

COUNCIL PLAN 2016-18

Delivering our vision for Newcastle-under-Lyme



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Our Vision

*... a borough
that is prosperous, clean,
healthy and safe*



Leader of the Council
Cllr. Elizabeth Shenton

*"Working to re-build the
hearts of our Towns and
Villages"*



Chief Executive
John Sellgren

"Excellence is our goal"

Our priorities state 'what' work we will focus on, and our values describe 'how' we will go about delivering them.

*... work co-operatively
with our partners and
communities*

*... put residents at
the centre of everything
we do*

*... be open and transparent
in all our
decision making*

*... be open to new
ideas and new ways of
doing things*

Foreword

Welcome to the Newcastle –under-Lyme Borough Council Plan 2016-18, which serves as the basis for everything we do as a council. The delivery of public services can't be done on our own and we need to make changes in the way we work, to ensure that we are delivering the key services within our reducing resource base.

Our plan is to work with partners and communities to improve the lives of people living and working here, ensuring sustainability and the right support is available for people. With the impact of reductions in public spending, funding for the borough council from government grant will reduce over the coming years to 2020. This means there is a need for changes to the way we work, do business and deliver our services in the future. This plan informs how we will be working together to make the borough an even better place for everyone who lives, works, and studies or visits here. Faced by reducing resources, this aim can only be achieved by taking advantage of every opportunity available and developing new ones through innovation and a more collaborative approach. The plan sets out how we as a Council wish to strive for excellence in everything we do, and develop what is necessary in order to support the people of the Borough. Only by working co-operatively can we achieve this and ensure the Council, and so the people of the borough, are in a stronger position for the future.

Our priorities for the Borough

The Council has developed four priorities to deliver this:

Becoming a Co-operative Council delivering high quality, community-driven, services.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is committed to becoming a Co-operative Council which means we are working together with our residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can using the resources we have.

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

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

A borough of opportunity

We will work with our partners to maximise Investment in the borough and encourage enterprise and employment - generating activities that will create opportunities for improving the prosperity, as well as improving the well-being of our citizens and their communities.

A healthy and active community

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

“...using resources well to provide good services”



“...Residents are happy with Newcastle as a place to live”

Our key priority

Being a co-operative Council delivering high quality services

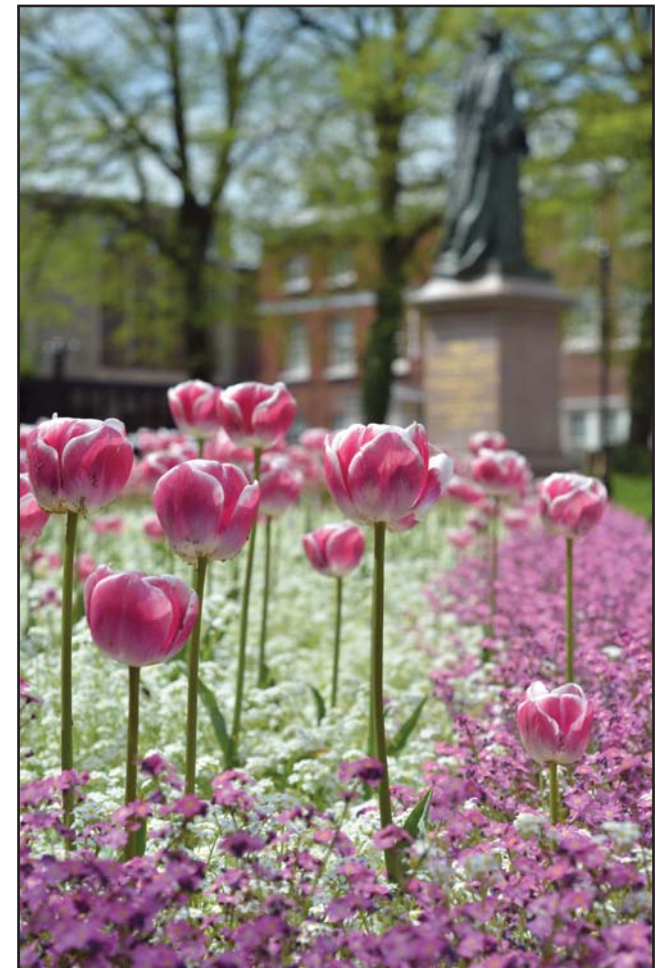
Financially, the Council continues to look at resources and how we can use less but still deliver effective services and respond to the challenges ahead. Our aim is to work with partners at a national, regional and local level to ensure that public services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In 2017 the Council will have moved out of the current Civic Offices and will be in the new Public Sector Hub, which is to be built on the site where the former St Giles' and St George's School was, adjacent to the Queen's Gardens. To be ready for the transfer, we need to become a more modern council and carry out improvements in the way we work, individually, with partners, and as a council.

Agile working will become the norm, enabling efficient ways of working, sharing work spaces with partners. To do this effectively, we as an organisation need to create a cultural shift, and deliver the transition through identified, well planned projects.

