9 years) and the England average (79.3 years). Female life expectancy is 82.7 years, again broadly similar to the Staffordshire and England averages of 83.2 years.

4.15 There are, however, wide variations across the borough with the inequality driven by deprivation. For Newchapel and Mow Cop ward, the life expectancy at birth for males is 82.4 years, but in Town ward it is 6 ½ years lower at 75.9 years.

4.16 For females in Loggerheads life expectancy at birth is 87.1 years, but in the Town ward it is 11 years lower at 76.1 years.

4.17 Across the borough, the age-standardised mortality rate (avoidable mortality) of 287 was higher than the Staffordshire rate of 242, the West Midlands rate of 277 and England's 253.

4.18 There are circa 53,400 homes in the borough (2021). At the 2021 Census housing tenure was as follows:

- Owned outright 38%
- Owned with mortgage/loan 30%
- Social rented 17%
- Private rented 15%

4.19 Overcrowding is mostly assessed by the 'bedroom standard' which assesses the number of bedrooms needed according to the size and composition of households. In the 2021 census, Newcastle-under-Lyme had an overcrowding rate of 2.1% – very similar to Staffordshire's 1.9%. and significantly lower than England's 4.4%.

4.20 Across 2023, the local housing affordability ratio i.e. median house price compared to median gross income was 5.52, significantly lower than all of the other Staffordshire districts. Across the West Midlands the ratio is 7.10, and across England it is 8.18. The borough's rate is lower than in 2013 when the ratio was 5.26.

4.21 In 2023, 94.0% of residents of working age had qualifications at level FQF1 or above, higher than the 87.5% across the West Midlands and the Great Britain average of 89.0%. However, an estimated 37.9% of adults aged 16-64 were qualified to level RQF4 or above – lower than both the West Midlands rate of 42.5% and the Great Britain rate of 47.3%.

4.22 The unemployment claimant count for the borough of 3.3% as at August 2024 was slightly higher than Staffordshire's rate of 3.1%, but lower than Great Britain's 4.3%. As with most of the country, there has been an increase from March 2020 when the rate was 2.4%. There is some variance across the borough – in four wards the rate is higher than the national average, in five wards it is lower than half that rate.

5. Refresh of Financial Assumptions

5.1 Council agreed a five year Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2024 covering the period 2024/25 to 2028/29. For 2024/25 Net Expenditure of £17.046m on services was budgeted for with a Council Tax Requirement of £8.472m. There is a Council Tax Base of 38,738 and a Band D Council Tax of £218.69. There was a balanced budget for 2024/25 but a forecast gap of £4.193m across the period 2025/26 to 2028/29.

5.2 The MTFS gaps have been rolled forward a year to cover 2029/30, this was reported to Cabinet on 10 September 2024 and the assumptions updated, further updates will be reported to Cabinet on 3 December 2024 and again on 7 January 2025. There will continue to be further review of the gaps throughout the budget setting process, cumulating in an updated gap being reported to Cabinet on 4 February 2025.

5.3 The MTFS has been revised to reflect current information and includes an estimate of pressures that have both a short and medium term impact on the tax base for Council Tax and Business Rates.

5.4 Overall, rolling forward a year the Council is forecast to have a funding gap of £4.033m over the next five years. £1.453m of this is in 2025/26 and whilst the overall strategy is to have a balanced five year plan the focus of attention will be on this first year.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)
Expenditure	1,737	967	810	835	1,104	5,463
Gap	1,453	959	783	290	548	4,033

Income

- 5.5 A provision for income losses of £0.100m has been built in for 2025/26. An assumed annual increase in fees and charges has also been included of 4% for 2025/26 and for each year thereafter.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
National Insurance	(403)	-	-	-	-	(403)
Business Rates Baseline Funding	(73)	(109)	(112)	(114)	(117)	(525)
Business Rates Reset	500	500	500	-	-	1,500
Fees and Charges	(408)	(399)	(415)	(431)	(449)	(2,102)
Income Pressures	100	-	-	-	-	100
Total	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)

Government Grant

- 5.6 Local Government has been through an unprecedented period of austerity. The assumption is for legacy New Homes Bonus grant funding to reduce to nil, any loss from the 2025/26 New Homes Bonus award being offset by the Funding Guarantee, with continued one year settlements until further notice. It is also assumed that the changes to Employers National Insurance will be fully reimbursed to Local Government.

Business Rates

- 5.7 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 Section 31 grant and have therefore not impacted the Council's bottom line.
- 5.8 The MTFS currently assumes an inflationary increase of 2.5% in each year in terms of collectable Business Rates, this is in addition to an inflationary increase in the base level funding set for the Business Rates Retention scheme by Central Government (1.7% for 2025/26).

Council Tax

- 5.9 The Council has a market housing supply of 2,815 properties over the 5 year period of the MTFS. The MTFS assumes that the requirement will be met per the trajectory in the draft Local Plan, thus increasing the tax base accordingly. The MTFS assumes a Council Tax increase of 1.99% per Band D property for all years.
- 5.10 The Council operates a Council Tax Support scheme, introduced following the localisation of support by Government at the start of austerity. Increased levels of Council Tax Support were awarded during 2020/21 in the midst of the Covid-19

pandemic. The MTFS forecast assumes that the levels of support have now returned to pre-pandemic levels, however this will continually be reviewed.

Savings/Income Generation

- 5.11 To date savings of £1.503m have been identified for 2025/26 enabling a balanced position and a contribution to reserves to be proposed. £2.211m has been identified to largely close the gap for the remainder of the MTFS (total shortfall of £0.319m).

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	235	-	-	-	-	235
Staffing Related	189	-	-	-	-	189
Good Housekeeping	179	-	-	-	-	179
Tax Base	425	306	345	430	401	1,907
Council Tax Increase	175	177	180	184	188	904
Government Grants	300	-	-	-	-	300
Total	1,503	483	525	614	589	3,714

Expenditure

- 5.12 Employee pressures relate to assumed pay awards of 3.5% for 2025/26 (£0.501m) and 3% for all years thereafter, 2025/26 also provides for the 2024/25 pay award (£1,290 per full time employee regardless of grade) that was over and above amount assumed, this amounts to a further pressure of £0.093m excluding the associated increases to National Insurance and pension contributions.
- 5.13 National Insurance contributions related to assumed pay awards and the 2024/25 pay award amount to an additional £0.090m for 2025/26, whilst associated pension contributions result in a pressure of £0.184m. Changes to Employers National Insurance Contribution rates and the associated thresholds amount to a pressure of £0.403m, it is assumed that the changes to Employers National Insurance will be fully reimbursed to Local Government.
- 5.14 A number of new pressures facing the Council in 2025/26 have also been provided for, these include increased costs relating a restructure of the Legal service and the introduction of a Commercial post to identify new income streams.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,340	743	767	788	811	4,449
Premises	153	58	61	63	65	400
Transport	19	20	20	21	22	102
Financing	45	136	(48)	(47)	206	292
Pressures	180	10	10	10	10	220
Total	1,737	967	810	835	1,114	5,463

Inflation

- 5.15 Provision for price increases is made in line with the Bank of England target for CPI (Consumer Price Index) where appropriate.

Investment

- 5.16 The base budget includes an annual contribution to the Borough Growth Fund of £0.250m 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.

Capital financing

- 5.17 The proposed Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 is based on new schemes which are vital to ensure continued service delivery and in assisting the Council to achieve its corporate and service objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2022-26. These schemes total £94.604m including major investment into the Borough via external funding in terms of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deals Fund for both Newcastle and Kidsgrove and associated projects.
- 5.18 The Capital Programme will require to be financed by borrowing, primarily for cash flow purposes, whilst assets are procured and constructed, after which time significant capital receipts are expected. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS. The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the current financial year and the financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 (£13.323m).

Other financing adjustments

- 5.19 The Council has eliminated reliance on capital receipts to finance revenue expenditure.

6. In Year Response to Financial Pressures Arising from Covid-19 and Cost of Living Crisis

- 6.1 There remains a small amount of uncertainty at present with regards to the recovery of lost income levels resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis. The medium term therefore contains risks around loss of income, these are included as part of the risk assessment informing the Council's level of reserves. A number of steps have been taken in year, or are planned for future periods to continue to address the financial impact and ensure that the Council remains financially resilient including:

- A review of income forecasts as part of monthly budget monitoring processes.
- 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.

7. Approach

- 7.1 The following section sets out the central approach to developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2029/30.

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 Borough Profile, assessment of the

Cost of Living Crisis, a full benefit opportunity assessment and 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 the 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.

One Council

- 7.3 The One Council Programme was launched in February 2021 following Full Council approval of the budget in order to meet the changing needs of our residents by increasing our ability to provide flexible, efficient and customer driven services. The programme was designed to respond to the key lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic, how this impacted on how customers accessed Council services, and how services flexed in order to remain resilient. The programme focussed on reviewing customer need alongside modernising internal processes whilst developing our internal cultural transformation and ensuring we address financial demands.
- 7.4 The One Council programme facilitated a fundamental change in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's operating model and how the Council addresses its challenges. Significantly, it set out to enable the Council to make better use of the resources available to it, ensuring both efficient and effective service delivery.
- 7.5 One Council was a "spend to save" programme with an agreed investment of £1.2m. Recurrent benefits of £1.173m have been achieved (£0.196m achieved in 2021/22, £0.601m achieved in 2022/23 with a further £0.376m in 2023/24).
- 7.6 In order to build the programme and consider the areas for change and focus, the broad concepts of purpose were considered alongside a benchmarking exercise which placed the customer and delivery of services at centre stage. This analysis supported the development of certain big ideas which have formulated the overall Future Operating Model design and gave a structure to the design of service change through the development of the "Big Operating Model Building Blocks" of:
- Leadership and Management
 - Information Advice and Guidance and Website
 - One Front Door
 - Internal Support
 - Mobile Multifunction Team
 - Strategy and Performance Team

Leadership and Management

- 7.7 The programme realised the importance of cultural development, attitudes, behaviours and overall quality and consistency of leadership as a driver for success. As such a dedicated culture work stream was initiated which considered our purpose as a Council and provider of services as well as the important people driven elements which would support the achievement of our goals. Focus groups across the Council considered our purpose, strengths and weaknesses and contributed to the development of an overall mission statement and related values.

Information, Advice and Guidance / website

- 7.8 A core aim of the overall programme was to enable residents and local business to self-serve wherever possible, thereby freeing up expertise and staff time to support delivery of complex tasks and innovative services in a more efficient model.
- 7.9 The Digital work stream engaged with services to consider changes needed to enable this transition for users of our website and contracted with Jadu to develop the new website which was launched on 27 October 2021.
- 7.10 The site is cleaner and more modern than the previous site and has been developed with a focus on functionality and ease of use to support the customer. The website developments integrate directly with the established One Front Door (or Customer Hub) and drive traffic away from resource heavy phone lines enabling a deeper and broader remit and function to develop within the customer facing team.

One Front Door

- 7.11 The One Front Door, now known as the Customer Hub, is the customer facing function designed to offer end to end service, advice and transactional support to customers of the Council. A strong feature of this service is providing the team with training and development across a range of services, as well as giving them access to in service technology to allow them to have up to date information and ability to transact specific elements of queries easily and efficiently.
- 7.12 Work initially focussed on the previous teams for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits and the two areas were consolidated. Pulling the teams together, with focussed work on processes alongside the website development has enabled the team to be resourced more efficiently and for knowledge to be spread amongst a larger number of employees.

Internal Support

- 7.13 Efficiencies have been developed within our internal services. These continue to provide services with streamlined support and guidance whilst releasing those with technical expertise to focus on value added delivery.
- 7.14 Much like the One Front Door, efficiencies of scale have been identified here as well as process and technology developments which have enabled a reduction in Full Time Equivalents (FTE) assigned to the teams.

Mobile Multi-Function Team

- 7.15 The Mobile Multi-Functional Team recently renamed the Neighbourhood Delivery Team, enables an agile and diverse team of operatives to be dispatched where there is immediate need. Linked to a preventative delivery arm and the One Front Door, the impact on the Borough and residents has been significant and positive.

Strategy and Performance Team

- 7.16 The Strategy and Performance Team supports services in their strategic aims as well as becoming a critical friend and challenging function in terms of performance and delivery. This function has enabled the Council to better use data and performance indicators to drive outcomes against the Council Plan and other strategic aims.

- 7.17 In addition this service will continue to look outward to strengthen relationships with our partners, consider policy and strategy development and ensure effort and activity drive us closer to our overall aims and vision.

Future of One Council

- 7.18 The One Council Programme has completed the initial 3 year programme of works. The programme has been successful in realising £1.173m of reoccurring savings, has implemented process improvements, and had a positive impact on the culture of the Council through seeking continuous improvement to services. This approach of improvement and change is now embedded within service provision.
- 7.19 Due to the success of the One Council Programme, three further workstreams have commenced. These workstreams will focus on the sustainable agenda (One Green Council) the digital agenda (One Digital Council) and the commercial strategy (One Commercial Council).
- 7.20 The One Green Council will focus on the Sustainable Environment Strategy in order to achieve the Council's Net Zero target in 2030 and the Borough's Net Zero target in 2050.
- 7.21 The One Digital Council will focus on the delivery of the Digital Agenda and the continuous improvement of services via technology.
- 7.22 The One Commercial Council will concentrate its activity on the Commercial Strategy, reviewing commercial options in order to generate additional income for the Council whilst improving service delivering and organisational efficiency.

