

# ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2023 - 2028



NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## **1. Foreword**

The Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Strategy are key strategies that establish the Council's approach to its use of resources. 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 Council's asset portfolio to meet the needs of the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors. As we move into the future with a new set of challenges and priorities, we have had to tailor the Asset Strategy in such a way as to meet those challenges head on, whilst taking other Council-wide strategies into consideration. This Strategy builds on the previous Asset Management Strategy.

By having an Asset Management Plan as part of this Asset Management Strategy for 2023 to 2028 the Council is well placed to ensure we are able to adapt to the changing market and deliver our corporate priorities.

**Cllr Stephen Sweeney**

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

## MISSION STATEMENT

*“Our mission is to establish an Asset Management Strategy that reduces ongoing expenditure, increases investment income and renews and grows the Council’s asset portfolio so that we can provide the highest attainable standard of buildings and facilities for the people of Newcastle-under-Lyme.”*

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme is part of the conurbation of North Staffordshire. It is the most populated district in Staffordshire with a population of around 125,000 and has an area of 81 square miles. The two main towns within the Borough are Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove, and there is an extensive rural area to the west/south-west of the urban area.
- 2.2 The industrial base of the Borough has changed significantly in the last century, with the closure of local coal mines and the development of the distribution sector. Service industries are the largest employers in the area, with the number of people employed in water, energy and construction industries being higher than average. The presence of Keele University with the growing number of hi-tech, research and medical technology businesses in its Science and Innovation Park, along with the medical school demonstrates the potential for added value growth of the area.
- 2.3 Newcastle town centre is recognised as being one of two strategically important centres in the North Staffordshire conurbation, with further growth predicated upon its good connections to major transport routes.
- 2.4 There continues to be ongoing reductions in funding provided to local authorities, government, and its agencies, arising from the need to restrain public expenditure to rebalance public finances following the global economic recession that began with the banking crisis in 2008 and more recent increase in inflation. Services remain under pressure to reduce costs and to keep fixed outgoings such as property related costs under review. Some specific funds have however been made available recently including the 'Town Deal', 'Future High Street Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund and it is key that those funding sources are spent on the right projects.

- 2.5 At the same time, the Council's own resources available to finance capital projects are limited and income is key to further delivery of the capital programme. The Council continues to require receipts from land and property disposals to fund future capital programmes.
- 2.6 In 2020, Cushman and Wakefield Surveyors were commissioned to carry out an independent Investment Property Portfolio Review. A detailed statement of the Council's current property portfolio is detailed within this and some of the key findings and recommendations from that review has assisted in developing the Asset Vision and will drive much of the Asset Management Strategy between 2023 and 2028. The Cushman and Wakefield Report as referred to at Section 18 below is available upon request.

### **3. Core Strategic Objectives**

- 3.1 The core strategic objectives for asset management are designed to support the Council's vision and priorities. They are:
- To ensure that the Council's asset portfolio supports the delivery of its services and objectives.
  - To maximise income through the asset portfolio in line with the One Council Commercial Strategy.
  - To maximise the Council's assets to deliver corporate objectives such as major regeneration programmes.
  - To ensure that all assets are demonstrably managed in the most economic, efficient, and effective manner.
- 3.2 In achieving these objectives the principles to be followed are that all operational assets must be:
- In the right location to allow customers to access the service and any other related services of partners, in suitable condition to enable staff to deliver services in a comfortable environment for both staff and customers without interruption.
  - Suitable and sufficient for the purpose for which they are being used in terms of size, type, and layout of accommodation – including accessible to people with disabilities.
  - Flexible to the extent that they can be adapted economically to adjust to changing services' needs, including sharing with partners in service delivery.

- Able to demonstrate 'Best Value' in terms of a balance between efficiency in operational running costs and long-term sustainability.
- Able to convey a positive image of the Council and the service being provided and able to contribute positively to the immediate environment, particularly where there is a need for physical regeneration of the locality.
- Good examples of sustainable development if new or extensively refurbished.
- Maintained in such a way so as to minimise reactive maintenance by improving planned maintenance arrangements; and managed to mitigate their impact on and the effect of climate change.

3.3 All non-operational assets must be:

- Able to make the maximum contribution to service revenue budgets in terms of rental income; or
- Able to make a positive contribution to the social wellbeing of the community either through its presence as a heritage asset or through use by others such as voluntary groups, charity organisations or small businesses; or
- Retained for reasons of strategic importance, such as to influence the physical economic regeneration of the Borough.
- Please note that some non-operational assets are subsidised to assist new start-ups.

3.4 In order to deliver a sound, well planned asset management strategy, the Council must first analyse the current position against our vision, then set key priorities for the overall assets portfolio and for individual assets. Where there are key priorities for specific assets the Council needs to evaluate funding opportunities and timescales. When proceeding with asset purchases, sales or long term leases there needs to be clear policies, procedures and processes that will ensure the successful delivery of the overall Strategy.