We will engage and listen to our communities and customers who make up our borough and use our services. We will then use the information to inform what we do next and:-

- look at how we can simplify the processes in place,
- remove any duplication,
- reduce costs and
- improve the quality of the service.



Priority One:

Being a co-operative Council delivering high quality services

We will work co-operatively with:

Our **customers** to deliver 'one and done' services
This will include:

- Continuing our commitment to have excellent customer service by increasing the range of council services which are accredited with the Customer Service Excellence standard
- Increasing the range of services which can be delivered online
- Continuing our commitment to work with other partner organisations to deliver more seamless services to simplify transactions

Our **communities** to improve the quality of life for all
This will include:

- Empowering our Locality Action Partnerships to take actions to respond to the needs of local communities
- Enabling community groups and others to take initiatives to develop and improve community facilities to better meet their needs
- Continuing to work closely with Town and Parish Councils to improve services for local people

Our **partners** to sustain local public services in a context of reducing resources

This will include:

- Extending the range of services which are part of our locality commissioning framework
- Taking opportunities to better utilise assets through greater shared usage of facilities
- Continuing to share staffing resources to secure efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery

We are committed to:

- Working to develop community-led and community-commissioned services with partners and residents
- Increasing access to, and the sharing of, quality information for citizens and staff at the right time regardless of time or location
- Improving the way valued citizens information is managed throughout its lifecycle
- Providing a new Recycling Collection service to become operational in 2016
- Developing the Community Engagement and Participation Framework to encourage volunteer groups to care for their green spaces and neighbourhoods
- Consolidating our internal IT systems to increase efficient working and to ensure best value from suppliers
- Ensure the workforce are upskilled through the delivery of workforce development plans for all service areas

Priority Two:

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

We will improve the environment so that everyone can enjoy a safe, sustainable and healthy borough. Residents consistently identify a cleaner and safer borough as a priority for them. At Newcastle we want people to feel safe wherever they are;- in their homes, neighbourhoods, parks and green spaces or when accessing towns, shopping centres and places of work.

We believe that effective partnership working is essential in improving outcomes for our communities and ensuring that our collective resources are used efficiently and effectively. Working with our partners in this time of austerity, we will continue to commission services and deliver initiatives to assist vulnerable residents and to contribute to preventative approaches which positively impact on improving health and wellbeing and community safety in our communities.

Our Operations team work hard to maintain high levels of cleanliness and environmental quality in our streets and green spaces. We work with local communities to identify issues and prioritise services and we support people in volunteering to take care of their neighbourhoods and promote community pride in our borough as a great place to live, work and visit.



Priority Two:

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

We will work to make the environment clean, safe and sustainable with:

Our **services**, communities and partners to maintain and improve parks and green spaces

This will include:

- Continuing to ensure our award winning parks and open spaces are maintained to a good and safe standard that are well used by residents and visitors to the area
- Working with communities, businesses, schools and Friends Groups to reduce and control litter, and improve the parks and green spaces
- Ensuring stakeholders are involved in developing and prioritising future services

Our **partners** to deliver well communicated and developed services

This will include:

- Working with the Police and other key partners to tackle community safety related issues such as anti-social behaviour, dealing with domestic violence, safeguarding and ensuring that appropriate support is available for vulnerable victims.
- Helping people to feel reassured and safe in their homes, and when working or visiting the borough
- Delivering a range of innovative early intervention initiatives and campaigns supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that crime in the borough remains low and incidents can be prevented.
- Supporting businesses in licensing matters and improved hygiene ratings to improve the resident and visitor experience of the area
- Improved public transport routes

Our **delivery** of an efficient waste and recycling service

This will include:

- Implementation of a new recycling and waste service from 2016 to improve the service and reduce the cost of the cost of the service to residents
- Developing new Initiatives to ensure behavioural change in how waste is recycled and residual waste is reduced

We are committed to:

- Encouraging community engagement and participation in caring for local green spaces and neighbourhoods
- Delivering a planned programme of community managed allotments
- Investigating and taking action in respect of nuisance identified in the borough whether environmental or anti-social
- Development of an action plan to support LAP groups in addressing identified community issues
- Reducing residual waste from households and increasing the amount of recycling taking place in the borough
- Maintaining satisfaction with cleanliness of streets and green spaces
- Attracting sponsorship for Newcastle in Bloom
- Being a Fair Trade Borough, with the development of an action plan
- Supporting investigation of local geothermal energy schemes

Priority Three:

A borough of opportunity

Both the Borough Council and our partners at Staffordshire County Council have now taken formal decisions agreeing to the Ryecroft regeneration project and the creation of a public sector hub in Newcastle. To enable the wider redevelopment of the Ryecroft area, and to deliver all the benefits in terms of new jobs and a boost to the town centre economy, the Council will move out of the Civic Offices in 2017 and to a new Public Sector Hub working alongside our partners. This will encourage joint working and improved conditions, which is offset by savings through energy saving and efficient accommodation.