Commercial

- 7.23 The Council's Commercial Strategy was updated and approved by Full Council in February 2024. The vision is for Newcastle-under-Lyme to be a sustainable and business-oriented Council that maximises commercial opportunities in order to deliver long-term benefits for residents of the borough and support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 7.24 As a Council which adopts a commercial mind-set across the organisation, we expect staff to think innovatively and deliver services differently. We will use commercial principles to maximise the impact of our assets (whether physical or intangible) to benefit our communities and deliver financial sustainability.
- 7.25 The primary objective is to use the Council's resources as effectively and efficiently as possible when delivering the Council Plan. Achievement of the primary objective will come in part through the following:
- Developing a commercial culture
 - Putting sound governance in place – being clear about responsibilities, authorities, processes, templates and funding
 - Ensuring there is appropriate performance management in place for commercial initiatives
- 7.26 The overarching aim of this strategy is to deliver a financial return, which contributes to the Council's efficiencies and additional income targets. This will help to safeguard, and develop, frontline services that the Council currently provides and enhance the Council's ability to invest in its place shaping agenda.

Property

- 7.27 The Council's Asset Management Strategy for 2023-2028 was approved by Cabinet in September 2023. The Asset Management Strategy provides a clear framework for understanding the value and condition of property owned by the Council so that, in turn, investment decisions can be taken to optimise the use of the said land/property to meet the needs of the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors.
- 7.28 The Asset Management Strategy directs the Council's disposal of surplus land and property assets, it also sets out the approach to managing the Council's assets, both those that are operational and those that are commercial.
- 7.29 A key element of this is ensuring that all buildings and land holdings continue to meet the needs of our users and are effective to manage. The Council needs to ensure that assets maximise income where they are commercial assets to ensure that the Council generates income to support operational costs and investment plans.

8. Reserves

- 8.1 Forecast balances for the Council's reserves as at 31 March 2025 are as follows:

Reserve/Fund	Balance 31.3.24 (£'000's)	Forecast Balance 31.3.25 (£'000's)
General Fund	2,157	2,007
Walleys Quarry Reserve	200	500
Equipment Replacement	54	-
Budget Support Fund	484	125
Budget Support Fund (Local Plan)	211	-
Budget Support Fund (Homelessness)	184	-
Borough Growth Fund	79	-
Conservation & Heritage Fund	30	20
Mayor's Charity Fund	30	-
Museum Purchases Fund	46	30
Business Rates Reserve	1,654	1,302
Elections Reserve	50	123
Clayton Community Centre Fund	24	17
Totals	5,203	4,124

- 8.2 A full reserves risk assessment is completed as part of the 2025/26 budget preparation. Based on a preliminary assessment it is considered that the current balance of the general fund reserve provides sufficient cover for foreseeable risks.
- 8.3 It should be noted that the balance of the Business Rates reserve is to be held to mitigate against future collection fund losses and as a contingency for the Fair Funding Review.

9. Capital Strategy

- 9.1 The Council agreed its Capital Strategy and ten year Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34 in February 2024, this will be refreshed as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process. 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.
- 9.2 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 with 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 Council's corporate objectives
- Oversees the development and implementation of the asset management and commercial strategies
- Reviews new capital project and on behalf of Cabinet.

9.3 As part of the Efficiency Board process every capital scheme and in-year capital commitment has been reviewed.

9.4 The draft ten year Capital Programme for the period 2025/26 to 2034/35 provides for investment into the Borough. This programme will be funded by capital receipts, significant external contributions (Town Deals and Future High Streets Funding) and borrowing. The revenue impact of borrowings has been included within the MTFS.

10. Treasury Management Strategy

10.1 The Council agreed its Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 in February 2024, the strategy for 2025/26 will be updated alongside the proposed budget and capital programme as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

10.2 As referred to in the above section, the Council will be required to borrow to fund the draft Ten Year Capital Programme. The PWLB and Council to Council borrowing are the primary borrowing options that the Council is currently reviewing to fund borrowing in relation to the capital programme.

10.3 The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the periods below (£13.323m).

Funding Stream	Capital Receipts (£000's)	External Contributions (£000's)	Borrowing (£000's)	Total (£000's)
2024/25	3,786	32,961	14,549	51,295
2025/26	4,150	3,543	16,038	23,731
2026/27	50,787	1,500	(4,942)	47,345
2027/28	34,350	1,500	(12,322)	23,528
Total	93,073	39,504	13,323	145,900

11. Budget Preparation Timetable

11.1 Work on the development of budget proposals for 2025/26 is at an advanced stage. 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 2025.

11.2 An Efficiency Board chaired by the Leader of the Council plays a key role in shaping the MTFS and providing input and challenge to savings and investment proposals.

11.3 The decision making timetable was as follows:

Event	Committee	Date
Budget consultation	Mid November to mid December	
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	5 December 2024
Approval of final MTFs & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	7 January 2025
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	16 January 2025
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	4 February 2025
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	12 February 2025

Appendix A – Summary of Refreshed MTFs Assumptions

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,340	743	767	788	811	4,449
Premises	153	58	61	63	65	400
Transport	19	20	20	21	22	102
Financing	45	185	(20)	38	228	476
Pressures	180	10	10	10	10	220
Income	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)
Total	1,453	1,008	811	375	570	4,217
Contribution to Reserves	50					
Savings						
Income	235	-	-	-	-	235
Staffing Related	189	-	-	-	-	189
Good Housekeeping	179	-	-	-	-	179
Tax Base	425	306	345	430	401	1,907
Council Tax Increase	175	177	180	184	188	904
Government Grants	300	-	-	-	-	300
Total	1,503	483	525	614	589	3,714
Gap	-	525	286	(239)	(19)	553

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

3rd December 2024

Report Title: **One Council Review and Next Steps**

Submitted by: Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance

Portfolios: One Council, people and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>To provide an review of the One Council Programme including lessons learned and achievements.</p>			
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledges this report and the successes evidenced. 2. Further acknowledges the lessons learned and the need to continuously improve as the One Council programme closes. 3. Notes that service level change and delivery of improvement moves into business as usual as teams use the skills they have learned through this process to challenge them selves and others to continue to make positive change. 4. Celebrates and endorses the significant efforts of Council teams involved in the transformation. 5. 5.Agrees that Agile becomes the espoused project methodology across NULBC, along with knowledge of the tools used to deliver the One Council Programme – Refresher training be offered to Business Managers to ensure the required adoption. 6. Approves that the Benefits Tracker continues to be used to capture opportunities organisation wide to ensure their delivery and inclusion into succession programmes and Efficiency Boards. 7. Agrees that the Programme governance, approach and dashboard model is emulated in the One Council Green, Digital and Commercial follow-on Programmes. 8. Agrees to refer the report to Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee. 			

Reasons

A large scale programme such as the One Council will create lasting change and improvements to services. These changes will not be linear.

Acknowledging where things could have gone better is a valuable learning experience and supports organisational learning and continuous improvement.

1. Background

- 1.1** The One Council Transformation Programme was Newcastle Borough Council's biggest ever change programme borne out of both future financial uncertainty and learning from the pandemic when the Borough Council was required to swiftly adapt and change.
- 1.2** The Programme aimed to fundamentally change the Council's operating model to better meet the needs and demands of our community, to become both more efficient and effective with the resources at our disposal and to provide enhanced customer journeys whilst bringing about annual financial savings of over £1.17m (amounting to 6% of the Council's net budget) year on year.
- 1.3** The appendix report summarises the process followed, achievements and lessons learned of the programme and sets the scene for The One Green Council, One Digital Council and One Commercial Council programmes.

2. Issues

- 2.1** In 2020, the Council was facing significant future financial challenges, alongside the operational and strategic challenges of service delivery during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 2.2** Taking a forward thinking approach, the Council took the decision to face these challenges head on and embark on a full scale transformation which launched in 2021.
- 2.3** The transformation delivered a new operating model alongside significant operational efficiencies measured in officer time and delivery cost
- 2.4** Central to the programme was a focus on culture and behaviours leading to improvements in staff engagement as well as a renewed emphasis on organisational values designed to enhance the delivery of excellent services to residents.
- 2.5** Teams and services were encouraged and supported to work together in order to create slick and efficient experience for our customers.
- 2.6** A spend to save model was used with an outlay of £1.2m over the life of the programme, which resulted in overall savings of £1.17m per annum.
- 2.7** Programme progress was tracked throughout via innovative use of Power BI tools and a 'benefits tracker' which supported live tracking and measurement of intended and realised benefits.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is asked that Cabinet:

- 3.11** Acknowledges this report and the successes evidenced.

3.12 Further acknowledges the lessons learned and the need to continuously improve as the One Council programme closes.

3.13 Notes that service level change and delivery of improvement moves into business as usual as teams use the skills they have learned through this process to challenge themselves and others to continue to make positive change.

3.14 Celebrates and endorses the significant efforts of Council teams involved in the transformation.

3.15 Agrees that Agile becomes the espoused project methodology across NULBC, along with knowledge of the tools used to deliver the One Council Programme – Refresher training be offered to Business Managers to ensure the required adoption.

3.16 Approves that the Benefits Tracker continues to be used to capture opportunities organisation wide to ensure their delivery and inclusion into succession programmes and Efficiency Boards.

3.17 Agrees that the Programme governance, approach and dashboard model is emulated in the One Council Green, Digital and Commercial follow-on Programmes.

4. **Reasons**

4.1 A large scale programme such as the One Council will create lasting change and improvements to services. These changes will not be linear.

4.2 Acknowledging where things could have gone better is a valuable learning experience and supports organisational learning.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 n/a

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 n/a

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The programme was designed to ensure that all citizens have equal access to Council services, and that the website in particular was and remained accessible. All transition processes were undertaken in line with equalities legislation, and the Mission and Values promote an overall increased focus on inclusivity.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Overall savings of £1.17m per annum.

9. **Major Risks & Mitigation**

9.1 None as result of this report.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

- One Commercial Council
- One Digital Council
- One Green Council

For all One Council follow-on programmes (Commercial, Digital and Green) learning will be taken from the One Council approach and forward activity will be in line with the recommendations for this report.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 n/a

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

- 13.1 Programme approved February 2021 Cabinet.
- 13.2 Update report November 2021

14. List of Appendices

14.1 Appendix A One Council Review and Next Steps

15. Background Papers

15.1 n/a



ONE COUNCIL

Review and Next Steps



One Council Review and Next Steps

December 2024

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1. Executive Summary

The One Council Transformation Programme was Newcastle Borough Council's biggest ever change programme borne out of both future financial uncertainty and learning from the pandemic when the Borough Council was required to swiftly adapt and change.

The Programme aimed to fundamentally change the Council's operating model to better meet the needs and demands of our community, to become both more efficient and effective with the resources at our disposal and to provide enhanced customer journeys whilst bringing about annual financial savings of over £1.17m (amounting to 6% of the Council's net budget) year on year.

The overall budget for the Programme was set at £1.2m and included consultancy costs, cost of website and intranet review, additional staff resource and backfill, staff development and training and restructuring costs associated with change management. The programme was funded by a combination of capital receipts and the Borough Growth Fund.

Taking a systems led approach with a digital focus, the programme identified and delivered on efficiencies to processes, reduced waste demand and enhanced customer experience through mapping customer journeys across services.

Underpinning the process and change elements was a cultural workstream which has focussed values and behaviours of officers, wellbeing, inclusion, role clarity and leadership.

A principle of continuous improvement has been embedded across the Council and as such some models implemented through the programme have been and will continue to be reviewed as feedback and performance is considered. Implementation under this programme does not set things in stone and it would be naive to behave as if it did. Our environment and capability changes and we learn from our activity and continuously develop.

Key aspects of delivery were met as follows.

- **Timeline:** The project was completed on schedule, with all project deliverables achieved. Initial set up was 6th July 2020 with the official commencement being the start of financial year 2021 and the end date as March 2024.
- **Budget:** The project was delivered within the allocated budget of £1.2 million
- **Quality:** The Programme was audited in December 2023 by NULBC's external auditor and received a positive grade 4, out of a possible 5 meaning that the programme was satisfactory in the way it delivered the objectives.

Detailed review of achievements, outputs, benefits successes and lessons learned are contained in this report.