3.5 The Council has ambitious plans over the forthcoming years and this strategy seeks to support these. Whenever possible the Council will seek to maximise outcomes with external funding stream and working with the best partners. Timescales for individual asset management decisions will be made taking a whole range of issues into account. This Asset Strategy has been drafted in accordance with and supportive of the one Council Commercial Strategy.

## 4. Approach

4.1 As the wider landscape within the Council's asset portfolio is constantly changing and evolving and as many factors are outside of the Council's control, the general approach that has been adopted, is to:

- Establish the asset portfolio in two groups [operational and non-operational estates]
- Carry out an updated assessment of the two groups /estates (following the Cushman and Wakefield Report's headings [see Annex A])
- Establish what funding streams and capital reserves are available / allocable
- Review already planned capital works and other projects
- Establish what can and should be done to the assets in each asset class (operational and non-operational) to find savings and improve efficiency.

4.2 It is important to note that the Asset Management Strategy will be ever evolving as new challenges and objectives are revealed and as new funding sources become available.

4.3 It is paramount that any strategic objectives are fulfilled and delivered within governance rules and guidelines set out by central government, the constitution, property law and are reflective of the various other strategies across the Council.

This Strategy along with the Council's Capital Strategy seeks to demonstrate alignment with, and delivery of, the Council's ambitions as set out in the Council Plan 2022-26 and is also aligned with:

- The Financial Strategy
- The Digital Agenda
- The Carbon Management Plan
- The Council's Constitution
- Local Plan including Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Playing Pitch Strategy

### The Carbon Net Zero Roadmap

4.3b The Council is leading Newcastle-Under-Lyme to a sustainable and carbon net zero future. The Council is working with partners in the private, public and educational sectors to create an energy efficient environment in Newcastle-under-Lyme. This should ensure that the Borough remains a preferred place in which to live, work and invest.

The Council's Carbon Net Zero Roadmap represents a further step in the journey to become a carbon net zero council. The Council has made a good start in their contribution to the Council's reduction in energy use over the past year.

The Council are working with the Carbon Net Zero Roadmap to reduce its carbon footprint as well as the carbon footprint of the Borough (by 2050) as whole, which includes our homes, businesses and public spaces. The Council are introducing energy saving measures in properties, for example the council now collect food waste to be converted into energy through anaerobic digestion. The Carbon Net Zero Roadmap is still being finalised however we are beginning to take action now to reduce and cut the emissions we produce directly and indirectly. The Roadmap alongside other strategies and information about sustainability and climate can be found on our Sustainability and the Environment webpages which will be published soon on our website.

#### 4.3c Our approach to more efficient and carbon net zero buildings:

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is currently consulting and reviewing the energy use and consumption of its built estate. The buildings the Council owns contribute to a vast amount of emissions that we release into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. In our soon to be released Carbon Net Zero Roadmap we will be initiating multiple projects to decarbonise our owned facilities such as J2, Knutton Lane Depot and Kidsgrove Town Hall. Our goal is to become fully carbon net zero by 2030 within the Council's built estate by developing renewable energy projects for electricity and heating, upgrading the fabric specifications (insulation) of our buildings, embedding biodiversity net gain in all our developments, facilitating sustainable behaviour campaigns and upgrading our buildings ventilation, lighting and the controls that regulate it sustainably. Our goal for 2030 within the built estate is also accompanied by our wider goal to become a net zero Borough by 2050, aligning ourselves with the UK Governments initiatives.

## 5. Governance

### 5.1 Legal and Constitutional Context

- a. The Council has a duty, both fiduciary and operationally, to utilise its Assets for the benefit of the community.
- b. The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Section 123 - the Council has a duty to achieve best consideration when disposing of its assets.



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

## 5.2 The National Context – Government Policy

Many Government initiatives, policy statements and/or guidance influence the Authority's asset policies, including:

- The Quirk review of ownership of public assets
- The Gershon Review, and the drive to improve efficiency
- The Prudential Code for the management of capital finance
- Leamer and Greener Report – Delivering effective estate management
- Leamer and Greener II – Putting Building to Work
- Penfold Review
- Laying the foundations of a Housing Strategy for England
- The Localism Act - Community Right to Bid
- The National Planning Policy Framework
- Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

5.3 The Authority as an employer, a landowner, a landlord and a provider of services, has a wide range of responsibilities with an implication for accommodation including:

- The legislative framework in respect of buildings
- A range of health and safety legislation, EEC requirements. HSE best practice and guidance notes, Industry standards and Insurance requirements.
- Carbon reduction and energy efficiency legislation and requirements.
- Equality Act 2010. This does not simply encompass accessibility considerations and should be taken into account in virtually all development and maintenance work which is carried out to ensure that every possible aspect of disability has been considered when implementing work.
- Management of the risks associated with property assets including regular maintenance and servicing to address matters such as:
  - i) Legionella – A managed programme of water testing and preventative measures are carried out including weekly flushing

regimes, monthly temperature tests, bi-annual bacteria testing and, as required, physical system cleansing. A robust legionella policy is in place for the council as required by law.

