

**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Plan

2013 -14 to 2015 -16



Message

from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Gareth Snell



**Councillor
Gareth Snell**
Leader of the Council

The Newcastle Borough Council Plan serves as the basis for everything we do as a council. The services we provide to our residents and the way we go about improving the borough are all determined by this plan and is empowered by the mandate the current administration has from the people of the borough.

With bold and ambitious plans to make the borough the best it can be, the plan sets out what we hope to achieve over the next 3 years and how we are going to turn a plan into reality.

Councils continue to have their funding cut by Government and legislative changes to the responsibilities of local councils means there will be some tough decisions ahead in the near future. This plan demonstrates our commitment to protecting vital public services and addressing the needs of local people while keeping Council Tax as low as possible during these difficult times.

Overall this plan is everyone's plan. The outcomes and priorities are derived from the mandate the Labour Party received at the ballot box and reflect the promises we made to everyone. However, this plan is a living document and we want to encourage local people to help shape our borough by improving opportunities to get involved and have a real say in the decisions that affect their lives.

To ensure the success of the council and delivery of our Council Plan, we want to make it easier for everyone to find out about their council, talk to their councillors, help develop their local services, and help us tackle the issues that are really important to you.

***. . . using
resources well
to provide good
public services***

***. . . targeting
support for
those who need
it most***

***. . . local people
involved and
having a say***

Welcome

from the Chief Executive

We want to make the borough a better place to live, work and invest.

Our Newcastle Borough Council Plan sets out how the council will seek to achieve this over the next three years.

In these challenging economic times it is important that we use resources prudently and effectively. In producing this plan we have reviewed the way we do things and considered what is important for the borough.

Our plan focuses on doing those things which will deliver our priorities and ensure that we continue to deliver high quality services for our customers.



John Sellgren
Chief Executive

This Corporate Plan takes account of several drivers for change:-

- **Our area and its people**
- **The Welfare Reform Act**
- **Localism Act**
- **Our Local strategies**
- **Performance Management review**
- **The Way We Work**
- **Making good use of public money**



Our vision

.... is to create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe



We want Newcastle-under-Lyme to be a borough in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business. Moreover, we want the borough council to be an open, honest and transparent organisation which is accountable to local people and which, through co-operation with partners, will work together to improve where we all live. By trying to deliver better services, focused on the needs of local people, we aim to create a council which is responsive and in touch with the people it serves.

A borough of opportunity

We will 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.

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 support activities that will enable them to improve their health and quality of life.

“ safer place to live, work and visit with long-term crime rates falling over the last few years ”

Becoming a co-operative council which delivers high quality, community-driven, services.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is working towards being 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.

Priorities

A clean, safe and sustainable borough

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



**“ Newcastle
is a
co-operative
council ”**

**What is a
co-operative council?**

We are working to:-

- Bring more public services together so that people get what they need at the right place and the right time.
- Encourage more involvement from local people and our staff in planning and running services.
- Support our communities better and encourage people to do more to help their own communities.

Whilst we still face budget cuts, the council is making sure local people are more involved in reducing our costs and challenging what we spend.

We are involving the community and business leaders in developing our future plans, drawing on the skills and expertise that exists in the borough.

**Working with our
communities**

The Newcastle Partnership works with 11 Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) across the borough in offering opportunities for residents and communities to get involved in activities, engagement and decision-making in their area.

LAPs represent the Partnership’s established infrastructure for the delivery of locality working and offer communities enhanced and focused access to a range of partners in order to address and deliver against local priorities.



**... projects
taking place
in partnership
with the
community**

**... LAPs
or 'Friends of'
groups**

**... collaborative
working with
our strategic
partners**

**... partnerships
and commissioning
arrangements
with the
third sector**



Drivers for change

We have many things to consider when delivering a service to residents.

Our area and its people

Recently released figures from the 2011 Census tell us that Newcastle's population has grown by 1.5 per cent since 2001 and there are now an estimated 123,900 residents in the borough.

Our population is ageing, with about 14 per cent more residents aged over 60 than in 2001. The biggest increase has been amongst people aged over 85 and this is expected to grow further in the coming years. This increasing old-age dependency ratio will have wide ranging implications on the economy of the borough.

Newcastle-under-Lyme continues to become more diverse, estimates suggesting that around 95 per cent of residents are white, compared with around 98 per cent at the time of the 2001 Census.

