

Civic Pride Strategy (Empowering Our Communities) 2025 – 2028



NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Foreword

Cllr Simon Tagg – Leader of Newcastle Borough Council



At the heart of how we work at Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council is listening to our communities and finding ways to give residents power over their own lives and the neighbourhoods they live in. This is central to our Civic Pride approach in Newcastle-Under-Lyme.

Our community is active across our Borough with residents, partner organisations, schools, the college and the university, businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors making a difference every day

In 2024, Staffordshire County Council adopted the Communities Strategy (add link here), reaffirming how important the energy of the community is in setting the direction of how the County Council works and moving into implementation to take work forward. The vision was shaped by engagement and feedback, including stories from residents, partners, businesses and others about what happens in their local communities, including Newcastle, and has been adapted to help shape our strategy for the Borough.

Building on and linking with this work, we are now launching a Borough Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy, which will set out the areas we will focus on as we make progress, respond to feedback, and continue to listen to our communities. The Strategy will be a dynamic document, evolving as we move forward.

Our priorities will mirror those in the County Council's Communities Strategy and will focus on the Great Places Where We Live, our Connected Communities and The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts.

This strategy is the first step of our journey to support residents to achieve the lifestyles and local neighbourhoods that they want to see.

Thank you for being involved, and for being at the heart of everything we do.

Introduction

In every part of the Borough Council, our councillors, staff, volunteers and services interact with residents and partner organisations every day. It's important to do this in the right way. We know that when we work together with residents and communities, outcomes for everyone are improved. This is why working with our communities is central to our [Council Plan](#) (2022-2026). This strategy is the next step forward for this collaborative work.

The strategy has been developed by listening to what our communities have told us, and hearing from people who live in, work in, study in and enjoy Newcastle. People have talked about what they do to help themselves and each other in the Borough, and what the Council could do differently. This has informed the first iteration of our Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 2028.

A huge amount of work takes place across the Borough Council to improve how we work with communities, from finding better and more convenient ways to provide Information, Advice and Guidance to residents, to developing new forms of engagement that put residents at the centre. This is the first time we have brought all of this together into a strategy to make sure that this work helps us make progress with our collective vision over the next 3 years.

Integral to this strategy is our Delivery Plan, which sets out the practical actions we will take together with our community. This translates our high level objectives into real actions our residents expect, and will show what difference we have collectively made in the future. We will review progress against the Delivery Plan every year, and conduct a reflection in 2028, taking soundings from our partners and residents to check that the direction is still relevant and delivering the right outcomes as we prepare for any changes Local Government Reorganisation may bring.



Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is intended to guide how Newcastle Borough Council works with its communities, how its communities can be involved in decision-making and local service delivery, and to support our workforce and partners. It is to provide clarity and guidance for:



Our Vision

Communities are at the heart of everything we do. We will work better with residents and partners to help people get more involved and make a local difference.

<p>Great Places Where We Live (#Pride in NuL – safe, clean, friendly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our work with partners to help people feel safer and more included within their neighbourhoods • Help residents get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable • Help people to have better access to our town and neighbourhood centres by working with Staffordshire County Council on a Local Transport Plan • Engage with the County Council and our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better
<p>Connected Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector • Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent • Connect people of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place • Support people to become digitally included, informed and connected across the Borough
<p>The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally • Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved, and support officers to understand how they can help • Support all our councillors to access the local information they need



Engagement Process

Staffordshire County Council engaged with Staffordshire's communities and partners, including Newcastle, from November 2023 to February 2024 using a multi-method approach which involved:

An online residents survey

A paper residents survey

A dedicated partner survey

Face to face conversations with targeted groups of people

A social media campaign

In addition, the Borough Council continually engages with communities in Newcastle via elected members and the Customer Hub, with our partners in the Newcastle Partnership, through the Public Consultations pages on our website, and through our day to day interactions with the community we serve.