- ii) Asbestos – An on-going programme of surveys and management together with the use of asbestos registers and regular monitoring to prevent the release of dangerous fibres and warn of the presence of asbestos across the portfolio. A robust asbestos policy is in place for the council as required by law.
- iii) Fire Safety – The Authority undertakes Fire Risk Assessments in respect of its properties and tests fire safety equipment e.g. alarms on an annual basis. Weekly, monthly and annual testing of fire monitoring and backup systems also take place as required by the legislation to ensure that fire systems are maintained.
- iv) Gas Safety – Inspections and services are carried out on an annual basis to ensure that all gas appliances are safe to use. The correct pre-planned maintenance approach has also ensured that gas appliance failures are now very rare which has delivered a considerable saving in respect of reactive maintenance costs.
- v) Electrical Safety - An ongoing program of periodic tests is carried out to fixed wiring as required by both legislation and our insurers together with Portable Appliance Testing and emergency lighting testing.
- vi) Lifts, pressure vessels, safety line, chimney maintenance - checks are carried in accordance with best practice.
- vii) Lightning Conductors – checked in accordance with best practice.
- viii) Routine inspection and repair/maintenance of assets including tree stock, playground stock, railings and structures, footpaths and roads etc.
- ix) Testing and maintenance of generators, air conditioning and mechanical services equipment.
- x) Glass and glazing assessment.

NB: The above summary is not an exhaustive list of statutory inspections/maintenance arrangements.

## 6. The Current Estate

6.1 The Council owns a broad variety of over 186 properties (buildings) ranging from crematoria to sports centres to industrial premises. As previously indicated the Council's property assets are divided into two portfolios – the operational and non-operational portfolio – see below: -

### Operational assets

6.2 In broad terms this is property that is held, occupied, used, or contracted to be used on behalf of the authority in the direct delivery of services for which it has a responsibility, whether statutory or discretionary or for the service of strategic objectives of the authority. This includes 'Community Assets' which are delivering wider benefits of the community and the wider Council objectives.

6.3 This category includes (not exhaustive list):

- Castle House
- Knutton Lane depot
- Jubilee 2 Health & Wellbeing Centre
- The Museum/Art Gallery
- Crematorium and Cemeteries
- Land associated with operational property
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Historic Buildings/Monuments
- Allotments
- Sports facilities and pitches
- Community Centres
- Off-street car parks (non-fee-paying)
- Structures bridges, watercourses etc.
- CCTV infrastructure

### Non-Operational Assets

6.4 These property assets are those held by the Council but not directly occupied, used, or concerned in the delivery of services, although they are likely to align with the authority's strategic objectives. Examples in this category (list not exhaustive) mainly related to

commercial land and property, leased/rented to other parties, and generating income which include:

- Town Centre Retail Premises
- Industrial Units
- Offices
- Ground Leases
- Market
- Town Centre Car Parks (fee paying)

## **7. Key Objectives and Priorities**

### **a. Asset Management Priorities**

- Lease Renewals / Rent Reviews Backlog. As with most local authorities across the country, there is a percentage of the non-operational portfolio where leases are holding over and need to be reviewed and renewed and there are also a number of lease renewals outstanding. Many lease renewals will have been purposely left alone, to avoid tenants requesting re-gears where the rent is inevitably reduced. It is in a landlord's best interest therefore to get the timing right on when to press the tenant on rent reviews (subject to lease terms).
- There is an aspiration (subject to funding) to introduce regular building condition surveys on operational buildings on a rolling basis. The condition, sufficiency and suitability of the estate, and the associated performance measures are essential in enabling strategic decision making. This is a continual assessment process, and will inform budget setting facilitating improved service delivery, energy efficiency, and compliance with statutory requirements.
- Greater emphasis will be placed on rationalisation, refurbishment and re-use of the portfolio to deliver efficiency savings.

### **b. Regular Performance Analysis and Management**

- The Council should re-assess processes to maximise revenue opportunities, particularly in relation to asset management.
- There is a requirement to review all non-operational assets and the processes involved in managing investment assets and maintaining operational assets.

- Disposal of none or low income generating properties could deliver capital receipts for reinvestment in the Capital programme.
- Consideration must be given to under-utilised and unsuitable operational assets to determine opportunities for re-use, investment, regeneration or disposal. For example, the Council currently owns a number of small and outdated unused buildings such as public conveniences across the borough and consideration needs to be given on what should happen to these assets.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1 The Council constantly consults residents and key stakeholders on a wide range of issues. The aim being to become more accountable to our customers and to make our decision making processes more transparent. Communication on the challenges both in terms of policy and service delivery and finance is something that the Council is striving to deliver.