2. Intention

2.1 Programme Objectives

The Programme was established early in 2021 with consulting support from Ignite Consulting who were contracted to both support the executive team in developing a sound change management foundation to the Programme, and defining the overarching Programme Objectives. The objectives were set as:

- **Objective 1:** Develop and implement a new Target Operation Model (TOM) which was designed around the need to better meet the needs and demands of both the residents and customers of the Borough Council and fulfil our statutory and regulatory duties
- **Objective 2:** Enhance both the customer and staff journeys to improve satisfaction by designing better process interactions to pull the help and support needed from the Council
- **Objective 3:** Achieve year on year financial savings for the Council of £1m to ensure our financial sustainability is maintained by becoming as efficient and effective as possible within our resource envelope, primarily by seeking operational efficiencies.
- **Objective 4:** Create a culture of innovation and flexibility within the council where staff of all levels not only feel valued and cared for, but are also trusted to do their jobs and to make evidenced-based changes to improve how we work
- **Objective 5:** Embrace the digital ways of working and the tools at our disposal to deliver end-to-end digital customer journeys to create operational efficiencies, whilst guiding self-service when appropriate and

2.2 Principles

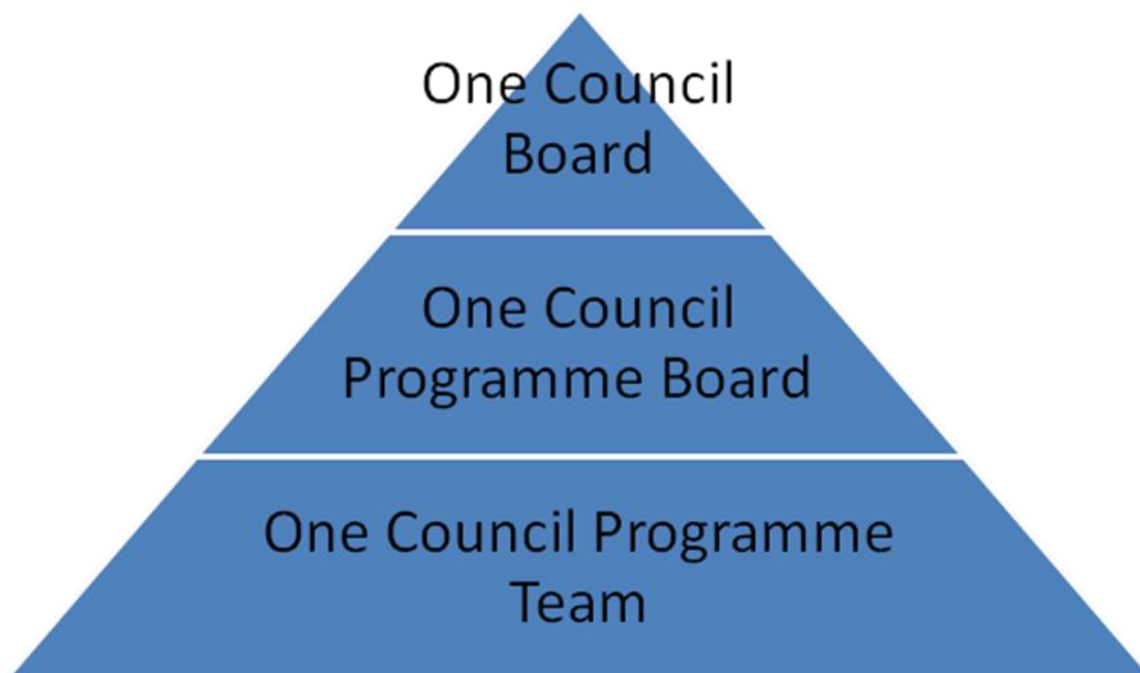
The deliverables were used to create a series of principles, developed through a series of engagement sessions with officer and members. These principles underpinned how outputs of the programme would impact on stakeholders and acted as the golden thread for decision making and scope.

<p>Establish line of sight to strategic outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is a clear sense of purpose and alignment at all levels across the organisation and everyone understands their role in that purpose • Ensure that we make evidence-based decisions that will have the greatest impact on our strategic ambitions for our community and track quality of service delivery and organisational productivity • Ensure that we set out clear lines of accountability to empower decision making at the right levels within the Council
<p>Delivery in Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally we work better together, focussing on the needs of our customers to deliver efficient and appropriate service to our community • Externally we work with our communities to understand and address their needs, as well as recognising that we need to work with others to achieve this • We need to trust our partners and work together to achieve the outcomes for our community
<p>Proactively Manage Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to use intelligence and insight, including understanding our customer journeys, to identify where better public information, advice and guidance will stop unnecessary contact • Additionally use the insight to look forward and manage peaks and troughs of demand, freeing capacity to refocus on priorities • Recognising that changing the way we work (i.e. more digitally) will not itself reduce demand, but we need to work with the community to build resilience and support them to do more for themselves
<p>Efficient and Effective ways of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that being commercial as an organisation means the ability to create income from the services we deliver but also about the mind-set of providing value for money • Developing a learning culture to always challenge why things are done the way they are • Build on the experience of agile working to recognise that change is constant and the Council will need to evolve • Create greater opportunities for staff to grow and play to their strengths • Embed a culture of trust ensuring employees have the confidence to be creative and explore options to get things done
<p>Digital Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we can personalise the service for our most vulnerable residents and those that need help • Continuously explore how developments such as AI and automation can improve both service delivery and cost to deliver • Use digital workflow and processing to help provide end to end solutions where possible, break down the silos, share knowledge and respond to customer needs • Ensure consistency of approach across the Council.
<p>Customer Focussed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand our communities and customers better • Engagement is continuous to develop analysis and insight into trends • Ensure we have consistent customer journeys across the Council so customers know what to expect, and from whom. Use the insight to manage customer expectations and have clarity on what the Council does and does not do
<p>Empowering People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the community to help themselves and build resilience • Recognise that there are different perspectives to be considered that are valid and informative • Build an employer brand that is focussed on being flexible, adaptable and business friendly • Recognise that change is constant and managing this change both internally and externally is a core competence for the Council

3. Design and Delivery

3.1 Programme Governance

The One Council programme had a 3 tier governance structure as follows:



The One Council Board was the decision-making group that drove the transformation programme and ensured that benefits were delivered and costs managed in line with the business case. The board was strategic in that it was concerned with overall programme effectiveness and delivery. It was not concerned with the full detail of the individual workstreams.

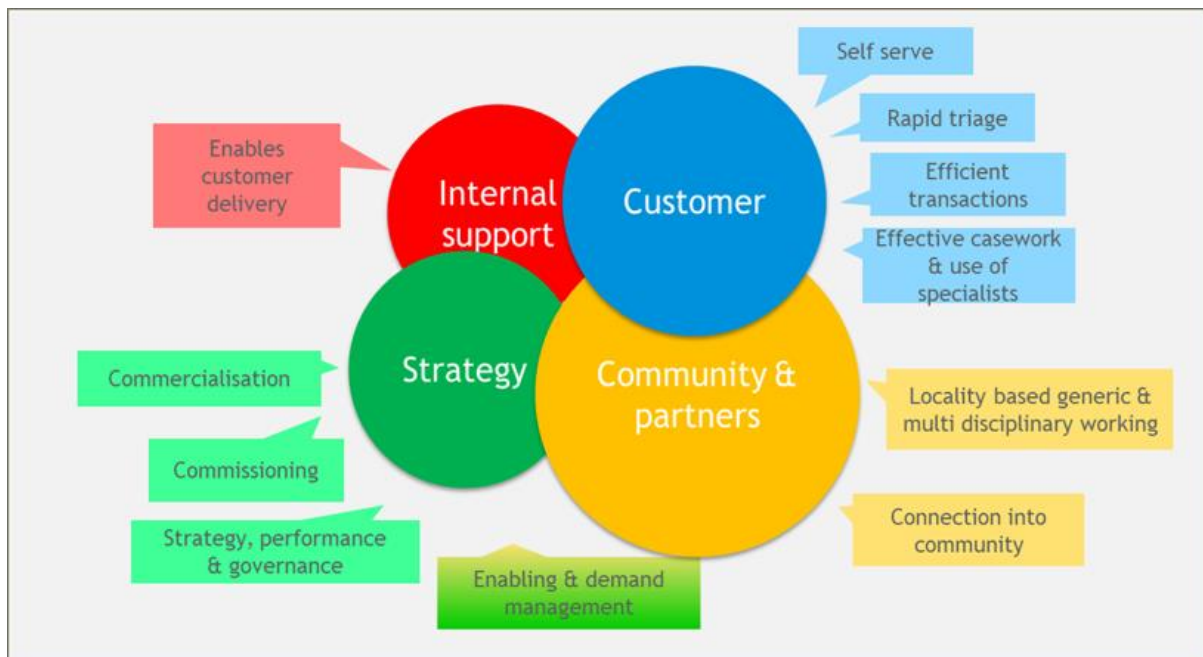
The One Council Programme Board made decisions and agreed actions that related to the delivery of the agreed programme within the agreed budget. Any decisions that involve a change to programme milestones, benefits or the overall programme budget were escalated to the One Council Board.

The One Council Programme Team Meeting was the operational group that monitored and drove the operational transformation programme activity. The board made decisions and agreed actions that related to the delivery of the agreed programme within the agreed budget. Any decisions that involve a change to programme milestones, benefits or the overall programme budget were escalated to the Programme Board.

Workstream leads attended this meeting and reported progress against key deliverables, providing a RAG rating against deliverables and raising any emerging risks and issues.

3.2 Operating Model Intention (Building Blocks of Design)

The structural intention for the programme was to develop an 'operating model' which reflected the activity of the Council and gave priority where needed to deliver the Council Plan. The below figure shows the elements present as we deliver services.



A series of 'Building Blocks' were identified which acted as the foundation of the target operating model and gave a shape to the overall delivery of service and informed the alignment to strategy and vision. These building blocks; *Customer*, *Community Strategy and Internal Support*, impacted both internally and externally to varying degrees.

- **Customer:** Our customer focus block deals with most transactional & rules-based cases at the point of contact, pulling support from specialist resources where the customers transaction exceeds rules-based activity to deliver a joined up, consistent customer experience for your residents, businesses & visitors.

The concept deals with a wide array of queries, anything from looking for information, wanting to report a problem, needing a progress update on their case or starting an application on a range of council services.

- **Community and Partners:** This building block focused on creating a visible and connected presence on the ground incorporating community engagement, proactive prevention, education and enforcement, as well as inspections, monitoring activity and tactical mobile tasks that are delivered 'in the field'.

Teams in this block work seamlessly with those in the Customer block to prevent avoidable demand and increase channel shift.

An integral part of this block focus on combining the enforcement activity across the Council, ranging from administering parking charge notices to handling more complicated fly tipping penalties and prosecutions with a balance between enforcement and education.

- **Strategy:** This building block creates 'single brain' to translate political will and ambition into evidence-based strategy and planned services, actions and projects. It is focused on ensuring

- That there is clear line of sight between the strategic outcomes required and the activities being delivered by the services
- That the Council can be proactive in looking forward in linking the external environment to the delivery of services, rather than responding reactively at an operational level
- There is a focus in the development of strategies and policies to deliver the political will, whilst ensuring efficient and effective use of resources

This block consolidates these disparate elements that exist within the Council but are spread out across the organisation. The design needs to bring clarity regarding requirements, capacity and capability, accountabilities and responsibilities to ensure that strategic outcomes and objectives are delivered. It will also identify where strategic activity sits in the appropriate part of the organizational efficiency benefit and targeted use of resources.

- **Internal Support:** This building block considers how internal services an support can facilitate the smooth running of external facing teams.
-

The 4 building blocks translated into 4 key aspects of the programme which were delivered 'top down' almost as projects in their own right:

- Customer Hub (from *customer*)
- Neighbourhood Delivery (from *Community and Partners*)
- Strategic hub (from *Strategy*)
- Resources and Support Services (*from Internal Support*)

Further to these building blocks were elements of the programme which facilitated high performing services aligned to the programme principles

3.3 Project workstreams and governance.

In order to deliver the Objectives, the One Council Programme was split out into a series of workstreams , each with an assigned Lead Officer who had responsibility for delivery in line with a set of agreed Design Principles to ensure a consistency of design & architecture across the Council. The 4 building blocks referenced above each had their own dedicated workstream with other integral schemes addressing supportive and transformative aspects of delivery.

Across the phases of the programme, the workstreams were reviewed

The workstreams were agreed as:

1. OFD / Customer Hub
2. Resource & Support Services
3. Strategy Hub 'strategic brain
4. Mobile-Multi Function
5. Leadership & Development (*became business as usual on delivery of the leadership workshops*)
6. Benefits Realisation & Reporting
7. Culture & Change
8. Digital Delivery
9. Service Delivery (*added in later phases of the programme to reflect ongoing scrum activity*)

As the programme progressed, these workstreams were reviewed and Service Delivery Workstream was added following the closure of Resource & Support Services, the successful

delivery of the Strategic Brain and the transfer of Leadership & Development to business as usual (BAU).

4. Outcomes

4.1 Big Building Blocks

4.1.1 OFD / Customer Hub Workstream

Following extensive activity mapping and demand studies of forward-facing services, the Customer Hub (working title One Front Door) design was agreed to include Customer Services, Revenue & Benefits and Reception staff from across the organisation.

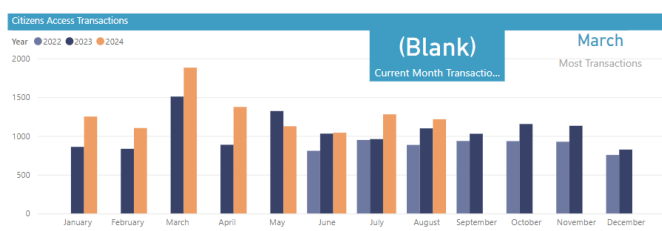
Following a formal consultation period, the OFD team launched in October 2021 followed by the customer engagement elements of the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) team joining in January 2022.

An extensive programme of cross-skilling and training occurred throughout 2022 to allow the OFD team to confidently deal a wide range of customer enquiries with a matrix of officers being able to undertake more complex processing work to both broaden the service offer and deepen the level of work handled at the first point of contact, thus moving the processing work further forward in the system.

This work package redesigned the Revenue & Benefits business processes, pulled heavily on the Digital Delivery Workstream to maximise the use of processing & self-service technology and made significant enhancements to the way telephone demand is routed through to the OFD staff.

Since the creation of the Customer Hub, some key performance improvements have been achieved in addition to the financial savings. Of note are:

- Number of phone calls reduced; Ignite benchmarking identified 137,225 phone calls between July 20 to July '21. For this period in '23/24, the figure is 101,921. This is a 26% reduction in call volumes from the benchmarked period.
- Wait times & abandonments improved
- The number of self-service digital transactions for Council Tax, Benefits and NNDR have increased month on month (by maximising Citizen Access module)



- The percentage of service requests raised by Hub Officers in Jadu on behalf of customers has reduced demonstrating a migration to self-service. Falling from 28% in 2021, to 17% in 2022, 15% in 2023 and 13% at the time of writing.