Feedback Themes

This engagement was crucial in helping us start to understand what matters to our residents and partners, what they already do in our local area, and what we could do differently to help them do more. We learned:

Community: Residents see their community as where they live. People consider their town or village as their community. Identity is based in local place. Fewer residents identify with other communities, such as groups or clubs they are members of, workplaces, or places of education, however younger people place a greater emphasis on online communities.

Most Proud: Residents have pride in their communities. People are most proud of the friendliness/neighbourliness. The sense that people look out for each other, neighbourliness, friendliness, and community spirit are sources of pride.

Matters Most: Safety and neighbourliness. Safety/low crime matters greatly. Feelings of safety associated with low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, along with neighbourliness or community spirit, are the things that matter to people in their communities, along with a clean and well-maintained green environment, and the availability of community groups, activities and events.

Improve: Infrastructure and transport. Residents think that better infrastructure would improve their community. Residents identify infrastructure and maintenance (roads and pavements) along with the need for better public transport as the things that could improve their communities. Transport was an important priority, particularly regarding accessing local amenities, and seeing this as necessary for a thriving local area.

Involvement: Residents support each other through mostly informal neighbourliness. Residents want to be more involved in local decision making. Residents feel that broadly, people in their community do help them out from time to time, mainly via neighbours helping them with small tasks. This has clear links to the idea of small actions making a bigger difference.

Done Differently: Residents would like to help out further. Residents want the Council to communicate more. They are already engaged where they are able, but they would also like to help out further given the right opportunities of additional support. Better information, advice or communication about opportunities that are available are something that would encourage people more. Residents would also like to see the council setting an example, getting more involved and listening to communities.

Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme

We have analysed the feedback and learning from the County Council engagement and considered this alongside our experiences from other community work across the Borough Council.

We have also shared learning with partners via Newcastle Partnership Board and our pilot Civic Pride events, and learned from what they could tell us, which has helped test our thinking.

This has helped us to validate and agree the three overarching and ambitious aims set out in the County Council Communities Strategy for our work with communities in Newcastle. These will help us achieve our collective vision and set our focus for the next 3 years of the journey.





Great Places Where We Live

(#Pride in NuL – safe, clean, friendly)

Strengthen our work with partners and residents to help people feel safer and more included within their communities differentiate the objectives somehow.

People told us that feeling safe within their community and connections to other people were the things that mattered to them the most.

We have recognised this within our strategy and will continue to work with partners such as the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, our Local Policing Team, the County Council and Newcastle Partnership to support these aims.

Help residents to get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable.

People told us that they would like to take a more active role in maintaining their local environment. The Borough Council Sustainable Environment Strategy sets out our vision to become carbon neutral as a Council by 20230, and as a wider Borough by 2050. The County Council Climate Action Fund supports community activity in this area and gives a great starting point. Our teams will work with partners and community groups to identify and provide more opportunities for people to get involved.

Help people to have better access to thriving local town centres and neighbourhoods, by working with Staffordshire County Council on developing a Local Transport Plan.

People told us how important it was to access their local area through well maintained roads and pavements, using a range of inclusive, sustainable and safe transport modes. We will support the County Council in writing the Local Transport Plan which will support the Government's target to de-carbonise the transport network by 2050 and play a key role in helping our communities to thrive.

Engage with our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better.

We also know that lots of other organisations understand our communities. It is important that we continue to work together, sharing whatever knowledge and resources we can, to help us work even better.





Connected Communities

Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

A vital part of our work with communities is with organisations in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. It remains important that we help the sector to thrive and be sustainable, so this is a key priority within the Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy.

Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent.

People told us that they can find it hard to get information about activities in their community or about how they could get more involved. We know there is a lot of information available, but it can be hard to know which information is correct and up to date. We can build further on great work we have already done such as our Information, Advice and Guidance pages on our website, Citizen Access/MyAccount and our links with communications teams in partner organisations. If we can make the system simpler, we think this could help residents be and stay independent.