### **Consultation Arrangements on Future Disposals**

8.3 The primary purpose of the consultation on potential freehold land disposals is to identify any physical, technical or other constraints that might affect the scope/opportunity for alternative use or development being pursued. The outcome of such consultation exercises, taken together with desktop technical assessments, allows the Council as a landowner to consider the latter approach. Importantly it is considered that the Town Planning processes (Local Plan and Planning Applications) should consider the appropriateness of land or property being developed or used for alternative purposes rather than the Council as landowner making potentially subjective judgements.

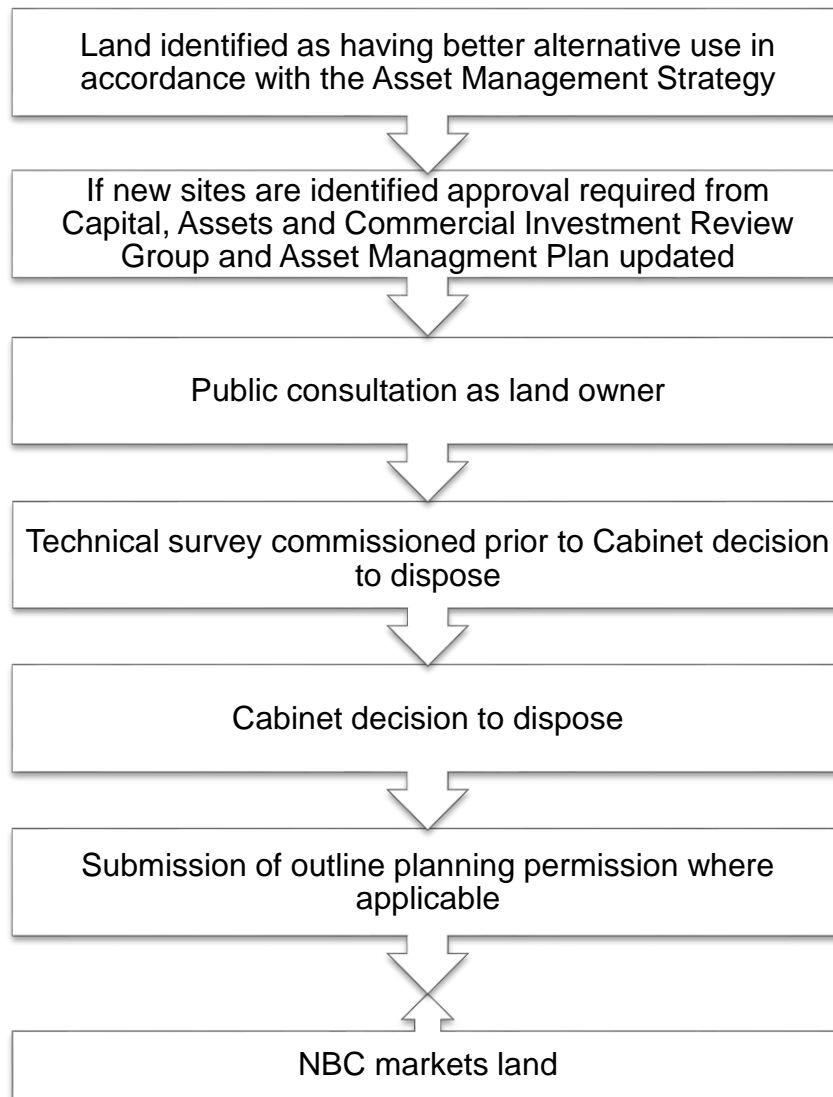
8.4 The consultation process approach involves Ward councillors being notified prior to the start of the process; notices being placed on site and; the adjacent property owners being notified, along with the Parish/Town Council, where relevant. The consultation timetable is set out below. This arrangement is considered to be generally proportionate and appropriate to the majority of sales of both land and property.

8.5 Property Description Consultation Approach

| <b>Property Description</b>  | <b>Local members<br/>(prior to general<br/>public)</b> | <b>General public</b>    |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Publicly accessible open space >0.5 ha.  | 3 weeks  | 6 weeks                  |
| Publicly accessible open space <0.5 ha.  | 3 weeks  | 3 weeks                  |
| Grazing / agricultural land >1 ha.   | 3 weeks  | 3 weeks                  |
| Grazing / agricultural land <1 ha.   | 2 weeks  | 2 weeks                  |
| Operational estate with active community use   | 2 weeks  | 4 weeks                  |
| Commercial, retail and industrial premises and land designated for a particular purpose i.e industrial | No consultation required                               | No consultation required |
| Incidental areas <0.1 ha of land adjacent to neighbouring property                                     | No consultation required                               | No consultation required |

8.6 There will however be some circumstances in respect of certain disposals, such as the disposal of disused public toilets, where a public consultation process will not be necessary or may be scaled to a more proportionate level. Other examples could include land or property where the future use is consistent with the present use (e.g. a shop premises in a shopping parade) where there is unlikely to be any public interest at stake. The approach to consultation in each case will seek to ensure that any public/stakeholder consultation is proportionate to the particular disposal.