4.1.2 Neighbourhood Delivery 'Mobile-Multi Function' Workstream

The Neighbourhood Delivery Team was created through systemic review of activity and demand across teams including Environmental Services, Community Development and Parking Performance.

Following the alignment of resources to form the Neighbourhood Delivery Team, a detailed period of service redesign followed to review all the core customer journeys relating to the

new service area in order to not only optimise the flow of work but to improve the quality of the service delivery. In total thirteen core customer Journeys were redesigned during the delivery of this workstream, making 48 improvements to the business processes along the way.

The customer journeys redesigned during this implementation are wide ranging by the very nature of this building block, covering fly-tip enforcement, ASB reports, abandoned vehicle investigations, parking enforcement to name but a few. As a result of the redesign to these journeys, it is estimated that 2,738 hours of efficiency was released back into the business, equivalent to 2.16FTE.

In addition to efficiency improvements, the Neighbourhood Delivery team has seen an increase in the number of fly-tip FPNs issued, a dramatic reduction in the end-to-end time taken to resolve abandoned vehicle reports.

4.1.3 Strategy Hub ‘Strategic Brain’ Workstream

The Strategic Hub was created through use of savings from the HR restructure and Business Improvement and repurposing a position from the communications team. Fundamental to the principle of strategic decision making, this team consider and support the use of data led and evidence based decision making to ensure that all teams across the council are working to deliver our strategic aims.

This team developed a framework to map measure and report on progress against internal and external facing strategies. Using Power BI the team have created focussed dashboards providing clear and interrogable data to aid decision making and assurance.

4.1.4 Resource & Support Services Workstream

The initial model devised by Ignite Consulting proposed a single support series function which mirrored the externally facing Customer Hub. In this model, transactional services were to be performed by multiskilled officers who could answer and perform basic queries in scope of IT, legal, finance and HR.

One review of the activity in these tams however it became clear that what initially appeared to be transactional in nature was more specialist to the different services and the combined services were not large enough to accommodate this broad model design. As a result, it was decided that each specialism would review business processes to ensure that officers were supported to self serve as much as possible (using a similar framework to that of the customer hub demand management review) and that efficiencies would be made through improved processes and digital improvements.

The Legal Services restructure was completed in 2023 which included a review of scope to incorporating the Corporate Complaints, Contracts, Procurement & Risk management.

The Finance structure brought in debtors which had previously been part of customer services, and undertook vacancy review and improved self service capability to improve processes.

The Human Resources Team reviewed customer journeys resulting in an efficiency which enabled a restructure with savings to staffing budget.

It must be noted that review of the legal provision is now underway.

4.2 Supportive and Service Workstreams

4.2.1 Leadership & Development

The programme initiated a programme of leadership development across the organisation. This included a structured programme delivered by an external facilitator which aimed to create a cohesive vision and equip our leaders with the tools to deliver this with their teams.

Initial sessions were held with CLT to create and sustain a strong, cohesive, and supportive performance culture with the following principles modelled in behaviours:

- Owning and Driving Outcomes
- Embracing Innovation and Change
- Partnership and Connectivity Ethos
- Encouraging inclusion of different experiences and bias to add value to the whole
- Support and Challenge

The sessions were based around the values and vision which emerged from the Culture and Change workstream. The senior tier of leaders undertook a 360 feedback process to benchmark their own skill set and competence.

Further to this, Business Managers joined CLT to create 3 cohorts in which 3 workshops were delivered:

1. The benefits of focusing on performance.
2. Coaching for performance
3. 'Crunchy' conversations for performance

Each member of the cohort was assigned a coaching partner to practise and consolidate coaching skills.

In total, 52 officers undertook this training in Spring 2022.

The next phase of the leadership and development team saw the creation of the cluster leadership model which formed CLT from the previous model of EMT and Heads of Service. This model has allowed senior leaders to consider the wider corporate experience and strategy, enabling wider opportunities for development and growth.

A further phase of leadership development is planned for 2025.

4.2.2 Benefits Realisation & Reporting

A detailed log of activity was diligently kept throughout the programme which considered projected savings against those realised over time.

Benefits were considered either in monetary terms or in time saved by officers (FTE) and could be either fixed or variable.

All savings were captured on a central log and tracked over time to ensure that benefits were not double counted or lost. Progress against target was tracked across the life of the programme with regular updates provided to the member led Programme Board and the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix 2 shows the final set of benefits as targets were reached.

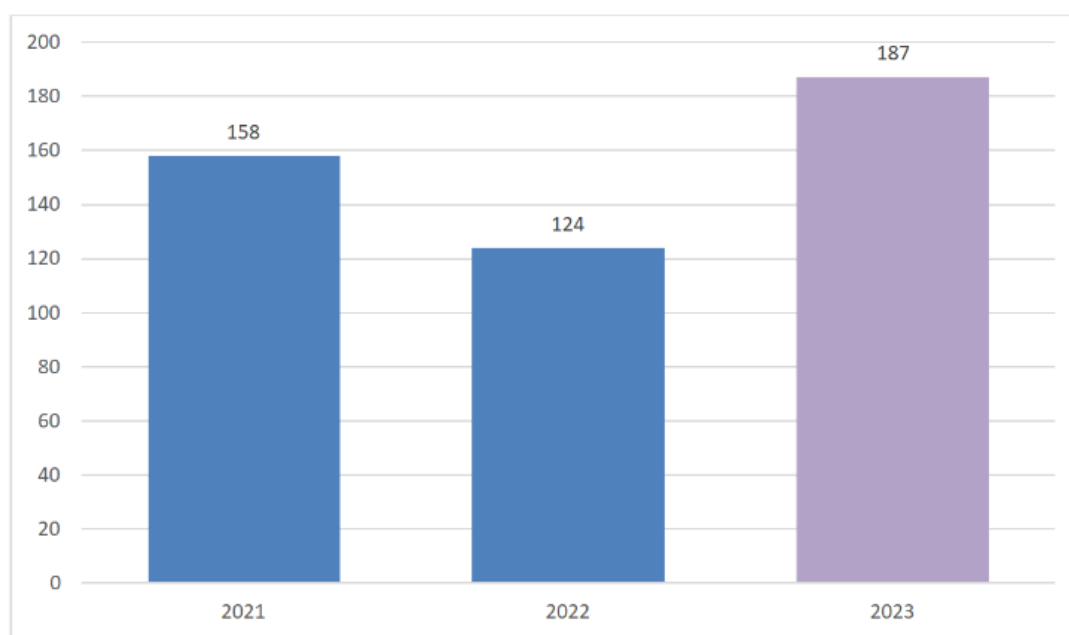
4.2.3 Culture & Change

The Culture and Change workstream had 2 key areas of focus. 1 was to effectively, safely and compassionately deliver any formal change in the organisation. This included the restructures of the Customer Hub, the People Team and Neighbourhood Delivery.

The cultural aspects delivered were done so with the intention of fundamentally shifting '*how we do things*'. Initially centred around the creation of a set of Organisational Values and associated behaviours, these values then formed the basis of leadership development, people policy development, appraisal, recruitment and performance management.

Since 2021 we have used the values framework to gauge our cultural position through use of a staff survey which seeks to measure staff experience against these themes. The results of the surveys influence further interventions designed to improve our adherence to these underpinning values. Each year the survey has seen greater participation and an increase in alignment to our target values.

Figure 1: Responses to surveys 2021-2023



Examples of interventions have been:

- Leadership Development workshops and coaching tools delivery
- Creation of the staff led 'Thrive' group which suggest ideas for policy and improvement
- Participation in externally accredited 'Thrive' scheme aimed to improve wellbeing and health
- People policy review and implementation (e.g. volunteering policy, fostering policy)
- Enhanced staff discount to Jubilee 2
- Annual Staff Health checks and health advice

4.2.4 Digital Delivery

The One Council Programme set out the clear aim that, where possible, information should be available and accessed on-line and would be an integral channel strategy to reduce the volume of avoidable calls; where contact is needed, it would be via digital solutions as far as possible, as these solutions operate at a much lower cost base than face-to-face or traditional 'phone calls.

Given the digital aspirations, this workstream was a core enabler to the Programme, tasked with not only replacing the website platform, but rewriting all the content on every page and

developing over 140 integrated digital forms to make all customer journeys as user friendly as possible. This workstream has allowed digital channels to become a credible option for our customers through a modern website containing quality information, advice & guidance to allow customers to find the information they need and to log the service requests without having to call the OFD team.

In addition to re-writing the website and designing over 140 digital forms, this workstream has further developed the MyAccount portal by configuring the Citizen Access modules in Council Tax and Business Rates to maximise the technology already available. MyAccount has seen consistent growth in both the number of registered users and the volume of successful transactions month on month as discussed in the OFD section above.

It is important to note that an ever-increasing number of completed forms is not necessarily a positive outcome for this Programme; the Service Delivery Workstream identified that many digitally raised contacts were demands that could have been avoided with better information advice and guidance at the point of contact, and forms that dynamically advise customers based upon the information entered. This workstream has underpinned some significant demand reductions across the business – See below and put the council in to a fantastic position to continue our digital transformation with the One Digital Council Programme.

4.2.5 Service Delivery Workstream

With the big building blocks of the operating model delivered in distinct packages, ‘top down’, a ‘bottom-up’ approach was taken across the service areas not directly affected by the operating model delivery to bring about operational efficiencies whilst aligning to the Design Principles and meeting the wider Programme Objectives.

The main achievements delivered across the organisation are shown in Appendix 1

5. Achievements

5.1 Recurrent cost reduction

At the close of the One Council Programme, the savings profile, is recorded in the Statement of Accounts as achieving £1.173m worth of ongoing savings to the Borough Council. The savings profile is as follows:

- £0.196m achieved in 2021/22
- £0.601m achieved in 2022/23
- £0.376m in 2023/24

5.2 Operational Efficiency

At the closure of the Programme, the corporate benefits tracker has recorded 41.06FTE of efficiency savings spread across the organisation, not exclusively limited to the workstreams discussed in section 5a above. This has enabled officer to ensure focus is on areas of work which add value to residents and customers.

In addition, an estimated 3.16 tCO₂e had been reported to the One Green Council Programme for inclusion towards NULBCs net zero pledge.

5.3 Staff Engagement

Throughout the Programme, there has been a constant and sustained focus upon improving the working culture here at NULBC, this has been monitored via the annual staff survey to track

At the time of writing the 2024 survey remained open to staff, however the available data from the 2023 survey showed significant progress had been made in virtually all areas assessed.

The 2024 staff survey has also included a section specific to how people have experienced One Council so we can continue to learn and develop our approach.

6. Lessons Learned

In line with the values of the Programme, it is important to acknowledge and learn from the elements that did not work out as expected to ensure that changes to our approach can be made in the future.

This section is subdivided into specific elements that were implemented differently from the original design as well as general learning:

6.1 What could have been better

6.1.1 Sequencing

The Customer Hub model was the first building block to be developed and implemented and important lessons were learned from this piece of work. Based on benchmarking and activity mapping a model was designed which, it was anticipated, met the demand of activity in a scenario in which processes were efficient and teams were multi skilled. The restructure took place in advance of the skills development to ensure that key posts were filled and savings were released as quickly as possible.

However, on reflection this left some officers in the teams initially unsure of their remit and who required additional support and development to be able to function in the newly designed teams.

Although the model has proved effective over time now it is embedded; officers were undeniably unsettled by the change to a degree that it had an impact on wellbeing. This result in additional support being sourced from agency teams to ensure the right skills were in the teams for key areas of work such as revenues and benefits.

Learning from this situation, subsequent changes and restructure through the programme happened only when process redesign had been embedded and skills development undertaken. This resulted in a longer lead time for the financial benefit to be realised but saved in backfilling of resource and improved staff engagement.

6.1.2 Receptions

Front of house resource was transferred to the Customer Hub as per the Target Operating Model where it was envisaged that staff would become cross skilled to enhance the customer experience. Whilst this model is still in place, it has proven particularly difficult to implement, especially at J2 and the Museum where conflict has occurred between supporting the business

area with tasks traditionally performed by the reception and the wider OFD need to take calls, process digital enquiries and transaction rules-based activities.

This element of delivery is currently under review and the model may alter from that implemented during the programme to ensure optimum customer experience and staff engagement.

6.1.3 Internal Services

The Internal Support Services model as proposed in the original design, was explored at considerable length but ultimately it was felt that the small size of the teams and the specialisms contained meant that this model was felt not appropriate for NULBC. It is believed that this demonstrated a confidence of leadership by not simply following the design but having the strength of mind to do what is right for NULBC.

6.1.4 Understanding the MMF building Block

This building block represented a very different way of working for NULBC and this was borne out during the delivery stage; staff, officers and members struggled to understand how this concept would operate given the very diverse customer journeys within the remit and therefore the range of skill sets required to be effective.

In hindsight, more preparatory work could have been undertaken here to enable people to see the direction and end result.

6.1.5 Trade Union Engagement

Relationships with Trade Unions were strained throughout the programme to the regret of all concerned.

6.2 Generic lessons learned

6.2.1 Change management: The Programme highlighted that when change is undertaken in a structured manner, then it can and does bring about lasting transformational change.