Connect People of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place.

A lot of work has already taken place across the Borough Council and with our partners. Whenever people need help we try to link them to support which is nearer to home, and which helps them get on with their lives. This is why encouraging our communities to help themselves and each other is already an important part of our Council Plan.

Support people to become digitally included, informed and connected across the Borough.

We already support people to stay involved with the council through digital channels, from social media and emails, all the way through to digital ways of getting residents views on things. Digital can help us to do more of this, but we know that not everybody wants to engage with us in this way and we don't want to leave anyone behind. However, if we can support more people who would like to, then we can have better conversations together, and they can stay better informed.





The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts

Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally.

People would clearly appreciate better communication and information from the Council. They are also clear on how important their very local area is to them. Across the council we are already engaging with residents in new creative ways. However, we want to make our engagement better every time.

Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved, and support officers to understand how they can help.

Working with communities is already a key part of our Council Plan and we have a long history of fantastic work with residents and partners which was highlighted in our Corporate Peer Challenge report. However, there is more work to do. This strategy will focus on making sure everyone in Newcastle Borough Council understands how their role, and every decision we make, impacts on the Borough's communities – and how we might be able to link up work and make things simpler and better.

Support all our councillors to access the local information they need.

Councillors across the Borough are vital to the success of this strategy. Not just Borough councillors, but county, town and parish councillors too. As local champions who understand the patch but who also understand the strategic work going on, they are the people who can join it all up. We need to ensure they have everything they need to do their essential job.



Other Key Work and How this Strategy Relates

The Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy is closely related to other major pieces of work across the Borough and County Councils. Many other organisations and agencies are also working with communities differently too, and we will develop our next steps in partnership with them

**Newcastle Borough
Council – Council
Plan 2022-2026**

**Staffordshire
County Council
Communities
Strategy 2022-2026**

**Newcastle
Partnership –
Workplan and
Community Safety
Partnership Action
Plan**

**Newcastle Borough
Council Sustainable
Environment
Strategy**

**Newcastle Borough
Council Technology
Strategy**

**Newcastle Borough
Council - One
Green Council, One
Digital Council, One
Commercial Council**



Measuring Our Impact/What Will Be Different

We have been working differently with communities for a number of years but this strategy now gives us our long term vision for where we want to get to and marks the start of the next phase. An integral part of this strategy is the Delivery Plan which sets out what we will do to deliver each of the objectives and has clear milestones and implementation dates for each one. We will review this regularly, but most importantly we will not stop listening and talking to residents and partners about this work. The strategy will guide, co-ordinate and set the terms for everything we do with our residents and partners. It is essential that we continue to review this to make sure residents still feel we are going in the right direction.

We will monitor milestones under each of the objectives of the strategy. These will be reviewed annually but will be especially important at the review in 2028 when we will ask partners for views on progress and reflect on feedback provided by our communities in relation to the following themes:

- **Do residents feel safer in their communities, and feel the highways and transport in their area are improving**
- **Do residents feel better informed about where to find opportunities to get involved, and are more of them doing so**
- **Are residents and partners telling us they feel more engaged and that the Borough Council is more visible to them**
- **Are VCSE partners telling us that our systems are evolving and becoming easier for communities to get involved, with capacity being built.**
- **Is our information, advice and guidance being used regularly and increasing over time**

Long term	Mid-point review	Annually	All the time
This is a 3 year plan, so that we have a vision for the long term	After 1.5 years or sooner we will review progress and update the Delivery Plan	We will review our progress every year to make sure we are delivering what we aim to	We will try to maintain a more consistent dialogue with residents about our work with communities in the future

Delivery Plan 2025-2028

Great Places Where We Live (#Pride in NuL – safer, cleaner, welcoming)

Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Strengthen our work with partners and residents to help people feel safer and more included within their communities	Deliver the Community Safety Action Plan	NuLBC/Staffs Police	Ongoing
	Hold regular Civic Pride events across the Borough	NuLBC/SCC/Staffs Police/Aspire	Ongoing annual programme
Help residents to get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable	Deliver Newcastle in Bloom local competitions	NuLBC	Annually in June
	Support community volunteering in green spaces	NuLBC	Ongoing
Help people to have better access to thriving local town centres and neighbourhoods by working with Staffordshire County Council on a Local Transport Plan	Deliver Town Deal, FHSF and UKSPF projects	NuLBC and Town Deal Boards	2025 – 2028
	Local Plan	NuLBC	2025
	Digital Infrastructure	NuLBC	Ongoing
	Local Transport Plan	SCC	Ongoing
Engage with our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better	Deliver Placemaking Programme Action Plan	NuL BID/NuLBC	Ongoing
	Promote Civic Pride in Newcastle-under-Lyme	Newcastle Partnership Board/ elected members/Town and Parish Councils/Support Staffordshire	Ongoing



Delivery Plan 2025-2028

Connected Communities

Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector	Host Newcastle Partnership Board meetings Facilitate Newcastle Partnership Board workshop to identify priorities and update workplan	NuLBC NuLBC/Newcastle Partnership Board	Bi-monthly meeting June – October 2025
Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent	Continue to develop the Information, Advice and Guidance pages on the website	NuLBC	Ongoing
Connect people of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place	Support Staffordshire County Council Supportive Communities programme	SCC	Launched in April 2025
Support people to become digitally informed, included and connected across the Borough	Support Staffordshire County Council Supportive Communities Programme	SCC	Launched in April 2025

Delivery Plan 2025-2028

The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts			
Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally	Programme of "Ask the Leader" digital broadcasts Programme of face to face engagement events as part of Civic Pride days across the Borough Online engagement survey Civic Pride Online Community Panel	NuLBC NuLBC SCC/NuLBC NuLBC	Launch in July 2025 Launched in January 2025 Launched in January 2025 Launch in July 2025
Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved and support officers to understand how they can help	Regular feature in Team Talk and CastleNews Volunteering Scheme	NuLBC NuLBC	Ongoing Ongoing
Support all our councillors to access the local information they need	Members Area on Connexus	NuLBC	Ongoing



Additionally, each Service of the Council will progress the following initiatives:

Service	Policy/Strategy	Action/Project	Communications
Sustainable Environment	Grassland/Tree Management	Lyme Park Countryside Park; greenspace trail	Waste minimisation campaign
Planning	Planning policy and planning application decisions (healthy and vibrant town centres/protect built heritage and open spaces)	Work with property and land owners to add value to development proposals; use building control powers to ensure safety/accessibility and facilitate aesthetic improvements	Engage with communities on Local Plan proposals via road shows and online consultation
Commercial Delivery	Strategy for future cremated remains burial (Bradwell Crematorium extension)	Digital hubs in Community Centres; Knutton Village Hall	Town Deal newsletters; bereavement services customer information (memorial safety/tribute removal)
Regulatory	Partnership approach to supporting vulnerable people	Navigation House Hub	Energy efficiency/Staffordshire Warmer Homes campaigns
Legal and Governance	Governance support for town and parish councils	Civic and mayoral events/support for town centre enforcement	Promotion of local democracy to young people/promotion of social value procurement



Service	Policy/Strategy	Action/Project	Communications
Strategy, People and Performance	Council Plan to deliver community priorities and facilitate co-production of services	Better Health programme	Social Media campaign to enable improved interaction
Information Technology	Technology Strategy to deliver services to residents digitally	CRM/Customer Portal to improve resident access and communication	Promote digital connectivity to reduce digital divide
Finance	Capital Strategy to support community benefit and priorities	Setting budget to keep Council Tax low and support community priorities	Budget consultation for residents to have their say
Neighbourhood Delivery	Mobile Multi Functional operating model	PSPO enforcement/Great British Spring Clean/Safe Space	Publicity on enforcement successes