**Typical freehold land disposal process in respect of sites that require consultation above in 8.5**



**NB. Attention is drawn to the council's proposed approach to consultation as both land owner and as local planning authority.**

## 9. Operational and Non-Operational Portfolio Strategy Vision

- 9.1 Our 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.
- 9.2 This will be achieved through:
- Generation of service efficiencies [Operational Estate (O)]
  - Generation of new income streams [Non-Operational Estate (N/O)]
  - Maximising existing revenue streams [N/O]
  - Effective procurement and contract management [O&N/O]
  - Prudent investment in income generating assets [N/O]
  - Strategic asset development [O&N/O]
- 9.3 Generating income through commercial activity that can be re-invested in local priorities, services, and improvements for our residents.
- 9.4 Building strong working relationships with public, private and third sector partners to maximise collaboration and generate efficiencies.
- 9.5 Embedding a commercial culture within the council and ensure that our staff are equipped with the skills they need to operate in a more commercial environment.
- 9.6 Supporting the council in delivering the council plan and growth agenda as a key pillar of the medium-term financial strategy and our goal of financial self-sufficiency.
- 9.7 Optimising the council's use of technology and support our digital agenda to enable new, more efficient and flexible ways of working and interacting with customers and residents.

## 10. Arrears / Tenant Debt Policy

- 10.1 As the Covid pandemic has hit small to medium sized businesses hard, this has had a knock-on effect to the Council's tenant debt / arrears levels. Adding the cost-of-living crisis and heightened inflation to this has increased current tenant debt levels above average.
- 10.2 That said, if the Council was to take an aggressive stance on arrears at this stage, that could lead to increased business closures and that will not benefit the Council in the medium to long term.



- 10.3 Therefore the approach to this increased level of debt must be well balanced, so as to provide an appropriate level of support, whilst remaining reasonably assertive and finding positive solutions for all stakeholders.
- 10.4 In July 2023, Cabinet approved a new Debt Recovery Policy.

## **11 Acquisition and Disposal Policy**

- 11.1 The objectives to be achieved from any asset acquisition are that it should provide one or more of the following benefits and that the benefits are more valued than the cost of acquisition:
- a demonstrable contribution towards the delivery of the Council's priorities and the provision of its services;
  - a strategic acquisition for redevelopment or tactical purposes;
  - to facilitate economic development; or
  - to generate revenue income.
- 11.2 Where surplus capacity in property or land is identified, its future use or disposal will be considered in accordance with the Council's priorities and within the planning framework. The opportunity to share with partner organisations will also be explored as part of the options appraisal process.
- 11.3 Where property is proposed for disposal, consideration will also be given to the consequences of the piece of land or property not being subject to the Council's control in terms of standard of care, maintenance etc., by the inclusion, where appropriate, of covenants in the contract to maintain the required standards of care.
- 11.4 Options appraisals for capital investment or disposal will include whole life costings. These are the systematic consideration of all relevant costs, revenues and performance associated with the acquisition and ownership of an asset over its physical, economic, functional, service or design life.
- 11.5 The strategic approach to asset management planning will assist in the development of a more comprehensive and co-ordinated medium to long term capital budget strategy and is an important aspect in the planning of the Council's resources in delivering its ambitions and priorities.

## 12. Planned Capital Works and Projects

(The current position in respect of following planned capital works and projects, asset disposals and other projects, which build on the previous Strategy, are set out in the Asset Plan Table at Appendix A)

### 12.1 Land Adjacent to Keele Cemetery

There are plans to install a solar energy installation on Council owned land that is adjacent to Keele Cemetery, this project is currently in the planning stage.

### 12.2 Ryecroft

Ryecroft is the site of former Civic Offices and the former Sainsburys supermarket and car park. The Council is to redevelop this site and the proposals are set out below:

12.3.1 A new multi-storey car park (Castle car park) on the western third of the site will be open in early January 2025 as the first element of the wider Ryecroft redevelopment plans. This is being partially funded by the Future High Street's fund

12.3.2 A planning application has been submitted for the development of new residential. Aparthotel and commercial units for the middle section of the wider site, through our development partner Capital&Centric, who will own and operate the development upon completion. The land / structure will be sold to the developer.

12.3.3 McCarthy Stone have purchased the last remaining section of the wider site (at its easter corner) for an over 55 yr old residential development and a planning application has been submitted for this.