Agile delivery worked well in conjunction with Lean Systems Thinking principles, especially when the principles of Value and Preventable demand and work are applied, along with an evidence-based approach to iterative design.

6.2.2 Nudge Theory: The 'EAST' principles as designed by the Behavioural Insight Team proved to be very effective when redesigning business processes to either encourage or discourage particular behaviours. The principles also proved to be effective when applied to the language of our website, digital forms and IVR 'phone messages.

6.2.3 Benefits Realisation: This is proved to be a critical element of the Programme and absolutely key in ensuring the objectives were being met whilst following the Agile approach. The Benefits Tracker used throughout the Programme has received positive attention from the LGA resulting in the sharing with other authorities who have previously struggled with this problem. We have also worked with the LGA to host dedicated learning events helping other organisations to track their benefits.

6.2.4 Culture Change: Baking in a dedicated workstream to facilitate the culture change piece has been a significant to the programme success; culture change is notoriously difficult to achieve, and whilst we acknowledge that we are still on that path we celebrate the successes the workstream has made to date.

6.2.5 Digital: Whilst significant steps have been achieved to digitise the way that NULBC works, the Programme has also demonstrated that our technology landscape is preventing us from developing too much further; this has provided us with a solid spring-board to the next stage of the transformation journey by underpinning the One Digital Council Programme to ensure we remain a digital focussed authority, providing the experience that customers and residents experience in other key service areas.

6.2.6 Contracts: The Programme, when reviewing how the organisation works, identified some significant contract opportunities that were not being maximised for the benefit of the organisation. Some notable examples include:

- Citizen Access portals not being configured to automate Revenue & Benefit actions
- Contract with IEG4 for the provision of online benefit applications despite that functionality existing within the core NEC Northgate application
- S.106 monitoring software included with the Uniform IDOX suite but not being utilised, or even known about.
- A full repairs and maintenance contract for the car parking meters across the Borough that was not being used as it was not known about

As a result of these discoveries, it has been decided that a review of the Contracts Register will be a key part of the One Commercial Council Programme to ensure not only the contracts in existence are maximised but are reviewed to ensure they are both relevant and offer value for money.

7. Recommendations

- a) That Agile becomes the espoused project methodology across NULBC, along with knowledge of the tools used to deliver the One Council Programme – Refresher training be offered to Business Managers to ensure the required adoption.
- b) The Benefits Tracker continues to capture opportunities organisation wide to ensure their delivery and inclusion into succession programmes and Efficiency Boards
- c) The Programme governance & approach is emulated in the Green, Digital and Commercial follow-on Programmes.

8. Conclusion

The One Council Transformation Programme successfully achieved its objectives, delivering significant improvements in service delivery, improved customer journeys, and operational efficiency. The lessons learned and recommendations provided will help sustain these improvements and guide future projects.

Appendix 1. Service Delivery scope and outputs.

Team	Context	Aims	Outputs
Environmental Services	<p>This service area was receiving significant levels of demand aside from that caused by the ever present situation with Walleys Quarry; demand studies illustrated that IRO 1000 service requests were received annually covering barking dogs, noise nuisance and so forth.</p> <p>The processes were mapped and it was discovered that significant portions of received demand was not of the nature that NUL could add any value to; investigations were being started in full knowledge that the outcome would be that the customer would be offered information, advice and guidance in relation to the issue as it was not a statutory nuisance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the customer expectations of how NULBC can help before the report was made by adding the IAG to the webpage and webform • to encourage customers to resolve issues amicably between themselves • to cease sending letters to the offending party until evidence is received of the concerning behaviour • Not to chase reporting parties who fail to submit requested diary sheets / evidence 	<p>The service saw a drop in demand from an average of 82 reports per month to 29 per month.</p> <p>The time saved is estimated to be IRO 1483 hours annually, equating to 1.17FTE in additional capacity for the team to focus upon the cases requiring intervention from Council staff.</p> <p>In addition, the team designed process improvements for private water supplies and industrial process which are still in the process of being implemented.</p>
Jubilee 2	<p>Significant levels of manual processing were highlighted which adversely affected customer journey; concerning given the level of competition in this market segment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of process for booking Swimming lessons, both sign-up and ongoing subscriptions • Improvement of process for booking General swim sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two self-service portals were installed into the reception area allow high volume/low complexity transactions to be channel shifted, such as parking permits, class bookings, swim classes etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of process for booking Membership sign-ups • Improvement of process for booking Class bookings, including payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mobile app was also launched allowing a digital Lyme Card to ease entry, easier digital bookings instead of the traditional book at reception or via our website and push notifications for essential communications. • Reception iPads to digitally enrol customers who walk into J2 seeking either a gym membership or swimming lessons, ending the reliance upon carbon paper forms and manual Direct Debits • Migration to Direct Debits for swimming lessons to avoid subscriptions dropping out, and frustrated customers presenting at reception • Introduction of swim level descriptors to allow the removal of dedicated tutor assessments • Introduce Essendex SMS messaging for unforeseen lesson & class cancellations to members, instead of individual calls to each affected person. • General swim sessions are in the progress of being included on the kiosks and app for e-booking, following classes such as Parent & Toddler, Adult Swims, Aqua Blast etc. which are already available.
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			<p>The above changes are estimated to have created an additional 3253 hours (2.57 FTE) of capacity, predominantly, but not exclusively, within the reception function.</p> <p>At the time of writing, there is an additional 2288 hours (1.81FTE) of improvements in progress.</p> <p>In addition to the above, memberships numbers have steadily grown to approx. 4000 and 82% of new members sign up digitally (not all memberships can be handled by our sign-up portal, such as internal staff discounts & corporate members). Over 8800 downloads of the J2 App, with over 2500 regular monthly users. 80% of class bookings are now made digitally meaning approx. 1000 fewer reception visits each month.</p>
Streetscene	<p>This area was one of the first to review their business processes via the Programme and engaged with enthusiasm; the customer journeys covered were wide ranging but included fly tipping removal and investigations, graffiti removal, litter bin emptying and reports of issues such as overflowing or damaged, inspections for playground equipment, pavements, culverts and vehicles, the reporting of issues with trees and the general enquires received by the service area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the quality of the information received from the customers at the point of contact, especially in relation to the location of the issue, and its size / scale to reduce the time wasted searching for the issue or not having the correct 	<p>These changes made some significant efficiency savings in the team, of particular note is that route planning for the emptying of litter bins saved an estimated 499 hours (0.39FTE), £1500 in fuel costs and 3.14 tCO2e saved; whilst the improvement of location, size & scale information for fly tips saw time savings IRO 390 hours (0.31FTE).</p>

	<p>The overarching theme in this area was one of manual processing and antiquated ways of working; the demand here is predominantly out of the service area's control but the way that demand is services was with scope to change.</p>	<p>equipment or staffing as the issue was poorly described.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitisation of routes and data capture; litter bin routes have now been plotted using route optimisation software and staff have access to data enabled tablets containing the service requests allowing them to update as they go about their work. • Simplifying the ways on reporting with the team; such as making forms easier and cleaner to use whilst removing confusing journeys such as 'general enquiries' 	<p>Overall an estimates 1803 hours (1.42FTE) of efficiency has already been created with an additional 841 hours (0.66 FTE) still in the process of being delivered.</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p>The service redesign in Development Management focussed heavily upon using technology to improve the way we work and smoothing out the customer journey.</p>	<p>The scrum team looked end-to-end, from the pre-application advice stage all the way through to S106 payments and enforcement. 29 improvement areas were identified, 25 of which have been delivered, with the remaining 4 being 'in-progress' at the time of writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of tablet devices for site visits to improve the access to pertinent information & plans, along with the auto indexing of images • Migration away from Information@Work to SharePoint; I@W caused significant manual re-work of document indexing • Improvements to the website information, advice & guidance to improve the quality of submissions and remove unnecessary questions,

			<p>particularly in relation to smaller householder applications, enforcement situations and conservation areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digitised pre-application route to make this a seamless process for the customer • A redesigned S106 process, including the configuration of previously purchased monitoring software, along with invoicing for legacy agreements totalling up to £4.2m • A conscious push towards use of the Planning Portal for all applications allowing customers real-time updates and significant operational efficiency for officers. <p>The results of this strand was 2059 hours (1.62FTE) of efficiency created, of which 1510 (1.19FTE) has already been delivered.</p> <p>In addition to the above process improvements, the scrum team undertook benchmarking of Fees & Charges which illustrated that NULBC are between 30 & 50% cheaper than neighbouring authorities for services such as pre-application advice and validation checking resulting in lost income. This has since been partially addressed in the proposed fee scales for FY '25/26.</p>
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Bereavement Care	This service, as a major income generator for NULBC, undertook a review of its processes with the primary focus being upon the internal processing undertaken by staff and enhancing our offer to bereaved families.	The team identified 13 key improvements, 4 of which have been delivered and 9 are in progress now that the core Bereavement Care IT system, BACAS, is about to be moved to the Microsoft Azure cloud server.	865 hours (0.68FTE), 728 hours (0.57 FYE) pending With areas of projected income of £13,899 additional annual income coming from upsell items, such as memorials, genealogy research and so on.
Licensing	This was the first service area to be scoped as a part of the Ignite discover; this scrum work identified that the business was incredibly reliant upon manual processing which consumed significant amounts of time across not only Taxi licences but also event notices, premise licenses, lottery licenses and betting & gambling applications.	The initial scrum work resulted in 29 improvement opportunities being identified, many of which were dependant upon the replacement of the Civica APP IT system and digitisation of customer applications. Unfortunately the APP system is now scheduled for replacement in 2025, therefore significant opportunities are still outstanding in this area.	To date, despite the service remaining on Civica APP, 1172 hours (0.93 FTE) of efficiency has been released. A further 2010 hours (1.59 FTE) will be released when Microsoft Dynamics, Civica APP replacement, is released into the business in 2025. The Dynamics solution, at the time of writing, was in build with our Microsoft partner.
Newcastle Housing Advice	This service area was reviewed as a part of the widening and deepening of the OFD concept as the initial Activity Mapping exercise identified significant proportions of several roles that better aligned to the Customer Hub building block.	The customer journey mapping identified that there were also areas to improve the customer experience when interacting with the service; the main improvement opportunities were identified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting the resource closer to the customer to enable advice to be offered at the point of contact and not behind a call-back system 	As a result of the service redesign, 2 FTE transferred into the Customer Hub to provide the initial point of contacts advice to residents in need of support; additionally, the above improvements opportunities delivered 1570 hours (1.24FTE) of efficiency split across both the NHA and OFD teams with an additional 250 hours (0.20 FTE) outstanding.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing a Duty Officer role to act as a single point of contact where the customer facing officer required greater expertise to help the customer• Streamlining the process for allocating cases, where appropriate, to a named Housing Advisor to prevent• Improving the information, advice and guidance available on the website to allow customers to receive self-service advice tailored to their circumstance• Improving the digital application journey for customers with some level of housing need within the Borough	
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Appendix 2 Benefit Outturn

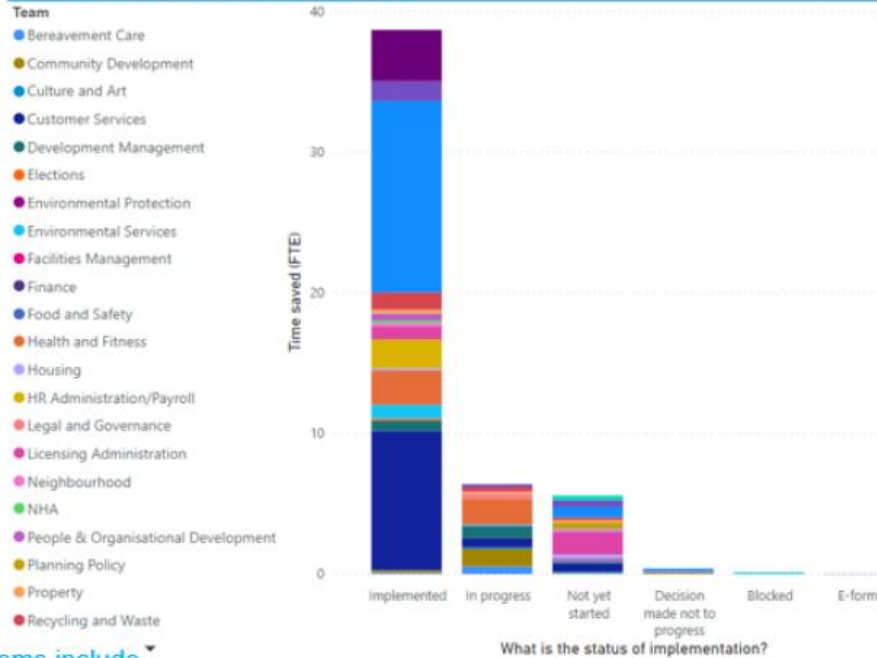
Financial Benefits for One Council



Variable Benefit Saving Status



Weighted Benefit by Implementation Status (FTE)



Status

- Blocked
- Decision made not to progress
- E-forms
- Implemented
- In progress

Team	Weighted estimated saving (£)	Saving type	Time saved (FTE)
Revenues and Benefits	£340,938.32	Variable	14.53
Customer Services	£261,225.15	Variable	11.19
Health and Fitness	£82,053.89	Variable	4.26
Whole Council	£85,296.03	Variable	3.62
Licensing Administration	£53,083.59	Variable	2.48
Streetscene	£53,823.84	Variable	2.11
HR Administration/Payroll	£53,364.31	Variable	2.05
Recycling and Waste	£40,263.13	Variable	1.74
Development Management	£46,486.75	Variable	1.67
Community Development	£35,371.24	Variable	1.54
Environmental Services	£36,775.42	Variable	1.21
Bereavement Care	£15,388.87	Variable	0.69
Property	£17,003.83	Variable	0.59
People &	£16,154.22	Variable	0.55
Total	£1,200,490.44		51.14

