

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S **REPORT TO FINANCE, ASSETS AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

4 SEPTEMBER 2025

Report Title: Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 - 28

Submitted by: Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships; Community Safety and Wellbeing;
Sustainable Environment

Ward(s) affected: ALL

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To consider the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provide feedback in advance of adoption			
<u>Recommendation</u> That Committee: Considers the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provides feedback in advance of adoption			
<u>Reasons</u> To boost civic pride across the Borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly			

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2024, the Council launched its Civic Pride campaign which aims to boost pride across the borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly, with a week of action in Newcastle town centre, followed over the next few months by a varied programme in Kidsgrove, Loggerheads, Chesterton and Holditch, Crackley and Red Street, Audley, Bradwell and Porthill, Knutton and Cross Heath, Clayton and Westlands, Wolstanton and May Bank, Westbury Park and Northwood, Silverdale and Thistleberry.
- 1.2 The Clayton and Westlands event on 11th June also hosted the launch of the new £22,000 Civic Pride Investment Fund where elected members were allocated £500 each to support community priorities in their respective wards via a simple application process. The first round of applications saw a total of £5,500 awarded to 5 projects. Further events are planned for the remainder of 2025 in the other neighbourhoods in the Borough as well as a further 2 rounds of the Civic Pride Investment Fund.

- 1.3 Civic Pride aims to create a strong sense of belonging to, and pride in, our fantastic borough. It's a response to feedback from residents and captures a lot of the work that already goes on by the council and its partners – under a unified #PrideInNUL badge – and is also a call to arms for people of all ages to get involved.
- 1.4 One of the council's priorities is to create healthy, active and safe communities. As part of this area of work, the Council is committed to working closely with partners, and local groups, to make a positive difference in every part of the borough. Civic Pride is a great legacy from the Borough's 850th anniversary celebrations and aims to build on the fantastic community spirit and pride shown by residents in 2023.
- 1.5 Cabinet approved the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy for consultation at the meeting of 8 July 2025, which will provide a framework to guide our continuing work in this area and the Council has been consulting our communities and partners on the strategy since this date.

2. Issues

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 In 2024, Staffordshire County Council adopted the Communities Strategy, 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.
- 2.3 This strategy is the first step of our journey to support residents to achieve the lifestyles and local neighbourhoods that they want to see.
- 2.4 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.

- 2.5** 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.
- 2.6** 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 (IAG) 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.
- 2.7** Integral to this strategy is our Delivery Plan, which sets out the practical actions we will take together with our community under the themes of Great Places Where We Live, Connected Communities and the Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts. 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.
- 2.8** 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:
- Residents
 - Our staff and volunteers
 - Partner organisations (through Newcastle Partnership Board)
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - Organised voluntary, community and social enterprise groups
 - Children and young people
 - Students
 - Businesses
- The draft strategy is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 2.9** Consultation is in progress with this group of stakeholders to sense check the draft strategy before formally adopting it later this year (2025) subject to the feedback we receive. The consultation is running online for 6 - 8 weeks from July to September 2025.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1** That Committee considers the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provides feedback in advance of adoption.

4. Reasons

- 4.1** To boost civic pride across the Borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 No other options were considered.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Council has a duty to work with partners to deliver particular functions and can engage with the communities of the Borough to assist in shaping service delivery.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 It is intended that this strategy will have a positive impact on equality by providing opportunities for all Borough communities to engage in service design and delivery.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are significant staff resource implications in consulting on the draft strategy and progressing the actions in the Delivery Plan.
- 8.2 Each service area will need to adapt and flex workplans to enable delivery of the actions, and be mindful of how this fits with other pre-identified priorities.
- 8.3 Some actions also have financial implications which, wherever possible, will be absorbed within existing approved budget provision. Where this is not possible, further reports will be brought forward to explore funding options.
- 8.4 A Civic Pride Investment Fund of £22,000 has been approved in the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025/26 which invites applications up to a maximum of £500 from each ward member to support community projects which contribute to civic pride. The application form is available on the Civic Pride web page and the first round of applications resulted in 4 projects being approved, and a total of £5,500 being awarded.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 There is a risk of limited community and partner engagement with the Civic Pride campaign. Efforts will be made to promote the campaign and develop community ownership of local issues, including making funds available for local projects via the new Civic Pride Fund.
- 9.2 There is a risk of limited staff capacity impacting on the Council's ability to drive the strategy and deliver the actions in the Delivery Plan. Efforts will be made to balance competing priorities and support communities and members to take forward local actions.
- 9.3 There is a risk that Local Government Reorganisation could have a significant impact on the sustainability of the Civic Pride campaign in Newcastle. Options to mitigate this risk will be considered when more detail is known about the model of any future Council which covers the Borough.

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 ☒

Providing Information, Advice and Guidance to communities on service efficiencies and commercial opportunities are a key element of the strategy.

One Digital Council ☒

Access to digital services and considering digital exclusion issues are a key element of the strategy.

One Sustainable Council ☒

Supporting communities to be involved in managing green spaces and contributing to the Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030 are a key element of the strategy.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is not a key decision.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None

14. List of Appendices

14.1 Draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 - 28

15. Background Papers

15.1 Staffordshire County Council Communities Strategy 2024 - 29