### 12.3 York Place Shopping Centre (Astley Place)

The Council acquired the York Place shopping centre in early 2022 to facilitate the delivery of the Future High Street fund regeneration proposals and improvements to the town centre. The centre was emptied of tenants by March 2024 and a partial demolition leaving the main structural elements (columns and floors) exposed for developing upon – saving costs, programme and reducing the carbon footprint of the new development. Our development partner, Capital&Centric, have submitted a planning application for a residential development with a commercial square on the ground floor, and will own and operate the development. The land / structure will be sold to the developer.

### 12.4 Midway Car Park

Upon completion of the Castle car park on the Ryecroft site in early January 2025, our development partners, Capital&Centric, will develop the existing structure into residential

units, again by retaining the structural frame (as with York Place above). A planning application has been submitted for this and the developer will own and operate this development upon completion. The land / structure will be sold to the developer.

### 12.5 Carbon Capture Areas

As part of the Council's Sustainable Environmental Strategy, approved by the Council in December 2020, there is a desire to create Carbon Capture Areas within the Borough. These will consist of 60 Council owned green spaces saved for tree planting which is taking place as part of the wider Urban Tree Planting Strategy. To date four phases have been completed and a further phase is planned for Winter 2023.

## 13. Asset Disposals

### 13.1 Knutton

One of the major Newcastle Town Deal projects is to master plan parts of Knutton, The former clinic was acquired and subsequently demolished along with the adjacent community Centre. It is proposed that this along with the site of the former Knutton Recreation Centre be redeveloped for both residential and industrial purposes. This involves disposing of land to Staffordshire County Council to extend its enterprise centre, the building of a new village hall which will remain in the Borough Council's ownership and the disposal of the remainder of the land for residential development. These land transactions will be completed early January 2025.

As part of this masterplan a new football changing facility is being built at the Wammy. The Council will retain ownership of this asset is leasing the new facility to a community group.

### 13.2 Parkhouse West

This site was approved in the last Asset Management Strategy for disposal for industrial development purposes and has been sold to a local company who have submitted a planning application for a sustainable industrial park. Works are due to commence in mid-2025.

### 13.3 Town Centre Car Parks

Once Castle car park has been completed, the car parks listed below will potentially become surplus to requirements and therefore alternative uses for these brownfield sites may need to be considered. These will be consulted on in accordance with the consultation process as set out in Section 8 above. Additionally these sites have been put

forward to the Planning Authority for consideration as potential bonus/windfall sites within the new local Plan and will be subject to review as to their merits under the planning framework, prior to their reclassification and potential disposal.

Consultation as part of the draft local plan has prompted petitions to be raised particularly regarding the significance of the Hassell Street car park for local businesses. Reflecting this, Officers will be required to bring forward proposals for development which include the provision of some public parking spaces at Hassell Street and others as appropriate.

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Blackfriars car park, Newcastle         | 0.32 acres |
| Blackfriars car park, Newcastle         | 0.21 acres |
| Hassell Street, Newcastle ST5 1AY       | 0.32 acres |
| Cherry Orchard Newcastle ST5 2UB        | 0.30 acres |
| Goose Street Newcastle ST5 2EA          | 0.84 acres |
| King Street Newcastle ST5 1HX           | 1.39 acres |
| Bankside/ Well Street Newcastle ST5 1BP | 0.10 acres |

#### 13.4 **Former Keele Golf Course (Lyme Park)**

As per the previous Asset Management Strategy, the former Keele Golf Course site is again listed for possible disposal. The site is currently classified as Green Belt land. Prior to any Council build out and/or sale to third party developers this classification will need to be changed to allow for any residential development. As noted within the Strategy in previous sections, the Local Plan has been submitted for examination and it is expected to be adopted following an Inquiry towards the end of 2025. The proposal is for 900 homes and a new country park be created, but until the Green Belt classification is amended or not, no such development or sale can be considered.

#### 13.5 **Land at Glenwood Close, Silverdale**

This 0.69 acre site is designated as low quality and low value in the latest Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy therefore given it has little value as open space alternative uses need to be considered.

## 14. Other Projects

### 14.1 Kidsgrove

14.1.1 There are plans for the creation of a shared service hub in Kidsgrove. This is on land partly owned by the Council that is currently used as a car park (Meadows Road Car Park) and an adjacent piece of privately owned land which the Council is looking to acquire (with town deal monies). NBC will own the building, but Kidsgrove Town Council will lease it from the Council.

14.1.2 It is proposed that Kidsgrove Town Hall be refurbished to create modern lettable office space. This is to be funded through shared prosperity.

### 14.2 Creation of a Circus Heritage Centre.

A unit on Merial Street in the Council's ownership has been refurbished and the Philip Astley CIC occupy the unit. Plans for a relocation are under review.