In progress items include

Fixed Saving Benefit Breakdown

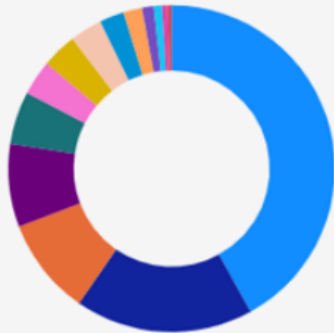


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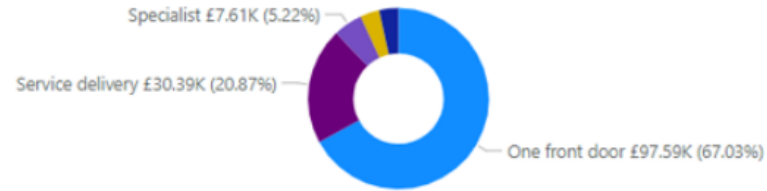
Fixed/Cashable Saving

Total Fixed Benefit (Cashable) Found "As is" Team

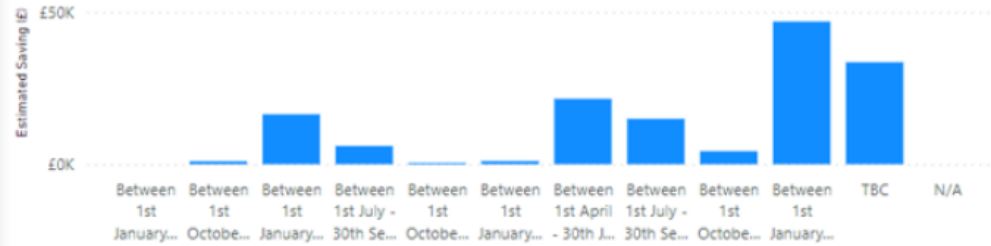
- Revenues and Be...
- Customer Services
- Bereavement Care
- Whole Council
- Development M...
- Neighbourhood
- HR Administrati...
- Health and Fitness
- Culture and Art
- Property
- Streetscene
- Environmental S...
- Licensing Admin...
- Recycling and W...
- Food and Safety
- Administration S...
- Finance
- Leisure & Culture



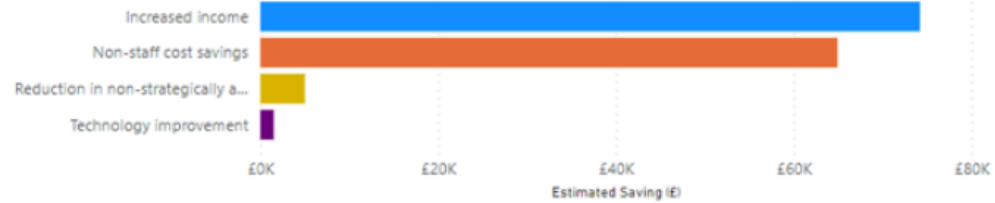
Total Fixed Benefit Found Operation Model



Implementation Profile



Total Fixed Benefit Saving by Benefit Type





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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO
CABINET**

03/12/2024

Report Title: Procurement of Corporate CRM and Case Management system

Submitted by: Service Director – Information & Technology

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To seek Cabinet approval to procure a corporate CRM and Case management system, alongside a suitable partner to support the Council to deliver the programme.	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
That Cabinet:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships to enter into a contract by direct award to procure a suitable, modern CRM system. 2. Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships to enter into a contract by direct award with a suitably qualified CRM partner to design, deliver and support the CRM programme. 3. Approve the implementation of a single CRM and case management solution across all Council services. 	
<u>Reasons</u>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council has outgrown the capabilities of the current CRM platform. A modern CRM system that can operate cross-service will enable greater opportunities to deliver excellent services to our residents and businesses. 2. Harnessing new technologies to support service delivery and efficiency is a key strategy aim of the Council's Technology Strategy (2023-2028). 3. The use of a modern CRM platform will support the Council's target of becoming net zero by 2030. 	

1. Background

- 1.1 A key priority of the [Council Plan](#) is ensuring that Council services are efficient and effective, and deliver for local people. The Council's transformation programme, One Council embarked on a journey to change the way in which the Council operated, driving a new culture of modern service delivery, harnessing technology as a key business enabler.

The programme also implemented a new operating model to improve the way that we interact with our customers to provide the most efficient and effective service.

- 1.2 The One Council programme was further supported by the introduction of a new [Technology Strategy](#) which set out three strategic themes and actions;

1.2.1 Residents & Customer: *Supporting our residents, businesses, and visitors to access the services and information they require online. Whilst ensuring we provide a choice of access for those who are not digitally connected.*

1.2.2 Workforce: *Ensuring our workforce have the skills required to deliver services to our customers, as effectively and efficiently as possible, as well as the capacity for continuous learning and adaptation to respond to developments and changes.*

1.2.3 Infrastructure: *Work to enhance the technological infrastructure within the Borough, supporting access to technology, high-speed fibre broadband and internet connectivity*

- 1.3 The strategy recognised that some of the Council's current systems are no longer fit for purpose, and that it needs to transform its customer service delivery to meet the evolving needs and expectations of its customers. Harnessing newer technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in order to enhance service efficiency.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The Council has identified a number of key issues and gaps within the current application estate:

2.1.1 The Council uses multiple and disparate systems to manage customer data and interactions, which results in siloed and fragmented information, and prevents the Council from having a single view of the customer.

2.1.2 Many of the Council's systems are bespoke for local government. These systems require significant administrative support, lack integration with newer technologies (such as AI, RPA, ML) and/or are often expensive to procure.

2.1.3 Some departments utilise some manual data entry and paper-based processing, which are time-consuming, costly, and could be prone to errors and delays.

- 2.1.4 The Council offers limited self-service options and channels for customers to access information and services, which reduces customer satisfaction and engagement, and increases the demand for face-to-face and phone interactions.
- 2.1.5 Residents are required to create multiple accounts in order to access some Council systems, whilst some systems do not have any self-service functionality at all.
- 2.1.6 The Council has inconsistent communication with customers, which leads to confusion, frustration, and complaints.
- 2.1.7 The Council has limited insight and visibility into service performance and customer feedback, which hinders the Council from evaluating and improving its services, and from identifying and addressing customer issues and needs.

3. **Recommendation**

- 3.1 Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships to enter into a contract by direct award to procure a suitable, modern CRM system.
- 3.2 Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships to enter into a contract by direct award with a suitably qualified CRM partner to design, deliver and support the CRM programme.
- 3.3 Approve the implementation of a single CRM and case management solution across all Council services.
- 3.4 Approve the transition to paperless National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) billing for all NNDR accounts.
- 3.5 Approve the transition to paperless Council Tax billing for all new residents to the borough and promote paperless billing for all other residents.

4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 A key Strategic theme of the Council's 2023-2028 Technology Strategy is 'Residents & Customers', highlighting the Council's vision to improve digital services so that our residents, visitors, and businesses use our online services as the preferred method of contacting the Council. This is alongside the Council's ambition to learn from the best public and private sector organisations to ensure that services are simple, intuitive and inclusive.
- 4.2 In order to deliver the Council's Technology Strategy, Council services need to be agile to change, and the latest available technologies. One of such technology and change is to implement a single CRM system across the whole organisation, transitioning away from traditional, bespoke local government systems, where possible.
- 4.3 The introduction of a single CRM will drive efficiency and awareness by providing the Council, its officers and members with a 'single view' of the

borough's residents and businesses. Pulling information from various Council systems, as well as national data sets to understand customer requirements, preferences and needs, in turn driving proactive and personalised delivery of services to our residents.

4.4 A cloud-based, single CRM system will bring numerous benefits to Council and its residents, businesses, and visitors, including:

- 4.4.1** Improve customer service and satisfaction by utilising a unified and integrated CRM system that allows the Council to manage all customer data and interactions in one place.
- 4.4.2** A single view of 'the customer' allowing the Council to understand the customer journey, preferences, and needs, enabling proactive and personalised service delivery.
- 4.4.3** Creation of a single customer portal where residents and businesses can access all council services. Empowering customers to access information and services at anytime and anywhere, whilst being able to self-serve – creating new and updating and tracking the status of their existing requests for service/support.
- 4.4.4** A flexible and scalable platform that can be configured and customised to suit the Council's specific needs and processes, and that can be easily integrated with other systems and applications (i.e. Microsoft Office, Telephony/Communication systems, Revenues & Benefits, and Waste Management systems).
- 4.4.5** Reduced manual processing that saves time and resources and improves data quality and accuracy.
- 4.4.6** Introduction of AI and RPA that enables the Council to automate repetitive and routine tasks, and to provide intelligent recommendations and insights.
- 4.4.7** A user-friendly and intuitive interface that enables the Council's staff to manage cases and communications, whilst allowing residents the ability to keep track with the status of their case and provide information securely.
- 4.4.8** An adaptable system that can be used for both external (residents/businesses) and internal uses, such as IT and Facilities incidents/service requests.
- 4.4.9** Real-time reporting and data-driven decision making that allows the Council to monitor and measure service performance and customer satisfaction, and to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- 4.4.10** A secure and reliable platform that ensures the protection and availability of the Council's data and services, and that complies with the relevant data protection and privacy regulations.

4.5 A corporate CRM with in-built case, subscription and record management capabilities will enable the future retirement of numerous legacy Council

systems and applications. This will in turn drive financial cost savings and operational efficiencies.

- 4.6 Modern CRM platforms are licensed using a subscription-based model, which allows the Council to scale up or down licence numbers as required and on a phased basis. This will allow the Council to reduce duplication of spend and only onboard departments as their existing software contractual commitments come to an end. There may however be requirements to migrate some departments over to the CRM sooner than the contractual end date where it is deemed operationally necessary, for example Customer Services.
- 4.7 The Council makes use of several critical systems, such as Revenues and Benefits, and Waste Management. Due to the complexity of the systems, it is unlikely that all elements would be able to be replaced with a CRM solution. Instead, it is critical that any new CRM solution would be able to integrate into these systems, enabling self-service via the Council's single customer portal.
- 4.8 In order to deliver a cross-service CRM platform, the Council will require specialist support from a suitably qualified CRM partner. This partner will aid the council in designing, delivering and supporting the CRM platform.
- 4.9 A key part of this programme will focus on how the Council can make use of modern communication methods, such as email and SMS in order to reduce operational expenditure, such as manual processing, printing, and postage. This will not only support further reductions in operational expenditure but will also support the Council's net zero sustainability plans and improve productivity, for example the annual billing letter can be automatically generated and sent to residents via email, instead.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 **Continue with Existing Supplier** – The Council are committed to ensuring that it transforms service delivery and realises opportunities for cost and operational service efficiency. Whilst continuing with the Council's current CRM provider would have been the easiest option, this solution would have limited the Council's ability to deliver a truly cross-organisational and transformational CRM solution with all of the latest technological advancements and integrations. For example, integration into the Council's telephony and unified communications platform.
- 5.2 **Procure a Modern, enterprise-level CRM platform (Recommended)** - The Council conducted a thorough analysis of its customer service requirements and objectives. During a recent proof-of-concept (PoC) programme, the enterprise-level CRM platform showcased its ability to operate as a 'single' platform, providing the necessary scalability and flexibility to support the enhancement of our operational service delivery.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The procurement route proposed in this report is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations.

- 6.2 Note that Appendix A is exempt from publication (at the current time) on the basis set out in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority in question. It is considered that disclosure of this information at this time would be capable of having a significant detrimental impact on the efficacy of the authority's business affairs and its financial well-being.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 No adverse impact has been identified as a result of delivering this proposal.

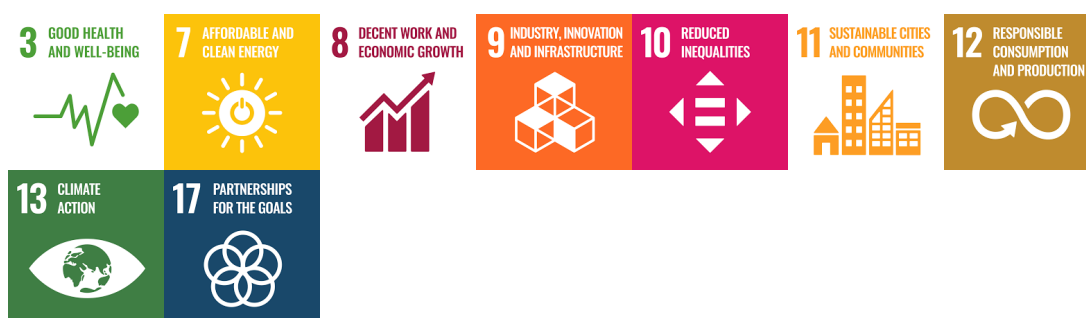
8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The preferred procurement route for this contract is direct award under a suitable, compliant procurement framework, such as G-Cloud or Crown Commercial Services (CCS).
- 8.2 The Council will make use of CCS Strategic Partnership Arrangement (2024) which provides public sector bodies a discounted, fixed price on Microsoft products for five years. The new arrangement between CCS, UK Government and Microsoft went live on 1st November 2024.
- 8.3 The CRM programme and solution will be delivered within the Councils existing budgets.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 The council runs a risk to the delivery of operational services where it fails to invest in ICT and modern technologies.
- 9.1.1 This is an identified risk within the Corporate Risk Management system under the ICT Services and Corporate Risk profile.
- 9.1.2 The council have already taken steps to mitigate this risk with control measures, such as the implementation of a Technology Strategy, Consolidation of hardware and software and the One Council transformation programme.
- 9.1.3 The procurement of a modern, adaptable CRM solution will allow the Council to respond to technological advancements and the changing landscape of local government legislative and operational requirements.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

- One Commercial Council
- One Digital Council
- One Green Council

The procurement of a corporate CRM and case management system will work to support all three One Council programmes by improving operational efficiency, reducing cost expenditure, identifying opportunities for growth and development, and reducing carbon emissions by promoting sustainable practices and operations.