Our borough is becoming a safer place to live, work and visit, with long-term crime rates falling over the last few years. Reports of anti-social behaviour have also been falling steadily over the past four years.

Residents are happy with Newcastle-under-Lyme as a place to live but in some areas the fear of crime remains a concern despite falling crime rates.

The economic downturn has meant that there has been a seven per cent reduction in the number of jobs in the borough between 2006-2010, meaning that there are now around 3,200 fewer jobs.

Despite this, the rate of unemployment is not particularly high when compared to the national picture. However, long-term worklessness and benefit dependency due to ill-health are major issues in some areas.

Business start up rates in Newcastle are particularly low, but survival rates for those that do get off the ground are relatively good.

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

The Welfare Reform Act

The Act provides for the introduction of a Universal Credit to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age, starting from April 2013.

This is the Government's proposals for reforming welfare to improve work incentives, simplify the benefits system and tackle administrative complexity. Besides introducing Universal Credit and related measures, the Bill makes other significant changes to the benefits system.





Localism Act

The Localism Bill was introduced to Parliament in December 2010 and shifts power from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils.

Localism isn't simply about giving power back to local government but to individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions - close to the people who are affected by the decisions.

The Localism Bill includes five key measures that underpin the Government's approach to decentralisation:-

- **Community Rights**

New community rights will ensure that community organisations have the Right to Challenge by expressing an interest in the running of a local authority service. Communities can also bid to take over land and buildings that are important to them through the Right to Bid.

- **Neighbourhood Planning**

New rights will allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans.

- **Housing**

This will mean that more decisions are taken locally, allowing councils to decide how best to help their homeless people, improve their housing allocations and give direction to providers on the type of tenancies suitable to better meet local housing needs.

- **General power of competence**

Councils will be able to take action and get on with things they think will benefit their local area. The new power will give councils the freedom to work together to improve services, drive down costs and enhance their local area.

- **Empowering cities and other local areas**

The Act enables the transfer of public functions to local authorities in order to improve local accountability or promote economic growth.



Local Strategies

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has three main strategies linked to its priorities:-

- Economic Development Strategy
- Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy

These strategies show how the council is planning to work with partners and other organisations to improve and develop local communities to deliver our vision for the borough.



The Way We Work (TWWW)

This project was established in January 2011 and stemmed from the council's Transformation Programme. Our aim is to focus resources and energy on four key projects:-

- Review the way the council uses its accommodation/offices.
- Home working.
- Flexible working.
- Electronic document and records management system.

Examples of areas of work within these projects include:-

- Expanding home working opportunities for staff.
- Improving mobile working by giving officers in the field access to the right technology.

- Making better use of our accommodation and encouraging partners to occupy spare office space at the Civic Offices.
- Reducing paper by scanning documents and using/storing them electronically.
- Becoming more energy efficient.

Making good use of public money

Having to do more with less means we will be looking more creatively at how we provide, and deliver, our services over the next four years - on our own and together with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will be taking a radical look at our assets - working hard to keep Council Tax low, maximising our resources and seeking efficiencies in everything we do.



Priorities, Outcomes and Activities

In this section we have set out, under each of our priorities, the outcomes that we are committed to delivering.

For each of the outcomes you will find:-

- An explanation of why improved outcomes are needed.
- Activities we will be undertaking over the next three years to achieve improvements.
- Performance indicators we will use to measure our success.
- A list of targets, linked to each indicator, showing how we propose to deliver the improvements over the next three years.

By 2016 the borough will look and feel like this:-



A clean, safe and sustainable borough

Outcomes:-

- Levels of safety will have improved, along with standards of public health.
- Vulnerable citizens and victims of crime will be provided with high quality support.
- The negative impact that the council, residents and local businesses have on the environment will have reduced.
- Our streets and open spaces will be clean, clear and tidy.
- Town centres across the borough will be sustainable and safe.