## 15. Government Funding

The Council is in receipt of government funds which include Town Deal, Future High Street and the Shared Prosperity Funds. Some of these funding streams directly impact Council assets, the major schemes are set out in section 12-14 of this Strategy. The remainder of these projects are set out below

### 15.1 Kidsgrove Town Deal

15.1A Construction of an access road has been completed at Chatterley Valley, on privately owned land.

15.1B Refurbishment of Kidsgrove Railway Station and creation of a transport hub is also planned. The land areas involved in this project are owned by Network Rail / operated by East Midlands Railway.

15.1C There are a number of planned improvements that will be made to the Canal towpath on land that is owned by Canal & River Trust. (Some shared prosperity fund is also to be used for this).

15.1D There will be a series of interventions for community based facilities – at The Kings School, on the Meadows, one way traffic and associated landscaping on the Meadows, and highway improvements on King Street.

## **15.2 Newcastle Town Deal**

- 15.2A **Digital Infrastructure Project** – This project has been tendered and work will commence in early 2025 to provide super-fast broadband and community digital hubs.
- 15.2B **Sustainable Transport Solutions** - A mix of measures are being introduced in regards to public transport. A new bus entrance will be completed in early 2025 at Keele University (on land owned by the University), installation of real time passenger information at Newcastle Bus station have been completed and plans to improve bus service reliability with Keele University.
- 15.2C **Electric Vehicle charging points** are now installed at the new Castle Car Park at Ryecroft .
- 15.2D **Transformation of Key Gateway Sites** – The partial demolition and redevelopment of the Midway multi storey car park is planned as set out above. The former Zanzibar nightclub site (that is in the ownership of Aspire Housing) has been demolished and it is intended to be replaced with residential development, along with approximately 5 small enterprise units which the Council will own and manage. Works on the enterprise units will commence in mid 2025.
- 15.2E **Digital Society** – The Town Deal will fund the conversion of a town centre building for use by Keele University for a learning / enterprise space, and will open in January 2025. The building is owned by Keele University.
- 15.2F **Cross Street Chesterton** – The plan for this project is that the Town Deal will fund the re-development of the current housing land that is owned by Aspire housing in this area.

## **15.3 Future High Street Fund**

- 15.3A A public realm and market improvement project has been underway during Autumn 2024 with the completion of the overall scheme with a large digital screen and seating to be installed in March 2025.

## **15.4 Shared Prosperity Fund**

- 15.4A Improvements are planned to Clough Hall Park, in line with the existing masterplan
- 15.4B The creation of a Homeless Hub is underway having purchased a suitable property which will be refurbished for the specific use in early 2025.

## 16. Completed Projects

- 16.1 The refurbishment of Kidsgrove Sports Centre was completed using monies provided by Kidsgrove Town Deal. It was opened in Summer 2022 and is managed by Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group.

## 17. Completed Significant Land Disposals

| Address                                       | Disposal Date |
|---|---------------|
| Freehold sale – Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads  | Mar-21        |
| Freehold sale- 20 Sidmouth Ave, Newcastle     | Nov -21       |
| Freehold sale – Apedale, Chesterton           | Nov -21       |
| Covenant release – Midway, Newcastle          | Dec-21        |
| Freehold sale – Market Drayton Road Newcastle | Apr-22        |
| Freehold sale – Knype Way, Bradwell           | Jan-23        |
| Freehold sale - Park House West               | Oct-24        |
| Freehold sale – Ryecroft Site (Western edge)  | Oct-24        |

The total value of the above disposals from March 2021 is circa £7.3m

## 18. The Market

- 18.1 In respect of the objective of being a town centre for all, diversification of the type of market is key. As such we currently host General Markets each week, Antiques Markets each week, Artisan market each month, up to 3 Vegan Festivals, up to 3 Bring your dog to town Markets, 6 vinyl collectors fairs and one-off events such as Young Traders Market and Charity Fairs.
- 18.2 The Council works in partnership with Newcastle-under-Lyme BID to deliver its portfolio of events such as the Castle Classics retro car show, outdoor music and food and drink festivals. As a licensed premises we are able to host licensable events.
- 18.3 The market is cashless for collection of stall rents and pitches will soon be able to be booked and paid for online. This will make resource savings and embraces the digital payment and banking trend.

- 18.4 The market provides a platform for fledgling businesses to test and grow their business model with a view to potentially taking on a Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre “bricks and mortar” business premises.
- 18.5 Our footfall figures and performance indicators show that we have made a significant difference to visitor numbers on our new event and trader-run markets. We have rationalised and improved our fixed stall provision, and created more flexibility by purchasing a stock of temporary stalls. This, alongside improvements to the public realm to create a flexible events space, continues to rejuvenate the general market and market infrastructure to ensure we retain a contemporary market offer.