Other opportunities gained by delivery of an effective Local Plan to enhance the housing offer and further development of the Borough, will be beneficial both economically and for the wellbeing of all. Support through improvements to the infrastructure of the borough would also help to provide the mechanism to promote business growth and attract residents to an area with growing employment opportunities.

The Northern Gateway Development Zone is being taken forward by Cheshire and North Staffordshire local authorities and the two associated LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) to see how the area can maximize the economic benefits of HS2. This is expected to stimulate significantly greater interest in the area for new investment, new businesses and increase demand for housing.

Working with partners we will develop a new Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 for the Borough. This will be aligned to the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and European Structural Investment Framework.

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



Priority Three:

A Borough of opportunity

We will work with:

Our *partners* to sustain local public services in a context of reducing resources

This will include:

- Work together to deliver high quality housing advice and investigate the Homelessness Gold Standard
- Deliver car parking service with low charges in order to remain competitive to support the town centres
- Promotion of the Living Wage for employees and ongoing work with the Chamber of commerce, contractors and key local businesses to encourage participation
- Continuation and growth of the apprenticeship scheme with partners
- Support to retailers and local businesses to remain in the borough

Our *wider partners* to ensure effective and efficient development and delivery of key projects for the borough

This will include:

- Development of the Keele Masterplan and ensuring the offer maximises the opportunities to be realised whilst reducing any negative effect to the borough
- Implementation of the planned Asset Disposal programme to provide necessary funding to deliver a strong Capital programme and facilitate delivery of housing within the Borough
- Complete the Local Plan in order to inform future planning arrangements for the area and the housing offer
- To invest in the energy efficiency and delivery of high quality commercial and retail units to support local business

- Work with the Newcastle Business Improvement District to support a vibrant business led town centre

Our *communities* to ensure the opportunities are communicated

This will include:

- Clear communication and information provided in consultation within the borough
- Transparent and open decision making, ensuring development opportunities are available

We are committed to:

- Focusing on our town centres as locations for economic growth and delivering the Economic Development Strategy 2012-17
- Planning and supporting the delivery of the retail-led redevelopment of the Ryecroft site and new Public Sector Hub
- Supporting the development of our towns and villages for the future
- Supporting local residents in housing need to access appropriate housing and to prevent homelessness
- To support the most vulnerable residents living in the private rented sector to ensure they can live in a safe and secure home; where possible this will include targeted housing-led interventions
- Work with partner organisations and communities to operate and manage community facilities
- Implementation of the Land Sales programme and consideration of a Community Land Bonus
- Promoting markets and events to encourage visitors and maintaining low vacancy rates of premises within the borough
- Supporting employment initiatives with partners and continuing to promote the Apprenticeship scheme

Priority Four:

A healthy and active community

At the heart of our borough we want communities that are happy, vibrant and prosperous with good health and wellbeing.

We want to reduce health inequalities with a focus on those areas where the council can have the greatest impact. The Health & Wellbeing Strategy outlines our commitment and services offer, and supports development of leisure, cultural and community facilities in the borough.

Plans are being developed for a feasibility plan of a new leisure facility in Kidsgrove for a new swimming pool and facility for the area. With partners such as Staffordshire County Council and Sport England and others, we will seek to identify a funding strategy to ensure residents and visitors are able to access a range of facilities and support activities that will enable them to improve their health and quality of life. In the last twelve months the Newcastle Partnership has awarded over £233,000 from Public Health to benefit the people of the borough to support activities, nutrition and physical exercise. Working with partners, we want to continue to deliver high quality services to the most vulnerable. By using information and feedback from service users and the community to identify issues and service provision gaps, we will develop the provision available, and so help to reduce health inequalities across the borough.



Priority Four:

A healthy and active community

We will continue to consult and work with:

Our *customers* and *communities* to deliver services to enhance the borough offer

This will include:

- Everyone has the opportunity to comment on activities and planned proposals for enhancing the Health and Wellbeing offer in the borough
- Services are inclusive and available to all users wishing to take part
- Services are targeted through locality commissioning ensuring provision is based on need and evidenced through consultation and feedback

Our *partners* to deliver leisure and cultural opportunities for the future

This will include:

- Consideration of a business case and funding strategy for a replacement leisure centre for Kidsgrove allowing access to high quality leisure facilities.
- Development of a Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy to support the Joint Local Plan which we are doing in partnership with Stoke on Trent City Council
- Working closely with partners to develop the cultural offer and agree priorities for future funding

We are committed to:

- Delivery of a programme of cultural events and exhibitions
- Supporting community-run events, both leisure and cultural
- Working with partners to identify funding strategies to meet the council's priorities
- Delivery of a programme of healthy initiatives with partners
- Seizing opportunities to develop and improve the leisure and cultural services offer to residents and visitors of the borough
- Implementation of recommendations of the Borough's Playing Pitch Strategy
- Working with the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop Stage One Bid for a potential redevelopment of the museum