A borough of opportunity

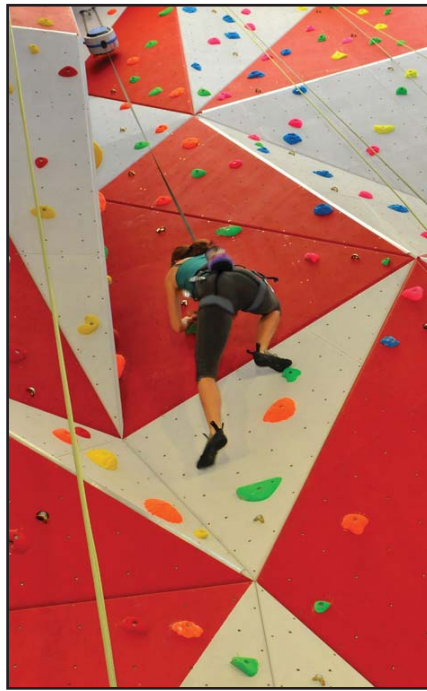
Outcomes:-

- Levels of worklessness will have reduced.
- Local people will be able to access opportunities for personal development and growth.
- Housing will be available and accessible to meet a range of diverse needs.
- Key parts of the borough will have been regenerated and there will have been overall economic growth.

A healthy and active community

Outcomes:-

- People who live work, visit or study in the borough will have access to high quality facilities.
- Levels of cultural activity and participation in the arts will have increased.
- There will be a range of healthy lifestyle choices, resulting in an increase in participation in sport and physical activity.
- Local people will be more able to work together to solve local problems.
- Council services will be influenced by resident engagement, enabling local communities to shape services which directly affect their lives.



A co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven, services.

Outcomes:-

- The council will have increased the capacity and skills of its workforce.
- Councillors will be community champions and powerful community advocates.
- The council will have delivered further efficiencies.



- High performing services will be provided for all residents and customers.
- The council will be an open, honest and transparent organisation which undertakes regular consultation with its residents and listens to their views.



Priorities	1. Promoting a cleaner, safer and more sustainable borough	2. Promoting a borough of opportunity	3. Promoting a healthy and active community	4. Becoming a Cooperative Council delivering high quality, community-driven services
<p>Our vision is to make the borough a better place to live, work and invest</p>	<p>We will improve the environment so that everyone can enjoy our safe, sustainable and healthy borough.</p>	<p>We will 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</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>We want to become a modern, streamlined, effective Council which delivers a range of excellent services that the public need. We will do this by working in partnership, wherever appropriate, to maximise the resources at our disposal.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>These outcomes describe the improvements that we want to see</p>	<p>1.1 Ensure high standards of safety and public health</p> <p>1.2 Ensure sustainable initiatives for the environment</p> <p>1.3 Ensure streets and open spaces are clean and clear</p> <p>1.4 Offer high-quality support to vulnerable citizens and victims of crime</p> <p>1.5 Achieving a thriving and safe evening and night-time economy across the borough</p>	<p>2.1 Ensure a good range of housing is available</p> <p>2.2 Aim to reduce levels of worklessness through educational achievement and skills development</p> <p>2.3 Promotion of economic growth in all service delivery</p>	<p>3.1 Provide high quality facilities for those who live, work, visit or study in the borough</p> <p>3.2 Promote cultural activity and participation in the arts</p> <p>3.3 Promote healthy lifestyle choices, encouraging participating in sport and physical activity</p> <p>3.4 Make the town centre more vibrant and attractive</p> <p>3.5 Building relationships so that people work together to solve local problems</p>	<p>4.1 Develop staff and members</p> <p>4.2 Delivering efficiencies and cost savings by ensuring that resources follow priorities and by improving procurement and other cost saving practices</p> <p>4.3 Developing an improved scrutiny process</p> <p>4.4 Engaging with residents to ensure that services are provided, either by ourselves, in partnership with others, or by other organisations, which are more responsive to the specific needs of individuals and communities</p> <p>4.5 High Performing services for all residents and customers</p>
<p>Measures</p> <p>We will know that we are achieving our outcomes by measuring the things listed here</p>	<p>Outcome 1.1 Number of people killed or seriously injured on the borough's roads</p> <p>Number of people contracting food poisoning from eating at food outlets in the borough</p> <p>Outcome 1.2</p> <p>Outcome 1.3</p> <p>Outcome 1.4</p> <p>Outcome 1.5</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>Outcome 2.2</p> <p>Outcome 2.3</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>Outcome 3.2</p> <p>Outcome 3.3</p> <p>Outcome 3.4</p> <p>Outcome 3.5</p>	<p>Outcome 4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>Outcome 4.2</p> <p>Outcome 4.3</p> <p>Outcome 4.4</p> <p>Outcome 4.5</p>