## **19. Community Centres**

- 19.1 The Council is continuing to explore options for the long-term sustainability and management of the Community Centres in partnership with the community and voluntary sector and to review the management arrangements linked to these options and implement the proposals. The digital infrastructure project through the Town Deal (see above) and the placement of community digital hubs within these buildings should assist in the long term viability of some centres.
- 19.2 To date four community centres have been leased on 25 year leases to community groups, whereby over a 5 year period the maintenance and running costs are transferred to the community organisation thereby reducing the Council’s liabilities. In addition it allows the management committees greater freedoms to pursue external funding. Negotiations are ongoing in relation to two other community centres.

## **20. Further Reading & Associated Publications**

- The Corporate Strategy
- The Commercial Strategy
- The Capital Strategy
- The Financial Strategy
- The Digital Agenda
- The Carbon Plan
- The Council's Constitution
- The Local Plan (including Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy)
- The Playing Pitch Strategy
- The Debt Recovery Policy



- The Cushman Report

## Further Information

For further information on the Asset Strategy, please contact:

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### APPENDIX A ASSET PLAN

| SITE LOCATION   | SITE AREA (Acres) | CURRENT POSITION   |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Land Adjacent to Keele Cemetery                                   | 35.59             | Proposal to install a solar array on this land. This project is in the planning stage.   |
| Lowlands Road, Ravensdale   | 7.70(developable) | Industrial development land, under offer and subject to an option to purchase  |
| Plot E Apedale Road, Chesterton                                   | 4.42              | Industrial development land approved in the last Asset Management Strategy for approval. This site has been on the market for a number of years. There have been a number of offers but none have progressed through to completion. The site is being marketed |
| Site of former Recreation Centre, Knutton                         | 5.31              | Masterplan approved by Cabinet. It is proposed that this site be developed for residential and industrial purposes   |
| Site of former community centre and clinic, Knutton Lane, Knutton | 1.72              | Masterplan approved by Cabinet. It is proposed that this site be developed for residential purposes  |
| Former Keele Golf Course  | 150               | Plans are being considered for the potential development of the former Keele Golf Course site that currently sits in the Green Belt, which could involve Council build out and / or sale to third party developers. The Local                                  |

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
|   |      | Plan is currently out for consultation of which this site forms part. The proposal is for 900 homes.   |
| Ryecroft  | 4.18 | Planning permission has been approved to develop a new multi-storey car park (Castle car park) on the western third of the site.   |
| York Place Shopping Centre  | 0.72 | Cabinet approved the demolition of York Place in June 2023. A further report in respect of the redevelopment will be considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2023  |
| Midway Car Park   | n/a  | An option report will be considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2023.   |
| Blackfriar's Car Park   | 0.53 | The site is partially vacant and partially used as a public car park. Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered            |
| Part of King Street carpark   | 1.39 | Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered for part of this car park  |
| Cherry Orchard car park   | 0.30 | Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered for this car park  |
| Part of Goose Street car park   | 0.84 | Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered for part of this car park  |
| Hassell Street car park   | 0.32 | Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered for this car park  |
| Garden Street/<br>Bankside car park   | 0.10 | Once Castle Car Park is completed this brownfield site will potentially become surplus to requirements and alternative uses may need to be considered for this car park  |
| Land at Glenwood Close, Silverdale  | 0.69 | This site is designated as low quality and low value in the latest Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy therefore given it has little value as open space alternative uses need to be considered.                              |
| Land site of former mortuary, Newcastle Cemetery  | 0.23 | Mortuary demolished June 2020. Public consultation complete. Options for residential development to be considered  |
| Sites approved in previous Asset Management Strategy (Low value or little or no interest) |      |  |
| Cotswold Avenue, Knutton  | 0.44 | Grassland area not included in latest Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy for review. Site offered to Housing Associations, but no interest.  |
| Kinnersley Street, Kidsgrove  | 1.60 | Site not included in latest Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy for review. Grass and tree covered area on very steep slope. Topography to be analyzed to assess which parts maybe developable only likely to be a small part |
|   | 0.36 | Surplus brownfield land at the rear of Kidsgrove Town Hall. Poor access to the site  |

|  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| Rear of Kidsgrove Town Hall, Liverpool Road. Kidsgrove |       |   |
| Victoria Street, Chesterton                            | 0.04  | Developability of site to be explored   |
| Silverdale Road, Newcastle                             | 1.38  | Brownfield site, former plant nursery which is located on the flood plain   |
| Brick Kiln Lane, Chesterton                            | 11.76 | Grassland area not included in latest Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy for review. Third party access to the site is required |
| Former Public Conveniences, Merial Street, Newcastle   | n/a   | Closed in 2015, alternative uses being considered once development of Ryecroft is underway  |
| Pepper Street Public Conveniences, Newcastle           | n/a   | Closed alternative uses to be considered  |