The developer of the cloud-based CRM platform is also committed to becoming carbon negative, water positive and zero waste by 2030. They are also already utilising renewable energy within their data centres.

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 N/A

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 None

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix A

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 [Technology Strategy 2023-2028](#)

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

3rd December 2024

Report Title: Car Parking Strategy 2019-29 Update

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: Town

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>To provide an update to Members on the Newcastle -under-Lyme Borough Council Car Parking Strategy 2019-2029, which sets out the Council's plans and ambitions for its owned car parks, in particularly considering the development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park.</p>			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
<p>That Cabinet:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approves the updates to the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2019-29. 2) Commences consultation on a Traffic Regulation Order amendment and authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to make any necessary recommendations and adopt the Traffic Regulation Order. 3) Notes and endorses the Christmas Period Free Parking times, as set out in the report. 4) Approves that the Portfolio Member for Finance, Town Centres and Growth has flexibility in setting the Castle Car Park parking charges once open, as noted in the report below. 			
<u>Reasons</u>			
<p>The current car parking strategy was adopted in 2019 for a 10-year period and an update was made in 2021. It is appropriate to undertake a further review to ensure the car parking strategy continues to deliver the best outcomes and specifically considers the development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park.</p>			

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a wide range of car parks in Newcastle town centre which play an important role in the operation of the town centre for visitors and businesses. The car park strategy sets out how the Council will utilise these

resources to balance the demands of the various users of car parks, support town centre businesses, and ensure operational costs are met.

- 1.2 Management of car parks also involves wider partners such as the Newcastle Business Improvement District and wider strategic objectives including reducing carbon emissions and supporting the use of electric vehicles.
- 1.3 The Car Parking Strategy 2019-29 has established three objectives, which are:
 - To provide car parking which meets the current and future needs of the town centre for visitors, businesses and residents that will live in the town centre;
 - Optimise the cost-efficiency of the car park assets;
 - Minimise congestion and improve air quality.

Under these objectives, a number of priorities have been set:-

- Priority 1- to provide good quality car parks.
- Priority 2 - to improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle.
- Priority 3 - to support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre.
- Priority 4 - To ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users.

2. Issues

- 2.1 An update on these priorities is contained below and in the attached updated Appendix Car Parking Strategy Action Plan.

2.2 **Priority 1 - to provide good quality car parks.**

One of the key actions within the Car Parking Strategy is the delivery of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park with EV charging points, good lighting and a safe modern environment to service the Town Centre.

Linked to this is the ambition to see the redevelopment of the Midway Car Park with the consultation for the removal of the Midway car park to commence upon approval of this report. Working with Capital&Centric, the Council is seeking planning permission for this later this year.

2.3 **Priority 2 – to improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle.**

Twelve new ticket machines were installed with the facility to pay by card – either chip or contactless, as well as by cash. The ticket machines in the new Castle Car Park will also take card payments with an increasing number of drivers choosing this method of payment. Over the medium term the Council will review types of payment methods and could seek to reduce cash collections from the machines as these types of payments reduce.

The Council continues to contract with one of the leading providers in the country, PaybyPhone. The contract includes a minimal 7p convenience

charge and increasing APP usage, this reflects national market moves away from a QR code system. Through its contractor the Council wishes to ensure that all customer transactions are safe.

The new Castle Car Park will have CCTV monitoring and surveillance with new cameras and monitoring provided by our CCTV contractor.

The Borough Council will support Staffordshire County Council's implementation of the new street signing as part of the Wayfinding Strategy. This has involved replacing older signage, updating directional information, and showing capacity numbers for borough car parks. New signage will be erected to direct drivers to the new Castle Car Park.

2.4 Priority 3 – to support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre.

A shopper's discount of £1 after 1pm was proposed as a trial for 8 months, however due to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on shopping habits, this has continued. Whilst this offer has been neutral in respect of impact overall, there has been some negative impact on the customer experience at J2. School Street and Barracks Road are key car parks for the operation of J2 and the Council should seek to provide relatively close car parking to parents and carers wishing to take their children to swimming lessons after school. The centre's peak time is for children's swimming lessons from 3.30pm to 6pm, followed by adult J2 member attendance from 5.30pm onwards as customers visit after work.

The development of Deakins Yard is progressing and the increase in contractor parking is already having a negative impact on availability of parking spaces for J2 customers. Once the building is occupied there may be a demand for daytime and overnight parking. It is therefore proposed to commence an evening charge on these car parks from 8pm. This would mean that the £1 after 1pm charge would expire at 7:59pm, with an overnight charge of £1 from 8pm until operational hours the following day.

The £1 after 1pm will continue on Cherry, Corporation, Goose, Hassall, King, Silverdale, and Windsor Car Parks and monitored to ensure that the offer continues to attract visitors to the town centre. Part of the benefit of having parking offers is to maximise the marketing of the town centre and to do this fresh offers and varied marketing messages can be beneficial.

Currently the Council offer free parking for 5 event days per year where there is a clear business engagement plan where it demonstrates economic impact. It is proposed that this continues subject to the BID providing the evidence.

To support business owners and workers in the town centre the council continues to offer simplified quarter permit scheme. Moving forward the Council will offer permits in the Castle Car Park for £172 per quarter.

2.5 Priority 4 – to ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users.

Following the introduction of EV chargers on several sites, the Council have procured Zest to install EV chargers in the new multi-storey Castle Car Park. With the continued growth in electric vehicles, it is anticipated that the need for charging facilities will increase and the County Council is seeking to meet the needs of residents where they have no facilities at home. Working in partnership with the County Council there are plans through the LEVI programme to procure a Charge Point Operator in 2025, with them conducting soft market testing on the suitability of the following sites:

- Windsor St / Hassell St
- Silverdale Road
- King Street
- Wharf Street
- New Chapel Road - Pump Track at Kidsgrove.

2.6 Consultation on under-utilised assets

2.6.1 Within the Asset Management Plan, which was adopted by Cabinet in 2023, the Council identifies that assets that are under-utilised should be considered for alternative uses and where there is no Council operational need they can be disposed of. Several car parks were considered and it was identified that the Hassell Street site needed to retain some public parking alongside other sites where appropriate.

2.6.2 In line with the Asset Management Strategy the Council can consider when to take forward the full and partial site disposals identified for brownfield development:

Blackfriars car park, Newcastle	0.21 acres (Full disposal)
Hassell Street, Newcastle ST5 1AY	0.32 acres (partial disposal)
Cherry Orchard Newcastle ST5 2UB	0.30 acres (full disposal)
Goose Street Newcastle ST5 2EA	0.84 acres (partial disposal)
King Street Newcastle ST5 1HX	1.39 acres (partial disposal)
Bankside/ Well Street Newcastle ST5 1BP	0.10 acres (full disposal)

2.6.3 It is important that the Council considers the usage of its car parks to inform future provision. Car park counts taken over a mix of days and times for the Council town centre have identified the average space requirements and these have been used to predict the usage of car parks if changes occur as outlined above.

Car Park Name	Future Status	Current Capacity	Current Average Spaces used	Current % Usage by Car Park	Current % of Total Used	Future Spaces	Average Spaces Used	% Usage by Car Park	% of Total Used
Bankside (Well Street) - permit only	Close d	13	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	null	null
Blackfriars	Close d	25	0.875	3.50%	0.16%	0	0	null	null
Midway Car Park	Close d	624	174.25	27.92%	30.98%	0	0	null	null
Cherry Orchard	Close d	24	23.25	96.88%	4.13%	0	0	null	null
Ryecroft (Former Sainsbury)	Close d	182	88.75	48.76%	15.78%	0	0	null	null
Silverdale Road	Open	66	18	27.27%	3.20%	66	18	27.27%	3.20%
Goose Street	Partial	114	25.125	22.04%	4.47%	51	25.125	49.26%	4.47%
Barracks Road (School Street for 11/7/23)	Open	114	79.125	69.41%	14.07%	114	79.125	69.41%	14.07 %
Rear of High Street-Bridge Street - permit only	Open	15	10.5	70.00%	1.87%	15	10.5	70.00%	1.87%
King Street	Partial	170	67.125	39.49%	11.93%	148	124.875	84.38%	22.20 %
Fogg Street East - permit only	Open	12	10.125	84.38%	1.80%	12	10.125	84.38%	1.80%
Windsor Street	Open	21	19.75	94.05%	3.51%	21	19.75	94.05%	3.51%
Corporation Street	Open	9	8.75	97.22%	1.56%	9	8.75	97.22%	1.56%
Hassell Street	Partial	39	36.875	94.55%	6.56%	15	15	100.00 %	2.67%
Newcastle New Car Park	New	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	403	251.25	62.35%	44.67 %

(Within the new Castle Car Park there will be 16 accessible parking bays plus 6 accessible EV parking bays – all located on the ground floor.)

	Available Spaces	Average Spaces Used	Utilisation %
Current Car Park Numbers	1428	562.5	39.9%
New Car Park Numbers	854	562.5	65.87%

This shows that the car parks would have sufficient empty spaces should drivers wish to park but that the car parks would be better used and therefore a sensible commercial decision.

Subject to Cabinet approval of this report, it is proposed that consultation commences on changes to these car parks as set out above as part of a Traffic Regulation Order amendment.

2.7 Christmas Offers

In the run up to Christmas 2024 it has been decided that the following days will have free car parking across all car parks in Newcastle town centre, to encourage residents and visitors to shop locally in the town centre and enjoy all of the facilities that are on offer.

- Sat 21/Sun 22 December
- Sat 28/Sun 29 December; and
- Sat 4/Sun 5 January

In addition to this the Midway Car Park was made available until 10pm for the Town Centre Christmas Lights switch-on on Sunday 24th November, to support the residents and businesses to enjoy the celebrations.

2.8 Castle Car Park Parking Charges

It is anticipated that the new parking charges to the new Castle Car Park will be slightly different to the remaining surface level car parks due to the modern facilities available in the new car park. This has been reflected in the new Fees and Charges of the Council. In order to promote the new car park, it is assessed to be necessary to provide promotional rates in the first few months of the car park. Dependant on usage figures these may be extended or ended accordingly. It is requested in this report that officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth review these charges and usage figures and decides upon appropriate and adequate revisions to these new Castle Car Park charges, during the first six months of the new Castle Car Park operation.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1** That Cabinet approves the updates to the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2019-29.
- 3.2** That Cabinet commences consultation on a Traffic Regulation Order amendment and authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio Member for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to make any necessary recommendations and adopt the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 3.3** Notes the Christmas Period Free Parking times, as set out in the report below.

- 3.4 Approves that the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth has flexibility in setting the Castle Car Park parking charges once open, as noted in the report.

4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 The development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park is a significant improvement for the provision of car parking in Newcastle town centre. The development of this car park was identified in the 2019 strategy as it identified that the Midway car park was nearing the end of its useful life as a car park and was not meeting customer expectations. The development is intended to change drivers behaviour and to encourage parking within the ring-road at this key site which provides clean, safe, secure modern facilities including electric vehicle charging and a variety of payment methods. It is therefore appropriate to take the next steps to review the existing car parks and at this time review the 2019 strategy.
- 4.2 As part of the Asset Management Strategy the Council identified that there would be underutilised car parking and that some of the sites would most appropriately support the town centre if they were considered in the future for brownfield development.

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council has a choice of the order in which it undertakes consultation on car parking, this includes completing individual car parking consultation of grouping the car parks together into one consultation. Subject to Cabinet reviews it is recommended that the consultation commences based on the car parks outlined in this report. The benefit of this is that it enable consultees to understand which car parks are being proposed all together and thus their consultation response can take this into account.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a Traffic Regulation Order 2017 (with further subsequent amendments) which sets out the management of off-street parking on the town centre car parks. Should the Council wish to alter the car parks included in this order then consultation is required and a review of the responses to assess if the proposed Order amendment should proceed or be amended further.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The development of the new Castle Car Park provides a safer and secure facility for visitors to the town centre, whilst this improves parking for all residents it clearly provides a better option for lone female drivers that are visiting in the evening and supports the Council's safe evening economy and Women's Safe Space scheme.
- 7.2 The Castle Car Park also includes 16 disabled parking spaces which is for the benefit of drivers who hold a blue badge.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 For 2023/24 income generation from parking services totalled £612k, this was £244k less than the income budget (£856k). The income generated during 2023/24 was subject to the £1 after 1pm promotional scheme. There was also a significant reduction in parking related income compared with 2022/23, where £868k was generated. This is a £256k reduction, or 29% less, than the previous year.
- 8.2 In the first six months of 2024/25 49% of payments were made by cashless means (card and APP), 36% was cash and 15% was permit sales. The increase in cashless payments is in line with society's increased use of card as the primary payment method.
- 8.3 For the first six months of 2024/25, £280k has been generated from cash (£161k) and cashless (£119k) parking, with a total of £560k forecast for the year against a whole year budget of £724k. This is a potential shortfall of £164k, but an increase on 2023/24 in real terms of £71k or 14.5%. Further car park related income to end of September 2024/25 consists of permit sales (£51k) and Penalty Charge Notices (£23k).
- 8.4 With regard to parking income from School Street and Barracks Road, if the Evening charge continues to operate then residents of the Deakins Yard development would be able to park from 1pm onwards for one hour's charge. Pre-6pm there may be three payments of £1.20 by parents/carers bringing children for a swimming lesson as parents/carers are parking for less than an hour. The potential income from an evening payment is therefore significant less than those attending a swimming lesson who are paying £1.20 at present. Steps therefore need to be made to cease the £1 offer and alter the evening charge on these two car parks.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 The proposals are not considered to be a major risk as the consultation responses will be considered prior to making any decisions on adopting the Traffic Regulation Order.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1 The car park strategy is aiming to support the following UNSG and Climate Change objectives in a number of ways



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council ☒

The Strategy seeks to ensure that the Council is using its assets effectively and that investment is made in car parks that deliver good quality parking to the customers.

One Digital Council ☒

The Council will seek to utilise developments in car parking technology such as payment options to ensure that digital options are available to customers where possible.

One Green Council ☒

As part of the Council's Sustainability agenda the Council will seek to invest in schemes such as solar panels where there is a business case to support this.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 Not applicable.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 Cabinet 16th October 2019 for the Strategy adoption and Cabinet October 2021 for the Strategy Update. Cabinet September 2023 approved that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be given delegated authority to develop a disposal programme and to undertake consultation on the disposal of sites as set out in the Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028.

13.2 Cabinet Report November 2024 – Traffic Regulation Order Amendments.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1 - Car Parking Strategy Action Plan.

15. Background Papers

15.1 Car Parking Strategy 2019-2029.

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Appendix 1 - Car Parking Strategy Action Plan

Short, Medium and Long Term Actions	Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale
Objective 1 -To provide good quality car parks				
Short Term Actions	Annual car park inspections	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time	Annual
	Implement car park repairs following inspections	Property and Facilities Team	Repairs and renewal fund for minor pot holes / capital programme bid for major repairs	Responsive, ongoing for the long term
	Establish provision in the Capital Programme for larger investments in car parks	Finance, Property and Facilities Teams	Capital Funding to be allocated	Annual
	To open the Castle Car Park with EV charging points, good lighting and a safe modern environment to service the Town Centre.	Regeneration, Property, Facilities and MMF Teams	Officer time, Capital and revenue funding	2024/25
	Midway cathodic protection Survey and repairs	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Funding allocated in capital programme	Completed 2019
	Install new drainage in the Midway	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Quotations required Estimates £10k Architects fees and works at £100k.	Drains cleared

	Invest to improve the cleanliness of the Midway internally and outside on the pavement	NBC Operations	Review the approach including how to clean the stairwell	Completed – not required going forward for new car park
	Ticket machine renewal, prioritising old machines and key car parks	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	£30k allocated in the capital programme for 2019/20.	Completed with updates to be undertaken if machines cease to operate or technology changes
	Introduction of contactless / chip and pin payment options on the new ticket machines	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers and Finance Officers	Revenue implications to be calculated	Completed
	Pay by phone to be procured to ensure that a customer friendly product is	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers and Finance Officers	Council to review the convenience charges and financial implications	Completed
	Promote cashless payment methods	NBC Communications Officers and BID	Officer Time and publicity material	Completed
	Ensure effective and proportionate parking	Neighbourhood Delivery Service	Officer time	Ongoing
	New CCTV system for the Midway to improve customers feeling of safety	NBC and BID joint working with Stoke CC	Capital funding to be allocated Estimate £22K Use of s106 funding towards overall costs	Completed
	Improve signage to and from car parks for wayfinding	SCC Highways, Business Improvement District and HRA officers	SCC funded and potential for BID funding	Completed

Medium Term Actions	Review the take up of car payments mechanisms	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Officer time and potential capital funding	Completed
	Review the provision of Disabled and parent parking	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Officer time and potential revenue funding	2025-2026
	Lighting review and installation of new lighting where required	Property and Facilities Team	Initial repairs through Council Repairs and Renewal Fund	March 26
	Internal painting of the Midway	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Quotations required	Completed 2020
	Hassall Street resurfacing	Property and Facilities Team	Capital Funding to be allocated £50k	To be completed in line with any changes to 2026-2029
Long Term Actions	Review development of payment options	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Officer time and potential revenue funding	
	Rear of High Street and Frog Hall access road	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Capital Funding to be allocated £40k	Complete
	Review development options for the least used and least economically viable car parks	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time	2021-2025
	Undertake a review of the business rates and take any appropriate action	Property and Facilities Team	In-conjunction with Council agents	2025-26
	Deliver rolling programme of refurbishments	Property and Facilities Team	Capital Funding to be allocated	2025-29

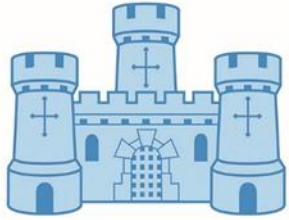
Objective 2 - To improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle				
Short Term Actions	Trial a shopper discount of £1 after 1pm	Property and Communications Officers BID Facilities	Officer time and potential revenue loss of £95k	2019-20
	Establish business engagement programme to promote discounted parking		Officer time and potential revenue funding	Completed
	Establish a mechanism to evaluate the 1pm after 1pm	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers and Finance	Officer time and potential revenue funding	2020-21
	Work with the BID to establish a town centre offer	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers BID	Officer time and potential revenue funding	2020-21
	Offer free parking for 5 events days per year where there is a clear business plan to demonstrate economic impact	Business Improvement District, Mobile Multi-Functional Team and BID and Finance officers	Financial implications to be calculated	Fees and charges Cabinet January 2020
	Support Christmas retail and town centre shoppers in the run up to Christmas with free parking from 5pm for Christmas late night shopping	Mobile Multi-Functional Team and the BID	Officer time	November 2019 - Completed
Medium Term Actions	Work with the County Council to review charges at Merrial Street, Corporation Street and Bridge Street	SCC NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	NBC and SCC Officer time	Completed

	Evaluate potential for shoppers permit for residents	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Officer time and potential revenue implications	Completed
	Explore with the BID willingness for it to control Goose Street for dedicated shoppers car park	BID NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers and Finance Officers	Officer time and potential revenue implications	Completed – BID did not wish to proceed
Long Term Actions	Evaluate the impact of any Clean Air actions on car park charging	Property and Facilities and Finance Officers	Officer time	2025-26
	Establish a mechanism for differential charging to reward the greenest	Property and Facilities and Finance Officers	Officer time and revenue implications	2026-27
	Utilising information from the new car parking machines to direct the future car parking	Property and Facilities officers Finance Officers	Annual fees and charges	2025-26
Objective 3 - to support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre				
Short Term Actions	To prioritise and market Fogg Street, High Street and Well Street for adjacent businesses	NBC Housing Regeneration Assets Officers	Revenue implications	Completed
	To support businesses and workers with improved permit scheme	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Revenue implications	Completed
	To implement a marketing campaign for <u>permits</u>	NBC Communications Officers	Officer time	Completed

Medium Term Actions	Maintain ongoing dialogue with businesses to understand their needs	Officers BID	Officer time	Ongoing
	Maintain a programme of specialist events to support the town centre and maximise the assets	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers BID	Officer time	Completed
Long Term Actions	Evaluate the opportunities for car parks to support diversification and specialist events	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers BID	Officer time	Completed
	Continue to work with the BID to ensure that parking supports local trade	Mobile Multi-Functional Team and BID	Officer time	2025-29
	Evaluate the take up of permits and technological developments to improve the purchase of permits	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time	2025-29
Objective 4 - To ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users				
Short Term Actions	Delivery of Electric charging points for taxi's as part of the Clean Air project	HRA and Environmental Health Officers	Officer time and revenue implications	Completed

Medium Term Actions	Research demand for Electric Charging Points and establish funding model, seeking to deliver additional car parks with EV chargers in conjunction with Staffs County Council OVEC funding	NBC Housing Regeneration and Assets Officers	Officer time and revenue implications	Completed – currently procuring in conjunction with Staffs County Council 2025/26.
	Review parking bay sizes to accommodate larger vehicles	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time and revenue implications	2025-26
	Work with the County Council on wider Regeneration projects to improve access to the core town centre including the possibility of nipper parking in south High Street.	County Council and Landscape and Community Team	Capital funding required for wider regeneration project	2024-25
Long Term Actions	Provide EV charging points in all car parks	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time and revenue implications	2025-26
	Review car charging technology and the links to parking accounts	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time and revenue implications	2025-26
	To review the technology developments for directed parking app's	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time and revenue implications	2026-27

	Introduce solar canopies in the car parks	Property and Facilities Team	Capital funding will need to be allocated	2025-26
	Review the implications for automated vehicles	Property and Facilities Team	Officer time and revenue implications	2028-29



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 between 1 December 2024 and 31 March 2025

This plan gives notice of decisions that [Cabinet](#) is expecting to take over the next few months. It also gives, except in cases of urgency, at least 28 days notice of all “Key Decisions” that will be taken “Key Decisions” are decisions about “executive” functions that will:-

- A) result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings of an amount which is significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or the function to which the decision relates. (NB: The financial threshold above which expenditure or savings become significant has been set by the Council at £100,000 Revenue and £250,000 Capital Expenditure); and/or
- B) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

We have to take some Cabinet decisions in private because they deal with confidential or “exempt” information. That is information described in one or more of the following categories set out in 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

If we intend to take a decision in private, we will tell you why in the plan below. If you disagree with our reasons, you can tell us why using the contact details below. We will respond to you directly and will publish our response in the meeting agenda. If we have published the meeting agenda before we can respond, we will respond verbally at the meeting and record the response in the minutes.

You can find more information about Cabinet, Cabinet Members and their portfolios, agendas, reports and minutes [here](#).

More information on Cabinet procedures, executive functions, Key Decisions, urgent decisions and access to information is available in our [Constitution](#).

For all enquiries, please contact Democratic Services, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1BL.
 Telephone – 01782 742222 / Email – DemocraticServices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Report Title	Description	Portfolio	Intended Decision Taker and Date	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Wards Affected	Reason for Determining in Private Session (if Applicable)	Key Decision
Draft Savings Proposals 2025/26	To consider a report on the Draft Savings Proposals 2025/26	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 3 December 2024	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A	No
Procurement of Corporate CRM and Case Management System	To consider a report on the Procurement of Corporate CRM and Case Management System	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - One Council, People and Partnerships	Cabinet 3 December 2024	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority	Yes

Report Title	Description	Portfolio	Intended Decision Taker and Date	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Wards Affected	Reason for Determining in Private Session (if Applicable)	
						holding that information)	
Car Parking Strategy Update	To consider a report on the Car Parking Strategy Update	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 3 December 2024	Economy and Place	All Wards	N/A	No
Walleys Quarry Odour Update	To consider a report on the Walleys Quarry Odour Update	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - One Council, People and Partnerships	Cabinet 3 December 2024	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	Yes
Draft Revenue and Capital Budget and Strategies 2025/26	To consider a report on the Draft Revenue and Capital Budget and Strategies 2025/26	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A	No
Walleys Quarry Odour Update	To consider a report on the Walleys Quarry Odour issues	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - One Council, People and Partnerships	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	Yes
Schedule of Fees and Charges 2025/26	To consider a report on the Schedule of Fees and Charges 2025/26	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority	Yes

Report Title	Description	Portfolio	Intended Decision Taker and Date	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Wards Affected	Reason for Determining in Private Session (if Applicable)	
						holding that information)	
Memorial Headstone Policy	To consider a report on the Memorial Headstone Policy	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Environment	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	Yes
International House Contractor Award	To consider a report on the International House Contractor Award	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Yes
Update on Decarbonisation of the Council's Operational Buildings and Fleet	To consider a report on Update on the Decarbonisation of the Council's Operational Buildings and Fleet	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Environment	Cabinet 7 January 2025	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	No
Kidsgrove Town Board Award of contract for the Shared Service Hub Development	To consider a report on the Kidsgrove Town Board Award of contract for the Shared Service Hub Development	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 4 February 2025	Economy and Place	Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority	Yes

Report Title	Description	Portfolio	Intended Decision Taker and Date	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Wards Affected	Reason for Determining in Private Session (if Applicable)	
						holding that information)	
Revenue and Capital Budget Strategies 2025/26	To consider a report on the Revenue and Capital Budget Strategies 2025/26	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 4 February 2025	Finance, Assets and Performance	All Wards	N/A	No
Walleys Quarry Odour Update	To consider a report on odour issues at Walleys Quarry	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - One Council, People and Partnerships	Cabinet 4 February 2025	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	No
Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25	To consider a report on the Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	Cabinet 4 February 2025	Finance, Assets and Performance, Audit and Standards	All Wards	N/A	No
Walleys Quarry Odour Update	To consider a report on odour issues at Walleys Quarry	Cabinet Portfolio Holder - One Council, People and Partnerships	Cabinet 18 March 2025	Health, Wellbeing and Environment	All Wards	N/A	No

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

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